WRITINGS OF HORATIUS BONAR - VOLUME 1

by Horatius Bonar

A collection of theological writings, sermons, and essays by Horatius Bonar (Volume 1), compiled for study and devotional reading.

99 Chapters

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Chapter 1

01.00 - A Stranger Here

A Memorial of one to whom to Live was Christ, and to Die was Gain.

Horatius Bonar, D.D.

Messrs. James Nisbet & Co., London. 1852 TO THOSE WHO, THOUGH IN THE WORLD, ARE NOT OF THE WORLD, THAT THEY MAY PASS THE TIME OF THEIR SOJOURNING HERE IN FEAR. TO THOSE WHO ARE BOTH IN THE WORLD AND OF THE WORLD, THAT THEY MAY COME OUT AND BE SEPARATE, AND SEEK THE THINGS THAT ARE ABOVE.

Chapter 2

01.000. Preface

This Volume is not one which needs a Preface. It unfolds itself without any introductory explanations.

Like the life which it records, it is not meant for show, nor got up for effect. It will not startle by incident or scene, nor attract by sentimentalism or romance. It trusts to the reality, the intense reality, which comes out in all its pages, for the interest it may awaken.

If, indeed, the most original man be he who acts out what he thinks, and lives all that he believes, there may be something found here which may deserve to be called fresh and new. But, whatever may be thought of it in this aspect, there will be no difficulty in recognising in it the image of one to whom Christ was truly "all;" in whom He had taken a place which dispossessed inferior objects, and to whose eye the glory of this unseen Saviour had eclipsed the world’s brilliance and the creature’s beauty. For various private reasons, the names of persons and places have not, in general, been given. This, however, will be no hindrance to the usefulness nor detraction from the interest of the volume.

KELSO, December 1852.

01.01. The Sketch

The Sketch OF the life that is outward,—the life that is lived before the eye of man,—there is little in this volume; almost nothing. The world’s "great things" are not here. Yet there are greater things than these,—the transactions between the soul and its Creator,—the intercourse between the Saviour and the saved one. Of the life that is inward,—the life that is lived under the eye of God,—with its struggles, and hopes, and joys, with its changeful movements, its lonely utterances, its quiet walks of shade or sunshine, there is much. In few such records will more of this be found; and it is this that gives to these pages all the interest which they possess,—an interest which will not seem poor or trivial, to those who know the difference between the seen and the unseen, and who have discovered, that the points at which the soul comes into contact with the God that made it, and with the eternity where its joys are treasured, are the points of truest interest and importance in its history. But though the dazzle of strange incident or soaring sentiment be awanting, the reader will find little of the flat or the commonplace. The life here recorded was no copy, no stale imitation. However much the biographer may fail in sketching its features, the life itself was not tame or artificial, as if the individual were merely saying over again what she had heard others say, and trying to feel in certain modes, because she had read that others felt so, and setting down in her diary or letters some excellent sentiments, neatly culled from the experiences of others. It was singularly fresh and real; all the colours of its varied complexion arising from the health underneath, and not laid on by a skilful hand from without. It was thoroughly natural, nay, original, even to simplicity, both in thought and language. Its movements were, not from the surface to the centre, but from the centre to the surface, produced by the indwelling Spirit, and regulated by His inworking hand. It did not shew itself in the form of second-hand pietism or imitated devotion; nor did it work itself into the stiff, irksome routine of externalism, either in language or in action. It came out, without effort or study, in the warm utterance of unborrowed feeling, in the eagerness, sometimes the fitfulness, of impulse, in vigorous yet quiet consistency of character, and in strenuous pressing forward to the mark for the prize of the high calling. It does not deceive you with plagiarised experiences. It is as true as it is transparent; true both in what it speaks and what it leaves unspoken, in what it does and in what it leaves undone; sometimes changeful in its moods, abrupt in its movements, and extreme in its ebbings and flowings, yet always true; with something in it of cloud, but more of sunshine, with much of conflict, but more of victory.

Take, for instance, such passages as the following, which, without unduly anticipating the narrative, will illustrate these statements. She writes to a dear friend—"I was a little happier at prayer this morning, but it was in confessing and weeping over my sins. I felt so vile, that I had nothing to say; I was self-condemned and ashamed; but the sweet name of Jesus I could plead, and I felt that His blood cleanseth from all sin. I think it is the fittest place for me,— in the dust: not even to look up. Oh! I am very unholy! You would not love me if you saw my heart. But God sees it all; and I wonder I am not more ashamed of my vileness. Oh to be holy as He is holy! Heaven would not be heaven if there was the shadow of a sin there. Don’t you long for heaven? It is not so

much of being very happy here, even in God, that I think: I always want to be away, and at rest, from this vile body of sin." And again: "In your next I want you to tell me more about the Psalms, and how they tell about Jesus. I thought they were all David’s feelings; I think the one for this morning, the sixth, suited my state, for all my joy is fled. You said, in one of your letters, that you had then little delight in prayer. That is just my grief at present, and I have, what is worse, no desires after God. Oh! of all my different states of feeling, I shudder most at that, when I seem as if I had no need to seek God in prayer; I had far rather long, even to agony, to get a sense of God’s presence, than be as I am now, so lifeless: my soul seems completely driedup within me. Were you ever in that state when you cannot pray at all, because you do not know what to ask for? I like when I feel my need of God, for then He is precious."

"Dear J____, I wish I could speak to you about Jesus as you do to me, for I often think you will not care about my letters, for they are not fragrant with the oft-repeated name of Jesus; but what can I do? I cannot raise my dead soul, I can only write as I feel; but when we are together, we shall be ever speaking of Him, and He will join us as He did the two disciples going to Emmaus. Do you ever feel like Mary at the sepulchre, when she wept because they had taken away her Lord, and she did not know where they had laid him? Oh! such tears have a sweetness in them; but mine are dried up! I cannot even weep because Jesus is away. Perhaps he is with you. Oh! if he is there, I can feel happy yet. Don’t you long to bring others to Him, when you are happy in Him yourself? I sometimes wish that I could give ____ my faith, and then go and ask Him for more...Now may Jesus bless you, and speak peace to your heart!"

Then add to these such a paragraph as the following, and you have a specimen of the battle and the victory:—" Monday, August 10.—After a long season of darkness, God, my own God, has made his face to shine upon my happy soul again. I got near to Jesus in prayer this morning, and could do nothing but praise. Lord, I thank thee, Lord, I thank thee!

Why me, Lord, why me? Oh! how my whole soul longs and pants to live to his glory! O that I could only get rid of my vile self, I should be happy; but self, vile, hateful self, cleaves to all I do. Oh to be swallowed up in Jesus! O Lord, my own precious, altogether lovely Saviour, make me all thine own!" A life like this touched the world at but few points. Its affinities were with things unseen, and its connexions were with a world that is still "to come." Its communications were with One within the veil, and its ebbings or flowings were traceable to some far-distant orb, whose invisible influences, counteracting the forces of earth, regulated the tides of spiritual being. The religion here unfolded was no uncertainty, no mere earnestness, no well-filled-up piece of ritualism, no confused groping after the eternal birthright, but a "serving of God," a "walking with God," founded on the distinct consciousness of reconciliation through the blood of the everlasting covenant.

Such were the things which gave to the life here written such a tone of profound reality. They who saw it felt this; they who read it will feel it too. Power, genius, breadth of intellect—many things may be lacking, but reality is here. What reality there is in such a passage as this!— "This is Thursday, so I suppose you are all praising Jesus in the dear schoolroom, where, I doubt not, you have had many a happy hour of blest communion with Him whom your soul loveth. I wish I could join you at this moment in spirit, but, oh! I am so cold and dead! This afternoon, at five, I tried to pray for a blessing on you to-night at the meeting; tell me if you were happy, for I found it sweet to tell Jesus you were to be there to meet him. For two days I have been actually rejoicing in the love

of Jesus! You will be astonished to hear me say so, after what I wrote in A.'s letter, but I do not understand it myself. I had been very miserable one day about ____, for I thought she was beginning not to love me, and afterwards I suppose I felt the love of Jesus sweeter; for I was so happy— so very happy; oh! how I longed to share my joy with you! I wonder what gave me such delight; it was not any clear views of my interest in Christ; on the contrary, I never stopped to inquire! I could not help rejoicing; and when Satan whispered that he would get me yet, I felt no alarm; indeed, the strangest thought came into my mind; I thought, well, if I am lost, I will sit in a corner, and think about Jesus! and I actually felt as if I could be happy even there, if I could think for ever about Jesus. My heart bounded up to him so. I thought I even loved Him! but that is impossible; such a cold heart could not love Him; but then He loves me. Nothing will ever persuade me that He does not; and He loves you too. Never believe Satan's lies when he tells you He does not; believe that Jesus loves you, and you must rejoice. If the joy I have felt for two days were to last always, I don't think I could stay on the earth!"

"Was it right to rejoice in this way without being sure that I was a child of God, and without being humbled for sin? But I could not think about myself, I was so enchanted with Jesus. We hear of people rejoicing in a sense of forgiveness, in the Spirit witnessing that they are children; in seeing their sins nailed to His cross; but my joy was simply this, that Jesus was love, that He was worthy to be loved; it was not that He loved me, but that he was love itself, that made my heart glad. I don't understand my own feelings, now that I can think of them. I sometimes fear that I have a kind of enthusiastic joy that does not spring from faith; whatever it was, however, I wish I could have it oftener, for I felt as if then I could do anything for Jesus."

There is a certain class amongst us that speak much against "unrealities," and "shams," and "falsehoods." And they do not speak amiss or too strongly. But they know not where all this hollowness lies. They have yet to learn that the sad unreality of the age, is the want of the living God; that the world's great falsehood is believing the lie of the Evil One, in preference to the truth of the everlasting gospel; that the grand "sham" is that of a religion without the indwelling Spirit, and without the fellowship of the Eternal Son. It is not (as one of them has said) that "the eternal pole-star has gone out," but that men will not have its light. Yet every other light is an "unreality." From a life like the one before us, some, perhaps, may learn the difference between the real and the unreal. An old minister of the Reformation—of whose poetry Scotland has no cause to be ashamed—dedicating his book of hymns to a noble lady in 1598, thus writes: "It is a rare thing to see a ladie, a tender youth, sad, solitare, and sanctified, oft sighing and weeping thro' the conscience of sin." It may be that such a sight was rarer in the days of Alexander Hume than it is now. But, whether it be so or not, we cannot but think that the Memoir before us presents us with just such a character as these simple but solemn words of his describe. Not less in our day than in his, is the world laying, its snares for the young and buoyant. How many are its victims, how potent the fascination that binds them, and how few are delivered from the enchantment! This record of one who had escaped "as a bird from the snare of the fowler," may rouse some poor child of gaiety, to seek the unwinding of the spell, which is blinding her eye to the glory of the kingdom. It may make her feel that this world's glitter is but a cheat, and that its mirth is madness; that the closet's twilight stillness is dearer than the bright hall of midnight; that there is such a thing as the excellence of the unseen and the distant, disenchanting the beauty of the seen and the near, and such a thing as the love of Christ supplanting in the soul the fondest creature-love, and imparting

gladness, truer and more abiding than all creature-joy.

01.02. The Sleep of Death

The Sleep of Death

M ____ was born in K ____ , amid scenes of beauty such as few spots can rival. Though many of her ties to it were soon broken, never to be re-fastened, still, to the last, she loved it, as Mary might love Bethlehem, though her stay in it was brief, and her links to it were few.

She had early sorrows; but they went by and were forgotten. Once and again, in childhood, she was made to look upon the face of death— the death of dear ones; but no lesson for eternity did she learn from her early tears. The sister and the playmate were taken from her side; but God was not chosen to fill up the blank which, in such a case, even childhood feels, nor the Son of God resorted to as the portion of the soul,—sweeter than sisterhood, dearer than companionship, as truly fitted to satisfy the first unripe, uncertain longings of immortal being, as the larger, more definite cravings of the aged and the wise. To earthly relatives she clung the closer in the days of her early bereavement; but God was far away. From her tenderest years she threw herself upon the affection of others, cleaving to them firmly; by nothing wounded so sharply as by any slowness in returning her love. Timid and diffident, she did not make acquaintances rapidly ; but, when made, she held them fast. Wayward, sometimes even to selfishness, she would yet do or sacrifice anything for those whom she loved. Keen in feeling, and with a touch, it might be, of sullenness as well as warmth in her temper, she was yet honest and straightforward. She could not but be trusted by all who knew her, so conscientious was she, and without deceit. The family having removed to Edinburgh while she was yet young, she attended the Circus Place School, where she was marked by her good conduct as well as her great perseverance. In the spring of 18—, her family went to reside in France, accompanied by the dear friend to whom most of the letters in this volume were addressed. On neither side was there, in this friendship, the tie of grace. The intimacy was close indeed, but it was not "in the Lord;" and though of this friend, M____ could, in after years, say as Paul did of his kinsmen, "who also were in Christ beforeme," yet, during their sojourn in Paris, they "walked according to the course of this world."

M____ kept a diary then, and in it we read records such as the following. How strange would they seem in later years! "Sunday. Went to church in the forenoon. In the afternoon took a walk with J. W. and R. in the Champs Elysées."

Again, she thus records her worldliness:—"Went to a dance at General B____'s. Had great fun, and danced the whole evening."

Again, "Sunday, went with J. W. to see the Palais Royal. Took a walk in the Tuilerie Gardens."

She was not flippant or frivolous in her worldliness, for it was not in her nature to be so. Yet that did not make her love of vanity and gaiety less intense and cordial. It was as if she did not trifle even with these pleasures, but went the full round of them all, with the ardour which marked her character. The theatre and the ball-room she enjoyed. And these, with the novel or some light volume of the world's literature, either French or English, filled up her hours.[1] She lived to

herself, to the world, and to vanity. She was "without God." As a fuller illustration of the utter worldliness with which she was then encircled, a few extracts from the journal of a companion are added:—

"St Omers, June 13th.— Had lessons in Italian and French. 14th.—Went to chapel forenoon and afternoon; in the evening to the Grande Place, to hear the band. 21st Sunday.—Went to the cathedral to see the Fete de Dieu, the finest in St Omers. Saw a procession in the church. The music fine. All sorts of instruments. Went in the evening to hear the band in the Petite Place. 28th, Sunday.—Went to chapel twice. Went to hear the band in the evening. July 22d.—Spent the evening at ____. Dancing and cards. 23d.—

Got my first lesson on the guitar. August 18th.—Went to the opera with ____, and M____. Paris, October 4th.— Went to the ambassador's chapel; after dinner walked to the Tuileries, then to the Palais Royal and had coffee. December 31st.— Went to a dance at Mr. B____'s, where I enjoyed myself very much. We brought in the New Year at the supper-table, and afterwards danced till four in the morning. January 3d.— M____ and I went to General B____'s, where a lady played. Mrs. B. sang, and the General and Monsieur D____ played chess, although it was Sunday. D____ came home with us, and we had a great deal of fun. January llth.—Went with M____ to the Italian opera, to Mrs. B____'s box. Heard ____ ; was delighted beyond measure. 12th.—Went with M____ to the Theatre de l'Ambigu Comique, and was very much pleased." Scenes like these are only recalled for the purpose of shewing, without concealment or extenuation, the character and early life of one for whom God had much grace in store.[2] It is by marking the contrast between her earlier and her later years, that we see the greatness of the Holy Spirit's work, and the love of Him who "delivered her from a present evil world." Truly, in her case, "the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant, with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus."

She was thus altogether "in the world," and "of the world." Of God, and Christ, and the endless kingdom, she knew nothing. The Bible was an unheeded volume, turned over, perhaps, once a week, when the Sabbath drew a cloud between her and vanity; but neither studied nor prized. Few could have been found further from God than she, more sunk in spiritual death; for "she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth" (1 Timothy 5:6). "All my happiness was confined to this world," is her own statement of her condition in these days of gaiety. It does not appear that she had ever looked into eternity, or called to mind the judgment of the great day. Her tastes and pursuits were earthly. Of religion, she had nothing. The love of the Father was not in her; and the cross of the beloved Son invited her eye in vain.

Two years after this she went to London on a visit to a near relative. There, for the first time, the Word broke in upon her dreams, and she awoke to the thought, "I am a sinner." She seems to have had, at this time, some pleasure in listening to the Word, for, in 1843, when writing to her friend, then in London, and attending Regent Square Church, she thus expresses herself: "I remember the church you go to, well; many a time have I sat in it with great delight. Strange, when I did not care for Jesus then!" But the gleam was momentary leaving, when it vanished, the darkness as deep as before. Her convictions were faint, and her inquiries after deliverance were but half in earnest. Her feet turned not to Calvary, nor did her eye light upon the cross. She saw neither the sin nor the Saviour, as he saw them who said, "in Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His grace," and her consciousness of guilt

passed off. She had not seen enough of sin to make her hate it, nor enough of Christ to win her love to him, nor enough of his blood to pacify her conscience truly, nor enough of the Father's grace to afford her a resting-place or a joy; and so she went back to the world, or rather, let us say, she resolved not to leave it. Still, as ever, warm in her love, and firm in her attachments, and kind in word and deed, she sought her portion among the things that never filled a soul, nor healed a wound, nor dried a tear. Full of the buoyant life of youth, she was wholly "dead in sin." Endowed with excellent mental gifts, her imagination ardent, her temperament susceptible, her whole tone of thought high, she had not yet realised her responsibility, nor laid out one talent for God. The mind was cultivated, but the soul —it was left to the god of this world to make his own of. The world seemed bright to her, for she had not yet seen the brighter. She loved it, and sought her joy in it. For the human heart must have a world to live in; and if "the world to come" be unknown, then the soul betakes itself to the present, poor as are its pretensions to gladden or to satisfy. For, poor as it is, it does pass itself off for being fair and great, so that many are ensnared. Nay, and in these last days, it seems to deck itself with richer beauty in order to win the warm, fresh heart of youth more thoroughly to itself, and draw it away from God. Hardly can there be a sadder sight than the fascinated victim of pleasure. For all is so gay without, yet so hollow, so dark within. The mirth, the glitter, the dance, the song, "music's voluptuous swell"—these are the enchantments! These are the excitements that tamper with the health of youth's unripe affections, forcing into sudden growth the sensibilities of opening manhood and womanhood, before their time. These are the visions that lure the soul into a region of unrealities, where a false tone is given to life, and a feverishness infused into thought and feeling, which not only "costs the fresh blood dear," but which eats into the very vitals of spiritual being, increasing the distaste of the natural mind for all holy truth, and the terrible intensity of its enmity to God. And what a spell for the young and fervent! Yet how sad the spectacle! The light step is there, but it treads the way of death. You hear the joyous voice, but there is not a tone in it that could take up the new song. The flower-wreath decks the forehead; but wreaths are for the free and the victorious;— are they seemly for the bondman and the conquered? The flower and the fetter, the gem and the iron, the bud of spring and the mouldering leaf of autumn, the revel and the funeral, the brilliance of the gay hall and the blackness of the eternal darkness,—how painful, how awful the unlikeness!

O world, what a vanity,—what an infinite vanity! "With what an array of deceptions art thou furnished for beguiling the eye and heart of man! Wounding, but not healing the soul; emptying, but never filling; saddening, but never comforting; intoxicating, but never refreshing,— thou art able to cheat us into the belief that thou canst heal, and fill, and comfort, and refresh! Thus man is mocked; thus the young heart is cheated, mistaking the unreal for the real, and preferring the beauty of the creature, to the glory of Him who is fairer than the children of men."

01.03. The Awaking

The Awaking

SHORTLY after their return from France, the family went to reside in P____, near Edinburgh. There, as in Paris, M.’s heart still went out after vanity, and sought its joy in the world.

There was no seeking after God, no wish to have him for her portion. Instead of an approach to Him, there seemed a more resolute departure from him. Her dislike of religion and of religious people seemed to take firmer root. In part, this was occasioned by the inconsistencies of one very dear to her, who, having been aroused to a sense of sin, had turned back to her former ways, or at least was not walking as "becometh the gospel." In after years, this relative thus wrote in reference to that crisis in M.’s life as well as in her own:—"At this time, or shortly before, J. W. through your ministry was brought to Jesus, and, having found the Lord herself, she soon began to desire our salvation. Why I was the one who at this time visited Kelso, and not M____, J.’s peculiar friend, I cannot recollect. But so it was; and I was awakened by the sermon you preached from Isaiah 3:10-11. For a time my distress was great, but, instead of laying down my burden where Christian laid his, at the Cross, I sought relief in the prayers and works of self-righteousness; and my goodness, as may be imagined, proved like the morning cloud and the early dew. I mention this, because I remember, that, on my return home, this false piety of mine was a great stumbling-block to M____, and tended to excite in her mind a dislike of religion, and of those who professed it—chiefly, I think, of you." In spite of this aversion, she still retained her love to the early friend alluded to in the above extract ; and to visit her, she came to Kelso on the 8th of June 1841.

She comes, however, resolved to keep aloof from all religious influences, and to steel herself against every serious impression. She determines beforehand that she will have nothing to do with those who had been the means of so strangely altering the friend of her youth. How much of hostility, and how much of fear, there may be in this purpose, we cannot say. Both unite in leading to its formation. Curiously mingled are the feelings with which she comes. She loves her friend, yet she hates her piety. She has delight in visiting her, yet she dislikes coming within the reach of her religion. She fortifies herself against serious impressions, as if afraid of their contagiousness. She clings to the world, as if dreading that an attempt will be made to tear it from her. On the evening of her arrival, her friend, on parting with her for the night, after mutual assurances of friendship, expressed her hope that their friendship might be "for eternity." This was the first word of the kind that had, since her arrival, fallen upon her ear, and it seemed to fret and annoy her, though without calling forth any remark in reply.

Thus was she going farther and farther from God, not loving to retain him even in her knowledge. She had come for a season to enjoy the society of one who knew God, but it was not with the design of learning to know this God, or to walk in his ways. She "would have none of Him." If God could have been shut out, she would have shut him out, and denied him access at every avenue. But as she went farther from God, so He, in the sovereignty of his love, drew nearer. She fled, but He pursued.[3] She repelled Him, but he would not be repelled. He laid his hand upon her, and at

length, in spite of all resistance, drew her irresistibly to Himself. It needed a strong arm to arrest one so froward, so bent upon fleeing farther and farther from the God who sought her; but the "vessel" was a "chosen" one, and must not be cast away (Acts 9:15; Romans 9:23). This was the crisis. The sinner's hatred of God and God's love to the sinner now met, as if seeking, each to quench the other. Which is to prevail? Her visit took place at a time when much prayer was made, specially for those that were "afar off." Although both in her character and circumstances there were many things that seemed to make her case an unlikely and unhopeful one, in so far as religious impressions were concerned, yet she was not the less, but the more, on that account, made the object of special prayer by those who loved her and who had already known the grace of God in truth. Both before she came and afterwards, frequent intercession was sent up in her behalf.

Induced by her friend, though with no willingness, she went to hear an evening sermon in the place which she had resolved to shun. This was on the first Sabbath after her arrival; and though she thus, in compliance with another's earnest wishes, broke the outward part of her purpose, she made up her mind to keep the inward part only the more steadfastly. The letter of her determination she gave up, only to retain the spirit more truly, by hardening her heart against all solemn thought, and drawing the armour of her worldliness more firmly round her, to ward off every arrow from the bow, every stroke from the sword of the Spirit. But, can man arm himself against God? Can he refuse to hear or to feel when God himself is the speaker? The subject of discourse that Sabbath evening (June 13) was the nineteenth question of the Shorter Catechism, respecting "the misery of that estate whereinto man fell." It was one of a series of sermons upon the Catechism which had been proceeding for some months. Each successive statement given in the answer to the question, formed a separate head of discourse, which was summed up with warning to each hearer, yet with a declaration that, wide as was the misery, there was deliverance as wide and full.[4] On leaving church, M____ remarked that that preaching was "too awful for her—she would not go back." Yet her soul was troubled. No distinct impression had been made that night, yet it seemed as if a dark cloud were threatening to overshadow her. The first result was irritation. She was angry at being disturbed; angry at the clouds of the eternal gloom being thus rudely rolled betwixt her and the world. Between anger and alarm, the night passed over, and another day opened on her. On the following day I saw her. But she was reserved in the extreme. As she could not with propriety leave the room where we were, she kept almost entire silence; and though she could not help listening to the conversation, she took no part in it. No effort would draw her into conversation. Yes or no, was the sum of her replies. She seemed bent on carrying out her purpose of shutting up her soul against conviction; and her object was to make the interview as disagreeable as possible, in order that it might not be repeated. This was the first stroke of the Spirit's hand upon her. Her conscience had, though very indistinctly, been touched. But the work was to be a deep one, and rapid as well as deep, so that stroke followed on stroke, and the crisis came with speed. She was not to be, as many are, the subject of various fitful impressions, going and coming, ruffling the surface, yet never striking down into the depths of the lake below. She was to be thoroughly searched and broken; yet the process was to be much less gradual than it is with many. And in the deep stirrings and convictions that accompanied her awakening, we have the key-note of her future experience. In spite of her irritation at the Word spoken, and her resolution to go no more to hear it, she was persuaded to attend a prayer-meeting on the Monday evening. Whether it was to please her friend, or whether it was because there was an unconscious

fascination in the very words that had repelled her, we know not. An unseen hand was leading her, and a will which she felt not, but which was not on that account the less irresistible, was setting aside all her determinations, and bringing her into the position which she was striving to avoid. At this Monday evening meeting she was deeply smitten. In the midst of the address, when the minister was uttering some words of warning, she turned round to one sitting next her and said, half-aloud, in an angry tone, "What does the man mean? "

Terror now took hold of her. It was in vain that she tried to shake off her convictions. On returning home from the meeting, she was evidently disturbed, yet she affected great indifference, and strove to appear unmoved; and, as if afraid that those around might guess at the tumult within, she said, abruptly, when no one was alluding to the matter,— "Don't suppose that I care anything for that man's words—I am determined not to mind him." The way in which she spoke made it evident that she was caring most deeply, but that she was angry at herself for caring, and sorely annoyed at the idea that others might got an insight into the state of her feelings. She thus betrayed the anxiety she was so anxious to hide. No remark, however, was made in reply, and the evening closed. But her sleep went from her, and she lay trembling with sore alarm. Sin, and the eternal hell into which sin must plunge the soul, stood before her. Satan, too, as she afterwards told, seemed to lay his hand on her for the purpose of drawing her back, as if alarmed at the prospect of losing his prey. She felt as if he seized her. Then she started, and sat up in bed, trying to keep herself awake, lest, if she slept, she should awake in hell.

Next morning she was restless and very unhappy, still fighting with her fears, and still seeking to conceal alike the struggle and the terror, by pretending total indifference to what she had heard the night before.

Throughout the forenoon she was unsettled and uneasy, going from room to room, without any real object, her countenance, all the while, betraying the misery of her soul. She tried different ways of employing herself, but was unable to fix her attention upon anything. She knew not what to do, such was the fever within; and this moving to and fro was the unconscious expression of an inward grief, for which there was neither concealment nor relief. She then sat down to write, but remained some minutes motionless, her forehead resting on her hand. She then dated her letter, as if to begin. Then she stopped, forgetting what she meant to do, and totally absorbed with her own troubled thoughts, as if listening only to the fitful gusts of that tempest that had risen within. After thus sitting for a little, wrapped in bitter musing, she dashed the pen away from her, exclaiming, with angry bitterness—"It is strange that I cannot now even write to my own mamma!" It seemed as if for the time the spiritual convulsion that was going on within were unfitting her for everything. On being asked what was the matter, the pent-up feeling burst forth, and she exclaimed, "Oh! that man's words have donefor me!" The secret was thus disclosed. The words which she had heard on the previous evening were ringing in her ears. They had "done" for her. "What were the words that so distressed her? " she was asked. "He asked us how we could go to sleep with sin unforgiven, when we knew not but that we might awake in hell."

"I happened (says her friend, who was with her at the time) to be reading notes of a sermon by Mr. M'Cheyne, from Song of Solomon 2:14. She came to me and asked if I would read it aloud to her, which I did. She listened very eagerly. I then proposed to read God's Word, and, as the above text had greatly interested her, we read a great part of the Song of Solomon, which seemed sweet to

her. When I stopped, she said, ’Read on, it is very beautiful.’ She wept very much, and seemed a little relieved. She began from that time to read her Bible a great deal; but still, for some time, she shewed an unwillingness to disclose her feelings to any one. Two or three times the sentence would escape her lips, ’That man’s words have done for me!’"

In what way his words had "done for her," will be plain enough. The expression, however, is one quite like herself. She was as vivid in expression as in feeling, and often gave vent to her impulses in such abrupt expressions as the above. Many of the kind will be found strewn over her letters, for she invariably, in expressing herself, took the words nearest at hand. Hence the brokenness, yet, at the same time, the vigour and point, which throw such interest into her correspondence. To let out what she felt, and just in the way she felt at the time, was all she ever sought.

One cannot but see what a real thing this awakening was. It was no excitement, no fancy, no flitting cloud of melancholy mysticism, in which so many are finding all the religion they think needful. It was all most genuine. There was nothing indistinct about it in the end, though the first shadow that stood over her might seem vague and undefined. It was the "terrors of the Almighty" that had taken hold of her. It was a sense of sin that broke her down. It was the feeling of her lost estate that shook her frame and robbed her of her rest. In this there could be no imitation, either conscious or unconscious, for she had scarcely heard of such things before. She had read no experience of the kind. She had never seen another passing through such a cloud. Whatever her feelings might be, they were certainly unborrowed. No book nor friend had said to her, "thus and thus you ought to feel." She was not trying to feel or tryingto alarm herself. The impressions awoke within her, as in a moment, while she was thinking of every other thing save of them; the sense of sin laid hold of her, when as yet she had no idea of sin at all. In after years, these deepened and became more intense; but even from the first they were of no superficial, no transient kind. Her feelings, at this time, seem to have been not unlike those which an old minister describes as his, when thus aroused by the Spirit:—"I had a deep impression of the things of God; a natural condition and sin appeared (and I felt it) worse than hell itself; the world and vanities thereof terrible and exceeding dangerous; it was fearful then to have to do with it, or to be rich. I saw its day coming. Scripture expressions were weighty. A Saviour was a big thing in mine eyes. Christ’s agonies were then earnest with me, and I thought that, all my days I was in a dream till now, or like a child in jest; and I thought the world was sleeping. Shame, trouble, and affliction, want and poverty, were sweet and secure. I was wearied of my life; it was bitterness to me, and sorrow did consume me, so that there was a sensible influence on my body, and I looked like a man come from the grave; yet did none know my trouble. The night was sweet, because I had some rest; but the morning was as the shadow of death, because I was to conflict; I would even have been content to have lain still perpetually, my spirits were so over-foughten."

Immediately after this, she went into the country for a few days. There her impressions lost somewhat of their edge, and she tried to throw herself into the world again. "When she returned," says her friend, "I happened to be writing, and my Bible was lying open on the table beside me. When she saw this, her hostile feelings returned, and she said, within herself (as she told me afterwards), ’This is miserable work,’ wishing, at the same time, that she was back to her worldly friends." But her convictions soon returned in all their force, and her anxiety increased. Nor did it again abate. She went back to the world no more— but, after a little delay, straight forward to the Cross, there to deposit all her sins and fears.

01.04. The Rest

The Rest THE sleep was broken, and the sleeper had opened her eyes upon a new region of feeling and of being. She saw danger— eternal danger in front, and she looked round for shelter. On the subject of religion her mind was a blank. Hence, though she had more to learn than many, she had less to unlearn. Self-righteousness (the great hindererof the soul when seeking rest) had less scope for its subtleties and snares. The only manifestation of the self-righteous feeling was in her preference of a small, dark or dimly lighted room. There she sat alone with her Bible, during the few days that elapsed ere she found peace. Its gloom suited her. For terror, anger, and sorrow had taken hold of her. Light was for the joyous;—did it not mock the sorrowful? And what had sunshine to do with the darkness that was within?

She had "terrors;" but she thought not of resting on them. She had read no books inculcating "terrors" as prerequisites to the sinner’s acceptance; and when they came upon her, she fled out of them to the hiding-place. She did not rest on them, nor look upon them as a title or certificate, on the strength of which she might approach the cross and claim forgiveness. As one beset with dangers, she seemed to sit down despairingly, not knowing which way to turn for help. But the Word of God, of which she had been so ignorant, and to which she had now betaken herself, was itself to be her guide. She was not permitted to remain long in darkness. The light soon arose.

"One day," says her friend, "when I was alone with her, she asked me to read the Scriptures to her. We began the fortythird of Isaiah, but did not get further than the first verse. On reading it she said that she was amazed at the love of God to sinners. She wept much over the concluding words, ’thou art mine;’ and added that she wished she could feel that they were spoken to her. But even though she could not, she felt that they drew her to God. What she seemed ’to feel was this, that the God who sent such a message to Israel must necessarily be a God of grace; and seeing such grace in him drew out her love in return. She sometimes got very impatient at her own distress, and used to express herself angrily. I remember on one occasion, a friend, seeing her uneasiness, offered to pray with her; she refused, saying she would pray by herself. She afterwards felt sorry for this. She gradually became more willing to tell me her feelings, and we read the Bible often together. At that time she preferred this to reading it alone, as she said she understood it better; not that there was any explanation given, but sometimes we expressed what we felt on reading certain passages, and this drew her attention more particularly to them. I, often being at a loss how to speak to her, urged her to see you; she was reluctant at first, fearing she might not be able to express herself so that you could understand her; however, she soon agreed. After you had spoken and prayed with her, her mind seemed clearer and much calmer. At this time she attended the prayer-meetings and Bible-class regularly, and never shewed any desire to return to the world. Only once after this she went to a dancing party, and said, when she left, she could never return to such a scene. She spoke to a friend of hers who was also there about these gaieties, and told her there was no satisfaction in them, and added—’Those friends of ours who will not come to them are happier than we are.’ This was the first time she had spoken for Christ, and she said that she felt happy at having an opportunity of doing so. This friend avoided being

alone with her ever afterwards. ’ She had now got her eye upon the cross; and, in seeing it, peace flowed in upon her. The knowledge of what had been accomplished there took away her terror, and bade the storm be still. In the crucified One she saw the Substitute, and on Him she saw the wrath, which she dreaded, descending, that it might not descend on her. There was life from his death; there was healing from his stripes; there was joy from his sorrow."

But, ere long, this peace was ruffled. Some sifting was needed, and the tempter was allowed to disturb. On Wednesday the 21st of July she was at my class, as she had been several times before. At the close she waited behind the others, and put into my hands the following paper:—

"I have entirely lost the sweet feeling of peace and happiness that I had some days ago; I am now, not in a state of sorrow or grief because I feel myself to be a sinner, but in a state of great alarm, so that I can get no rest. The more I look into my heart, the more alarmed I get, for I see it is so much worse than I ever imagined. I see and feel that I cannot think a single good thought; in short, I perfectly feel how true that verse is, wherein the heart is described as deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. Now, how can such a heart ever turn to Christ? I don’t understand it; ever since I believed I have had less peace every day. Now you told me that, if I believe, my sins are pardoned; how am I ever to think they are, if I feel the burden of them heavier than ever I did before? Last night I was in such agony, because I thought I had got hold of Christ, and Satan tried to pull me back; I tried to pray, but could not; I could not get myself to believe that God would hear me. It was fearful! My only consolation is in thinking of Christ; and, oh! if I could just know and feel that I was resting upon him, I should not mind these thoughts so much. What makes me so changeable? Why do I sometimes feel happy in thinking of him, and at other times nothing but despair? The Bible tells us so much about having a new heart, being born again; now, will my heart ever be changed? For I see it must be, before I can love Christ as I ought. I often feel both love and gratitude to Him, but it is a selfish love; there is no purity in my love; I don’t love Him for himself alone. If I were not so vile, I am sure I could love Him! I have a great desire and longing to know Him; I can’t tell what I mean rightly, but I want to know Him, his character, everything about Him, and then I don’t think I shall be able to help loving Him. Ought I to come to His table with these feelings? Oh! surely I should see Him there! I long to go, yet am fearful. I feel as if I could say much more, but I am afraid of trespassing on your time. I fear it is asking too much, to request you to have the great kindness to give me an answer in writing: but I am sure to forget what you say in speaking, and I wish much not to forget. I am very grateful to you for your past kindness to me." To this I replied next day. She has preserved my reply among her papers; and as it may be useful, I give it here:— "Your loss of peace comes from your looking away from Christ. It was the glimpse you got of Him that gave you peace, and now Satan has turned your eye to something else, so that you could not but lose it. Perhaps you have been tempted to think that something more is needed to maintain that peace, than the mere sight of Christ and his Cross. Perhaps you are thinking that, inaddition tothis, there must be the sight of something good in yourself— some improvement, some feeling, some holiness—before you can expect to retain your joy. Now, from beginning to end of a Christian’s life, it is the sight of the Cross, and of that alone, that gives rest to his soul. It is what he sees in Christ, not what he sees in himself, that keeps his soul in perfect peace.

Study the Cross. Do not suppose you know all about it well enough, and only need to feel it. This is a delusion which darkens many. Search the Scriptures, to know more of Christ, and of what He

has done."

"You say that the more you look into your heart, the more alarmed you get. I don't wonder at this. Did you ever expect anything else? Did you expect to see something else there than sin? It is indeed worse, infinitely worse, than you have ever yet conceived. No tongue can tell, nor heart conceive, its wickedness. Hence the absurdity of looking into it for comfort. Would you look into a dungeon for light? Would you go near an iceberg to get heat? You are to look into yourself, not for good, but for evil; not for holiness, but for sin; not for life, but for death, in order that you may bring all your wants, and sins, and complaints to Christ. Study yourself, in order to become more and more dissatisfied with your own heart. Study Christ, in order to become more and more satisfied with Him."

"You complain of unbelief—burden of sin being heavier—

Satan pulling you away from Christ, &c, Well,— go to God with your complaints. Tell Him all that you have told me,—and with the same confidence, or rather with a thousand times more confidence; for He is infinitely more worthy of it and more willing to hear you, even you. 'Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out.' You say, 'my only consolation is in thinking of Christ.' Could you have better consolation? I am glad to think that it is so, and I trust that your present perplexities will drive you away from every other refuge and every other source of comfort, and make you look to Jesus— to Jesus alone. Tell Him that you long to know him more; that you see that in Him is contained everything you need for time and eternity; ask him to unfold his treasures to you. You need not fear a repulse. He loves to hear you, and to answer you. Trusthim. Unbosom your whole soul to him. Tell him every feeling of your heart. He cancomfort you, and he will. Only do not distrust Him. Nothing grieves Him more than this. And this is the only thing that will ultimately keep you from peace. You cannot love Jesus as He ought to be loved, till He teach you; and even then, while on earth, there will remain much of impurity and selfishness in your love. But do not despond on that account—confess your selfishness to Him ; He will forgive it all. And, besides, remember that love to Him is not necessarily wrong, because selfish. It is wrong indeed not to love Him for his own loveliness,—but it is not wrong to love Him for having loved us. The want of gratitude would be as sinful as the want of love to him for himself. 'We love him because he first loved us.' Head the whole of the first epistle of John."

"If you are looking simply to Jesus as your Saviour, your life, your all, you ought to go to the table. That is the true test of discipleship."

"Hold on! It is for heaven! You have a rich inheritance before you; and, oh! is it not worth a little pain and labour to 'win Christ, and be found in Him?'"

The peace which she had found was too real to be destroyed. It had been shaken, but it was re-established. It came directly from "Him who is our peace," and from His cross, where peace was made. He changed not. His cross remained the same. It still spoke peace to the sinner. And there, where M____ had found peace at first, there also, and in the same way, she found it again. How it was occasionally broken, and then recovered, the remaining chapters, and specially those which contain extracts from her letters and diaries, will fully shew.

Knowing little of Scripture, the speed and simplicity with which she found her way to the cross is amazing. But the Spirit led her on. She had thrown herself upon the Divine Word, and God

honoured His Word. It seemed as if now God himself had put the Bible into her hand, and she seized it as her treasure. From that never-to-be-forgotten week, it was with her continually. Nothing would part her from it. It became her light, her joy, her companion, along the narrow way. The following extract from her first to a friend in Kelso, after her return home, will shew the state of her mind:

" P____, August 4, 1841...What endless gratitude do I owe to God for what He has done for me! Oh that He would teach me to love Him as He ought to be loved! What a cold, what a dead heart mine must be, that does not continually beat with love and gratitude for such unmerited love! I would not exchange one hour of communion with Him, for the whole world and all the treasures it contains. I seem to myself to have a new existence; nothing gives me now the least pleasure that formerly was all my happiness ; everything that does not speak of God seems so dry and uninteresting; every book seems dull after that mine of pure treasure, His own Book. How bitterly I now regret my sinful neglect of the Book that is now so precious to me![5] But I do not wonder that I have so often thought it dry, for I did not understand it; the very same words have now a meaning, a beauty that I never saw in them before. Oh, the wonderful love of God to such a sinner!"

01.05. Trials and Joys

Trials and Joys TO pass from a circle where the new nature found so much to meet and satisfy its fervent outgoings, to one where all was uncongenial, was a heavy sorrow. During these few weeks in which she had been tasting the joys of the wondrous change, feeding upon the Word, and having fellowship with Him whom she had so lately learned to love, she had been mingling with those who were of one mind in these things. Intercourse like this she had found beyond measure sweet. But there was a wide circle of friends with whom she had been wont to mingle, who were of another mind. She must now return to these. How is she to feel?

They and she had hitherto been at one in their sympathies; now this oneness was at an end. Her affection towards them remained unaltered ; but her sympathies had ceased. The tie of congeniality was broken; for, since she had parted from them, she had been born into a new life; and with that new life had come new tastes, new longings, new loves, new aims of being. They were the same as when she left them in June last— she was wholly different; as loving as ever, nay, mere deeply, truly loving, yet still a different being. There could not but be something both strange and sad on her return.

Thus she expresses her experience on this point in a letter, dated August 10, 1841:—"When I returned home, I felt as if I were a different being. Everything about me was the same, but all within me had undergone a change. Oh! I have had some sweet and precious hours! so sweet and so precious, that I have longed to leave this vain world at once, and to be with God,—to see him face to face,—to be with Jesus,—to be absent from the body and present with the Lord...I miss the sweet converse that we had in dear Kelso. Everything then excited me to greater diligence in seeking God; but I often find now, a lurking feeling, that so much diligence is not necessary. Will you pray for me that I may never grow cold? " And again,—"I am afraid my friends will not think me a very pleasant companion, for how can I laugh and talk about trifles, when I so long to talk of Jesus?"

Again, in November 1841, she writes,—"And now I must tell you of my troubles. One thing is a cause of much distress to me, and that is my conduct with regard to others. I am always told that I ought to be cheerful, and enter into the amusements of those around me, that they may not think the change in me is for the worse, in place of the better.

Lately I have been trying to act thus; and the consequence to myself, is, that I have totally lost all my enjoyment in these things, that only a few weeks ago made me so happy. Is it not strange? I have no spiritual joy, no nearness to God, no realising of unseen things...Though I do speak and laugh with them, I have no interest in it. I have no interest in any of the things of this world; and yet no enjoyment of the things of the next. I have had many a conversation with ____ upon the subject. They tell me to laugh and talk and be happy. I may seem so, but in reality I am not. I think I go into extremes. One is to live so much, as it were, in the other world, realising its pleasures, feeling God near, and delighting in prayer, and reading and thinking uponChrist(oh! I love to do that!), that I long to be away and with Him; and thus I unfit myself for other things, till I begin to

think that I am very selfish in trying to make myself so happy; and then I go to the other extreme, get wretched, and care for nothing. Could I not join them? I am afraid it is only advanced Christians that can do that, for they are not so selfish as I am…Is it wrong to take no interest in this world, and to seek continually to live in the contemplation of the next? ’’ Had her change been a partial of a gradual one, the dissimilarity might not have been felt so much. But her conversion had been so sudden, one might say abrupt, the nature of the change had been so decided, so much the opposite of everything superficial or transient, that in the return to old companions, and even relatives, there was a shock distinctly felt.

It was a sharp trial to her. Yet she felt it to be wholly unavoidable. Unless she could put off the new nature she had received, or part with her new tastes, or draw a veil between her eye and the eternal kingdom, she could not be what she once had been. It was not that she dared not compromise; she could not. It was not simply that it would be sinful to reenter the world; she could not. The depth of the change had made these things impossible. If the change, though real, had been more shallow and partial, there might have been struggles, and yieldings, and compliances, and regrets, and vacillations. From all these she was saved. It was not that she had torn out the world’s joys from her breast; they had been resistlessly but quietly dispossessed, so that there was no longer room for them. It was not that she had succeeded in trampling out the "wildfire of the heart," as Whitefield called it; the blood of the sacrifice had quenched it. It was not that she had cast off the world; it had fallen off by the very necessity of the new nature, in which it found nothing to which it could attach itself.

But, while all this greatly simplified her course, and freed her from those entanglements to which halfhearted discipleship never fails to expose the individual, it did not remove the pain arising in her soul, from the consciousness of the uncongeniality between herself and those whom she so truly loved. She met them as before, but there was a difference. Could she fail to perceive and to feel it?

Besides this, there was the awful thought, that while she had thus been made partaker of eternal life, they had not. They were still in that world which she had left; and she knew that to belong to that world is death, and that the friendship of the world is enmity with God. She might bear taunts and coldness. She might submit to accusations of pride, or selfesteem, or unkindness; but how could she bear the thought that the everlasting welfare of those whom she revered and loved was still at hazard?

It was this that tried her so sorely. And throughout her life, this trial was always her keenest. Her yearning over unsaved relatives or companions, often rose to agony. That one whom she loved should be lost for ever, was more than she could bear to think of. Her new position in her circle is thus referred to by one dear to her "in the flesh," and afterwards yet dearer in the Lord:—"On her return it was very manifest that a real and decided change had taken place. It was now that she began that constantly kept up correspondence with J.W. which will best describe the progress of her soul, the trials she met with, and the battles which, as a faithful soldier of the cross, she had now to fight. One of her sorest trials was that she stood alone and had no one to speak to or sympathise with her; and, to her affectionate nature, this must have been very painful. I had totally forgotten all I had learned in K____, and had, at this time, a decided enmity to the truth. I remember yet the painful feeling which the sight of M____ reading her Bible used to stir up. There

was one spot in a little spare bedroom where she used to meet with God; and, go at what hour I pleased, there she sat with her Bible on her knee, poring over its contents. 'She is for ever at that tiresome Bible,' was my thought, but, fortunately for me now, I never gave expression to these feelings. One day she came to me with a book tied up, and inclosing the little paper which I sent you.[6] I opened the parcel eagerly, in the hope of finding a book congenial to me; and felt much disappointed that it was only a Bible. What a long-suffering God he has been to me! My beloved one did not go long mourning alone, however; for, about two months after her return from K____, you came to Edinburgh and visited us. When M____ told me you were coming, the mention of your name brought strange feelings to my mind, and I felt the instantaneous conviction flash upon me, that now was the time when Christ or the world mustbe chosen. The Lord inclined me to listen to you, and I believe, if I have found the Saviour at all, it was that evening when you spoke of him to me."

"After this, M____ was most earnest in her exertions to win the rest of us to Christ, and we agreed to have a prayermeeting for them every night, which we kept up as long as we were together. The Lord has answered many of these prayers of hers already, and I trust that he will answer them still, and bring those of us nigh who are as yet afar off." Her anxiety as to the spiritual wellbeing of others, referred to in the above extract, is thus manifested in a letter to myself, of date Sept. 25, 1841:—"Do you think that ____ has really found peace? She often quite puzzles me. She is at times full of joy, and at others, again, she does not seem to know whether she believes or not. She appears to me to take her confidence too much from what she feels; and, therefore, when she does not feel, she begins to doubt. Perhaps you can discover her real state from her letters to you; and you would make me very happy if you would write a few lines to me, to let me know what you think of her. Oh, my dear sir, how anxious I am about her! She is very anxious about others, which surely she would not be, if she did not see the necessity of it herself. You will be glad to hear that our two friends, whom we spoke to you about, seem very anxious. One of them (who, I think, is most so) came to speak with us yesterday. She said she knew no one who would speak to her about these things, and she seems to dread the ridicule of her companions, if she were to become religious; and then, she says, she is so fond of the world, and that she has not strength of mind to give it up. But if she were once to taste purer pleasure, if she could taste and see that the Lord is good, she would not be so fond of the world, and would not find it so difficult to give it up as she thinks. She asked me for a book upon the vanityof the world; could you tell me of any that might be of use to her?…I have another favour to ask of you, that you would pray for my beloved little brother, who is away from us all. Perhaps we may never see him again on earth. Oh! pray that we may meet him in heaven. And will you ask God that he may meet with Christian friends wherever he goes, who will tell him about Jesus? Oh that I could know that he is Christ's! Then would he be safe, whatever happened to him in this vain world."

Some short time after, the relative referred to in the commencement of the above extract, having become a fellow-pilgrim with her on the way to Jerusalem, we have such a letter as the following, giving us a glimpse of their feelings and trials:—"I must tell you an interesting conversation we had. ____, and ____, and ____ were dining with us, and, after dinner, some remark of K____'s about putting 'love' in place of 'charity,' in the 13th of 1st Corinthians, led to a deeply interesting conversation upon spiritual things. It is a very solemn thing for two girls like us to speak of these things before others; and very painful. They were all very angry with us; for they think we suppose

none of the family is converted but we two. They say they cannot understand us at all; and ____ said, it was so strange to see two of one family thinking differently from all the rest; and when he said, Can you explain it? I said to him, Lay the case before God, and ask Him to explain it to you. I just fancied God opening his eyes, and shewing him the reason. Ah, he could understand us then! It was a painful scene ; but I felt very grateful that we were permitted to speak for God before such precious ones. It is strange how unbelieving I feel at these times, and how deserted, as if I were left entirely to my own strength…I am always glad when we speak in that way, for it gives us an opportunity of bringing in a great deal of God's Word, and it makes them think of these things whether they will or no; and it does B ____ and me good, for it stirs us up, and makes unseen things more real. But I wonder when any of them are to be changed…The only thing that gave me comfort this morning was these simple words—the God of truth. But when the Spirit really applies them, they can feed the soul for a long time. Can't you trust the God of truth, my beloved one? Oh, yes; let us trust in him at all times. We shall soon see him face to face, and then all unbelief will fly away for ever. We cannot gaze on that loving countenance, and have another fear. Oh to see it now by faith! Jesus seems to be smiling on us both, even while I am writing to you. Oh to be his only, his wholly, his now, his FOR EVER! I was much pleased with what you said, about speaking to one soul every day. It would indeed be very blessed if we really did that. We are apt to say, that is too little; but, alas! if we look back upon our past life, how many days in which we have done nothing! Yes, we are selfish creatures; at least I am."

Thus her joys and sorrows mingled together; her hopes and her fears alternated. In the midst of much to ruffle and sadden her, she still held fast the cross. Though broken off from former friendships, and suffering neglect in many unexpected quarters, she found that the companionship of Jesus could supply every want, and compensate for every sorrow. Though oft "in heaviness through manifold temptations," she yet "greatly rejoiced" in the fellowship of her new-found Saviour.[7] The following extracts from letters to her Kelso friend will fully unfold her feelings. They are miscellaneous, but not the less suitable for our object. We confine our selections in this chapter to the letters written during the five months succeeding her conversion.

" P____, August 14, 1841…MY DEAREST J____, I daresay you are astonished at hearing again so soon from me, but I cannot help writing, as I long to tell you of all God has done for me. At every new proof of his love and pity, after first thanking the Giver of every good and perfect gift, I long to tell you all the feelings of my heart. Oh! it is a delightful thing to think that God looks on you with love—that he teaches us to love him; but I need not attempt to speak of the gratitude I owe him for his rich mercy; when I think of all his unmerited love, I am lost in wonder and admiration: and then how I hate myself! I have found a remedy for pride; I think of Jesus! that is enough, it lays me in the dust, and then I not only feel sorrow, but shame for my sin. Oh! how I grieve that I must still do nothing but sin against such a holy God! In everything I sin and come short of his glory; but, blessed thought! Christ made atonement for all sin—and, oh! does he not now look upon me in the face of Jesus Christ!"

"…There is one thing I wish to write about, for it appears to me so strange, that I cannot understand it. On Sundays, or after the Communion, or, in short, after any time when I have felt peculiar joy from a sense of God's presence, I am almost sure to be unhappy afterwards; now, why is this? I felt it both after the Communion in Kelso, and when I returned home. I was very happy at the time, but almost immediately after, the feeling changed, and my heart was restless

and unhappy. I seemed to long for something, I knew not what; and it was the same last Sunday. It seems to me as if I had a Sunday through the week, and that Sunday was like a week-day! Now, should you not think that Sunday would be a day of peculiar enjoyment to me, when I may meditate on God and his love, read his own Word, and go to his house the whole day? Yet it is not so. I am sometimes frightened at the thoughts that take possession of my heart,—hard thoughts of God and a distaste of religion altogether. Surely God is not angry with me for having these thoughts of him, for he knows how I hate them, and how sincere my desire is to have very different thoughts of him. I am glad he knows all my heart, for then he knows how I long after him. 'Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee.'"

"P____, August 17,1841…"MY DEAR MRS H., I cannot tell you with what pleasure I received your letter. My heavenly Father has been indeed abundant in goodness to me, in giving me so many opportunities of knowing more of Him, and of hearing His beloved name. His name ought, indeed, to be precious to me, and I humbly thank Him that He has made it so. How amazed I am that I could ever have had pleasure in anything apart from God! Will you have patience with me while I tell you of a thought that has taken possession of my mind—I know not how—I think Satan must have put it there to rob me of my peace, for it certainly does sometimes make me more miserable than I can tell you, and even with God's own promises before my eyes, I cannot get comfort? It is the thought that I am not in Christ, that I am not trusting to Him, and that, consequently, I ought not to get comfort from God's promises—that they are only for those who believe. Now, should you not think it an easy thing to know whether you believed a thing or not? and yet I find it often very difficult to know whether I do or not. Do not mistake me, do not think that I want to find anything in myself to lean upon for comfort; on the contrary, I want to "know that I am not looking to myself, but to Jesus; I want to know that I am holding fast, for, till I know that I am doing so, I am in continual fear. Now, is it not strange that I should have these fears now which I had not at first? You say, get clearer and clearer views of Him who is the perfection of beauty. O my dear, kind friend, will you tell me how I am to get Clear views of Him? I am very stupid, very slow at learning, but, oh! I am most willing, most anxious to learn. These thoughts sometimes tempt me to despair, but having tasted that the Lord is gracious, I am very unwilling to think that I have not an interest in Him, to think that I shall not be found in Him. I must go on— I would die with joy this moment if I were sure that my hope was in Him. For what is life without Him? My dear friend, will you write to me as soon as you can find time, and tell me where the fault lies? it must be in me. Oh! tell me how to rectify it, and may God bless you for it! You must forgive the shortness of this letter, for I cannot write to-day. There is only one thing now I want to ask your advice upon, and that is how I ought to study the Bible—I mean, in what order I should read it, and what parts I ought to read most."

"P____, September 1, 1841…"…Sometimes, when I am sitting alone, I feel so happy that I can scarcely bear it; but, alas! how soon my joy is turned to bitter, yes, bitter grief, when the thought comes across me that others whom I love do not share it with me! I do indeed feel that the thought of one's own bliss is almost forgotten in sorrow for others. I most gladly agree to the proposal of praying for them; and, oh! if we should be heard! My heart thrills at the thought! Let us plead, again and again, the name so dear to God's ear, the sweet name of Jesus! I have often thought, in praying for others, that God has promised to give us whatsoever we ask in that name. Now, if we ask him for the conversion of any one we love, will he not grant our prayers? It appears to me that

I ought not to despond so much when I have his own promise; and 'God is not a man that he should lie.'"

"…How I love the very name of a Christian! I have taken a great longing to know some of God's own children..."

"P____, September 11, 1841…"…I cannot tell you the happiness I have had since I last wrote to you; I was then in grief about E____, but, oh! how my blessed heavenly Father has enabled me to rejoice for her now! I trust she and I are now travelling together the narrow way that leads to life. I trust she is now one of God's children, and that nothing can ever pluck her out of his hand. I think I feel more gratitude when I think of E____ than of myself; there is something so exquisitely delightful in the thought that God has called her to himself, that I cannot thank him, I can only weep, and my tears are tears of joy. Mr. ____'s has been a blessed visit to us both…E. and I can now speak together, for we are of one mind; we love the same dear Saviour. Have I not cause for gratitude? Should I not love much, and yet, is it not grievous that my heart is so cold? But I do not despair. Jesus can melt even my heart. I have been at times in a terrible state since I last wrote you, but I have now found peace, and I trust it will not again leave me so utterly as it did. I can hardly tell you the horrid thoughts I had; but the more sinful I found myself to be, in place of being the more grateful for a Saviour, I began to despair, and to think I was too wicked ever to be saved! I thought God could notlove me; I felt as if he loved all the world but me; in short, I was miserable;—oh! may he grant that I may never feel so miserable again, and may he forgive me my wickedness in doubting his love!"

"P____, October 19, 1841…"MY DEAREST MRS. H.,—I feel such a great desire to write to you, that I think I must obey the dictates of my heart, and try to write you a few lines. I wish I could tell you all I feel and all I have felt since I last wrote to you; but, oh! I have a cold, cold heart; I think nobody has such a cold heart as I have, for I am not grateful to my Father in heaven, and yet I have so much to be grateful for. Dear Mrs. H., I think one reason why I love you so much is, because I know that you love Jesus, and, oh! I should like to love him as much as you do. Is His not a sweet name? I sometimes say to myself, when I am cold and ungrateful, Jesus loves thee so much that He died for thee, and then I think about His love, His redeeming love, till I love Him too—I can't help it. Think of loving Him always, and without sin! Oh to be in heaven!—to see Him as He is! Can it be, that for vile sinners there is such blessedness in store?— wonderful love! I sometimes think that when I get to heaven I shall at first be contented with seeing Him, with gazing with enraptured eyes at Him who died for me, and then that I shall be wishing for a look from Him, then a word, sweet and lovely as Himself, and then I will fly to Him, and never, never leave Him more!…When you write, speak a great deal about Jesus, and tell me, too, what a wicked, sinful creature I am, for, when I think about Him I forget that I am so vile, which I should not do, for I know I ought to feel great sorrow for sin. I do not hate myself enough. Dear Mrs H., is it not very delightful to think that our glorious Jesus has not knocked in vain at the door of R.'s heart? She has opened to that beloved Saviour, and I trust—why should I doubt?—she is now His own child."

" November 5, 1841…I felt great sweetness in praying for you all to our Father this morning, and last night I went to implore a blessing on you when I knew you would be at ____. Tell me when you write, if you felt God near, for I prayed so that you might; and, dear J____, pray much for me just now, for I am very, very sad; I may say with truth that I go mourning all the day long; I tell God that

I do so long to feel him near, that I cannot live without him, and yet I have not found him. I know that he hears me, but I cannot, oh! I cannot feel that he does; he seems so far away, and as if he were hiding his face. Perhaps it is his discipline, and that he is trying how long I shall persevere to seek him in the dark; if so, I ought to submit, and I do, but it is with sorrowing. Oh! if he would try me in any other way, I think I could bear it; but to withdraw himself is a kind of slow death, always dying, but never dead! Dear J____, will you tell him that I have waited long? Tell him to smile upon me at last, to give me cause to say, 'I waited patiently for the Lord, and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry;' and pray that I may have deep convictions of sin, that I may hate it, and that I may have strong faith, for I have very little." "…When I got your letter this morning, before I opened it, I prayed that if there was anything in it about the love of Jesus I might be enabled to feel it, for nothing seems ever to melt this desperately hard heart of mine. One thing will melt it—a sight of the Lamb in heaven! It will melt then, because I shall be like him, for I shall see him as he is; but he could melt it now, he might look upon me now and make me happy: oh that he would! Tell me if you are happy, and that will give me some happiness too. You can feel for me when I am mourning after God and not finding him. I cannot be cheerful and gay with others; I know I ought to deny myself for the sake of others; but there is no one on earth I ought to love like God, and I ought to grieve at his absence. Am I not weeping after Jerusalem's King? and should I not long to be home?…I am only afraid of ceasing to weep after Jesus! I would rather weep for Him than laugh with the world!"

"P____, November 11, 1841…I hope you often think of me and pray for me, for, oh! I need your prayers; the oppressive load is still on me; I am scarcely, if at all, better than when I last wrote; I don't know what it is, I very often attempt to pray, but I have no comfort in it; sometimes, for one moment, I feel a degree of sweetness ; but Satan comes immediately and takes it away. Last night I had the most extraordinary feeling of terror and misery I ever yet had. I had gone to the throne for some comfort (for I know that I can get trite comfort nowhere else); well, I did feel some nearness to God, and, about ten minutes after, Satan put such dreadful thoughts into my mind as made me think that I was lost. Then I felt as if I had been too presumptuous in striving to get so near to God, and that he was angry with me! I sometimes feel afraid of Satan ; but, after all, he cannot really harm me. I want to know all his wiles, that I may not fall a victim to them."

"…Tell dear ____ that it will not be with my will, if I do not come Kelsoward with the spring flowers. What a long time it seems till then! When I think; that the leaves have all to fade, die, and fall; to be covered with snow, and the snow to melt, and again the leaves to begin to bud before I see you! But, after all, it is a short time, and it will pass at last: that is what cheers me often when wearied with earth's emptiness and with sin; that heaven will burst upon my view! our view! Then we shall see the wisdom and love that are displayed in all our dark and sorrowful hours; we shall then'know how much we owe.' Oh that that may indeed be the end of all! I sometimes think how precious Christ must be in afflictions, for, when anything hurts you, do not your thoughts immediately fly to one who you know sympathises with all your griefs? What a heart must Jesus have!—no wonder the poor soul that feels he is far away is sick with longings for him! I had a letter from A____ on Tuesday, and she will have my answer this morning. I wish I could write anything worth her trouble in reading it; but what can I write but sin? All I do is sin, all I think is sin ; I am all sin, and Satan tempts me to doubt I am too sinful to come to Christ! Well, Mr. ____ told me one thing which I try to holdfast; he said, 'Trust God for eternal life, and if you do not get it, God would be untrue.' Now,

it is impossible that God should lie, so that I mean to trust him for life, and surely I cannot perish. I want to begin a course of reading with you, if you have no objections,—I mean that we should take any part of the Bible you like to fix on, and let us read it prayerfully together, and tell each other any new views we may discover. Should you like it, do you fix the hour, and the part to read, and tell me in your next: and I should like also to fix another hour for meeting at the Thronetogether. We might often meet in spirit though absent in body. Will five o'clock suit you? And don't you think, increase of grace to ourselves should be one of our petitions, and the other intercession for any one peculiarly dear? Let us then agree to plead together at five for our parents—plead you for mine and for your own, and I shall do the same; and let us remember the promise, 'If two of you shall agree as touching anything they shall ask,' &c. I have now proposed three times when we two can meet at our Father's throne,—ten in the morning, five in the afternoon, and at our hour for reading. I wish, my very dear J____, you would propose another meeting to ask some other blessing; it will be doubly sweet, the one fixed by you; but is it not lamentable that we are so little sensible of the real value of the privilege we have, in thus being able to make all our requests known unto God? There must be much unbelief mixed with all we do, for, if we really believed that we should have all our petitions answered, should we not be more deeply grateful for our precious privilege, and more frequently and more earnestly plead the promises?…My wish is to get to the end of it (the journey). I do long to be done with sin, and to see the sweet face of Him who died for me, and for you, and for many others. "Will not that be a glorious day when we shall meet at the right hand of God, 'and hear the Lamb pronounce our names, with blessings on our heads'? I had much sweetness this morning in pleading for us all. I begin with your circle, and when I speak of you, I feel, indeed, that I am speaking to One who is the hearer and answerer of prayer, but I have no sweetness yet in praying for myself. I hope you pray for me. I am ashamed of the egotistical letter I have written, but shall send it nevertheless, because I don't wish you to think better of me than I deserve, for I know you will love me in spite of all. Believe me, my very dear friend, yours in the love of Jesus." " P____, November 18, 1841…MY BELOVED J____, Many thanks for your letter. I was very happy to receive it. I hope in time to grow less selfish, and not to require of you to write so often. I am happier than when I last wrote to you. Thank our Father for His lovingkindness to a worm of the dust. I have more comfort in prayer, particularly since I have begun our five o'clock meeting. It is curious that 'I should have fixed the hour you had hitherto devoted to prayer yourself, but is it not strange?—two days ago, when I had gone at five, I felt it so sweet, and all at once I thought, I am sure J____ is kneeling with me just now, and you really were. But we need not wonder; is it not the same sweet Spirit that tells both our hearts to retire from the world and be a while with our Father?...I do begin to feel again as if He loved me. And the first smile I got, after so long an interval of absence and sorrow, was so sweet, it melted my hard heart, and struck me with such remorse at having doubted His love. It is sad, very sad to sin against love.I hope you will write soon to K____, for I don't think she is very happy, and I am sure I have a fellow-feeling for her, but I am a very bad comforter, particularly to her. I don't like to encourage her doubts, and yet I should like to give her some comfort, so do you write to her, and tell her much of the love of Christ, and of the love of Christ to sinners, for I begin to think that we are often striving to get a title to His love, as if we were something besides sinners. Don't you think that we are often apt to forget that although we are children, we are still sinners? Oh! J____, I see it is a harder thing than I had ever imagined to consent to be nothing and let Christ be everything…"

"I have been reading a short memoir of Mrs. Judson; how I envy her; the feelings she had about the purity and the justice of God! I too often think bad things of God; I really believe I am too proud to submit to his sovereignty, in calling some and leaving others. I cannot get it to agree with our freedom of action. It is terrible, the horrid thought I have about His being cruel; I know all is rightly and most mercifully ordered, then is it not strange that I cannot submit to Him in all things, and feel that He is right? Will you pray much for me, that I may be brought to love His holiness and His justice—pray that I may really feel and acknowledge that He would be just in condemning me? but is it not strange that I should love Him and yet not feel satisfied with all His character at the same time? If you understand what I mean, I wish you would ask Mr B____ about it, and let me know what he says, for it distresses me very much, that I cannot think rightly of God."

"P ____, November 27, 1841…How I long for the conversion of my beloved____! I think differently about her, fifty times a-day. Something at one time makes me tremble with eagerness of joy at the thought that our prayers are even now answered, and again my hopes are dashed to the ground; I fear I am too impatient, but I do yearn for her to see. But I cannot allow myself to believe that God will not answer our prayers. Oh! J____, do you pray for her believingly?—Oh that I could say we were a redeemed family!—let us pray for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Do you think it is a token for good that lately I have seemed to feel what abundant blessings we might get, if we prayed constantly and earnestly for the Spirit? It seems as if something reproached me for making so little use of our precious privilege of intercession, and telling me that if I prayed much, much, that the blessing would come abundantly. Oh that I could! but my heart is ice. My precious friend, will you pray muchfor me, that I may be more earnest in seeking God, and in even wishing to seek him?—for I am shocked to find how little real desire I have for what I pray for. Pray that I may have more desires after God and holiness, and more love to prayer and reading his own Word; for it seems as if the world were getting back my affections again. I thought my Saviour Jesus had all my heart, but, alas! I have been bitterly taught that my heart is more wedded to earth than I had ever imagined. I thought like Peter that I could die for Jesus, but I did not know myself. I wish I were with you, my dear J____, to talk of our Beloved, for, oh! I trust I can say He is my Beloved, though so little, so very little loved by me; but, praise be to his blessed name! I love Him because He first loved me. Don’t you love that verse? It is very precious to me, because it tells of His love, which must kindle mine—oh that it would! But what alarms me is, that I really don’t seem to wishthat it would."

" P____, 2d December 1841…I am very glad that your Communion season was so precious to you. Oh that I had a heart to praise Him for His kindness to you! But I cannot. I never knew such a vile heart as I have. You remember I used to tell you of my intense horror of the place of misery; but I think now that the sin that is in it would be worse far than the torment of body; but don’t think that I am growing better, and would not live where sin is;—I don’t mean that: I mean that sin is so hateful as against God, that I could not bear to live where everything would be hateful to God ; for, dear J____; though I cannot do anything to please God, yet I do earnestly wish to be enabled to live to Him, and not to myself. To-day my heart was so grieved at sinning against my Father, that I did not know what to do for misery; but, oh! I hope I am forgiven. I wish I had even one little bit of love to Jesus ; pray that I may. Oh the conflicts I have had with coldness and deadness of soul! I have just read your very welcome letter. I could not help crying for joy on getting it; and what made me weep still more is, that I cannot feel as I rejoice to see you feel about Jesus. Oh that I loved

Him! But it is not so much my love to Him that I want to see and to feel; it is His love to methat I want to believe, in such a way that would kill sin, and make me love Him in return. J____, I will tell you the truth—I am not happy; my heart is so very worldly, and I think lately we have spoken so much of our own feelings, that it has just deadened me. I want to know and to feel the feelings of Jesus to me; your letter has, I trust, stirred me up to try to get a taste of His love…I see more and more how unworthy I am, but I want Jesus to love me. You do not know the delight it gives me to think that Jesus loves the vilest, because then I can put in my claim. Sunday is our Communion, and I want you to pray much for me, that I may go prepared. Ask two things—that I may go deeply, very deeply humbled for sin, my own individual sins, but that I may also go rejoicing in a sense of forgiveness, and that I too may find Jesus at his own table. I should like if you would ask that I might go with a humble joy. Satan once suggested to me that I was too presumptuous; but he has no need now. Alas! I do not live near enough. I know you were happy. I am happy at present in your love—oh that I were so in the love of Jesus! "

"P____, 7th December 1841…What a wonderful conversion I____ C____ 's has been! She is so beautifully simple in all her views and feelings. How she makes me blush by her expressions of gratitude to God for having brought her to Himself, and the way she was brought, without any distressing fear or doubt—as she said to me to-day, 'I was brought in such perfect love!' Oh! is it not sweet to think of her! I would give a great deal for her confiding simplicity; but I am always in trouble about something or another. I am always asking, why is such a thing? but you know a little about my way, for we often conversed about things I did not understand, or rather should say, would not submit to. Don't you think it must be pride which prevents me having this childlike trust that all is right? Whatever it is, I wish it were removed, for it prevents my gratitude flowing out towards God as it ought. I wish I could get over this spirit of inquiry about God's dealings with me…Have you continued as happy in the love of Christ as you were when you wrote? Oh! that name, Jesus! the chiefest among ten thousand! the altogether lovely! the Lamb of God! the Beloved! the Plant of Renown! the meek and lowly Jesus! the Man of Sorrows! That last title sounds to me almost the sweetest just now! I have written some of his lovely names, to try if it would melt my hard heart, and make me feel as if he loved me. I should like to sit at his feet and listen to his gentle voice, as Mary did of old. I told you our Communion was last Sabbath. Well, I felt so cold all the time during the prayers, that I prayed in an agony that Jesus would meet me at his table; and when I went forward, I had a momentary feeling of joy, a sort of bounding of the heart, that made me feel, that if I did not get quickly to the table, I should lose him; and, after all, when there, I could only weep. I felt, well, I am safehere, I am secure; not even Satan can pull me away from this place; still I could do nothing but weep. I could not rejoice; but they were not bitter tears, I think; but the sweetest feeling I had was seeing I____ C____ beside me. I longed to say to her, 'Here we are together at the feast of Jesus.' M____, J____, and E____ had gone to the first table, and, not knowing if those around me were sisters, it was very sweet to have one whom I knew was a sister in Jesus Christ…B____ and I had a long talk with dear ____ on Sabbath night. I had read aloud a very striking sermon on the necessity of being born again, and I think she must have been struck with it, for she began to speak to us, when all the others had retired. I think the Spirit is striving with her; but then Satan tries to take away the good seed. God, however, is stronger than Satan, and must conquer in the end. We gave her text after text to prove that we must be born again, and you know nothing can resist the sword of the Spirit…But now have we nothing to say of our Beloved? What a long letter I have written, and the name of Jesus scarcely in

it! How cold is my heart in talking of Him, the mention of whose name ought to make it burn within me!"

" P____, December 16, 1841…I wonder why Jesus loves me; it must be because He is love. I would give the whole world to be able to love Him. I have been thinking a great deal about that sentence in your letter, where you say, 'If His names are so sweet, what must Himself be?'—what indeed? I often long to die, to go and see Him, and then to be like Him. Yes; it is the absence of all sin that makes Him so very lovely; He is, oh, yes! He is the chiefest among ten thousand—the altogether lovely. Then why don't I love Him, and shew my love by my works? It must be because I am so full of sin. I join in your desire to be holy—I don't like being so very sinful. Do you really think that I shall get to heaven at last? Oh! I tremble to think I perhaps may be lost. I wish I were sure. Do you know, sometimes, that it seems a more dreadful idea to miss seeing Jesus than even to be in hell? but I must be in Christ— I must just keep continually coming to Him and trusting in Him. 'Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.' Blessed Jesus! He loves you: is it wrong to love Him for that?...I am invited to spend a week or two with ____. I am not very sure about going, for I dread getting ashamed of reading and praying so much, and you know how clever ____ and ____ are, and how weak and ignorant I am. Do you think it would be putting myself in the way of temptation? But then, I do not go in my own strength: in the Lord I have strength, and I think that I should have more strength given me on purpose, and God would put words into my mouth. I must say I wish to go, for I think God might bless my visit to ____, and, dearest, you must pray much that it may be so, and that I might glorify Jesus by winning souls to him in that house...The night before last was the first time I could join you in prayer at five since my illness, and I felt it very sweet to commit all dear to us, to Jesus...Let us plead more and more! I have a growing conviction that my visit to R____ may be blest to those at home, because I could write, and then you and I could pray for a blessing on my letters; and I think my own impression of eternal things would be deepened, and therefore I could write and pray more feelingly. Oh that Jesus would answer my prayers for them all! Amen."

" P____, December 18, 1841…MY DEAR MRS. H.,—Thank you very much for your last kind letter. How differently I feel now, compared to what I did when I last wrote you! Everything then appeared so sunny: now I am very seldom happy. I remember in one of your letters you said that it was a very painful process the getting clearer views of Christ. I suppose I am going through that process, for I do not find everything so sweet as I did at first. One thing greatly vexes and grieves me, and that is, that I thought I had given my whole heart to Christ, but I find that I have not, for if Christ reigned in my heart, how would anything have power to vex me? If I had Christ, should you not think that I would not care so much to see that people don't care for me; or, still less, that I should ever give one sigh of regret to the world? I sometimes think that Satan is painting the pleasures of the world in flattering colours to me just now; but he does not succeed so well with me in that, as when he whispers that those whom I love don't love me so much now, and that I am vexing those for whom I would suffer anything if I could only get them to turn to Christ. Oh! these things make me fear I have not come to Jesus yet, for would not a sight of Him make up for all?…I am afraid, dear friend, you will think this a very egotistical letter, but I certainly am very selfish—I see that more and more; I wonder any one ever thinks of loving me. I don't wonder there are many that I love, for they all deserve to be loved, but I have no loveable qualities; and there is another thing, I fear, will make you not care for my poor epistle—there is nothing about Jesus in it. Oh! to

think of writing all about myself when Jesus might be my theme!"

" P____ December 27, 1841…I wish I could love Jesus! This morning I asked him to take my heart, and reign there alone: and I think he heard me, for I felt a little, a very little, as if he were near me. I am always afraid of earthly rivals taking the place of Christ in my heart. I think I shall have many a painful struggle before Jesus reigns alone. But then I may love people in Christ, may I not?"

" E____, December 30, 1841…Here I am still at ____'s. I have such a bad cold and cough, that I cannot go to P____ to-day as I had intended, for this is the day we were to have set apart for prayer, but I hope I shall join you in spirit, though I cannot get away as much as I would like. Dear ____ and I had a short chat last night. ____ had gone out, and ____ herself said she wanted to speak seriously a little. I assented with joy, and she began by saying that I was going too far, and that these things should be kept sacred in our own breast; in short, she said just what I should have said myself a very short time ago. Ah, how humble I ought to be when I think who has made me to differ, and how grateful! was thinking, this morning, before I rose, what a different life we should lead if we had continually in our thoughts the wonderful, the glorious prospects we look forward to. Oh! if we would ever realise the hope set before us, of spending an eternity of happiness and glory, an eternity with Jesus, how we should patiently bear, nay, rejoice, in all the petty cares and disappointments we meet with in this wilderness, this bleak waste! Yes, it is bleak and cold when Jesus is unseen! But though unseen, he is not always unfelt. Sometimes, when I cannot get to pray to him, or to read his Book, I think about him, and that, some day, I shall at last see him face to face, and then my heart bounds and dances with sweet delight, and I feel as if nothing were too hard to bear for his sake; and then, oh! don't you long to bring everybody to him! Oh! how sorry I am for those who do not know Christ! I want you to pray much for ____. I do not know why, but I feel so much more earnest in pleading for her than almost any one, I have such a longing for her to be brought. Would it not be very delightful, after all her trials, to see her rejoicing at the feet of Jesus, a humble, happy follower of the meek and lowly Jesus? Her very trials give me a ground of hope, for I think they are just so many knocks at the door of her heart, as if Jesus were determined to be admitted…I can sympathise with dear E____ about the angels, but I wish I could feel more with you about sin; for I don't hate sin enough! Does it not shew how devoid I am of all holiness, when I can bear about, without much groaning, such a body of sin? Oh! how Jesus must have loathed it!—how his pure, spotless nature must have shrunk from such pollution! And yet did he not bear our sins? J____, I wish I could live to His glory. I wish I could go about, as He did, doing good, and spend my life in winning souls to him. I do hate myself when I think that I never do anything for Christ. I might blush when I think of you going about speaking words for Christ, shewing sinners a complete Saviour; and I, what do I do for him? I wish you would tell me what to do. Here is a new year beginning. I should like to spend it all for Christ. I sometimes think I would rather wait a little longer on earth if I might be made the means of winning souls to Him, than even to die now and go to Himself. Lately I have been so sure of God's love, I cannot think of him but as "love," and it is not so much Jesus as God the Father! It is so sweet to say, my Father! It is curious, the different things which come into my mind. You know that it is Jesus who gives confidence to the sinner in approaching God. Well, I had some time ago such delightful convictions of the love of God Himself. I was so persuaded that his name was love, that I thought it was dishonouring to him to plead so earnestly for anything, because that seemed as if he were

unwilling to give it; and I knew that he was so very willing. I could not reconcile this; but then I thought—well, it is because He is willing that I do plead so earnestly with him. Sometimes I think I am ungrateful to Jesus in praying more to my Father than to him, and it is curious, though I pray most to God, it is always Jesus I think of, and long to be with in Heaven. But I must stop now and finish this to-morrow, for I want you to get it on New Year's Day."

" Friday afternoon, P ____ …My own beloved friend, I have just come to F ____ , where I found your letter. I have still such a bad cold, that even if there is church this evening I cannot go, but I shall try and get away at half-past six to plead with you all at our Father's throne. The subject is a very sweet one. How glad I am at what you say about rejoicing in Christ alone! I have done that much lately, and when I cannot see my own interest in him, I think, well, I must surely have come to him, else I don't think I could rejoice in him. Am I right in thinking that?"

" Oh that I had a heart to thank him! but, J____, I have a wicked thought sometimes about God. I don't feel satisfied with him, till he saves all I love, as well as myself. Will you pray that this rebellious and wicked thought may be forgiven? I am sometimes ashamed of myself before God, but, oh! I have no sense of the guilt of sin…Thank you, dearest, for the chapters about the sympathy of Jesus. I shall read them often. I trust we shall all soon rejoice together—all of us; and let this be our prayer, that we may all be brought, ere another year be done. May Jesus bless you, and shew you his love. May he speak to your heart. Remember my beloved parents at five o'clock. Yours, affectionately."

These are specimens of her spiritual growth. How rapid it had been! How wondrously she had sprung up in stature, during these few months! How few among us have made the same amount of progress in the course of years! We seem to dream; she was awake. We loiter; she hasted onwards, with Jesus at her side, and the eternal glory in her eye.

01.06. Progress in 1842-43

Progress in 1842-43

THOUGH all the true features of the new man came out at once, under the Spirit's hand, yet their development into prominence, and order, and expressiveness, was a thing of more gradual growth.

It is true that, in receiving the Lord Jesus as "our life," we pass at once "from death to life." We were crucified with him ; we died with him; we were buried with him; we rose again with him; we went up with him, and are seated with him in heavenly places. It is not merely that we oughtto die to sin, and live unto righteousness; but we have diedto sin, and have been made "alive unto God" (Romans 6:2-11); old things have passed away, all things are become new (2 Corinthians 5:17). Such is the new legal standing into which we are brought. In believing on Him who died and rose again, we become so identified with him in his dying and rising, that, in God's sight, and in the eye of law, we are counted and treated as having actually ourselves died and risen.

Thus far our condition is not a gradual one ; our standing in the sight of God is, from the moment we believed, complete, as to acceptance, for our identification with the Accepted One is complete. But progress in repentance, progress in holiness, progress in likeness to the Lord, is not a thing to be overlooked or swallowed up in the privilege of acceptance. Some, indeed, have so magnified a saint's standing and relationship to God, as to slight the importance of the inward work upon his soul. They have spoken of forgiveness, till they have actually trifled with sin. In their prayers they so give thanks for acceptance, as to make others suspect that they have ceased to feel themselves sinners, or that they think it unnecessary to confess sin before God.

Very different were the feelings of her whose life we are recording. Progress—progress—PROGRESS—this was her watchword. Forgetting the things behind, she reached forward to those before. Pervaded with a sense of the forgiving love of God, she bemoaned, night and day, the body of death which she carried about with her. An ever-deepening consciousness of sin was one of her characteristics. But it is not for the purpose of marking one feature in her character that we have drawn together the following letters, written in 1842-43. Our object is to shew her progress in the various points in which we are to seek conformity to the image of the Perfect One. In aiming at this progress, she felt the necessity of being rooted and grounded in love. Thus she writes in August 1842:— "I wish you could write us a letter once a month, telling us of the love of Jesus. It is strange how difficult we find it to believe that love. I wish I could do as Jesus bids us, 'continue ye in my love;' but when I see myself so very full of sin, it seems impossible that God could love me; and hard thoughts of God come in to my mind at times, in spite of myself. I had been very unhappy before your litter came, struggling against sin, and unbelief, and coldness, and distance from God. But your letter has done me good, for I have been so full of joy, and have had a very sweet feeling of nearness to God lately. I liked much what you said about the gentleness and forgiving love of Jesus, and going to him in our coldest hours. What I want is to realise God's presence at all times, to live as seeing Him who is invisible. Oh! I wish you were

here, that you might speak to me of Jesus...I hope you will come soon. We have no one to speak to us as you do. How much we owe to you! You were the first who spoke to us of Jesus, the first who cared for our souls. How well I remember the first time you spoke to me! It was at the class. You said, Have you found peace?—are you happy? I said 'no,' then; but, oh! I can say 'yes,' now. I have a happiness which the world can neither give nor take away. It is strange what a difference I find in all my feelings;—one short year ago, all my happiness was confined to this world; now, this world is a wilderness, a place of sorrow and sin, hateful sin; and my happiness is all above, for Jesus is there. But I wish I loved him more, and lived more to his glory, and I wish I knew more of him. I seem to know less than I did at first." In January of this year she thus expresses herself:—"I much wish that I were humble. I sometimes think it ought to make me humble to see how much pride I have, and then to reflect who is the creature that dares to say, I am proud,—I a poor, wretched, very sinful creature. I proud, and Jesus meek and lowly! I wish I could hate myself!…I really think I love him most when he is afflicting me. I sometimes have felt as if he were beating me, and that I was astonished that God should do it; then restive, and inclined to rebel; then got more and more resigned and subdued, till at last I felt convinced that it was the hand of love, and then I could rejoice...I think that Christ has been teaching me that I am all self! I have felt three sins to be very grievous lately, and these are, pride, selfishness, and unbelief. You will say, 'only three!' I know I have many more, but these I have seen most lately. I have been so convinced of unbelief, that I got quite frightened, and began to think I had no faith at all. Oh! how I have been trusting to my own strength! I tremble to think of it. No wonder that I have been burdened, when I have not been casting myself on Jesus, getting my strength from him. But he has promised to give me all things, if I ask in his name, and I know that he will increase my faith. Oh! I cling to that with such joy! But there is one thing that I must ask you about, for I don't understand it; it is, that though at first I felt great distress at the conviction of my terrible unbelief, yet, after a while, I felt quite glad that I had seen it. It must be because I can now pray so earnestly, for more faith, whereas, when I thought I had it, I felt NO such need. All my prayer now is for faith; and I feel so very happy to think my prayer will be heard. I have much to say to you. Tell me when you are tired of complaints, and then I won't write any more. I always remember you and your people, and dear Kelso."

Without further introduction or comment, we now give extracts from the letters of these two years; they will be the best indications of progress. One or two are from Kelso, where she came on a second visit in the spring of 1842.

" Kelso, March, 2, 1842.—My own dear B____, here I am once again in this sweet town. Oh that you were with me! My happiness is imperfect when I remember that you are not here to share it with me; yet our happiness will always be imperfect here below; when in the bright realms above, it will be perfect. To think that you and I shall stand together and see Jesus face to face! Only think of seeing HIM, the Beloved One! Does it not seem too glorious to be true? and yet it is true. The more glorious it is, it is the more like God."

" Kelso, March 10, 1842.—My own R____,how glad I was to learn that you are happier! Jesus longs to make you happy. I think that you are likely to be much happier in your soul than I, because when we are surrounded by outward trials Jesus is far sweeter."

"March 11, 1842.—…Last night Mr. B. was speaking of the storms of this life, making us rejoice the more in the security of our Ark. How I wished for you!Let us praise Him, my beloved, that you

and I are safe in this ark. How often I have rejoiced on your account, more even than on my own, I think! I am so happy to know that Jesus loves you, that He has washed you in His own blood, covered you with His own perfect righteousness, that He is sanctifying you by His Spirit—the Spirit that dwells in Himself—and that He will at last receive you to Himself, to dwell for ever with Him in His Father's house. If we oftener realised our glorious inheritance, how easily would all our light afflictions here be borne, nay, rejoiced in!—for 'we know, that if we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him.' Do not let us wound our beloved Saviour by doubting his love. About Mr. Hay, J____ says you should not meet him since ____ is so much against it. I am grieved about this, yet I think too it is a proof of the love of Jesus; for He seems, in thus removing every earthly prop, to wish to have you all to Himself, that you may find your all in Him. Still, my earthly heart is grieved that you should lose such a dear Christian guide, but I hope it may be only for a little time. Let us pray that, if it be for the glory of God, you may be permitted to meet him again. J____ bids me ask if you are like the man in the parable who sold all and bought the pearl of great price. I am most grieved that you are not to write to Mrs. ____ again. What can be the reason for wishing you not to write to such a Christian? She will be very sorry about it. Does it not really seem as if God were taking away everything from us to give us Himself alone? And is not He enough?"

" Saturday…Pray much for me, dearest, that all my motives, in whatever I do, may be pure and holy. I have been praying, ever since I came here, that God would make me an instrument in his hands for promoting his glory whilst I am here, that I may be made useful, by his blessing, in bringing souls to Christ, that the worthless life which he has redeemed, may be spent in his service. Oh! join with me in this prayer!"

"April 1, 1842…"MY DARLING E____,—I received your note this morning, and am grieved to hear that dear ____ is vexed about our letters; yet, after all, it may perhaps do good instead of harm, for she will see how anxious I am about their souls, and she cannot be angry at that. I asked our reconciled Father this morning, that it may work for good, that He would bless it to the souls of our beloved ones, and I feel persuaded He will hear my prayer. 'This is the confidence we have in him, if we know that he heareth us, we know that we have the petitions we desired of Him.' Let us copy the faith of Abraham, and, though our way seem dark, let us still trust in the naked word of a faithful God. Our loving Father may not seem to be answering our prayers, but they are all treasured up. Let us leave our prayers at his feet, and wait till he answer them, and, oh! I know that in his good time he will answer us. Let us, therefore, plead with him, my own beloved, that all our troubles may work together for our good and the glory of his own great name, knowing that our present light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Let us trust in the word of Him who cannot lie; and do not say you are not His…Abraham went out, 'not knowing whither he went;' let us do the same. We have left the world and its vanities; we seek a letter country, that is, an heavenly; but we, like Abraham, must trust in God, though our way be so full of troubles, so dark that we do not know where we are going. That we do not see the way, makes no difference in God's faithful promise, 'they shall never perish.' God knows the way, and He has promised to lead us and guide us continually. The way was all dark to Abraham, but he went on as patiently as if it had been all light, trusting simply on the pledged word of Him who is the God of truth."

"J____ sends this message to you: 'Best your whole soul on the arm of the Beloved, and you can never be lost. You have the promise of Him who cannot lie. Lay your head on the bosom of Jesus

when it is aching with the sorrows and reproaches of this valley of Baca. It is a peaceful bosom, and will impart to you its own peace.'"

" P____, April 20, 1842…"MY BELOVED J____, I arrived here quite safely last night. I got very sick and faint after we had gone a few miles, but it went off again, and I was quite well all the rest of the way. God was careful of his child, though so undeserving of any of his love. Oh! what a God we have! I wish I could dive deeper into the ocean of his love. Oh! praise the Lord with me, my beloved! let us exalt his name together! feel in a strange way to-day. I feel as if God were so near, and yet I cannot come to Him. I cannot lay hold on Him. What a blessed life it must be to live very near to God, if one moment of communion with Him, one felt feeling of his glorious presence, is so full of the joy that is unspeakable and full of glory! I wish I lived nearer Him; but I am so cold, and so unbelieving, that if I don't get the answer to my prayer soon, I have not faith to plead and plead again till I prevail. It is now nearly four o'clock, and dear A____ will be setting off to the class. Tell her I shall remember her, and that I hope she will think of me when she is walking up to it solitary. I had an aching heart yesterday when I looked at you for the last time—oh how desolate I felt! But, J____, we shall never take a lastlook when we get to our eternal home. We shall meet in heaven, my beloved, and Jesus will be with us, and will wipe away all tears from our eyes. We shall then be both perfectly holy, we shall love each other with a holy love. O to be holy, to be emptied of self, hateful self!"

"Dearest R____ was at the coach waiting for me; it was very sweet to meet her again; she, too, is precious in the sight of Jesus, for she is washed in his blood…It makes me sick to speak of my vile self—let us rather speak of Jesus, of our Beloved; yet what can I say? I have no words, glowing, burning enough, in which to speak to you of Him who is fairer than the sons of men. Oh for a beam from the Sun of Righteousness to enlighten and warm into life my dark, cold soul! Do you remember the two chapters we read together on Monday? I think He was with us that day. Do not forget next Monday at half-past two. We are then to read together again. Let us ask Jesus to be with us both, and the loving Spirit to take of the things of Christ, and shew them to our souls. I shall remember you and your scholars to-night at five."

"R. was telling me this morning about her district. I wish I were better, that I might go about with her, and try to do some good in this place; but I am in God's hands ; He will make me well in His own time. Pray for me, that sickness may make me cling closer to Jesus. O that I felt His absence more, and that my heart were as sorrowful on account of sin as it is because I cannot see you! Tell me when you write if you are rejoicing. I think you were when I left you. You seemed to feel Jesus near. Tell me if He still gladdens your heart with His presence."

" 27th.—Ask God to forgive my sinful fears, and to give me more submission to His will. I am grieved and ashamed when I think how unwilling I am to suffer illness when it is He who sends it; and how little He sends! How gently He deals with me, ungrateful worm that I am! I am still in a weak state; but I think I shall get strength soon. Did you meet me at half-past two? I was at ____'s that day, and was afraid I should not be able to meet you; but I did, for it was curious that he and M____ went out to walk at the very hour, and left me alone! I read our two chapters, and passed a very sweet half-hour."

"We had not time in Kelso to fix what we are to read together every Monday; I think, if you like, it would be nice to read Acts together, for I have not read it much, and I remember you saying there

was a great deal of the gospel in it. Tell me if you would like it, or else fix any other part of our precious volume you like better, and let us read a chapter next Monday, at the same hour, and we can speak about it in our letters. I think we should have a short prayer before we begin to read, and ask that Jesus may be with us both. I wish, my beloved, you would ask for me a prayerful spirit, for I feel as if my heart could not pray—as if my prayers were shut out. I wonder when I shall get out of this dark, troubled state! Dear R. and I had a meeting on Sabbath. We remembered the school, and particularly you and your girls. Often the only happy time I have at prayer is, when praying for Kelso, and in asking Jesus to bless my beloved friend. E. and I were at her district on Saturday, and we spoke to all the people; but, oh! they seem very indifferent! One woman is just like your Grizzy, she assents to all you say, but it has not reached the heart yet, I fear."

" April 30.—R. has just come in from visiting her families; I____ C____ was with her. She told us all about her father, whom she seems to think much changed. He told her that his illness had been blest to him; is not that delightful? She reads a great deal to him, and he seems to like it very much. We must remember him in our prayers. Does it not seem strange that, when all my prayers of late have been that I might be enabled to be of use, God has laid me entirely aside, so that I can do nothing to promote His glory? Will you pray for me that He would sanctify all my troubles to me? I have a great deal to say to you, and a great longing to talk to you about Jesus, that name that sounds so sweet in a believer's ear; but I have already written too much, for I feel my back painful."

" May 9th…I remembered you yesterday, dearest, at your Communion, as you told me, and I hope my prayers were answered, and that you were happy, leaning on the bosom of your Beloved. It is a wonderful restingplace for a sinner, the bosom of the holy Jesus. Did you say, 'My Lord and my God'? My own beloved Lord!—oh! if seeing Him through a glass darkly is so infinitely blessed, so sweet, so very, very sweet, how shall we feel when we see Him face to face! The man Christ Jesus, the Man of Sorrows! O that I could love Him even a little!—but I would not be satisfied even with that; I want to love Him much, to love Him as He ought to be loved; that we shall not be able to do till we are like Him, when we see Him as He is. How we should long to bring others to this precious Saviour! I wish I could pray more earnestly and more believingly for others; but I have a cold, hard heart. I am sometimes tempted to doubt if even Christ can melt it. Pray for me, that I may have more love for the souls of others, and that I may continue to plead and pray for them, though I seem to get no answer to my petitions. I seldom feel as if there were any reality in spiritual things, unless I am alone in prayer to God. I feel exactly the opposite of what I did in Kelso; there I felt more in the Spirit in church, or with others, than when alone; whilst here, I come home hungering and thirsting for heavenly food, and never get better till I am alone with my long-suffering God. I am sure He is wonderfully forbearing with me! How I resist and grieve His Holy Spirit, and return all His love with ingratitude and sin!"

"P____, May 23, 1842…I have just been meeting you at the throne of grace, where I had much delight in pleading for great blessings for you and all in my native town. It is very sweet to pray for Kelso, to ask God to bring souls there to Himself, and to bless His own sheep. Tell dear Mrs. H____, with my warm love, that I never forget her. I wish I could meet with you at her house to-morrow."

"I have had another attack of illness since I wrote to you. I am now, however, quite well, which I am almost sorry for—I was so very happy during my illness. Pray that I may come out of the furnace purified seven times. I am in great fear that my frequent illnesses are not sanctified to me."

"I have been very happy lately by seeing the freeness, the fulness of Christ to every one. I put in my claim as a guilty sinner, and I know He will not cast me out. How sweet He is! He is altogether lovely; and He is mine! Wonderful! Well may I say, Why me, Lord? why me? But we are always reminded that this is but the wilderness after all: there is no perfect bliss here."

" Edinburgh, May 27, 1842…I have so many things to speak to you about, that I hardly know where to begin; indeed I don't think I should write at all to-night; for I am so cold and lifeless, that I am afraid I shall infect you. When I found that I could not get to town to meet them all, I went and asked Jesus to be with them, and I think I never had so much sweetness in pleading for His presence before. I felt so sure that He was listening to me, and that He would answer my prayer; and I think He did, for I think K. got a blessing. How completely I enter into your feelings, in longing to have more substantia l, more tangible views of Christ! I feel as if I had just a littlebitof Him,and that little makes me long to know more of Him; to see more of His glory, His sinless beauty. Our holy Jesus! our lovely, lovely Saviour, why is my heart so narrow, so cold, that I can see or feel nothing of His preciousness! I remembered your petition, my beloved, and shall continue to plead it for you; but I often feel, in praying for you, that my views of heavenly things are so low and earthly, that I do not know what to ask for you, so that I tell Jesus that, and ask Him to give you all the blessings that are treasured up in Him, to fill you with His own fulness."

"Do you expect to go soon to London? I wish we might travel through the wilderness together, leaning on our Beloved, and ever speaking of Him. Oh! how much I cling to my own will yet, even when I know that His will is that alone which can make me happy! He sees what is best for me, and how, and in what situation, I can best promote His glory; and should not that be enough for me? I want now to speak to you about that part of your dear letter where you say you are afraid lest you should hinder the blessing to any of your pupils by pride or negligence. Now, my beloved J____, if youfeel afraid, how much more reason have I to tremble! My unfaithfulness is fearful; but, J____, do you really think that will hinder God blessing any soul? Is there the least chance that I may come between any loved soul and salvation? Tell me about this in your next letter, for it has made me very unhappy."

" Edinburgh, June 4, 1842…I am confined to the house to-day with a cold, and I want to have a talk with my sister about Jesus, our beloved Lord. O that I could speak of Him! I have been a great backslider of late, I think; I have not lived near God or to His glory ; the world seems creeping into my heart again. Is it not sad to think that any idol should fill a heart that has known Jesus, that has tasted that the Lord is gracious? I wish that, in every letter, you would tell me if you are happy in the love of Him who is altogether lovely, or if you are like Mary, who wept because they had taken away her Lord, and she knew not where they had laid Him."

"This morning, at ten, I had a strangely mixed time. At first I could do nothing but grope in the dark; my heart was sad and heavy, for God hid his face; but in one moment the veil seemed to be taken away, and my God smiled upon me, and I could feel that he was near. Oh, the bliss of that moment! I felt such delight in asking Him to look on me in Jesus, not to look at me at all, except in his beloved Son; for then, and only then, he can say, 'Thou art all fair, my love, there is no spot in

thee.’ It is blessed, when you feel very vile, to hide in Jesus, and though still as vile as ever in yourself, to say, ’Abba, Father!’ Don’t you often feel disposed, when you have got hold of Jesus again, to say with the Bride in the Song, ’I hold thee, and will not let thee go’? In reading our chapter, the only part I could dwell on at the time was, ’this same Jesus.’ It seemed so sweet to think that it is the same Jesus who was so lovely, so loving, so gentle, so full of sympathy on earth, who is now in heaven, ’the Friend of sinners,’ pleading for them at God’s right hand; that it is the same sweet voice that on earth said to the troubled sea, ’Peace, be still,’ that now in heaven says, ’Come unto me, and I will give you rest.’"

"If you like, you may fix another day besides Monday, and we can read two chapters a week; the oftener we meet the better. I wish I were always ’in the Spirit.’ Dear E. is to write you very soon. She is not strong at present; but I hope Summer will revive her. I wish she had more joy in believing. She never gets quite rid of her doubts, which is strange, for I, should have thought she would be so confiding. I had a long walk with Mr. Hay on Monday.[8] It is refreshing to meet a Christian like him. We were at tea at Miss R____ ; I like her exceedingly; but how can one help liking one who is washed in the blood of the Lamb, and sanctified by the loving Spirit? It is now nearly five o’clock, so I must go and plead with you at our Father’s footstool. Oh for a spirit of prayer! My precious friend, farewell for a little! May Jesus be with you now and ever.—Your own "M____."

" P____, Wednesday, June 4, 1842…One would think we could never forget Jesus, yet how continually we do! At least I know I do. I have been thinking a great deal lately of being able to realise his presence at all times. I feel that I should be such a different being if I were to remember that his holy eye is ever upon me. How it would banish worldly, vain thoughts! I don’t know if you feel this, but I find it so much easier to recognise God’s presence in prayer, or in reading the Bible, than at other times throughout the day. I have been praying much lately for this continual dwelling, as it were, in Jesus’ presence, and I want you, my beloved, to ask this for me at our ten o’clock meeting…"

"I am expecting my dear R. every minute. I wish she would come, for it is very lonely for me to be without her. How I love her! More than ever, now that she is a follower of the Lamb. She and I have many a sweet talk together, and at such times we always long to be at home. When are wethree to have a meeting again, I wonder? To-morrow is my birthday, the first I have had since I knew the Lord, the meek and lowly Jesus. I should like it to be a day of much prayer and humiliation. Oh, to think that I have turned a deaf ear for so many years to the sweet voice of my Saviour! I am the very chief of sinners. I shall never cease wondering why vile I was chosen, and others, O how much more worthy, left! You must remember me to-morrow, and pray that I may be truly humbled."

"P ____, June 15, 1842…I cannot tell you with what delight I received your dear letter this morning. The moment I had read it, I longed to go and answer it, to tell you all my heart; but I went first to plead for a blessing upon you, at the throne of grace. Do write again immediately, and tell me if you have again found joy and peace in believing. I am sure you have, for I had such delight in praying for every blessing upon you this morning, that I know God heard me, and will answer my prayer. wish I could tell you that I am still in the happy frame I was in when I wrote to you last; for I have had such a week of distance from God! Is it not a comfort to think that God’s love does not

change as we do? He is the same. He looks on His sinful children in the face of His beloved Son, and we are all fair in His eyes. Wonderful love! God loves with an untiring love ; but I wish that the contemplation of this love would melt my hard stone of a heart, and make me cease from wounding Him by sin. I have seen myself very vile this last week; I have often groaned under the load of corruption in my truly desperately wicked heart. How this should make us prize Jesus, whose blood washes all this vile sin away! Would that we could always praise! I am very glad that the texts I sent were blessed to you. O that Jesus would give me every word I ever write to you! I asked Him this morning that He would teach me to write, and would bless His own words to you."

"I hope you meet me at five? It is a beloved hour. I wish I prized it more. It is curious that E____ and I should have felt so much the same lately with regard to P____ and M____. We often think the Spirit is striving with ____. O that He would enable her to drive out His enemy and her own sin and let Jesus into her heart! I often think of how much she would love Him. I think love would dwell much in her heart. She is so like a follower of the Lamb now; what would she be if she knew Jesus, and loved Him from her heart? K. and I read a chapter to her and aunt every night before going to bed ; and when aunt goes up-stairs, my darling M____, with a kind of anxious, sweet look that she often has, says, 'I think we had better read a Psalm now.' How I love her when she says that! Don't you think it is a good sign if she is hungering for the Word! She is very fond of the Psalms, she thinks them so earnest. I have more hope in pleading for her than for ____ at present, for she seems as if she had been in some degree awakened; at least she seems to have a feeling, as if it were in spite of herself, thatall is not right.Now, I don't think my darling ____ feels that at all; but with God nothing is impossible, and I am trying to hope against hope. We can but lay our prayers at the feet of Jesus, and we know, that 'whatsoever we ask in prayer, believing, we shall receive.' I was struck with what you said about going to God downcast, expecting and feeling that you deserved his frown, and yet getting his smile: it is what I have often felt, and I think nothing ever humbles me so much; yet it is strange, that notwithstanding all the cause I have to be humble, I am still proud! I am sometimes ashamed to confess my pride to God, it is so hateful; but, my own J____, I must be thinking now of concluding, and yet I have so much to say to you. What a letter to send! I wanted to make it all about Jesus; but I can't speak of Him. I have lived far from Him lately, yet not too far for His arm to bring me back, or for His voice to say, 'Return unto me, for I have redeemed thee.' Don't you often wonder to think what the voice of Jesus must be? On earth they wondered at the gracious words that proceeded out of His mouth—what must it be in heaven! Fancy that voice saying to you (and how I rejoice to know that it will!), 'Come unto me.'

I wish I could live more amid these unseen joys, that this earth might fade from my heart. Will you pray for me, dearest, that I may live nearer God than I have ever done? — for I feel the world creeping into my heart; yet I trust I am grateful for this, that I find its pleasures very poor, after having tasted the joy that is unspeakable and full of glory."

"July 6, 1842…I wonder if we are ever to meet again to have a talk about Him who loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood. O that I loved Him more! or even a little, for I sometimes fear I have no love to Him at all. I have been longing to get a beloved letter from you lately, to help and quicken my lifeless soul, for I think I have been declining in the life of God. I wish I could live alwaysnear God. It has been my prayer for a long time that I might continually feel that He was near to me, that I might live as seeing 'Him who is invisible.' It is strange the difficulty I feel in doing this. I sometimes think that I am an infidel half the day. If I really believed that a holy God

was ever watching over me, what a different being I should be! O for the perfect love which casteth out fear! I feel it difficult to believe that God can love me, I am so desperately wicked, so awfully unholy; but then, the thought of my Surety, the Lord my righteousness,makes me rejoice, though often with trembling; for my faith is weak; but He says, 'to them that have no might, he increaseth strength.' What might we not get if our faith was strong! I was very wretched the other morning at prayer. I had gone with great reluctance, for I felt so utterly dead, that it seemed impossible I could ever be quickened. Well, the thought came into my mind, that although I was so cold, yet it was not for my sake, but for the sake of Jesus, His beloved Son, that God heard me. But oh! J____, in place of that filling me with joy and confidence in pleading this all-prevailing name, I felt actually unwilling to be indebted for all to Jesus! My heart is worse than I ever conceived it possible that any heart could be! To think that after all the love of Jesus to such a vile worm, I should rebel at being nothing that He might be all! Pray for me, that my proud heart may be humbled. It were enough, one would think, to make me humble, to know that I am proud."

" Thursday.—I have very little, if any, life in me at present; but Jesus is my life; yet though I know that He is so, how little do I feel upon it! find it is so difficult to cling to Jesus, when I see myself so entirely empty; but that is the very reason I should cling to him the closer. You say, 'Is it not sweet to be nothing, that he may be all in all? ' I trust I am beginning to feel more sweetness in that now. It is strange you should have said that when I had just been writing to you how differently I had been feeling on that very subject; but I hope that I wish to feel as you do, and that Jesus will enable me. He will bend and bring low my proud heart. When I think of Jesus, my own precious Saviour, I am willing, oh! more than willing,—I am rejoiced that He should be all, and I less than nothing. I cannot tell you the litter feeling I have, when I think that even for one moment I should so dishonour Him. I am grieved, my beloved, that you still complain of languor and deadness. I cannot bear to think that you are ever anything but rejoicing; but, you say, it makes Jesus the more precious, and I think if you feel that, you will soon be happy.

All our happiness must come from Him. I am always happiest when I see and feel that He is lovely. I always remember you in my prayers, and seldom kneel at any time without mentioning your beloved name; but I fear I often do it very coldly. I have a very unloving heart; but then I comfort myself by remembering that it is for the sake of his beloved Son that God hears my prayers, and that, pleading Hisname, He will hear me, though I am ever so cold."

"July 12, 1842…Are you not wearying of the wilderness, where you cannot love Jesus as you would long to do? I am so sorrowful when I think that it is always a struggle, a fight to keep my heart in the love of my God, to get my whole affections and thoughts fixed on Him who is so worthy, so infinitely worthy of our love. It is painful to be so earthly—so carnal. I feel so completely that earth is my native atmosphere; it is another nature to me to be spiritual. O for the time when the atmosphere of heaven will be my native air!—when this vile body of sin will be a glorious body, when I shall love Jesus without effort, without sin! Is it really true? But perhaps I have a long life in the wilderness before me ere I stand faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy; and O that I could spend that life, that life which He has redeemed, to His glory! What can I do to glorify Jesus? I am so terribly useless! Do you think Jesus will not use me as an instrument in promoting His glory? I sometimes fear it, and it grieves me very much; yet, my beloved friend, Jesus knows that the glory would be His. It would indeed be an unspeakable honour to be the means, under Him, of bringing even one sinner to Him; but I would still be only the instrument. Oh

that I were a more willing one! Will you ask this for me, for there are many whom I long to be brought? I have been alone here all day, and I have been trying to be all day with Jesus; but still my soul cleaves to the dust; I need the loving Spirit to quicken me. Do you ever pray to the Spirit? I generally ask God to send Him upon me; but to-day I prayed to the Spirit himself, and I felt it so sweet to ask Him to tell me about Jesus, all about Jesus; to reveal Him to me, to shew me His sweetness, His beauty, the freeness and the fulness of His work. How ignorant I feel myself to be at prayer! I never know what to ask for; but the Spirit has promised to help our infirmities, and Jesus tells us He can have compassion on the ignorant." "My greatest difficulty, and a great sorrow I feel it to be, is what I have often complained to you about, namely, the different persons in the Godhead. You will perhaps tell me not to be troubled about that; but I can'thelpit; and I am the more troubled that I cannot quite explain to any one what I mean. I wonder if any one ever felt so strangely as I do. I feel, when praying to Jesus, as if I wronged the Father, and did not care for His love; and then, when all my delight (as it often is) is to say, 'Abba, Father,' I am miserable by thinking that I don't love Jesus! What should I do ?[9] I try to tell God, but I scarcely know how; but this thought often gives me comfort, God knows all about it. Still, I have had it a long time now. I shall remember you all at your approaching communion; I hope you will find Jesus sweet on that day. May you lean upon His bosom, as the beloved disciple did. What a happy resting-place! There are not horns there. O that I knew more of its bliss! When there, you have the peace which passeth all understanding; to be there is joy unspeakable, and full of glory. How lightly should all the sorrows of this life fall upon one who has found this sure, this sweet resting-place! Does it not seem as if nothing should ever make us sorrowful again, save the thought of piercing this bosomon which we lean? How continually I do that! If it depended on my thinking one holy thought, speaking one holy word, or doing one holy act, I could never see that face that was marred more than any man's, or lean for one moment on that bosom of love; but I rejoice to know that it does not depend on me; it is all free love, and for sinners. I want to love Jesus, and I cannot! what shall I do? O that I were holy, that even here I could love Him a little! I fear, my beloved, that I have written a very egotistical letter, and yet I meant it to be all about Jesus; but I can never speak of His love without telling you that I long to love Him."

" July 28, 1842…"I don't think I ought to write to you to-day, for I am so cold; I am sure to freeze you. I don't think any one ever had such a hard heart, or such a dead soul as I have. Nothing ever seems to melt me: a sight of Jesus would; a single glance of Him who hung on the cross for vile sinners like me, would melt the ice; but I cannot see him; I cannot feel his love. Oh! if I could only lie at his feet, and weep tears like those shed by Mary Magdalene, how blessed, how happy should I be! But I cannot shed a tear; I feel as I could never weep again. I wonder what is the matter with me, for I was so very happy lately, and had such delight in prayer, and now I have none. O that you were here to pray with me! We have often rejoiced in God, in the smiles of our Father's face together; and now, I wish you were here, that you might speak to me of Jesus, till my whole soul melted. I am very unhappy, for I feel as if I did not care for Him, and as if He did not care for me, and yet I have been telling Him all this morning that I cannot be happy without Him, that I will not let Him go except he bless me; but I cannot find Him ; my soul is quite dead. Surely Satan must be tempting me, and making me think hard thoughts of God! I hope you are happy? I remembered your petition yesterday, and hope you could wash the feet of Jesus with your tears. I think I would rather have Mary's place than John's to-day; anywhere near Jesus would be ecstasy. O that I could find Him! I would not let him go. What a hateful thing sin is! It is a bitter thing, for it

makes God hide his face; it pierces the loving bosom on which we lean. O to be holy! It is, indeed, blessed, my beloved, to think that we have a holy home awaiting us. I wish I were there, for there is so little of God here, so little Holiness." "May you be much blest at this Communion. May you weep with Mary Magdalene, whilst you lean with the beloved disciple on the gentle, loving, holy bosom of your own Jesus; may you say, with Thomas, 'My Lord and my God.' How I envy you going to a communion table! I long very much to go again, for it is long since I have been; perhaps I should find Jesus there."

"My loving Father, you see, never forgets me, though I am so often forgetting Him. I wish I never forgot Him, that I were always full of love to Him, alwaysdelighting in Him, always lived to His glory, always felt Him near. I wish it were always summer! I don't like when it is winter in the soul. Yet this serves to remind us that this is not our home; it is indeed 'polluted.' We must 'come up from the wilderness, leaning upon our Beloved.' Don't you wish you always felt that you are really a pilgrim? When shall pilgrim days be over, and all Zion's travellers be home? You ask me what you are to plead for me ; plead for forgiveness for a cold, icy heart; plead for a heart broken for sin,and FULL of love to Jesus, and to those for whom He died. Plead that I may always realise His presence, that I may live as seeing Him who is invisible ; plead that everything, whatever it is, that comes between my soul and God may be removed; plead for holiness, plead for the Spirit, plead for gratitude for a 'love which passeth knowledge;' plead for more love to poor sinners who know not God; plead for more love to God's dear children, and that I may be more like them. Will you remember all these petitions? How many wants we have! We are very poor beggars ; but Jesus is rich, and loves to give. I feel that He is far more willing to give than I am to receive. How strange it is that I am not willing to be blest!" "I want you to remember M ____ and me at eleven in the morning; for after I have met you at ten, I pray and read with her for half an hour. Pray for me that God would teach me to teach her. —Your own attached M____."

"August 1842…MY BELOVED FBIEND, —O that you were here to speak to me of Jesus! I read your precious letters, which are so full of Him, over and over again; but I can only weep, because He is not to me what He is to you. I wish that I felt Him as near and loved Him as you do. Does it not make you long to be with Him, done with sin and sorrow, and distance from Him, and to see Him as He is? Here, the moment you get hold of Him, almost before you feel that He is near, you lose sight of Him again; but there He will never be hidden."

"I am so glad that you were happy at your Communion; you could not help being happy, for you got near Jesus. I don't know what has come over me, but I cannot write to you today. I think it is because I have so much to say, that I cannot say anything. I am in a strange state at present. I am sometimes so joyful and happy, that the very thought of Jesus makes my heart swell; and then, again, nothing seems ever to move me. What distresses me is my worldlymindedness, that I cannot always realise heavenly things, or always feel God near. Everything on this earth is so dull, so tasteless, after tasting spiritual joys; and yet my heart cleaves to it in spite of me; and then, all I do is so polluted by sin. Oh! J____, to think that a holy God sees my evil heart, and yet He does not hate me! I wish I knew something about God. I seem to know less every day. Is it not strange? Do you find that you grow in the knowledge of God? Is it not wonderful to think, that although He is so glorious in holiness, so perfect, so pure, so spotless, yet a vile sinner, laden with iniquity, may go to Him, to this glorious being, and call Him 'Abba, Father!' O the unutterable sweetness of that name!"

"May Jesus bless you and make you joyful in Himself. May you rejoice in the Lord always! I am so happy and joyful when I think that you are His—that my own beloved is safe in the fold of the Good Shepherd, hidden in the clefts of the Rock, so that no storm can ever come near her! Oh to think that you shall never now be separated from Jesus! 'Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world;' and even then He will be with you: 'when thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee;' but I trust, my beloved, I shall pass the waters first.

" Am I ever to be done? I grieve to send you such a letter, with so little of Jesus in it; but you must forgive me: I cannot speak of Him, for I have an earthly tongue. Write soon to your unworthy but attached M____."

"P____, September 5, 1842…"MY OWN BELOVED ONE,—It was curious that you should have been thinking of that verse with me; but I was much struck with the different ways in which we had looked on it. In thinking of 'holiness to the Lord,' all your thoughts went to Jesus, while mine, as usual, went to my own vile self. For nearly a fortnight I could not realise the presence of God, or feel Him near, though I often cried to Him with very bitter tears. He seemed as far away as ever ; but this morning I found Him again. I felt Him near, and my tears were sweet! Praise Him for it, dearest, with me; and ask that I may not again lose sight of Him. It is strange, when I cannot realise that God is near, I cannot pray for you;but whenever He blesses my own soul, then my heart hastens to ask blessings for my beloved friend, and I find it very sweet to plead for you. I want you to pray just now for a dying young man, the brother of our neighbour's servant. He is dying, and, I much fear, unchanged. How calmly we can talk of these things! How little have I of the faith which is the evidence of things not seen! I cannot realise or feel his awful situation as I ought. B. and I have been praying for him, and sending him some tracts ; O that they may be blest!…I have seen our Queen several times. She has much to draw her heart away from God. I fear I do pray too formally for her. Let us agree to plead together more with our hearts for her and for all dear to her."

"September 20, 1842… I long to be free from sin ; oh! it is loathsome, and yet I do not see it at all as I ought. But I must not trouble you with speaking of my sinful self; I want to speak to you of God, of our own sinless Saviour, but I cannot do it. O that I had you here to speak to! I long very much for you now; it will be so very sweet to speak with you of Jesus as we have so often done, and tell you all my sorrows. I sometimes wonder when I am to get right again, and get one sweet glimpse of Jesus. My soul has been so dark, and sorrowful, and heavy, for so long a time now. There seems a weight on my heart, and a veil over my eyes. I was happier a little while ago; but now I am as much cast down as ever. I long to begin the school; surely I shall find Jesus when speaking to little children of Him. In heaven He will never be away, or hid even for one moment. What if I should never get there? I am so very unbelieving, so unlike a child of God. You told me, in your dear letter, to go and weep with Mary at His sepulchre; it is strange that I had just been reading that very chapter! I could find no relief in any way, and at last I thought of the sweet chapter we have so often read together; but I could only weep, because I could not find Him. Yet you say He is always near. Do you know Satan sometimes tempts me to disbelieve His existence altogether! Is it not fearful? Oh! it is great agony! Do you think a child of God could ever have such a dreadful temptation? R. and I are quite solitary just now, and we have a great many very sweet meetings and readings together, and at such times we always remember our most beloved J____, and my sweet native town. And now farewell. May your own precious Saviour bless you now and always.

Your own loving M."

"P ____ , October 6, 1842…I must tell you about our school, for that is certainly a great deal in my thoughts at present; and I know how much you will love to hear how we are getting on. Well, Tuesday was the first day, and B. and I opened it ourselves, as we did not like to ask any one in Mr. B____'s place. I had fourteen little ones, and E. five big ones. We sung 'The Lord's my Shepherd'—as we had not got the other tune,—and then we prayed, and then divided our classes, and in about an hour we again assembled, and read a little bit of ' Glory,' then a prayer, and they went away—and so ended our first day of school. E. and I sat down together at the fire after they were all away, for a long time, neither of us quite sure whether we ought to be pleased or disappointed. But, on the whole, we settled that we ought to be pleased, for, though they did not listen to us when we told them of Jesus the Good Shepherd with as much interest as we at first expected they would, still, they behaved very well, and were not at all noisy. We went a good while before the hour to get the forms placed, and the books in order; and when the first girl entered the room, and took her place, you would have been amused at the look, half sheepish, half triumphant, which E. and I gave to each other. To-day we were so amused;—one big girl came with the others, whom we had never seen before, and sat down very quietly beside E.'s class—and two little ones to T____'s, and one to mine—and when we asked them who they were, and who sent them, they told their names, and said their mothers sent them!"

"This is rather encouraging. One of mine is called Jeanie Deans! There is one of my class a perfect delight; I never saw such a sweet child in my life: she is lame, poor little thing! and she sits on a chair beside me as quiet as a little mouse. She is only five, and she can already say all the letters! Oh! I love to talk to her of Jesus; she is just like one of His lambs. I am so grieved that she is only to be with us for a few weeks. She lives in Edinburgh. I want you to remember her particularly in your prayers, dearest, and O pray that I may get words to speak to her!…"

"I am very, very sad and sorrowful; and yet, for all the terror I often feel at prayer, I am restless till I can get alone, and to my knees. Is not that strange, when very often I can do nothing but weep? I wish, my beloved, you would tell me what to do, for you have no idea of the misery I suffer. I think it is Satan tempting me to doubt if there is a God at all! Surely I am not believing him! Will you ask God to search my heart, and shew me my sins? for it must be my sins that make Him hide His face. 'He does not afflict willingly.' Oh, no; it is all my own vile self; but I want to know more of my own heart, that I may humble myself under His hand. O pray also that Jesus may reveal Himself to me as a Saviour, to save me from my sins, and that His chastenings may make me more holy, more humble, and more loving. It is getting late, so I must finish this letter; and, long as it is, I grieve to think that there is so little of Jesus in it. But I can't write of Him now, for I am quite cold and dead; and yet 'He is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand.' He is our own precious and altogether lovely Saviour. Why do I alone see no beauty in Him, that I should desire Him? I want to say, with Peter, 'Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love Thee.' I sometimes think I do love Him a little. Surely Satan must be trying to pull me away from Him. Do you think so? If it is he— oh! he takes a desperate pull; but Jesus is stronger. I must trust myself to Him, and try not to fear."

"November 4, 1842…What a sweet season this has been at St Luke's!

I think many of God’s children must have feasted on Sabbath. All I felt was a hard, unbelieving heart, and a body of sin. At the table we had a very beautiful address from Mr. Andrew Bonar from Revelation, ’Him that overcometh, I will make a pillar in the temple of my God,’ &c. He said, ’It is sweet to have a father and an elder brother; we like to have a father and an elder brother; but nothing gives us such perfect bliss as to be able to say, My God.’ On Monday I got most. Our own Mr. Bonar preached from this verse, ’As my Father hath loved me, so have I loved you; continue ye in my love.’ My whole heart was melted, in spite of sin and my cruel enemy Satan. What delighted me was the unchangeableness of Christ’s love; and that, though our love gets cold, His never does; and though we are so unworthy, He still loves us;—and we are to ’continue in this love.’ When we leave the table, we are not to go from His love; His parting address to His people, is to continue in His love. I liked when he said that, for I so often feel as if I did really leave Jesus in the church;—it is so difficult to feel His presence in the midst of a cold world that hates Him. My beloved J____, to think that we shall dwell in this love during the long ages of eternity! I wonder we don’t sooner weary of this wilderness. We had a very solemn meeting on the Sabbath evening. Mr Burns preached one of his awakening sermons, and then said that he would remain to pray with any who wished it, after the rest went away. He did so, and O how he prayed and spoke! His whole soul seemed to be yearning over sinners. He could not let us away, and again he said he would remain a little longer. We remained to the end, and I am very glad we did; it was just like Jacob wrestling with God. There were several awakened that night, I believe. When are you coming in? How I weary to see you! I have such a longing desire to kneel once more together at our Father’s throne. We have often been blest when there together. But I feel that I must not long too much for any earthly blessing. I have too much self-will."

" P____ , November 23, 1842…"MY OWN BELOVED J____,—I have often felt what you mention about telling God to look on His beloved Son. I sometimes feel so ashamed of myself, that it is a great delight to say, ’See God my shield.’ Don’t you often feel ashamed of doubting God’s love? It is unmerited, entirely undeserved by us, and yet it is still so true that God does love us with such a wonderful love, that often I can only weep when I think of it. O for a heart to praise Him, and never to grieve Him by doubting such a heart of infinite love!"

"I can feel with you, my beloved sister, when you complain of a hard, unbelieving heart. I think I never felt my heart so hard as it has been lately. I am often astonished that nothing ever melts it. What I feel most just now is want of love to souls. I loved them far more at first. Is not that strange? Surely I am living very, very far away from God, otherwise I must by this time have got a little of His love even into my heart. What a sin this is! To see souls living around me without Christ, and not to feel for them! I am very much grieved about this. Will you ask that Jesus would make me in this respect more like himself? O that I could weep over perishing souls! There are many here to weep over. It is an ungodly place this. The worldseems so stamped upon every thing here, that it is very difficult to live in it constantly, or even occasionally, realising the unseen world, where Jesus is loved by unsinning hearts. I was thinking last night of what a sweet expression that is, ’walking with God.’ Should not you like to go through this wilderness walking with God?— feeling Him near? There is such a holy kind of feeling in being near God. But I need not speak so to you, for I know but little of this blessedness compared to you. I wonder if any one ever made such slow progress as I do. Do you remember that sweet part in The Two Sisters?— ’She seemed to be always lying on the bosom of Jesus, and now and then lifted up her head to smile on or to comfort

those around her.' I am reading the book just now, and certainly never read anything to be compared with it. It often makes me sad to read it, it is such a rebuke to my selfish, worldly heart. We had Mr. Hay at the school last Monday. He spoke very sweetly to the children. I hope he will often come and cheer us on. Whom do you think he introduced me to? Mr. M'Cheyne! What a sweet countenance he has! He is exactly what I fancied every Christian to be."

"I went to hear Dr. Chalmers at St George's. It was a very fine sermon, but too learned for me. What an interesting time this is in Edinburgh!"

"P____ December 1, 1842…"MY OWN BELOVED J____, I have taken a longing of late to write to you, I scarcely know why, unless it be that I like to tell you all that our loving Father has been shewing his poor sinful children. How I do weary to talk with you face to face, and to hear you speak of Jesus, our own precious, altogether lovely Saviour,and to pray to Him together once more! May He bless you with His felt presence! I sometimes feel much sweetness in praying for you; but it is not often that my cold selfish heart can pray aright for any one."

"M____ has just taken the pen out of my hand to write you a few lines. She is a very sweet creature; I wish she loved Jesus. She is very kind to poor R. and me in all our troubles. None of them ever come from her. I wish you would write to her, and tell her that she should come to Jesus. I often think they are all far more like God's children than I am: indeed, I know they are; but this is my comfort, that Jesus died for the ungodly,and such am I. I have had much delight lately, in thinking about the faithfulness of God, perhaps because I have had only that to rest upon, being so utterly destitute of all feeling. Isn't it sweet to think of the 'Thus saith the Lord,' and to know that He will do as He has said? Oh! J____, He is a wonderful God! I sometimes sit and think of everything till my head gets giddy, and it just ends in this: I am the chief of sinners, and know nothing, absolutely nothing of God. O for the simple confiding trust of a little child! "

" I have just returned from our school; they are all as careless as ever. I tremble lest my unbelief should hinder the blessing. I get more unbelieving, more heartless, about their souls every day. They could not have had a more hard-hearted, sinful, helpless teacher, than I ; and yet God has placed me there; at least I trust He has. You must pray much for us both, particularly for me, for I am the most unbelieving. They are often a burden on my mind, but oftener I seem quite as careless as themselves, I cannot describe to you what I have endured, and still do endure, from infidel thoughts. I cannot realise or believe anything: it is very dreadful; it seems strange to speak to them about their souls! Surely it can only be the "everlasting arms that are supporting me at this time. I would give much to have you for even one short hour to tell me that itis all true. What can it be? His precious promise, 'Ye shall not be tempted above what ye are able to bear,' sometimes comforts me; and, then, God knows it all. I don't feel that He does, but I try to believe it."

"I am glad that you meet me at the throne so regularly. I almost always get at five now; but it is long, long since I have had a sweet time; it is all fighting with unbelief, coldness, want of desire, and sin, hateful sin, which at times seems to reign in me."

"No wonder that we mourn, when we lose sight of these glorious realities, so that to speak or write of them seems strange! It is a sweet fountain, the fountain of living waters. Why do I live so far from God, and therefore drink so seldom of these sweet streams! May you, my beloved, be hidden deeper in the clefs of the Rock that was smitten for you. Tell me, when you write, if you are happy;

if all is light; it is horrible when all is dark. God is light; let us live near, very near Him, and then we shall not walk in darkness. What sweet meetings we shall have when you come! Oh, to think that, if God will, we shall meet so soon! I hope always to send you the money for the Jews, at least as long as I have any to send. All I have is God's; should it not be used for promoting His glory?"

"I often lament that I do so little in that way, but I have often not a penny to bestow."

" P____, December 10, 1842…MY OWN BELOVED J____, I was trying to thank Jesus to-night for His love to you at His table; but my heart was cold. I have a hateful heart. I am very I much rejoiced to know that you are so happy; what a day you must have had! There is no blessedness compared to the joy that is unspeakable and full of glory; and then 'the joy of the Lord is your strength.' You will be strengthened now, my beloved, to work for Jesus, and you will find it a sweet labour to go and tell sinners of the love of Him who is filling your own soul with such a sense of its blessedness.[10] I daresay you have at this time been longing to see Him as He is. These tastes of glory make one long for that sweet home where we shall for ever drink of the water of life, of which a few drops fill us with such blessedness."

"I heard Mr. Islay Burns, for the first time on Thursday night, and this was his text: 'But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly.' It was a very sweet sermon, but very short, as he had to read a letter afterwards. I could do nothing but cry all the time, I had such a longing to be in a better country with Jesus. It is strange, whenever I feel the love of Jesus to one so awfully unworthy as I, it always makes me weep. Oh, J____, what a being Jesus must be! But I know nothing of Him. I cannot feel, or see, or believe anything at present. I cannot tell you how I feel, I scarcely know myself; but I am so dreadfully unbelieving, I cannot realise anything; and then I have such a hard heart. My greatest comfort is in telling God to look on His beloved Son, and to look on me through Him. I want to be contented to be in darkness or light, in sorrow or joy, just as He pleases, so that I have Himself; if I could say, 'My Beloved is mine, and I am His,' I would wait His own time to get all I need; but do you know that when I spoke about this to Mr. ____ when he was here, he said, 'And yet the joy of the Lord is your strength?' and I have been troubled about it ever since. Does it not seem as if he meant to say, that I was wrong in saying I would try to be contented to be in darkness if that were God's will?[11] Mr. Hay came to see our children, and we had a conversation about the sad state of this place, and we agreed to unite in praying for a revival here, and wish you to join us. We have not fixed any particular hour, as perhaps it will be better to plead far it when we feel drawn to pray. Our English minister is fixed here for seven years. E. and I felt so very miserable there last Sabbath, that we have determined not to go again, if we can help it. It was the Communion Sabbath too—what a different one from the one you spent! But soon this passing world will be done, and then eternity begins—oh! may it be to all 'Whom we love, an eternity with Jesus!"

"I have been thinking much of this verse—'God is love;' and I see I have never believed it. If I really believed that, could I have all the sinful, hateful doubts that my soul is filled with? How I pant for the blessed nearness to God, which you, my beloved, have been enjoying! I care for nothing when God hides His face; all is dreary and unsatisfactory. Last night I think I got a little nearness to Him, when E. and I had our meeting together, and it has made me to-day more impatient than ever at my distance from Him, and at my utter want of desire. E. and I have a meeting every night. We enjoy them very much. We ask for all the others, and for more grace to ourselves;—for you, and

for all God’s dear children. You must pray much for us both at this time—that we may be consistent and decided in following God, especially at this time, for ____ and all her family are to be here the end of this month. What will they say to our school? Both E. and I are rather in dread about their coming, we have so many troubles already; and we fear their arrival will increase them. But we must be strong in the Lord, and then we need not fear. Perhaps it will drive us closer to Jesus; and, if that be the case, then, welcome all the trials this poor world can inflict. Perhaps God will give us a word to speak to them. You must ask this."

"P____, December 27, 1842…"MY OWN BELOVED ONE,— …How curious that He should have laid you on a sick-bed just after giving you such sweet discoveries of Himself at His table! Perhaps it was that you might not lose what you had got there, by mixing again in the concerns of this cold, Godhating world;—that on your sick-bed you might feast over again the blessedness you then enjoyed. I trust He has been very near to you all this time; but I long to hear that you are better."

"I wish I could write to you as you would like. I long to speak to you of Jesus, as I might speak if I were not the coldest, deadest being, who ever ventured to call herself a child of His. I often doubt if I am one. I cannot feel His love, and I cannot speak of it. It is still the same, although a poor worm like me— a bottle in the smoke—cannot speak of it. I shall give you His own words,—’My Beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand; His mouth is most sweet; yea, He is altogether lovely.’"

"Mr. Hay was down at the school yesterday, and spoke to the children; and little Robert P____, whom I mentioned to you, seemed to be struck, for he began to cry; and when I asked him what was the matter, he said he was afraid of hell. I spoke to him about Jesus, and His love to little children ; but he still continued weeping, so I sent him home to his mother. Ah, Jesus loves him with a tenderer love than even she does! I went to-day to his house, and had a chat with his mother about him, and read the third chapter of John to them. She is not a pious woman, but is a very pleasant person. Robert, poor little fellow! had got over his terror. We must ask that he may become one of the lambs of Christ’s flock." "P____, December 30, 1842…O that the Spirit would come and breathe on my dead soul! I feel, like you, that it is not easy to be contented when the light of His countenance is withdrawn. It is impossible to live to His glory when in darkness and heaviness. We cannot shew forth His praises when at a distance from Him; at least I feel it to be so. I often weary now for the time when we three shall stand faultless before the throne, with exceeding joy; and when God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes, and when the veil shall be taken away; when no sin shall separate between us and ourGod; when we shall no longer weep because we cannot find Him, and because we so continually dishonour Him; when He will no more hide His face, and when we shall no more wander from Him; when we shall see Him as He is, and be likeHim. Like Jesus! Can you believe it? When you see such evil filling every part of your heart, can you believe that that heart will really be one day pure and holy? O for that time! It will be a wonderful change for mine, for it is the vilest of the vile. How happy they all are in heaven, because they see Jesus face to face, and because they never sin! Even here, when Jesus shines upon us, and enables us to feel Him near, and when sin seems a little subdued, even here we enjoy a little of the bliss of heaven. Are not you glad that it is the same kind of joy we at times feel here, that we shall have there, though in a wonderfully different degree?"

"Do you read our chapter in Acts now? It is sweet to be reading together, as well as praying together. I sometimes think I should have more peace if I read more; but I am generally more inclined to pray. Are you to have any meetings in the North Church this last week of the year?

R. and Mr. Hay and I have agreed to read together the same chapter when it is striking twelve on Saturday night, and I want you, my beloved one, to join us. Will you? We have fixed on the twentieth of John. Are you and I ever to fix on another, I wonder? And let us plead for each other, that we may live more to God's glory during the year that is so soon to come, than we have done this year. Oh, plead that He would bruise Satan under our feet shortly, and would take away all infidel thoughts. Let us plead that the joy of the Lord may be our strength, to work for Him throughout the year."

"My beloved sister in Jesus, I must finish this now, as I want to write a few lines to ____ about her soul. Farewell, dearest; may Jesus watch between thee and me, when we are absent one from another. Your M____ —."

Thus closes the year 1842. She has now been a year and a half upon her pilgrimage. How eager her steps, how rapid her advance! Truly she hastens onward, as if she knew that her time was short! These eighteen months have done more for her than eighteen years do for many. The year 1843 opens with the following glimpse of her pilgrim experience. In the beginning of January, she thus wrote to me:—"Your letter was most welcome, because it directed us to look for comfort out of ourselves. I, at least, find nothing but darkness and sin within…I so long to feel Him near and to be happy in Him, but I often feel as if he were frowning upon me and I am so miserable, for I now can have no happiness when far from God…I should be far on the road now, and yet I always seem either at the very commencement or else going back. I am afraid I am not earnest enough, I do not pray enough, nor do anything as I ought, and yet I call myself an heir of glory. I am afraid of myself. Oh! suppose I am not 'found in Him' at last! I cannot bear the thought. could not spend an eternity without Jesus. Ah, that should make me feel more for those who are living without Him in the world, and who, if they seek Him not here, must live for ever without Him. There are no more of us returning to God yet. Perhaps many might have been changed, if I had been more faithful and prayerful…We hear that we are to have Mr. M'Cheyne and Mr. Milne at the Communion. What a treat it will be to hear Mr. M'Cheyne again![12]…We often speak to ____, but we do not get on well; for we feel she needs to be roused, and then she gets angry, and says—How do we know that she is not right? We often long to win her to Christ, in place of alarming her to flee to Him; but when we speak in that way, she always assents to all we say, and says, 'Of course, there is nothing else worth but Christ;' but when we see she does not care for Him at all, we cannot help telling her, and then we get all wrong again. I think ____ does not mind us so much as she used; she cares more for parties than for Jesus. "I was much obliged to you for the tract about the second coming of Christ. I must study the subject from the Bible. Mr. Watson sent me your address about the Church. I want so much to know all about our dear Church. I am so glad that you are going out without being forced to go, for then you will shew that you are willing to part with everything for Christ. I longed to be a minister when I read it, that I might be privileged to suffer for His sake." The remaining letters of this year we give without comment. They exhibit the same stranger-spirit, the same urgency of haste in passing on to the kingdom.

" P____, January 1, 1843…MY DEAREST J____, What a wonderful being God is! That is all I can say. I cannot speak of God now. But when could I speak of him—poor earthworm that I am? I had a strange time at prayer today. I felt such a satisfaction (I cannot say sweetness, for I seldom have a sweet time now), just in the thought that He existed,that I could not pray. I tried to praise and thank Him for His lovingkindness, but my words were poor, and my heart was cold. I think Satan is very busy with me just now. He always finds drumly water to work amidst. I think I have seen a little of the monstrous depravity of my heart lately, but I greatly grieve that this does not make Christ precious. I long to get near God again. I cannot bear to have His face hidden so long from me. I should like to lay my sorrowful soul on His bosom, and call Him my Father, my God, my Saviour. How I do long for you to come, that we may together plead, and say, 'We will not let Thee go except Thou bless us!' I think I must not write more to-day. I shall finish this on Monday, if the Lord will. Is it not sweet to be in His hands? Let us both say tonight, 'Doubtless, Thou art our Father.' Are we not accepted in the Beloved? O that He were more beloved! May Jesus bless my very dear friend."

"P____, January 23, 1843…MY DEAREST J____, What distresses me most is that I cannot pray. I cannot realise God's presence, nor any spiritual thing at all. I feel as if I did not need anything, and I have not so much desire as I used to have. The throne of grace is now to me a place of great conflict and sorrow. I can seldom get my thoughts fixed one moment. They are continually wandering; and I have so little spiritual life or feeling, that the soul, and heaven, and hell, and God, seem strange sounds to me; that is exactly the word, they seem strange; when I think of people's danger, my own danger, the necessity of fleeing from the wrath to come,—it seems all strange, as if the words had no meaning attached to them, so that, when I go to pray, I repeat all these things as if it were mechanically, and often I can only groan in agony. Sometimes I am praying for an hour, and all the time can say little more than, 'Oh! have compassion upon me; Lord, hear me! Lord, help me!' And I have been so long this way, that I am getting almost to despair; but I feel that nothing can ever drive me from a throne of grace, though I were to do nothing but weep at it all my life. 'To whom can I go but unto Thee?' Dear J____, He has the words of eternal life, and I must go and plead with Him. But oh! 'I am weary with my groaning.' Will you tell all this to God? That is why I am so selfish as to grieve you by telling you how sad I am. Oh! the infidel thoughts I have! I cannot describe them to you. It is miserable to live so far from God. It is dishonouring to Him, and ruinous to my own soul. I have been thinking of not going to the Communion this time. What do you think? I can hardly bear the thought of not going, for I pant for near communion with Jesus; but I must not partake unworthily. You must ask that I may be guided, and that, if I am not His, I may be ere long; for I long to be His, His only, His wholly, and His for ever! We are to have Mr. M'Cheyne and Mr. Milne at St Luke's this time. Only fancy what a couple! It is to be on the 12th of next month. Do you think our dear minister will be in Edinburgh? If he does not, will Mr. M'Cheyne give E. and me the tokens? But I must speak to him first, for I am afraid to go in my present state…"

"It must be sweet to suffer for His name; but I don't think I have felt that sweetness, for it always seems my own sins that bring me suffering. I must shew you ____'s letter when you come. Do you know I feel as if I shall be all rightagain then? We must ask that our souls may be greatly blest, and that God may get glory by us. I long to read the Word together. I think I know the chapter our Bibles will open at! She wept, 'because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they

have laid Him.' Do you think Jesus will come and say, 'Sinners!' and we will say, 'Our Saviour'? I want you to pray, especially at this time, for a dear child of God who is in great darkness, ____, whom I wrote to you about. He is not going to the Communion; and I feel so much for him. It must be deep agony to stay away…I have never yet told you of our seasonable supply; well, it was this: E. and I are often sorrowing that we have so little to give to the poor people here; and one day we were sitting at our school fire, after our flock had gone away, speaking about many things, when a lady was announced, who said she had come to be a short while in P____, and that she was very anxious to do something for the poor. She said she had heard that we taught some poor children, and that she thought we might direct her whom to assist! Well, we told her that we knew many in want, and, as she was afraid of her little boy getting disease from any of the houses, she asked us to give what she wished to bestow, as we thought best. She gave me eight shillings,—in the meantime, she said,—and then talked about the school, and seemed to take a great interest in it, and said she should like to give the children some clothes. Well, in two or three days she came back, and said she had bought twenty yards of tartan for frocks, and twenty yards of flannel, and six little shawls. We are now busy getting them all made. Wasn't this a very pleasing adventure? R. and I often wonder if she is a Christian; I think she must be; she is very quiet, and does not say much, but her actions speak for her, I think. She is very young, and a very sweet person. It is wonderful how God has raised up friends for us since we began our school. Do you think that a sign that it is for His glory? Well, getting all this assistance for our poor has enabled us to give the basket-money to missions; but I am disappointed, after all, that I have so little for the Jews, for many things have greatly reduced my little stock; but after this, I don't think I need distrust Him from whom every good comes. The ____s have been here some time now, and I am glad to say they have not discovered our school. They are very sweet girls, but, I don't know how it is, I always feel so melancholy whenever I am with them. Oh! they are full of the world, this poor, vain world! It seems as if it would be impossibleto speak of Jesus to them. I want to ask your advice about one thing. They are to have a small party on Monday, and I daresay they will be having more; do you think we should refuse to go? If it were a large dance, we would refuse at once; but they speak sometimes of having one or two, and making a dance among themselves.[13] They would laugh at us if we called this a party! and yet they will be waltzing, and dancing, and how can we go? ____ says we should go rather than offend them, and refuse to dance; but I don't like that way, for I don't think that it is the mere act of dancing that is wrong, but the whole spirit of the thing. I should like to be decided at once for Christ in everything. I wish I were with you, where you now are, at the Monday meeting. I asked that you might get a great blessing to-night. generally meet you at five now, but what an hour it is to me! Oh! where shall I find Him! Farewell, my beloved friend, may Jesus bless you this night."

"Edinburgh, January 28, 1843…"MY BELOVED FRIEND,—How shall I answer your most precious and sympathising letter? It was a perfect cordial to my poor unbelieving heart; it was so full of the love of HIM whose whole being,—whose very name is Love. I think God has blest it to my soul. After I read it, I went to the throne (that sweet Bethel for poor, weary, sinand-Satan-tossed souls), and I cast my burden upon the Lord, and He sustained me. I went to God, not as a child or a believer, but as a guilty, polluted, hell-deserving sinner (though I do not, alas! feel myself this just now), and cast myself, and all my heavy burdens, upon His mercy, His love in Jesus; and I felt happier and lighter than I have done for many a day; but, oh! I cannot get rid of these awful thoughts;—it seems as if everything future were a blank—a strange dream! My comfort is, that it is

all true, and I pray and speak as if I felt it; but Satan must be very powerful, for I think he can make me believe anything. I shall not grieve you any more by telling about my trials; I shall rather tell you of my blessings, of the free, rich mercies that are so constantly showered down upon such a guilty rebel as I. We can always praise; we can praise Him that ever He taught our dead souls to seek Him; that ever He put one feeble desire towards Him in our cold hearts; we can praise Him for shewing us the vanity of everything but Himself.[14] Ah! and we can praise Him for the unspeakable gift! —'the new and the living way to the Father;' we can praise Him for Jesus—the altogether lovely—the Father's holy Child—the Man of Sorrows—our sympathising High Priest; and we can praise Him for the loving Spirit—the glorifier of Jesus: but where are we to end? No, we cannot end; eternity will be too short to shew forth all His praise. Oh! if ever I enter heaven, I shall be the greatest monument of free love there. I think I mustsing the loudest song. Ah! why cannot I sing that song now? Since I cannot pray, I think I ought to do nothing but praise; perhaps this would open my heart to pray too. Won't it be sweet when we once more kneel together at the throne of grace? I long much for that time now,—and to read the Word too! O that I loved both more! What you said about the Communion was very sweet. You say, 'Go where you know He is ;' that is what I long to do; but I am so unworthy; you don't know how vile, how unholy I am; yet Jesus knows, and does He not say even to me, 'This do in remembrance of me'? I have a curious feeling about going. I long and pantto go; my heart bounds when I think of it; but a fear comes over me when I think what I am. I am afraid that I shall be a Judas—a disciple outwardly, but not in reality. But Jesus still says—'Come.' He is willing, and I think I am too; at least I know that I desire nothing but Him. None but Christ, none but Christ; yet how constantly I distrust His love, and how constantly my heart wanders from the Fountain to earthly cisterns! I am so glad that you are to have Mr. M'Cheyne at the Communion; may you be muchblest.[15] You must tell me the Sabbath, that I may plead for you. Ours is on the 12th. You don't say if Mr. Bonar is to be in. I should like, if he does not come in, to speak a little to Mr. M'Cheyne when he gives us the tokens. We should be so glad if we could get him to speak to the children of our school ; they could not helplistening to Mr. M'Cheyne. He would tell them of Jesus in such a sweet way, that they would surely listen. But ah! Jesus himself must speak, or not a stony heart will be moved. His children's voices are often very sweet, but they are not like His; yet how often we let Him stand at the door of our hearts, and do not hear His voice! We are getting on very well with our school at present; that is to say, they attend regularly, and are sometimes attentive; but there is no moving of the dry bones yet; they are very careless when I am speaking to them sometimes about the love of Jesus; and when I hope they are listening, some one of them is sure to say something quite foreign to what I am saying. They often interrupt me by saying, 'Ma'am, the glass is ran out,' or something like that; but then I remember what God has to bear from me, and that makes me try to be patient with them. I have got much interested in my class now, which I am glad of. O to see them begin to seek after God!"

"P____, February 14, 1843…I can think of nothing but the glad prospect of seeing you so soon. I cannot realise it at all; but I wish I could get over thinking of the parting again. It was cruel of you to mention that. I sometimes think that I would rather not meet than have another parting; but no, I would rather see you for half an hour than not at all; but Jesus orders all and so all is right. What a dreadful time I have had lately! Satan seemed to have got hold of me; I could do nothing but groan; I could not even weep; but I am better now, not because I have said, 'I will not let Thee go,' but because Jesus said, 'I will not let thee go.' I cannot say I was very happy on the Communion Sabbath; I could only weep and long after an absent Lord. The ministers assisting were not very

spiritual, except Mr. Milne, and we had not him at our table, so that it was quite different from our former seasons; but perhaps it was better that it was so, for both R. and I felt that we were more entirely shut in to Christ. Yet ah! my dear J____, I had none of the blessed feelings you speak of. I prayed all the time for Jesus to come and make me FEEL His presence, but I only felt a hard wicked heart. Yet it is strange I could scarcely get myself to leave the table. I felt as if I had left Jesus there, and I wanted to get to them all, and beseech Him to come and fill my longing soul with Himself; but the longings I had for him were sweet. Oh! He is a glorious being, and yet He is also a loving, gentle, lowly being. Why don't we love Him more? and why do we so continually grieve him by sin? I wish I had more desires for holiness; I have often nothing but a longing desire for Jesus,—to be able to believe, and to feel His love, to live to His glory at all times and in every way. Mine is such a selfish love! On the Thursday we had a very precious sermon from Mr. Somerville of Glasgow. The text was, 'Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her Beloved? ' I wished for you all the time; I could do nothing but sit and weep, Jesus seemed so lovely, so loving. could gladly have left the body to be present with the Lord; it was almost too much. E. was beside me, and you know, beloved, how pleasant it is to have one with you who feels as you do. He was speaking of Jonathan, and he said, 'he thought that he was one of the sweetest lilies that grew in the garden of Jesus.' I thought it such a sweet expression, the garden of Jesus; and, in speaking to the unconverted, he said, 'Oh! will ye not come to this willing, living, loving Saviour?' I wondered they did not all cry, 'Yes, oh yes, I'll go to Him!' I felt so sorry for those who did not know Him. Ah! how little I feel that! I am often alarmed when I think how little I care for souls; I fear that I have not His spirit who wept over them. Will you ask that I may get more love to souls? On Friday we had another beautiful sermon from Mr. Davidson, about Jesus calling Zaccheus; and on Saturday we had Mr. Manson. It was a pity we had none of them at the Communion; but Mr. Milne was very fine; he seems full of the Spirit…I am glad you have heard from dear J____; she is a very sweet, simple Christian: it is the grace I have least of. I feel it is the enemy within that troubles me most. I had a very precious season of prayer on Monday morning at ten; but oh! it was often a sore battle; but Jesus came at last, and all was light, all was peace. 'I sought the Lord, and He heard me, and delivered me from all my fears.' Praise Him for this with me, my beloved friend. But we cannot praise here, it will take eternity to do that. Farewell; may your own gentle, holy Saviour Jesus, your Saviour God, be with you and bless you, my precious friend! M____."

"P____, February 23, 1843…You will soon be here now: I can scarcely believe it, but I suppose it is true for all that; many a thing is true that my hard unbelieving heart finds it hard to believe. It is true that Jesus loves even me, the chief of sinners, and yet how many severe lessons it requires before I can believe that blessed, that wonderful truth, that the holy, sin-hating God, loves unholy, sin-loving sinners! 'While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.' 'Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us.' Yet I find it very difficult, when I feel nothing but sin continually filling my heart, and mingling with all I say or do, to realise and rejoice in the unchangeable love of Jesus. But then He is God, not man; and it does not seem so wonderful when we think, not who is loved, but who it is that loves; and then He looks upon us in the Beloved;He looks upon His beloved Son, and then we are 'all fair.' We shall soon speak together of this Christlike love, and pray that it may be shed abroad in our cold hearts (mine is VERY cold), and then we shall love Him who first loved us. E. and I were at a very sweet meeting at our kind friend Mrs. ____'s. It was a meeting of all the Sabbathschool teachers of two schools. Mr. D____ was there, and conducted

everything. There were more than thirty altogether. We first sung a hymn, 'O God of Bethel,' and then Mr. D____ gave us a short address upon this verse, 'Search me, 0 Lord, and know my heart.' It was very beautiful and very striking. He said we should all ask ourselves, could we look up to a heart-searching God, and ask Him to search us?—he said, out of Christ no one could ; but that, hidden in Him, we could come to a holy God, and say, 'Search me.' He then spoke of our motives in teaching. Was our single aim the glory of God? Did no other motives influence us? ' Ah!' he said, 'I am sure there is not a soul in this room that does not quail when I put that question.' Mine did; I could hardly look up for shame ; I felt confounded when I looked at my motives ; there seemed every motive in my heart but the only one that should be there;—the glory of God. Is it not sad to think that low, unworthy, selfish, vain motives, should all fill the heart that should only burn with one desire—the glory of Jesus in the salvation of sinners? But He bears the iniquities of our holy things. 'His blood cleanseth from all sin.' O that it may cleanse mine! He then said, that making God's glory our sole aim, gave us steadiness in our work, for the motive would be always the same; he said we were so changeable, that one day we might go eagerly to our work, and the next we might be quite careless; but that, by continually desiring His glory in it, we persevered, and that it also gave us strength for our work, because we cast the whole burden of it upon Him; that when we felt we were the mere instruments, that all our strength must come from Him ; and at the end, he spoke so sweetly about Jesus; he said we should always take the Master with us, that, when surrounded with our scholars, we should realise the presence of our Master, who is looking on with satisfaction and delight. We then had a very sweet prayer, and separated…K. had a long chat with ____ about her soul. She gave her Mr. Bonar's Way ofLifeto read. You must pray for her and for us, that God would guide us in speaking, and that He would draw our dear ____ to himself. She is the only one of her family we have spoken to yet, and she takes it very sweetly. We have given her this sweet text: 'I love them that love me, and they that seek me early shall find me.' How differently some take your speaking to them from others! ____ is a great grief to us; she gets so angry, and we cannot help feeling anxious about her, she is so very delicate. Oh that she would come to Jesus! How happy she might be, if she had Him to make all her bed in her sickness! ____ is another burden to us; she says Mr. ____ wishes her to be confirmed, and yet she is quite ignorant about spiritual things. She has no thought about what she is called upon to vow in such a solemn way, and then she has no right to go to the Lord's table; for, alas! she is not His; her heart has not been given to Jesus."

"P____, March 22, 1843…MY VERY DEAR MRS. H.,—...It must be a peculiarly sweet kind of love that binds one to a Christian. Think of heaven, where all are Christians! I sometimes long to be there! I am weary of this sinful, ungodly world, and still more weary of my own ungodly heart. I see nothing but sin and unbelief now; I cannot get near Jesus; I want to sit at His feet, like happy Mary, but I cannot get near him. I cannot believe that He will look with love upon such a vile wretch as I am. I cannot believe anything. I often think I don't believe in anything beyond this poor world. I cannot see that they are realities, and yet they are,— are they not? Dear friend, do not be grieved with me for asking such a question, for my soul is in a dark, dark state. I often long to say to some one, ' Say tome thatitis all true!—that Jesus lives, and lives in our nature; that He does hear my feeble prayers.' Oh that feeling of strangeness,—that it would go away! I long for the simple faith of a little child. I got great comfort from the rainbow yesterday; there was a very lovely one seen here after a great shower of rain, and when I looked at it, I thought of God's faithfulness, and I could not but rejoice that though I do not believe, still He is faithful; He will do as He has said."

"P____, April 4, 1843…We had a very nice day at Mr. Robertson's on Sabbath. We all went to the table, and to me it was the sweetest hour, I think, I ever passed. I found Jesus, and I was happy, unutterably happy. I thought I was in heaven; I almost saw Him! You must praise Him for this. I was cold at first, and could not get near, but I told Him I would not let Him go except He blessed me; and He did bless me, and then I could not let Him go. Don't you feel afraid when you have found Him, that He will go away again? I thought yesterday morning, on going up to my room, what should I do if I had not God? Fancy living without God in the world! but ah! how often I do that! I do so continually grieve Him away.

" Saturday, April 8.—I must tell you about our school. We have never been able to get another room yet, to our great sorrow; but we heard of one yesterday, which, I think, we shall get soon. I shall be very glad when we begin it again, but I tremble to think how very unfit I am for such a task; but Jesus says, 'My grace is sufficient for thee;' and if I could only get out of myself into Christ, then all would be well. O to be able to say, 'I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me!' If I only really felt myself to be weak, then I could say, ' I am strong;' but I only say I am weak; I feel and act as if I were strong. Will you ask for me, dear friend, that Jesus would shew me my own weakness, and lead me to lean entirely upon Him? Ask that I may 'come up from the wilderness, leaning upon the Beloved.'"

" P____, April 24, 1843…MY BELOVED FRIEND,—I had your note this morning, and am very happy to know you are safe with dear ____. I had much sweetness in praying for you several times on Thursday. I long to hear again from you, if you were enabled to speak for Jesus on board, and what you have been doing since you arrived. I am so happy in thinking of the liberty you have at ____ in reading the Word at any time. I hope you will have a Peniel season all the time you are in London. May you live in the sunshine of His countenance! 'In His favour is life.' I am sure you feel that to be true. If we have not His presence, life is only a misery, a dreary void. I feel a kind of persuasion that you will be greatly blessed in London, that your Father will give you much, of His holy, blessed presence. May it indeed be so, my own dear J____...It makes us very sad that our ____ should have turned from us, but it is probably for our good. Poor K. is in great distress about it; but I have a far more severe sorrow, the hiding of my Heavenly Father's countenance, and my heart seems hardened to everything else. In your prayers for me, will you ask this for me, that God would shew me what it is that keeps me so far from Him, and that He would make me willing to part with it, whatever it is?...Have you written to ____ yet? I should like to write to her; but, as you will perceive, I cannot write at present. Oh to get near to Jesus, that my cold heart might be melted and warmed!—there is no happiness, no joy, no warmth, but near the Cross. How our hearts freeze when away from Him! We went yesterday to Lady Glenorchy's, and heard Mr. Davidson. I like him very much. He preached on a favourite text of mine, Isaiah 41:17. I am sure there was one poor and needy soul there. I felt thirsty for the water of life. I have been thinking of this verse. 'Unto you which believe He is precious,' and asking myself if I find Jesus precious, and why? Is it not your poverty that makes Jesus precious to you? Then He should be very precious to me now, for I am entirely poor, entirely empty, and yet I fear He is not. I feel Him more precious when He is near; now I should feel Him more precious from his having everything I need. Should I not? I am afraid often that it is only a lovely picture, not a real Christ, that I love."

" P____ ,May 11, 1843…MY VERY DEAR MRS. H____, I have often attempted to write to you, and failed, but this morning I asked Jesus to give me every word that I should write, so perhaps I

shall be able. I should, if I trusted simply as a little child would do, to His help; but, alas! though I feel my weakness, I still trust to myself. Is it not strange? I wonder Jesus is not weary of teaching me, I am so backward and so unwilling to learn. Isn't it sweet to have such a teacher? I should like always to sit at His feet, like Mary, and hear His words: we should say to Him, 'Let me see Thy countenance, let me hear Thy voice; for sweet is Thy voice, and Thy countenance is comely.' How little I know of Jesus! Oh! if I knew more of Him, and knew Him better, I could not remain here any longer; but I am so earthly, I lie crawling on the earth, in place of mounting up as an eagle to His very seat. K. and I have been again feasted at the Lord's table. I can't tell you what I felt. I felt that I would not go away from Jesus if the whole universe told me. 'To whom should I go but unto Him? He has the words of eternal life.' I felt all the time that I knew nothing of Him, and that I was the very chief of sinners; but I could not but trust Him; He was so lovely, so gentle, so kind, so winning, so gracious, so full of compassion even to me, so touched with a feeling of our infirmities.

Only think, our school-room is let for a year, and we are not sure if we can get another; and, besides, we can scarcely get any of them to come just now, for they say their parents are out working, and they must stay at home. Is it not very vexing? We are thinking of giving them up for two or three months during the summer, and not taking a room till the season here is over. What do you think about it? We are averse to give them up, but if we can only get two or three, and not even sure of them, it would be perhaps better to keep our money till the autumn and winter, when we could collect many more...I can scarcely get myself to believe that Mr. M'Cheyne is no longer a pilgrim on this earth—that he has reached home. We should not mourn for him indeed. Is he not seeing Jesus face to face? Is he not like Jesus altogether? But yet it is sad to think we shall never more hear him speak of Him whom his soul so greatly loved. I shook hands with him only once, and I shall never forget the sweetness of his look and smile. How I do pity his poor people!"

"May 20, 1843…I had a long letter from ____ the other day. I answered his letter yesterday, and had much comfort in writing to him. As I cannot give comfort to any one except from the Bible, I wrote all the sweet truths I could think of, and Jesus seemed to apply them to my own heart. I was so cold when I began, I could hardly write a word; but very soon such sweet texts came into my mind, that I could hardly stop. What an important time this is in Edinburgh at present!" "Of course you know all about our dear ministers. Only think, E. was in the Assembly on the Thursday and saw them all go out! So we are no longer of the Established Church! Does it not seem strange? I almost envy the ministers being allowed to suffer for His name. I went to the Assembly at Canonmills on Friday, and, it was curious, it was the London deputation who spoke that day. I heard your minister, Mr. Hamilton, and liked him much. When I heard his name, I looked at him, and listened to him with peculiar interest, for I remembered he is your minister for the present."

" Saturday.—I could not get my letter finished yesterday, and I am not sure of being able to finish it even to-day; I am so often interrupted. We had Mr. E____ to our meeting at Miss A____'s on Tuesday. He is, I think, one of the most spiritual and lowliest of Christ's ministers. He prayed twice, and his prayers were very fine; but I cannot say I enjoyed the meeting, for I could not get near God all the time. I think I never felt so much my need of the Spirit as that evening. They seemed all in the Spirit but me,—and I was like a stone. Does not that shew how utterly vain the very best means are without the life-giving Spirit breathing upon the dead soul? Let us pray earnestly for the Spirit, dearest; and let us also remember yesterday's text; 'Quench not the Spirit.' How often I grieve away the Spirit by my sins! He is God, and not man, else He could not have borne so long

with me. We are to have a Free Church here, I believe. What a blessing it will be for this place if we get a really godly man! You must ask on our behalf, dearest, that they may send us a true servant of God. ____ was telling me yesterday that the praying people here have been much stirred up to plead for this. I was thinking this morning that the best means for getting a revival here is to have a revival among God's own people. I think they must be made to feel more the misery of those who are living without God in the world. They must have more love to souls, more yearning over them, and, above all, more desire that Jesus may be glorified by their conversion ; and then they will be more in prayer for them, that the blessing may come. How little I feel for poor, poor souls! for are they not poor when they have not Jesus? I want you to ask especially for me, that I may have muchlove for souls, even though I should be made miserable about them. That would be infinitely better than being at ease when souls are perishing. And oh! earnestly ask that I may be delivered from Satan's temptations, for he puts such horrid infidel thoughts into my mind at prayer sometimes, that I can scarcely utter a word. Won't it be sweet when we have entered into our rest? when we shall have done with Satan, sin, the world, wandering thoughts, &c.; and when, in place of a heart filled with selfishness, and everything earthly and vile, our hearts shall be for ever filled with Jesus, and none else? Sometimes, when I can get no rest nor peace, and when I cannot even pray, I think, Well, it will soon be all at an end. I shall at last see Him whom my soul loveth, face to fece, and never more, even for one moment, cease to love Him. But I cannot always get comfort from that, for I often fear I shall never get to heaven at all, I am so unlike Jesus here. It is near three o'clock, so I shall finish this after we have read our chapter together. May He 'open our eyes, that we may see wondrous things out of His law.' What a nice chapter to-day's is! particularly the 22d verse. Does it not mean the Word of God? that it shall continually be with us; or does it mean God himself? How sweet it would be if we could thus constantly realise His presence with us; that wherever we went, He went with us; that when we slept, He kept us; and when we awaked, He talked with us. I think we should never be unhappy, even in the wilderness, if we always felt Jesus near. It is not trials themselves that make us unhappy; it is He not being in them. The hardest trials and severest sufferings would scarcely be felt by us, if we always felt the everlasting arms underneath us; if we heard Jesus saying, 'Fear not, for I am with thee.' There is no sorrow like the sorrow of living at a distance from Him; of not being perfectly reconciled to Him; at complete peace with Him. Oh! to think how often we grieve Him by our abominable hearts!"

" P____, June 23, 1843…MY DEARLY BELOVED J____, Are you not astonished at my long silence? I have been again laid by my loving and faithful God upon a sick-bed, and am only able to-day to write once more to you, myown friend.What a blessed time the season of sickness is for being humbled in the sight of God! And He knows how much I need to be humbled; but oh! I greatly fear I have come out of the furnace unpurified. Is it not grievous, that I, by my own desperate wickedness, lose all the benefit intended by my merciful God? I have not glorified Jesus at all in this illness; I have been impatient, proud, unwilling to be humbled, filled with unbelief and hard thoughts of God, prayerless and thankless. What I am most grieved at is, the dishonour I have brought upon Christ's name by my unholy un-Christ-like behaviour during this illness. Oh! J____, my darling M____ will not be led, by seeing my good works, 'to glorify my Father who is in heaven;' she will rather be led to think that there is nothing in religion, when its professed disciples are no better (nay, even worse) during a time of trial than those who do not profess anything. Pray, dearest, that it may not be so; pray that I may not be a stumbling block before my dear M____, or any of my dear family. I am almost ashamed of myself; I say almost, because I feel it takes a great

deal to make me ashamed of myself; I am so proud. Will you remember me at a throne of grace, for I am sad and sorrowful? I can get no sweet sense of God's presence, or of His forgiveness; pray for me, that ' though my iniquities testify against me,' that yet, for His dear Son's sake, he would 'receive me graciously, and love me FREELY.' I feel as if I could suffer years of pain, if I could get but one smile, one forgiving word, one compassionate look, from my God, my greatly insulted, but precious, blessed God. Oh! is it not AGONY to feel unreconciled to Him! But you never feel that, I trust. I remember you saying at Miss R____'s that you never could fancy Jesus angry, but only grieved for your own sin and folly. And does He not say, 'Mine anger is taken away'? Jesus bore it, for it is written, 'Thy wrath lieth hard upon me;' and then, 'The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.' These are sweet words for poor sinners; may the Holy Spirit apply them with saving and healing power to both our hearts!…Let us ask our God to give us a more realising sense of spiritual and unseen realities, and also more of the love of souls that Jesus has. It makes me ashamed when I think of myself compared to the very coldest and weakest of God's dear children. I do not seem to care for a single soul;—well, I must just lie lower before Him, and ask Him to put His own Spirit within me. I think this illness has been a very humbling time to me; it has shewed me how little, if any, grace I have. can see nothing but sin covering me all over. O for the blood that can cover even that! I read our chapter in Proverbs with you to-day; it is the 10th, is it not? I like the third verse, and also the twenty-second, but I have not time to write about it to-day, as it is time this was off. Now, do not be a very long time of answering this."

"I must tell you of a misfortune that happened to ourbasket. We had filled it with beautiful things, and gave it to a little girl to sell, and to our dismay she returned in a few days to say that she had sold nearly everything, and lost the money on the road! We are greatly afraid it is all false, and that she and her mother have kept the money. If this is true, it is worse for the girl than for us; but still it is hard to lose all our little earnings, when we have so much to do with it."[16]

"P____ July 14, 1843…Here is a verse for you that I have been thinking of to-day: 'Thou art all fair, my love.' It is difficult to believe that Jesus could say that of such sinners; but when it is His own beauty that covers us, we must indeed be 'all fair.'Isn't it very sweet to think that Jesus gets all the glory? that we are nothing, and less than nothing, and that He is all in all? I think the happiness of heaven will be to see us all in our proper place, the dust, and, with willing hearts, to give Him all the glory. How sweet it will be to be free from all sin, especially selfishness, and with ' unsinning hearts' to sing 'Worthy is the Lamb' throughout all eternity! Oh think, dear friend, that one day you will see Jesus, and be for ever with Him, never, never more to be separated!"

"P____, July 20, 1843…MY BELOVED J____, I remembered your request at the throne of grace, that you might have more of the presence of Jesus in private, and I trust that He has heard me, and that you are continually rejoicing in the light of His countenance who is the light of the world. 'Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed upon Thee, because he trusteth in Thee.' Let us only trust Him, and He will prove that He is the faithful God. I wonder we ever distrust the love of Jesus; it is different from every other love; for it is love to the unworthy. His love is poured out upon those who seldom return it but with coldness, ingratitude, and suspicion. He is a kind Master, ever ready to forgive, and 'who upbraideth not.' We are to celebrate His love on Sabbath at St. Luke's; you must ask that 'He may manifest himself to His people then, in another way than He doth unto the world.' I am more afraid to go this time than I have ever been—I feel so very unworthy; but then I think that should not keep me away, for, however worthy I might be, that

would give me no title to go; but still I am afraid of deceiving myself, by thinking that I am trusting to His merits, when, perhaps, I am secretly trusting to something in myself. I have much need to cry, 'Search me, 0 Lord, and try me.' Perhaps God is shewing me my sins, to prove to me that there is nothing in me in which I could trust. R. and I should be up at St. Luke's at this moment, but it is pouring such torrents that we dare not go; it is very vexing, I must say, and I am rather inclined to murmur at the disappointment; but I have two things to console me;—one is, that it is not man who prevents us, but God, and therefore it must be ' well,' for you know 'He doeth all things well;' and the other is that it gives me an opportunity of having a chat with you. I want you to get this before Sabbath, that you may remember us then. I do not know whom we are to have; I believe it is likely to be Mr. Milne. Have you got any work to do for Christ yet? O that I had more love to souls! Mr. Robertson said a very sweet thing about that verse in the Song, 'Draw me, we will run after Thee;' he said it was not, 'Draw me, I will run after Thee,' but ' we will,' &c. ; as much as if to shew that we could not go to Jesus alone, that if He draw us, we must bring others with us. Did you ever think of it? B. and I continue to go to hear Mr. R., and every time with greater pleasure. I think we are very fortunate to be so near such a true servant of Jesus. I wish we had one like him here."

" Edinburgh, September 15, 1843…I have been thinking yesterday and to-day about that expression, 'the unsearchable riches of Christ.' I don't think I know anything at all about the love of Christ. I am so carnal; I have little relish for the things of heaven. I should be ashamed if youknew how earthly I am, and yet God knows it all; but still He does not abhor me; He does not cast me away from His presence. 'I am the Lord, I change not.' My own friend, here is a sweet word for you, 'Jesus Christ the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.' Do write soon, and tell me something about Jesus, for my heart is so veryearthly; tell me how lovely, and how precious, how satisfying you find Him; describe Him as the Bride does in 'the Song;' and then I shall be constrained to say, 'Where is thy Beloved gone, that I may seek Him with thee?' I want to get a sin-crucifying view, a world-crucifying view, of Jesus; I want to get nearer Him than I have ever done yet, for I feel more earthly than I ever felt before. Will you ask this for me? You might also remember my dear, dear P____, particularly; for do you know, I sometimes can hardly pray for any one else. I have had great wrestlings in prayer for him for several days. O that the blessing would come! but I pray so unbelievingly, I sometimes pant to speak to him, but I never have courage. I did speak a few words to him about the necessity of being prepared for death, when we were speaking about poor Mr. D____'s death. Oh! to think of Mr. D____ being carried off in two days! We heard of this a few days ago, and I have been asking that it may make my dear P____ think. It is surely a good sign, that God has made me so anxious about his soul; don't you think so? I have sometimes felt God, our loving God, listening when I have been praying for him, and felt such humble confidence that I was asking according to His will. I am so afraid that I shall grieve away the Spirit, and then I shall not be able to pray for him, or have any desire for his soul. Oh! why is he not converted, when God is so willing and so able? Will you tell me, when you write, what you think may be the hindrance? And ask that God would shew me if it is anything in me that hinders this blessing."

" P____, September 25, 1843…So, you are so fond of London! Well, I can't say I liked it. But you have had much of God's presence there, and that must make you like it. What should we do without God? I have not been able to realise His presence, or rejoice in the light of His blessed countenance, for a long dreary time. I know He is near me, and guiding my feeble steps; but I do

not feel it. If it is such misery to be away from Him, even for a little while, what would it be to be separated from Him for ever! I sometimes think that there is some idol in my heart, that makes Jesus hide His face from me; or perhaps my earthliness and unholy walk has grieved the Spirit. It must be my own sin, in some way or other, that makes me lose sight of Him 'in whose favour is life.' Will you ask, my beloved friend, that He would search my heart, and shew me what causes me to go mourning all the day, in place of 'rejoicing in the Lord alway'? Your dear letter was blest to me, for it made me long more after Jesus. I was thinking of that verse lately, it seems so full, the last part especially—I wish I were doing it every hour,—'increasing in the knowledge of God.' It is in Colossians 1:10. I know so little about God. What blessed holy knowledge! There is no knowledge to be compared to that,— 'To know Him is life eternal.' Now, 'we see through a glass darkly ;'but when we are WITH HIM, 'we shall know even as also we are known.' We'll never have an unkind thought of Him. We shall, indeed, beloved one, 'stand faultless before Him with exceeding joy.' I think one of my happiest sights will be to see YOU there, and B. too,—dear E. I was thanking Him this morning for all he has done for my own B. It is sometimes very sweet to plead for one another at our Father's throne. Do you always remember five? I almost always get now, and I hope you will meet me. There is a nice verse in our chapter for last Saturday,— 'Cease from thine own wisdom.' It seemed to me such a sweet thought, that I was not to have any wisdom of my own, but to lie like a little child (who, you know, has no wisdom of its own), and leave everything to the infinite wisdom as well as tender love of my Father. But how far removed am I from such a childlike spirit! I think that is one cause of my dark, unhappy state, that I will always reason, in place of believe. But He has given the command, and He will give the power to perform it.—Your ever attached friend and sister in Jesus."

" P____, October 11, 1843…MY BELOVED J____,—Everybody is out of the house but myself, and I think the sweetest, and I hope, also, the most profitable, way in which I can spend my quiet time is in writing to you about the things which free grace has taught us both to love. I have not had an answer to my last letter; but I don't stand on ceremony with my own beloved one. How I do weary to see you, and to kneel again with you at the feet of Jesus! That is our happiest and safest place. I wish I loved more to be there; but my soul gets more earthly every day. How continually I abuse His lovingkindness! I wonder my heart is so desperately hard, as continually to pierce the bosom on which I lean. am greatly tempted to doubt my being a child of God at all. But I have been trying this morning to look away from my vile self to the Holy One, and to; trust in His infinite merits, even with the consciousness; of my utter worthlessness, which I feel very much just now. I like to see my sins, for I don't think I ever saw sin as I ought; but I must not add to their guilt by doubting the merits of the precious blood of the Lamb. He says, 'the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin,' and I dare not doubt after that. But oh, it is difficult, as I daresay you well know, to come to God with confidence, when you feel that there never was such a sinner as you living. And then Satan tries hard to keep me away, and to make me think hard thoughts of God; but 'greater is He that is in me than he that is in the world.' I feel that if God did not continually draw me back to Himself, I should never even have a wish to return. This text has been much on my mind lately—'It is of the Lord's mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not.' His compassions fail not! Isn't that fine? We soon weary of Him; but He never has, and never will weary of us. Is it not a very sweet text for to-day? I hope you have heard Jesus' own sweet voice saying to you, 'Fear not; only believe.' How are you getting on? You will be far beyond me on the road; earth keeps me back. I sometimes feel unwilling to forsake all and to follow Christ; but

He will make me willing. You must ask that He may;—that I may 'count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.' It is a sore struggle at times with such a carnal heart as mine. But He has promised that neither 'things present, nor things to come, shall ever be able to separate me from His love;' and that I shall come off 'more than conqueror through Him that loved me.' Oh! J____, when shall I ever forget myself? Never till that wonderful time when I shall cast my crown at His feet, and confess, with unutterable and unselfish joy, that Christ is all in all. Then we shall love Him and one another, with unsinning hearts." "P____, November 14, 1843…MY DEAREST MRS. H.,—I am so unlike a child of God, that I often doubt my being one; but when I think of His free invitation, and of such a blessed verse as this, 'It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners,' I can't help feeling as poor Joseph did; if Christ came to save sinners, why not me? I wonder if any one ever was so full of earthliness as I? It has been a great burden to me lately. When I long to be spiritual and holy, I cannot; I have such a vile body of sin and death, which is opposed to all that is holy. 'I find a law in my members, warring against the law of my mind.' Don't you often feel inclined to cry with Paul, 'O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?' What a wonderful love the Spirit must have that dwells in such unholy hearts as ours, at least mine! I think God is shewing me that there is really nothing in me in which I can glory. I always want to see something good in myself. I am afraid, when I feel that I am altogether unworthy; but then I have all the more need of Jesus. 'He came to save sinners;' that is my only plea. I was wishing this morning that I might be entirely devoted to His service. I long to forget myself, and to have no other wish on earth but 'to shew forth the praise of Him who hath called me out of darkness into his marvellous light.' Will you ask, dear friend, for E. and me, that we may do this? that we may shine as lights in this dark world? that everything we do may be done from a single eye to the glory of God? How holy and happy would this life be! The very wish I feel to be happiness, such as I never felt in anything in this world. Don't you feel, when you can sincerely wish to live but for Jesus, that the very wish is happiness? There is something very sweet in holiness; it is very painful to have such an unholy heart; but Jesus is able and willing to make it holy ; and then, even though I were holy, it is not on that account that I am accepted, but ' in the Beloved.' Don't you think that our unholiness should make us prize Christ more? I wish I were beside you an hour just now, that I might ask you about this subject, for I am so ignorant about everything, that I am afraid of trusting to myself; but you will tell me I have a Teacher who will never let me go wrong, if I trust in Him; but I am very unteachable. How much dear E. and I have to be grateful for! I feel this when I see all the beloved souls about us feeding on the husks of this world, while we feed on 'the finest of the wheat.' Oh, let us praise Him, and pray that His love may kindle ours, and may constrain us to walk so that others may be led to Him. I blush when I think how I dishonour Jesus by every look, and word, and action. I am glad when I think that you pray for us. Ask this, and ask it constantly, that we 'may shew forth His praise;' not our own, but His. I am always wanting others to praise me.O to have no wish but that He may be glorified! I find it difficult to be contented, nay, happy to be nothing, that He may be all. Ask that Jesus would make use of us, that He would use us as instruments in His service in any way, only that He would do it."

"P____, December 16, 1843…Your letter was blest to me, for it made me more desirous of being near Him, and like Him; and it also sent me to the throne of grace to plead for you. How ashamed I should be if you knew how cold and feeble my prayers for you are! You must ask that I may live nearer the Cross, and then I shall have my cold heart warmed. I have been reading the account of

the deaths of several eminent Christians to-day, and I feel such a strange kind of longing, anxious desire for something, I know not what. I want to die like them, and to go to Jesus; but I am afraid I am not prepared to die. The other world is sometimes so near, that it is very solemn. Don't you sometimes feel your heart swell when you think of Jesus? I have felt His presence to-day, I think, but I don't feel peaceful or happy; I feel dissatisfied with myself; I long to do something for Christ, but I don't know what to do. I am afraid I am like the barren figtree; when I feel in this way, I generally go to pray, but something always tells me that I should not be praying, but working for Christ, and that it is of no use praying when I don't do any thing; this often makes me unhappy at prayer. Did you ever feel this? Perhaps it is a temptation of Satan to keep me from prayer.[17] There is one part of your letter I want to speak to you about. In speaking of God's love to you, you say it is ' in the Beloved.' I wish I could tell you all I feel, dearest, but it is so difficult in writing. I want to know how God looks uponme. You know I am all fall of sin. Now, if I am in Christ, does He look upon Christ, and not on me at all? Should I forget myself, and think only of what Christ is? Is it a different thing, or is it the same thing,—trusting in what Christ has done, and in what He is?[18] I wish you would write me what you feel about these things, for I feel more dark and ignorantjust now than ever I did. Is it right to say, I am sinful, but Christ is holy; I am unrighteous, but Christ is righteous; I am weak, but Christ is strong? I am in great fear that I have not right views of Christ, and I am afraid, if I die, that I may find I have been deceiving myself. You must pray for me, that God would enlighten my eyes in the knowledge of Christ; and if you are able, I hope you will not be long of answering this part of my letter, as I am in an anxious unsettled state. Remember I expect my usual Christmas letter. The first Sabbath after the New Year is our Communion, and I am anxious to get clear views before going...I see your birthday and mine are both on the Sabbath, so that, if we are spared, and in health, we shall spend them in God's house. Perhaps, J____, it will be in the courts above; He alone knows. Let us leave the time to Him. But let us be prepared for the call; may the call to each of us be, 'Friend, come up higher.' Or perhaps we may spend these days together in God's courts below. Isn't it curious that R.'s text [19] (8th July) is a prayer, to which mine is the answer? I think it is very sweet. About our reading, let us fix Leviticus. I think it will be very sweet, and very profitable. R. thought of it too, and besides, it is your choice, and that is enough for me.

O that it may be much blest to us all! May our souls feed on Christ! I rejoice with you, beloved one, in the sweet glimpse you had of our glorious three-one God. May you often 'draw water with joy out of the wells of salvation.' I can a little understand what you say about praising Him for what He is in Himself. I think it is the finest, holiest feeling we ever have, just to praise and thank Him that there is such a glorious, holy being as Himself. I am very happy when I can feel this ; but ah! it is seldom; it is a fine thing to be able to praise; it is like heaven, even than prayer; if we praised more, we should not so often have to complain that we cannot pray. Mr. R. says, 'Praise clears the breast for prayer.'"

"May the everlasting arms be underneath you this night, my precious friend, and may the everlasting love of Jesus fill your whole soul. O to be able to tear every other idol away from our hearts, and to receive Him as our all in all, our satisfying portion!"

"Monday ,18th.—I must finish this letter, but I have not much heart for it ; I feel completely burdened with a load of sin, and I can't see Jesus bearing them all away. I sometimes weary very much for that time when I shall be free from sin, and when God, our own tender, loving Father, will

’wipe away all tears from our eyes.’"

"How differently God treats us from man! R . and I have a hard time of it often. But how grateful should we be that we are counted worthy to suffer shame for His name! I trust it is in His cause that we suffer. But I am afraid that I too often cause His name to be evil spoken of. What a dreadful thing to bring reproach upon the name of Christ, to wound Him in the house of His friends! What a long-suffering God we have! I was rejoicing this morning that the gospel of Christ humbles the sinner, and brings all the glory to Him. I am glad it humbles us, for the dust is the fittest place for us. ’God be merciful to us, sinners!’ It is fine that we can say that. Should not you like to have Mary’s place, sitting at the Master’s feet? Oh! it is sweet, when the heart is wounded by the unkindness and harsh words of man, to think of the tender, holy love of Jesus to us, unholy sinners. When we ask wisdom, He gives it us liberally, and ’ upbraideth not.’ O that, being forgiven much, we loved much! Will you pray for my beloved R. and me, that we may be enabled to ’walk wisely towards them that are without;’ and that we may not dishonour Christ in any way, but may ’let our light shine before men, that they, seeing our good works, may glorify our Father who is in heaven’? We have many troubles, and our sins bring us into many more (at least mine do); but He has said that He will deliver us out of them all. How selfish of me, to be thinking so much of my own sorrows, in place of feeling for those who have not Jesus to comfort them at all times! But my selfishness is intense!…I don’t quite like one part of your letter—where you say that every sin lessens our weight of glory; for then I don’t think I shall have any left when I reach heaven; for I never do anything but sin. There is no good thing in meat all. However, if I can get to heaven, I shall see Jesus, and be like Him, and oh, I trust, be near Him; and what can I need more?"

"P____, December 23, 1843…MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,—I have entirely lost sight of Christ, and I am sorely tempted to give it all up together. I am often, for hours, in agony at the throne of grace, and come away as miserable as I went. And I do not feel sorrowful, as I used to do, at the sight of my sins; but I feel angry, angry with myself, even with God. I can see nothing but sin, and Jesus frowning upon me; and then my heart is unwilling to be humble. I want to be humbled, but still my heart will rise against it. And then, when I pray so earnestly, and Christ seems never to mind me, I am tempted to have unkind and angry thoughts about Him. What am I to do? You will say, if I am not a child of God, go to Him as a sinner. But I cannot go; I do not know how. I do not know what believing in Jesus means. I am quite dark; and oh! I am afraid, unwilling to learn. Our Communion is to be soon, and I dare not go in my present state; and I am afraid to stay away. I am utterly cast down, cannot see, or feel, or believe anything. I wish very much you would write me a letter, telling me about Christ, and about the way of salvation, for I am as ignorant as a heathen. I know nothing. Oh, dear friend, tell me about your precious Lord, and how I may come to Him; and I will pray that He, who knows my case, may give you a word in season to my weary, guilty, sad soul. I sometimes think I shall be in hell after all, and see you and J. W. in heaven beside Jesus. But no, I could not stand that. I must be there too. But oh! I am so full of sin; you don’t know my heart at all. When you pray for me, will you praise Him too on my behalf? for surely, though my unbelief prevents me seeing it, I have much for which to praise. Why has He ever looked upon me at all? I have no claim upon Him. I never sought Him. Yes; I can still praise. Even as I write, my heart seems to soften a little. Tell me how I can get to Him. I long to have her place who sat at His feet, bathing His feet with her tears; but I do not know how to go, and I am afraid. I am so vile. Are you to have any additional prayer-meetings at this season? I am glad our weekly meeting is on

Christmasday, for I find that the worldly doings going on at this time have a very hurtful effect upon my soul. I sometimes find that half an hour's worldliness drives every spiritual feeling from my heart. We have a prayer-meeting in the Free Church here every Wednesday evening. I hope you will sometimes remember us on these evenings at the footstool."

Such are some specimens of her first two years' correspondence after her conversion. We find in it striking progress. It shews us the resolute "pressing forward." Her hope has anchored upon the kingdom to come, and her eye is on Jesus. In spite of the flesh, the evil one, the heart of unbelief, the taunting world, she struggles forward. In much loneliness, and weariness, and grief, yet with strange joy, and quiet rest, and heavenly fellowship between, she walks with God. The way is not smooth; nor is the sunshine always on it. But she faints not, nor tarries. Nothing can daunt her, or turn her back. She has counted the cost, and she is willing to pay it when demanded.

01.07. Conflicts

Conflicts

M____ knew that, in leaving the world, she was not at once passing into THE BEST. She had found rest in so far as the knowledge of God's favour gives rest to the weary even here. She rested on the Restingplace. She had "peace with God." But still there was trouble. "Innumerable evils compassed her about," and she could say at times, "I am so troubled that I cannot speak." It was not the trouble arising from uncertainty as to the way she was pursuing, or as to the character of that Saviour on whose cross her eye was resting. But it was trouble arising from the "flesh," the "old nature" within, and from adversaries on every side. Thus, though there was peace with God, there was, in other respects, unceasing warfare. For the Church is not an army on parade, but on the battle-field. She knew this, and set her face to it. At times the battle was sore, seeming, not seldom, to go against her for a time, as if the enemy prevailed. Yet she did not yield, though she was ready to faint. She put on the whole armour of God, that she might war a good warfare. She faced each enemy as he came up, though with fear and; trembling. Whatever it might cost her, she would not retreat, nor throw away either sword or shield. There were fightings without, and fears within; but she kept the field, and ceased not till she overcame. Her conflicts with herself may be seen in such passages as these:—

"December 27, 1842…I always meet you at ten and five; but it is often a hard battle. Sometimes I do nothing but weep the whole time. How is it with you? Is Jesus still near, still precious? Ah! He is near, even when you don't feel Him! I would give worlds to feel Him near. I pant for Him at all times. Does not your heart feel desolate when He hides His face?"

After this, she wrote thus to me:—"I have such conflict in prayer, that I often go with dread. Sometimes I do nothing but weep; and they are not sweet tears, such as it is sometimes a relief to shed; but they are bitter. I wonder what is the matter. I never in my life experienced so much agony as I have for the last week…My love is fallen very cold; but there is nothing that gives me any joy but Christ; and He will teach me to love. I would not go back: to the world and Satan again—no. Even suffering with God is more glorious than an eternity of the world's joys. 'Whom have I in heaven but thee?' Oh, is it not ecstasy to tell God that?—that you don't want anything but Himself—that He is your portion?" To her friend she wrote:—"I have great conflicts in prayer just now. think Satan tempts me much. Every day he tempts me to think there is no God at all. But still, I am never so happy as at prayer. I feel so sorrowful,—such a void in my heart, that it is ecstasy to go and throw myself at the feet of Jesus and weep there. It is sweeter to weep at the feet of Jesus than to rejoice in all the pleasures of the world." And elsewhere to the same friend:—"I have not had a happy time except a short while on Tuesday, in the evening. I am sorely tempted by Satan in many ways, especially by infidel thoughts. I feel as if Jesus had left me, and Satan got entire hold of me. I cannot describe to you the painful longings I have at times to feel Jesus near me, and to know that He is love. I think I would be contented if I could get but one feeling that He is love, into my heart. It is great agony to feel as if He were frowning on me. I think it is a little hell within me. O

to see Him face to face, and never more cause Him, by my sins, to hide His blessed countenance from me!" In a letter to myself she says:—"I cannot by any means get near God, and you know no one can live far from Jesus who has ever felt the blessedness of being near Him. I only know what it is to miss Him, not to feel Him near. I cannot realise His presence, and yet I do so long for it. When I am praying I feel as if I were repeating strange things; as if my own words seemed strange to me. I wonder if any one ever felt as I do, and what they did. Often, in speaking to people, I do not believe what I am saying. Is it not a wonder that God is not tired of me? In spite of all that Satan says, He must be a long-suffering God, for He still bears with me. Why cannot I believe that He is love, and lean on Him and be at rest? One reason I want to be at peace with God, and to be delivered from Satan's delusions, is that I may feel for others, and be able to pray for them, and to speak to them, really believing that they are in danger. I cannot glorify God in this state, and what is the use of living if I do not live to Him?"

Again, in her diary, she writes:—" Wednesday, 6th.—Have passed a very miserable day; I cannot get near Christ, and I cannot pray, and I cannot speak for Him, or realise spiritual things at all. Have been meeting my beloved friend at the throne of grace (five o'clock), and am greatly relieved in my soul. At first I was almost in despair; I could not pray; I could hardly even get the luxury of tears. I have wept so much lately, my tears seem dried up; but at last I was enabled to rest my weary soul on the faithful word of a faithful God; and I have found that a sure foundation. I have not found joy yet; but I have found peace, the peace that Jesus alone can give; His own peace; precious peace; sweet peace; it indeed 'passeth all understanding.' Had much delight and some earnestness in pleading for my dear E., that Jesus would bless her, and make her a blessing where she now is."

" Thursday, October 19, 1843.—Had a painful season this morning; had a sight of my sinfulness and misery in going away from Christ, and longed to be received back again."

" Saturday, 2lst.—I felt this morning more than ever that religion must be all or nothing. I had a time of agony to-day. My corruptions seemed to rise up as if they would overwhelm me. I wrestled for an hour, with strong crying and tears ; but I could not find relief. I longed for a broken heart; but every moment it got harder and harder. I had such angry, hard thoughts of God, and I could not feel humbled. This passage melted me a little, 'Will He plead against me with His great power? no, but He would put strength in me.' This promise was fulfilled to me; for though I could not say I have found Him whom my soul loveth, yet He gave me strength to continue to plead with Him. I found a sweet peace, a resting of this weary soul of mine upon Jesus, my God, in pleading for my beloved family, and in committing all our concerns to Him; and I feel peaceful and happy in the thought that He would direct everything for the good of our precious souls."

" Tuesday, November 5.—Let me record the loving-kindness of the Lord. I had a sore battle this morning with unbelief and Satan's fiery darts; but Jesus at last appeared for my help, and my soul returned to its quiet rest. Blessed be His name for ever. I can say, I sought the Lord, and He heard me, and delivered me from all my fears."

" Friday, 22 d.—Had a sore time this morning, battling with sin. I cannot get rid of it, and I cannot see Jesus bearing it. I am dark and sorrowful. I am bowed down greatly. I go mourning all the day."

" Tuesday, December 26.—It is very strange,—for some time, since I have been trying to give myself up more unreservedly to God and to His service, I have been so unhappy! I feel as if Christ were angry with me, and I cannot get rid of this feeling. Perhaps it is the enemy making a more vigorous effort to keep me back from Christ, when he sees me trying more earnestly to be entirely His. My consolation is, 'Greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world.'"

"April 1, 1844.—Felt great desires for spiritual blessings, but very unbelieving. Lord, increase my faith! I have been in deep, deep waters for long now; I cannot tell what I feel. God knows it all, and He alone can help me. O that I could trust Him! I feel such a hard heart. It will not melt. Have been looking at Mr. M'Cheyne's life. It seems very lovely. O to be like him!—no, rather, to be like Christ!"

" November 13.—Am not nearly so happy as I was, for I have not such a clear sight of the finished work of Christ as I had. But I humbly trust God is carrying on the work in my soul; and He has promised to carry it on to the end. O that that time were come! I am weary of this body of sin; but I thank my gracious God that I am fighting, and that I do not fight in my own strength. I think He is teaching me that when I am weak, then I am strong. Glory will make up for all we suffer here."

Her affection for relatives and friends was of the intensest kind. She might say:— "To be beloved is all I need, And whom I love, I love indeed." From this loving sensitiveness many of her conflicts arose. "I have often prayed to God that He would make me love you less," were her words to a dear friend in Christ. Coldness or neglect pained her sorely. To this she was much exposed, from her peculiar position among friends, and her steadfast consistency of character. They who had loved her, sometimes looked coldly on her, because of her faithfulness, her decision, and her preference of the closet's solitude to all earthly companionships. She felt this most keenly, and was only comforted by remembering for whose sake it was that she was thus disesteemed. A conflict of this kind the following passage brings out:—"I sometimes think I am getting silly, when so many trifles give me pain ; but, oh! it is no trifle that has made me wretched all this day. I think there is a struggle going on in my heart betwixt Christ and ____. I cannot tell you the agony I have at times when I think she does not love me. Oh! what shall I do? Must we love Jesus better than our own? Of course we must.

I know it; but still it is hard to bear."

Again she writes:—"My beloved ____, I have been much harassed of late. We have suffered a small martyrdom, I think. You who have such precious privileges, and so many to join with you, cannot conceive the inexpressible delight I feel at the idea of being free to read, pray, speak, and think about Jesus. And to hear Him preached, to speak for hours with you, my beloved one, oh! it is too much happiness! And then to pray with you for others!" Another sore conflict which she had to endure was respecting a peculiar kind of preaching, which had greatly perplexed and darkened her. She thus wrote to me, in January 1842:—"I have been wishing to write to you for some time, but was prevented by your saying in your last letter that I should go more to God with my difficulties. I must, however, write to you, for, even if you don't answer me, it is a great relief to write, as I am in very great distress. I shall tell you the reason. I had a conversation with Mr. ____. I forget what he said at that time, but tonight I went to a meeting of his, where he spoke a great deal of people getting a false, delusive peace…What alarmed me most of all, was his saying that a man that does not see himself to be deserving of hell, has no right to think himself saved. He repeated that three or four times, insisting upon it. Now I felt that if that is the case, then I am lost,

for I cannot see that. I know it, for God says it ; but I cannot feel it, I cannot see it. Have I, then, no right to think myself saved?...I have been, and still am, in great distress. My mind is in a complete chaos. I try to tell all my difficulties to God, but I get no comfort; for I am frightened now, that I am not humbled enough; for Mr. ____ seems to think it pride to say you have peace, without being completely humbled. He has driven me from my compassionate, blessed Saviour. Last night I was in such agony at the thought that I had not come to Christ! I long to go to Him. My whole heart burns for Him. What shall I do? Oh! what shall I do? Will you write to me, and tell me, not how I am to believe, but what I am to believe? The Bible says, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.' Now, what is believing on Jesus Christ? Oh! tell me, tell me! put me out of this misery, for I can hardly bear it. What can Mr ____ — mean when he says it is not enough to believe that Christ died for our sins? He appears to be deeply humbled on account of sin himself; but is it not the sight that he has had of Jesus that has humbled him? Must we be thus humbled before coming to Christ? I should be inclined to come to Jesus and tell Him that I am not humble at all, but that I bring my heart to Him that He may humble it; and casting myself thus upon His mercy, am I not saved?[20] Mr. ____ says the way of salvation is this;—to go to God, feeling that you are a lost sinner, and pleading His promise in Isaiah 43:25-26; and that God will justify you. Now, if I do not feel that I am lost, and that I deserve hell, what am I to do? Wait till I do? I think that would be making a Saviour of our humility. He seems to be afraid that people don't feel sin enough, and that they are not humble enough. But I think he might leave that more to God. It is seeing that we have nothing to do but to accept salvation, that really humbles. I liked the other way of preaching the truth much better, because it always drove me from myself to Christ. I could then cling to the cross. Everything in me drove me to Christ. But now I am afraid. When he spoke of that man not having saving faith unless he saw himself deserving of hell, I was afraid to cling to the cross, for, oh! I have a proud heart!…Surely that preaching must be bad which drives from the Saviour. My whole heart melts when I think of Him; and, oh! am I not His?"

Shortly after, she thus wrote to me:—"I was very glad to get your last, for I greatly needed it. I wish I could tell you that I have again found peace; but I think it has been too severely shaken to be easily restored. Yet at times I am happy; but it is only for a moment. There is such a weight of sadness on me that I cannot shake off. I am trying to be patient, but, oh! I fear much more will be needed before I learn submission. Mr. ____ has done me one good thing at least; he has made me search my heart; and oh, the sin, the fearful sin that is there! I never saw myself so sinful, so utterly without any good thing, as I do now. Did you ever feel what it was to be sick at the sight of yourself? No. You are not like me. We are all sinners, I know; but there never was one like me. Oh, is it not blessed, most blessed, that God not only gives us forgiveness, but makes us holy? That is my longing desire—to be holy ; but I fear it shews much unbelief to be weighed down by a sense of sin, because we know that Christ's blood cleanses from allsin. Should not our sins make us cleave the closer to the cross, where they are all washed away?"

There is such a thing as "making sad the hearts of those whom God has not made sad;" and such seems to have been the case, so touchingly narrated in the above letter. God overruled it for blessing, but that did not make the evil the less, nor alter the responsibility of those who were the instruments. To preach the law, man's pollution, the heart's deceitfulness, the difficulty of being Christians, and the liability to selfdeceit,—is this all that is meant by searching and faithful preaching? Alas! and is the cross of Christ not the grand touchstone for deceived souls? Law will

not do, terror will not do, man’s tests will not do. It is the uplifted cross that sifts, and tests, and undeceives. It is the preaching of Christ that shews men whether they have received Christ. Man’s wisdom suggests the experiment of hiding the cross and exhibiting only the law, in order to arouse and alarm; but the result, in such a case, is only to harden and anneal ; or if any conscience be disquieted, it is not that of the sinner or the slumberer, but only of the sensitive and tenderspirited believer. Those who try to humble their hearers by some legal method of their own, are fostering the very sleep and selfdeception which they mourn over, and furnishing food for that self-righteousness which nothing can extirpate but the cross.[21] M____ on one occasion thus described the difference between the two kinds of preaching:—"When I hear ____, I am ashamed to believe; when I hear ____, I am ashamed not to believe." Again: "When I hear ____, I am afraid to come to Christ; when I hear ____, I am afraid to stay away from Him." And again: "____ makes me ashamed of my faith; ____ makes me ashamed of my unbelief." Again: "I think that every one who really believes, finds it difficult enough without his making it more so." And again: "Mr. ____ hardly preaches about Christ’s love at all; and I am sure that nothing else ever will draw a sinner; does he not say, I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me?" Once more: "Mr. ____ spoke of Christ being so precious when we were humbled for sin; but I could not help feeling Him precious, though I am not half humbled enough."

She was also a good deal troubled in spirit by the doctrinal controversies as to the atonement and election, and the Spirit’s work. "I am troubled about doctrinal points," she writes, "I am so afraid of getting into error." Into error she was never allowed to be led one hair’s breadth. She held fast the Father’s electing love, the Son’s redeeming work for the Church, and the Spirit’s work in all its fulness. God, not man, had taught her these; and in her own experience she found how true they were! God kept her in all her perplexities on the right hand and on the left; and in her we see the exemplification of a statement which old Fraser of Brea makes in reference to the errors of his day, and those by whom they were adopted:—"I never," says he, "knew any extraordinary tender walker (with God) that stumbled into these."[22]

Throughout all her letters, the intimations of conflict may be traced— conflict alike with error and with sin. For she saw in both of these her enemies—enemies of kindred character; and both she dreaded, the former no less than the latter. The spirit of the age makes light of error, as if it were not sin. Even some who call themselves Christians, have lost their dread of error, and hurry on from opinion to opinion, exulting in their freedom from old fetters and trammels, reckoning themselves peculiarly honest and unprejudiced. Alas for truth in such a case! How can it be reached? Alas for the love of truth! How can it exist where there is no fear of error? The love of opinion grows rank, but the love of truth has fallen into the sere and yellow leaf. The love of opinion is but selfwill, pride, and lawlessness; its fruit mustbe error, for "with the lowly is wisdom." The love of truth is the offspring of a will co-ordinate with the will of God. The former knows nothing of the inward conflict; the latter knows it too well. To side with God for righteousness and for truth, necessarily, in such a world as this, involves warfare. Nor is it the warfare of a day, but of a lifetime. He who has found it otherwise, and has had no occasion for "the whole armour of God," would do well to conclude that Satan still counts him as one of his own.

Chapter 10

01.08. Labours and Longings

Labours and Longings IN her diary we find this entry: "I am distressed that I have nothing to do for Christ. I seem the only useless Christian in the world."

Yet all the while she ceased not to pray for souls, and, according to her opportunities, to labour for them. All her letters (very unconsciously on her part) bear testimony to her zeal and fervour. She could not be idle. When she could not speak, she could write. When she could not write, she could give or send a tract. When she could not do even this, she could pray. In one of her letters she thus speaks:— "I am unhappy when I think that I am of no use in this world, and that all God's children are working for Him except me. I often think I am the barren fig-tree ; and that Jesus will say, 'Cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?' I do not know yet in what way I can work for Christ; but I have laid my prayers at the foot of His cross; and I know that God will answer them in His own time and way; not for my sake, or on account of my prayers, or my earnestness; but for the sake of Him who died on that cross for such vile sinners; and I know that God, who spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, will with Him freely give us all things. Perhaps He may give me an opportunity of writing to some beloved one about their precious soul, and about that Saviour who is so willing that all should come to Him that they may have life; or, perhaps He may enable me to speak for Him to poor, perishing sinners here. I feel so happy at the thought of living for Jesus. I do not know what has given me such an ardent desire to be enabled to do something for Him. I wish I were a man, and then I would be a missionary!" In every direction she looked round for labour. She could not rest if she were not doing something for Him who had bought her with His blood. Wherever she went, though but for a brief sojourn, she could not be idle. When she visited Kelso, she sought a district to labour in, or some souls to watch over and pray for. Almost all her letters give proof of this. One will suffice at present:—

" Kelso, May 22, 1844…MY DARLING E____, Mr. Bonar has given me a district, and I go nearly every day to speak to the people, and to read to them, and give them tracts; and I cannot tell you what delight I have had in it; God enables me to speak to them so often, and to pray with them. Will you pray much for me that I may win at least one soul? But I want to get many more than that. I shall tell you more particularly about some of them, that you may pray specially for them. There is one old woman, very self-righteous, about whom I am very anxious; for I think God is opening her eyes to see that she has been all wrong hitherto. have sometimes such nearness to Jesus, and such sweetness when I am praying with her, that I am sure He is there, and that He is dealing with her soul. I feel it sometimes very solemn to speak to her, she is so attentive, and so desirous to hear; and the light seems to break in upon her every now and then; but she is still dark; she is not yet willing to come as an empty, sinner,and God alone can make her willing. Oh! ask that He would!

"She said yesterday, that she never had felt before as she does now, that she sees she is not right, and that she can get no rest. Oh, I am glad she can get no rest till she finds it where alone it is to be found, in Jesus, the sinner's Friend."

"There is a sick girl, too, to whom I often speak, but I have not much pleasure in it, for she is not anxious; but God can and will bless His own Word. Pray for her also. She has a sister, a Christian, which must be a great blessing to her. There is an old woman, also, about whom I am anxious, for I don't think she knows Jesus; but there is another, and oh! what a darling she is! a real child of God! If you only saw her face when she speaks of Jesus,—it beams! I said to her, 'Do you love Jesus?' She said, 'I canna love Him weel enough;' and when I spoke to her about the hymn I sent you, and said, 'I shall read you a hymn about the Pearl of greatest price,' she replied, 'Ay, He is that!' She seems to dwell much upon this, that it is God who must first love us , else we would never love Him. She always says, 'My love is so cold, He must draw me with the cords of love.' In speaking of the sufferings of Jesus, she said, 'Isn't it woesome?' How I did long for you to come into the room beside us! I wish you were here with me; how exquisite it would be to go to the district together! I am going very soon again to see her. You must remember her, too,—this aged sister in the Lord. She can scarcely speak, she is so old and frail; but it is all the sweeter to hear her speak of Jesus with such stammering lips."

"It is a very solemn time this. There is something so strange and so new in it all, that I can hardly stand it often; and then Satan is so busy with me; but Jesus is stronger than all. It is curious how simple the way of salvation seems to me when I am speaking to others; it seems so free; there is really nothing between us and Jesus but our own unbelief; we won't trust Him. Oh! we are great wretches!" "How grieved I shall be to leave all these souls! I think my heart will break. But there are souls in P____ as precious as those here."

"We had a lovely sermon on Sabbath, from Mr. Lang, on this verse—'I am the way, and the truth, and the life.' It was all Jesus, and very precious it was to my soul. Jesus is the way,—not our faith, or our feelings, or our anxiety, or our deep work, or anything in us or about us, but simply Jesus; He is the way to the Father, and He alone. Oh, it is a blessed way! You and I don't want any other way, do we, R____?" In her own neighbourhood she visited most faithfully; not needing the invitation or urgency of others, but herself eagerly planning and carrying out labours of love. In the Sabbath-school, in the cottage, on the highway, or wherever she could find or make an opportunity, she laboured joyfully and untiringly. In the month of August 1842, she and her sister devised another work, which she thus refers to in one of her letters:— "We wish to begin a little school for poor children; what we need is a little money to hire a room, and purchase a few books for them. We want to take about a dozen, and teach them to read, and tell them about Jesus." The plan here devised was vigorously carried out, in spite of many hindrances and disappointments. In October 1842, she wrote thus to me:—"I must tell you how we have come on with our school. Yesterday was the first day. R. had all the big girls, and I the little ones. We got on creditably;—how I wish you had been with us! It was so sweet when we all sang together 'The Lord's my Shepherd,' and then knelt down to pray that the Good Shepherd would teach us to feed His lambs. We must not rest till each child can say 'The Lord's my Shepherd,' I am rather ashamed of some in my class, for each day two or three of them have begun to cry to get home; and I have to send them away in a great hurry, lest the others should follow their example. I am going up to Edinburgh next week to get a few lessons at the Infant School. I find it a very difficult task to make them listen. I am rather disappointed, for I thought it would be so sweet to tell them about Jesus; but they don't understand, poor things! Some of them are very ignorant. They seem scarcely to have heard of God at all." Many (it has been said) "only work enough to prove that they

are unwilling to work." It was not so with M____. Her whole soul was in her work. She neither lingered nor trifled. Not much, indeed, lay in her power. She had no one to direct her operations, or to encourage her under disappointments. She had no one to lean upon, or to aid her. Yet she pursued her solitary path of doing what she could for souls that she saw to be so precious, and for a Master whom she loved so well.

"I have got fifteen poor families," she writes, "that I give tracts to, and R. has got twelve. You must not forget to pray for them. They are all careless, I fear; but we must go on speaking to them, and praying for them, and we have God's promise that His word shall not return void. That promise is a precious one; and don't you think that we should always expect that His word, spoken in faith, will be blest?" She could not rest satisfied with want of success. Her heart was set on serving Christ and saving souls. When one plan seemed to fail, she tried another; when one door was shut, she sought entrance at another. Nor could failure and disappointment dishearten her, however sorely they troubled her. Finding, for instance, that the children whom she had undertaken to teach, remained unimpressed, and were sometimes very unruly, she speaks thus with mingled faith and sadness: "It is a hard trial to our patience; but we must persevere, trusting that God will bless our otherwise vain labours. He has more to bear with from us than we shall ever have from these poor things." And then she adds: "E. and I have adopted a plan, to see if we can do them some good. We keep in one girl by herself after the rest are away, and speak with her for a little. Perhaps it may make an impression on them. We kept one of the worst to-day." In thus labouring for Christ among the young, she thus expresses her sense of responsibility in the work:—"I have been rather frightened lately, when I think how responsible we shall be for them. It is a solemn thought that such ignorant and sinful creatures as we are, should take upon us the care of so many precious souls; but I think we must trust the more entirely and unreservedly to Him who has said, 'Cast all your care upon Him, for He careth for you.' You must ask Him to perfect His strength in our weakness, that we may be increasingly fearful of ourselves, and confiding in His strength. I never felt so weak or so sinful as I do now, when I have more to do than I have ever had. I often get discouraged, till I remember that I am but a tool in His hands, that His is all the power, and, oh! that His is all the GLORY. I like to think of that, and to know that Jesus will be glorified, though I be humbled in the very dust. One thing encourages me, and that is, that I have always had so much sweetness in praying for our success; but still I get terribly distressed when I think that perhaps, through my sin, any of them may be lost. How sweet it would be if we were to meet them all in heaven! Our districts get on pretty well; all the people listen to our poor words. One woman was affected even to tears. I like her very much. She is one of my people, and her little girl is to be one of my scholars. There is another of mine whom I should like you very much to speak to if you were here. She is an old woman, which should make us more anxious about her. O that I were taking you to see all our poor people! That would be a happy day. I often think of you at prayer-time. O that there were an altar erected to God in thishouse! The young man I wrote to you about is dead. How glad I am that Mr. Burns went to see him! They say he prayed just before he died, and then fell asleep, and died quite calmly. Oh, if he fell asleep in Jesus! There is something unspeakably sweet in the thought of falling asleep in Jesus—in the Shepherd's arms."

Most diligently did she prepare beforehand for her work. Unlike too many Sabbath-school teachers, who seem to think that they can just go at once to their class and talk to the children, without the trouble of previous preparation, she sought most conscientiously, both by prayer and

study, to fit herself for teaching her little ones. She felt that she must be fitted herself, ere she could pour out even so much as a drop upon others. She went first to God to be taught , ere she ventured to teach others the things respecting Him and His Son. She grudged no pains in qualifying herself. She prayed, she read, she wrote, she madeinquiries, she went to other schools and teachers;—all for the purpose of fitting herself for instructing her little ones.[23] We may insert here one or two specimens of her preparations. Here is one of her simple addresses:—

"My dear children, there is a beautiful verse in God's Holy Word I should like to speak to you about, for a little. You will find it in John's Gospel, in the eighth chapter, and at the thirty-seventh verse:—'Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.' It is Jesus, God's dear Son, and the Saviour of poor sinners, who speaks, and He is telling you, and every one, that if any sinner on earth, even a very little child, comes to Him to be saved, He will in no wise (that is, not on any account) cast them out. I want to shew you, dear children, from the many sweet stories in the Bible, that Jesus is true to His word, and that He never has, and never will, cast out any who come to Him; and oh! as you read about those, some of them children like yourselves, who have sought and found Jesus, pray to that kind Saviour that He would make you also willing to come to Him, and if you go, you are assured He will not cast you out."

Here again is a hymn which she wrote for them in the end of 1844:— [24] NEW YEAR'S HYMN "With rapid pace another year Has gone into the past;

Eternity will soon be here; Time will not always last. And this new year we now behold, Will just as quickly fly;

Our life is like a tale that's told; The youngest soon must die.

Then let us not too fondly cleave To any earthly joy,

The dearest ties we ever have, Death will at last destroy.

Let Jesus all our portion be; He never will remove;

None satisfies the soul but He; How precious is His love!

Dear children, seek the Lamb of God— "The Life—the Truth—the Way;" He'll wash you in His precious blood; Oh, do not stay away!

He bids you come, for, hear His voice, " My son, give me thine heart;"

Oh, may you make the happiest choice, And choose the better part! This year will be a happy one,

If Jesus is your friend;

And when your years on earth are done, Your joys will have no end.

Then Jesus face to face you'll view, And join the saints above,

Who sing the song that's always new— Praise to redeeming love. In reference to her labours of love, it may be as well to introduce here some extracts from a special journal which she kept:—

"November 12, 1845.—Journal of my district.

I have determined, by the grace of God helping me, to keep a regular journal of the precious souls in my district, that I may notice how the work of the Lord is prospering in it; and O that, each time I go near them, I may go, feeling my own utter weakness, and he strong only in the Lord, and with a vivid sense of the awful state of those who are without Christ! also believing the love of Jesus to their souls, and His great desire to save them, and His ability and willingness to do them good, even through me, who am so unworthy."

"Had great desires in prayer this morning that I might have an open door to many; and the Lord graciously answered my prayers, for I was enabled to speak a word from God to several. O for the Spirit to bless His own truth!"

"Spoke in particular to one woman, Mrs. C____, with great earnestness. Spoke about the conflict. She seemed to feel she had not known anything of this, so that I was enabled to press upon her this mark of a Christian, the two natures warring together. She has been under a gospel ministry, and knows a good deal (head knowledge!), but said she knew that there must he more than that. Spoke to her next about the love of Jesus, and the joy she would give to all heaven if she turned to Him. She seemed quite melted, and wept a good deal. O for the Spirit to shew her Jesus! I yearned over that soul, and must never lose sight of her now, nor rest till she has come to Christ."

" November 27.—Mr. George Hay came down to have a meeting here. He visited several of our people, and then collected them in Mrs. C.'s room, and addressed them. Only a few came, however, but their souls are precious, and if even one be brought to Jesus by means of this dear servant of His, our meeting will not have been in vain. He spoke about the throne of grace and the throne of judgment, Hebrews 4:16, and Revelation 20:11. He said it was at the throne of grace that we got the passport to pass from the throne of judgment to the throne of glory. The people were very attentive. O that the great day may shew much from this day's labours, and that even here we may see many turning to Jesus in this barren place!"

" Dec. 9.—Gave thirty tracts to-day. O for a blessing on them! Felt very dull and lifeless in giving them. Lord, shew me how sinful this is! Spoke a few words to Mrs. H____ again, who said she felt comforted by our conversation last time, and wished to see me again. To God be all the glory. Spoke to ____ and her old mother. Alas! they seem quite careless. I wonder what fruit of these feeble efforts I shall see in glory!"

"Dec. 13.—Gave twenty-one tracts to-day. Spoke again to Mrs. C. She got a little angry; but I was not sorry, as it shews that the truth has touched her conscience. O for the lifegiving Spirit to open her blind eyes! Went to Mrs. P. She gets on well. She and Mrs. S____ are the only two I have any comfort in."[25]

" Dec. 17.—Mrs. P____ called last night, to say that her husband wanted to see me ; so I went down to-day, and had a long talk with him. He seems wavering between the world and God. O that he would choose the better part! This is a very interesting case."

"Jan. 3, 1846.—Attended the monthly tract meeting, the first of this year. May this be a fruitful year, wherein many souls shall be brought to Jesus; and may a double portion of the blessed Spirit be given to His own children! And may we who are tract-distributors know ourselves the Saviour of whom these tracts speak; and may we never rest satisfied till we have every soul in our districts brought into the fold of the Good Shepherd!"

" Monday, 5th.—Spoke to Mrs. ____, who says she is not satisfied with her state. I am glad of it, if she is not yet 'born again.' Find it very difficult to speak to her. How ignorant I am! It makes me very sad to go to my district and see so few caring for Jesus and His great salvation; and then, as a natural consequence of this carelessness, what misery there is amongst these poor people! O for the love of Jesus, the tears of Jesus, that I might yearn and weep over these poor wandering sheep! have no conversions yet to record. Lord, why is this? Perhaps I am seeking my own glory: perhaps I am wishing that souls might be converted because it is my district. O for a single eye and a single desire for the glory of Jesus! Give me this, Lord!"

" Tuesday, 13th.—Gave the rest of my tracts. In the morning, at prayer, had the most earnest longings and yearnings after the souls in my district I think I ever had. Wept almost in agony over them, and felt as if it were a burden too heavy for me to bear. Pleaded with God that nothing could be done for them unless He did it."

" March 12.—Gave twenty-six tracts to-day. O for an outpouring of the blessed Spirit on my own dead, careless soul, and also on these poor souls in my district! I am anxious to form a 'maternal meeting' amongst the mothers in my district. These meetings have been much blest in other places, and why not here? Mrs. P.'s house would be a nice place to meet in. Mrs. H., Mrs. C., and another with whom I had a talk to-day, would probably join; and though they do not care about their own souls, yet, in seeking the souls of their children, they may be led to think of their own. Spoke very solemnly to Mrs. ____. She does not seem at all anxious. Alas! what a state to be in, and how many in this place are in this state!—on the brink of hell, and not anxious about their condition! May the Spirit arouse them, for He alone can."

" March 26.—Had a little encouragement in my district to-day. Went to Mrs. P., who said that her husband, after telling her about some business being settled, said—'But I have better news than that to tell you! Miss ____ has been here, and spoke to me about my soul, and my heart just seemed to burn within me, and (she has almost got me to turn.) O that he would be not almost, but altogether persuaded to turn to God! I am very hopeful about that soul. It was very encouraging to think that he feels that the good done to his soul is better news than the settling of his worldly concerns, especially when he mustbe anxious about these, as they are so gloomy at present. But we must tell him to press on; he is not safe till he is inthe Ark."

"September 23.—Have been ill, and therefore not able to give my tracts so regularly. O that I could see more fruits of all my labours here, poor and unworthy as my efforts are! E. and I are seriously thinking of going abroad as missionary teachers. May the Lord guide us in this great matter! Had a conversation to-day with Mrs. H____. I do think she is inquiring the way to Zion. P____ goes on well; but I am not satisfied as to his being really 'born again,' and without that, nothing will do—'Ye must be born again.'"

Another way in which she laboured for Christ was by trying to bring friends into contact with those from whom some blessing might be expected. By inducing them to read some quickening book, or listen to some faithful minister, or converse with some pious friend, she hoped to win them to the Lord. And no opportunity did she let slip of thus serving Christ. Instances of this will be found elsewhere. Here is one in a letter dated July 27, 1843:—"This will be delivered to you by ____, a friend of mine, whom I am very anxious to introduce to you, in the hope that you may be able to speak to her about her soul, during her stay in Kelso— dear Kelso. I trust that her visit there may

be as much blest to her as it was to me. I am very anxious about her, and her dear little boy who is with her; and I will make no apology for writing to you about them, as I know that you will not be grieved to have another soul to speak to about Christ."

Very frequently did she write to myself and others about those whom she loved, entreating that prayer might be made on their behalf, or asking advice respecting them. As a specimen, the following is given, written a few months after her conversion:—

"P____, December 4, 1841.—MY DEAR MR. BONAR, You will be astonished to get another letter from me so soon; but I shall make no apologies for troubling you again, as I know that what I now write about will, from its importance, plead my apology. You perhaps remember a young friend of ours that we often talked to you about: I. C____. She has been here today, in much distress about her father, who has had a stroke of palsy. The doctor says he may die in a moment, and I____ is, as you will believe, very anxious that he should be roused to a concern about his soul. You may perhaps wonder that we trouble you about everything; but we have really no one to give us any advice, and we know you are willing to help us. I said to I____ that I would write to you about her father, for she says that he has read your sermon about Christ subduing the soul to Himself, and he seemed to like it…From what she says, he seems to be only a very little anxious, and is trying to get peace from his own endeavours. She says that, if you have time enough, you would perhaps write something for him that would alarm him out of this fearful sleep, and then we would pray that it might be blest to him. Oh! when I think of the immense value of even one human soul, I get quite alarmed at the cold way I am writing to you…Pray for him and for his daughter, that she may be enabled to speak to him. Do you think, when you answer this, that you could give her some advice as to what she should say to him, and what books she should read to him? It would be very delightful if you and the many Christian friends you have would join in prayer for him, that he may be brought to Christ. I wonder that we are not more anxious about the souls of others. Does it sometimes overwhelm you when you reflect for a moment on the immense value of a soul? I wish you would pray much for me, that my icy heart may be melted into love for souls; for I have many precious ones to pray for…Tell me, when you write, if you remember my beloved brother, R____, who is at Hudson's Bay. I long to know if you pray for him…I wish I could tell you that ____ — had found peace ; but she is still in much darkness…I think everybody is in earnest but myself. I wish you would say something that would rouse me out of this dead state. Do not spare me. I want my pride and self-love killed. May Jesus fill your own soul with the peace that passeth all understanding. I pray every night and morning for you, that God would make you very happy, and that you may be the means of bringing many souls to Christ. Always pray this prayer for me, that I may love souls."

Here is another instance, in a letter to her friend:—

"Dec. 29, 1843.—MY BELOVED FRIEND,—I sit down to finish this letter;

may the Lord enable me to write! I have been asking that He would give me a message to your soul. I hope you will get a blessing in the reading of our chapter to-day. I want you especially to remember dear ____ in your prayers, for ____ has been writing to him about his soul, and he sent an answer this morning so full of the pride of intellect; ah! he does not know yet that he must 'become a fool, that he may be wise!' Perhaps you will think this a very bold step of ____, but I do think she was right; what does it signify what he thinks of us if he is brought to Christ? I was

reading the first of John, where it speaks of Andrew telling his brother Peter that he had found the Messiah; and it is added, ' And he brought him to Jesus.' Why may not we bring one to the same loving Saviour, who is as willing to receive him as He was to receive Peter? I have written also to ____, so you must be sure to pray for a blessing upon these feeble efforts, my beloved J____. I spoke to ____ that night when I was so happy ; I felt such a longing to bring her to Christ, that I thought my heart would break if I did not speak: it was long before I could, but I prayed for strength; and I spoke at last, and asked her if she loved Jesus, and if she was 'born again.' She could not be angry, for she saw I spoke in love; but she seemed very much annoyed, and I left her, and went to pray for her. What a blessed refuge the throne is! E. and I are both feeling just now the necessity of being entirely God's, of forgetting our own ease, and everything about ourselves, and seeking to live to God's glory. I feel that I am only half a Christian. I try to remember your wants, particularly as you ask that your languor and deadness may be removed. I oftengroan under that; it is very painful; but still 'we have not an High Priest who cannot be touched with a feeling of our infirmities.' Oh! if we could only believe the love of Jesus! I don't think any of His children have any right idea of the love that fills His heart. O to have it 'shed abroad,' to have it filling our whole souls, and transforming us into His own holy image! Oh! if I could only believe that Jesus loves me! Do you think He does? Just say yes;—it is awful unbelief to doubt it; but still I long to hear Him say that He loves even me. I was telling Him this morning that I did not want to see my love to Him, but only His to me; it seems to be all I need, and all I want to have— His love 'shed abroad in my heart.' May you be filled with it, beloved one! I must finish this letter afterwards, as it is nearly three, and I must read our chapter with you. May the Spirit breathe upon it! Did I not tell you about M. C____ ? She was an old schoolfellow of mine, as careless as myself, and about a year ago, when she came to live in Edinburgh, I went to see her sometimes; but I felt unwilling to go, for I could not speak to her as I used to do. Well, one day ____ told me that M. had been made one of Christ's sheep, and that she told them that she had been keeping away from me on the very same account! Was it not curious that each of us thought the other did not care? Little did we think how happy we should be to meet. She is a very dear girl, and a staunch Christian. " From the moment that her eyes were opened, she saw the danger of those who are still out of Christ. Her love of friends did not lead her to think or speak smooth things respecting their spiritual condition. "It often startles me," she once wrote to me, "to think how few of all those I know are Christians." She saw that they were unconverted, and she knew that if they remained so, they must be lost. She did not try to persuade herself that perhaps they were Christians after all; and that perhaps theymight be right and she wrong. She felt that if the Bible were true, she was right, and they totally astray. She did not say, They are older than I am ; they think themselves Christians; others think them Christians; what right have I to think otherwise? She did not say, They are my friends, my kindred, my dear ones; is it not cruel in me to form harsh judgments respecting them, or to allow such a thought to enter my mind, as that they are on the way to death? No. She looked at God's Word, and she read, that "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature" (2 Corinthians 5:17). How could she doubt that, however dear to her, they must be lost if not made new? And how could she believe them to be "renewed in the spirit of their minds," when she saw no fruits of holiness, no love to Christ, no forsaking of the world, no delight in prayer or the Word of God? She could not be mistaken. These dear ones of hers— dearer now than ever—were still far from God; and to blind herself to their sad condition, was only to increase their peril, by throwing away the opportunity of attempting to save them. She dared not say that conversion meant less than God said it meant;

nor that sin was a less evil than God said it was; nor that the world was a less enemy than God declared it to be; nor that the certainty of a Christless soul being lost was not so absolute as God had proclaimed it. Not daring to say these things, she saw that her part was to set herself in good earnest to win the souls of these erring ones, by faithfully warning them of their danger, and pointing them to the same cross where she had found shelter. The most refined cruelty of which she could be guilty, would be to make them believe that there was little difference between herself and them, and that possibly their danger might not be so great as some in their sternness supposed. She resolved to be faithful, though she might be called proud and presumptuous. Souls were precious, time was short, life was speeding away; she must be faithful to their souls. And the Lord blessed her faithfulness. No doubt she suffered for it. She was spoken of as unkind, and stern, and proud; but she did not turn aside. Her eye was single. Her views of eternity were vivid. Her love to the unsaved was intense. Her consciousness of the joy of being "in Christ," and her estimate of the misery as well as danger of those who are out of Him, made her thus fervently long for the salvation of all whom she loved. It was one of the most marked features of her piety. She could not walk in light, and leave others, uncared for and un-prayed for, to go on in darkness. The more she learned to rejoice in Christ, the more did she mourn over those who knew nothing of this joy.

Thus she writes, chiding herself for indifference in this thing:—''I had great sorrow this morning, amounting to agony, by finding that I have so little love for souls, so little desire that they may be saved, and that they may have the blessedness I have had, in knowing Jesus. I could hardly bear to think that I did not love souls, especially those precious ones who ought to be so dear to me. How vile this shews me to be! And this makes it worse, that I should not desire that Jesus should be glorified by their conversion. I wonder why I have not more of the mind of Christ about this yet."

Again: "Felt great joy and much earnestness in pleading for ____. It was the same yesterday. I can hardly stop praying for him. Surely God intends good to his precious soul. He cannot have given me those desires, without meaning to satisfy them. They are the 'unutterable groanings' of his own Spirit. O for more faith! I feel as if God were willing to grant me all my requests, if I could only believe that He would. I try to look at His almighty power and wondrous love, in place of dwelling upon the greatness of the thing I ask for, the conversion of a soul that has long resisted all the drawings of His Spirit. I like to think of this precious Scripture,—'Is there anything too hard for the Lord?' That is a wonderfully sweet verse to me just now, when Satan and my own unbelieving heart try to persuade me that his heart is too hard to be melted. No, mine is harder; and praise be to Him, for He has melted mine. Oh! I wish I could tell ____ how much God loves him, and wishes him to be saved, and how happy he would be if he were God's child. I must seek for opportunities of speaking to him. I must watch unto prayer."

Again: "Had some earnestness in pleading for my beloved ____. I felt more than ever I did that it is God, not I, who is anxious that he should be saved. Oh, no, there is no good desire in my cold, selfish heart. To God be all the glory."

Again: "Had another wrestling time at prayer for my beloved ____. E. and I had a meeting together. Felt drawn again to plead. When will our prayers be answered?"

Again: "Got a bitter disappointment to-day. I had been visiting a girl of fifteen, in the prison, and was very anxious to get her into some institution when she came out, and was engaged the whole

day in trying (and at last succeeding) to get a ticket for her admission into the Shelter, when she refused to go! I tried for more than an hour to induce her, but all in vain. How terribly I felt it! It was very humbling to me. It shews me, however, that God alone can turn the human heart; and oh, if He has touched mine, I need never despair of any." In a letter she thus speaks: "I think at times my heart will break altogether, when I look at my beloved ____, and think I can do nothing for him. May God help me! for this is the sorest trial I have ever had…Blessed Jesus! He cannotbe unkind; He cannot err! What sweet rest that thought gives!"

"Prayed this morning (June 10, 1843) that I might have love to souls. O that this prayer were answered! I feel it very painful to have such a selfish heart, with no love to any soul but my own, and no right love to my own either." In another place she thus briefly but lovingly records the conversion of a friend:—" Nov. 7.—Had a very sweet letter from M.C. She is now a pilgrim on the road to Zion!" In regard to another friend, over whose soul she yearned, she thus speaks:—"Wrote a long letter to dear V____, beseeching her to come to Jesus. O that the blessed Spirit would open her eyes to see her need of a Saviour!" And again: "I long to tell ____ how lovely Jesus is; but I am so fearful and so unbelieving. O for a bold yet loving spirit! May Jesus himself give me grace to speak…I have spoken. I told her I had found a treasure in Christ, and asked her if she too had found Him! But, alas! she seemed very much annoyed by my speaking to her, and said she had the Bible to tell her about these things. I must not despair, but pray that even this feeble effort may be blessed to her soul."

"Jan. 8, 1844.—Read Mr. Hamilton's tract, The Prison Opened, and had a very sweet taste of the sweetness of the love of Jesus, in reading it. Prayed earnestly for dear ____. I long for her to taste the sweetness of His love."

" May 11,1844.—Wrote to M____ about the hiding-place! May she find it. Had a meeting with my beloved J. at five. Felt dead, but thirsty; and, oh! very sinful. I should like to get my heart cleaned out. Alone a little after tea. Had much sweetness in pleading for my darling R. May the Lord himself bless her, and be her everlasting portion!"

" 20th May.—Wrote to ____. May the Lord give the letter His blessing! Again at my district. Great desires for Lizzy, and much liberty in speaking to her, and praying with her. Spoke to several others."

"2lst.— Went to my district. Spoke again very solemnly to Lizzy. She says she feels differently from what she did; that she sees she is not right, and that she can get no rest. May the Lord open her eyes to see a free Saviour."

"A letter from dear R.M.G. has been brought to Jesus. Another soul brought to Jesus!"

"Went to visit Mr. Hay's grave. Alas! it was a sad visit. I think this has been one of the saddest days I ever passed. We spoke a few words to a man there, an infidel. O that the Holy Spirit would send home the Word to that soul! We shall know in eternity, if not here." In a letter she thus expresses herself:—"I pray for you as earnestly as my heart of stone will allow. I like to tell God to bless you, to pour out His Spirit upon you; to bless you in every respect, in yourself, your dearly-loved self, in your dear family, in your scholars, in every way. O that He may answer all my prayers for you! I know He will. His name is Love…How is dear ____ getting on? Tell her, with my kindest love, that I had great delight in pleading for her, last Wednesday, at four o'clock." At

another time she writes:—"I saw my dear R. yesterday, and was delighted to hear that you had written to her. I think she would not be so doubting if she were not so much with poor ____; but they always speak together about themselves, instead of speaking about Jesus ; and then they get into doubt and darkness. Dear ____, I cannot tell how my heart sometimes rejoices when I think of her being a follower of the Lamb, and that we shall be with Jesus in heaven together. And you, my dear J____, you will be there also…Will you pray for me, that I may have an opportunity of speaking a word to dear ____ ? for he is a great burden on my mind just now; for I think I should speak to him when I am here; and yet I have never been able ; and I think it is because I am not willing. Oh! it is grievous that I always consider myself instead of those I love…Will you also remember dear V____? Tell me about Mrs. 0____ when you write. Is she really anxious? How blessed it would be! I should like very much to write to her, but I am so totally unfit ; still I don't feel easy till I have done so."

"E____ tells me that Mrs. ____ is anxious; how glad we ought to be! She says I should write; which I should like to do; but what could I say? But then God would give me words. I am glad you wrote to dear ____; poor thing, she is in a sad state. It is curious, I could not speak to her now about believing; she seems to me to be taking Mr. ____'s way, and making herself more humble first. I wish she had peace; and I do think we need not wait, if Jesus is willing to receive us. Write to dear K. when you can, for she has not much peace either. L____ is anxious; but only a little, I think. Pray for her ; and write her a rousing letter when you have time. I wish I could get a word spoken to dear ____ and ____; I get alarmed when I think that I know their danger, and don't warn them. But I find it so difficult to realise their danger. Do you feel that? Pray that I may be enabled to speak, if it be for God's glory ; and that I may be shewn when to speak. I wish ____ would write to you. I don't know what to think of her. She is anxious at times, and then it wears off. She puzzles herself about being born again. I don't think she can have come to Christ yet, from all she says. It is very difficult to deal with her, for when she is anxious, she says, 'Well, but what more can I do but read and pray? '"

"Jan. 3, 1842.—What a solemn day the last of the year was to me! ____ and I were sitting alone in the drawing-room, just as the clock struck twelve, and another year commenced its silent course.[26] I could not resist saying a few words to him, and I asked him if he was born again. We did not speak much, for I was so agitated that I could scarcely speak. He laid his head upon mine, and I saw the tears falling fast. He said it was a serious question, and seemed to think it would take a long time to answer I said,—'Suppose God does not give you a long time to settle it?" I have written to him, telling him more of what I wanted to say; but, somehow, I have not courage to give it to him. Pray that God would bless it. I hope you will soon write to dear ____. She says she will be delighted to hear from you, all about yourself and all her friends in Kelso, but that, for anything else, she has her Bible to go to. I tell you this that you may know how she feels, and act as you think best. It might do harm to force the subject of religion upon her; it is very difficult to know how to act; but God will guide you, and then you cannot go wrong. I am going to ____ on Wednesday. Will you plead that I may have an opportunity of speaking to my dear ____, and also to ____? for she is often a great burden on my mind. I wish you would tell Mr. B. and Mrs. H. her case, and ask them to pray for her."[27] In August 1842, Mr. M'Cheyne, Mr. Gumming, Mr. Somerville, and myself, visited Newcastle for the purpose of preaching the gospel. That visit was not un-blest. Souls were saved, and Christians were aroused. In it M____ took a deep interest,

and in reference to it she thus writes: "I long to hear more about your visit to Newcastle. I hope many poor wanderers have been brought to the fold. It must be very delightful to be enabled to go and tell sinners of Jesus. I have been praying that you might win many souls ; that Jesus would teach you to speak, and incline many to listen to His message of love and mercy. I wish I had more of the spirit of prayer. It is so sweet to plead for others. I hope you remember poor P____. We need your prayers." And is it not thus that ministers are blest? Is it not from the closet of the obscure believer, of whom they may never have heard, that the cry goes up which is to draw down the freshening rain? Do ministers sufficiently urge this upon their people? Do the people rightly discern their awful responsibility in this thing! "Thousands and thousands of prayers were put up for me," says Whitefield; and was this not as much the secret of his success, as his own prayerfulness and spiritual fervour? Moses may marshal the host, and Joshua may lead on the array; but there must be Aaron and Hur upon the hill. Intercession for ministers must be more fervent and real. "Brethren, pray for us!" We need your intercessions. We expect them. We charge you, by all that you owe to us, to yourselves, to the Church, to the world—not to withhold or restrain them.

Such were the ways in which the new life came forth. The warm zeal, the tender pity, the decided action, the faithful love, the bold energy, were not of man, but of God. She did not work in order to get the credit of working, nor from any bustling activity of nature, nor because led by the example of others. Her zeal sprung from a holier and diviner root. The same Holy Spirit that had drawn her out of the world, wrought in her to compassionate and to plead for that world, out of which she had been drawn. In all her labours she acted as if from irresistible impulses within. It was not a question of duty with her; it was a matter of simple necessity. She could not do otherwise. The mother does not weep over the coffin of her first-born because she ought to do so. She cannot help it. The brother does not shield the sister in the hour of danger because it is his duty. He cannot but do it. So was it with M____. In regard to the unsaved around her, the question of duty never came up at all. Why? Not because she was not alive to the call of duty when it came; but because the strength of the new nature carried her far beyond it. It was not so much conscience as compassion that quickened her. Love hurried her on. She spoke, and wrote, and laboured, and prayed, because love would not let her do otherwise. God owned her love, and gave her souls for its reward. And so is it always. The most bustling works of duty may be barren; but the activities of love are vital. They bear fruit for eternity.

01.09. Progress in 1844-45

Progress in 1844-45

"THE whole life of a man," says a writer of the seventeenth century, "is a continued conversion to God, in which he is perpetually humbled under a sense of sin, and draws nearer and nearer to God, with more fervent faith and love; and daily walks closer and closer with the Lord, endeavouring at perfection." The above sentence might be taken as a true description of M ____ ’s life. The tossings to and fro which the good man refers to as his own experience, are largely exemplified in hers. There is a firm holding fast to the anchor which is fixed within the veil; and yet what strainings of the cable, almost at times to breaking! What driftings hither and thither, as for as the cable would allow!

Whilst not resting on what she felt, but on what her Substitute had felt for her, she yet cannot be satisfied without feeling towards Him all that she ought to feel; and the conflict between these two states of mind is often painful, nay, agonising. She knows that her peace is to be built, not on her love to Him, but on His to her; yet she longs to love with her whole heart; for she sees how worthy He is of all her love. Hence the flowings and ebbings, which the following letters so artlessly narrate. Every change, or shade of change within, she notes; and as she notes it, so does she carefully and accurately describe it to her friend. Perhaps there is too much of this; nor have we thought it needful to give such passages in full; remembering John Livingstone’s resolution—"Finding myself sorely deserted, I made a promise to God, not to tell it to any but to Himself, lest I should seem to complain, or foster misbelief in myself or others."

There was in her at all times are intense fixedness of eye upon the Cross. When some mist or cloud threw itself between her and that polestar, she still kept gazing on the spot from which her star had disappeared, persuaded that it would soon shine out again undimmed. It was just such a star as her darkness needed; and she knew that nothing could pluck it from the firmament. In it she found light, and guidance, and hope, and healing, and gladness. The letters which follow in this chapter are addressed to more than, one individual, as the initials both of person and place will sufficiently indicate. They are given in the order of date, without any notes or explanatory comments. They unfold the writer’s spiritual state and progress, which is the main object of their insertion. They are very vivid reflections of M____’s mind, exactly revealing her feelings and her doings, without colouring or exaggeration. Not one word is written for the sake of effect. When she spoke,it was always to tell, simply and truly, what she felt; and when she wrote, it was with the same truthfulness and simplicity.

There is great singleness of heart and purpose manifested in these letters. They contain no references to passing events; and even personal or domestic circumstances are only introduced, in their bearings upon that eternity towards which her eye so intently and so fervently turned. With what solemn steadfastness of purpose she pursued her heavenward path; with what zeal she laboured for her Lord; and with what willingness she bore His cross—the reader will discover in these letters, which mark her progress in the years 1844 and 1845.

"P____, February 14, 1844…MY OWN DEAR J____, Since I last wrote to you, the Lord has again laid me on a sick-bed, and I was very nearly being 'absent from the body,' I trust to be 'present with the Lord;' but you need not be alarmed about me, for I am now nearly well."

"This last illness of mine shews me how in one moment we may be taken away. O to be always ready for a dying hour!— to be 'found in Him!' Then, come the summons when it may, we are ready. I often think how much need I must have of our Father's loving rod, for I am so often laid low. Will you ask that this chastening may be for my profit, that I may be partaker of His holiness? But I must tell you how I got ill. About a fortnight ago I had such a severe 'fit of toothache that I was obliged to have a tooth taken out; I got it out on the Monday, and it stopped bleeding for two hours, but about three o'clock it began bleeding again, and from that time till nearly ten on Tuesday night it bled violently. Only think of me bleeding for thirty hours! The doctor could not stop it for some time, and I got so weak with loss of blood and want of food and sleep, that I nearly fainted, and poor R. had to go at ten o'clock at night with the doctor to E____, to bring another doctor, for the one here said, if it did not stop I might sink in a moment, and that I would not survive another night. I did not know there was any danger, or I should have been alarmed. E. did not tell me till next day, when I was out of danger. It makes me start when I think how nearly I was entering on the unseen, realities of eternity. O that the worthless life that God has spared may be spent in His service! Pray much, dear one, that this illness may be blest. I am very much afraid that I, in my folly and desperate wickedness, may let it pass unimproved. I have not had the presence of Jesus in this illness;—scarcely at all; indeed that has been my greatest trial. It has been a fortnight of great bodily weakness, and very great depression of soul, but still 'He doeth all things well,' and in His own time the light will arise; but I wish the time were come now.I am trying to pray that this illness may be blessed to my dear M____, for I have several times had an opportunity of speaking to her about the necessity of being prepared to die, and of illness being sent to lead us to God; and I want you, my own friend, to ask that I may not let this precious season pass, but may seek her conversion in earnest. Perhaps this may be blessed to her more than to me; if Jesus is glorified, that is enough."

"We had a very precious sermon from Mr. Moody Stuart on the Communion Sabbath, about the 'sure foundation, the tried stone.'

Neither K. nor I had joy, but we both felt more, I think, than ever we did, that Jesus was a sure foundation, and that we could trust Him in spite of all our want of feeling…Mr. M. said in the morning that the Father was telling us all to look at Jesus, ' Behold, I lay in Zion,' &c. He said, Many of you may be looking at other objects, but this is the one object to which God directs you to look— Jesus! I thought it so sweet to be told that we might look at this glorious object, and that we were to look at nothing else all the day. Oh, that we should ever look away! I did not find Him at the table, and I thought my heart would break but at last I said, Glorify Thyself, though I should be in darkness, and I felt comforted. I am a dog, and unworthy of the children's bread; but yet you remember that 'the dogs eat of the crumbs that fall from their master's table.' To get the lowest place in heaven is a wonderful place for one who deserves the lowest place in hell! Did 'the Beloved' meet you at His own table? J. I long to hear all about it." " Thursday, 15th.—MY DEAR J____, I must finish this letter by degrees, for I am too late for this day's post. I would rather speak to you than write, but still I am very thankful to be again able to address you in any way…Our dear minister has returned from the country, but has not been permitted to preach; however, he expects

to be able once more to tell of Jesus next Sabbath ; but he seems learning to say, in the sweet but difficultlanguage of yesterday's text, 'Not my will, but thine be done.' I sometimes think God is preparing him for His service in heaven, rather than for work here, for his conversation is literally in heaven; he speaks more of that than of the wilderness…I was very glad you liked the notes of the sermons. I shall try and take some more on Sabbath. I never write anything but for you, for I think it better to feed on them at the time; but if God blesses anything I write or remember to my beloved one, I would write all the time. Oh! J____, won't it be sweet when Jesus leads us by the green pastures and by the still waters? I remember, when you first spoke to me in Kelso, you said, M____, won't it be blessed? I did not think so then, and would not listen to you; but I think I would now: whose is the praise? Is it yours? is it mine? No; to Jesus be all the glory and all the praise…I have been learning nothing lately but the evil that is in my heart; and I am beginning to see that though a painful, yet it is a very necessary and a very loving lesson; loving, because it makes Christ more precious. Last night the thought struck me all in a moment, and as if a voice had spoken it, how very precious Christ should be to His people; they get all from Him, and through Him; how they should love Him! And my heart rejoiced at the thought that He must be so very precious to us; and then for one moment I got a bight of this precious truth, the truth that He had done all,and my weary soul rested, and no words can tell the blessedness of the feeling that resting gave. O that we could always rest on this lovely One, and not be continually coming and going, seeking rest and finding none! And O that all the world knew this rest!"

"P____,Feb. 22, 1844…MY VERY DEAR FRIEND, I have been long in answering your last sweet letter, but since I received it, the chastening hand of my Father in heaven has again been laid upon me; yet it was all in love, and I feel I needed all He sent me, for I am very, very unlike any one of Jesus' dear 'little ones,' far less am I like Jesus himself. You must pray, dear friend, that every sight that God gives me of my utter unworthiness may make Jesus more and more precious to me. I have been thinking much lately of this verse, 'To them who believe, He is precious,' and I long to be able to say, Jesus is precious to me. God has been giving me lately greater desires to know Jesus, and to feel His precious-ness, and to feel my entire need of Him, and my entire dependence upon Him, than I have ever had, and I cannot doubt but that He will satisfy the desires He has Himself given. I feel my utter ignorance of Jesus and His finished work so much; I seem to know less about Him than I did at first; but one thing greatly rejoices me, and for that let us praise Him, that He is shewing me and making me feel more than ever I did my need of Him. I sometimes find it so sweet, I cannot describe to you how sweet, to ask the Father to reveal the Son to me— to tell me about Jesus. I think thenHe really smiles upon me. I have very little joy, or even peace just now; but sometimes God gives me such a desire to learn about Jesus, that the very desire is very, very sweet. I should wish to speak about Jesus with you, but everything I say seems like hypocrisy; and yet all I can say of Himas being the lovely One is true, though I don't feel it so. Let us have a pen-andink talk about our Beloved, in spite of Satan and a cold heart. Can you always say 'my Beloved'? I still tremble to do it; but we need not fear when we think how kind, how gentle, how tender He is. 'He can be touched with a feeling of our infirmities, for He was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.' Oh! I am so very glad He is without sin; if He had even one taint, we could have no hope; but is He not 'the Lamb without blemish and without spot'? Is He not 'the Holy One of God'? Even the devils confessed that He was; and does not the Father— (His Father, and therefore ours)—say of Him, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased;' and could God be well pleased with anything that was not perfectly holy? It is difficult to

realise it. We are so unholy, we cannot understand how any one can be perfectly faultless; but let us be exceeding glad that it is true, and also rejoice to know that when we shall see Him as He is, we shall be holy too; you, and my beloved J____, and I, poor sinful I, shall one day stand ' without fault before the throne of God.' Isn't it wonderful? I shall be very glad when the journey is all over, for I cannot stand my earthliness any longer, it is so painful."

"E____, April 4, 1844…MY DEAR FRIEND, I am quite solitary now, as my darling R. has gone for a month to the country. I hope the Lord will be with her, and enable her to win souls where she is…We saw our dear Mr. ____ in Edinburgh, and had a nice chat with him, and a prayer with him. He spoke to J____, which I was very glad of. He gave us each a text on going away. Mine was such a sweet one, 'The night is far spent, the day is at hand.' Oh! should that not make us redouble our diligence in the Lord's work, that the time is so short? What have I done for Christ since He called me"!

Nothing! I was speaking to a poor old woman to day—one of God's children—who is in great darkness, owing to her disease, and she said, 'Oh! if I only had strong faith;—but I must just creep in at His feet, and surely the precious blood which has washed thousands can wash me.' I was helped to give her many sweet texts; but I was struck by seeing how plain it is that He alone can make His Word food;for, after all my texts, she still stuck to one, which, she said at the beginning, gave her comfort, and it was this: 'None is able to pluck them out of my hand.' It is strange how loving Jesus appeals to me when I speak to others about Him; and yet I cannot feel that He is love to me. I had a very sweet time at prayer this morning while confessing sin; the love of Jesus in forgiving my vile, vile sins against light and against love, appeared so wonderful, that I could not stand it; my hard heart melted, and I would not give the sweetness of the tears I then shed for a world of this world's joy. I could only say, 'Truly, Thy name is Wonderful.' When I get a sight of Christ's willingness to forgive and receive His backsliding child again, without one word of upbraiding, it almost breaks my heart. Oh! how this tender, forgiving love should make us hate sin! but yet I don't hate it; no, I have often loved it. I am reading a very delightful book just now—Memoir of Mr. M'Cheyne. It is very beautifully written by Mr. A. Bonar. Oh, what a Christian he was! It is humbling to read it. I have finished the first volume, and have begun the second to-day. Have you seen it yet? "

"P____, April 20, 1844…Friday is the earliest day I can get, so on that day, 'if the Lord will,' I shall have the joy of seeing you once more. Friday will soon come, and on Sabbath we shall together sit at Jesus' feast of love. We shall do this in remembrance of a love which many waters cannot quench...I expect to be greatly quickened, and made more alive to unseen things. We must ask and expect a blessing, and let us ever remember that He is more willing to give than we to ask."

"Kelso, April 27, 1844…MY DARLING E____, When I arrived here, I saw J____ coming to meet me. We went together to Mrs. H____'s, and had a talk, and then prayer. On Saturday there was a meeting in the evening, and Mr. A. Bonar preached on 'He was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.' He said that Jesus suffered and obeyed for us in infancy, in youth, and throughout His whole life ; so that we should take all our sins to Him, pleading that He has atoned for them all. He said that on the judgment-day the Father will turn to Jesus and say, 'Thou art all fair;' and then that Jesus will turn to His people, His own Church, and say, 'And thouart all fair.'"

"I got more comfort from that sermon than I got all the Sabbath, for I was not happy then. Our Mr. Bonar said in his prayer, 'Let us forget that we are in the world; let us forget that there is a world altogether.' O that we could!"

"Mr. A. B. preached on Monday night upon ' having boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus.' He said we were to enter into the holiest, and never to come out; that there is nothing said in the Bible about coming out; we are to abide there; we are to carry on our worldly business in the holiest of all. I wish we could banish every idol from our hearts, and be filled with the love of Jesus. How Jesus loves you and me! I am sure He does, so do not let us grieve Him by putting anything else into our hearts besides His blessed self. Let us say, 'What have we to do any more with idols?' J____ and I have our meeting every day at five, and we always remember you. Pray for me, for remember that I cannot get on even here if the Spirit do not come to me. I have been twice to see old Miss D____ ; she is a more wonderful Christian than ever. She said to me, 'Satan has been telling me that the Bible is a fiction, and that Christ is a fiction; but I told him that he was a fiction only to hell;' and then she said, 'Oh, Christ is a Jewel! I am always asking to have that Jewel.' We spoke about getting near Christ in heaven, and she said, 'We shall each get a whole Christ, and a whole throne to ourselves.' She said, too, that there is a war in heaven; the redeemed tell each other their history, and each says he is the greatest debtor; and then they always end with, 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty.' She said that if we were oftener to tell one another what God has done for our souls, we, too, would end with, 'Holy holy, holy!' She cannot read now, so she wants me to go often down and read to her. You must pray that it may be blest to both of us."

"Here is a verse I have this moment made for you:—

"Soon we shall be at rest,

The painful struggle o'er;

We'll see Him whom our souls love best, And never gnere Him more."

"Now good-bye for a little.—Your own loving M____."

"Kelso, May 13, 1844…MY DARLING R____, I have just received your dear letter, and hasten to answer it. I praise our God for what He has done for you; I praise Him for making you more entirely satisfied with Jesus. There is no one like Him. His love is unchanging, and that we cannot say of the love of any other in heaven or on earth. I think God is evidently weaning you and me from things below, and though it may be painful just now, like the plucking out of a right eye, yet we shall one day together praise Him for all His dealings. We shall praise Him for every pang. Not one, we shall then see, could have been spared. Oh, I don't know Jesus at all! Will you pray, dear R., that my visit here may lead me nearer Jesus; that it may lead me to make Him my all in all, my Beloved? O that I could lean my weary sinful heart on that bosom which never beats but with love unutterable to poor degraded sinners! He loves sinners; and you and I are sinners; let us put in our claim as such, and say, 'Jesus, my own Jesus, thou lovest sinners, thou lovest me;' and do not let us doubt it. What a heart Jesus has! No human being would bear with us as He does. Earthly friends look coldly on us when we slight their love; but, after we have tried every earthly cistern, after we have 'played the harlot with many lovers,' Jesus says, ' Yet return unto me.' It is wonderful! Surely the love of Christ passeth knowledge."

"J____ and I have had some sweet meetings together. At five yesterday it was peculiarly sweet. God seemed so near while J____ was praying, that after she was done, I could hardly speak; I felt afraid to disturb the sweet calm the presence of Jesus shed over us. On Sabbath evening Mr. Bonar preached on this text, 'Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.' He said the reason that the earth was so miserable was, that there were so many wills; but that in heaven there was but one will, and that one God's. O that my will were conformed to His in all things!"

"I have got a district here. R., dear, pray for me that I may be enabled to speak to the people in it, and that during the short time I am here I may win some souls. Oh, if I could win but one! Pray, pray for the Spirit, the life-giving Spirit, to water the seed sown by such a feeble hand!"

"Kelso, May27, 1844…MY DARLING R., I got your letter as usual, on my return from Mrs. H____'s meeting. O how I longed for you to be with us! ____ prayed, and I always enjoy it when she does, for she has such a sweet, confiding spirit. She prays like a child pleading with a tender and loving father; and the nearer she gets to Him, the more confiding she becomes. You see what a loving Being our God is, for the nearer we get to Him, and the more we know of Him, we are the less afraid. His perfect love, shed abroad in our hearts, casts out all our fear."

"I see more and more (and perhaps this is the blessed lesson I am to learn here) that it is our simply looking to Jesus as ungodly, empty sinners, that is to make us what these dear friends here are. Let us look at Him too, nothing doubting, and we shall grow as they do; there is nothing to hinder it. None of our outward trials need hinder it ; on the contrary, they are the means of growing in grace. They lead us more to Jesus; and everything that does that, whatever it be, is a blessing. Oh! pray that I may come back to you more emptied of self, and more filled with Jesus, in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."

"Kelso, May 1844…MY OWN DEAR R____, I was so glad to get your letter to-day. I do think God is weaning you and me from everything but Himself. Let God's will be done; oh, let His blessed, loving will be ours! I think He sees that we do not find all our happiness in Himself, and He knows, as you say, that no other joy can fill us, and He therefore, in mercy and tender love, takes away from us our broken cisterns. Let us, as dear Mrs. H____ prayed this morning, be always drinking at the well of free grace; let us trust to the steadfast love of God ; let us get our souls filled with that love which many waters cannot quench, and we shall have no relish for earthly things."

"I do not feel happy in my soul just now. You must pray that the Spirit would come to me, and shew me Jesus; for oh, I am such a dry branch in the midst of so many living branches!"

"Kelso, June, 1844…MY DARLING E____, I intended to have written to you sooner, but I could not, for I took such a longing to go and speak to old Lizzy, that I could not do anything else. Oh! R., I never yearned over any soul as I do over hers. If you only saw her, old and frail, and blind both in body and in soul; weeping when I speak to her of Jesus, and struggling, as it were, to see,—it would melt a heart of stone."

"I have been about two hours with her to-day reading and praying, and urging her to come to Jesus. She says she has been very miserable and anxious since I came to her, and that she is now much happier, and has no fear. I wonder if she has really come to Jesus! I said to her, 'Do you feel happier now? ' and she replied, 'Oh, my heart just burns within me!' She says that Jesus is all love together. Surely she has seen Him! She asked me to-day to give her one of our

hymnbooks, that she might read it, and think of me when I should be away; so I shall take her one tomorrow. I told her that I should probably go home in a week, and she said so sorrowfully, 'And will I never see you any more?'"

"I could not stand it, and we both wept together. How sweet it would be to meet her before the throne! Is it not worth my coming here, if I win a soul to Jesus? —here, where I first cared for Him myself! Last night, at the prayer-meeting, Mrs. ____ came and sat down beside me, and said, 'I am so glad to become acquainted with another lamb of the flock; it is some one more to pray for, and to love.' Was it not kind of her? She went with me to some of my people, and spoke very sweetly to them, and prayed with them. I wish I had such compassion for souls as she has!"

"Kelso, June 6, 1844…MY DARLING E____, Your tidings about illness have made me sick at heart. My only comfort is this, ' He doeth all things well.' This is a heavy trial. May it lead us closer to our loving and holy Saviour; everything is a blessing that does that. I have sometimes such sorrow, that I wonder my heart does not break; yet I feel that it is well to be tried, for I am led more to Jesus then. Sorrow has often driven me to Him, when I might otherwise not have felt so much need of Him. I think I have learnt many a valuable lesson in this place. I cannot tell you all in a letter, but if spared to meet, I shall tell you much. Everything seems to make this Scripture ring in your ears and mine—' Cease ye fromman.' I don't think we have either of us found our all in Jesus, and I don't think He will let us alone till we do. He will prove to us that all else is an empty cistern; and it is a difficult lesson to learn, but a needful one. I was thanking Him this morning for every pang that has ever passed through these weary hearts of ours. Oh! R., it will soon be over, and then we shall be where Jesus is all in all, and where there shall be no more sorrow nor sighing nor sin. Mr. Bonar spoke last night from this verse— 'And to Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant.' He said that the name by which Jesus is known in heaven is, 'The Lamb that was slain.' In heaven His praises are sung as the Lamb that was slain. The Father looks upon Him well pleased as the Lamb that was slain; angels praise Him as the Lamb that was slain; and the redeemed praise Him as the Lamb that was slain for them.And then he spoke about the freeness of the gospel, 'the new covenant.' The Father says—'Are you satisfied with what Christ has done? —then come! There is nothing for you to do but to draw near. Jesus has done all, and the Father is satisfied; are you? Is it not simple? I was thinking this morning of what Mr. Robertson once said at a communion, and it seemed so comforting:— 'Looking to yourself, how can you presume? Looking to Jesus, how can you doubt? You; should go to the table on Sabbath, my beloved, 'looking unto Jesus,' and then you can have no doubt. I shall meet you there in spirit. I have been asking that His banner over you may be love. Would it not be sweet to spend our lives in the service of Jesus, and then to spend eternity in His blessed presence? I am going to see Mrs. ____; O that I may be able to speak a word to her soul! I shall not likely ever see her again. Ah! when I hear she is dead, how I shall wish I had spoken! Mr. Bonar called to-day, and he says he is hopeful about my old Lizzy. Is not that good? I have no more to tell you, so I shall stop.—I am ever your own dear M____."

"P ____, June 15, 1844…MY OWN DEAR J____, I arrived safe in P____ and once more sit down to write to you…I saw J____ in Edinburgh before I came down ; she is pretty well. O that she knew Jesus, the sympathising Jesus! She would be happy in the midst of all her trials. Pray, dear, that E. and I may be enabled to walk wisely, faithfully, and lovingly amongst them. O that I could only care for their souls! R. and I want to get more of the feeling of pilgrims than we have ever had; it would be blessed if we were not of the world, even as Christ was not of the world…We ought to

thank our loving Father for permitting us to have so many sweet meetings as we had, for I am sure God has often met with us when we have been together. We must meet now in spirit, and oh, I trust Jesus will always be with us! I thought of you and dear Mrs. H____ to-day at eleven, and asked that you might be much blessed…I wish I could write you a letter full of Jesus; but oh! I have such a cold heart, and I know nothing of Him. I do long to know Him, to be intimately acquainted with Him! I long to be at home; this earth seems sometimes like hell. I cannot stand it. No one cares for God, or speaks of Him, or seeks to glorify Him. I wish Jesus was glorified. I shouldn't care for myself, I think, if only He got the glory due to His holy and blessed name. I mustlive for Jesus, and I must live near Him, else this earth will indeed be a wilderness. R. and I had a very precious meeting last night. Jesus was very near; and oh! He was so loving, I felt as if I could not have any fear. His perfect love cast out all our fears."

"June 20, 1844…DEAR B____, I have often, often thought of you since I left, and fancied us together in our little room, where we so often met our holy Saviour, and had such sweet communion with Him and with one another. This is Thursday, and I think I see you all in the dearschool-room, you and dear, dear Mrs. H____, and my beloved; and, in short, I just wish I could join you. Last Thursday, at this hour, I was there too. You must ask for me that I may improve all the precious, privileges I then enjoyed. I do not feel eternal things so near here as I did in Kelso. I often felt in a heavenly atmosphere, and I almost felt, when I arrived here, as if I had come out of heaven; but I have Jesus wherever I go, and He is 'the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.' Is it not blessed to think that He never changes? We often change, and when we do, we are apt to think that He changes too, but that can never be. He loves us with an unchanging love, with a love that can bear rejection. I am often with worldly people here, and it is so refreshing, after so much worldliness, to get away to the throne of grace, and tell Jesus that in Him alone is there any real joy or peace. What a place heaven will be, where there will be nothing but Jesus, where there will be no need of the ran to lighten, for the ' Lamb is the light thereof,' and where we shall for ever sing, 'Worthy is the Lamb!' That is the new song which we shall sing in heaven; but we must learn it on earth. Do you remember how you used to say you wanted to sing it now?Dear friend, I hope we both find it sweet to say, even now, 'Worthy is the Lamb;' not we are worthy, but He is worthy. Let us plead the worthiness of His own Son with the Father. Looking on us in Him,He sees no iniquity in us. He says, ' Thou art all fair,' and then we can call Him 'Abba, Father.' When you go to see dear old Lizzy, ask her, from me, if she can say 'Abba, Father' yet. I hope your visits will be blest both to her and you, for I find I often get good to my own soul when speaking to another about Jesus."

"P ____, June 23, 1844…MY OWN BELOVED J____, To-day E. and I have a very quiet house, as they are all from home but ourselves; and I am glad of the quiet opportunity of having a talk with my own sister in the Beloved. I only wish my heart were in as quiet a state, calmly resting on the bosom of my Lord ; but many a storm Satan and sin raise in this weary soul of mine; yet, beloved one, is it not sweet to think of that voice which, though so small and still, can hush to silence the wildest storm, saying, 'Peace, be still'? O that I only knew Jesus really and truly! It gave me much pleasure to hear about Mrs. B____. I have been thanking God on her behalf, and praying that the child may be His child. It was very kind of her to think of me at such a time…I thought my heart would break when I turned and gave you my last look. O to lie away, where partings will never be known, nor sorrow of any kind! I sometimes think there is really nothing else but sorrow here.

There is one sorrow that we three used to share together in that dear room—that so few whom we loved cared about Jesus. I wish I could pray more and more believingly for them ; but I often get hopeless, when I see no change whatever. The world is much in their thoughts, too, at this time, owing to ____'s marriage ; everything is the world. They never ask, will Jesus be at it? Poor ____, we must remember her much at this time. I wish, dear, you would ask for K. and me, that we may not be carried away by the worldliness around us; for oh! I feel, at least, how soon spiritual things fade away, and worldly thoughts fill my heart. We took M____ with us to church on Sabbath, and we had a most beautiful sermon from Mr. Robertson in the afternoon on this text: 'Wherefore, He is able to save them to the uttermost,' &c. It was all Jesus together; I just wondered why everybody did, not come to such a Saviour—so able, so loving, so tender. Surely such sermons will be blest. This is Tuesday. I had immense pleasure in remembering you all at the meeting this morning. You must tell me, when you write, how you get on at these precious meetings…But I am getting away from the Master to the servants, and that won't do. Do you remember Mr A. Bonar saying 'Master,' so often? He is a sweet Master; and I should like to sit with Mary at His feet, and learn of Him who is meek and lowly inheart.So you still have your text—'Many waters cannot quench love.' It is a wonderful text indeed. am glad you find it so supporting. I wish the Spirit would write it on my heart also…And now, my own beloved one, may Jesus be with you, and shine into your soul at all times, and fill you with the love which many waters cannot quench."

"P____, July 23, 1844…MY OWN BELOVED J____, You must ask this, that Satan may not be permitted to make me give up praying, for I sometimes think he will. I am so tempted at these times, that I dread when the hour comes. How sinful to dread going to speak to Jesus;—to dread going to tell our merciful High Priest all my sorrows, when He says, 'Fear not, it is I;be not afraid.' But I think that Satan does us good, for he often drives us into the fold when we would not go of ourselves…Oh! J____, my beloved one, there is nothing in this world like the presence and the favour of God—'our own God.' 'In Thy presence is fulness of joy, and in Thy favour is life.' I often think, if I were not so slothfill, I should have more of heaven on earth than I have. I have not self-denial enough. I want to be an ' uncommon Christian;' but then I forget that we can only be that by uncommon effort. Not that anything we do has any merit; but then we cannot get the blessing unless we use the means; and I am often unwilling to do that. I am too lazy; I should pray more, and read more searchingly, and deny myself in many ways,—by rising earlier, by avoiding useless conversation, worldly company, and many things which are hurtful to the soul. I think we might grow more. What a dishonour I am to Christ! His love must be free, or it would never reach me. How glad I am that you have got my district! it is so sweet to think my people will now have you visiting them. You will have my poor petitions, my beloved, that your labours may be blest; your district has always a claim upon me, and now it will have a double one, and you will be obliged to go to dear old Lizzy. Oh! I am so glad. You must win that soul, and I won't be jealous if she is yours. May the Lord go with you always; may you always say, 'Come with me, my Beloved;' and you know if you ask you will receive. You must always tell me how you get on. The old woman who lives above Lizzy was ill when I left; is she better?—and the sick girl, is she alive yet, poor thing?…E. and I went to hear Mr. B. on Monday evening. We met E____ and her sister there. Miss M____ tells me she is still seeking Jesus. Oh! J____, that you and I could tell each other such glad news! None here are seeking Him. I fear I am guilty of their blood, for I neither pray for them nor seek their conversion as I ought. O for the Spirit! What a difference it makes when the transforming Spirit of Jesus comes to a soul! I often wish, when I see the fine showers that make

all nature look so fresh, and make everything grow, that the Spirit would come into my soul like 'showers that water the earth.'…E____ tells me that Mr. Hay has got a charge. I hope he will be blest, and made a blessing to those to whom he is going. He will be zealous and faithful, I am sure. As a minister, he is one of Christ's own chosen ones, so that he must be blessed. I wish I could take your text, 'Be not faithless, but believing.' What wonders we might do if we had but faith; we could say to every mountain, 'Be thou removed,' and it would be done. I sometimes despair of ever being able to do anything; but with God nothing is impossible. What a blessing it is that we are helpless! That may sound strange, but only to those who do not know the blessedness of leaning all their weight upon, 'the mighty God.' Jesus says, 'Ye can do nothing;' therefore He must do all, and then He wall have all the glory; and I am sure that is a sweet thought."

"The last sentence in your dear letter was very sweet to me: 'He will never fail you.' It's like a rock to lean on. Oh! J____, I shall be glad when the fight is all over, and when we are all at rest; then we shall never have another unbelieving thought, nor a single thing that will vex us in any way, when we shall stand in the sea of glass, and feel for ever the calm of a pardoned breast!—there is nothing calm here…And now, once more, farewell, my beloved friend; may the strong arms of Jesus be ever underneath you, and hold you up at all times."

"August 6, 1844…MY DEAREST B____, 'Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord!' That was all they needed to make them glad, and that is all we need, just to see Jesus. We often look into our own hearts to try to get materials to make us glad from them; but we can never succeed; it is the sight of the heart of Jesus that makes us full of joy." "We look into His heart, and see that it is full of love even to the chief of sinners, and when we believe that love, we cannot help being glad ; and if we always did this, we should always be glad; but, alas! we are always looking at ourselves, and then I am sure it is no wonder we get dark and sorrowful. In our own hearts we see nothing but sin and ingratitude to Jesus, notwithstanding all His love to us, and then we get discouraged, and think Jesus cannot still love us; but we forget He loves sinners; that is our claim upon Him, that we are sinners, and that He died for sinners, so that our sins should humble us, but never make us afraid to go to Jesus, and say to Him, 'Lord, thou lovest me.' 'Truth, Lord, I am a sinner, but Thou lovest sinners.' 'While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.' From the beginning to the end of our journey, all our boast must be the free love of God, all our trust must be in that; and it is that alone which will ever give us a real heart-hatred of sin. How can we sin against free love— unmerited love! I think that just in proportion as we dwell in the free love of our 'Wonderful' Saviour, we shall become holy. When we are doubting His love, we cannot desire to be holy; we cannot get on in anything. I remember, a long time ago, our dear minister saying that it was easy to doubt and sin, but that we could not believe and sin; and I feel it is true. Is it not strange that we will not believe in God's free love! He does not want anything from us but just to trust Him, and then we shall get on; but we refuse to do it, at least we refuse to do it entirely, unreservedly, in the face of all our sins."

"P____, August 19, 1844…I hope you had a sweet day yesterday in God's house; it is the sweetest place on this sorrowful earth when 'the Lord makes His presence felt;' but it is dreary without that. Oh! think what a place heaven will be, where there is no need of a temple—where we shall have Jesus himself, and therefore shall need no ordinances to bring Him near; we shall not even need the sweetest of all ordinances, His own Supper, in order to remember Him; for how can we forget Him when our eyes shall never for one moment be off His blessed face? Ah! my eyes

are often off Him now, and then I always get into sin. I am not getting on, dearest; but I won't write about myself, for it would only make you sorrowful, and I like you to be glad...I told M____ what you said about slightillnesses. He is, indeed, a God of infinite love, and it is a very grievous thing to think how continually we doubt that loving heart. I remember a time when I thought I could never distrust Him; but there is a wonderful change now, for I feel as if I could not trustHim. Is this getting on?…It is very painful to feel dead in the midst of such proofs of love; but it is blessed to know that it is not our love, but the love of our Master, that is to serve us in the end, and to feed our souls. Even now, our feelings are really nothing such as we ought to have. How much we ought to feel!—but there is no merit in our feelings. Christ is all—we are complete in Him. I had no joy either; I felt scarcely anything till we were singing the hymn at the end, and then I felt it was sweet to praise Jesus, and thought how much sweeter it would be to praise Him at the table above. You will be there, too, my own beloved, and that is a sweet thought."

"September 3 , 1844…MY DEAREST B____, I have taken a great longing to know more about our dear Redeemer; for, though it is very strange, I seem to know less of Him now than I did at first. It is said, 'To them that believe, He is precious;' but oh! dear friend, I do not find Him thus precious. I wish, when you write, you would tell me what makes Him most precious to you, because I often think that I just love Him because He is such a loving, kind, holy Being, not because of what He has done for me, and that often troubles me. Does it ever trouble you? But I daresay you won't understand what I mean, for I seem to be like no one else. I do little, little for Jesus, and I seem to do less every day. O to be a living, fruit-hearing branch! I think if I were to die now, I should be ashamed to look at Jesus, after living such a useless life. Will you pray for me, dear friend, that I may get a double portion of the life-giving Spirit? How blessed it will be when we shall not have to complain any longer of a cold sinful heart, and when Christ's blessed face will never more be hidden from our view! I am often weary of this earth, but I am more weary of myself than of anything else. Ask Lizzy, with my love, if she can say, 'One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see.'"

"P____, September 17, 1844…I often long now to he away. Whenever I get the least glimpse of Jesus, everything else appears so poor, so vain; but I very seldom behold Him. I am generally is great heaviness; I don't understand it. J____'s text has been very sweet to me. It is sweet to think that Jesus must give the power to obey every command He gives, so that when He says, 'Be strong,' we may rest assured He will make us strong. There was another blessed word I got today. 'Wait, I say, on the Lord; be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart.' It is very blessed when you can, in some measure, plead His own pledged word and say, 'Thou hast said it, and therefore thou wilt do it.' Why do we find it so difficult to believe that God will do anything for us, when we know what He has already done? Oh, it is strange! He has given Jesus, and the greatest blessing we can now ask is as nothing in comparison. I feel as if He could not do such things for me, a poor sinner. If it were for my sake, I might despair, but you know it is not my vile name I plead with the Father; it is His, whose 'name is as ointment poured forth;' it is the sweet name of our sinless Jesus that I bring. Why, then, do I doubt?

E. and I were in town last Sabbath, and heard Mr. Charles Brown all day; it was all Jesus together. I am very fond of him. I wish we could always go to hear him, for our own minister is so often prevented from preaching by illness. But Jesus knows what our souls really need, and 'He will provide;' if our Heavenly Father knoweth that we have need of things for our perishing bodies, and

has told us not to be careful, but trust it all to Him, surely we may apply this to spiritual things which He knows to be so much more needful. You must join us in praying, beloved one, that if we leave this place, we may be led where we shall hear one of His own people…Could we but see God's loving design in all our trials, how we should praise Him! All His aim is the salvation of our precious souls, and His own glory therein; and should we not believe, though we cannot see as yet, that all is love, pure, unmixed, unmerited love? I am very much interested just now in ____. He is very ignorant about God and eternal things; he often says he cannot understand a thing; he seems not to know anything about God's dealings with the soul, or about the way of salvation. I had some interesting conversation some days ago with him about the gospel (O that he knew it!); and when I, in my poor feeble way, tried to shew him what the gospel was, he said he did not understand me at all. How true it is, that the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God!…Write soon, and tell me if you are happy in the love of Jesus."

"P____, September 27, 1844…MY BELOVED FRIEND,—This is the third time I have addressed you since I got your letter…E. and I have just been calling on two of God's dear children (O how I love them all!—there is nothing like a Christian). There are a Mr. and Mrs. ____, very pious people, which is not often the case amongst the rich. They have taken a house here for a year, on purpose to do good ; and he has a meeting every Sabbath evening. You must pray for a blessing on our intercourse, my own darling…We met another child of Jesus today—how old, do you think? Ninety! She is a dear old body. We are to go and see her often. I sometimes think there are more of the Lord's hidden ones in this place than we think. Will you plead with us for a shower of the Spirit to give efficiency to this new means of grace? Without that he will labour in vain."

"P____, October 8, 1844…MY BELOVED J____, This morning I felt a little happier than usual, and felt the Word come to me with some sweetness, when E. came into the room, and said, 'To-day's text is, They shall sing in the ways of the Lord;' and it seemed the very text I should have chosen. Would it not be sweet if we could always sing, sing praise, as 'the beloved M'Cheyne' says? He is singing now, and he will never cease, day nor night. Ah! he has no vile body of sin and death to damp his joy or to make him sing less sweetly: he sees Jesus, and he is like Him, and he needs no more to make his cup run over throughout eternity. "

"Do you ever feel this, that the bare thought of God makes a thrill of gladness to run through you? I often wonder if it is a right feeling to have, for it often damps my gladness when the thought comes across me,—but am I interested in Him? Do I feel grateful for what he has done? And I know I am not grateful as I should be at all; still I cannot help being happy when I think of Jesus, whatever becomes of me. Oh! won't it be blessed to see Him glorified as He ought to be? served without sin by all His people? Won't it be sweet to see every one bowing at the name of Jesus? One thing I know, I could not spend eternity away from Him. I would rather be absent from you for ever, dearly as I love you; but my heart is very deceitful, and I may be deceiving myself. How awful that would be! I am most afraid of my feelings, for they are naturally warm, and I may think that that is grace; but then it is not natural, alas! to love Jesus; and He alone, I think, can have taught me in any measure to do it."

" October 25, 1844…MY BELOVED FRIEND,—Your last letter made me very glad. I cannot bear when any of Christ's dear people are not rejoicing in Him. It is our own sin when we are not. The sun is always shining brightly, though our sins may raise up a cloud that hides Him from our view.

Is it not wondrous love in Jesus, to choose you and me when many better than we are left out? I often say, 'Why me, Lord? why me? I am getting on very slowly, if at all, in the divine life."

"How ashamed I should be if you saw my heart! and yet Jesus knows it all ; but if I be indeed washed in His blood, He sees no spot even in me. Oh, I sometimes have such a happy feeling coming up in my heart when I think of Jesus! This has been a sweet verse to me often: 'They looked to Him and were lightened;' just as if whenever we felt sorrowful we thought of Jesus, and immediately were lightened. We have much to make us sorrowful here, but we shall never know sorrow in Immanuel's land. shall be so glad to see you there. You will never come there, and tell me you are not so happy to-day! You will always be in His presence, and in that blessed presence is 'fulness of joy.'"

"P____, October 29, 1844…What a day we had on Sabbath! I can hardly write to you, I am so very, veryhappy. Will you praise Him for me, for He has indeed put 'a new song into my mouth.' I feel as if this were a new world altogether: everything breathes love, unutterable, wondrous love. I think, if ever I tasted the joy that is unspeakable and full of glory, it was on that blessed day; and ever since, I cannot pray, I can only praise. And yet I cannot praise. Oh, help me! I seem to hear nothing but Jesus saying, 'I loved thee, and gave Myself for thee.' The truth about our precious Saviour is so new, so fresh, and so inexpressibly sweet, I wonder the whole world does not believe. Jesus is indeed all; and the Father is satisfied in Him, and with all who come by Him. The Father seems to love me, because He loves His own well beloved Son."

"Don't you remember how I was always saying that I did not know Jesus at all, and that I was sure I always went to the Father without Him? But now, how different! Jesus is all to me. Oh! J____, is it indeed true? I can say, 'who loved me, and gave Himself for me.' Oh, praise Him, praise! What can I do for His glory? I can do nothing but say, 'Here am I, Lord; send me.' It is so sweet to think of Jesus standing in my room and being my righteousness, my wisdom, and my strength! How I longed for you on Sabbath! What have I been doing for three years? I never felt as I do now. Surely it is not a delusion! Satan often makes me afraid; but Jesus is mine, and he cannot hurt me now."

"Will you pray much for me just now? I am almost afraid of the state I am in; and I am so afraid of going back, and I am afraid of being uplifted; and, oh, pray that I may walk worthy of such a Saviour! I wish very much that you would write to me very soon, and tell me what I should do. I seem in a kind of dream." "We heard Mr. A. B. on the Saturday, and liked him very much. It was the same text he had for one of his tableservices at Kelso—'If there be any consolation in Christ.' He said there is nothing so certain as that there is consolation in Christ. Mr. Moody Stuart's text was Isaiah 4:2, about Jesus being the Branch. It was what he said about that, that gave me such peace, and such sweet, sweet views of Jesus. He said, that the Father, as it were, tasted the fruit of the glorious branch, and that He said, 'It is enough, I am satisfied.' Oh! darling, is there not peace in it? And does it not make Jesus precious? O that He were more precious to me! I need again, I am sure, to beg your pardon for such an egotistical letter; but I must tell you what the Lord has done for my soul. Goodnight, my beloved; may Jesus ever be near you, and say to you, 'Fear not, I have redeemed thee.'...I have such yearnings to be a real Christian; but it is difficult; the old man is very strong...How soon the time will come when we shall never again have to complain that we are cold and lifeless! The minister at our table spoke about this text— 'What! could ye not

watch with me one hour?' He said it is but one short hour, and then we shall be in Immanuel's land. We have a great work to do, and oh, what a little time to do it in! 'Let us, therefore, not sleep as do others.' I should like if I could really live for eternity. Eternity is everything. I wish, with you, I could get deeper views of sin; but just now I can see nothing but that Jesus is perfect, and that He is all in all; and yet it is a sight of Jesus that shews us our sins. I know little of anything; but Jesus is my wisdom. Do you know, He seems a new Jesus to me? and yet He is not new. O to be kept from dishonouring Him!…I have written such a long letter, that I have hardly left myself time to speak of our district. O that Lizzy would really come to Jesus! Tell her from me that God is satisfied with His beloved Son, and that He requires nothing from her but just that she bring Jesus in her arms, and plead His name, and she is sure to be accepted. Don't think that I am so conceited as to pretend to tell you what to say to her; but I want to send her a message, for I do love her. How I should like to accompany you on your rounds once more! but I must follow you with my poor prayers. I am much interested in your meeting; remember the sweet promise—'Where two or three are gathered together, there am I in the midst.' May you see much fruit, beloved one!—Ever your loving friend."

"P____, November 6, 1844…MY BELOVED J____, I feel how much grace I need at present; there is so much of the world going on amongst us, that it is very difficult to realise unseen things. I often find this line of a hymn coming into my mind— 'O for a closer walk with God!' I am afraid of getting like those meant by the thorny ground hearers; so many earthly things come in to choke the Word. O for grace to be kept from falling! but 'He is able to keep us from falling;' blessed be His holy name! I often wish I were safe in heaven; but that is sinful; He can keep me as safe in the wilderness as He can in heaven, if I only lean on Him; and then I ought to wish to bring sinners to Him. O that I could!—what can I do? I long to be a living disciple, but I much fear I am a fruitless one...I am not so happy as when I last wrote to you; but Jesus is still the same, and His work is as precious, and as sufficient in the Father's eyes, as it ever was. We must not depend on anything in such poor changeable creatures as we are; but when we do get a sight of Jesus, it is terrible to lose Him again. How blessed it will be when we shall never for one moment have His face hidden from us!"

" November 22, 1844…MY BELOVED____, We have only a few letters to write now, dear friend, and then we shall meet, never more to be separated, in that blessed place where we shall not need to write, for we shall see one another face to face. Perhaps we may have that joy once more even here, but, oh! everything here is alloyed. Even at the communion table we are reminded that we are still confined to this body of sin and death. I was, as you supposed, very happy at the table, and my joy came from a very blessed view the Lord gave me that Jesus had done everything, and that the Father is now well pleased with all who come in the name of His dear Son. I cannot describe to you what I felt, but it seemed something I had never seen before; and oh! it was so sweet, and it made Jesus so very precious, and everything seemed to breathe love.It was a very wonderful time. I think many must have got a blessing that day. Jesus was evidently set forth crucified in the midst of us; and He was with us. 'The doors being shut. Jesus came in and said, Peace be unto you!' You say truly, the peace is not ours,and, therefore, we cannot impart it to another. It is His peace. Does He not say, ' My peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you'? O to be filled with this peace, 'which passeth understanding!' What must heaven be, when a dropof it is so sweet, so filling! This is heaven—this one sentence—' So shall we ever be with the Lord.'

Don’t you think so? I often wonder what sort of a place it will be; but Jesus will be there; I know He will, and that is enough—that makes it heaven. His presence would make hell heaven, I think, but He is not there, and therefore it is hell. Should we not long to see brands plucked out of the burning? Should we not seek and pray that sinners may be saved from hell, and brought to heaven, where Jesus is? How little I care for souls! That often makes me fear I am no child of Jesus, for if I had His Spirit (if I have not his Spirit, I am none of His), should I not, like Him, weep over sinners? Pray that I may be like Him in this, and pray that I may be made useful wherever I am. I have much to do, I do not need to go and seek work; but I am idle, and slothful, and selfish. O that it could be said of me, ’She hath done what she could!’ "

" What a sweet thought that is, that we are not our own! How happy we should be if we could always carry it about with us, and how holy, too, for we could not sin so often if we thought, I belong to a holy God, and my Father loves to see His child becoming daily more like His dear Son, my Elder Brother. K. was saying yesterday that it was curious to notice how like people got to one another, when they were much together. That shews us that if we were more with Jesus, we should grow more like Him. ’Beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image.’ And then, think of this wonderful verse, and can you help bursting into a shout of joy? —’We know that when He shall appear, weshall be like Him, for we shall see Him as he is!’ No wonder that, when we are presented faultless before the presence of His glory, it is with exceeding joy! Oh! how we should yearn over a blind perishing world! Let us agree, dear friend, to pray particularly for missions at our Saturday meeting; and, oh! ask that I may be forgiven my awful neglect in this matter. E. sends this text: ’For yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry.’"

" P____, December 5, 1844…MY BELOVED J____, How differently do I feel now from what I did when I wrote to you! My joy is all away now; but Jesus is still the same, and He still says, ’Look unto me and be ye saved;’ ’I will in no wise cast out.’ Blessed words! they have given peace to many a weary soul."

"December 11, 1844…MY DEAREST FRIEND,—You ask me if the friendship of Jesus is not worth having, even if it terminated with this life. It is indeed; it is the only real enjoyment in this life to ’know Him,’ and the more we know of Him the more we desire to know; yet I think we should be sorry to part with Jesus at death—don’t you?—but, ah! if we are His, that will never be the cake; death, which separates us from all else, only unites us to Jesus, never to part again! I am often much cast down just now; joy never lasts with me; I often feel constrained to say, ’I have no might against this great multitude that is come upon me, neither know I what to do, but mine eyes are unto Thee.’ Do you remember what Jonah said?—’All thy waves and thy billows are gone over me.’ He was in great straits, yet he said, ’Yet will I look again towards Thy holy temple.’ To whom can youand I go but to Him? ’He is a very present help in every time of trouble.’ It is blessed when we can hope against hope, and, in spite of everything, cast ourselves on Him, and say, ’Thou hast said, him (any "him") that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.’ Oh! these words are a rock. They are an answer to Satan and to the world, and to the whole host of our enemies put together (and I believe these are not a few); they cannot answer these words, ’Him that cometh to Me’—the Me is such a sweet word—and then, ’In no wise.’ I am very fond, too, of that part where Jesus says to the poor trembling woman, ’Neither do I condemn thee; go, and sin no more.’ Oh! it is the frankness, the tender love of the pardon, that makes the command sweet, ’Go, and sin no more.’

We find, then, that 'His commandments are not grievous.' I want to love Jesus more, but I cannot; will you ask Him to teach me to love Him? I am afraid often I am not one of His, but he says, 'Come, and I will in no wise cast out.' Oh! when shall I be any better? Do you ever feel like Jeremiah, who, I think it is, says, 'Thy words were good, and I did eat them'? They are just like food sometimes, and they give you such a holy boldness in pleading. I sometimes feel just as if Jesus were smiling on me, when I bring His own words to Him in prayer, and say, 'Lord, Thou hast said this, do as Thou hast said.' I wonder we are ever unhappy when we have always such a God to go to, and such exceeding great and precious promises to plead; but, oh! our desperate unbelief; it is this that spoils all. 'Lord, increase our faith'—should that not often be our prayer? R. and I are to be at a family meeting on Friday ; will you ask, dear, that we may be there for His glory? and to-morrow week we are to be at the marriage of a dear friend of ours—a child of Jesus. You must remember us all on that day also. Give my love to dear old Lizzy, and tell her Jesus says, 'Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.' I love her soul much, but Jesus loves it far more. Let her choose Jesus this day, that she may serve Him."

" P____, January 25, 1845…It is curious that I really get more ignorant about spiritual things every day, instead of knowing more! But perhaps that is to humble me; perhaps God sees that even a little grace would make me proud. Alas! how I stand in my own light, and by my wickedness prevent even a loving God from filling me as fall as He longs to do! How sweet it would be to kneel together once more! But we must not quarrel with God's providence; its designs are as loving as the designs of His grace are; all is right on His part, only we are blind. O for a simple childlike faith ;—to trust Him entirely, and to trust Him at all times! May He give us both this grace! There is a very nice family here, that I have known for some time, a man and his wife, and some little children; very moral, but not pious ; and I am very anxious to try to get up alittle meeting at their house once a week. I mean to read a chapter, and, if God enables me, try to say a few words about it sometimes, and begin and end with prayer. I shall only have one or two poor women besides the woman of the house. I have told the woman to have only one stranger the first day, in case my courage fail, but I may get more in time.

I wish I saw how really weak I am, for then I should be obliged to lean on God. Will you ask this for me? I don't want you so much to ask that I may be able to speak, as that I may be humbled, and then there will be less danger of there being so much of myself in this thing; perhaps the best thing would be, that my mouth be shut, then I might plead with Him to speak. I know you won't forget me. I intend to go on the Wednesdays at three in the afternoon. Remember also our classes on the Sabbaths at four ; for, now that it is getting lighter, we intend to take a class each...I sometimes feel such a longing desire to be made of any use in this world; but then, again, I am damped when I remember how very unworthy I am; I can scarcely believe God will use me. Is it not wonderful that God works by such beings as I? that He does not say, 'Stand back, I can do without you'! And so He could; He does not need worms to aid Him in His mighty plans, but still he condescends to use us; and I wish he would use me, and make me willing to work…How is Lizzy now? Is

she born again yet? Tell her from me Christ says, 'Ye must be born again.'—Farewell (I hate the word), and believe me your loving friend."

" P____, January 28, 1845…MY VERY DEAR FRIEND, I should not have answered your welcome and kind letter quite so soon, but that R. and I are very anxious that you should join with us in

praying about a minister to this place, for they are, I think, just about settling; and, oh! we are so afraid lest man should have the choosing, and not God. Oh! will you pray for us, dear Mrs. H____ ? for it is a most important time this, so much depends on our getting a real man of God. And will you enlist all our praying friends on this behalf? 'Pray forus'—that is all I seem able to say. I feel it is in God's hands. It could not be in better ; and I am sure He will hear the cry of His poor needy children in this place, and also the sorrows of Christless souls here, and send one whom He will own and bless. It is not so much on R.'s account and mine that we are so anxious, for we are but two, and there are so many here needy, like us; and there is much sorrow to us individually, connected with our getting a godly man here, because then we shall have to leave our dear, dear pastor,[28] who has fed us with the bread of life for two years now; and although we leave him to come to our church again, and to many advantages connected with having our church so near, still it must be painful to leave one we have liked so much. This is another proof that this is not ourrest—it shews we are in the wilderness still. O that I were like a pilgrim!…I have been ill again with my side, and had to put six leeches on ; it is not well yet, either. Pray that this pain may be sanctified. It troubles me most when I kneel, which makes it more a cross, as I always feel that I need all my strength then. We have been reading The Night of Weeping, by Mr. Bonar. I may have many instructors in Christ, but I have but one father, and he is my spiritual father. May his own God reward him.— Farewell, my very dear friend, and believe me ever yours affectionately in the love of the only lovely One, Jesus, God's dear Son, and our dear Saviour."

" January 31, 1845…MY DEAREST ____, I daresay you will be thinking me very ungrateful for being so long in answering your two last letters, but I assure you it is not want of love, but want of time and want of spirituality that often prevents me writing when I would wish much to do it. I am not getting on in the life of God, I fear, and I am afraid of infecting you with my deadness. But oh! dear friend, it is my own sin if I do not get on; it is no want in Jesus. By the bye, I want to ask your prayers for one thing just now. R. and I are writing some more little hymns for a book, and I am very anxious that you should pray for us, that we may be enabled to write them, and that they may be blest to some souls; for, remember, God can bless the feeblest means; and be sure to tell no oneabout it. I would not have told you, but that I want your prayers; and, dear friend, remember our Sabbath classes also, and our tract giving; and when you write, tell me what you want us to ask for you particularly, and we will remember it at our Saturday meeting.

" Monday,3d February.—Do you feel this, that when you are for any time with worldly people, you lose sight of spiritual things almost entirely? I feel this very painfully, and I often say to E., who feels in the same way, How are we to live in the world, if one day with them puts us all back? And then I feel so guilty, as if Christ were angry with me; and when they speak about worldly things, and say, What is the harm of them? I begin to think there is not so much harm in them, and I cannot speak for Christ, or feel spiritually at all. I have been thinking a good deal tonight about poor old Lizzy. I am anxious about her, that she should come to Jesus, if she is not already His. Oh! tell her to delay no longer, but to come now, for 'all things are ready.' Tell me about her when you write. How I should like to see her again! and sit beside her in her little room, reading the blessed Bible to her. I wonder if I shall ever do that!"

" P____, February 10, 1845…MY VERY DEAR MRS. H____, It is indeed a sweet kind of love, the love of Christians to one another. I hope I am a Christian, and I am sure of this, that I dearly love all God's dear people. I am grieved to hear you have been suffering so much from your head. I

wish I could bear the pain for you; but that would not do you any real good. We never get one pain too much to bear, for it is the hand of our Elder Brother—(what a thought, that He is really that!)—that applies every stroke, and He never does, and never will, afflict any of His children willingly. It is all for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness; and I am sure it is worth suffering anything, in order to attain to such a glorious end. And then, is it not written that it is a light affliction, and that it is but for amoment? And then follows the 'exceeding and eternal weight of glory.' O that the end were indeed come! I am afraid, dear friend, that I am too impatient. It would be right if I longed to be with Jesus, but I fear it is more a feeling that then I shall be done with sorrow…The furnace He often puts us in is, I humbly trust, purging away our dross, and oh! not one particle of the pure gold, if there be indeed any, will be lost. Jesus is sitting watching the furnace; may He be with us in it! O that we may come forth as gold, prepared and fitted for the Master's use! I am sometimes, indeed always, cast down by seeing in me no growing likeness to Him—no fruit of my trials; and they are pretty severe. Is it not strange? Surely I must be more than usually earthly. Jesus has more trouble with me (if I may use the expression) than any one of His children. How kind it is in Him to have anything to do with me at all! I think I may say— 'And when I'm to die, receive me, I'll cry; For Jesus hath loved me, I cannot tell why.'

Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits.' We were yesterday once more permitted to sit down at the Lord's table, and remember His dying, yet never-dying love; and a wonderful day we had.

Jesus was evidently in the midst of us. It was very solemn and very sweet…How slow I am to learn that all my strength, all my righteousness, and all my holiness, in short, that everything I have, is in God! but I feel He is teaching me step by step. I am indeed a very babe,but He will, I know,He will teach me all I ought to know. And I just feel willing to be in His hands, and say, 'Lord, do Thou undertake for me, do Thou perfect Thy strength in my weakness, do Thou make me all Thou wouldst have me to be.' I am not my own, I am His, and has He not a right to do as He will with His own? Yes, He has; and can we not trust Him? I am a poor helpless worm. Isn't it a glorious life the Christian's? Oh, what an aim his is!—God's glory. What strength he has!—God's strength. What a Saviour he has!—God's dear Son. What servants he has!— angels. What a work is his!—winning sinners to God. What a home he is looking forward to!—God's house. And what a portion he has!— God himself. And is all this yours and mine? Our song should indeed be loud and sweet even here. But oh, how loud, how sweet, will it be in heaven! 'Let the children of Zion be joyful in their King.' Christians should sing so loud, that the world would hear them, and perhaps they might feel a longing to learn such a sweet song too. If we were always shewing forth the beauty of our God and King, they might be led to say, 'Whither is thy Beloved gone, that we may seek Him with thee?' What do we more than others in shewing forth His praise!"

"February 17, 1845…MY DEAREST ____, I am quite well now. O that I could spend my strength in Christ's service! I am an awful sinner, and I am often afraid I am too bad ever to get to heaven; but it is very wrong to think in that way, for Jesus says, 'I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.' Yet it is very difficult, when you see your sins, to believe that Jesus still loves you. I know this is pride, abominable pride. The true humility is to consent to be saved just as a sinner. Dear friend, I feel very sorrowful to-night on account of my sins against such a loving Saviour. I just think I have no right to speak about Him at all. O that I could hear Him say, 'I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgressions, and as a cloud thy sins!' Don't you find that it is an evil and a

bitterthing to sin against God? Whether do you see more of its evil or of its bitter nature? I am often troubled in confessing sin, by finding that I feel more the pain it gives myself than the dishonour done to God. Do you feel this? It is right to feel sin painful, and I wish I felt it more so, but we should think more of its dishonouring and grieving God. I do earnestly long to be a real living Christian, it is so sad to be only half alive. I think you and I should agree not to rest satisfied with a low state of grace. Let us pray for one another, and stir one another up in our letters. I fear I shall only do you harm, I am so utterly unlike one who has been made alive."

" MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,—Jesus has been teaching me many lessons lately; it should make me very humble to think how many chastenings I need; but I deeply feel I do need them, I have never had a pain too much; no, 'He doth not afflict willingly;' it is all for my profit, 'that I may be partaker of His holiness.' O that I saw more of it in me! Any trial, however severe, is blessed if it leads you closer to Jesus, and shews you more of His heart, which is all love together; and, as you say, it is very sweet to have Him dealing with us in any way. I have been much drawn to prayer for my dear parents since I have been ill; perhaps God has laid me low for this reason among others, that being so much with them, and witnessing their tender care of me, I may be led to feel for their souls. Dear friend, will you ask that my poor prayers may be answered, and my weak efforts blest to these precious souls? "

"P____, February 28, 1845…"O the precious soul! what can you give in exchange for it? How trifling all our earthly concerns often seem to me! I sometimes wonder when I see grave and learned men taken up with what seems so childish in comparison with eternity. How strange, that God should choose the weak things of this world! It sometimes staggers me, and makes me unbelieving; but that is because I am so blind and foolish. I am often very unbelieving about them all, for none of them are beginning to care, as far as we can see; but still we must pray on, and never cease till our breath goes, and our praising days begin, never to end. O for a praying heart! I was thinking to-day how sweet it would be if all my members were employed in His service. I should like if my tongue were always employed in commending Him, my eyes to behold no face but His, my ears to hear no voice but His, my feet to go on no errands but His, my hands to be employed in no work but His, and my heart filled with Himself. O how contrary to this is my real state! May I be humbled on account of my shortcomings."

" March 3…I want to tell you what a sweet time I had this morning in praying for your family and mine, for I think we should encourage one another by telling when God seems to be saying, 'Pray without ceasing; ask, and ye shall receive.' What a mighty weapon prayer is! No wonder, when it moves the arm that moves the world. I cannot tell you how sweet it was to bring them all to His dear feet, and to say, 'Lord, they are even now dead, but lay Thy hand upon them, and they shall live.' Do not cease to wrestle, and ask that I may be taught, too, to pray, and we shall prevail. I know we shall. It is for His glory, and will He not glorify Himself? And then, why are they all alive now? Does not that very fact seem to have a voice, and to say to us, that our very hearts may leap for joy, ' As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in their death, but rather that they should turn and live?' He has not cut them down, because He is too anxious to save them. I don't much mind though we are not the instruments. He will employ those who will bring most glory to Him; and is not that enough? It is sweet to roll ourselves on the Lord, and to say, 'I know that Thou wilt do all things well.' I wish I could praise Him, but I haven't a heart to do so. I am so cold, so selfish; I seem to take everything as my right. But He will teach me, He will humble me, and I am just glad to lay

myself at His feet, and say, 'That which I know not, teach Thou me.' I feel as if I had just begun to learn. I cannot say the A B C in the divine life yet. We have had no more battles since I last wrote; it is curious I never feel as if we were going on right when they are all kind. I am afraid lest we be trying to avoid the cross; but the best way is to seek humbly and prayerfully to do our duty as far as we see it to be God's way, and to leave all consequences to Him. I wish I could 'cease from my own wisdom.' I had a sweet dream last night. I thought I had gone to Kelso to spend the day, and we had such a sweet time together ; it was more like heaven than anything here; for there seemed to be no sin in anything we did, or that was going on around us. All seemed to breathe such a quiet sweet air: the only sorrowful thing was, that Mrs. H____ was very ill. I thought she was entirely confined to bed; yet she, too, seemed so sweet and happy. I often wonder if we ever can learn anything from dreams. It is sweet to think that heaven, with its quiet green pastures, and its still waters, and its 'Lamb as it had been slain,' is no dream. No! It is the greatest reality there is. The love of Jesus is no dream. It is too often but as a dream to me. O for more faith! All my cry just now is for faith, strong faith, giving glory to God."

"Mr. ____ seems to me to be wrong in making so many Christians think they should not go to the Lord's table. At the last communion, some of them did not go forward, even some of his elders. I get frightened when I think of my going, and so many of His people staying away; but still I just cling to this, that it is not us God looks at, but Jesus. He says of Him, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.' What should we do without Him to hide in? It is a sad world this; how few care for Jesus, and how different His own people are from what they ought to be! At least I know I am…It is a blessing it is no sin to be poor. Jesus was poor, He had not where to lay His head…Do you still take from eight till nine on the Saturday nights? for that is my hour with B____. You will get this as you go to the Tuesday meeting. It is curious, I often am happy on Tuesdays at prayer in the morning, and then I recollect that you are all meeting together at our Father's throne ; and I think perhaps you have been remembering poor me, and it is a sweet thought. I have communion with you in that way. Farewell, my beloved friend. Here is a verse for you—'God is love.' O that we could enter into it! God is love, and He is love to me; nothing but love, infinite, undeserved, unending love. His nature and His name is LOVE. What a God we have! What short returns do we make! Alas for me! I love but little in return."

"P____, March 26, 1845…MY BELOVED FRIEND,—Nothing for a long time has given me such delight, as hearing that we are perhaps soon to meet; that will indeed be a happy moment. I wish it were come. I have been twice laid up since I got your last letter, or I should have answered it sooner. I do wish these illnesses were improved by me. I had a sore throat which ended in one of my usual fainting fits. I have been thinking it must be for some end that I am so often tried, though my illnesses are slight, and I feel so anxious they should answer the very end for which they are sent. Oh! pray that they may. God seems to be shewing me my heart at present, and it makes me very miserable to see it, for I think He cannot look upon such a vile wretch as I, for I am really that. Don't you sometimes feel ashamed and grieved, to be always going to God, and saying, 'Lord, I have sinned'! I felt that very much to-day. I am always grieving my kindest Friend, and He is always forgiving me, and I can scarcely stand it at times, it is so wonderful. Why does He love me? I cannot tell. I shall know, when I get to glory, all about it ; but in the meantime, I wish I could sin less. Oh! if I could be only one hour without sinning, how glad I should be! But this should make Jesus more precious. O that it may! I had a wonderful time at prayer in bed this morning. Jesus'

love seemed indeed to pass all knowledge. I thought He said to me, ’ Thou art all fair, my love.’ I cannot describe the sweetness of the words, ’my love.’ Don’t you feel that you would be ashamed to speak of God’s loving you, if it were not in His Son? All! that’s the glory of it all! But why do I speak of it? What do I know? I sometimes think I should give up speaking or writing about it at all, I am so mean, so vile. O for a clean heart!"

"P____, March 1845…I long ardently to be away, to know something of that love which passeth knowledge, for here I do indeed see through a glass darkly, but thenit will be face to face. What a thought! I think that will be ’the exceeding weight of glory’ spoken of, seeing Him who is ’ altogether lovely.’ O to live a more heavenly life on earth! I often fear I am on the broad road yet, I am so unlike one who is but a stranger and pilgrim here. Is it not strange I don’t get more assurance? My dear friend, I fear you will think me too egotistical, but the reason is, that when I quit my vile self, which I am always so glad to do, and speak of Jesus and all the glorious things of another and a better world, something within me seems to check me and say, ’You are a hypocrite; you have neither part nor lot in this matter;’ and I fear it is too true. But I won’t vex you with my sinful doubts, only, when you write, ask that God would give you a word in season to a weary soul…I should like to have a talk with ____ again about our Elder Brother. What a thought, that Jesus wears, and will for ever wear, our nature! There is none like Jesus! What a precious privilege, to be allowed at any time, and at all times, to pour out our hearts before Him! It is often a relief to me just to kneel down and say, ’Lord, I thank Thee that Thou art;’ O that I could add, that Thou art mine! Should I never get any more from Him than I have already got, I have matter for praise through all eternity. I deserve nothing, and if I do get to heaven at last, I think I shall be the greatest wonder of mercy there; I shall have the lowest place; I think I should be ashamed to see myself in any other. There is one man I am very anxious about here, will you remember him? I spoke to him the other day about his soul, and he seems anxious, but he has strange views, and won’t go to any church; however, I have got him persuaded to go next Sabbath. Poor man, a woman next door tells me he is so miserable sometimes, that he often comes to her house, and, without saying a word, seizes hold of her Bible, and reads a verse, then stands thinking over it, then goes away again. He said to me with a kind of despairing feeling, that he thought of joining the Unitarians, who deny that our blessed Jesus is God. He asked me to go to see him again to-day. O that Jesus would speak by me!"

" April 1…MY BELOVED J____, I have not been well enough to finish this till now, but I am quitewell now. O that all my pain may be sanctified! I despair of ever getting any better. I wish I could see myself completein Jesus. I am ashamed when I think of what I am, so proud, so vain, so foolish, and selfwilled. All I want is, that Jesus should be glorified by me, and then it matters little what man thinks of me; but my fear is that I dishonour Him. ""Sometimes eternal things seem so real, so important, that I gaze with wonder to see so many never thinking of them all. I wonder they do not feel as I do, and I wonder I feel so little. It is a strange life this, but it is a glorious one, and the end of it is glory. ’His rest shall be glory’ (Isaiah 11:10, margin). "

"I have sweet news to tell you about our congregation at M____. E. and I have been feeling for some time a great desire for a revival amongst us, and your letter about Jedburgh made us doubly anxious, and we thought what a delightful thing it would be if we could get all the praying members to fix an hour for us all to plead for it. We spoke to a dear Christian, who joined in our plan with all her heart; and she introduced us to two more Christians in the congregation, who have agreed too,

and she is to speak to all the other female members, so that we shall soon, I trust, be praying at the same hour for precious Jesus to come into the hearts of His enemies amongst us, and win them to Himself, and draw His own closer. One is Mrs. D____, and she seems just like the dear one of the same name in Kelso. She said she had been long wishing it, and was so struck when Mrs. W. spoke to her about it…Besides our separate meeting, we are to have a monthly meeting at Mrs. D____'s house at three o'clock the first Friday of every month; so you will remember us on Friday, our first meeting: eight of us have also fixed an hour for prayer, at six in the morning every Monday and Friday. We had our first, last Monday, and it was very sweet to have such a quiet morning hour. Our dear minister is very wonderfully quickened just now, so that we all feel there is the greater call for us to pray for a blessing, when God is so anxious to bless, as He shews He is, by stirring His servant to such earnestness in seeking to win souls. O that we saw many seeking Jesus! I trust K. and I shall get great good from our monthly meetings with such Christians. How much my poor soul needs it! I feel very humbled in the midst of them."

"P____ April 18, 1845…I am at this moment alone here. They are all in E____. I wish I could spend the day with God. I feel I should improve a quiet time like this; but oh! weary, weary sin; the 'old man' is still very strong in me. I cannot tell you the longings I have to be done with this body of death, and to have a body like unto His glorious body. O for the time 'When I stand before the throne, Dress'd in beauty not my own.'" "We met a dear old Christian the other day, past ninety! and she was always singing— 'Oh! to grace how great a debtor, Daily I'm constrain'd to be!'

She has begun the chief note in the new song even here."

"Edinburgh, May 1845…MY DARLING E____, I have been constantly thinking of you since you went away, and wishing you were back; and oh! I dowish we were both at our Father's house in heaven, for this is a dreary, sad world!"

"I have been reading some of Mr. Baker's letters, and one remark he makes I liked very much. He says, 'You must go to Jesus for those things which we are very apt to think we must bring toHim, such as deep repentance, love to Him, delight in God,' &c. It is a difficult thing to be a real Christian; and I think it is difficult, just because we are so proud, and have so little simplicity. We won't learn of God; we often want to teach ourselves, or to learn of God but inour own way." "I am up to-day, and much better, though the pain is not yet away. It is sweet to know that I am in a Father's hands, and that every pain will work together for my eternal good; but as yet, I see no effect of my many illnesses in making me more holy ; I am no better than I was. Oh, pray that Jesus would draw near, and draw me near to Him, and make me holy as He is holy, and because He is holy! It is sweet to me at times to think of Him as my Elder Brother; it brings Him so near to ourselves.

You and I shall never regret our choice in taking Jesus to be our Saviour, our all in all; and yet it is not we who chose Him. He says, 'Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you.' Blessed be His holy name for choosing such a creature as I!— and I am so glad He has chosen you too! Let us give Him no rest till He gather us all into His fold."

"When you see my old ____, tell her to pray for me that Jesus would give me the victory over Satan, who has long tried me with a sore temptation. I could not explain it to any human being, but He knows it all. O for faith to trust Him! What do you think of old Lizzy? Tell her from me to beware

of resting short of Christ. Perhaps God has sent you to speak the word to her that will be blest; Jesus walked till He was weary just to convert one soul."

"We are thinking of letting our house, and going to some country place, and I want that you and I should pray about it, for it is of importance what minister we all hear for two months. We are told, 'In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will direct your path." I do love you, and am glad that we shall spend eternitytogether. May Jesus shine on you for ever!—Your own loving M____."

" P.S.—Mr. Robertson preached on Sabbath, and I must give you one sentence from his sermon, as it suits you and me so exactly. It was this: 'It would not be safe for you to be without sorrow, till you are without sin, God must have the whole heart, and it mustcome to this at last, that you cry,

None but Christ, none but Christ! and oh! if the loss of a creature draws you closer and closer to Jesus, can you then say, 'All these things are against me'!"

"P____, June 7, 1845…Oh! Jesus is truly 'Wonderful!' I sometimes think, Well, I will trust Him, let Satan and my own evil heart say what they like. Oh, that we should for one moment distrust Him,—that we should not place unlimited confidence in Him! He is worthy, yes, He is worthy! He is a faithful God; we shall be more than satisfied one day that all His dealings with us, His poor, weak, guilty children, were right, and that they all spoke but one language, and that love. O for a praising heart!"

"P____, June 1845…MY DARLING R.,—I have been seeing little Helen, and she is very ill. She has no decided complaint, but just seems wasting away, as many of the poor children here do. I scarcely knew her again, she is so thin and altered; but oh, she is patient and sweet! I do hope she is one of Christ's lambs. You must not forget to pray for her, and ask that I may have a message for her every time I go. She is very fond of the Testament, and even sleeps with it! She says she loves it because it speaks about Jesus."

" I must tell you a very striking and sweet answer to prayer which I had yesterday with regard to her. As I was returning home, after having seen her, I kept saying to myself, 'Oh! if I could only afford to pay a doctor for visiting her!' for Mrs. P____ does not like to send for a doctor, when she is not able to pay him. Well, I asked God just at the moment to send me some money, if it were for His glory: and when I got home, mamma said to me, 'I gave R. some money when she went away; here is the same for you.' Was it not very striking? Could we really learn to trust God, I believe we should get many prayers as wonderfully answered; and my prayer was so unbelieving too, for I really did not expect to get it so soon answered. "

"I had a sweet time this morning, in feeling my utter helplessness, and lying at Jesus' feet, at His disposal, and telling Him that He knows that without Him I can do nothing; and that therefore He must help me. Oh! He seemed sweet, sweet! When I can get a glance at Christ, I could give up anything."

" I had a talk with ____ this morning. It began about our many trials, and in speaking to her about having Christ, and the certainty that He would never forsake me, but enable me to bear all trials in His strength, I got great comfort to my own soul. I said these things at first, rather than felt it; but as I went on telling her many sweet texts, they came with power to my soul, and I felt in a small degree that Jesus would really keep you and me, and enable us to glorify Him before them all. I

went to see dear old M____ yesterday. She is very feeble now, and still dark in her soul; but she said one sweet thing—'Oh! if I only had strong faith! but I must just creep in at His feet, and surely the precious blood that has washed thousands can wash me!' "

"Dear little Thomas has departed, I trust to be with Christ, which is far better. He died during the night on Tuesday. The last text I gave him was, 'The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms.' His mother said he often slept on that verse. He sleeps in Jesus now, and how sweet his slumbers are! "

"How are you getting on? I am grieved to hear that you do not feel our Beloved near; but He is near nevertheless. He says, 'Lo, I am with you alway? I went to Mr. Drummond's lecture yesterday, and was greatly refreshed. In speaking of the trials of God's children, he said, 'Jesus sits watching the furnace, longing for the time to bring them out. He does not afflict willingly, but He relieves willingly." He is trying your faith and mine, dearest, that it may come forth as gold. Mr. M'Cheyne, in one of his lovely letters, says, 'The way to be saved is to know the heart of God and of Christ; see John 17:3. If you only knew that heart, you would lay your weary head with John on His bosom. For one look at yourself, take ten looks at Christ. Look at Romans 15:13. You are looking for peace in striving, or peace in duties, or peace in reforming your mind; but ah! look at His Word, "The God of hope fill you with all peace and joy in believing." All your peace is to be found in believing God's Word about His Son. If for a moment you forget your own case altogether, and meditate on the glorious way of salvation by Christ for US, does your bosom never glow with a ray of peace? Keep that peace; it is joy in believi ng. Look as straight at Christ as you sometimes do at the rising or setting sun. Look direct to Christ.' Is not that fine? I do think that when we get to heaven (wonderful! but not more wonderful than God giving us Jesus), we shall be amazed at the simplicity of what it is to look to Jesus. Let us look, and never mind our own feelings at all. Don't you feel lighter even in thinking about it? I do. I think I go wrong in looking for the effects believing must have, instead of looking and trusting. If I were to look and trust, I could not help growing. Remember, 'the everlasting arms' are always underneath, so that, however low we may fall, they are still beneath us, and in His own time He will raise us up. "

"Good-bye. I wish you were back again, I long so for you. May Jesus be with us both, and say, 'Peace be unto you.' A smile from Him is worth a world. Once more, good night.— Your own…2 Corinthians 5:7 M____."

" E____, July 8, 1845…Can you believe that our dear Mr. Hay has really left this sad world? It is sweet to think he is in glory; but it is a sad trial to those that are left. My heart bleeds for his poor ____. May the Lord be her husband!…Mrs. A____ has gone to Jesus; she died the same day as Mr. ____. Be sure, when you write, to tell me all about his death. How strange it sounds to say that word in connexion with him! Tell dear ____ I long to write to her, but that I am so poorly, and so utterly downcast in soul, that I have no heart to do it. I am afraid it is sinful to be so sad and cast down about anything; I should think more of what a dear minister once said, 'Whoever goes, Jesus stays; whoever dies, Jesus lives!' The Lord liveth."

"P____, August 4, 1845…MY BELOVED J____, He is infinitely worthy to be trusted. I am ashamed when I think of all my perverseness and ingratitude! Surely, I should trust if any should; for, oh! he has been a kind Master to me. I often wonder how He can be so gracious and loving to me, when He knows how ungrateful I shall be to Him; but 'He is God and not man.' It is a very

blessed thought, that every trial is to make us more holy, and that all things shall work together for our good; but I do not think I am growing in holiness at all. I do not profit as I ought under the trials He sends me. It makes me very grieved often to think how very little I am the better for all His chastenings; it is terrible to come out of the furnace not purified. Will you pray for me, dearest, that not one trial may be unimproved by me?…We went to visit the grave of our beloved friend…I can scarcely believe he is really gone; I never felt a death so much. I feel as if the world had got a darker hue since he left it. Can you believe he is really away? 'He has seen Mr. M'Cheyne now,' and he has seen Paul and John,and, above all, he has seen Jesus! We should not wish him back from such a sight as that. Everything says to us, 'This is not your rest.' We must arise from the dust, and raise our whole souls to eternal realities. We must set our affections on things above, not on things on the earth. Don't we profess to call Jesus our treasure? then let our hearts be where our treasure is, and that is in heaven. We need many a lesson before we become obedient children; but, blessed be His name, though we weary of His correction, He does not weary of correcting us; and well for us He does not. What should we do if He said of us, 'They are joined to their idols, let them alone'? Anything but that, would you not say? We shall thank Him for them all one day, and say, 'I know that in faithfulness thou hast afflicted me.' Will you pray also for our Sabbath classes? I feel very much how unfit I am to be a teacher— unfit in every way—and I am so grieved when I see none of my scholars turning to Jesus… ____ would feel dear Mr. Hay's death much. How strange it sounds— dead! Ah! well, 'it is the Lord, let Him do as seemeth Him good.'"

"August 12, 1845…MY DEAREST FRIEND, I have been thinking much lately of living to God's glory. Do you remember the verse which says, 'This people have I formed for myself, they shall shew forth my praise'! It is not our praise we are to shew forth, but God's; we are not to seek great things for ourselves, we are to seek God's glory supremely; and that is what I fail in so much—I seek self terribly. I have been praying a great deal for a single eye; it is so very sinful to be seeking or wishing our own glory or happiness instead of God's glory; our happiness should be in glorifying God. What a sweet heavenly life we should lead, if we thought only of God's glory, and forgot our sinful selves! If God's will were ours, our will would not be so often crossed. But this is hard to flesh and blood: blessed be God, it is not impossible, for 'with Him nothing is impossible,' and He is able to subdue our stubborn wills to His. What holy peace we should enjoy if we would just lie at His feet, and say, 'Lord, do as seemeth good unto Thee!' I don't understand God's way with me at present, but I know it is all right, and if I do not see it clearly now, I shall one day say, 'He hath done all things well.' What about old Lizzy? Has she found Jesus yet? Tell me about her when you write, and dowrite soon. I am grieved, dear friend, you have so many troubles. 'Look unto Jesus,' Cast them all upon Him, and He will sustain you. Think of this sweet verse—I think it is "almost my favourite of all in the Bible—'They looked to Him, and were lightened.' We cannot look at Jesus and be heavy-hearted any more, at least while we are looking. As you say, if we realised more of His presence, we should not be so often troubled."

"P____, August 18, 1845…Pray that God may send you here if it be for His glory. I trust I should not wish even you here if it were not His will. Oh, it would be sweet to have no will but His. I have been thinking much lately, that it would not be an impossible thing even to glory in tribulation. The great thing is to see the hand and the heart of Jesus in any trial; and then it is not only borne with submission, but with gratitude. It is easy, and sweet, too, to trust Christ when all is as you like it;

but there is a more solid sweetness in trusting in Him, and clinging to Him, and loving Him, when He is trying you with a sore trial; it is very sweet to thank Him for afflicting you, and saying, 'I know that in faithfulness thou hast afflicted me.' No affliction, certainly, is joyous, but grievous; but I think when you see Christ's hand in it, and feel that it is for your real good, you will not quarrel with it, but say, 'Good is the will of the Lord.' It is good to be tried; it makes this world much more a wilderness, and this life more like a journey. We feel more that our real joys are above, where Jesus is. O for a pilgrim's heart and a pilgrim's life! But it is nearly midnight, so I must stop. My pain is not away yet, and I intend to try leeches again; but I hope still it may go away without. O for sanctified pain! It is sad, sad not to turn any better under the heavenly Physician; it is not His fault, but the fault of His unworthy patient, that prevents a speedy cure."

"P____, August25, 1845…MY BELOVED FRIEND,—This is but a wilderness world, after all. I am beginning to long to be at home. Oh! I am so weary of sin;—sin, always sin. O to be holy as Christ is holy! and that is perfectly holy. It is only when we see Him as He is that we shall be like Him."

"Salvation would be to me no salvation at all, if holiness were not included. Jesus does fulfil His precious promise that sin shall not have dominion over His people, but if it does not reign, it rages terribly in me. Mr. Robertson said yesterday, in his sermon, 'God's answer to all our hard thoughts of Him is, I have given you my Son; and His answer to all our high thoughts is, Ye have crucified my Son.' What delighted me more in the sermon was this, that when we come to Jesus, He made us holy as well as forgave us; and the very thought of being made holy seemed to me so sweet, that I could scarcely bear the joy it gave me. How kind and how lovely Jesus seemed as my Sanctifier! I think I said to Him from my heart, 'Yea, mine own God art thou!' I was very happy all Saturday and during church on Sabbath, but I have been sinning very much since then, and Jesus is not so near, nor so sweet. Ah! that shews He is a holy Saviour, for He turns away from the least sin."

"I often notice how soon and how terribly I sin after a time of joy. How ungrateful that is!—how black sin is then! Ah! I see I need grace for joy as well as grace for sorrow. What a blessed thing it would be if we had no idols,if we had no aim, no desire but to glorify Jesus and to do His holy will! But self comes in, and many other idols—at least I find it so; I seek great things for myself. Do you find it difficult to be willing, really willing, to be always humbled and laid low, and to see that you are utterly worthless and despicable, and that it is only on account of another that God can have anything to do with you? I sometimes find it very sweet, but at other times my pride rises, and I am unwilling to be alwaysin the dust —always nothing. What a warfare it is! I am often 'faint,' yet God, my 'wonderful' God, keeps me still 'pursuing;' and, oh! I trust, since He has begun the good work in me, He will not leave it off till it is finished—till I, even I, am 'faultless before the throne.' O to be there! and to see you there, my most beloved, 'without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing,' and join with you in the sweet, sweet song, 'Worthy,' yes, 'worthy is the Lamb that was slain for US!' I shall see you clothed in His beauty, and glorify God in you. It will be all Jesus there. No self, no sin, no idols, but Jesus will be all in all. 'Amen! Even so, come, Lord Jesus.'

I wish I could see you face to face, that I might speak of the Lord's dealings with my poor soul, for they have been very wonderful lately. I don't know when that will be, but I am quite satisfied that He will permit us to meet in His own time, and when it will be more for His glory; and it would not be a sweet meeting if any other hand than our Father's brought us together. I have been going on

frowardly in my own way lately, but God has most graciously shewn me my wickedness, and has brought me back in some degree to Himself, and made me more willing to say, ' Not my will, but Thine be done.' I had been thinking that such and such a thing would make me happy, and I sought it in spite of God. What a sinner I have been, and am! but He has now taken away the idol—He has made it bitter to me ; and now I see His way is the best, and the happiest too; and, dearest, will you pray for me, that I may not be allowed to take my own way any more in anything? Are not these wonderful words? —'Thou hast played the harlot with many lovers, yet return unto me, saith the Lord.' God's way is so much the best in everything, I am determined, in His strength, to trust Him for everything. He is too wise to err, and too good to be unkind. Let us trust Him when we cannot see plainly the love of His dealings with us, and we shall see it in His own time—if not here, yet yonder. Our path in life may be a solitary, and a painful, and a trying one in many ways—we may be despised and overlooked, but He will never forsake us, nor withhold onegood thing from us; and all these things will most assuredly be for the good of our souls. Then let us sing— 'The way may be rough, but it cannot be long, And then, O how pleasant the conqueror's song!'

I speak in this way to you because I want you to praise Him for me, and to pray that I may have grace given me to trust Him to the end. O that I saw all we love seeking this gracious One! I am not hopeful about____ just now, which is strange, when I feel I can trust Him more about myself; but I see no signs of life yet. Perhaps God's time has not come; we must continue to pray, and 'hope against hope.' We are very anxious about dear ____ just now, but he seems to hate when we mention the subject. O that Jesus would reveal Himself to him, and he could not kelp running after Him!"

"P____, October 6, 1845…I am to be busy this week giving my tracts. Pray for a blessing on them, and that I may have an open door to speak to many souls. I intend to go and get a quickening from ____. I am glad to say that at present I have more desire to stay here and win souls to Jesus than to be away. Mr. Robertson spoke of that yesterday, and said that we should not desire perfect rest till we had served God all we could here. I am going to-morrow to see the old man at N____. Ask words for me, and the blessed Spirit to carry home the sweet message of mercy to that soul. How sweet the sound of a free salvation is when you feel that you are the chief of sinners!"

"P____ October 15, 1845…We had a nice day yesterday. I did not get much from man; but I had a sweet time at the table. At first it was mingled; a painful sense of sin—sin against love— and a sense of the love of Jesus, too; but in a little while I cannot tell you what a sweet; calm, happy feeling of peace came over my whole heart. I felt that Jesus had come near, and that He loved even me ; and I tried not to think of my wretched self, and gave myself up to the blessedness of being the Lord's. I was almost afraid to breathe, lest it should all go away."

"P____, October 25, 1845…There is but one who can give even a drop of comfort at a time like this, and to His effectual sympathy and tender love I have been unceasingly commending you ; and I do feel persuaded He is very near you. O that he may say to your very heart—' It is I, be not afraid!' I pray that you may see love, divine, holy love, in this stroke ; and oh, may the 'exceeding great and precious promises' be more precious to you now than ever!…Mr. A. Bonar said in his sermon—'The Father's bosom was the shore to which Jesus always swam in all his temptations.' He left that bosom to win for poor sinners the crown of glory; and, now that He has gone back, He

tells us that we, too, may find a refuge there; for that in Him, His God is our God, and His Father our Father…We cannot but weep at such a time, and Jesus wishes us to weep. He wept himself at the grave of Mary and Martha's brother, and He has the same heart still. Farewell, my beloved friend. I commend you to Him who can bind up the broken heart and heal all those wounds.—And, praying that you may grow much in the knowledge of Jesus, I am your very attached friend."

"P____, October 30, 1845…My beloved J____, night and day you are in my thoughts. I have, indeed, been in the furnace with you; but what good will that do you? None. But there is One with you who can and will comfort and bless you. One like unto the Son of Man is very near you…'He doth not afflict willingly;' and 'in all your afflictions He is afflicted.' He is our blessed Head, and He feels when any of His members are touched. 'He that toucheth you toucheth the apple of His eye.'…The other day I heard just as it were a voice in my heart, saying, 'Do not grieve, it is I who am smiting her, and it is for her eternal profit.' cannot tell you how it comforted me. It was Jesus who had drawn near, and said, 'O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt? Thy friend is safe, for my hand holds the rod.'...In a few short years we shall be in Immanuel's land. One tie less to earth is another tie to heaven. You will feel earth more a wilderness now than ever; and don't you remember what Mr. M'Cheyne said? —'Christ is never so precious as when the world is one vast howling wilderness. 'I will allure her into the wilderness, and will speak comfortably to her, to herheart.'…I wish I could write something that would comfort you, my own friend, but I am but a broken cistern; but Jesus is a full fountain, and His fulness is for you. Here is one of the drops of that fountain— 'Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God.' Again— 'Give ye them no possession, I am their possession.' Ah, the Christian should want nothing here, he has all in God. I am ashamed to send such a cold letter, with so little in it of our wonderful Immanuel; but you have Himself to go to, and He is always full, always ready and able to bless you."

" P____, November 12, 1845…I am glad you have such friends as ____ with you. Jesus himself, when in His agony, went to His dear disciples for comfort (oh! how like ' the children' he became!), but He found no comforters. Blessed Jesus! what He suffered that His people might spend an eternity without a single pain! I feel as if my cold earthly words would just annoy you. When you get near, will you remember my poor soul? not that I may be happy, but that I may glorify Jesus. This morning everything seemed swallowed up in the one thought of His glory. O that the world knew Him! My heart is pained just now with the thought that so few know Him—that so few see any beauty in Him, and that even His own people see so little...It was very sweet to me to hear our truly 'wonderful' God is sustaining you; while He is making your cup of sorrow full, He is also making your cup of consolation to run over; if your afflictions abound, may your consolations much more abound. The tempest makes us run quickly and closely to the shepherd's side, when fair weather might tempt us to wander.—Praying that the God of peace, and love, and hope, and consolation, and all grace may be with you, and manifest himself to you, I am," &c.

" P____, November 24, 1845…My heart rejoices in the midst of its sorrow when I hear how kind the Lord is to my dear friend, in supporting and comforting you while suffering under His hand. I try to give thanks to our God on your behalf. We are told to weep with those that weep, and to rejoice with those that rejoice: will you let me weep with you, my own friend, and rejoice with you too? It is painful to be so far separate ; but this is His will who doeth all things well, and we must not think any of His commands grievous…How soon we shall know all we now see so darkly! I often wish that time were come, for I do nothing but dishonour Jesus, and I am so often mourning without the

sun; but still I think I should like to live even many years here yet, if I could win any to Jesus. Ah! I think He will need to cast me into many a furnace before my dross is purged away. O for a willing heart to all He calls me to bear! O for a childish, simple faith—to be Christlike! Truly 'in this tabernacle we groan, being burdened.' How different we shall be when we walk with Jesus, and with each other, by the still waters and the green pastures! O that the well of water which is even now within us, if we are Christ's, would spring up more and more, and cheer us on our way to Immanuel's land,—that it would also flow out from us, giving life to many dead souls around us!...G. H. took R. and me to visit a poor dying girl, whom he found a rejoicing Christian, and who, he discovered, had been brought to Jesus by his own brother about a year ago. She said, in speaking of God's mercies, 'Yes, and they all come to us streaming with the blood of Jesus.' She takes great delight in speaking of Mr. Hay, and said, 'He will have a heavy crown, yes, he will have a heavy crown.' Is it not sweet to go to a dark corner like that, and see such a bright light shining to the glory of Jesus, who hath called her 'out of darkness into His marvellous light!'…O that we could find many (and be followed by many) in glory who had been led by us to the foot of the cross!"

"P____, December 1, 1845…He does indeed bring good even out of our evil. I am so glad that everything will be for His glory; even our sins, in the end, are the means of making His blood more precious, and shewing how glorious He is in subduing them all, and thereby He gets glory… Ask for me, that I may so see myself that I may not be able any longer to dishonour Jesus, by trusting to anything in me at all. O that I could glorify Him, by trusting Him even in full view of a deceitful and desperately wicked heart! And oh! how worthy He is to be trusted! how tender, how wise, how loving, how wondrously long-suffering he is! I feel as if He were more amazingly loving in saving such a vile creature as I, than in saving any of His people. He alone knows what I am, and I do greatly wonder He does not abhor me. I trust I am really His. My own blessed Saviour! does He really say to me, ' Come unto me'? Oh! I shall be glad, glad when I lay down this body of sin and death, and never, never sin...I had a very nice time to-day at my district. Jesus gave me a word to one poor woman, and she listened very attentively. I must not lose sight of her ; I feel greatly the need of the Spirit when I go amongst them. What a wonderful thing it is, that we should be allowed to go and tell sinners like ourselves of such a glorious Saviour!"

"I think I never feel so happy as when I am going from one poor wretched dwelling to another, trying with stammering, and alas! most sinful lips, to tell about the Lamb of God. Oh! it is glorious work; it is angelic work, and yet it is not given to angels, but to sinners...Have you seen ____ lately? I was sorry to hear of a dance she had been at. Poor — — ! I fear she has not given her heart to Jesus yet."

"P____ December 17, 1845…Do you not long for the time when we shall never part from each other any more, and when we shall meet, too, with beloved brothers and sisters in the Lord, even now with Him, and even now talking with Him of the decease which he did accomplish at Jerusalem? Blessed, glorious Jesus! I wish I knew Him! How like the wilderness this world has seemed the few last months even to me, though I have not been in such a hot furnace as you! Heaven seems more real than ever; and it is good to feel this. We should not feel at home here…Perhaps we may see few more years come in. O that this one that is so nearly here were to be spent more to His glory by all His children! Mrs. D____ wants me to visit at the House of Refuge. What do you think about it? I am afraid I at least am not capable of such a work. There are

children, and sick people, and old women, all needy souls. It would be pleasant work to go and tell some of them of the Lamb of God, who can take away all their sins; but I fear my unfitness. Pray about it; and, oh, pray for three souls in my district, whom I am particularly anxious about! God knows all their cases. One is B____'s father. O that I could win this soul to Jesus!—not I,but that He would use me as the unworthy instrument, if that be for His glory. The other cases are women, one self-righteous, the other very ignorant. I feel very much just now the need of the Spirit to bless my .poor efforts; but He will come if we pray for Him, and I am sure there is great need of Him here. There are many means, but as yet little blessing. I often wonder why this is the case; but still it is encouraging, and matter for praise, that there are any even a little moved. But I must finish. May He who never slumbers nor sleeps watch over you this night."

"P____, December 29, 1845…I must write you a few lines tonight, as I want to have a chat with you, before this year passes, never to return…There is nothing worth living for in this sad world but to win souls to Jesus…I like what you say about Jesus having compassion on the ignorant. It came home to me, for I am more truly ignorant, and I am worse than only knowing that I know nothing, for I am often tempted to think that I know something. I cannot tell you how sweet I felt what you said about that. Surely, Jesus will look with great compassion on me! We must plead much for one another during this approaching prayerunion. It is sweet to think there is to be one…What a world this is! We are really getting deeper and deeper into the dark wilderness. May it make us long for the cloudless day, the sinless eternity, to which all God's saints are hastening. And oh, may the Sun of Righteousness arise, even now, with healing in his wings, and may that sun never set!…I have begun to visit at the House of Refuge. Oh, think if we could win jewels for the crown of Jesus out of that place! E. and I went for the first time on Friday last, but we were very newto it, and we did not speak to many. One woman, however, we are much interested in. Pray for her. I went again alone to-day, and saw her, and had a long talk. I am determined to win that soul. O that I may not seek my own glory in it! I then went to another room in the hospital, and read and spoke to a great many old and sick women; I cannot think how I had courage to do it. Surely God strengthened me. Oh, it is glorious work! There is nothing makes the world disappear like speaking to souls about Jesus. Eternity seems everything; and then how humble you feel that He should permit you to speak to sinners for Him! I could scarcely stand it. Ask for me that God would strengthen me, and teach me, and give me love to souls for His sake, and that He would give us souls in that place. O that the Spirit would come down! Mrs. H____ gave me a sweet word of encouragement about it; I am sure God gave it to her, for it came to me with such sweetness and power—'He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing PRECIOUS seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him! Let us plead the precious promise in His name in whom all the promises are yea and amen, and we shall not labour in vain; let us take it as our motto-text for our districts, in all our efforts; but oh! what efforts mine are! poor, weak, sinful, feeble; but through Jesus, they are mighty to the pulling down of strongholds. I am glad we have been sent to the Refuge; it is so sweet to go from one sick-bed to another, stammering out some words about the Heavenly Physician…And now farewell for the present. May you be filled with the peace that passeth all understanding, and may you in body, soul, and spirit be preserved blameless to the coming of the Lord; and oh! if it be His will, may you and I meet again even in the wilderness, to talk together of all His wondrous works, to tell one another what He has done for our souls, and to exalt His name together. Dear Saviour! glorious Immanuel, I wish I knew Thee better, and served Thee better. I wish much, you would pray for me, that if I am spared to see another

year, I may spend it entirely for God, and with God. I do wish (if I know myself at all) to live as a child of light, as a pilgrim travelling to another land; but if it is only wishes, that is of no use. How grieved and ashamed I am, when I think of all the sins and shortcomings of this past year! Will you ask forgiveness for them all, and also that I may overcome, through Christ, all my sins and temptations, particularly slothfulness, selfishness, worldliness, and desire for my own glory? I have many, many more than these, but I seem to see these particularly. Pray that they may really be overcome; and pride too. I sometimes fear I shall never get over my sins, for I see, when I look in, I am intending at some future time to be better, and to live really as a child of God; but then I see I am always putting it off, instead of beginning now. Oh! I am weary of myself at times, but, thanks be to our wonderful God, He is not weary of me, and He will perfect the work He has begun. O that the next year may truly be a new year with all God’s dear children!"

01.10. Features of a Saint

Features of a Saint

LIKENESS to her Lord in all things was what M ____ ever sought. Over her unlikeness to Him she mourned. Becoming less and less satisfied with herself, and more and more satisfied with Him, she could not rest with anything save conformity to His image. Daily she looked to Him, not only that she might draw fresh peace, and healing, and strength out of His fulness, but that she might become like Him in all things. "Beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, she was changed (transfigured) into the same image from glory to glory" (2 Corinthians 3:18). She walked in the light of His countenance, and she found holiness as well as gladness. Fellowship with Jesus she proved to be as purifying as it was comforting. Losing her resemblance to the children of this present evil world, she grew in conformity to the children of the kingdom. She had taken the family name, and she could not be content without the family likeness. The lineaments of the Elder Brother were traced more and more legibly upon her day by day.

Some of these features we will now draw together, not grouping them after any special order, but bringing them out with sufficient distinctness to make them perceptible, and illustrating them by extracts from her diaries and letters. We make no attempt at an artificial exhibition; we do not try to colour, or soften down, or flatter; we give her own words— words written in most cases in the closet, under the eye of God alone, and evidently expressive of her genuine feeling in its various moods— shady or sunny, hopeful or depressed, buoyant with victory or broken down with conflict.

Sense of Helplessness.— Her impulsive fervour of character and resolute energy of action did not lead to self-dependence, or, as it is the fashion to call it now, to "self-reliance." Her strength, like her life, was "hid with Christ in God." It was not strength acquired by self-exertion, or deposited in her by God. It was strength for the occasion, or the day, or the trial— strength drawn out of another by faith, she herself remaining helpless as before. It was strength in weakness—strength corresponding to her infirmities, and which led her to glory in these infirmities that the power of Christ might rest on her. As it was to another’s righteousness that she was indebted for her acceptance, so it was of another’s strength that she availed herself in all that she did for God.

"I have had," she writes, "I think, but one feeling this morning—a feeling of utter helplessness. I went to prayer this morning with no desires, no faith, no power, no strength at all; and I felt very miserable at first; but I was enabled to cast myself upon the almighty strength and the unchanging love of my own compassionate Saviour, and there I found rest. I think God is answering my prayer, that Jesus may be made precious to me, by making me first feel my own weakness. I must first be emptied of myself before I can be filled with Jesus. It is a painful way; but if it makes me prize Him,it is worth bearing (and a thousand times more) all the sore trials I have ever suffered. How blessed it would be if I could see myself entirely helpless, that I might trust altogether to Jesus! How sweet it would be to come up from the wilderness LEANING upon the Beloved! O Jesus, wean me from self, from self-will and selfishness in every form, from sin, from earth, from every earthly idol, and fill my whole soul with Thyself. Amen, Lord Jesus!"

It was thus that God led her on—making her feel that selfreliance is as incompatible with the work of the Spirit as selfrighteousness is with the work of Jesus. Again she writes—"I feel my utter weakness and helplessness more than anything else just now, I think. Oh! may it make me prize His strength the more, and lead me to trust entirely to Him who is the mighty God!" Lowliness of Spirit.—One was sometimes led to think that she undervalued herself too much, as it led her to lay undue stress on the opinions of others, and to distrust her own judgment entirely. An extreme like this is not without its danger; for it sets aside personal; responsibility before God, produces vacillation of opinion and action, and hinders that manliness of decisions which holds fast that which it has received. Though occasionally, however, deferring to others who ought rather to have been taught by her, and thereby involving herself in perplexity, M____ held fast her faith and hope. Yet while doing so she speaks thus of herself:—"Make me willing to be esteemed as vile, and worthless, and mean (and what am I but that?) among all who know me, if only Thou art glorified. What a wretch I am, to feel so unwilling to let others despise me, if that would bring glory to Jesus! Oh, if I could only be willing to lie down and let others walk over me to Jesus, if it be only by that means they can come to Him! If He is glorified, what does it signify if I am despised? I had a letter from S____ which hurt my vile pride. O Jesus, give me grace to win this soul to Thee!"

"I hope God will hear my prayers for her" (a friend for whom she often prayed), "for the sake of His dear Son, though I think my prayers are more full of sin than anything else I do. Do you find that?"

Decision and Earnestness.— She had left the world at once. She never looked behind her, but fled precipitately from it, as if fearing that it might pursue her, or that she might be tempted back again. Like Christian, with his fingers in his ears, running from the City of Destruction, so did she run. She never stayed to calculate the consequences, nor give an opportunity to the seducer to overtake or ensnare her ere she left the region of vanity.

Thus she threw herself beyond the reach of many a subtle snare, and saved herself from the pain of many a trial that might have arisen from attempts to lure her once more into the net. Her decision at the outset made every one feel that such efforts were hopeless. No friends, however dear, could entertain the hope of inducing her to set foot again within the circle of vanity. They might go to her; but she would never again rejoin them. And though, doubtless, some of her trials did arise from her decision, yet how many were thus warded off, and how much of her spiritual progress may be ascribed to this calm firmness of purpose! Vacillation at the outset, if it does not quite drag the soul back into its former worldliness, most sadly retards progress in after life, and is the unconfessed cause of many a wretched stumble. As she had left the world with an energy quite her own, so she threw herself with her whole soul into the embrace of her Lord. She was in earnest. Yet her earnestness was not of that false, sentimental, or self righteous kind, so much in fashion. The word "earnestness," so common amongst us, deceives many, both those who think that they possess the quality, and those who admire it in others. It forms one of Satan’s most cunning traps for the unwary. By means of it, he is cheating thousands out of their divine inheritance, making them think that they are religious, and that their earnestness is such a goodly thing before man, and such an acceptable thing in the sight of God, that they are really entitled to claim heaven, whatever their opinions— nay, whatever their life may be. Earnestness, with many, covers every fault, and beautifies sin, error, folly, Popery— nay, even infidelity itself. But the earnestness of which we speak was that of one whose whole soul had become engrossed with the mighty things of an eternal heaven and an endless hell, who had sought and found forgiveness,

and acceptance, and joy, and heirship through the great propitiation, and whose heart had gone up to Him in whom centred all created and all uncreated beauty. It was the earnestness of a justified soul—the earnestness of one who had got a glimpse of the unsearchable riches of Christ. Of this earnestness we need give no particular specimens; it is transfused through all she wrote and did.

Longings to be Holy.— To be holy, was the burden of her prayers. "Oh, when shall I be holy?" is a frequent interjection in her letters. To use Christ, not merely for pardon, but for getting rid of sin, was what she sought to do. To anticipate a holy heaven was one of her dearest joys.

"I have been very unhappy," she writes; "I have seen my sins so much, without seeing my Saviour, that I am often terrified, and cannot pray. My heart seems quite frozen; and oh, at times, the grief I am in, at the bare possibility of not getting to heaven at last! It is not so much the being for ever happy that I long for, as the being for ever holy, and with those who are holy. I long sometimes to beseech God not to send me to hell, for there are none holy there, none who love Jesus. Oh, if it be misery to live with worldly people on earth, what must it be there! I wish I were holy! Don't you long for it also? But then you are not like me; you are not so perfectly sinful. Dearest, will you pray much for me, and pray that my hard heart may be melted?"

" October 12, 1842.—When you remember me in your prayers, will you plead for holiness? for, oh, I am 'sick of sin! Don't you sometimes feel as if everything around and within you, as if the very air you breathe, were all full of sin? I often long to feel one holy thought or wish; but I long in vain." And in these longings to be holy, how strongly did the new nature manifest itself! There was something about them so fervent, so intense, so irrepressible, that we are made to feel that the spring within, out of which they poured themselves, must have been of no common depth. Is the average of the age's piety at all like this? A correct religious deportment is one thing, and holiness is quite another. There may be a fear of acting inconsistently, and yet no desires to be holy as God is holy. There may be the dread of a woeful hell, and yet no longings for a holy heaven. Such extracts as the above may lead some to re-examine the nature of their piety, and to requestion their claims to discipleship. Their religion may pass just now unquestioned, nay, honoured, for this is man's day; but God's day is at hand;—will it stand the sifting then? In these warrings against sin and desires after holiness there was evidently a deep and solemn joy, though the strife was desperate, and, in the course of it, anguish not seldom poured in upon the soul. The consciousness of not being wholly in conformity with God himself was bitterness; yet the longing to be so was in itself joy. The feeling that she was at one with God, in her desires to be like him, drew her into a nearness of fellowship with Him, which lighted up each cloud through which she passed.[29]

Tenderness of Conscience.— Through the blood of sprinkling her conscience had been pacified. The sight of the great sacrifice had removed her guilty terrors. What the knowledge of God's free love had done for her heart, that the knowledge of the cleansing blood had done for the conscience. For the "purging of the conscience" cannot be effected by the knowledge of Divine love alone. Nothing but the sight of the blo od can do that. In the blood we see the life of another taken for our life; and recognising this substitution, we get the benefit of it in our consciences; for thus that which troubled them is taken away. We see the wrath that should have smitten us passing over to another, and exhausting itself on him. But that very process by which her

conscience was pacified gave it a sensitiveness which no mere dread of wrath, no threatenings of the fiery law, could have done. Her natural conscience had been sensitive, but her renewed conscience was still more tender—tender in small things as well as in great things—tender as to a straying thought no less than a froward step. It is the tender conscience that is speaking in the following passages:— "29th.—Spent a day of sin and worldliness in Edinburgh. Alas! how often do I spend such days! And yet, when I came home and went to prayer, ashamed and afraid, I had such a wonderful, such a melting season as I have not been blest with for a long time. O the wonderful forbearance and forgiveness of God to such a vile wretch as I am! I could not think of my sins; I could do nothing but praise Him for His love. When I thought of the sinful day I had passed, I tried to confess my sins, but could do nothing but praise. O that I could cease sinning against such love! O that I could cease piercing the bosom on which I lean! but when I would do good, evil is present with me."

"16 th.—Last night I dishonoured Jesus by yielding to an unholy temper. How sinful I am! To think that I, who call myself the friend of Jesus, should behave as one of His enemies! This occurrence has, I trust, been sanctified to me. It has shewn me how keenly the unconverted watch every action of the Christian. It shews me how prayerfully and how holily I must walk. It has led me more to the throne of grace."

"9 th.—This morning I had a painful yet sweet season at prayer. I had committed sin, the night before, by giving way to angry feelings—a sin, alas! I often commit; and this morning my whole soul was melted with grief at my desperate wickedness in sinning against so much love. My heart felt breaking as I wept before Jesus. I think He has forgiven me; but I cannot forgive myself. My sins seem all the more vile, the more they are pardoned."

" November 22.—M.C. came to spend the day with us. I grieve to say we were full of levity and folly all day, and in the evening we went together to the throne of grace and confessed our iniquities to our injured God and Father, and I trust were forgiven. It was a solemn meeting. We had never all prayed together before, but none of us seemed to mind the presence of the others. We were so ashamed before our God, of the way in which we had dishonoured Him, and brought reproach on the name of Jesus. I thought my heart would break as I thought of how much I had grieved the heart of Jesus, and been a stumbling-block in the way of others coming to Him."

Separation from the World.— In M____’s case there was no looking back on Sodom, no thought of returning whence she had come out. There was no coming and going between Egypt and Canaan, as if there were some neutral region which she might occupy, or as if God had not defined the boundaries between the realm of darkness and the kingdom of His dear Son. Her coming out from the world, as we have seen, was complete. She did not hanker after it. She did not sit down to calculate how many of its gaieties were harmless, and how many were harmful, that she might still indulge the former while keeping aloof from the latter; she did not try to persuade herself that the world was not wholly evil, and that worldly people might be Christians after all. She saw that if the Bible wore true, there were just two classes of men— those that are of God, and those that are of the world; those that are from beneath, and those that are from above. There was no third party, half-earthly and half-heavenly. She might yearn over the world, but that would not make it less "the world;" that would not lessen its danger, nor alter God’s condemnation of it.

She not only "came out," but she was "separate;" she "touched not the unclean thing" (2 Corinthians 6:17). She "hated even the garments spotted by the flesh" (Jude 1:23). She saw that it was an unholy world; a world that sought its own pleasures and honours; a world in whose gay haunts God was not; a world with which her new nature could have no sympathy; a world whose society no holy soul could enjoy; a world whose tastes and habits were totally uncongenial with hers: she saw these things, and she quietly but resolutely withdrew from all its vanities. Nay, more, she sought to win others to the same separation, for she could not understand how it was possible for a man to be a Christian, and yet join with the world in its dance, and song, and sport. Hence she never hesitated to warn or to counsel those who walked in worldliness, and yet named the name of Christ; and she sought, by all means in her power, to draw the poor worldling out of the deadly snare. She knew what the world was, and she shunned it as a fatal fascination. She remembered how it had once stood between her and God, how it had done its utmost to shut out the glory from her eye; and she sought (if one may so speak) to be avenged on it for its enchantments.

Thus she writes to her friend, not long after her conversion:— "I went to Mrs. ____, but had not an opportunity of speaking to either of them. I doubted the propriety of remaining, for I was very unhappy. I could not pray, nor do anything. Oh! it is terrible to live with those who do not seem to care for God at all! Pray much for my dear ____ who lives with them! I shall tell ____ what you say about 'the line between the world and Christ.' I sent my letter to dear ____. He wrote me a very kind answer. He was not angry at my writing, and says he hopes it will have the effect of bringing us both nearer to God. He says he may perhaps write again on the subject: he has not yet, so I am thinking of writing to him again, and speaking to him about the love of Jesus, and the happiness of having found Him. Do you think I ought? But I hope to have opportunities of speaking to him, which would be much better. But O how Satan tempts me at these times to think that there is time enough! I always seem to realise the things of eternity at these times less than at any other: do you feel that? I am very glad you are to write to ____. told her about being wholly on one side or the other. I also told her your dream. She did not say anything. I wish she knew Jesus; she would make a very sweet follower of the Lamb. Dear friend, shall your dream really come to pass? Yes, I trust it will. Oh! shall you and I reallybe amongst the green pastures, by the still waters, with Christ, seeing Him as He is, and being like Him? It is more like a dream than a reality. You, I have no doubt of; oh! I hope I shall meet you in heaven! It seems too glorious for me. I hope I shall welcome you to heaven, for I MUST go first; and I hope I shall die in Kelso, with you beside me, saying, 'Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly; take her to Thyself!'"

High Aims .—She sought not "great things" for herself, and yet she was ever aiming high. She "coveted the best gifts." She was not content to stand upon the low level or to live at the low rate with which most are satisfied. She was ambitious of an honourable place among the children of the King. Thus she tells her aims:—

"Have just finished the Life of.J.B.Taylor.What a wonderful Christian he was! And it has stirred me up to be what he pressed upon everybody—to be 'an uncommon Christian.' But oh! I have an evil heart of unbelief, and great earthliness and corruptions to struggle with!"

" Dec. 30,1844.—I should like very, very much to be a very spiritual Christian. But it is written, 'The diligent soul shall be made fat,' and I am far too slothful. I wish I were in heaven. I cannot stay here

any longer. It is so miserable to be a halfand-half Christian, a lukewarm believer, if there can be such a thing. Don't you long for the rest in Immanuel's land? —for its golden streets, its pearly gates, its eternal sunshine, its green pastures, its still waters, and its sea of glass, and, above all, the unveiled face of Him who alone makes our heaven below! I often wonder that we can remain so contentedly here, absent from the Lord."

Love to theScriptures.— It was intense. "Every word of God" she set above all price. Her reading of it was thorough, not superficial ; systematic, not desultory ; continuous, not fitful. Though she had her chapters or her verses that she seemed to joy in above others, yet it was the whole Word that she searched and fed upon, delighting to link all with "the Beloved One," and feeling that of each part He was the centre. She eagerly laid hold of any text that might come from the lip or pen of a friend, and treasured it up. If you had lighted up a new star before her eye, you could not have given her half the gladness which seemed to kindle within her, when some new ray fell upon a passage and gave her a fresh glimpse of the things within the veil. She generally placed a text at the head of every letter, that those to whom she wrote might have a message from God ere they read a word of hers. In a similar spirit she thus wrote to a friend:—I cannot tell you how delighted I am that my letter was so much blest to you; it is the only letter I ever sent off to you with any satisfaction, because there were none of my words in it, and I felt so happy at the time in thinking that my beloved one would get one letter from me that might be blest to her." Elsewhere she thus writes:— "The text that the blessed Spirit sent home with power to my heart this morning, was this—and oh, it is a very precious one—'The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin." In her diary of June 1843, there is the following entry:—"I have had a long time of reading to-day ; I don't know how it is, I can do nothing but read His holy Word. I have no heart for anything else…R. and I saw Mr. B. the other day in Edinburgh. He gave me this text at parting—'The night is far spent, the day is at hand.' I felt as if he could not have given me a sweeter. O how sweet eternal day will be after such a long dark night!" In a letter to a friend, she writes—"Have you thought of what part of the Word we shall read together on Saturdays? Shall we read the 21st of Revelation next Saturday? and by the Saturday after, I hope to have heard from you. I was glad that you settled that we should devote last Saturday to confession, for oh, I feel I have been VERY guilty in the little profit I have got from such a sweet portion of God's sweet Word; how prayerlessly I have read it! how little I have meditated upon it! how little I have fed upon it! how little I have praised God for it! Let us agree, dearest, to read this in a very different manner. I have thought of a plan that might make it, by God's blessing, very profitable to us; I want us each to write down, after we have read the chapter, what particular verses have struck us, and what we think about them, and what has been most blest to us, and then, WHEN WE MEET, we can compare notes, and see who has most to praise Jesus for. Do you like this plan, and will you agree to it?"

Thirsting for God.—" I prayed this morning," she records on July 31, 1843, "that God would in mercy remove everything that comes between Jesus and my soul, and that He would shew me what prevents the light of His countenance shining upon my soul. Perhaps it will be painful to flesh and blood to have this prayer answered; but I am in the hands of One who doth not 'willingly afflict,' and I have no fear. All I want is to be weaned from this sinful, sorrowful world, and to have Jesus for my all in all."

"A remarkable feature of her Christian character," writes her friend, "was her misery when she could not realise the presence of God. Life seemed a burden to her if she had not the light of His

countenance continually. One day she came to me in an agony of mind, begging me to pray with her, for she had been long praying alone, but could not find God, and she could not live without Him." In a similar strain she thus wrote to her friend on recovering from a sharp illness:—"It is strange that I have not felt my Father's presence so much during this illness as I did the last; the first day it was the sweet Sabbath-day. I could only repeat to myself the name of Jesus, and I felt it very sweet to lie and think about Him. But I was soon too ill even to do that. At one time I almost forgot God. Oh, I have been very wicked! Will you pray for me, dearest, that God would forgive the sins of the last week?" In August 1841, little more than a month after her conversion, she thus wrote to her friend:—"I should like to have God always in my thoughts, dwelling in my very heart. I cannot bear to pass a day, nay, not an hour, without some token of His presence. I cannot live a stranger to my God."

Fellowship with the Saints.— Whatever there might be of natural selfishness in her character, as she often complains, it did not check the outflowing of her sympathies towards others, nor her desire to receive sympathy in return. In the days of her vanity this had been the case, and afterwards it came out still more fully. Her new nature went forth in quest of congenial fellowship. It was not merely that she wanted some to love; she wanted some into whose bosoms she might pour her griefs and joys. Hence she sought with such eagerness the company of saints. In every one who knew the Saviour whom she loved, she found not only a friend, but a relative. Nor did she hesitate to claim kindred in such cases. Poor or rich, it mattered not to her. They were members of the one household, and that was enough. She could speak to them of her beloved Lord; she could join with them in the hope of the inheritance; she could respond to them in their feelings as to the loneliness of exile here; she could try to bear their burdens, and ask them to bear hers in return. The reader may get an insight into this feature of her character from such a passage as the following:—"How glad I was to get your dear letter! you make me wait too long for them. Don't think you can't give me comfort. The very sight of your handwriting is enough to cheer me. I am sorry to write to you just now, because I feel so sad. I am afraid I infect you. Many outward things vex me, and then I have not much comfort within; but I have more than I deserve; and this encourages me—Jesus is the same. Though I change every moment, He is the same yesterday, today, and for ever. I don't think I shall be right again till I am with you. You cannot imagine how I long to see you, and tell you all my griefs. You will say, Go to Jesus, and tell Him all. Yes, but Jesus himself went to His disciples in His distress; and I am sure, when we are together, Jesus will be with us to bless us. How slow the time goes! It seems to creep. And yet, how it will fly when we meet!" Her intercourse was truly Christian fellowship. She had no relish for anything else. Narrating, in a letter, the circumstances of a walk with a friend, she sums up simply and touchingly thus—"We spoke about Jesus till we longed to be with Him." The Appreciation of the Blood of Christ.— However much the love of Christ might cheer and gladden, it WAS the blood alone that could give peace. The love might touch the heart; but the conscience needed the blood, for it required something to tell it that the awful penalty had been exhausted—"The soul that sinneth, it shall die." To know that there is a substitute; that he has met the law's inexorable demands, by giving it a veritable life; and that, by so doing, he has made the removal of our guilt a righteous transaction, never to be reversed, nay, irreversible: this is what the conscience needs, and without this it cannot have peace, for the thing which caused its trouble—namely, its sense of guilt—would remain untaken away. It is the blood alone that can "purge the conscience from dead works to serve the living God." M____ felt this deeply, for her conscience (as we have seen) was tender in

the extreme. The mere incarnation of the Son of God was not enough; there must be suffering and death. "Not without blood" is a verse to which every awakened conscience responds. Hers did most cordially respond to it, as, for instance, when she thus breathes forth her desires,—"O to be ever washed in this blood! It both cleanses and destroys the power of sin. I asked God to cover me all over with this precious blood, and He did it. And oh, what a wonderful tide of unmerited love He poured in upon my glad soul! It was almost too much. Oh, if the drops are so sweet, what must the ocean be!"

Trust in Christ.— She leaned on Christ himself, for she saw in Him one who was entirely worthy of her fullest confidence; and her soul was satisfied with His work, for she saw it to he altogether complete and suitable. It was enough for her. Her conscience needed nothing more to pacify it than the knowledge that "He had finished transgression, and made an end of sin, and brought in everlasting righteousness." "I am trying," she writes in January 1842, "to trust Christ for everything, for I have nothing myself at all; at times not even a desire; yet He will not be weary even of me, for He is longsuffering and abundant in mercy." Again she wrote on September 4—"Yesterday was the communion at Mr. Robertson's. I had less joy than ever I had at any communion before, I think; but I felt I could trust Christ...I did not feel Him near, but I trust I felt Him precious, as the Saviour of sinners, even the chief. I could trust my soul to Him for time and for eternity. 'It is finished' was all my plea, and I felt it enough. God is satisfied with the work of His beloved Son—why should not I be satisfied too?" Again, in August 1842, she wrote to me—"I have never forgotten one thing you wrote to me some time ago; you told me to go more to God with my difficulties, and less to man. I daresay I should not have done so, if I had had man to go to; but lately I have had no one but Jesus to speak to, and I have found it often very blessed to tell Him all my troubles. But still it is sweet to meet with a child of God; so you must not be angry with me for wishing it so much ; but you must pray for me that I may not trust too much to man's words, but that I may live more upon the Word of God." In another letter to a friend in Kelso, she speaks more at length:—

"September 23, 1844…MY DEAREST B____, I often find it difficult to believe that Jesus forgives freely. I am always wanting to bring something as a price—either my repentance, or my tears, or my prayers, or something else—anything but free grace. I suppose one reason is, it is so humbling to human pride to be freely forgiven; and another, because we do not know God, we do not know how immense His love is, and how it glorifies Him to forgive 'without money and without price.' Dear friend, you and I 'have nothing to pay.' Let us allow Jesus 'frankly to forgive us both!' In the chapter I was reading this morning, Paul says, 'I am nothing:' surely we may say that too. Nay, he gloried in his infirmities, that the power of Christ might rest upon him. Christ's strength is made perfect in our weakness—the weaker we are, the more Christ is glorified in holding us up; the more sinful we are, the more He is glorified in cleansing us from all sin, and in delivering us from its power; for He says, 'Sin shall not have dominion over you;' so that, though sin may rage, it cannot reign; and the more ignorant we are, the more He is glorified in teaching us (O how slow He finds me in learning!); so that, whatever we are, however low we may have sunk, if we only put ourselves in his hands, He will get glory to himself by us. How glad that thought makes me, that He gets glory from me! Paul says, 'When I am weak, thenam I strong.' Don't you often find how true that is? When you are weakest in yourself, then you find that you get on best, because you lean more on His strength. If we would trust Him entirely, how fast we should move! He tells us to 'trust

in Him at all times'—it is easier to do this sometimes than at others. What low thoughts of the Mighty God' that shews us to have! as if He could not help us in the greatest difficulty, as well as in the least! How we shall wonder at our unbelief, when we reach that blessed place where we shall never, never doubt Him again!"

"I secretly rested," says an old minister, "after I believed, in the act of faith, rather than in the object of faith, and drew comfort from this more than from the object, Christ holden out in the gospel." Though perhaps this might occasionally be a snare into which M____ was led, yet it will be evident that this was not her tendency. The object of faith had, in her eye, assumed such a place, that she seldom turned in to think about her own act of seeing. Engrossed with the Lord himself, she had no time to scrutinise or analyse the mental process through which she had thus become absorbed in the vision of His glory; or when at times He seemed absent or hidden, she was so bent upon regaining the sight of His excellency, by thinking about HIMSELF, that her own actings of faith and love quite fell put of sight. Engrossment with the person of her Lord kept her from thinking about herself, save as one that infinitely needed Him. She knew that to look at Christ was to have peace with God; but that to look at her act of looking, was to look away from Christ, and that to continue thus looking at her own act of looking, would inevitably be to fall from grace (Galatians 5:4). Nor would it avail her to have "begun in the Spirit," if afterwards she should seek to be "made perfect by the flesh" (Galatians 3:3).

Desires after Christ, and Attachment to His Person.— Letters and diary are alike full of these. They are the sun light of every page. With Him, all was noonday; without Him, all was midnight. At one time, when feeling that her soul was dried up, she writes—"O for John's place, leaning upon the breast of Jesus! I was telling Mr. Robertson that I could not praise Him for anything, and he said, 'Praise Him that you are miserable without Him.' This is, indeed, matter of praise. O how much worse should I be, if I were happy without Him? But I must seek to be happy with Him, and in Him. I read a chapter from Matthew to dear J— ____ to-night, and then prayed. I was much helped in prayer. I did not feel happy, but I felt softened and peaceful, and a sweet feeling that Jesus was listening."

"I miss ____ greatly, but I must go the more to Jesus. Ah! He must be my all in all. All I need is treasured up in Him; all I want for time and for eternity; and He himself is my blessed portion. O for a single eye to God's glory! that is what I want. O Jesus, mine own God, give me this! How precious Jesus seems to-day! I long to bring the whole world to Him…Make me instrumental in leading many souls to Thee, blessed Jesus!…I was a little happier this morning at prayer, while giving myself entirely to Jesus. It seems so very sweet, the idea of being Christ's servant. It was a very holy, happy feeling; and I could not help praising Him for it. It is sweeter to praise than to pray."

" Oct. 28.—E. and I had a wonderfully sweet meeting tonight. Jesus was evidently with us, causing our hearts to sing for joy. We were so happy that we could not help singing, and we sang together Psalms 23:1-6."

" Oct. 31.—Had a very sweet season in prayer this morning. It was all praise. I could do nothing but praise. I felt as if I were really standing before the throne, singing the new song. Jesus was very near, and unutterably precious...O for many such seasons! and O for a heart to praise! I felt each person of the blessed Godhead precious. The Father's love seemed so full in giving Jesus;

and Jesus seemed so precious; His love passeth knowledge; and the Spirit seemed so full of love, in lovingly dwelling in such a heart as mine. It was a melting season. O that I could shew forth His praise—that I had a heart and a tongue to tell to all around what a dear Saviour I have found!"

"Tuesday, Jan. 2, 1844.—Had a sweet season at prayer this morning, in thinking of the Father's well-pleasedness with His beloved Son. It is very sweet to think that Jesus is glorified in our salvation, that He gets all the glory."

"Saturday, 17th.— Had a few minutes of very great sweetness this morning at prayer. I never feel such solid joy or peace as when asking the Father to reveal to me the Son, and to enable me to make Him a whole Saviour, not a half Saviour. It would be so very sweet if I could only get my wicked heart to trust allto Jesus, and to rest my weary soul on the precious Scripture, 'It is finished.' I got a sight of that truth for a moment the other night, and it was unutterably sweet."

"I wish you were with me to-day, that we might speak together of the love of Christ, 'which passeth knowledge." I had a very wonderful taste of it this morning; it was all praise together. What a wonderful Saviour we have! isn't He very precious? I could hardly stand His love this morning, it was so very, very sweet, and so undeserved by me. I never had such a foretaste of the blessedness of heaven before; I felt as if I were really standing faultless before the throne, singing the new song. How my heart longed to praise Him as he ought to be praised! but I could praise Him for the glad hope, that perhaps very soon I should really praise Him even as He deserves to praised. It will be sweet to cast our crowns at His feet, and give Him all the glory. O to be rid of this body of sin and death,—'to see Him as He is!' for then 'we shall be like Him. I am very unlike Him now, but yet he loves me; I know He does! and He will teach me, even me, to love Him; to say with Peter, 'Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love Thee;' but oh, what a poor love mine is!— I am ashamed of it. I wish you would plead this precious promise for me— 'This people have I formed for myself; they shall shew forth my praise.' I wish I could forget myself and think only of Jesus. O that I longed more to bring sinners to Him! When He drew so near to me this morning, I tried to pray that you might drink deeper and deeper into His filling love; you know more of it than I do. You are not so full of self or unbelief as I am; but all the glory is His; He is more glorified in some than in others; isn't it sweet to think that He gets all the glory, and you and I none? Every feeling of love we have He gave us; all our natural feelings are enmity; isn't it wonderful? Are you happy in His love?"

Prizing the Mercy-Seat.— It was the "seat of mercy," the "throne of grace" to her. She prized it because she felt she needed it, and because the grace that was dispensed there was just the grace which suited her case as a sinner. And it was what she saw of grace in that throne that emboldened her to come, with every sin and burden, at any moment, in the assurance that from such a place no one that was willing to be indebted to grace alone would be sent empty away. Of it she speaks thus:—"This morning had a cross, which again led me to the mercy-seat. Oh, what a place it is! How grateful should dear R. and I. be, that we have been led to feel its preciousness!" To this mercy-seat she carried every burden, as well as every sin; every perplexity, as well as every fear. Most implicitly did she trust her God and Father, and with most childlike openness did she unbosom her heart to Him:—"I asked that He would lead us to choose a residence where He would bless our souls. I asked nothing for us all but that they might be born again. I asked that wherever we went He would go with us. I pleaded the precious command, 'Be careful for nothing."

I have committed my way to Him, and I know that He will be faithful to His word and direct our steps. I asked Him also to guide B. and me with regard to the church we should go to, and I know He will lead us in a right path with regard to this also. Oh, what should we do without Him! 'Hold thou us up, and we shall be safe.' I think I was made willing with regard to this matter to say, whatever way we are led in, ' Thy will be done, not ours.' I asked with regard to this, and with regard to where we may go to live, that He would not grant us our wishes if they were not according to His will. All my prayers, O Lord, are before Thee; oh! grant me a gracious answer, for Jesus' sake. I thought of this verse to-day— 'Continue in prayer, and watch in the same, with thanksgiving.' I must watch for the answer to these petitions."

" Thursday, November2.—Had a letter from ____, fixing every Thursday between eight and nine for herself, D____, T____, E____, and me, to meet at the throne of grace. I went to meet them this evening, and found it very sweet to plead for each other."

" Saturday, December 2.—The first day of the Prayer Union. It is a sweet thing to think that so many of God's children are pleading together at the same hour. O that there may be a great blessing!"

" 26th.—Have just had a very solemn and very, very sweet season at the throne of grace. I had not so much joy as a sweet, sweet kind of holy fellowship and communion with Jesus. Oh! it was blessed; I cannot tell how blessed! I felt I was so wonderfully happier than the worldling. I longed to tell all what a happy, happy life the Christian's is. I had much pleasure in praying for my beloved sister M____, and I felt I was heard. He will answer my prayer in His own time."

" Oct. 18, 1845.—I have been trying to learn to pray anywhere, even not on my knees, as I cannot go to a cold room. O for a praying heart! Am in great trouble generally about getting a room to myself for prayer, and was thinking how God could bring much good out of this evil both to me and to others. Was thinking that my dear friends, from the very fact that there is so much trouble and work about getting a room for E. and me, might be led to think, Do we as earnestly feel the need of a room for prayer?"[30] In a letter to me, August 1842, I find her writing: "There is one thing I want you to pray for E. and me; it is, that we may not be interrupted or hindered in our hours for reading and prayer. Will you ask this for us? I think they are sometimes vexed with us for being by ourselves so long, and yet I feel that I do not take enough time. I have often so much to ask for, that I could remain all day. But there are so many worldly things for us to do! I wonder how Christians can find so much time for all these worldly duties, and yet be so much in prayer. I am afraid we do not redeem the time as we ought. Will you tell us about this when you write? but especially pray that our Father in heaven may shew us where we have gone wrong, and enable us to amend it."

There is something touching in the above extract. What longings for fellowship with God, and yet what a desire to discharge all needful duties! What desire to be alone—to have hours, nay, days of prayer! And yet what unwillingness to do anything that might annoy others! The worldly or the formal see nothing but selfishness in this love of being alone; and they are often more roused to anger against the religion that shews itself in this solemn way, than against that which is ever working and bustling. The reason is evident. The man that is much with God in secret is, by the very fact of his going alone to meet with his God, a far more unambiguous witness for God than the man who merely says or does religious things. And, besides, the impress of God is more

legibly stamped upon him, by the closeness of his contact with Him whom he goes alone to meet.

Let us hear her again, as she refers to this her place of glad resort:— "What should you and I do if we had not the mercyseat to go to at all times? It is the sunniest spot on this dark earth. I have felt very happy in the love of Jesus these last two days. This morning I could hardly leave the happy spot where I may tell Him all I feel, and ask for all I need. We shall not find even eternity too long to praise Him. I do not forget you there. I was so hurried, that I forgot to tell you in my last letter how much I have been helped in pleading for you since you went away; asking that you may be enabled to speak for Jesus where you are. We must pray much for each other just now, that we may be brought nearer to Himself, and have no desire, no wish, but to be enabled to live to His glory. How far short of this do I live! I think there never was such an unChr ist-likeChristian as I am. I was asking much this morning that I might realise more the things that are unseen. Oh, if we could always remember that we are only strangers and pilgrims here, we should think more of our home in heaven, and care less for the things of earth. We must not live like those who 'mind earthly things.'"

"How little worldly people know what they lose by not caring for eternal things! I think, if a worldly person tasted for one hour the unutterable joy and the sweet peace that Jesus gives His people, they would never care for earthly things again, at least they would not make them their all as they do. I sometimes long to tell people how happy they would be if they would come to Jesus, and how Jesus longs for them to come. I have had great delight for several days in praying for my dear, dear ____. I think God must have special thoughts of mercy towards him just now. He cannot have given me these desires for him without intending to grant the prayers He himself has put into my heart to pray for him. Let us plead for him together, and for our sweet ____ also. How I love them both! and I delight to think that God loves them far more. Perhaps some day before very long we may all be kneeling round the throne of grace. What a happy, what a wonderfully happy time that would be! We must give Him no rest till He has made this family a praise on the earth."

" January 10, 1846…I have not much time to write to you today, but I am anxious to write during the Prayer Union week. How soon it passes away! I think that you and E. and I should keep it another week. It would be very sweet, and Mrs. H____ and B____ would join us, I hope you have enjoyed this Prayer Union.[31] I have not had much enjoyment myself, but I have at times been very happy to know that so many of God's dear children were uniting together to ask great glory to be given to Jesus, by the conversion of many sinners to Himself, and by the increased sanctification of His own elect."

Enjoyment of Communion Seasons.— With her eye not upon herself, but upon her Lord and His cross, she went to His table. There she found Him whom her soul loved ; or, if she did not find Him always as she desired, she rested on His promise. Thus she tells her experience:—

"Sabbath, Oct. 29.—Had a very sweet sermon from Mr.

Moody Stuart. I think I never before had such a clear idea of believing as I had while he spoke. It sometimes seems so simple, and Jesus seems so worthy to be trusted, that I wonder I ever can doubt. But all my happy feelings left me at the table. I could not find Jesus, yet I knew He was there. Perhaps I was seeking feeling, and not Jesus. In the evening, Mr. Burns preached the sweetest sermon I ever heard him preach—all about Jesus; and, oh, He seemed lovely—yea, He

is all together lovely!"

" October 1844.—E. and I. have just come down from the communion at St Luke's. It was the most blessed one I ever had; the fragrance of it is with me yet. I never had such a view of Jesus before. God shewed me that the work was finished—that He is well pleased with His beloved Son—that He is satisfied. And, oh, the joy that this light gave me! I never felt anything like it before." In the anticipation of a communion season, she thus writes to a friend, in February 1842:—"It ought to be a delightful Sabbath, with Mr. M'Cheyne and Mr. ____; but what is all that, if Christ be not there? What is the Sabbath without the Sabbath's Lord? Blessed Jesus! Pray for me, that I may find my Beloved at His own table. Pray that, if I may not have the place of the disciple whom Jesus loved, I may be permitted to bathe His feet with my tears, to sit at His feet and feed on the crumbs that fall from His table. Oh, how justly might He spurn me! But He will not, for He came to save sinners; therefore, He must be my friend." Of this season, she afterwards wrote thus:—"I should have been at this moment hearing Mr. ____, but I am so very tired with a long walk, that I think the next best thing I can do is to write to you, my dearest friend on this earth, this dreary wilderness, where we are still present in the body, but absent from the Lord. And what a Lord! the Lord of Glory! Jesus, in short—that is the sweetest name."

"I have so much to tell you about yesterday, that I scarcely know where to begin. What a day we had! How I longed for you!…The sermon in the morning was by Mr. M'Cheyne, from John 4:10—Christ and the woman of Samaria. He said this verse shewed three things— 1st, That Christ cares for individual souls. He spoke a great deal of His love in thus caring for each soul; but it would require Mr. M'Cheyne himself to tell you all he said about that. The only bit I remember is the last sentence, when he said—'This is wonderful, but it is like Christ—the more incomprehensible the love, it is all the more like Jesus.' 2dly, Jesus saves the worst. When He plucks brands from the burning, He generally chooses the worst. 3 dly, Jesus can bear long with stupidity and ignorance. Again and again this woman shewed her ignorance, and yet Jesus did not turn away. And, oh, the way he spoke of this! 'If thou Icnewest the gift of God!' If thou knewest the beauty that is in it, the peace, the joy! I wish you had heard him. I did not write that down; I could not for listening. But his table-service was the finest of all—I never did hear anything like it. Oh, how he spoke of Jesus! He told us to make use of a sacrament time to ask Him for everything. He said—'Tell Him all your wants—tell Him frankly. Ask Him for yourself,for your friends. Lean upon Him entirely. Those are happiest who lean most upon Jesus. Be like Jacob, go halting through the wilderness, leaning upon your Beloved. Doubting believer! ask Him for perfect peace, perfect love, which casteth out fear.' He spoke also of there being times when Jesus is peculiarly near, at communion seasons especially, and also at times of revival. He said— 'When you see many fall down at His feet, you may be sure the 'King of Glory' has come in. It is the voice of the Beloved, the step of Jesus. "

"I did not feel near to Christ; and what was it all without that? I felt a degree of peace in going forward to the table, which I have not felt for some time, but I did not feel joy. When I took the wine, I asked Jesus to wash me in the blood of which it is a type; and I think He heard my prayer. It is curious that I so often feel such peace at the thought of going to the table—a sort of feeling as if Jesus was there, and that I must be safe there; but, when seated, I generally feel only a kind of restless longing after something that eludes my grasp; and sometimes all I feel is a total want of gratitude for the love which is there so evidently set forth. One thing I must tell you, that Mr.

M’Cheyne said in his prayer—’Give us to mourn the sin of piercing the bosom on which we lean ’ None ever did that as I have done! He said also—’Give us to know Him as we have never known Him yet; to love Him as we have never loved Him before; to hide in Him as we have never yet done! We thank Thee for giving us only Thyself. We shall praise Thee better at the table above.’He spoke of Christ being our peace—that He would be our peace even in eternity. He then said—’If your eyes have seen Him, if your hearts have loved Him, this world will be a wilderness to you. You are looking on a brighter world.’ Either he or Mr. ____ (I don’t remember which) spoke of the believer longing to be with Jesus, his faith to be lost in sight.He said— ’Think of your own pastor. It is sweet to think that he, though absent, remembers you, and bears you on his heart; but you are not satisfied with that. You would not be contented with a letter from him; you want him to return to you. So it is with the believer. He knows that his Lord never forgets him, that He continually intercedes for him; but still he cannot be happy until he sees Him face to face, till he knows as he is known.’ Oh, don’t you feel that?"

"I was interrupted last night when I had got thus far, and have not been able to get a word written today till now; but I have been with you in spirit at our Father’s throne, and asked for you all you wished in your dear letter this morning. I am beginning to feel as Mr. ____ said on Monday. I am not contented with a letter, I want to see yourself. The longings I take to be with you are quite painful. I wish I could be a comfort to you; but we shall speak together about Jesus, and that will comfort you. It is strange, we really seem to read together, as well as think together; for the chapter you mention in your letter about Jesus stilling the tempest on the lake, and being asleep when the storm arose, is the very one I was reading last night, which gave me such comfort that I said, ’I must speak about this to J____ when I write to her again.’ He said—’Peace, be still! and the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.’ Is it not beautiful? Don’t you think you see His holy, calm, sweet countenance as He said simply, ’Peace, be still’? And there was peace, all was immediately still. On Sunday evening Mr. ____ preached on Psalms 69:20. It was about the sufferings and sorrows of the blessed Jesus. He spoke about what Jesus must have suffered, at the contrast between the holy home He had wittingly left, compared to the sinful, miserable world He came to. He said—’How He must have longed to be back to the holy, blessed society of heaven! And then, when He came only to bless and to love, He found nothing but hatred. He longed for friendship, and yet He said—"When I looked for comforters, I found none.’" I felt very miserable when he was speaking—it is so terrible to think that Jesus suffered all that, and for such hard-hearted wretches, too! but I felt glad when I thought it is all over now; He will never be sorrowful again ; the Father’s Holy Child is now in His Father’s bosom, and never, never will His blessed head feel a thorn. Yes, it is now finished. He is now seeing of the travail of His soul, and perhaps the day is near when He shall be satisfied. What a day that will be! Shall you, and I see Jesus face to face? Is it not like a dream? But, oh, it is true!" On the 1st of May 1843, she gives her friend the following sketch of a communion season in Edinburgh:—

"The feast is all over now ; and it truly was a feast.What a day Sabbath was! It was ’the house of God, the very gate of heaven.’ What a pity a communion Sabbath is not as long again as an ordinary Sabbath! We had Mr. Somerville at our table, and I never experienced anything like it. The first words he said were, ’I feel certain that Jesus is looking upon this table. I feel He is in the midst of us,’ and I am sure He was. B. and I were at the fourth table, and he served the third also; and what, think you, was the subject?—’ Woman, why weepest thou?’ How sweetly he spoke

about that! He said, 'What a wonderful sight was this!—a poor trembling woman and two bright glorious angels on the one side, and Jesus himself on the other, saying, "Woman, why weepest thou?"' He said, 'Perhaps there are some here to-day, weeping because they cannot find Jesus. Ah! He is not far away. He is often nearest when you do not know it.' I was sorry R. and I were not at that table, particularly as it was my text. But ours was even finer. The text was, 'My dove, that art in the clefts of the rocks.' What a Saviour we have! He is so tender, so loving; He is truly 'touched with a feeling of our infirmities.'…Then, at the end of the service, he spoke about this:—'When he putteth forth His own sheep, He goeth before them.' He said, 'I am loath to tell you to go from the table. I daresay many of you are saying, "I should like to stay a little longer." You have been in the sheepfold, dear souls, and you do not like to go back again to the wilderness ; but it is Jesus who puts you forth, and He goes before you. He puts you into the wilderness again, that you may learn your own helplessness, and His strength. But He does not drive His sheep. No; He leads them, and He always goes first. The world thinks that God's people are in bondage. But no; they are free. They are not driven; they are led. They follow the Lamb, because they love the Lamb, and would be miserable if they did not follow Him.' Oh! I did feel loath to leave the table; but Jesus went with me, and He is 'the same yesterday, today, and for ever.' When we left the church, and walked along the street for a little, I felt almost in heaven; and my dear E. enjoyed it so much too. O for a heart to praise! When the bread and wine went round, I am sure Satan was near, for I got such a fright when I found myself so cold and dead; but I asked Jesus to lead me away from my dark heart, and to enable me to look out upon Himself, and He did it; but how polluted all I did, and thought, and felt, was! Yet, if we are in the clefts of the Rock, all our vileness is hidden, and only the perfect beauty of Jesus seen; and then we know that 'He bears the iniquities of our holy things.' I often longed for you to share our feast, and remembered you at the table. I wrote down some sweet bits for you when I could; but I could do nothing almost but weep; it seemed to me so wonderful, that such a Saviour should think of us at all; and He seemed so winning, so gentle, so full of compassion; it was almost too much. I felt that I knew nothing of Him; but I hope he will teach me, for He has compassion on the ignorant."

Views of the Way of Acceptance.— Her resting-place was the work of the Son of God, complete in all its parts; needing nothing in the sinner to make it more sufficient or more suitable. Thus she went at first to the Father through the Son, and thus she continued to go to the last. But, like others, she sometimes got into perplexity on this point; and forgetting to hold the beginning of her confidence steadfast, she lost her consciousness of reconciliation.

"21st Sept. 1843.—Went to Mr. Robertson's to-day, and had a long and, I think, blessed conversation with him. God enabled him to shew me that I have been making the Spirit's work within me my ground of confidence in place of the work of Christ. I see I have been trying to come to God as a Christian in place of as a sinner.Mr. R. said I should put it down as a settled point, that I am always to come to God as a sinner, with no good thing about me at all, and plead that Jesus died for sinners. What a happy, peaceful, God-glorifying state I should be in if I always went to God in this character! I will do as Mr. R. says—in God's strength. I am determined always to go to Him as a sinner, and I know that 'He receiveth sinners.' This, then, is a settled point."

Spiritual -mindedness.—To follow Christ, to be like Christ, was what she sought with the whole vehement energy of her soul. To mind "heavenly things" was her aim. To be unlike the children of this world, and to be like the heirs of the world to come, was the thing which she saw to be so

infinitely desirable, and which formed the burden of her pleadings with God. Thus she writes:—"R. and I went to Miss R____'s, where we had a meeting. I think God was with us. I had a great longing to be spiritual—to have God in me. At prayer I was enabled to cast myself upon Him, and felt as if a load had been taken from my heart. I did not feel so much joy, as a sweet peace filling my heart, and taking away all my angry, unholy feelings. Had a great desire to live to God's glory. Asked this for us all. I think our kind God and Father led us there to-day. My soul was much refreshed. Oh! to think that, when I see spiritual to be so infinitely preferable to earthly things, I am so eager in the pursuit of these trifles!"

"22d—I asked this morning for spiritual-minded-ness, by whatever means. O that this prayer were answered! I am weighed down by sin, and earthliness, and selfishness. O to be holy! I do long to be holy! I hate sin. It is indeed an evil and a bitter thing to sin against God! But I am afraid that I think more of its bitterness than of its evil; but this only shews how entirely destitute of good I am."

Views of Sin.— Conviction of sin is not a pre-requisite or a preliminary to salvation; it is part of the salvation itself. The possession of it does not qualify us for coming to the Sin bearer; nor does the want of it disqualify us or make us less welcome to Him, or warrant us in standing aloof. To say, I must repent before I come, is to say, I must begin salvation, and then come to Him to carry it on and consummate it. If my sense of sin is not deep enough, instead of making this a reason for standing aloof from the Son of God, I am to make it an additional reason for going straight to Him, as one who needs Him more than others. Thus M____ acted, and in so doing her sense of sin deepened and grew more intense. Thus she writes:—

"June 9, 1843.—This is my birthday. Have I grown in grace since last year?…What a precious day this has been! At prayer this morning, I had such views of my exceeding sinfulness, that I was almost in despair. I thought God could never pardon such a being. But soon He led me to the Cross of Jesus, and there I saw all—even my sins—borne by Him 'who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree.' Oh how precious it was to feel that God could love me in spite of all my sins! I am always trying to come to God with a price in my hand; but Jesus shews me I must come as an empty beggar."

" Oct. 24, 1843.—E. and I came to town for a week to attend the Communion at St Luke's. Went in the evening and heard Mr. W. Burns. I think I never heard him so searching before. I felt as if he spoke every word to me. My heart seemed as if it would break with sorrow at the remembrance of all my sins. I think I never saw myself such a sinner before…He spoke about holiness and purity of heart, and said that the next best thing to being perfectly holy, was to be perfectly ashamed of our unholiness." In September 1844, she wrote to a friend thus:—"My dearest B____, I am very, very unlike one who calls herself by such a glorious name as a child of God. How precious should Jesus be to such sinners as we are! I am ashamed when I think that Jesus sees all that is in me. I cannot get rid of sin at all. It pollutes all I do, and think, and say. And then I am not humbled under a sense of my utter unworthiness." In her conflicts with the evil within, thus she speaks:—" Aug. 30.—Had a severe time of wrestling this morning against my corruption and deadness. I have such painful longings to get near Jesus, but He seems so far away!"

Reality in Divine Fellowship.—" I was an hour upon my knees before I could utter one sentence in prayer," was her expression one day in conversation with a friend.[32] And why this strange silence—this want of utterance? Because she knew too well what prayer consisted in, to speak

words without meaning, and preferred to be dumb before Jehovah rather than mock Him with unfelt utterances. Prayer was not prayer to her, unless it brought her into conscious contact with the living God. If it was not the interchange of feeling between her and the Christ to whom she had given her heart, it was nothing. Brought up amid "forms" of prayer, and accustomed, in so far as she prayed at all, to pray by book, she, from the time of her conversion, laid aside all such helps. Of the arguments for or against set forms, she knew nothing, nor ever thought of knowing. She felt that she must tell God what she wanted; that no other could tell her wants, or sins, or fears, or griefs, or trials; and hence she laid aside these forms simply as one who felt that she needed them not, and that they did but straiten and impede the outpouring of her soul to God. Her letters in almost every page reveal her longings for or enjoyment of Divine fellowship. The following extract, though not exclusively on this point, will illustrate this:—"I have been reading over one of your letters, and there is something in it I must ask you about. You say—'When you see you need any grace, ask God to give it you, and to forgive you for not havi ng it.' Now, is it our fault if we have not grace? If I could think that, then I should indeed see my sinfulness; for I seem never to have anything I ought to have. Will you tell me about this when you write again? for it has often troubled me. I have thought sometimes when praying for such and such things, I wonder if I am sinful in not having them already; but I think of so many things that continually puzzle me, that it would be endless to write them all. I want to ask you about one thing, however, that I can never do—and that is to search my heart! I don't know how you set about it, and perhaps that is the reason I see so little of my sinfulness. Don't your thoughts either wander away to this world and vanity, or else to Jesus? and then, oh! how can you think of yourself? Do tell me about these two things in your next letter, which I wish I had. I had a curious kind of feeling on the last day of the year; I must tell it you. It was after dinner; I had gone to meet you at our Father's throne, and I had not much delight in prayer; but when I came into the room again, I could not remain. I felt an almost intolerable longing after something, I knew not what; I could settle to nothing; so at last I went to my own room; but I could not pray, for I felt as if God had called me to speak to me, in place of me praying to Him! I was wretched, yet happy,till I thought of what Samuel said, and I knelt down and said, 'Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth.' And, oh! I felt so tremblingly happy, I thought God was actually in the room, and yet I had no fear. I did not feel my need of Him, but I felt that He had a message to my soul, so that I could not rest till I knew what it was. Oh! if it was to tell me to speak to my darling ____; and you know it was that night I spoke to him. I have been thinking of what Mr. B. said about glorifying God; it was indeed very humbling to me.O that I could glorify Him! But what I feel most at present is want of desire to do or feel anything. I prayed this morning a great deal for sincerity. feel convicted of sin in that respect; for if I reallywere anxious for spiritual blessings, surely I should pray more earnestly for them. But I am sometimes frightened to pray; and just now a feeling of depression seems to weigh down my heart, and at times I cannot speak to God for weeping...O the glorious time when we shall never be separated, in another and happier world, when we shall be for ever with Jesus! I wonder if we shall remember the time when we wrote and spoke together about Him on earth. I wish I were more like Him, holy as He is holy. Will you pray that I may have longing desires to be holy, and that I may feel more my load of sin?"

Thus it was that she shewed, not only "whose she was not," but "whose she was." Neither in the positive nor in the negative features of her character was there any ambiguity. That she "was not of the world" was evident; but equally plain was it that her "citizenship was in heaven." The family likeness was too plain to be mistaken. Her unhesitating mode of action in everything that might

discredit the name of Christian, or compromise her own character as the bearer of that name, might offend. It would be imputed to the proud assumption of a claim to higher spirituality; and the lukewarm, the half-hearted, would feel as if reproached. Yet there was nothing of assumption about her, no selfcomplacency, no love of singularity, no wish to cast reproach upon one human being. Unconscious of doing anything but simply following the Master, and bearing His cross, she could not but be surprised that her conduct should draw attention, or seem strange to any who bore His name.

There was nothing artificial about her piety, save as it was manifestly the workmanship of a Divine Artist. In this sense it was truly artificial;but, in every other, natural,—natural in its air and tone and complexion—natural in what it did and what it left undone. Her religion was not that of imitation. It was the unbidden growth of the new nature within,—not the result of outward appliances, or skilful efforts to do as others did, or to feel as others felt. That new nature, fostered, as it had been imparted from above, shot up into vigorous growth, and shewed itself in the fruits of the Spirit. She was healthful in her piety, for she was "rooted and grounded IN LOVE" (Ephesians 3:17), and the growth of such a soil was not likely to be stunted or sickly. Her intercourse with the world, though uncompromising, was ever gentle and affectionate; for she felt that as she differed on so many vital points, there was the greater necessity for not differing on smaller ones. Her intercourse with Christians was that of one who realised the oneness of the brotherhood, and to whom the "fellowship of the saints" was no unmeaning term of courtesy.

It may also be noticed here that her thoughts went often up to the angels. She used to speak of them, and to express her gratitude towards them for their acts of condescending love to the "redeemed from among men." She remembered that they were "ministering spirits," who, as Baxter says, "have charge of us, and pitch their tents about us, who bear us up, who rejoice at our repentance, who are the witnesses of our behaviour, who behold the face of our heavenly Father, who convey our souls to heaven, who will come with Christ in glorious attendance at the great and joyful day."[33] To "the whole family in heaven and earth" (Ephesians 3:15) her soul went out, realising her kinsmanship with all;—with the redeemed in virtue of a common brotherhood in Christ, and with the angels in virtue of a common fatherhood in God. Thus, taking in the whole circle in heaven and earth, she was brought under the moulding influence of those manifold objects on all sides, the contact with, or contemplation of which, is designed, so specially by God to promote our holiness, by assimilating us to what we behold. Each part of the new nature thus got hold of something congenial, and was expanded or elevated or purified. She longed to be holy, for all with whom she was to spend eternity were holy. Her "faith grew exceedingly," and her "love abounded." The fruits of the Spirit hung ripely on her branches.

01.11. Progress in 1846-47

Progress in 1846-47 IN M____'s course there was no lingering. Her face was Zionward, and she tarried not by the way. She might feel weary, she might stumble, she might be torn with the briers of the wilderness, but she did not turn aside. Jerusalem was in view, and so she pressed on. In her experience as a saint, there is a manifest advancement. There are still fluctuations in it; but, on the whole, it is steadier; the flow is longer than the ebb. She is evidently gaining ground, though she grieves over the slowness of her progress. The cross brightens on her view, and sheds its radiance more steadily upon her path, with less of distance or of cloud between. The feelings which that experience unfolds are maturer and less impulsive, though still as warm and fresh. Her fellowship with the Lord is more constant and unbroken.

There is also a greater vividness in her anticipations of the eternal kingdom. She speaks more than ever as a stranger; and there is at times the expression of a home-sickness in her letters, which seems almost like the presentiment of her nearness to the country she so desired to enter. And, with these home-longings, she breathes out the feeling of quiet loneliness, as if she were becoming more and more acutely alive to the un-congenialities of earth—more and more lovingly sensible of the affinities between her and heaven. Thus, for instance, she wrote, towards the end of 1845,— "How sweet it will be to speak together again about 'the King in his beauty, and the land that is very far off!' Don't you often long to be at home, free from sin , sorrow, pain, and everything that makes earth the wilderness that it is? Mr. M____ spoke so sweetly on Sabbath, about this verse,—'The wayfaring man, though a fool, shall not err therein.' It exactly suited me. He said the world erred in this way, for they were not wayfaring men, but the believer was; he was journeying on to his home, and the way was so plain, that, even though he were a fool, he could not err in it...I need not tell you the great delight it is to me to have my beloved ____ with me once more. It was very sweet to meet in the wilderness. How much sweeter still it will be to meet in glory! It will then be with 'exceeding joy,' for we shall be 'without fault,' and we shall see Him who is 'fairer than the children of men,' and we shall all meet then at our Father's house— His and in Him our Father. O to be 'made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light,'—to be holy, as Christ is holy, and 'perfect, as our Father in heaven is perfect!'…O for an open mouth,—to be always at the Rock, that there might be in me a well of water springing up into everlasting life, and flowing as rivers of living water, giving life to all around me! How much grace Jesus is able and willing to give me! I am not straitened in Him, but in my poor wretched self. O to be done with self— with a vile body of sin and death! Don't you long for the unsinning heart, for the glorious body like unto His glorious body, and to know even as we are known? I know nothing of Jesus at all; and yet how glorious He is, how worthy of being known, and loved, and praised, through all eternity! He is allglorious—all-powerful—all-loving. His power is boundless, His love as boundless; audit is all for poor sinners like you." But we shall leave our readers to gather from the letters in full the state of her feeling and experience. We give them, as before, according to dates:—

" P____, January 10, 1846…How you humbled me, my darling friend! If you only knew this desperately wicked heart of mine, you would not think I had any real desires for poor sinners! I

have seen a little at prayer this morning of what I am; and I am ashamed and confounded when I see how almost entirely I desire my own glory in all that I do; and I earnestly want you to ask this for me—that I may see the sin of it, and that it may be rooted out of me. I think I never long for my sinless home so much as when I see, that even in working for Jesus I am putting forward myself. I get alarmed when I think how I may win souls by holding forth ME in place of Jesus. I wish I were holy ; I wish I had pure motives—that self were forgotten, and Jesus everything! But I never find it thus with me, and I am very, very sad about it. Don't you weary to have a single eye?...I sometimes feel when I really begin to pray, as if I should need to pray all my life, and do nothing else, there is so much, and so many, to pray for. To-day was for all God's dear saints. Surely there will be a great blessing after so much prayer, and united prayer, too. We have had three prayer-meetings this week, I am happy to say. One was our meeting at M.____: it was very sweet. Then we had our usual meeting at Mrs. J____'s on Tuesday, and another at her house on Thursday...I am often comforted in seeing the love of God, even when I cannot see my own interest in it. It is unutterably sweet and refreshing to think there is such a being as Jesus. This verse has often given me great joy—'I am He that liveth and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore;' but yet, as James Laing said, 'I should like a taste myself.' have not time in this letter to tell you about my district people. I shall write again about them. I shall only say, pray for them; and oh! pray for me ! I am very anxious about a woman and a young girl whom I had a long talk with. I am longing for some of them to come to Jesus…May God, even your own God, bless you, and make you a blessing."

" Monday.—I have been giving myself anew very solemnly to the Lord this morning. O to be His alone His entirely, His

now, and His for ever! Seek for me, for I am utterly weak. I am going to my district now. Pray for me and it: it weighs heavy on my heart. Pray that I may feel more and more that it is His work, His cause, and that He alone must have all the glory ; and pray for conversions, for I feel as if I could not bear any longer to go among so many dead souls, hurrying to ruin, and a Saviour all ready to save them. Do write soon, and say something to encourage me, for my hands hang down, and my knees are feeble, and my faith is very weak. Let us plead for one another, that we may draw many to Jesus.— Believe me, ever your own sister in our sweet Lord Jesus."

"P____, January 31, 1846…Ah! my beloved one, these trials often give me a sight into the dark caverns of my heart, and shew me how much I have been seeking self, and my own glory, in place of the glory of Jesus. I often think if I were more intent upon the glory of my beloved Lord, I should care less about whether unworthy I were treated well or not. I am weary of myself at times. I do wish I had a single eye to the glory of Jesus. How often, too, in feeling envious at others having so much more grace than I, do I shew that I am not aiming at His glory; else I should rejoice at His being glorified by the holy walk of any one. How these things should lay me in the dust, and keep me there; and how precious should it make ' the only holy One,' 'the fairer than the children of men, ' and how it should make me long for the time when I shall be like Him, when I shall stand faultless before the throne, dressed in beauty not my own! and yet, with all the sins that cleave to us, is it not a sweet service, the service of Immanuel? O that I had more faith to trust Him entirely, however dark things appear!—and they are often dark: they are dark at home, dark around me, and dark in my own soul ; but the night is far spent, the day is at hand, even a morning without clouds. O to be ready for that day!…The pain in my side is never away. I had to put leeches on

again. Will you seek that I may get patience to bear it? for it is very trying to be so long in this state. What vexes me most is, that it comes on worst when I am at prayer; and then it prevents me doing as much as I should like, going to the House of Refuge, and to my people here; but it must be good for me, else I should not have it. Perhaps it is a thorn in the flesh which I am always to bear...I fear I have no new cases to tell you of in my district. Pray for it and me, and ask that God would shew me why He does not bless the means. Perhaps He honours me so little because I honour Him so little. I should like to leave this dry land altogether, and go abroad as a missionary. I want to go to Africa, and tell the poor negroes there is One who loves them, degraded though they be. But how am I to get? R and I are very anxious to be missionaries, and we often pray that, if it be His will, the way may be opened up; but ah! fear I am not fit."

"P____, February 12, 1846…How many proofs of love my loving God is still giving me, in laying His hand so often on me! He is determined to make me holy, and, oh! I do love and bless Him for it. I want you to join me in praying that all my pains may be sanctified, for they have not been so yet; and oh! I am anxious that God may get His own way, and not give me mine. I have many a sore heart for sin, but I am glad, glad that I do feel sin a burden. We should be glad that we are in the fight, terrible though it often be. You speak of sin getting the mastery—ah! dearest, you cannot, I think, know the struggle I have with it, I am so very vile. Oh! pray for me, that I may hear the rod, and Him who appoints it."

"P____, February 19, 1846…I don’t want you to be alarmed about ____, for she is not materially worse, only she does not get any better, and she complains more constantly than she used to do; and the reason why I tell you about her is, that you may join R and me in praying, yea, in wrestling more anxiously than ever, for her precious, precious soul. I think I could almost part with her, if it were to Jesus. There is much that is encouraging about her; and oh! how much to be grateful for! She reads a great many of the good books we put in her way, and you know how much she knows in many ways: I mean she sees in a measure the necessity of thinking of the soul; but oh! she is dark, dark, I fear, about the way of salvation. She does not see how it is entirely grace; and I feel how utterly weak we are to help her ; but He can, and He will, if we ask Him, for He tells us to pray for one another, and He knows wemust pray for one so dear; yet we are not to seek it for her sake, but for His glory; that is what I feel so difficult. Will you ask for E. and me, that we may have a single eye to His glory in this thing? I know the great love you have to ____, and I feel it a great relief to tell you all our sorrows, knowing that you will hear them before our Father’s throne. Yes, and there is One on that throne who bears them all on His heart; and I often thank Him for even these sore trials, though grievous, most grievous, at present. Your letter has been matter of comfort to R. and me,—specially as it shewed us that, without knowing our increasing anxiety about ____ —, you have been feeling, as we do, the necessity for double exertion on their behalf. We are most glad to join with you in setting apart a day for special prayer for ____; and let us ask for praying hearts and a single eye. We have fixed Friday first; and if that day will suit you, you may either write a line to say so, or, if you have not time, we shall understand that that day will do. We shall try and get as much of the day as we can, and will remember them particularly at ten in the morning, and at five. I often am almost in despair about them ; prayer is so long of being answered; but we must wait on in faith, for, as you say, God is almighty, and He is much more willing that they should be saved than we are, and it is He who has given us all our anxiety about them. I often think the cause why our prayers have not yet been answered may be in, me. I wish

you would pray for me, that I may walk more consistently before them— that I may win them to Jesus. Oh! J____, I wish I were not a daily dishonour to Jesus I cannot tell you the sorrow I feel, that, in place of growing and adorning the gospel, I am backsliding fearfully. I know I am. I am not half so anxious, or zealous, or prayerful, as I was at first. The world is coming into my heart again. Ah! it is this makes me long often to be at rest ; done with sin; done with a sorrowful, God-dishonouring heart, and a Goddishonouring world. But I don't think I'll be ready for a long time. O to be made meet for the undefiled inheritance! to be done with deadness, and coldness, and selfishness, and distance from Jesus! to see Him as He is, to sit at His feet, and say to Him, 'Jesus, my redeeming God, I shall never more grieve thy heart by sin again!' We shall say that in heaven; we cannot say it here; and it is this that makes life often so bitter. But how little of my sinfulness I see! I feel its bitterness a good deal, but I do not see its guilt enough. Ask this for me too. I will tell you a dream I had the night before last. I dreamed that I was in India, and I thought I was so enchanted to be there, for I thought, now I will go and speak to multitudes of poor heathen, and win them to Jesus; but, to my dismay, I found we were to leave next day, and I cannot tell you the agony I suffered when I found I could not remain to work amongst them. I said to E., 'Oh! think of Dr. Duff and all the missionaries being up the country there, and all the poor Indians, and we cannot get to them!' And we never did get to them, for I awoke in all my misery about it. I often think I should like to go abroad, but for leaving ____; oh that I saw her in Christ, and ____ too! I could leave them then. I wish I saw the way opened up for us to go somewhere; there is so much done at home, and they need people more abroad; only I have two strong obstacles in the way,—first, these dear souls in ____ , and then I fear, indeed I know, I am not fit to be a missionary. Well, we are all in His hands; let Him do as seemeth Him good; let Him choose our inheritance for us."

"P____, March 10, 1846…I am strong in body just now, but my poor soul seems famishing and faint. I wish you would ask for me that I may be greatly quickened, for I need it. I sometimes get alarmed at the dead, unprofitable state I am in; and I am grateful that I have life enough to feel that I am dead, and light enough to see that I am very dark. It is a great mercy, and one I ought to be very grateful for, but I want to press on to higher and higher heights; I want to be an eminent Christian, that is, one that glorifies Jesus much, and I am often much discouraged in seeing how far behind I am. O for a single eye! self does so pollute all I do. Will you pray for me, my dearest friend?"

"P____, March 23, 1846…I am very much tried and tempted in my soul just now. I sometimes feel as if sin and Satan were just I raging against me; but, praise, eternal praise to Jehovah Jesus, I shall one day be, through Him, more than conqueror. He is teaching me my own weakness, and it is a painful lesson for a proud heart to learn; but I humbly trust He will teach me also where my strength really lies, that in Him I have strength, for is it not written, and it is a wonderful verse, 'In Him are hid the treasures of wisdom and knowledge'? and 'In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.' Oh! that word bodily! To think that He wears our nature; yes, our Redeemer was 'made in the likeness of men.' I talk to you of these things like a poor babe, as I am; but in glory, I shall know even as I am known."

"P____, April 14, 1846…I have been confined almost entirely to bed since last Monday week, with a severe attack of rheumatism over my whole body, and pain in my side, which has ended in sciatica, so that at present I cannot walk across the room but with difficulty; it is very painful at

times, but I am very thankful that I am not always in pain, as I might be. How kind and gracious, God, my own wonderful, loving God, is to me! Oh! ask that I may see love in all His dealings with me, for I am very apt to doubt His loving heart! It takes a great deal to subdue me, but 'He is able to subdue all things unto Himself.' My heart bounds at the thought of meeting you once more; but I do not know what to say about it; the time is drawing very near, and the doctor says he cannot say I shall be able to walk in a fortnight. It is a sore disappointment, when Mr. A. Bonar is to be there. I must go to the Fountain, now that the streams are dried up. God's dealings seem strange just now! I had settled all I had to do—go regularly to the Refuge, give away tracts, get a Sabbath class, &c.—when, all at once, I am shut out from them all, and, instead of doing my Master's work, here am I laid up, fit for nothing! Oh! pray for me that, since I cannot do His will, I may glorify Him by suffering it. Ask that I may not come out of this furnace till His time come. Ask for a humble submissive spirit, and especially that I may have the spirit of prayer given me, both for myself and others, that I may be enabled to pray for those to whom I cannot speak. "

"Kelso, April 1846…MY BELOVED R., Although I have just come here, yet I sometimes think I cannot stay away from you any longer! I often think of the few bitter moments we had in yon little room before I left. And yet there was sweetness in them too, for I knew you had Jesus, and that He loved you, and would take care of you. Cleave to Him in all your griefs, and you will find Him sweet. He wishes you to find yourall in Him. I like the verses you sent me very much, particularly the last one— 'Think what Father's smiles are thine, Think that Jesus died to win thee— Child of heaven, canst thou repine?'

It is wonderful that He should love sinners so much!"

"Last night we were at ____'s. I learnt the last verse, and repeated it to myself all the evening, that, though my body was there, my heart might be above with Him who is holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners. I wish my heart were more there. How my soul cleaves to the dust! I may well cry, 'Quicken me, O Lord!' I have not felt God's presence lately; and this morning, when I was thanking Him for all His temporal blessings, I burst into tears as I thought, 'What is it all, if my Father hides His face?' I long to live near God, to hide deeper in the clefts of the smitten Rock. O to delight myself in God! that would be heaven upon earth. I wonder when our Father will call us home! O to be for ever with Him, with the meek and lowly Jesus, with Him who once wore a crown of thorns, but who now wears a crown of glory! Don't you long to cast yours at His feet? I have sometimes great longings to be away; but often Satan makes me not so anxious, by telling me that I am not a child, and that I shall never get to Jesus; but Satan is a liar, and we must not believe what he tells us. We must rather believe what Jesus himself says, and He says, 'Ye shall never perish.' "

"P.S.—Pray that I may win old Lizzy to Jesus. Oh! when will glorydawn?"

"Kelso, April 18th… I cannot tell you the grief your letter, telling me you are not to come here, gave me. My only consolation is, that it is not His will that you should come at present. You would not find it an Him if you came without being sent. Oh, no! I feel that very much, even though I am here, that it is the wilderness still, and, sweet though the Lord's hidden ones here are, He is the sweetest of all himself. There are many fair lilies in His garden, but He is the fairest of them all. 'He is fairer than the children of men.' The Rose of Sharon is the sweetest flower in all the garden of God. I hope I shall see much of its beauty here, and bring back with me a sweet fragrance of the

Plant of Renown. Will you pray that it may be so? Now that you are not coming, I must be doubly anxious to bring home the 'fragments' to you. O that Jesus would fill me while in this place, that I may return to you and all with a blessing! To glorify Jesus, that is everything."

"Little W____ is dying; Mrs H. told me such a sweet anecdote of him. She was sitting beside him, and he said, 'You have a great many rings.' She replied, 'They are all presents—I never buy jewels.' He then said, 'There is one jewel you have which you got for nothing.' 'Is that your mamma's ring?' she asked. 'No,' he said, 'it is Christ I mean, the pearl of great price.'"

"I had such a conversation with my dear old Lizzy to-day! Oh, pray for her, and for a blessing on my visits to her. I think my heart will break if she does not come to Jesus before I leave. How full and free He seems when I speak to her! Blessed Saviour, and blessed work! To think that weare called to it! I must stop now. Pray that I may win souls to Christ here— especially old Lizzy. Your own M____."

"Kelso,____ ,1846…To-morrow is Sabbath, the day of peaceful rest. Oh, think of the time when there shall be nothing but Sabbaths, one endless Sabbath of blessedness and holy joy! I wish you had Mr ____ to-morrow ; but you have Jesus, and that is far better than any on this earth. Though you have not the channels for the living water to pour into your soul, you have the fountain itself, and that is ever free and open to every sinner. Only go empty,and Jesus will fill you with His own fulness; the less you have the better, you will be better able to contain the treasures that are hid in Him."

"I have been praying ever since I came here that God would make me an instrument in His hands for promoting His glory, whilst I am here; that I may be made useful in bringing souls to Christ; that the worthless life which He has redeemed may be spent in His service. Oh, join with me in this prayer! I am often unhappy when I think that I am of no use in this world. When I think that all God's children are working for Him except me, I think that I am the barren fig-tree, and that Jesus will say, 'Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground?' I do not know yet in what way I can work for Christ; but I have laid my prayers at the foot of Christ's cross, and I know that God will answer them in His own good time and way, not for my sake, or on account of my prayers and earnestness, but for the sake of Him who died on that cross for such vile sinners. I feel so happy at the thought of living for Jesus. I do not know what has given me such an ardent desire to do something for Him. I wish I were a missionary…That the Lord may be your Shepherd, and that you may never want, is the prayer of your own affectionate M____."

"Kelso, May 6, 1846…I gave what you sent me to a poor child who is dying. Oh! R, if you only saw her! she is a real child of God. I must tell you all about her, for I am greatly occupied about her."

"We used to say that we had never seen a pious child, but I have seen one at last. The first day I saw her I wanted to take an angel's office, and carry her in my arms to Jesus! J____ and I heard that she was ill, and Mr. Bonar said he thought there was real grace in her, and off we set to see her. She is about eight years old, and is dying of water in the head. She suffers a great deal, but her mother says she is very patient. She sometimes cries out when we are there, 'Oh! mother, my head!' Poor thing, I am so sorry for her! She has turned quite blind, too! One day she said, 'I am blind, mem, but I can see Jesus with my heart.' Wasn't that sweet? I asked her what she saw in Jesus, and she replied, 'Love.' M____ said to her, 'There will be no sorrow, no pain in heaven;'

and her answer was, 'No, mem, all love.' I wish you could see her. But you never will, till you meet in glory. But I won't tell you anything more about her at present, for I have a plan about her. I have written down all the sweet things she said, and I want Mr. Fordyce and Mrs. H. to write some nice remarks about her, and to make a little book of it; it would be so useful for children."

"Kelso, May 1846…I wish I had as ardent a desire for communion with Jesus, our Beloved, as I often have for fellowship with His dear people! Pray that it may be so, and that I may have far more desire for Him, and His love 'which passeth knowledge.' I took a longing to see you just now; but, as I could not, I went to tell Jesus I wanted more of Him; and oh! He is sweet! I fear I know Him very little, if at all. I am so unwilling to submit to His will, not to say in all things, but in anything! O to be able to say, 'My soul is as a weaned child!' When I think how soon we are to part—to say that bitter word, farewell'—I fear I am not like a weaned child; but He says, 'Be careful for nothing.' It is sweet to tell Him all our heart, and to ask Him to comfort and sanctify us! He is a blessed God! How He bears with His poor, silly children! Our God is very pitiful, and of tender mercy. He never turns a deaf ear to any of our complaints, though they are often very foolish. He notices when His people are sad, and He draws near to comfort them, saying, 'Why weepest thou?' He knows why we weep, but He wants us to tell Him; He knows what a relief the very telling Him of our griefs will be. It is best to speak of Himself when we meet, and not outward things. O to know Him as a living Saviour, living in me, the hope of glory! O for a joyful hope of coming glory! Do you remember the home-feeling about heaven? But I must stop, or I shall think I am at P____ already."

"E____,June 11, 1846…I feel now that we are absent the one from the other, when I have to write instead of speaking to you face to face; but this is His will whose meat and drink it was to do the Father's will, and it must be our will too...I felt I was meeting you in spirit very often during the journey yesterday, especially about five. Jesus was very tender of His poor, sinful, sorrowful child, for He drew near to comfort me many a time after I had left you. I thought my heart would break! How I longed for our holy home where I never should say farewell—when we should be with theLord together for ever ! I must now get the closer to Jesus...I feel so drawn just now to all who love Jesus. It is a strong tie, the tie of grace that binds believers to each other; it can never be broken."

"P____, June 15, 1846…May we both lean our weary souls on the bosom of Jesus, and may we find it a very sweet resting-place! Yesterday was our communion at Musselburgh. I felt for a short time at the table, as if alone with Jesus. It is almost too much to think about the love of Jesus! I cannot stand it at all, if I feel it even a little. We shall need glorified bodies to hold the fulness of His love. It is sweet to get away from the world for a little, and sit under the shade of the 'Plant of Renown' with great delight. I could not help groaning when I heard man's voice again, and thought, oh! I am in the wilderness still! We shall never say farewell when we meet in glory."

"P____, June 17, 1846…It is a week to-day since we said earth's bitterest word, farewell, and it seems like ten years. I wonder how much I have done for Jesus in that week now gone; with all its sins and opportunities of glorifying Him— sadly and sinfully lost—gone never to return. I am often afraid to write to you—I am afraid I write you lies! Do you remember what Mr. W____ said about that? I hope you will send me sometimes the Thursday night's notes. How often we have feasted on them together! how often we have walked into the house of God in company! Shall we walk the golden streets of the New Jerusalem together? I am sometimes afraid;—yet this is sinful; Jesus

surely is able to carry me all the way. I wish I knew Him better; His name is ' Love,' and His name is ' Wonderful;' but my name is unbelief, and I cannot—no, I should say, I will not, trust Him. I could trust you—I could trust you with anything ; and can I not trust Jesus ? What a heart is mine! He gave a proof (another among the multitudes He is for ever giving) of His love to this family, for He sent our dear minister with a sweet message of love to dear ____ to-day. He spoke of this verse,—'We have known and believed the love which God hath to us.' He said that made all the difference between a converted and an unconverted man—the simple belief of the love of God; and yet, to make that difference, it required the mighty power of God. He would have given much to convert that soul, but he was powerless; yet God works by means, and we must plead, my beloved, that His message may be blessed. He seemed to be blessed in speaking of the love of God—his whole soul seemed to be in it; and you know where he got the love—he got it where the beloved disciple got his; and if He can fill a human heart so full, what must His own infinite heart contain!…Do you think I should print my little book? I think our dear little Mary's love to Jesus, and, above all, the exhibition of His love to her in the perfect peace He gave her, may draw some young heart to Him…Tell me if your den is a Bethel to you, if Jesus draws near and says, 'Peace be unto thee.' I am so glad when I think you are quiet there alone; yet not alone, because your Father is with you. My only drawback is, that I cannot come gently to the door, slip in, and join you at His throne, to bless Him for all His mercies to us, His poor silly sheep. We must be content that we excel in spirit for the present. My frequent prayer is, that our separation may lead us nearer to Himself. You must ask for me that I may often,— always have Mary's place, as I have a good deal of Martha's work to do. Oh to be at home! or to have more of a home-feeling about heaven even on earth!…You have One who never wearies in caring for you, who watches over you at all times with an intensity of interest and love such as never dwelt in a human bosom till the 'Word became flesh.' How deep, how pure, how holy, how unwearied, how unselfish, how God-like, is the love God bears you! I am glad you are loved thus by One so glorious, so lovely. Do you remember the sweet chapter we read together at our last five o'clock meeting? It was all about the altogether lovely One. O that I could trust both you and myself with Him without a fear, a doubt, a murmur, or a suspicion!"

" P____, June 26, 1846…Our minister was inducted yesterday at two o'clock. What a solemn service it was![33] Do you know I cannot understand my feelings about him. I feel so drawn to him, and yet I have never heard him preach. I felt so much all the time of the service, my heart was quite melted; and I felt, surely this man is a giftfrom Christto us, and I mustlove him. Do you think Christ gave me these feelings towards him. R. did not feel as I did, for she said she had never heard him; but neither have I, and yet I felt as if I loved him so much. I felt as if it were to be the beginning of good days to poor P____. O that it may be so! The Master was very near to us yesterday, I think; surely He has sent this man…Tell me what you feel about going to London; I hope you won't go; and yet, if it be for your good, we must, as you say, seek what our Father's will is. How difficult I find it to bend my stubborn will to His! but there is nothing too hard for the Lord. What a comfort it is to think that! How my heart went with you when you wrote that you want to be stirred up to start anew! It is indeed a weary thing to be a half Christian. For the honour of our Master, we should indeed seek to be a 'peculiar people.' We have just been reading Psalms 24:1-10 Jesus has such a beautiful name in it— the King of Glory: What a title! The followers of such a glorious King should not be like the world, who are His enemies. My precious friend, when you are pleading for yourself to be stirred up, remember your poor friend—pray for your blind child,

that she may really see. I have sometimes great longings to get on, but they have never been answered yet. I should like to be a 'song' Christian, but I am not one yet, I fear. You ask me if I have been learning anything lately, the question humbled me greatly, but I am so glad you put it, for I trust it will make me search and see what state I really am in. You must often put questions to me; I like so when you tell me what you feel, and ask me how I am getting on, for it alarms me out of my too easy state; you must always tell me what the Lord is teaching you, and it will encourage me more and more to follow on to know the Lord. I feel, like you, a good deal of what I am, but I do not see Jesus as I ought; I should like to be intimately acquainted with Him. He is too much as a stranger to me; and yet, I feel that none but He can satisfy my soul; none but the living God can satisfy a living soul. But is mine a living soul? Yet surely a dead soul could not long for Jesus as mine often does. I will try, my own friend, to lay all your wants before Him, who can and will supply them all. I sometimes greatly love to pray for you, especially at our own hour; but I should blush if you knew how little and how feebly I pray for you. I am so glad you want to have an additional hour for prayer. Oh! beloved, let us besiegethe throne; we have great need—I have, at least; and we have many to pray for. The hour R. and I have thought of, is from three to four on Fridays; tell me if you like that hour, or fix any other you like; perhaps you may think an evening hour will be less interrupted; and don't you think we should make our own families, Kelso, and P____, the chief things to pray for? Let us seek grace for ourselves and one another, that we may glorify God in the midst of them; let us plead for them, and let us plead for the places we dwell m, that Jesus may dwell in them, and revive His work in the midst of them."

"P____, June 29, 1846…How unlike the love of man is God's love! No earthly friend would have pained you all at this time, but we have a kinder Friend above. He wounds that He may heal; He lays low, that He may raise up again; He smites in love—mysterious, wonderful love! 'Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth.' A weight of glory will make amends for all the trials of the wilderness. God will not let any of you forget that it is the wilderness. Oh! what a weeping world this is! but faint not, beloved friends, all tears will be wiped away in glory."

"P____, Ju ne 11 , 1846…I sometimes feel solemn when I think how the Lord is dealing with us in both our families. There is such love in His taking to Himself those who are ready to go. I dread the king of terrors coming here, for so few are ready to meet him as a friend sent to bring them home...I need all your sympathy at present, for this is a very tried house. Dear ____ has been very ill, again; I had little hope of finding her alive on our return; and oh! the agony about her soul! I could think of nothing but that; yet, thanks to our wonderful and merciful God, we found her a little better...I cannot tell you what a solemn feeling I have about all this. How unspeakably important the soul seemed last night! I feel as if anything could be borne, if the soul were only safe. The Lord is speaking very loudly to us all, particularly to dear ____; and I write to ask you to join us more earnestly than ever, that it may be sanctified. Did you join us at three yesterday? I was with____; I read her the whole of 'Mary standing at the feet of Jesus.' It was very sweet to myself, and dear ____ seemed quiet and solemn. How I yearn at times over them all! but there is One who yearns far, far more. O to see them all at His feet, in His arms—yea, in His very heart! 'The advancing footstep of a sinner to the Altar, is a sweet sound in our Aaron's ears.' Do you remember that, beloved?…We are so cheered about ____. O that my old Lizzy and the old man at W. H. were gathered in too! Jesus has a large heart; it can hold all who come. I am glad youare in that infinite

heart. Farewell for a little. And now, may you know more of that lovely One who makes all heaven glad, and who cheers even earth's dull mansion with His bright beams. That these beams may shine into your heart more and more, is the earnest prayer of your own loving and attached sister in the Beloved."

"P____, July 17, 1846…I cannot tell you what or how I feel, when I hear our loving God has laid His rod on my precious friend. You tell me not to grieve, but I cannot help it. 'No affliction for the present is joyous, but grievous,' so I may grieve, but oh! not sinfully; and I fear I do that. How much I may have to suffer before my stubborn will is subdued, and 'every thought brought into subjection to the obedience of Christ!' But I can trust Him, my own beloved Lord. I wish we were all 'safe in the promised land.' I feel my distance from Jesus here; it is so painful, that I feel at times as if I could wait no longer, but mustgo to Him. 'Oh that I had the wings of a dove! for then would I fly away, and be at rest. 'How sweet it would be to go to glory together! Oh! my beloved, what a wilderness this is! and the dreariest part of it is the evil heart within. Let us plead that our afflictions may not pass away without the effect God intends by them. I dread that more than the suffering. I am thinking I shall be the next laid up, for my side is bad again; but don't you grieve, for I feel I need it all, and I am sometimes so happy when I feel the pain, for I think this is Christ's hand on me, and it is inlove, and I am so glad He loves me, that anything from Him is sweet. But I fear, if I were more tried, and tried in any very tender part, by bereavement for instance, I should not feel it sweet any longer. 'I am a beast before Thee.' I often say that—it seems just to suit me…And now, what message shall I send to yourself? I shall not send one from me, but from your beloved Lord. I have opened the Bible at Psalms 40, verses 1-3. May the sweet Spirit of Jesus write them on your heart."

" E____, August 17, 1846…You will get this on your birthday. If it be for the Lord's glory, may you, my precious friend, see many, many happy returns of this day; and may you every day see new beauties in your 'altogether lovely Saviour; and may every birthday find you liker and liker Him who is the spotless One— our all-perfect God. I cannot at all tell you my feelings when I received your dear and welcome letter this morning. It was one of those green spots in the wilderness one sometimes meets with. I had wearied for it during the last, to me, painful month; but I trust I have felt that this has been a needful trial, and that it has been blest to me. I lean too much on you when I am with you, and I lean on your dear letters when I get them; and you must ask that God would enable you to write to me only when He wills that I should hear, and then your letters will be blest to me. And soon, beloved, we shall not need to write with pen and ink; we shall speak face to face ere long, I trust, in 'Jerusalem above.' I often weary to be away! What a God we have! Truly He is God and not man, or He would have cast me off long ago…I am too weak to write much at a time, and my side is very painful today. Will you pray that all this may be sanctified? I should be humbled indeed, when I think how sinful I must be to need so much pruning. But it is all well,all right; and I shall see that clearly in the sweet light of eternity. O to be at home! I feel a kind of persuasion that I may be away soon. I feel little interest in anything here, and I think perhaps this pain is the messenger sent to bring down the frail body; but He knows the best time to take me. O that I were quite sure that I am prepared! But I feel as if I were cruel in saying all this to you.You would miss M____; you would be saying, 'I am distressed for thee, my sister.' It is curious I CANNOT STAND you speaking of going home, and yet I speak of it to you; but then I forget I am not J____, but only M____. I was at church yesterday for the first time for a month; and how lovely

and pleasant His courts were! We heard Mr. Gumming of Dumbarney at St Luke's, and I never heard such an exquisite sermon. I thought of you constantly. How you would have enjoyed it! I must try and remember some of it to tell you, in spite of my poor side."

"E____, September 3, 1846…E____ says you have promised to return in spring, so mind you are to come by ____. But ah! how little do we know what may happen before then! We may have met, beloved one, in glory; we may be by that time, 'absent from the body, and present with the Lord.' Do you know I sometimes lately have felt eternal things so near! Perhaps my being so poorly puts me more in mind that I am mortal, and that my days on earth are as a shadow. I am in wise and loving hands; and it is a wonder to me that He takes such pains with me as to afflict me so often; there is really nothing but love in it at all. I cannot see any severity; it is so gentle, so loving, and, oh! so infinitely less than I deserve. I am a wonder to myself, that my heart is not quite melted and won by such love; but it is not. I need not conceal either from myself or you that my heart cleaves as much to the dust, and is as cold as if the bright Sun of Righteousness had almost never shone upon it. I say almost, for it would be sinful to deny that He has shone even on my hard heart, but it is hard still; my only comfort is that it will not always be so. No! blessed be His holy and loving name, I shall one day begin (and never end) to praise Him with a warm and unsinning heart. But it is sweet even now to stammer His praise. I thought this morning it was such a mercy in God to allow us to praise Him. Is it not, dearest? And when we begin to praise, although the moment before, perhaps, we thought we had so much to complain of and so little to praise, soon we find that we would need an eternity to bless Him for all our mercies; and then all our complaints vanish. I often find I have nothing to complain of, when I thought I had a great deal. One thing I do bless Him for—we are all still alive; we can still pray for our beloved ones who are yet out of Christ. I wonder how long they are to be out of Christ. O that but one would come in!"

"September 14, 1846…It rejoices me when I hear that there is no cloud between you and the bright Sun of Righteousness, and that He is shining upon your soul. What a wonderful difference it makes when the Lord draws near! then are the disciples glad; but, ah! it is sad when He is away; nothing can make up for His absence…Everything is so changeable and uncertain here, that I often feel we must just live by the day. God could, in ways we never should think of, arrange everything for us as we could wish, at least, as would glorify Him; and His people should desire nothing that would not glorify Him."

Frequently, during the past two or three years, has M____ given utterance to her desires to labour for the Lord. She has sought, in many ways, to carry these desires into effect; and in no small measure she has succeeded. She has already 'done what she could,' as we have seen. But now her desires take a more decided shape. She wishes to be more directly and undividedly a labourer in the field. Anywhere— anywhere, at home or abroad—she is willing to labour. Only let it be work for Christ, and she will undertake it, at any cost of suffering, or toil, or sacrifice. But now her eye turns more definitely to the foreign field. She sees that the labourers are few, and she would fain step forward to offer her services, though most painfully burdened with a feeling of weakness and unfitness. It is this feeling that troubles her most. The hardships and the sacrifices do not weigh with her half so much as this. Her humility is at all times great; here it shews itself excessive. The purpose of her heart she is not allowed to carry out. Medical judgment decides against the scheme; at least, in the case of her sister, without whom she cannot go. Several hindrances come up, and ultimately the plan is abandoned. But her devotedness and consecration of spirit have

been fully proved.

These statements will explain the contents of the following letters:—

"P____, September 14, 1846…I must now tell you what B. and I are very much occupied with. We greatly wish to go out as missionaries— that is to say, as teachers. We have thought of it almost ever since we first sought the Lord,—I should say, since He sought us; and lately we have felt more and more as if God were calling us to it by His providence. O that it were so! What an honour and privilege to go to tell poor heathen children of Jesus, the friend of children! to take them to Him too, that He may take them up in His arms and bless them! There are many obstacles: first, we are afraid of running before we are sent, and I fear my motives are not pure at all; but then if I wait till my motives are right, I may wait all my life, for I have a desperately wicked heart. What do you think about our wishes? We think God seems to be pointing us to it in many ways: in the first place, it was He, not ourselves, who gave us these desires; then we had nothing to do in the writing of the letter about us to this lady; and her letter and the account of this society have come to us just at the time when our family are talking of many different plans for the future; and we want them (if they can) to settle them without calculating upon us, as we think we can do more for Christ amongst hundreds of children abroad, than with two or three at home. We spoke to mamma about it today for the first time, and she is very averse to it. Ah! that would be the terrible part of it—the differing with her, and the parting from her. That would be the plucking out of the right eye, the cutting off of the right hand; but Jesus says we must not love father or mother more than Him. But, oh! darling, we are anxious about this matter. I can pray about nothing else almost; and, oh! join us, for we are very anxious to do nothing rashly; we want to see God leading us every step, and our way is but dark to us yet. M____ will not hear of India, so we are thinking rather of applying to the Free Church. It would be nice, too, to go out, sent by our own Church; and Pesth or Jassy is not so formidable as India or Africa. Will you pray earnestly and much for us, that God would lead us every step of the way, and shew us Hiswill in this solemn matter? What a terrible thing it would be if we were refused! but we will tell them we are so anxious and willing to learn. Will you not be long of answering this letter, as I am very anxious to know what you think? I am afraid of two things: of being put back from it by any sacrifice Christ may shew us we must make, or by the ridicule of worldly friends; and I am afraid, on the other hand, of undertaking a thing I am not called to, or fit for. Oh, how sweet it would be, setting off together on our Master’s work! We should really be Christ’s servants then!"

" P____, September 19, 1846…Does it not seem as if God had come into the midst of us and our arrangements, saying, ’Ye are not your own, I have work for you to do’? What a brightness and a glory is there around the very thought that this may be the case! But then come in my two other objections: first, my health—I am certainly not strong, the pain in my side never leaves me, and it must weaken me; and, lastly, I am not fit for such a work m any way. I had such a sight of this this morning, while praying about it, that I could do nothing but weep bitterly, thinking that Jesus could not send me. How unsubmissive I am to His blessed will! I feel that it would be hard to say, ’Thy will be done,’ when, that will was to say farewell to my beloved father and mother, and my precious and most beloved friend on earth, your own dear self. I cannot dwell on the thought at all, so I won’t attempt to speak of it. Yet, I feel it would be far, far more difficult to say, ’Thy will be done,’ if Jesus said, ’You are not to go, you are not to go to tell sinners, far away, of my love;’ and I greatly fear He may say that to me, my motives are so unworthy. I feel, dearest, that all this has been

much blessed to my poor soul. It has often, since I got that letter about it, drawn me very near to my wonderful God. O that I had a holy heart to love such a holy God! O that I had a loving heart to love such a loving God! I feel my need of Him more, I think. I feel that I cannot stand or go alone. Hemustlead me; and is it not a sweet necessity laid upon us, that we must come and lean all our weight upon God—upon Jehovah-Jesus? Oh! J____, you and I will sing a loud hallelujah in glory! But I don't want to go to heaven yet; I want to go to His ancient people, and try to bring some of their little ones to Him who has already shed His blood for them. I was saying to dear ____, the other day, that I felt as if I were just beginning to feel that I need a Saviour. I have been professing for four years now that I am His, and yet this is all the length I am— that I need Him. Yes, I do indeed need Him, for I am a guilty worm of the dust, and can do nothing for myself; but He is everything, and has done everything, and all He wants now is, that we should consent that He should be our Substitute— that we should consent to be nothing, that He may be 'all in all!' This is humbling, but, oh! it is sweet too. Don't you feel that you would not like any other way of being saved but this way, 'the new and living way'? There is nothing on this sad earth so sweet as to weep for sin at the feet of Jesus; but it is a terrible thought, that we are never done sinning. It should make us lie very low, and make our High Priest all the more precious to us."

" P____, September 23, 1846…I wonder how my two old people are, Lizzy and the man ____. O that I could go once more, and tell them of 'Him who loved us, and gave Himself for us!' Could He give more? Could He give anything half so precious, half so lovely? and, having given Himself, can He deny us anything we can ask Him? No: let us trust Him, dear sister, and we are sure to come off more than conquerors through Him that loved us, and gave Himself for us. I love to repeat this verse, it is so sweet! Don't you often feel you don't so much, as it were, love Him for His gifts, as for Himself? If He had given us all His possessions, but not Himself, what would that have done for us? That is the misery of the worldling, that he is ' without Christ.' Can you conceive a more miserable, solitary state? What would heaven be without Christ? No heaven at all. I am often afraid Jesus will say these awful words to me at the judgmentseat, 'Depart from me?'— and then I should be without Christ. Oh! I think if I am to go to hell, I will sit in a corner and thinkofChrist,if I cannot be with Him. But He will not leave our soul in hell if we commit it to Him."

" P____, November 21, 1846…I shall be glad to see your face, for it is a rough world this, and Christ's poor silly sheep get many a hard blow on their road to glory; but itis a road that leads to glory, and that should make amends for troubles by the way…We are often dark and troubled about many things; but what a comfort it is to know that, though our way be dark to us, it is all light to Jesus! He knoweth the way that we take, and He will lead us by a right way to his own joy above; and He seems often to say to me, 'O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?' and, though it is a rebuke, it is such a gentle one, as if He said, 'Have ye any reason why ye doubt me?' making me feel I have indeed no reason to doubt my gracious Master. I envy you your hunger. I wish I had a hungrysoul, for I should be sure to be fed. I fear you will starve here; but you must go more to the Fountain, and you will get the water clearer and purer there. I am sometimes so glad God is pure and holy, it makes my very heart rejoice to give thanks at the remembrance of His holiness.' Think of the time when we shall be as pure as our glorious Master— when we shall partake of His holiness, not only in a degree, but altogether. I cannot imagine me without sin!"

" P____, October 6, 1846…I am so glad it is beloved Israel we are to go to, if we do go;but, oh! I am terribly afraid, especially since I have seen this dear sister in the Lord. I can hardly tell how I

feel about it—I am ashamed and afraidby turns. I could scarcely look at Mr. M____ when we were telling him—it seemed such presumption in me to think of it; yet, it is not I who am to work, but God—'the grace of God in me;' and, if He call me to it, He will surely give me the necessary strength."

" Oct. 7…—'The Lord your God is holy.' This is a sweet, and yet solemn verse for to-day. It would be a terrible thing if our God were not holy—infinitely holy. It is so blessed to think we may so surely, so safely trust our everlasting all to Him; yet I sometimes think it strange how we, at least 7, can trust Him for eternity, and that I am so unbelieving above the things of time. Oh! if we could only obey that precious command, 'Be careful for nothing,' we should find the promise fulfilled in our blessed experience, 'that the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, would keep our hearts and minds through Jesus Christ.' Truly it is a peace which passeth all understanding. I wish I knew more of it ; it is my own sin that I do not. I am in great trouble about the mission business, I am so afraid of turning before I am sent. I would not go anywhere without Him for thousands of worlds. Any amount of agony with Him would be infinitely sweeter than any joy without Him. I sometimes wish I were 'safe in the promised land,' I get so little of Him here, and I live so far from Him."

" P____ October 23, 1846…I think, too, we should not speak of it to any one; for, if I did not go after all (and I will not go if He go not with me), it may do harm to the cause. As for poor me, it does not matter what any one says and thinks of me—they cannot think too badly of me; but I must be very careful not to give occasion to any to speak against my Master. But I am really taxing your patience very unmercifully, and I fear you will say, when you read my letters, 'Ah! poor M____ is too full of doubts and fears ever to be a missionary.' I sometimes think any mission in Europe is too civilised for me. I think I should do better out in the wilds of Africa, where I should have to teach only poor savages, and not so many eyes on me. It is a wonderful thing that Jesus has put it into my head at all, to think that I, 'a beast before Him,' should venture to say, 'Here am I, Lord, send me.'"

"P____, December 3, 1846…MY VERY DEAR MRS. H____, R. received your kind letter this afternoon, and I now sit down to have a talk with you on this, to us, most deeply interesting subject. We were much delighted to receive your faithful letter. I thank our loving Father that He has given us faithful friends, for I am always afraid lest your love should blind you to us, so that you would not see us as we really are—at least in as far as we can know of one another. Dear friend, we have not taken up this matter lightly . I think God has been teaching us from the very beginning to dread nothing so much as following our own way in this matter, and I feel (as far as I know my deceitful and desperately wicked heart) that the language of our heart is, 'If Thy presence go not with us, carry us not up hence;' and I think, if you knew all the providences, you would feel, with us, that the Lord has been at least calling our attention to a missionary life very decidedly, although, at the same time, we feel that He has not as yet made our way so clear as that we can say we think it is His will that we are really to go. He has given us the strong wish to be employed abroad in His service. He has inclined the hearts of our dear family in a most wonderful way to be agreeable to our wishes. And another thing is very encouraging to us, our health has greatly improved lately, although we have at the Normal School had a great deal of very unusual fatigue. You say you 'do not think we can infer, from present appearances, that He will ultimately send us abroad.' Perhaps He may not ; but I think, at present, we should be turning from His way if we

were not much taken up with the thought that He is dealing with us very peculiarly in the matter. His will regarding us is not clear yet; but it is sweet, as you say, to rest in His present will, leaving the case of the future to Him. I almost dread to speak upon the subject of my fitness, I should rather say unfitness, for such a work ; I feel ashamed, and deeply humbled, to speak of it to you or any other friend I have; I feel so unworthy, so unfit, in every way, especially with regard to my knowledge of Divine things. I am not fit for any work at home or abroad; I am the merest worm that ever tried to speak a word for Jesus ; and if I looked at my own qualifications, I should at once give up all thought of going; but Jesus will not send me a warfare on my own charges; if I go, my Master will go with me, the everlasting arms will be underneath me. He will put His own words into my stammering lips."

" P____, January 4, 1847…O to be done with sin! I weary of the struggle often, and yet this is wrong, for I should have my mouth filled with praise that I am in the struggle; but the more I am loved, the more insensible my heart seems to get."

"P____,April 10, 1847…So your sweet Lord (as Rutherford would say) has not been forgetful of you any more than of us! Don't you find it a blessed thing to be afflicted? I think I agree best with trials, and I have not a few of them at present. You ill—E. ill, and away from home—and so many at home ill—and, worse than all, seeing so many I love, without Christ, still out of the ark, in spite of the many calls they have had to enter in. I should greatly like to hear from you; and oh! tell me that you are better, for my foolish heart can scarcely bear to hear you say you are ill. That shews how selfish my love to you is compared to Christ's: He makes you ill though He loves you so much; yes, and just because He loves you so well...I read to ____ in the morning now, as well as at night! Oh! seek a blessing on His own Word. How sweet it is to tell him how freeto him the Saviour is!...It is strange to me how much I am taken up about that soul. I sometimes feel as if I had no one else to care for. Surely He who has given this concern to such a cold heart as mine will answer, in His own time, the pleadings of His own Spirit within me? Oh! pray for that soul, that the entrance of His word may give light to it. I have asked ____ to remember us, and she says she will; it will be a great comfort to me to think that prayer for a blessing is ascending from some of God's dear children while I read to him...I wish I could tell you of some loved one 'born again;' well, let us not weary, and 'in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.'"

"P____, Ap ril 28, 1847…MY OWN BELOVED FRIEND,—I shrink from writing even to you just now, for I am in deep waters, and I can scarcely bear to speak of it, but I long to write a few lines to you at times. My beloved — ____ is now very ill; he has had three more of these dreadful attacks, each only one week after the other, and he cannot stand it long. My own friend, the furnace is very hot.O that it may purify the precious gold, cleansing all the dross away! It is very terrible; but it is all love, deep, God-like love—I cannot doubt it...I fear you will never see ____ more on this sad earth—oh! pray that you may meet in the Jerusalem above, and be together 'for ever with the Lord.' Now, my beloved, I can say no more; I must go to my Refuge, the throne of grace, to plead for him."

" P____, June 7, 1847…The Lord hath laid His hand very heavily on this house, but it is the Lord who has done it, and He will give us grace to say, 'He hath done even this well.' I cannot tell you that my heart has been brought to anything like submission yet. Oh! this is bitter, bitter sorrow! It is a hot furnace indeed, so hot that my faith often fails altogether; but Jesus' love never fails, and

even in the midst of my agony I have felt that there was 'One like to the Son of man' with me in the furnace, keeping the flames from kindling upon me. I have had moments of deep peace that could only come from Him. Seek, dearest, that we may get all the benefit God intends by this sore bereavement. His love to us is, indeed, wonderful; love shines out in every little circumstance concerning us, even to the most minute. As He has had all the pain of so deeply afflicting us, I cannot bear to think that He should not get glory to Himself from it all. May it be said of this stricken family, 'Now they desire a better country, that is an heavenly.' Pray for us all. What sore hearts we have! but Jesus says He heals as well as wounds. What a wilderness this is! I know now what the word means. Do write again; and believe me, yours most affectionately, in the love of Jesus."

" P____, June 22, 1847…Many a time, and in various, ways, has the Lord spoken to this family; but, oh! what were all these to this! I feel as if we never felt a pang before. He has now spoken to us by death; and that has gone to the very innermost corners of our hearts, causing them to bleed as they never did before. My precious father,—are we never to see his sweet, kind face on earth again? I think my heart will break; I thought time would make it lighter to me, but it gets worse every day. I get comfort but in one thing, that it is sent for good to our precious souls. Oh! if beloved ones are led to Jesus by this heavy stroke, surely we may well suffer this agony. Yes, dearest; this may be God's way of answering our many prayers for their conversion; and though it is a terrible way, still, if it be for such an end, we may well praise Him for it...I feel that nothing short of God getting glory from this tribulation will comfort me under it; and what will bring Him so much glory as to see us all sitting at the feet of Him who has so sorely wounded us! I must live to God now—this world can never be my rest. How I long to be at rest up yonder! I long to go, to be 'for ever with the Lord.'…There is something striking in the time God has been pleased to take to remove our beloved from us, when he and we together were looking for, and talking about, little else but the return of dear ____, after an absence of six years; and now that he has come, three weeks after our sore loss, we all look upon him, thinking, 'Oh! how he would have gazed upon him!' How I feel that God thus intends to make us see His hand in it very evidently!...I have great comfort at times in pleading that God himself would come and fill, and far more than fill, his place in our family. We have a promise to plead which we had not before; and I doget blessed comfort at times, in praying that He would fulfil it. Oh to have God to be our Father, to come, like David of old, to 'bless His household!' I long to see more love in this trial, but it almost overwhelms my wicked heart. He tells us that it is through muchtribulation we are to enter the kingdom; and yet how bowed down we are when the tribulation comes, 'as though some strange thing happened to us!' I was not present at the last, and that is to me one of the most dreadful parts of this trial. It was very sudden. I had gone to E____ that morning, and you may be sure he did not seem to be worse, when I could leave him, for I seldom left him even for an hour; when I returned, God had taken him. And now I can tell you no more, for I cannot speak of this at all."

" P____, July , 1847…Many thanks for your most welcome and very precious letter. One thing in it gave me especial comfort; indeed, it is the only thing that can comfort me now, your saying that, without this trial, the glory of ourblessed God would be incomplete. It seems to me very wonderful that it should be so, that anything about a poor worm like me should glorify Him in any way; but it must be true, as you say, my beloved, that all things are working for His glory, and so must this amongst the rest. Does it not shew what a desperately wicked creature I must be, when I could

wish not to pass through any furnace, if He would be glorified thereby? Yes, dearest; God is shewing me, at this time of unutterable anguish, that I am a great deal worse than I ever thought I was. If any one had told me before this took place, what thoughts I should have of God, and what unbelief, and murmurings, and repinings, and rebellings I should give way to, I should have said, 'Am I a dog, that I should do this?' but, oh, I havedone it! Did you but see my heart, from day to day, you would mourn for me indeed; but God sees it all, and yet He has patience with me, and has even passed His word— and He cannot lie—that He will have patience with me to the end. Why can't I see love even in this fiery trial? I cannot understand my feelings at all. I feel as if it were impossible that I could ever be comforted, and yet God says, 'With me nothing is impossible.' What a wilderness this world is now! and every day it gets worse. I take such a yearning of heart to see my darling father again; and when I remember that I shall never see him again on earth, the thought is so full of agony, I can scarcely bear it, and the very sweetest word in all the Book of books seems unavailing to give me one ray, one drop of comfort. I cannot believe that it is true; I don't think I have ever believed it yet, and yet I don't see him. Yes, yes, it is true indeed; and my very heart is breaking within me. Surely I cannot be a child of God, to feel in this way! I don't think His people ever have such a rebellious heart, at any time, as I have; I fear I am refusing to be comforted. But why do I speak of my wicked self, and grieve my own friend? "

" There is one thing I must say,—remember all the blame is mine, that I am so miserable. I cannot bear that any one should think the loving God is dealing too severely with His rebellious child. You will not think that, for you know God better; and I am a little happy when I think and know that: it would be terrible indeed, if I made any one think ill of my heavenly Father, as I fear I do."

"E____, August 7, 1847…I always feel sorry, my beloved J____, that my letters to you are so full of sorrow, for I know they will grieve you; but oh! how can it be otherwise? 'The cup which my Father hath given me' is a very bitter cup indeed; and although there are times when the deep wound does not bleed so much, still these times are rare. Oh! there is a depth and a reality of bitterness in this sore bereavement I never felt before! I never thought I could have felt as I now do. It has changed the whole aspect of this world to me; and often I have but one wish—to lay my aching head and heart beside my beloved father's, and neither sin nor sorrow more. But I feel that this is very wrong: my Father knows best when to take His poor sorrow fill child home,and I know that I should rather wish to live more to Him now than ever. Earth has but one attraction for me now, and that is to be enabled to bring souls to Jesus. If it were not that even I can thus glorify Him in a way that angels cannot do, I could not stay here any longer...It will be sad to leave that house and that beloved room, where we watched night and day our precious invalid, and where, often and often, God has enabled me to pour out my whole soul before Him for his precious soul. How I have sat by him, weeping my very heart out, and repeating to him, verse after verse, the sweetest I could find; and I see now, as if it were reality, his dear eyes fill with tears, and looking at me so kindly. O my father, my beloved father! no wonder this world is a desert to me. "

" P.S.—I have been taking this opportunity of again visiting at the prison. Seek a blessing on my poor efforts. I am often greatly helped in speaking to them of the sinner's Friend. What a wonderful thing, that God employs one sinner to direct another to the blood that can cleanse us both! They are often melted; but I long to see the blessing really come; there is nothing I find such comfort in as in seeking to win some of these poor wanderers back to the fold. Pray for a word of power."

" Blairgowrie, September 17, 1847…MY OWN DARLING FRIEND,—You will be surprised to see me address from Blairgowrie. I came here to nurse poor ____; she has been ill again. O that now she may cry from the heart, 'My Father, thou art the guide of my youth!' And will you ask for me, that I may be enabled to walk wisely towards her, and may have a word given me to speak to her precious soul?"

"Blairgowrie, September 1847…I shall say nothing till we meet, about the prospect of a minister to P____, except this— 'He hath been mindful of us, and He will bless us still.' Oh, yea He is a prayer hearing God, and He will give us a godly minister yet, for He says, 'Ask, and ye shall receive.' I am glad you are to meet ____ on Friday. I love real, spiritual Christians! Love to all, from Your own M____."

" P____, October 27, 1847…Since my visit to Blairgowrie, there has been a song of praise put into my mouth, and every new trial just seems to me a new cause for a louder and sweeter song of praise. I sometimes see such unutterable love to this family in all our trials, that I can hardly feel anything but thanksgiving to the God of love. I don't mean that I don't feel our sore trials; oh, no;—my wicked heart is far more inclined to faint under His rebukes than to despise them; but God is shewing me that He is afflicting us for our eternal profit, and making me feel that it is worth suffering anything, if the soul is only saved; and should not that make me praise Him!" In the month of September, as will be seen from some of the previous letters, she was called to attend a sick sister near Blairgowrie. Of this brief visit she has left a record which is entitled, "Diary during a short visit to Blairgowrie." As this is fuller than her other diaries, and as it brings her history down to the time of her marriage, we give it pretty fully. It is a sort of episode or parenthesis—the record of her experiences and activities when placed alone among strangers, with few, save the Christ whom she loved, to resort to.

" Sept. 8, 1847, Wednesday.—Left Edinburgh at half-past seven morning, and sailed in the steamboat to Dundee. Felt Jesus very near me almost all the time; read Mr. Hamilton's Olive ;—felt it very precious to my soul; felt especially sweet what he says of faith, that it has no virtue in itself; but that Jesus, to whom it unites the soul, is everything. How sweetly one learns when the holy loving Spirit is the teacher! I felt I could look beyond my faith to Him who is the object of it. Yes, my Jesus is all in all. O that He were all in all to me! I felt very sick soon after, and could not speak to any but one little boy, to whom I gave a tract. The Lord brought us safe to land, and after seeing about the railway, I took a walk to the churchyard;—met a servant girl there, to whom the Lord gave me a word. It was very solemn to talk about eternity, surrounded by those whose souls had already begun their eternal state. I wondered how many in these graves would rise to glory. Gave her one or two tracts."

"Left Dundee at half-past two, and arrived at New-tyle at halfpast three. Found I had to wait there three hours before the train arrived again, as the omnibus to Blairgowrie does not leave till then; this was very provoking, as I was tired, and had no place to go to but a dirty inn. But I thought I might get some work for my Master to do, and so the time would not be lost. I spoke to three girls about the love of Jesus, and gave them tracts. I then walked about for an hour or more, and gave tracts to nearly all I met. Got away at last, and arrived at Blairgowrie safely, but very tired, a little after nine. Found M____ very poorly. The Lord only knows how this illness is to end. May it be for His glory either way! Went very soon to bed. My own beloved Lord has been very tender of me this

day; He has been very loving to His wayward child. I often think God delights in shewing remarkable forbearance and love to me. Why me, Lord? why me?"

" 9th.—Went down to see dear old ____ after dinner, and felt it sweet to hear her talk of Jesus. It greatly delights me when I hear others speak well of Him, and see them trusting in His love. My faith is very feeble; I can trust Him when all goes well, but when He gives me a bitter cup to drink, as He has lately, how I misdoubt and misjudge Him!—and yet He is love still. Yes, I would not have it otherwise. It is all well, because He did it...Felt the burden greatly away. I said on leaving, 'The Lord be with you!'—'And go with you,' she added. It came very sweetly to my heart. I think I need double grace when I am away from home, I feel so lonely. Oh, I shall be glad when I am for ever with the Lord; I shall never feel lonely then! He is ever with me even now, it is true; but it is a different thing to see the loved One by faith, and face to face."

" 10th.—Felt very near God, and very peaceful and happy today. What a change when the Comforter comes! All clouds, all burdens roll away, and the Sun of Righteousness shines into the soul. Strange that I am not always thus! Jesus is ever the same, and so my peace need never waver. But, ah! I have a body of 'em to carry about with me, and that is a sad hindrance."

"A bright cheery day. Went down to see ____ ; was with her an hour. It is very sweet to sit beside her, and witness her cheerful submission to her painful earthly lot. I feel when with her, how ungrateful I am for my many mercies. Why am I not lying like her? I do not deserve the health I have. O that I could spend it in His service, and glorify Him as much as she does in her sickness!"

" llth.—I trust it will be the Lord's will that M____ will recover, for I fear that she has not yet experienced a real change, not passed from death to life. I can do little except pray for her, as she is not able to converse...A letter has come to ____, telling her that her father is gone. Oh, I know their sorrow: it is a very bitter one. May He who often at that time comforted me, comfort that family. I feel my own grief coming back afresh when I think of theirs. No letter from home to-day. Felt vexed about this. How little trouble makes me sin, and grieve away the Holy Spirit! Felt greatly troubled at prayer about this sin, of being so easily vexed. It hid God's face, as every sin must do till it is washed in the cleansing blood, and subdued by the kingly power, of Jesus. Strange, how sweet it is to weep for sin![34] And yet there is bitterness in it too; and the more it is forgiven, the bitterer my tears get. O that I should sin against such a God! I wish I could, like Job, abhor myself. I have two besetting sins: I am soon angry, and I am very selfish; and often do I plead with God, that I need double grace to subdue these sins, and that, if He do not hold me up, I must fall, for I have no strength. Oh! it is blessed to be able to plead my utter weakness, that I may lay claim to His strength."

"Monday, 13th.— Heard Mr. Macdonald preach twice yesterday. In the morning it was from 1 Corinthians 3:15. It was all about the difference of grace in Christians making different degrees of glory in heaven. It is a subject that always makes me very sad, as I feel that I come so very far short now, that I shall likely have a very low place in glory. What an undeserved mercy if I am there at all! But I should like to have a large cup of joy, and a bright crown of glory; for the brighter the crown, the fitter is it to cast at His feet; and the larger the cup, the sweeter is it, for it is just filled with Himself. This subject should make me very anxious to press on, that I may get more grace." The following extract wears a peculiar tinge of solemn sadness. She does not elsewhere express herself thus, but always rejoices in creation's loveliness, knowing that he who joys in God ought to

joy in His works. For may not a Christian say, with one of the world’s poets— "Oh my heart joys to gaze upon the sky, Gleaming athwart green leaves like happiness, Above the gloom and shadow of the world O summer sunshine! floating round all things— Meadow, and hill, and leafy coverture— Steeping all nature in most sweet delight, Till upward from the bosom of the earth, Before so cold, and blank, and unadorn’d, Spring fairest flowers, to gladden and adorn." But yet one does not wonder at the deep sadness of heart thus expressed, when it was the sadness arising from the uncongenial air of earth. She felt herself a stranger here. She looked around, and saw the world lying in wickedness. Creation was beautiful; but sin had tinged it, and shadows hung over it, and Satan reigned in it, and its dwellers were not walking with God. Then, too, there were other sights, to the believing eye fairer and more wonderful—other scenes, which partook more of heaven, and which drew the renewed soul upwards irresistibly by their superior attractions, making that which was beautiful in creation to have no beauty at all, by reason of the beauty that excelleth. It was evidently in such a frame of spirit that the following passage was written:— "I took a lovely walk to-day; but it is strange how little pleasure I have in beautiful scenery or walks now. My heart is far too sad to care for anything of that kind, even though they are God’s works. I like better, far better, to sit beside His dear people, and see His works and wonders of grace. I have no heart now for anything but spiritual things."

" Wednesday, 15th.— M____ much better to-day. O that this affliction, sent by God in love to her precious soul, may be sanctified! was so struck this morning!—I had been away for an hour, and had been praying earnestly that God would not let this trial pass away without bringing her to Jesus; and when I returned to her room, I found a dear Christian speaking to her with such solemnity and affection, beseeching her really to seek the Lord. He said. God had sent her two heavy trials, and that if she did not improve these, He would send a third; and that, if all failed, how sad her state would be!"

"Have been feeling much lately how very little I see God in everything. O for faith to see His hand in everything! Have had great desires, too, to have a thankful heart. Oh! if I thought more of my mercies, I should think less of my trials, for I should see that my mercies are far the more numerous of the two, and so my joy would be greater than my sorrow. But I have little of a grateful heart. I take things as if I had a right to them— forgetting that the least thing I possess, temporal or spiritual, I do not in the least deserve; that all is a free gift of God to a rebel."

"Went to see Mrs. E____. Had a very sweet visit. She is indeed a living epistle. She said, ’How sweet it is to think of the tree of life being so richly laden with fruit, that it bends down its branches, so that even I, lying here, can pluck and eat!’ I asked her if she had prayed for me that I might kiss the rod. She said, ’I tried to do so: I had one of the sweetest nights I have had for some time, and it began with praying for you. It was returned sevenfold into my own bosom, for I lay down under His own sweet smile. I asked for you, that Jesus would say to you what he said to Mary, Woman, why weepest thou? Oh! I felt it a sweet word!’ She said again, ’The Lord has a bottle for His people’s tears, and if we never were made to weep here, we should have no tears to be bottled.’ I gave her some flowers. She smelt them, and said, with such a peculiar smile that I saw her meaning at once, ’Ah! the cold takes away some of the smell.’ ’Yes,’ I said, ’the cold of this wilderness takes away some of the fragrance of Christ’s lilies; but their fragrance will be very sweet up yonder, when the Sun of Righteousness is shining full upon them.’ Her answer was, ’Oh that I had the wings of a dove!’"

" 16th.—Went to see my dear old friend, and was refreshed as usual. Speaking of E____, she said, 'O that she may often have a walk round the Cross of Calvary, and in the evening, through the streets of the New Jerusalem, whose streets are of pure gold, leaning on her Beloved!' Again she said, 'O that she may often visit the believer's five hallowed spots—the Manger, Gethsemane, Calvary, the Tomb, and the Mount of Olives!'—Went to Mr. Macdonald's meeting in the evening. It was very solemn—on the Signs of the Times, as they shew that Christ's second coming is very near."

" Monday, 20th.—Was much drawn this morning to pray for more faith, strong faith, so that, however dark things may look, I may never distrust God. Perhaps He is to send me some trial that will need strong faith, for He never gives faith without trying it; but the trying of it is precious. But I must not be anticipating trial. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof. I was also much led to pray for grace to glorify Him in the place where I now am; not to put it off, as I am so apt to do. What grace is this, that puts such desires within such an ungodly heart as mine!"

" 22d.—Went to see Mrs. E____. How sad to see her tried about outward things, when she has such a sore trial in her body! But she has her Lord's promise, that all these things are working together for her good. She was a rebuke to me. For, when her children may make what the world would call good marriages, her heart seems breaking at the thought that, by these outward temptations, their hearts may be drawn away from God. How different I am! How ready my wicked, worldly heart is to be glad, if at any time God seems to be sending my family any worldly good, instead of, like her, desiring first and chiefly for them the true riches! We had a very sweet though sorrowful meeting to-day. In trying to speak a word of comfort and encouragement to this beloved saint, I felt my own faith strengthened. And this night, in praying for her at our Father's throne, I felt, more than I remember ever doing, the sweetness of the privilege of being permitted to pray for the Lord's people."

" Thursday,23d.—My Lord bruised Satan under my feet a little, this morning, and gave me great confidence in drawing near to Him. What a God he is! O to be a better servant! Am reading Mr. A. Bonar's book, RedemptionDrawing Nigh. Felt, in reading it, how strange that I have thought so little of the second coming of Christ, when the Bible is full of it!"

" Monday, 27th.—My mouth has been filled with praise; O that my heart, too, were full this morning! I could do nothing but praise, as the Lord brought before me all His loving dealings with myself and my dear family. I felt that all that He had done was well, and that I could trust all our concerns with Him for time and for eternity."

Such are a few specimens of her experience at this time, which, along with the letters, will shew the advances she had been making. It was progress of a very decided kind. Little more than six years before, she was wholly of the world, with hardly a thought of the eternal kingdom. Now, she is far on in her course, making steadier progress during these few years than many in a lifetime. For, alas! in this, the mighty business of life, we seem to do little else than dream! Ten, twenty, forty years pass on, and we can scarcely discern our progress! We have hardly started from the goal! Sin uneradicated, unbelief still vigorous, evil tempers unsoftened, rebelliousness unsubdued, worldliness unconquered, slothfulness still oppressing us, selfishness still in its strength! Is this all the progress of men who profess to be followers of a holy Master, partakers of a heavenly calling, and heirs of an undefiled inheritance?

Ought we not to be "making haste"? Is it wise, is it safe, to loiter or allow sloth to steal upon us, so that we neither "endure hardness," nor "run," nor "fight," nor "strive," nor "wrestle," nor "keep under our body," nor "bring it unto subjection" at all? Crowns are not won by sluggards, nor are battles fought upon beds of down.

01.12. Her Last Year

Her Last Year IN the beginning of January 1848, M ____ became the wife of Mr. G ____ , a devoted minister of the Free Church of Scotland. Thus she writes respecting this:—

" Tuesday, 4th Jan., 1848.—Our marriage-day. Had an hour alone with God in the morning, and felt unutterable sweetness in asking Jesus to be at the marriage. My beloved M ____ and I were united at halfpast one. Dear Mr. Bonar married us. I can hardly tell how I have felt all this day; I felt more solemnity than anything else. Surely the Lord was in the midst of us. We had several of His disciples with us."

Two days after, she reached her new dwelling. Peace seemed to rest on it, and the promise of long days. She was now just in such a sphere as she had often sought after—a sphere of quiet but fervent labour for her beloved Lord. What could better suit her retiring diffidence, and at the same time give scope to her warm zeal, than the rural retreat in which her lot was now cast? It appeared as if she were set there for years of patient, loving work, as the helpmate of His servant. Alas! we thought not that she was placed there only to ripen for an early tomb. Her feelings are thus recorded in her diary:—

" B____, Thursday, January 6,1848.—Arrived safely this morning with my beloved husband at our new home. May it be like that at Bethany, where Jesus often went; and may He give me grace to do Martha’s part in Mary’s spirit, sitting at the Master’s feet!" Her experience during this year may in some measure be gathered from the following letters. It must, however, be remembered, that in her new circle, and with her new duties and cares, she had less time to write than before; so that the letters of this year are not so full and many as formerly.

" B____, January 8, 1848…MY DARLING E____, When I received letters from P____, I looked eagerly for yourhand amongst them. I long to know how you have been getting on since I left you. I am sure if you miss me, I miss you very much. We were always one, at least since the time when we really began to live—began to live to God—and it is strange to me to be separated from you. May our God bless you, E., and, oh, may you have more of Him now than ever you had! I cannot tell you what I feel in writing to you; my heart is fall, and yet it is with difficulty I can express what I feel. I feel as if I loved you more now than ever, and it makes me very sad to know that you will be missing poor M____."

"B____, January 13, 1848…I went with my dear husband to his meeting at K____, on Tuesday evening. It was pretty well attended—all common people, with the exception of____; you remember of whom it is said, ’The common people heard Him gladly.’ M____ is lecturing through Ephesians. Do write soon; and, oh, don’t make me sad by telling me that you miss your own M____. I know that you do; but my heart is pained when I think of you being alone in that room where we have so often knelt together, and read or talked by the fire. Well, my beloved, you must draw all the nearer to Jesus, and if you do that, our separation will be a blessing to you. When I am writing to you, my heart gets so full of yourself, and the thought that we two are at last separated,

that I can scarcely write about anything else."

" January 15…I am a rebuke to you, and to my late self also, for I rise by candle-light, and this morning we had breakfast and worship over by nine o'clock. After worship, we read together the Psalm for the day, and I then read aloud one of Rutherford's letters, and then we pray together. This is a very sweet part of our day's employments…Oh, E., how glad your account of dear ____ made me! I think, if he stands firm, it may have a very blessed effect on the others. Give him my warm love, and tell him that his Lord says to him, that he is 'to endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ,' and that, if he suffer with Him now, he shall reign with Him hereafter. We shall be sure to remember him in prayer, that the Lord would hold him up, and then he cannot fall…How dependent we are on one another, and how sweet that it is so! Surely love is of God. There is something of heaven in the very thought of making another happy."

" January 27…MY DARLING R____, Miss ____ drank tea with us on Tuesday before the prayer-meeting. She is one of the right kind, and I am greatly pleased with her. She proposed prayer together in my room, before going to the meeting, and it was very sweet. I have got a district to visit, and give tracts, and a Sabbath class. My district contains only about twenty families; but that will be enough, I daresay, as I have a house to attend to now. I feel that it is part of my service to Jesus to attend to that house, and to my dear husband's comfort as much as I can."

"Pray that I may win some souls in this place to His glory, who is so loving and gracious to unworthy me; and ask a blessing, too, dearest, on my Sabbath class. We go to it at five, and return about seven. M____ has a class, also, of boys in the vestry. At present we have only four teachers; but one thing greatly delights me, and that is, that they are all real Christians. You would be greatly pleased with our little school. O to win all the children to Jesus! Another thing I must tell you about; I am anxious to commence a female prayer meeting, like the one at P____.

Dearest M____ quite agrees with me about it. I began to think of it when I saw the teachers, and simply thought of asking them to come once a week or so, and pray for a blessing on our labours in the school; but M____ wants it to be more general, and to ask all the praying people who will come."

"I wish, dear, you would pray about this, for, as it will of course be in this house, I feel a good deal about it, all of them being strangers to me; and you know I am too apt to be backward. But I dare not stop a good work on that account; and, as my dear husband says, if I am weak, I shall just need to lean all the more on Christ for strength; and, he added (and I felt it was a word from God), 'it will be wonderful if He does not carry you through.' Miss ____ will be a great help to me, she is so much accustomed to these things, and the Misses ____ also, are real Christians. Your own loving M____."

" B____, February 3, 1848…Your letter this morning, about your coming, gave us both the greatest pleasure. The weather is milder now, so I don't think there is much fear of its injuring you to come here. How I long to see you! I long, too, to shew you my favourite study. It is there that we remember you all every morning at our Father's throne, and there that, as a family, we worship the blessed Lord who has given us all our blessings."

"B____, June 12, 1848…I had such a sweet season in prayer yesterday morning, though it was almost all confession of my

black guilt, so that I could not help praying with my whole soul, 'Lord, let me rather die than sin.' We had a fine day in church, too; my dear husband was much helped. I trust you pray for him, and for me, that I may not be a hindrance to him! I was seeing a very affecting sight in K____ on Saturday—a brother and sister, about eighteen years of age, both in one room, rapidly sinking under consumption. How ill they look! especially the girl. I spoke and read to them, and intend to go again. I think the girl has really found Christ—I trust both have; but it is difficult to tell their state, they are so ill."

" June 26, 1848…There is none like Christ, after all, K,____ ; not the very dearest on earth can fill the soul. Oh! it is a pleasant thing for a dusty, thirsty pilgrim to stop a moment on his journey, and take a drink of the water of life. Oh, pray that I may have a more thirsty soul!"

"July 4, 1848…What a chequered life this is! It may often be by the way of sorrow, and yet we are sure that it is by the right way our Father is leading us; and it ends in glory ; it ends in being for ever together, and for ever with the Lord. Amen, so let it be!"

" July 8…I cannot tell you how sweetly the Spirit spoke these words to me, on reading them this morning—'Seek ye my face.' I had the feeling as if God were smiling on me, and saying so tenderly and so anxiously, 'Seek ye my face.' How sad it is to think I am so backward in doing it! Seek for me, dear, a praying heart. I am not well, and fear I lead a very useless life now. I read a good deal, however. I have finished the Account ofthe Revivals, and Whitefleld'sLife, also Philip Henry's Life; and I am now reading Matthew Henry's. I have taken such a longing for this house to be like 'Broadoak' (their house). What a sweet Christian household that was! I must conclude now, as writing fatigues me."

" B____, July 24, 1848…I often marvel when I think how tenderly the Lord deals with me. Pray for me that I may not provoke Him to send trials by loving His gifts more than Himself. It will be sad indeed for my soul if I try to feed it with anything but Himself. I feel much drawn just now to seek grace to do my worldly duties for God. I have such a temptation to think I am not serving Him, except when I am at prayer, or reading the Word; and yet, on the other hand, I feel I am so naturally averse to all that is holy and spiritual, that I fear lest I am tempted to neglect the throne of grace, thinking that I am glorifying Him, though I am not there. What grace we need, to walk in the narrow path! we are so apt to go aside every moment!"

"B____, September 16, 1848…I have little news to give you. More I think goes on in the world within than without. What searchings of heart I have at times! I shall never be what I ought to be till I am standing faultless before the throne."

" B____, October 7…It gave me much joy to see that He has put a praising spirit in you, my own sweet R., for that is the happiest and the most God-glorifying state we can be in. How often have I got rid of a sad and heavy heart (and many a one you and I have had together), just by beginning to praise the Lord! and, oh! when we do begin this blessed, this heavenl ywork, what endless cause we find to praise Him! We find, then, that not only time, but eternity is too short to utter all His praise. How we shall praise Him even here, if these trials lead those so dear to us to Jesus! That will make us forget all our sorrows from very joy. I need not tell you that my poor prayers rise

up for you many a time; and through Jesus, even they will prevail. I fear I write sad letters, dearest; but you know, 'when one member suffers, all the members suffer with it.' Though absent in body, oh, how constantly and truly I am with you inheart!"

"B____, November 1848…I was very happy to hear about the new work you are engaged in. I trust that the Lord will bless it to many souls. So you have been hearing Mr. A. Bonar? How glad shall I be when he comes here! We are to have Mr. Reid of Collessie preaching for us next Sabbath; I wish you could be here to hear him. We are to have a sermon on the first or second Sabbath of every month, in the evening, for some months to come. Ask that the Lord would direct in the choice of His servants, and come with them, and bless His own word."

"I do not feel well at present. It is a solemn thing to think of this! The danger to myself; and then, to be a mother! I too have the care of an immortal soul! Oh, pray for me, my own dear sister, pray that I may really feel weak, and be able to say, 'When I am weak, then I am strong.' A fear comes over me at times, but He says, 'Lo, I am with you alway,' and so He will be with me then. I have little news to give you, except that I do love you, and that I have been giving some tracts to-day. Oh for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit in this dry place!"

" B____, Thursday…MY DARLING R____, How I wish you were here just now! there is not a creature in this house except myself! My dear husband is at a prayer-meeting at P____, and I have sent both the servants also, and so am left solitary. But 'I am not alone, for the Father is with me.' O that I desired and felt His presence more! I went up the hill on Monday to visit Mrs. W____, and had a nice meeting with her; I have been seeing another dear Christian also—one of our people in P—. She was very happy to see me, and spoke so of my M____. Her eyes filled with tears, as she said, 'No one can tell how I love my minister.' She made me very glad by telling me that she profited so much under his ministry. All the people I visit speak the same way of him. I find when I go amongst them how much beloved he is, and I think it does me good in this way, that it makes me far more anxious that I may not be a hindrance to him, and so be a curse in place of a blessing to the people. Pray for me, for a wife has great influence over a husband, for good or for evil. I wish I were able to go more amongst the people, but I feel less able every day now; but, if spared, I trust to be more with them afterwards."

" B____, Friday…I cannot tell you how very glad your letter about ____ — made me. O how blessed to have such a hope that she is safe for eternity! I wish you would pray for my poor soul, for I have many more things now to drag me to earth, and many more duties (right in themselves) to do, and I fear that my soul suffers. O that I could do Martha's part in Mary's spirit! It is curious, that sometimes, after a great many worldly duties and feelings, on going to prayer, I have more relish for it than ever. But this, alas! is not always the case. It will be terrible if I am less spiritual, now that I am a minister's wife, than I used to be."

"B____, Wednesday…'The Lord reigneth;' that text came into my mind after I had read your letter this morning, and it was very sweet to me, for I thought, 'then all is well' with my darling E____, though she may not see it as clearly as she will one day—if not here, yet in that bright sunny land of which Jesus is the light. It is written, 'Let the earth be glad;' let you and me be glad too."

" Thursday…Leave the future with the Lord, who has promised to make all things work together for your good. It is the enemy who tells you that you are not fit to die; he takes advantage of the

weakness of your body to trouble your soul; but he was a liar from the beginning. 'Trust ye in the Lord for ever.' Trust Him who says, 'Because I live, ye shall live also.' He will not give you dying grace before the time; but He says, 'As thy day is, so shall thy strength be.' You are His own child, and He says, 'My sheep shall never perish.' How much sadder I should be about you, when I hear of all your trials, did I not know whose handsends these painful rods, for 'the present not joyous but grievous!' How sweet it is to think that our Father possesses unerring wisdom, as well as boundless love. If He were only loving, we would be afraid to trust ourselves entirely to His guidance; we should fear He might err even in His love—as we so often do; —but He is wise as well as fall of love, and oh, we may safely trust such a God! It is indeed a great trial to me that we do not suffer together, as many a day we have done; but that is His doing too. He has ordered our different paths, and therefore they are right. I was thinking, after I read your letter, of that terrible time (our father's death) when I, too, was alone, and when I found it a very precious time for my soul. And how very soon after, the Lord fulfilled His word to His fatherless child, in giving her another earthly protector, and that one of

His own dear children! When things are at the darkest, they often turn very bright. How bright they will be up yonder, without a cloud!" Of this period of her life, her bereaved husband thus writes:— "As a minister's wife, she was a beautiful exemplar of what one holding that responsible situation should be. She was most anxious for her husband's usefulness, and strove, in every way, to be a help-meet to him. She felt very deeply her unfitness for the situation which she had been called in providence to occupy, and very fearful of being a hindrance to her husband. She accompanied him every Sabbath to the evening school, in which she taught a class of girls, in whose spiritual state she took a deep interest, which was evinced, not merely by the affection and earnestness with which she spoke to them from the lessons of the school, but also by her inviting them to the house for prayer on week-day evenings. Immediately after her arrival here, she commenced a prayermeeting with a few pious females belonging to the congregation. Her heart was very much in this meeting, though it was not so well attended as she desired."

"She had also a district for the distribution of the Monthly Visitor tracts, and this opportunity she improved for reading the Word of God, and praying with the people, and speaking with them oil the great subject of salvation. She proposed also having a general class of young women; and I remember well her great delight one day, after having visited, along with a pious female, the district from which the class was to be gathered, because of the many promises of attendance which she had received. But such was her diffidence of herself, that this work was not immediately undertaken; and then, bodily weakness, and finally death, prevented it. It was delightful to see how much her heart was in the spiritual work in which she herself engaged, and in her husband's public duties; what life there was in her religious undertakings. The Holy Spirit was, indeed, in her a 'well of water springing up into everlasting life.'"

Then, as to the last scenes in her life, he gives this brief narrative:— "For four or five weeks before her confinement, she was subjected to great bodily weakness and frequent pain; and during this period, it was her greatest regret that she was excluded from the services of the sanctuary; and, indeed, it was only through her husband's strong remonstrances that she was kept at home, when it was obvious to others that she was unable to attend. During this period, she wished me very much to be always with her; but this desire at once gave way to the call of duty. I think it was on the evening of her last Sabbath on earth, that I was very desirous to remain with her, instead of

going to the Sabbathschool. The evening was very stormy and wet; but she insisted on my leaving her, and going to the school as usual, for I might be useful there—and what other consideration could be so important as this? So unwilling was she that regard for her should be a hindrance to any ministerial duty."

"Notwithstanding her weakness, neither of us apprehended danger. We thought and spoke of her approaching confinement very hopefully. My own state of mind appears to me now in the aspect of security. How this aggravated the heaviness of the stroke that was so soon to fall, it is unnecessary to say. But she said she was prepared for the Lord's will: she rested on 'the Rock;' she 'knew in whom she had believed.' The last religious book—with exception of her daily companion, the Bible—which she read, was Mr. H. Bonar's little work, The Blood of the Cross, presented to her by me on the anniversary of our marriage-day. The last chapter that she read was the 9th, 'The Thoughts of the Saint concerning the Blood.' How suitable for being the last subject of meditation on earth for one who was on the eve of joining the happy company who sing in heaven! 'Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood.'"

"She was taken ill early on Tuesday morning, 23d January— already very much reduced in strength, owing to previous illness. Of the sufferings of the last few days of her life, I cannot trust myself to speak. Her mind was very much distracted by her great distress, and she could hold but little communication with others. It was the Lord's will that her life, and not her death-bed, was to be her testimony. I think it was on the Wednesday forenoon that she mentioned to me five texts that gave her comfort but amid the confusion and surprise of this sad season, only two have stuck to my memory: ' And calluponme inthe dayoftrouble;I will deliver thee, and thou shall glorify me.' 'The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneathare the everlasting arms.'"

" About three or four A.M., on Thursday, 25th, she gave birth to a son, who survived her only for a day. It was the last effort of her ebbing strength. She never rallied after this, but sunk into a state of unconsciousness, breathing very heavily. When it became too evident that she was dying, all present knelt by her bedside, with overflowing hearts and weeping eyes; and I was enabled to commend her in prayer to the care of that Good Shepherd who is with His own in the dark valley, and conducts them safely across Jordan. About three P.M. she breathed her last; and from the acutest suffering on earth, she immediately passed into the unutterable joy of her Saviour's presence above. It was a solemn season to all—a most painful season to one heart,—but, oh! what balm did the hope pour into the bleeding wound, that she who had suffered so much now suffered no more, but reposed on the gentle bosom of Jesus, the husband who first had her heart!" A short time before this she had written to her friend respecting her prospects:—"I want your prayers for the unborn child of your friend. That child has now a soul that will live for ever; and I earnestly claim for it your prayers, that its soul may live, even though it should never see the light of this world. I have given this precious trust to Jesus, and He will keep that which is committed to Him. I had a very sweet and solemn time this afternoon for this. I gave anew my beloved husband and myself to Him; and then I gave Him our yet unborn child, that He might give it back to us, His child. It is sweet to commit everything to His hands." In what way God was to answer her, she thought not; nor how fully each petition was to be granted, though by events in which man's eye might see nothing but the frustration of her dearest hopes. Jesus did indeed accept the charge thus committed to Him by His trustful child ; but He did not give it back to her in the way that she had prayed for, that she might bring it up for Him here, and lead it through the wilderness into the

rest to which she herself was hastening on. He bore it away from earth, to be trained up in His nearer presence, and in a purer clime than this. She had been thinking of its training here, and, in the fondness of a mother's hope, had been preparing for it; for in a recess behind the drawing-room shutter were found some few choice books for children, such as might have been useful had they been spared to each other. But the Lord had purposed to take the training into His own hands entirely. The education was to be conducted above, on no earthly system, and by no human teacher. In tranquil unconsciousness, the mother sunk away to rest, the everlasting arms upholding her, and knew not that she was a mother till she had passed beyond the confines of earth, and was overtaken by her babe on its way to the Paradise above. Unknowing of the mother that had borne him, yet, as if drawn by some strange attraction, and unable to remain behind, the babe, ere another day broke, had followed her into the presence of the Lord. There they now met, and there they rest together, mother and infant, doubly knit together, in life and in death, he only knowing her as a mother in heaven, and she only knowing him as a perfected spirit, without one spot of that sin which she so abhorred in herself; her first-born and her last; only for a few hours a child of wrath, and sin, and death, and then an heir of life and glory for ever!

Happy child, thus early laid to rest! Taken away from the evil to come; landed on the bright shore, ere one rude wave had gone over him! Thrice happy mother! Mother of a child that never wept! Mother of a child that never heaved a sigh, and into whose spirit none of earth's griefs, or fears, or bitter disappointments can ever find their way!

Passionately fond of infants as she was, she would either have doated over it to idolatry if living, or gone mourning in disconsolate sadness, if taken away. She was graciously saved from the sin of the one excess, and the pain of the other. The child, which she had given to the Lord, was not to be allowed to come between her and her God. Yet they were not to be parted,—or, but for a few hours, and then reunited for ever.

Happy child, and thrice happy mother!—he saved all an infant's pains and weaknesses; she spared all a mother's sorrows and fears, yet blest with more than all a mother's joys! As if in token of their union, they were placed in the same coffin, as well as laid in the same grave; the babe resting on its mother's breast, and enfolded in her arms. Thus they lie pleasantly together in the quiet churchyard, sleeping in Jesus, till the voice of the archangel shall summon them to meet their Lord in the air.

It was a tranquil end indeed! She had fought the fight, and the struggle was over ere she came to die.

She escaped the bitterness of partings that would have rent her heart, and, it may be, clouded her departure. Her Lord himself seemed to draw a curtain between her and things visible ere she had yet left them, and, in utter unconsciousness of all things round her, she breathed out her spirit.

It had been a sore and weary battle in days past, yet the victory was won and the crown secured. And who would not wage such a warfare to win such a crown?

Eight years ago she was a heedless worldling, and now she is with her Lord! Brief pilgrimage! Crowded with hopes and fears, and tossings and tremblings, and griefs and gladnesses, such as might have filled up a far longer story. Hers was not a long passage, though a stormy one ; and for its end how often had she longed! To be away, to be at home, to be with her holy Saviour, in His

holy heaven, amid His holy angels—how often had she sighed and wept! And, glad to be so soon done with the voyage, and to leave behind her the clouds and blasts of an unquiet sea, she stepped tranquilly ashore at the desired haven, which she had so speedily and unexpectedly reached, and, her infant in her arms, went up into the presence of her Lord!

"No stone," says her sister, "is as yet put up to mark her grave; should there ever be one, I would put her favourite text upon it, 'So shall we ever be with the Lord.'" Her husband's pen thus delineates her character:—"Her death produced a deep sensation, which took the form not only of sympathy for the bereaved, but of sorrow for a great loss to the religious interests of the place. Her funeral sermons were preached by Mr. Brodie of Monimail and Mr. Reid of Collessie—and it was remarked that there was scarcely a dry eye in the congregation on the mournful occasion.

"I would now give a few traits of her religious character, as these were impressed on me during the short time we were together. She was a remarkably sweet Christian; love predominated in her religion; she was naturally of a very gentle and affectionate disposition—and when the highest and holiest object of love was revealed to her, she clung to Him with all her soul. Her love to Jesus was a clinging, confiding, devoted love. Her religion was not an adherence to certain doctrines, but was more to a living person—the 'Man Christ Jesus,'—in whom all truth meets—the Alpha and Omega—the friend, the brother, husband—all."

"Her humility was also remarkable. She cherished a deep feeling of personal unworthiness, and more particularly in reference to the responsible situation of a minister's wife. She often said, 'Oh, think of my being a minister's wife!' She was never happy but in the background—out of sight. She thought herself fit for no duty, and worthy of no mercy."

"Her love of prayer was very great. She knew not prayer as a formality; it was more than a duty with her—it was the sweetest privilege, it was the intercourse of a child with a father, it was fellowship with God. She had the grace of prayer in a high degree, remarkable liberty and access in it. She had great love for prayer-meetings, and much enjoyment in them. In speaking of the intercourse she had with Christian friends, she always mentioned, as the sweetest part of it, their meeting together at a throne of grace."

"Her spirituality of mind was great. She panted after God and heavenly things. She feared much the deadening influence of the world, and was exquisitely alive to the least declension from a heavenly frame. A finely-polished blade is easily blunted, and so it was with her heavenlytempered spirit. After her marriage especially, her complaints became very bitter of the encroachments of the creature. I have found her more than once rising from her knees bathed in tears. In that humble posture she had been mourning before God, over the increasing influence of the world and creature affection—over her deadness and backslidings. Her Bible and Hymn Book are full of pencil marks, which give no doubtful indications of her prevailing feelings. I find passages of three kinds chiefly marked,—such as are expressive of the preciousness of Christ, of personal unworthiness, and of longing after the presence of God in heaven. The hymn in the Bible Hymn Book, marked 'My Hymn,' is, 'For ever with the Lord,' &c. Her well-worn and well-pencilled Bible is a precious legacy. The blank leaves at the beginning and end are covered over with texts, in the handwriting of the godly ministers and Christian friends she most esteemed and loved." We close with the following letter from one whose name often occurs in the preceding letters, and to whose ministry and counsels she felt herself so greatly a debtor:—

" Newington, Edinburgh, October 26, 1852…MY DEAR BROTHER, I regret much that the pressure of other duties has prevented my complying with your kind request till now; and I choose the form of a letter to yourself, both as giving more opportunity for the expression of cordial esteem for our departed friend, and as best suited to the mere glimpses of her character which I am able to offer you. I felt delighted when you told me of your intention to bring together what may form a permanent memorial of her worth, for her whole religious experience afforded a fine specimen of 'peace in believing,' and of 'sanctification through the truth.' The grand elementary principles of the gospel had a very strong hold on her understanding and her heart. The finished work of Calvary was the rock on which she rested her whole immortal hope, and the truth concerning it was the uniform spring of peaceful feeling and holy motive. Of the freeness of grace to the chief of sinners, her views were singularly clear and simple, and it was not only an article in her creed, but a deep practical persuasion, that the difference between the brightest and best of saints, and 'the vilest wretch who breathes the air,' is and must be the fruit of mere sovereign mercy. This, indeed, was one of her favourite themes. Feeling herself 'a debtor to mercy alone,' she was wont to speak of it with a warmth and emphasis which indicated that it was in her a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

"I remember some seasons, while she was connected with my congregation, during which she was sore vexed by the keen winds of spiritual trial. But even at such times I was greatly struck with the simplicity of her reliance on the testimony of God, just because the testimony was His. Her language was of this sort: 'There is nothing for the like of me but casting myself on the Saviour as I am—a lost sinner, nothing but a sinner; I wonder He admits me into His presence, and I wonder how I can venture ; but then He has promised to take my burden, and to give me rest. Everything in Jesus suits my case; all the blessings of His salvation are meantfor such as I am; who else could make use of them? Why not for me?' Thus she found that lost peace must be recovered and preserved precisely as it was obtained at first, the Christian living all along as he began to live, 'by the faith of the Son of God,' and 'holding the beginning of his confidence steadfast unto the end.'

"Many a time have I felt quickened by hearing her speak as she did of Jesus, as a Friend who was not only believed to be faithful, but who had been tried, and found to be so; of prayer, as becoming day by day dearer to her, from its having so often given vent and brought relief to her anxieties; and of meditation on the Word, as more and more inviting in proportion as she experienced its virtue to bear her on its wings above sublunary vexations. 'The Sabbath' was truly her 'delight,' and she 'honoured it' by the liveliest attachment to all its ordinances. Whoever might be the preacher, those were her favourite sermons that had most of Christ in them; and, as I marked her expressive countenance while listening to the Glad Tidings, it seemed to say more plainly than any language could, 'This word is found of me, and I am eating it; and it is the joy and rejoicing of my heart.' It was because her piety was thus 'planted by the rivers of waters,' and fed by secret springs, that its leaf remained so green. One of the best proofs of her joy in her religion being the joy of the Lord, was, that it had for its companion genuine Humility. The standard by which she formed her estimate of herself was neither the attainments nor the commendations of others, but the law and the love of Jesus; she preferred speaking of Him, the Adorable Object in whom she confided, rather than of her own confidence; and when on fit occasions she did 'give a reason of the hope' she so happily enjoyed, it was eminently 'with meekness and fear.'"

"I frequently admired her jealous avoidance of whatever was likely to obstruct her growth in grace, such as books of a light and trifling character, worldly amusements, or association with persons who held their profession in a formal or worldly spirit. She had a great fear of occupying debateable or doubtful ground where the life of her soul might be exposed to counteracting influences; and in judging of what was uncongenial or inexpedient, she was not guided by the opinions of others, so much as by her own experience. If anything had been found prejudicial to her,that was reason enough for shunning it, even though other Christian friends might think it harmless."

"She justly attached great importance to active usefulness as a means of grace. The kindness of her manner endeared her much as a Sabbathschool Teacher, and a Visitor in the home of poverty and in the chamber of affliction. Her zeal in doing good was real pleasure, the vital glow and energy of one who 'loved much.' She felt that there was absolutely one great object to be lived for—to get closer and closer to the Saviour's pierced side, that thence she might tell out the story of His love, and that thither she might draw poor souls that were straying far from their rest. I believe she has met in the Happy Land with some whose harps are struck with a stronger hand in the praise of their Redeeming God, for the instructions of her lips, the consistency of her example, and the importunity of her prayers."

"Deeply do I feel, along with you, my dear brother, that 'we can ill spare from our congregations such praying ones as she.' May the Lord raise us up many more! Often has He made the temporal death of one, the spiritual life of others. I trust the blessed Truth she used to press with all the earnestness of living affection on those she sought to win, shall still come back on their memories and their hearts with all the melting accompaniments of the grave and eternity, that there may be joy in heaven over souls brought back to God and of that joy she herself will be one of the happy partakers."

"While writing these slight and hasty hints, I have felt as if I heard her interrupting me, and saying, 'Speak not of me, speak of Jesus.' But have I not been speaking of Jesus, when commemorating some of the fruits of His abounding grace, which gave her all she had, and made her all she was? To grace be all the glory!—I am, my dear brother, yours very cordially, JAMES ROBERTSON."

Yes, surely it is the "grace of God" that her life shews forth so marvellously; it is of the glory of Christ that it so fully speaks; it is to the riches of His love that it so largely testifies. And it is God, not man, that this book is meant to exalt. The biographer may have come short in many things which he set out with aiming at; for it is not easy so to sketch a life as that God shall be fully seen in all its features, and man as much hidden, as in the building of a new world, or the kindling of a new star. Yet he has striven to exhibit not man, but God; not a model of creature-excellence, but a specimen of divine workmanship. He has aimed at shewing, not the steps by which man makes himself religious, and the ease with which he does this; but the way in which the Holy Spirit recasts and re-moulds fallen humanity—the process by which He brings light out of darkness, the heavenly out of the earthly—the discipline by which He trains and educates a child for His kingdom. In an age when multitudes, with the Bible in their hands and Gethsemane before their eyes, are casting about for an easy religion, a smoother road to the New Jerusalem than the rugged path along which the Master has led the way; when many seem to think that by a proper admixture of high sentiment and devout aspiration, they may construct a religion for

themselves—a religion of sunshine, and balm, and azure—undarkened by shadows, and unmarred by storms; it is well to call attention to certain elements in religion, which by such dreamers are supposed to be symptoms of spiritual unhealthiness, indications of bodily unsoundness, if not of mental feebleness—elements of which the Psalms are full— elements of which the seventh chapter of the Romans is the expression;—the broken heart, the bitter tear, the cry from the depths, the unutterable groan, the desperate conflict with the flesh, and the still more desperate wrestling with the principalities and powers of hell.

If this Memorial has merely drawn the reader's eye to man, and made him love a character or admire a life, or weep over an early death, it has wholly failed. If it has not turned the eye to God, and fixed the admiration upon the glories of His Incarnate Son; if it has not laid bare the hollowness of the world, and the mighty fulness of the eternal kingdom, so as to lead men to desire the better country; if it has not quickened the languid, startled the sleeper, made the loiterer blush, and roused the saint to a swifter race and a higher flight—it has not effected its end. THE END

Footnotes

[1] That she was a novel-reader in these days will not surprise us. But I believe that, after her conversion, till the day of her death, she never opened a novel. It is worth while saying this, for the warning of the young. There is hardly a more subtle and deadly snare than novel reading. The love of the world, the idle sentimentalism, the vitiated taste, the disrelish for spiritual things which it produces, are enough (apart from everything immoral) to make such books objects of suspicion and dread.

[2] In the spirit in which Augustine recorded the sins of his youth, are these scenes recorded. "I am willing to remember my past impurities," says he, "and the carnal corruptions of my soul, not that I may love them, but that I may love thee, O my God. From the love of thy love I do it, recollecting my most evil ways, in the bitterness of memory, that thou mayest become more sweet to me. Oh! sweetness that disappointest not, sweetness blessed and abiding, gathering me together from the dispersion in which I had been rent asunder, atom by atom! While averse from thee only, I lost myself amid a thousand vanities."

[3] Perhaps some reader may remember Augustine's striking expression as to God "pursuing his fugitives"— immingus dorso fugitivorum tuomm (Conf. iv. 4). In another place he thus speaks of the time immediately before his conversion:—

"I became more wretched, and thou nearer.

Already was thy right hand present, about to pluck me from the mire and to wash me; yet I knew it not" (vi. 16). And elsewhere he speaks of "deafening himself to the voice of God with the clanking of his chains."

[4] It may perhaps interest the reader to learn a little of the state of spiritual matters at the time when M____ came amongst us. The following reminiscences are from the letter of a dear friend:—"I have been looking over my gleanings at these times, and I find that, during those weeks in the summer of 1841, when God's Spirit first moved on the darkness of our friend's Heart, our minister was, in his Sabbath ministrations, unfolding a full salvation, and shewing that immediate

peace would follow its acceptance. The following brief notes occur in my scrap-book: 'God has provided the Lamb, he has set up the altar, there is nothing more needed than what was done 1800 years ago; furnish yourself with what God has done. It is all you need, sinner. The common fooling is, that God requires something more than what Christ has done, some conciliatory gift to be laid upon his altar, as if God was to be bribed by us...The message of the Gospel proceeds on the fact that every man is under the infinite displeasure of the infinite God…God says, 'meet me at the cross! All, this is the mercy-seat where God and the sinner meet!'…'No holiness without forgiveness.' I find also that we had a peculiarly refreshing and prayerful season about that time. Souls were brought to peace ill believing, and some awakened, besides God's people being quickened. One of the latter said to me on one of the days of our May Communion—'I am like Abraham when God called him, he went he knew not whither, never dreaming of the bliss awaiting him in God's service;' and again, 'This joy is not like the world's joy, for it heals the heart, and then it will be for ever.' I remember too the weeping of one now away, and the energy with which he spoke in the church-porch, of the effect of the Word upon his soul—'I never felt before the truth come with such power as that has done.' A Christian woman told me some years after, that she was brought to Christ under a lecture on the healing of the noble man's son, in which the same power, ability, and willingness of Christ to meet the need of those who come to him, were set forth; Go thy way, thy son liveth;—the simple word of Jesus, she said, was just to be believed, and she went on her way rejoicing."

[5] It may interest the reader to have some reminiscences of the season when M____ found peace. The friend formerly quoted thus proceeds:— "On the 20th of June, the 5th chapter of John was begun. Jesus was set before us as the healer, we saw the fulness of his character as the healer, his tenderness as well as his skill. Glimpses of the manhood of our Lord— Jesus went up to the feast: what feasts must there have been to his holy, human soul! what pure worship, what fellowship with the Father! I remember dear M____ dwelling with great delight on the steps of Jesus; she delighted in the person of the Lord, and seemed to realise his minutest actions as recorded in the Word. I think she began at an early stage of her experience, even when her peace fluctuated much, to be attracted by the personof the Lord. Her anxiety was that she might come to Jesus himself;not merely that she might understand this or that doctrine about Jesus. In June 27, on John 5:10-15, we were led to see the opposition to Jesus and his work: what saints are to expect from the world; when Christ does his mighty works in a town, or congregation, or family, what opposition! Our dear friend knew something of this, and learned meekness under it. You will remember her earnest longings after humility when this cross came. July 5.—John 5:17-19. We saw Jesus as Emmanuel, the Son, the Sent One, the centre of all beauty, divine and human, of all glory, created and uncreated, and we were glad when it was said to us, 'hear ye him.' July 11.—John 5:20-21. The Father's love to the Son;—the bearing of this love on us and our interests; it is because of this love of the Father to the Son that the sinner has hope; the more we realise this truth, the more firm we shall feel the ground of our acceptance. What a well of life this subject was to many! Dear M____ luxuriated in such truths. July 18.—John 5:24. It is in hearing the word of Jesus that we are blest; his words contain and convey the blessing; we get it by becoming listeners to him; it is not a future merely, but a present life he gives. July 25.— Communion Sabbath. We had meetings every night in the church this week, Mr. Cousin and Mr. John Bonar assisting. Sabbath evening. Mr. J. B.'s text—'Lay hold on eternal life;' people much quickened. One man could not sleep after it...Our dear friend M____ came to me for a day (July 27), the

greatest part of which was spent in reading the Word. I remember the eagerness with which she asked questions, and her thirst to be acquainted with Christ. She had occasional joy, but not steady peace at this time."

[6] From this "little paper" we extract a few sentences:—"My beloved sister, will you accept as a present from me the accompanying volume? It is the best of books, for it is able to make you wise unto salvation. Oh! pray to God that it may do so. Read often in His holy book, and read with prayer...Pray that he may teach you to love him…Do not despond, and say you cannot love him, that you have no feeling. Pray for feeling. Ask him to teach you to love him and his ways, better than all the world, and he will teach you...He longs for you to come to him, that he may bless you by giving you himself...He wants to make us happy with his love even here; and then, when we leave this life, where shall we be if we have believed in his name? In heaven with Himself. We shall see him face to face, we shall see him as he is. Is not the thought of living for ever with Jesus in heaven, enough to make us give up this poor, perishing world?…One thing is needful; oh! choose that good part, and it shall not be taken from you. And, dearest, when we pray for ourselves, do not let us forget to pray for others. Let us pray that, as we are now a family on earth, we may be found, at the last day, a family in heaven...That God may enable you to overcome, is the earnest prayer of your most affectionate sister, M____ .—

August 20, 1841.

[7] Shortly after conversion, an old minister thus describes his feelings— "I went about the fields singing songs of triumph over Satan."

[8] The Rev. James B. Hay, afterwards minister of the Free Church at North Berwick, is the person here alluded to. He was born at Kelso, and his soul was early drawn to seek after God. His zeal as a Sabbath-school teacher was singularly fresh and fervent. Rising often at four o'clock on a Sabbath morning, he would continue in prayer for his class for hours together. The interest which he took in the welfare of each was unwearied. He met with them, he visited them, he prayed with them, he wrote to them, he kept his eye and heart upon them in after years. Stirred up by the example of his friend Mr. A. Murray (whose labours the Lord has so owned in the South Sea Islands), he resolved to dedicate himself to the missionary cause, and left Kelso to carry on his studies. He did so, and while studying in Edinburgh, he manifested the same fervour of spirit and the same zeal for God as in his earlier years. He was afterwards led to change his mind as to the missionary field, and in the year 1844 was settled at North Berwick. His health soon broke down, and within a year after his settlement he died, resting on his longknown, well-loved Lord. In the month of September 1842, he was on a visit to Dundee, and thus writes to M____ and her sister:—"Having much to tell you of what the Lord has done and is doing in this town, I shall soon pay you a visit, and join with you in giving thanks to the Lord, your Lord and my Lord, for his gracious doings. There are three weekly meetings held within the walls of L____ house (where he was staying), at which I have often to officiate; and never did I witness such interesting scenes. The number on Sabbath nights, within the last two months, has increased from sixty or seventy to nearly two hundred. Most of them are mill girls, and many of them have truly become members of the family of God…I hope you are both prospering in soul, and realising yourselves not inhabitants of earth, but heirs of glory."

[9] This seems to have been the mere feeling of an oversensitive nature, wrought upon by Satan to distract and perplex her. It is evident, from every page of her correspondence, that she did not overlook any of the persons of the Godhead. To think more of one person of the Godhead than of another at different times, is not to overlook or dishonour any; it is simply to net according to the constitution of our finite natures.

[10] This gladness at another's joy, so often given vent to in these letter, reminds one of the apostle's feeling: "We are glad, when (or although) we are weak, and (that) ye are strong; and this also we wish, even your perfection" (2 Corinthians 13:9).

[11] As darkness has its root in sin and unbelief, it cannot be God's will; that we should remain in it; and we know who has said, "I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness."

[12] M____ generally went to St Luke's in Edinburgh, at Communion seasons. Not relishing the kind of teaching that she got nearer home, she tried other places, and at last resolved to go to Musselburgh, to attend the ministry of Mr. Robertson, the excellent and devoted minister of the United Presbyterian Church, then at that town, now at Newington.

[13] This mode of decoying the unwilling or the unwary is so common, that one wonders how any can be deceived by it. "Oh, it is just a small family party—a harmless dance among the young people!" Thus the world lays its snares! And, not seldom, those who call themselves Christians are found doing the same thing, and using the same argument! They want to enjoy as much of the world as will not damage their reputation for being Christians. They will not dance quite so long as the world dances; they will not crowd so many into their party as the world does; and thus they will enjoy the world, and yet pass for Christians! Ah! the cunning and the cowardice, to which half-hearted discipleship has to resort! Afraid to be worldlings, yet more afraid to be Christians! There are none who do Satan's work so effectually as these. How many such are there in the "religious world!"

[14] "Oh, how fully am I persuaded that a line of praises is worth a leaf of prayer; and an hour of praises is worth a day of fasting and mourning! Yet there is room enough for both."— Letter ofJohn Livingstone.

[15] The Communion here referred to was in February. But Mr. M'Cheyne, whose visit is anticipated in the above passage, was not with us. He was called away by the Church to visit a large district in the north of Scotland. It may interest some to see his letter telling me of this: "My dear Horace, it grieves me, as much as it can grieve you, to be absent from your Communion; yet I do not see how it can be otherwise. We have now fixed to start, God willing, on Monday next, 6th February. We have twenty-three parishes, and I fear we can get no extra labourers. I have no hope of being home till Saturday the 25th, the day before your Communion. I expect reproach and contempt, if not broken bones: but the King of Zion beckons, and I feel I ought to obey, without fear or murmur. Our Communion is on the third Sabbath of April. I am glad that you reckon on it. I trust God will make up to us both for my being kept from you. Remember me much in prayer, and believe me ever yours, till Jesus come. January 31, 1843. ROBERT MURRAY M'CHEYNE.

[16] This was a basket from the proceeds of which it was hoped that something might be got for the cause of God.

[17] In a diary of the seventeenth century, there is a statement which may illustrate this: "I have been much hindered from duty by studying the manner of duty, rather than the substance of it; by studying faith in prayer rather than prayer in faith."

[18] The answer to this difficulty is just that these are two parts of the same thing; our conscience rests on the work of Christ, and is pacified; our heart rests on the person of Christ, and is comforted and gladdened.

[19] Daily Texts, in Tract Society's Almanac.

[20] So also thought John Owen, who, in his treatise on Communion with God, thus wrote:—"A true saving knowledge of sin is to be had only in the Lord Christ; in him may we see the desert of our iniquities and their pollution: neither is there any wholesome view of these but in Christ."

[21] Old Mr Powel, in the seventeenth century, seems to have been troubled with this kind of preaching. He writes thus:— "Satan would keep souls from believing by persuading them that they are not yet qualified and sufficiently fitted for Christ, and that they have not seen themselves absolutely lost, nor so much burdened with sin as they should. And it is to be feared, that Satan makes use of many of God's ministers, as the old prophet mentioned (1 Kings 13:11, &c.), to keep off, and drive away souls from Christ, under the notion of preaching peremptory doctrine for Chrit, and so seeking to fit men for Him, as some have preached many months together this doctrine, before they would preach Christ at all; whereas their commission, and the example of Christ and his disciples, was, to preach glad tidings first."

[22] The whole of this passage is worth quoting:—"I saw that those whom they made their prey were ordinarily old, jaded professors, that never found the satisfying sweetness of their own religion, and in time wearying of it, and not able to resist the strong temptation of spiritual enemies, and wanting rest in Christ because never truly united to Him, have withered, and, like the unclean spirit, seeking rest and finding none, have here at last stumbled."

[23] How sad it is—ay, worse than sad—that so many of our Sabbathschool teachers lose sight of these things! Is not the teaching of an unprepared teacher positively injurious, even though sound and good? It is heartless in itself and deadening to the children. It is only by much preparation, specially in the way of prayer, that we shall reach the conscience. It is not difficult to touch the feelings or the fancy; but the conscience is not so easily pierced. "This kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting."

[24] She wrote several other little pieces, some of which were published in a small 32mo, entitled, Christ andthe Christian. We may mention here also, that she wrote a little memoir of a child whom she used to visit in Kelso. It was called Little Mary, the HappyChild. This was in 1846.

[25] Through M.'s unwearied endeavours, this Mrs P____ was brought to the knowledge of the Lord, and, after a few years of consistent walking, fell asleep in Jesus about six months ago.

[26] The reader will perhaps call to mind the contrast between this scene and that of the last night of December 1836, when the gaieties of the ballroom closed the one year and ushered in the next.—See page 13.

[27] The following letter to a friend will furnish a specimen of the faithful, solemn way in which she dealt with those who were still afar off. "You say you sigh for works and morality, but that all that you hear is about faith. Here are God's own words—'Without faith it is impossible to please God.' And again, it is written—'A man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.' All our works till we are united by a living faith to Jesus are abominable in the sight of God. How can creatures who are altogether sinful and depraved do anything pleasing to a holy God? We must first come to Jesus and have all our sins pardoned on accountof what Hehas done, and then the love of Christ will constrain us to do what is pleasing in his sight. The believer works because he is forgiven, not that he may be forgiven. You say that a doctrine like this must have a dangerous tendency. No, dear ____, believe me, no; rather believe God who cannot lie; this doctrine is the only one that will make a sinner holy. What does God say on this very subject? Paul writes to the Romans, 'Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein?' Do you think that any sinner going to Jesus and receiving a full free pardon for all his sins simply by believing on His name—do you think a pardoned sinner, beaming with gratitude and love to Him who has so graciously blotted out in His own precious blood all iniquities, could continue to live in sin? No, it is impossible; God forbid. He cannot do the abominable thing which God hates; he hates sin, because God hates it, and because it was his sins that nailed Jesus to the cross—and he loves holiness, because God loves it, and because by becoming holy he becomes more like that God who has done so much for him. We are always wanting to do something that we may be saved, but Jesus tells us that He has already done everything. When He was expiring on the cross, He exclaimed, 'It is finis hed.' He has done all the work, and there is now nothing for us to do but to believe in Him, and then we shall be saved—then we are saved. 'He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life.' 'Look unto me and be ye saved.' Where is there room for works there? Dear ____, a look is sufficient, a look will save you. Oh! if you would only look at Jesus once, you would never look away again, and by looking to Him you will grow like Him. Go to God pleading simply the merits of His beloved Son, and be sure He will not cast you out. 'Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out.' There is no presumption in going to God and pleading the finished work of Jesus as your only ground of acceptance with Him; it is presumption to go pleading anything else. We can never merit heaven by our own works; we deserve nothing but wrath. 'The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.' 'By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.' Now, dear ____, my love to your precious never-dying soul is my only reason for writing you all this. Do not think that I wish to teach you; no, I am too ignorant to pretend to teach any one. I know nothing myself, so that I cannot teach others; but I know this, and you know it too, that I love you very much, and therefore I long for you to be born again.

[28] She means Mr. Robertson of Musselburgh, in whose ministry she so much delighted.

[29] "How precious," says Mrs. Stevens, "are the moments when God and His child are at perfect agreement on the question of what is most to the soul's enrichment; when the Divine liberality, which waits to be gracious, is answered by the earnest devotion which longs to be holy; and spiritual treasures are, in consequence, given and received! This condition is one of the highest dignity and enjoyment that belongs to the immortal soul."

[30] She felt what an old minister sets down in his diary as his experience. Abstraction and solitude have done me much good, God hath oftentimes visited me in a solitary wilderness.

[31] For a good many years past, there has been a "Union for Prayer" among Christians, for several days together, towards the end or beginning of each year. These M____ prized much. They were not superstitious observances or Popish forms to her, whatever some may affirm respecting them. She saw nothing more of superstition in the practice of those who cannot (by distance) meet together m the body, agreeing to meet in spirit at certain times, than in the practice of those who can come together, having prayer-meetings at a certain hour.

[32] See Psalms 62:1—"Truly my soul is SILENT for God."

{Margin)

Works, vol. 18 p. 283. See other places also, for he frequently refers to the topic, maintaining that our Lord meant to affirm that each heir of the kingdom "hath his angel," yet that they are not ministers or servants of the godly, "but ministers of God, for the godly," a distinction which we often overlook when quoting Hebrews 1:14. He shews also, that, as being holy beings, and beings who have such love to us, they ought to be loved "with a great and holy love," so that we ought to "long for their company."—Vol. 5. Pp. 235-245.

She thus writes in her diary—" Thursday,25 June 1846.—The Rev. T. was inducted this day pastor of the Free Church here. May the Lord bless him, and make him a blessing! Felt very much drawn to him; I cannot tell how, as I have never heard him; but I take this as a token, that he is a gift from Christ to us; and if so, I mustlove him. Felt the presence of the Master much during the ordinance. It was very solemn. I feel as if this were really the beginning of good days to P____."

[34] Perhaps these words may call to mind a passage of Augustine— "Thou art in the heart of those that confess to Thee, and cast themselves upon Thee, and weep in Thy bosom, after all their rugged ways. Then dost Thou gently wipe away their tears, and they weep the more, and joy in weeping" (Confessions, B. v. ch. 2. Sect. 2)

Chapter 15

02.1.00. Bible Thoughts & Themes

BIBLE THOUGHTS & THEMES by Horatius Bonar Volume 1. The Old Testament Each chapter is short (some 4 pages), but powerful and insightful.

They are intended to be used as a DAILY DEVOTIONAL.

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02.1.01. The Sin, the Sinner, and the Sentence

BIBLE THOUGHTS & THEMES by Horatius Bonar THE SIN, THE SINNER, AND THE SENTENCE

Genesis 3:1-24

Genesis 1:1-31 and Genesis 2:1-25 gave us creation’s perfection. Like a newly finished statue, there it stands. The chisel has given its last touch. The sculptor is satisfied; pronounces it very good, and rests. All is fair. Earth is like heaven. But now the descent begins. The steps are no longer upward, but downward. Creaturehood cannot stand alone. The moment that it is left to itself if totters, it falls. It must be joined to the Creator before it can stand. The fall is the first step towards this everlasting union, in virtue of which creation is to become infallible.

I. The TEMPTER. Outwardly the serpent, inwardly the devil; hence called "the old serpent;" hence the Apostle says, "as the serpent beguiled Eve," and "lest Satan should get advantage over us." This is the first demoniacal possession. Afterwards we read that the devils entered the herd; that Satan entered Judas; that he filled the heart of Ananias. In speaking to man he must use some fleshly form. Thus by means of the serpent he communicates with man.

II. The TEMPTATION. The tempter makes use of the testing-tree, and points to it as a mark of restraint and tyranny. His object is to separate Adam and Eve from God; to produce the evil heart of unbelief, which would make them depart from the living God. For this end he suggests doubts on three points, (1.) As to God’s goodness– in prohibiting the tree.

(2.) His faithfulness– in fulfilling His threats.

(3.) His truthfulness– in deceiving them as to the real nature of the tree. Having got Eve to listen, he leads her on, and then flatly contradicts God. You shall not surely die.

III. The BAIT. (1.) Negative, you shall not die. (2.) Positive, you shall be as God, knowing good and evil. The first was to remove the dread of danger, the second to lead on. Knowledge! Knowledge like that of God! Intellectual ambition– this is man’s first snare, and it shall be his last. Worship of intellect and genius. Human supremacy in mind. Progress! Not in the knowledge of God Himself (Satan does not dare promise that); but of good and evil. Does not this imply that evil is in itself a strange attraction? To know evil man will do and dare as much as to know good. Evil is in his eyes an empire of boundless range, to whose utmost limits he sincerely would penetrate. Hence his love of the "sensational." The opening of the eye to see afar off, whether into space or time, or the substance of things, is an irresistible bait. For the obtaining of a wider range of vision, what will man not do?

IV. The SUCCESS. The tempter triumphs. Woman, "the weaker vessel," yields. She falls, and in falling, drags her husband down.

Three things win her over.

(1.) The tree is good for food. Why then not eat of it as of all the rest? Yet for this she had only Satan's word. But "the lust of the flesh" prevailed.

(2.) It is pleasant to the eyes; it looked goodly, and the lust of the eye prevailed.

(3.) It makes wise; it is the tree of knowledge. She needs to be wise, and she will not wait God's time, nor take it in God's way; but in her own, or rather the devil's. Wisdom is the devil's bait; wisdom apart from the God only wise– apart from Him who is the wisdom of God. What harm is there in wisdom, says he still; and so with this sophistry he leads men into knowledge where God is not; into literature where God is not, and where Christ is unknown.

V. The SHAME. We are unfit to be seen, is the first feeling that arises after the sin; unfit to be seen by any one, even by one another; unfit for the sun to shine upon. A covering or darkness is their only refuge. Now they know what nakedness is. The virus of the forbidden tree has shot through them, and the sense of disobedience clouds their conscience; they now for the first time know the distinction between their lovely and unlovely parts– the clean and the unclean. They take the nearest and the broadest leaf, and twist it over them. Here it is simply covering, in after days it became ornament as well.

VI. The DREAD. How shall we look on God, or God look on us? God comes down– they flee, as far off as possible, into the covert of the trees. Their fig-leaves were more for themselves, this is for God. They dare not face Him. They dread His anger. O folly! To hide from God! Yet man has always done so; his doing deeds in darkness or when alone, which he would not do in the light or before the others, is the same feeling as here.

VII. The TRIAL. God summons them. They come forth and stand at His bar. He questions them, and brings out their whole guilt step by step. They blame each other, they blame God, they blame the serpent. But they sullenly admit the deed. Poor excuses! What can palliate sin? What will God accept as palliation? Guilty on their own admission; this is the verdict.

VIII. The SENTENCE. Each of the guilty parties receives judgment.

(1.) The Serpent. As the instrument he is cursed, and as the representative of the old serpent. A greater than the serpent is here. In this curse on the serpent, God reveals His love to the sinning race, and tells that instead of cursing the victim, as no doubt Satan expected, he means to take his part against Satan– to raise up a deliverer, the Son of the woman, who, though not without wounds, will destroy man's enemy. The man with the bruised heel is to be the bruiser of the serpent's head.

(2.) The Woman. No curse, but still a chastisement, a memorial of her sin; as the first in sin she is to be in subjection, and though through child-bearing she is to be the source of blessing, yet this very thing shall be in sorrow, to remind her of her sin.

(3.) The Man. No curse on himself, but on the ground for his sake. Fruitfulness in evil is the doom of the soil; sorrow and death, toil and sweat is the doom of man. Yet these after all are earthly. They do not separate from the love of God.

IX. THE MAN'S FAITH. He names his wife according to the promise; mother of the living, not of the dead mother of him who is the living one, the resurrection and the life. Adam believed God,

and was justified; he accepted God’s testimony to the coming Messiah as the living One, though born of her who had brought in death, and he became partaker of life eternal.

X. GOD’S CLOTHING FOR MAN. Coats of skins; those of the slain sacrifices, provided by God himself, better and more durable than the fig-leaves; types of heavenly clothing, and pre-intimations of the source from which that clothing was to come– of the materials of which that clothing was to be composed, that is, the life and death of the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. This was what the Lord meant when he said, "Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him," and what Paul meant when he said, "Put you on the Lord Jesus Christ." Yes; the Son of God has come to clothe us! He has provided the garments, and He puts them on. They are fair and goodly; washed white in His own blood; glorious as the sun. He asks us to take them; no, He entreats us to allow Him to put them upon us." Buy of me white clothing, that you may be clothed, and that the shame of your nakedness do not appear" (Revelation 3:18).

02.1.02. Man's Fig-Leaves

BIBLE THOUGHTS & THEMES by Horatius Bonar MAN'S FIG-LEAVES "They sewed fig-leaves together, and made themselves aprons." – Genesis 3:7

They are alone, yet they are ashamed. They are in Paradise, yet they are ashamed. It is conscience that is making them blush. It not only makes cowards of them, but it works shame and confusion of face. They are ashamed of themselves; of their nakedness; of their recent doings. They cannot look one another in the face after their disobedience and recriminations against one another. They cannot look up to God now. Possibly too they shrink from being in view of the serpent who beguiled them. The feeling of happy innocence is gone. They must be covered. This is their feeling, the dictate of conscience. The eye must not see them, either of God or man. The light must not shine on them; the eye of the sun must not look on them; and the fair flowers and trees of Paradise must not see their shame. They love darkness rather than light. Covering is what they seek– covering from every eye. Thus, shame and guilt are inseparable. "I must be covered," is the sinner's first feeling– from the eye of God and man, even from my own. They cannot look on me, nor I on them! Thus far they are right. But now they go wrong. Their mistake was twofold:

(1.) That they could cover themselves;

(2.) that they can be covered with materials from vegetable nature. Let us look at these.

I. Man thinks he can cover himself. He knows not the greatness of the evil; he does not calculate on the penetration of the all-seeing eye. He sets to work and makes himself a covering, and he says this will do. What sin is, or what the sinner needs, or what God requires, he has no idea of. Each sinner has his own way of covering himself; he weaves his own web, whatever may be the substance of which it is composed. He wishes to be his own coverer, the maker of his own clothing. He thinks he can do it himself. He has no idea that it is utterly beyond his power. He trusts to the skill of his own hands to provide the dress that shall hide his shame from the eye of God and man. He thinks it an easy thing to deal with shame, and fear, and conviction, and conscience. He will not believe that these can only be dealt with by God. This is the last thing that he will admit. He will try a thousand plans before accepting this. He will make and try on many kinds or sets of clothing before betaking himself to that which God has made. The unbelieving man's whole religious life is a series of plans and efforts for stitching a clothing for himself, with which to appear before God and before men; no, with which he hopes to appear before the judgment-seat. It is with this manmade, this self-made clothing, this earth-made, or priest-made, or church-made religion, that he robes himself; with this he soothes conscience; with this he quiets fear; with this he removes the feeling of guilty shame. He can do all that is needful himself, or at the most with a little help from God.

II. Man thinks he can cover himself with leaves. He supposes that what will hide his shame from his own eye will hide it from God; that even such a frail covering as the foliage of the fig-tree will do. He has no thought of anything beyond this. The fig-leaf will do, he thinks. What more do I

need? But he is mistaken; the fig-leaf will not do, broad and green as it may be. But why will it not do?

(1.) It is man's device, not God's. That which covers sin, and renders the sinner fit to draw near, must be of God, not of man. God only has the right, God only can, prescribe to man how he is to draw near. What then is ritualism but a religion of fig-leaves?

(2.) It is simply for the body, not the soul. It does not relieve the conscience, or satisfy the guilty spirit, or cover the whole man. It is utterly insufficient. It could not remove one fear, or quiet one pang of remorse, or make the man feel tranquil in the presence of God.

(3.) It is composed of life, not of death. That which is to cover man's sin, and deliver him from the sense of shame, must be something which has had the life taken out of it. The green fig-leaf will not do. It is no better than Cain's sacrifice– the fruit of the ground. The only thing that can relieve the sinner from guilt and shame is atonement; the only atonement is by blood; for without shedding of blood is no remission; and therefore the only sufficient covering must be one connected with atonement, one which represents death, one which tells of the payment of the righteous penalty and the removal of the righteous condemnation. The fig-leaf spoke of life, not of death; of the blessing, not of the curse. It had nothing in it which told of propitiation or substitution; nothing which spoke of God's anger turned away by means of the endurance of that anger by another. The truths here taught us for ourselves are not a few. They are of profound importance.

(1.) Man's devices for covering sin are useless. They may be easy or difficult– cheap or costly– still they are vain. They profit nothing. The covering is narrower than a man can wrap himself in. These devices are innumerable. Good, deeds, long prayers, fervent feelings, self-mortifications and penances; church-connection, rites, ceremonies, religious performances– such are man's ways for approaching God, his coverings for a sinful soul. They are all fig-leaves!

(2.) Man's devices all turn upon something which he himself has to do, not on what God has done. Man misses the main point of importance. This was not wonderful in Adam, to whom nothing had been revealed; but it is amazing in us now, when God has announced that he has done all– that "it is finished!"

(3.) Man's devices assume that God is such an one as himself. He can conceal himself from his fellow man; therefore he thinks he can cover himself, so that God shall not see him. That which conceals him from a human eye, he supposes will conceal him from a divine.

(4.) Man's devices all trifle with sin. They do not fathom its depths of malignity in God's sight. They assume that it will be easily forgiven and forgotten. They overlook its evil, its hatefulness, its eternal desert of woe. What are fig-leaves as a protection against the wrath of God or the flames of hell!

02.1.03. The Way of Cain

BIBLE THOUGHTS & THEMES by Horatius Bonar THE WAY OF CAIN "And Cain went out from the presence of the Lord." – Genesis 4:16

"Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And why slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous." – 1 John 3:12

"Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core."– Jude 1:11 As "the way of Cain" is spoken of by the apostle Jude, as specially the way of the last days, let us inquire what it was. It was evil, not good. He is an open and defiant sinner; and in him sin takes its full swing. He is the first child of the fall, and the offspring of the fallen; he is no common transgressor; he runs no ordinary career of wickedness; he rushes to the extremity of evil. He is given as a beacon, yet as a true specimen of man, of the human heart even in the most favorable circumstances. He came into the world, not like Adam, full-grown, but a child, and therefore with the least possible amount of evil. He is the child of believing parents; for Adam showed his faith by calling his wife, and Eve showed hers by the way in which she received her first-born. He had a most godly brother, and was one of a pious household; brought up within sight of Paradise, and from childhood taught the knowledge of the true God, and the woman's seed.

He was exposed to no outward temptation; he had no companion in sin; he walked the broad way alone. He was warned, no doubt, against the serpent and his seed. He was more than once spoken to directly by God. He had every possible advantage, in the absence of evil and the presence of good. Much might have been expected from him; yet he turns his back on God, on Paradise, on the altar, on the sacrifice, on all that is good and blessed. But let us see more specially what the apostle calls "the way of Cain."

I. It is the way of UNBELIEF. Cain is the first specimen of an unbelieving man. His parents were sinners, but they believed. His brother was a sinner, but he believed. Cain is not an atheist, nor an altogether irreligious man. He owns a God, and brings his fruits to the altar. But he brings no lamb, no blood, nothing that speaks of death. He comes with no confession, no cry for mercy. He sees no need of the woman's seed, no danger from the serpent; no preciousness, and perhaps no truth, in the promise of the 28 serpent's crushed head or Messiah's bruised heel. He takes Satan's side against God, not God's against Satan; for all unbelief is a siding with Satan against God. God is not to him the God of grace, nor the woman's seed the Savior of the lost. He has a religion, but it is self-made, a human religion, something of his own; without Christ, or blood, or pardon. The love of God is to him mere indifference to sin. Rejection of God's religion, and of His Messiah– this is "the way of Cain."

II. It is the way of APOSTASY. He turns his back on God, and will have none of Him. He is not like one of our dark heathen, ignorant of the true God. He knows Jehovah, and has heard His voice; but he turns away. He is an apostate (the first apostate) from the religion of his father; a scorner of

the Messiah; he needs a Messiah of his own– "a Christ that is to be"; not God's Christ, but man's. From what small beginnings apostasy springs.

III. It is the way of WORLDLINESS. Having forsaken his father's God, he makes a god to himself; that god is the world. He goes far from Paradise, builds a city, becomes a thorough man of the world; becomes the father of the inventors of all curious instruments, leads the ever-swelling crowd in its race of worldliness and vanity– with the cry, Onward, onward; progress, progress. They eat and drink, marry, and are given in marriage. All about Cain is of this present evil world. In our age what a spirit of worldliness is abroad; often not open wickedness, but simply worldliness, so absorbing the soul as to draw it quite down from the region of "the world to come."

IV. It is the way of HATRED. He begins with envy of his brother; goes on to hatred; ends in murder. He is specially jealous of his brother's having found favor with God. Yes, strange, though he would have none of God for himself, he cannot bear that his brother should have it. Not the love of man or woman, but of God is the cause of the first jealousy and the first murder. He hates God, and all the more for loving his brother. He hates Abel, and all the more for being loved of God. He cannot lay hands on God, as he sincerely would do, but he lays hands on His favorite, and so takes his revenge. Yes, the way of Cain is the way of envy, jealousy, hatred, murder!

V. The way of GOD-DEFIANCE. He dissembles; he wipes his bloody weapon and his bloody hands, saying, What have I done? He lies; he pretends; he would hide his doings from God. He has beguiled his brother into a lonely field and slain him, thinking that none would rescue, and none see. He acts as the liar and the hypocrite in the very presence of God. The way of Cain is the way of hypocrisy, falsehood, and defiance of God. God asks him of his brother; his answer is not only a lie, but a brazen-faced piece of impiety: "Am I my brother's keeper?" Thus he mocks God; utters the language of irreverence and defiance:– "He is your favorite, why do you not keep him? I never pretended to keep him." Here mingled fear, shame, audacity, defiance are manifested. He would sincerely deny the deed, but dares not. He trembles, and would sincerely conceal it. He puts on a defiant air and attitude, as if to brave it out before the all-seeing One! Such is the way of Cain!

MARK HIS DOOM.

1. DESPAIR. No cry for mercy, but merely, My punishment is greater than I can bear. So is it in other ages. The sinner's despair of mercy, or complaint against God for making his punishment so heavy, is the repetition of Cain's offence and his doom. Why should a sinner despair on this side of hell? There is forgiveness to the uttermost; grace reaching far beyond the extremity of human guilt.

2. BANISHMENT FROM GOD. He goes out from the presence of God, as if he could no longer bear that. He must away from Paradise, the birthplace of the race, the old seat of worship. But what is this to the eternal banishment? Cain has no rest, moving to and fro without hope or aim, a fugitive and vagabond, seeking rest, finding none. Sad curse! yet nothing to the eternal wandering!

3. DISAPPOINTMENT. He himself was his mother's disappointment, for she thought she had gotten the man-child. So is he a disappointment to himself. From first to last we see in him a disappointed man, trying everything, succeeding in nothing; building cities, roaming from place to place, to soothe his conscience, and fill up his heart's void. But in vain!

4. FRUITLESS WORLDLINESS. He is the heir of a barren world; for the whole world is his. He is possessor of a soil made unfruitful by a brother’s blood; tilling and sowing, yet not reaping. A weary man, toiling for that which is not bread; trying to wring water out of the world’s dry sands and broken cisterns. Such is the career of thousands. Fruitless worldliness. A life of vanity; a soul utterly void; a being wholly wasted.

02.1.04. The Vision From the Rocks

BIBLE THOUGHTS & THEMES by Horatius Bonar THE VISION FROM THE ROCKS "From the top of the rocks I see him." – Numbers 23:9

It was of Israel and Israel's glory that the false seer of Pethor spoke. He stood upon the top of Moab's barren rocks, and gazed down on the happy nation, whom God had delivered from Egypt, had brought through the desert, and was about to lead into the land flowing with milk and honey. It was with wonder, perhaps with envy too, that Balaam looked on the goodly tents beneath him. So, from this desert land and these desert hills, we gaze upon the church on her way to Canaan, about to be settled in the blessed land and holy city. And when we gaze, what do we see?

I. The ruggedness of the land of our present sojourn. It is the region of hostility as well as barrenness. This is not our rest. These dark mountains are not our home. We may pitch our tents among them for a season, or climb to the top to gaze around us. But they are no dwelling-place for us. We may look on Canaan from Pisgah, but Pisgah will not do for a home. Nebo lies hard by Pisgah, and Nebo tells of death, not of life, – mortality is here. This is the land, not of Israel, but of Moab; and its gods are Baal, not Jehovah. We could not abide here.

II. The glorious land. Afar off just now, but still visible, still beautiful. It is the Paradise of God; it is the new Jerusalem; the city which has foundations; the new' heavens and new earth, wherein dwells righteousness. The vision gives us a wondrous contrast between what we are and what we shall be, making us long for the day of entrance.

III. A people delivered from a present evil world. Once in bondage, now free; once groaning under oppression, now in the service of a heavenly Master, and heirs of the world to come; the red sea crossed, and now between them and their persecutors as an iron wall. Forgiven and redeemed; with their backs on Egypt, and their faces to Jerusalem. "A people saved by the Lord."

IV. A people sustained by Jehovah Himself. Theirs is the hidden manna, the water from the smitten rock. Jehovah feeds them; Jehovah gives them the living water. It is not man but God who cares for them. All that they have they owe to Him who has delivered them. They feed on angel's food; no, better, the very bread of God; on Him whose flesh is food indeed, whose blood is drink indeed.

V. A pilgrim band. They are strangers on the earth; this is not their home; here is not their city. Their loins are girt, and their staff is in their hand, and they are hastening onward. No sitting down; no taking ease; no folding of their hands. Forward, still forward, is their watchword! Theirs is a pilgrimage, not a pleasure-tour. They must not tarry.

VI. A people bought with a price. Their ransom has been blood; and they are not their own. Another life has gone for theirs. They have been plucked from death and the grave; because another has died and risen for them. To that other they belong, not to themselves, nor the flesh, nor the world.

VII. A people loved with an infinite love. The banner that is over them is love. The song they sing is love, "Unto Him that loved us." It is a love which passes knowledge; a love without bound or end; a love eternal and divine. All around and above them is love– the love of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. They are the monuments of love; the witnesses of love– free love, forgiving love, redeeming love; love beyond that which angels know– a love which constrains them, purifies them, urges them forward, gladdens all their way.

VIII. A people preparing to pass over to the goodly land. It is within sight; a few days, perhaps less, will bring them over. Their journey is nearly done. Their toil and weariness will soon be exchanged for rest and glory. And "now is our salvation nearer than when we believed." From the top of the rocks they can see Jerusalem, and Olivet, and Bethlehem; and get glimpses of the whole outstretched land. It is a land of plenty, where they shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; it is a land of light, where there is no night; a land of blessing, where there is no curse; a land of gladness, where sorrow comes not; a summer land, where the frosts of winter chill not; a calm sunny land, where storms vex not and shadows fall not; a land of health, where the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick; a land of peace, where the war-trumpet never sounds; a land of life, where corruption and mortality enter not, where death and the grave are unknown; a land of union, where broken ties are all re-knit, and broken hearts all healed. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes! (Revelation 7:17.) There Jesus reigns; there we reign with him.

Chapter 20

02.1.05. The Doom of the Double-Hearted

BIBLE THOUGHTS & THEMES by Horatius Bonar THE DOOM OF THE DOUBLE-HEARTED "Balaam also, the son of Bear, they slew with the sword." – Numbers 31:8

Balaam had taken the field against Israel– against a people whom he had pronounced blessed– whom he had pronounced invincible both by earth and hell. Yes; Balaam "the son of Beor,"– he, and not another of the name– he rushes on the bosses of the Almighty's buckler; he defies Israel and Israel's God! But he fails. He would sincerely have cursed Israel; but he could not. He counseled Moab to seduce Israel by temptation, and his device succeeded too well. He now fetches his last stroke. In vain He perishes ignobly. He is slain with the sword which he had defied. Such is the end of the backslider; of one who knew the truth but did it not; who once said, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his." It was certainly not the end he prayed for; yet it was the end to which his whole life had been tending. He reaped what he sowed, and in him "God was not mocked." He died as he lived, in fellowship with Moab, yet in heart persuaded that Israel was the beloved of the Lord, and that Jehovah was God. His life had been with Midian, and so was his death. His grave is with the unclean. He passes from earth with none to soothe his death-bed and close his eyes; none to lament for him or to build his monument.

Sad end of a life of halting and indecision, and resistance of the Spirit, and braving of conscience, and rejection of light, and wretched covetousness. He loved the wages of unrighteousness, and verily he had his reward. Let us see what he wanted and how he failed; how ambitious he was, yet what a life of utter failure and disappointment was his. He would sincerely have risen, but he sunk. He would sincerely have been rich, but he lost everything. What a wasted life! Yet the life of one who knew better things but did them not; who knew that the world was vanity, yet followed it; who knew that Israel's portion was the best, yet chose that of Moab; who knew the true God and the true Messiah, but preferred the idolatries of Israel's enemies. He saw Him from the top of the rocks, but that was all. He got a passing glimpse of the cross, but no more. It was all he saw of the way of life, before he plunged into death and woe.

I. He wanted to serve two masters. These were the same as the Lord in after days designated God and mammon. He wanted not to offend either; to please both. He was like Issachar crouching between two burdens. But it would not do. He failed. Such is the certain failure of all who make the like attempt. "You cannot serve God and mammon." He loved the one master, mammon; and he dreaded the other; but would sincerely do the will of both. He could not afford to lose the favor of either. Miserable life! More miserable death! The life and death of one whose whole career was one long attempt to do the bidding both of God and the devil.

II. He wanted to earn two kinds of wages. The wages of righteousness and the wages of unrighteousness (2 Peter 2:15) were both in his eyes; he would sincerely have the pay both of God and of the devil. He was unwilling to do or say any which would deprive him of either. He was as cautious and cunning as he was covetous. He would not work without wages; and he would work for a hundred masters if they would only pay him well. How like many so-called "religious"

men among ourselves.

III. He wanted to do two opposite things at the same time. He wished both to bless and to curse. He was willing to do either according as it might serve his interests. The only question with him was, "Would it pay?" If the blessing would pay, he would take it; if the curse would pay, he would take it. If both would pay, he would take them both. Blessing and cursing were both alike to him, confessing and denying the true God, worshiping Baal or Jehovah, it mattered not, if by "this craft he could have his wealth." So with many among us. If Sabbath-keeping will pay, they will keep the Sabbath; if Sabbath-breaking will pay, they will break the Sabbath. True Balaams– without principle, without faith, and without fear!

IV. He wanted two kinds of friendship. He would sincerely be friends with everybody. Perhaps he was timid; of those whom Scripture calls "fearful" (Revelation 21:8); perhaps, also, he was ambitious, and sought great things for himself wherever these could be obtained (Jeremiah 45:5); certainly he had before him "the fear of man which brings a snare," and the love of man's approbation which brings no less a snare; he dreaded Israel's God, of whom he knew much, but he dreaded also Moab's gods, though whether he really believed in them we know not. Made up of these contradictions, and acting not by faith but unbelief, he tried to secure the friendship of all whom he counted great, whether in heaven or in earth. He shut his eyes not only to the sin but to the impossibility of such a course; he saw not that the friendship of the world is the enemy of God, and that whoever will be the friend of the world must be the enemy of God.

V. He wanted to have two religions. He saw religion to be a paying concern, a profitable trade, and he was willing to accept it from anybody or everybody, to adopt it from any quarter if it would but raise him in the world, and make his fortune. Perhaps he thought all religions equally right or equally wrong, equally true or equally false. He would rather not offend any god if lie could help it. He would make concessions to "religious prejudices" of any kind if the prejudiced people will only help him on. He was like Erasmus of old, whom a German writer thus describes– "Erasmus belongs to that species of writers who have all the desire to build God a magnificent church; at the same time, however, not giving the devil any offence, to whom, accordingly, they set up a neat little chapel close by, where you can offer him some touch of sacrifice at a time, and practice a quiet household devotion for him without disturbance."

Such was Balaam; two gods and two religions he wanted to have. But this double service, and double friendship, and double religion would not do. He could make nothing by them. They profited him nothing either in this life or that to come. His end was with the ungodly, his portion with the enemies of Israel. And his soul, where could it be? Not with Israel's God, or Israel's Christ, or in Israel's heaven. He reaped what he sowed. He was a good specimen of multitudes in these last days. An educated and intelligent man, shrewd and quick-seeing, of respectable character, high in favor with the rich and great, a religious man, too, after a fashion, not unsound in creed so far, for he acknowledges Jehovah as the true God. But he is fond of the world, fond of money, fond of preferment; one that would not let his religion stand in the way of his advancement; who could pocket all scruples if he could pocket a little gold along with them; hollow of heart, but with a fair outside; just an Erasmus; no Luther, no Calvin, no Knox, no confessor, no martyr. His worldly interests are the main thing to him. He would rather not risk offending God, but yet he would not like to lose Balak's rewards and honors.

He would rather not take up his cross, nor deny himself, nor forsake all for his God. Religion with him is not just a thing to be suffered for– at least if he can help it. So is it with multitudes among us. They want as much religion as will save them from hell; not an atom more. The world is their real God; gold is their idol; it is in mammon's temple that they worship. Love God with all their heart! They don't so much as understand the meaning of such a thing. Sacrifice riches, place, honor, friends to Christ! They scoff at the thing as madness. Oh, be on the side of God, out and out. Don't trifle with religion.

Don't mock God and Christ. Love not the world. Be religious in your inmost soul. Don't mistake sentimentalism for religion, or a good character for the new birth. You may go very far and yet not be a Christian. You may follow Christ in some things; but if not in all, what is your following worth? This world or the world to come, that is the alternative; not this world and the world to come. Christ all or nothing. The soul more precious than worlds, or utterly worthless. No middle ground; no half-discipleship; no compromise. No. The friendship of the world is enmity with God. Come out and be separate. The new birth, or no religion at all.

Look to your latter end! What is it to be? Where is it to be? With whom is it to be? Anticipate your eternity. Is it to be darkness or light, shame or glory? Oh make sure, make sure! Do not sear your conscience by praying Balaam's prayer, "Let me die the death of the righteous." What will that avail you? It is the life of the righteous that God is calling you to lead and he will take care of your death. Decide, halt not; else surely yours will be a wretched life and a still more wretched death. What will gold, or purple, or honor do for you when you lie down to die, or rise up to be judged?

02.1.06. Be Not Borderers

BIBLE THOUGHTS & THEMES by Horatius Bonar BE NOT BORDERERS "Go in and possess the land." – Deuteronomy 10:2

Israel passed through many changes in their history; but here we have its termination– the possession of the land. They were bondsmen, wanderers, outsiders, borderers; but they were not to remain such; they were to possess the land. Here their earthly history, which began with Abraham, ends. Let us learn from this something as to ourselves and our history.

I. We are not to be without a land. We are to have a country and a city. When in the world, we have these in a certain way, but they are all carnal, they pass from us and we from them. The world's cities and possessions will not do for us. They cannot fill us, nor satisfy us, nor abide with us. Hence, even when in the world, we are truly strangers; landless, cityless, homeless. And after we have come out from the world we are strangers, though not as before; for a land, a city, a home have been secured to us. Sinners, God offers you the better Canaan!

II. We are not to be dwellers in Egypt. The house of bondage is not for us. Pharaoh cannot be our king. We must, like Moses, refuse to be called the sons of Pharaoh's daughter. We must go out, not fearing the wrath of the king; counting the reproach of Christ greater riches than Egypt's treasures.

III. We are not to be dwellers in a barren land. The wilderness may do for a day, but not for a permanent abode. Ishmael may have the desert, Israel must have the good land– the land flowing with milk and honey.

IV. We are not to be borderers. To be out of Egypt is one step, to come up to the borders of Canaan is another; but that is not to be all. We are not outsiders, never crossing the boundary; nor borderers, belonging to neither region, ever crossing and recrossing the line, as if we had no wish to stay or no portion in the land. The border lands are not for the church, nor for any one calling himself a Christian, an Israelite indeed.

V. We are to go in and possess. Out of Egypt, out of the wilderness, across the borders, into the very heart of the land– Judah's hills, Ephraim's vales, Issachar's plains, Manasseh's pastures, Naphtali's lakes, and Zebulun's fertile reaches. We go in and take possession, leaving all other lands and regions behind. It is the God-chosen, God-given land. Let us enter on it. It is rich, goodly, well watered, let us possess it. Not merely let us survey it, or pitch our tents in it, but build our habitations there, to dwell in it forever. What I gather specially from our text is, that we are not to be borderers; not merely not Egyptians, nor Ishmaelites, but not borderers. The place to which God invites us is the land, the kingdom, the city. Just now, of course, it is but the promise, for the kingdom has not yet come. But I speak of the promise as if it were the thing itself, for the promise is God's, not man's.

There are many borderers in our day; half and half Christians; afraid of being too decidedly or intensely religious. They are not Egyptians, they are not perhaps quite outsiders, for they occasionally seem to cross the line and take a look of the land from some of its southern hills. But they are borderers. They have not boldly taken up their abode in the land; they have not entered in nor possessed it. They are vacillators, worshipers of two Gods, trying to secure two kingdoms and to lay up two kinds of treasures. Let me speak of and to these. Why should you be borderers?

1. It is SIN. It is not your misfortune merely, it is your guilt. That half-heartedness and indecision is about the most sinful condition you can be in. Borderer, you are a sinner; a sinner because a borderer!

2. It is MISERY. You cannot be happy in that half-and-half state. You don't know what you are, nor whose you are, nor where you are going. You are sure of nothing good; only of evil. Were you dying in that state– were you cut off on the borders, you are lost; and does not that thought make you truly wretched?

3. It is DANGER. You think perhaps that because you have gone a little way that all is well; or at least that you are out of danger. No. The danger is as great as ever. Were you to die on the borders– only almost a Christian, – you are as sure of hell as if you had died in Egypt.

4. It is ABOMINATION TO GOD. It is an insult to him. It says that you do not care for him or his goodly land. That half-heartedness is abominable to God. It is like Laodicea, or perhaps worse. Borderer, beware of thus provoking and insulting God.

5. It is LOSS TO YOURSELF. Even just now, how much you lose. You might be so happy! If decided and sure, you might have such peace! And then the prospect of such a land! What a loss! Yes, your own interests as well as God's honor demand decision. It is such a goodly, glorious land! It is so foolish, and so cowardly to hold back. Oh decide. Be a borderer no more. Enter in and possess the land at once! THE OUTLINES OF A SAVED SINNER'S HISTORY

"He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye." – Deuteronomy 32:10

We might take this figuratively, of Abraham, in Chaldea; or of Israel in Egypt; but Moses is speaking literally of the Sinaitic wilderness, and of Israel there. No sooner had they crossed the Red Sea than they became wanderers in the desert. There God found them; he came to them. It was truly a desert land; without bread, or water, or dwellings, or cities. All heat, barrenness, danger, terror. He met them, came to them, took their hand, and became their guide (Deuteronomy 1:31; Deuteronomy 1:33; Nehemiah 9:19); by day and night he kept and led them for forty years; taught, protected, watched, as if they had been the tenderest part of the tenderest member of His body. Such was Israel's story, until brought to Canaan; and such that of every Israelite indeed, every saved sinner from his first arousing until he enters into the joy of his Lord. Consider–

I. THE SINNER IN HIS NATIVE COUNTRY. That land of his nativity is a desert waste; it is the far country into which the prodigal went; the world where all is evil. It is a barren land, without comfort, or safety, or friends, or kindred. No living bread to feed his famished soul. No fountain of living water to quench his thirst. No peace, nor rest, nor gladness; no shelter from the wrath to come. He

is wretched and empty; a poor wanderer of the desert, a man without a home.

II. THE SINNER FOUND BY GOD. (Jeremiah 2:2) The three parables of our Lord bring out this: the lost sheep found by the Shepherd; the lost silver found by the woman; the lost son found by his father. It is not the sinner that seeks God, but God the sinner; and when God comes He finds him in the land of barrenness, and famine, and danger; He finds him in his sin and wretchedness; a child of wrath, an heir of hell. He goes in quest of him; seeks him; saves him. By convictions, by terrors, by disappointments, by a sense of need, by weariness; by these he pursues him from valley to valley, from refuge to refuge; and not by these only, but by a thousand such things great and small. Each believer, as he looks back reminds himself of this– "He found me in a desert land, a waste howling wilderness." Ask them all, and they will tell you this. Ask Abraham, Moses, Manasseh, Zaccheus, Paul; ask the Corinthians, the Thessalonians; they will tell you the same story– "He found me in a desert land; "He chose me, sought me out, found me, called me, sent from above, took me, and drew me out of many waters. I was a lost sheep, but He found me! A prodigal, but He found me! Some in childhood, some in youth, some in manhood. Yet all the same at last.

III. THE SINNER UNDER GOD'S CARE. The finding is not the ending, but the beginning of God's dealing with him; which from first to last is all marvelous; the display of wisdom and love.

(1.) GUIDANCE. No place needs a guide like the desert. One gets utterly bewildered in its intricacies and labyrinths of rocks and plains. He who finds him knows this, and takes him under his guidance, so that at every turn, every step, he shall be sure of being in the right way. No, and often does God bring him into circumstances, in which there can be no help except in Himself. The desert is pathless, the sinner is ignorant; there are false guides, uncertain ways, as well as darkness and enemies. Therefore does God lead us! By His word, His providence, His rod, His hand, His eye; by sorrows and joys, prosperities and adversities; by the footsteps of the flock; hedging up our way; denying us our own will. He "leads us about;" not directly, but with many a winding, and apparent backturning; many stages and unlikely bypaths. He does not take us at once to Canaan, but leads us about; for wise ends; of grace and discipline, and purifying; for the manifestation of Himself and the overthrow of Satan. What a leader! Whatever be the entanglements, briars, thorns, darkness, He will guide us; onward, still onward, to the city of habitation; we come up out of the wilderness leaning on the Beloved. We pray, "your Spirit is good, lead us to the land of uprightness."

(2.) INSTRUCTION. One of his first words is, "Learn of me." The sinner needs his teaching– divine, not human teaching; as to what sin is, himself, God, Christ, the cross, the love of God, the grace of Christ, the glory to be revealed. These God teaches us. Every day and hour is a teaching time; and He who has found us is one who has compassion on the ignorant.

(3.) PROTECTION. He comes at once under the shadow of the divine shield; so that he is kept by the power of God; "preserved in Christ." No enemy prevails; no weapon injures, no evil comes near; he is made more than conqueror. How careful God is of the new found one! How sensitive about injury done to him, as if done to Himself, to the apple of His eye! What a guardian, what a protector do we find in God! The sun shall not smite by day nor the moon by night; nor shall the sand of the desert blow into our eye. O men of earth, are you still wanderers? Lost, unguided, uninstructed, unprotected? What will the desert do for you? Will it be an equivalent to Canaan and

Jerusalem? God pursues you, appeals to you, seeks to win you, asks you, Have I been a wilderness to you? He calls! In every way, and by every agency; by the gospel, by the law, by a sense of want, by sorrow, by pain. He calls– he pursues! Oh, flee no longer from him. Let him this day overtake you!

02.1.07. Divine Longings Over the Foolish

BIBLE THOUGHTS & THEMES by Horatius Bonar DIVINE LONGINGS OVER THE FOOLISH

"If only they were wise and would understand this and discern what their end will be!" – Deuteronomy 32:29

These are the words, not of anger, but of love, of disappointed affection, of a sorrowful friend, of a tender-hearted father, of an earnest, gracious, patient God. In these words God yearned over Israel. In them He still yearns over us. In them we learn the attitude in which God is standing over us, all the day stretching out His hands to a disobedient and gainsaying people.

I. GOD'S DESIRE TO MAKE US WISE. Himself the infinitely wise God, He longs to make us partakers of His wisdom. He has no pleasure in our ignorance; no, it excites His compassion as much as His displeasure. He knows the preciousness of wisdom, and He loves not to see us without it. He wishes us to be wise. Why then does He not make us so, seeing He is as powerful as He is wise? I cannot explain this whole puzzle, it is inscrutable. Only let us remember, (1.) That He is sovereign as well as loving;

(2.) That wisdom, from its very nature, cannot be forced;

(3.) That the power of a human will for evil, for resistance both to wisdom and to love, is very great, far greater than can be supposed from the feebleness of the creature in whom it is.

We cannot disentangle the whole knot, but we know from His own words that He desires sincerely and honestly, to see us wise. What else can our text mean– "Oh, that they were wise." Is not this good news? God desires to make you wise! If any man lacks wisdom, let him ask of God.

II. MAN'S UNTEACHABLENESS. The wish to be wise and the unwillingness to be taught is one of the many strange contradictions of humanity. The search for wisdom and the rejection of it when God presents it, is a strange spectacle, but not quite unaccountable. For the wisdom man searches for is wisdom of his own selecting; it is wisdom without God, it is wisdom which will not contradict his sinful propensities and lusts, it is wisdom reasoned out by himself and according to himself the credit of discovery.

Submission to divine tuition is what he specially dislikes; liberty to take or reject God's instruction is what he claims for himself, and the present age is developing man's unteachableness to the full. He claims to be his own teacher, and to be the judge of the wisdom which he is to receive. He insists that his own reason, his own conscience, his moral sense, shall sit in judgment on all that is presented to him. The authoritative presentation to him of any doctrine he holds to be inconsistent with his liberty, and therefore even when he receives the doctrine thus presented, he rejects the authority on which it comes; he may receive the truth, but it is because his own reason has proved it or accepted it, not because God has offered it. He would have his faith to stand in the wisdom of man, and not in the power of God.

III. GOD’S PROVISION FOR OUR BECOMING WISE. He has not left us to gather wisdom at random, nor contented Himself with the mere expression of a wish that we should be wise. He has given substantial proof of His sincerity in this thing. He has provided,

(1.) The LESSON. This book of his contains that lesson. It is full, varied, complete, simple. It is a lesson for learned and unlearned, for Jew and Greek, for rich and poor– the same lesson for all. In this one book is written the lesson of lessons; the lesson which, when learned, removes darkness, ignorance, disquietude; and gives light, peace, health, and an eternal salvation.

(2.) The SCHOOL. It is the school of Christ. For our first step is to become His disciples, to accept Him and His rules for the guidance of our studies. "Make disciples of all nations" was His commission. So we enter His academy, we enroll among His scholars. This discipleship is the first step to wisdom, it is the renunciation of the false schools, of the world, of man, of philosophy, and the submission of our whole man to the regulations of this school.

(3.) The DISCIPLINE. It is not simply pouring in information that is required. The mind, the soul, the conscience must be so disciplined and prepared as to receive it aright. Various is this discipline, this training. Hardship, sorrow, trial– all kinds of chastisement are required in order to fit us for the reception of the wisdom. In this divine school all these are brought into use, daily use, to make us receptive, pliable, teachable, submissive.

(4.) The TEACHER. He is the Holy Spirit. Sometimes we are said to "learn of Christ" and to "learn of the Father," but the Spirit is the special teacher; "he shall teach you all things;" "who teaches like him." His teaching is perfect, irresistible, yet not miraculous; gradual, natural, yet supernatural. He teaches us out of that book which he has inspired.

Thus God yearns over us, grieving at our ignorance, mourning over our unteachableness, offering to teach us, to make us wise. Thus pitying us, He provides for us; leaving us inexcusable if we remain untaught. Oh that you were wise, He says to each one of us– sincerely does He say it. Let us place ourselves entirely in His hands for instruction, for light, for blessing. All He asks is that we enroll ourselves as His scholars and submit to His teaching. In His infinite compassion and love He beseeches us to be wise.

02.1.08. What a Believing Man Can Do

BIBLE THOUGHTS & THEMES by Horatius Bonar WHAT A BELIEVING MAN CAN DO On the day the Lord gave the Israelites victory over the Amorites, Joshua prayed to the Lord in front of all the people of Israel. He said, "Let the sun stand still over Gibeon, and the moon over the valley of Aijalon." So the sun and moon stood still until the Israelites had defeated their enemies. Is this event not recorded in The Book of Jashar? The sun stopped in the middle of the sky, and it did not set as on a normal day. The Lord fought for Israel that day. Never before or since has there been a day like that one, when the Lord answered such a request from a human being. Joshua 10:12-14

There are several miracles referred to in Scripture in connection with the sun. When the sun was darkened in Egypt (Exodus 10:21); when the "light of it shall become sevenfold"; when the shadow went back on the dial of Ahaz (Isaiah 38:8); when the sun was darkened at the crucifixion (Matthew 27:45); when the sun shall become black as sackcloth (Revelation 6:12); when it shall scorch men with fire. But this is the most extraordinary of them all, no, of all the miracles of the Bible. It is quiet and beneficent; it is conservative, not destructive; it arrests but does not injure. It is not like the deluge, or the plagues of Egypt, desolating and death-dealing; nor like the Red Sea, or Sinai, or Jordan, or the descending fire on Carmel. It is simply a stoppage of creation's movements, the arresting the descent of the two great lights, making day a little longer. It does not look like a miracle, for there is no change in sun, or moon, or sky, or earth; yet it is this "no change" that is the greatest of all miracles– "Never before or since has there been a day like that one, when the Lord answered such a request from a human being." The time had not come when they should have no more need of the sun. The thing was done in a moment, without premeditation or preparation; not by fasting and prayer, or an appeal to God, as in the miracles of Moses and Elijah; but by a command, a word, addressed directly to sun and moon; as if Joshua were assuming the Creator's authority; the command of faith, uttered in simple confidence in God; the word of one man; the word of a man in sympathy and fellowship with God. O confidence in God, what can you not accomplish! Joshua is a man of like passions as we are, yet he speaks to the sun and it stands still!

It is not only a very extraordinary miracle in itself, but it is a very manifest one; not done in a corner, but open to the eyes of all. That long long day in Palestine would doubtless be remembered forever. It could not be hidden. It was in one respect a beneficent miracle; in another, indirectly, destructive; for it enabled Israel to overthrow their enemies; and in such a ruin God is glorified. It was, we might say, a very superfluous miracle. Why not enable Joshua to cut short the work, or send the lightning or the earthquake?

God does not always economize His forces, His gifts, His treasures. He loves sometimes to show how He can lavish His fullness– how He can be, as men say, extravagant. How completely a much lesser miracle would have served the purpose! Yet he does not grudge this, in answer to the word of one of his saints. Stupendous and superfluous it does seem to us– for the one stoppage of the sun (or earth) includes so many other stoppages and the forthputting of an amount of Power,

absolutely inconceivable. We can measure the amount of power put forth in severing the Red Sea or the Jordan; but the stoppage of sun and moon involves an amount of power beyond all calculation or conception.

I. Familiarize your minds with a great miracle like this. Do not try to lower it or diminish it, or empty it of the supernatural. Take it for what it is here stated to be. God means what he says. He does not exaggerate. Take it for what it is.

(1.) It will ENLARGE YOUR THOUGHTS OF GOD. He is seen in this miracle as infinitely great and powerful; able to arrest sun and moon in a moment. We need to have our thoughts elevated, expanded, greatened. It is with a great God that we have to do. Alpine magnificence declares His greatness; but this far more. In days when man tries to make himself look great, and to think himself powerful; it is well to remember the greatness of Jehovah.

(2.) It will INCREASE YOUR REVERENCE. Reverence of God comes, in part at least, from what we see of his power and majesty. We must be steeped in such views of God as this miracle gives us, that we may be delivered from flippancy and frivolity in dealing with God– in prayer and praise. Are we sufficiently reverential? Are we bowed down in spirit before this mighty God?

(3.) It will GIVE YOU A TRUE INSIGHT INTO THE TRUE SUPERNATURAL. The tendency of the age is to disbelieve the supernatural; to assume that man occupies the whole space of being; and that beyond what he sees, and hears, and feels, there is nothing– no room for angels or spirits, no room for God, no room for agencies apart from known forces and ascertained laws. The Bible is full of the superhuman and supernatural. In studying it we are delivered from superstition, which is the supernatural of the fake; and taught the world of faith, which is the supernatural of the true. For faith deals with the true supernatural, the divine supernatural. It is the evidence of things not seen.

II. Have faith in God. Here is a miracle so great that we can hardly ask for a greater; hence we ought to say, "Is there anything too hard for God." It cherishes faith and expectation. It shows what God is willing to do for men like ourselves. Let us not be staggered by the greatness or difficulty of any work, or the power of any enemy. What though we needed a miracle? If not a visible miracle, yet something as great? Is not God willing to do it for us? There is still power, still love. He still takes part with His Israel against their enemies. Let us be trustful, believing, brave. If God is for us, who can be against us? What cannot faith do? What cannot unbelief mar? Have faith in God. Not in self, man, schemes, societies, organizations, churches, money, intellect, science, progress; but in God. Let us be Joshuas. Let us show what one living man, armed with the living word, can do with the living God!

02.1.09. Song of the Putting Off of the Armor

BIBLE THOUGHTS & THEMES by Horatius Bonar SONG OF THE PUTTING OFF OF THE ARMOR "O my soul, you have trodden down strength." Judges 5:21 "March on, my soul, with courage!" Judges 5:21 This is one note of the warrior's song; a note loud and glad. It is the exulting cry of victory; the song of triumph; victory and triumph; when the battle was not merely for Israel but for God. It is the song of Deborah and Barak; a song inspired by the Holy Spirit; a song of earth, yet doubtless responded to in heaven; the song of the putting off of the armor; the song of one who was strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

We might suppose it uttered by Abraham on returning from the slaughter of the kings; by Moses when he saw Pharaoh overthrown; by Joshua when he conquered Amalek; by David when he slew Goliath; by Israel in the latter day (Isaiah 14:3-4). It is the song of one who out of weakness had been made strong in the Lord and in the power of his might. We might suppose it to be Christ's song of triumph when he died, with "It is finished" on His lips; or still more when He rose again from the dead; or still more when He ascended on high, leading captivity captive. We might take it as the song of apostles on the day of Pentecost, when, "not by might or power," they saw three thousand saved; and as the song of apostles wherever they went preaching the gospel– Ephesus, Corinth, Colosse, or Rome– that wondrous gospel, proving itself mighty in their hands to the pulling down of strongholds, and the overthrow of enemies. Surely it was Paul's when he said, "I have fought a good fight." We might take it as the church's song in the day of her coming triumph over all her enemies– over Antichrist, over Babylon, over Satan; when caught up into the clouds, or standing on the sea of glass: "O my soul, you have trodden down strength."

It must be ours–

(1) daily;

(2) specially at certain seasons and emergencies;

(3) at the last, like Paul;

(4) hereafter throughout eternity, as we look back upon the past, and understand more fully our own impotence, as well as the greatness of the powers arrayed against us. How often shall we find ourselves repeating, even in the new Jerusalem, the song of the ancient prophetess, "O my soul, you have trodden down strength."

I. Our WARFARE. It is "a good warfare," or more exactly, "a glorious warfare." It is against enemies within, around, beneath; self, the flesh, the world, but specially, the principalities and powers of evil. "Fight the good fight of faith." It is our battle. It is God's battle. It is the church's battle; for we are but one of a mighty army of warriors. It is a warfare from which we cannot escape, except by deserting Christ's ranks; for there is no discharge in this war. It is a constant warfare. It is a lifelong warfare. It is earnest and formidable; no child's play; no mere sound or name; but an intense reality.

Nowhere out of Scripture do we find it better described than by Bunyan in his Pilgrim's Progress. He knew the reality, and has painted it well. Our life is then a warfare; a warfare which enters into everything; because at every step our great adversary stands to bar our progress, and to prevent us glorifying God in each portion and transaction of life. You complain of the power of sin. Well, fight! You complain of the difficulty of believing. Well, fight!

II. Our WEAPONS. We need to be armed, both for defense and offence; fully equipped in every instrument of battle. No half-furnished soldier can fight a battle like this. There must be no broken swords, no rusted spears, no shattered helmets.

(1.) What our weapons ARE NOT. They are not carnal; not earthly; not self-made, nor man-made. They are not the weapons of science, or philosophy, or human intellect. These avail nothing against sin, or the flesh, or Satan.

(2.) What they ARE. They are divine and heavenly, forged and hammered on no earthly anvil. They are God-made and God-given. They are complete, both for attack and defense. Sword, shield, sandal, helmet– all that is needed in this warfare, and described by the apostle (Ephesians 6), are provided for us. No man loses this battle for lack of offered armor.

III. Our STRENGTH. We need power to use the provided weapons. Not the weapons without the power, nor the power without the weapons, but both together. "Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might." Our sufficiency is of God; all strength is in the Lord. What are sword and buckler to palsied limbs? We need strength– divine strength for divine armor. The fullness of Him to whom all power is given, is at our disposal. There need be no lack of strength to us in this warfare.

IV. Our VICTORY. This warfare of ours is no vain warfare; no idle battlefield. We go forth to win! Yes. Our eye is fixed on victory from the outset. We are assured of triumph from the moment we draw the sword. We are made more than conquerors. How often are these words sounded in our ears: "To him who overcomes." We aim at daily victory– we aim at final victory– such as that of Paul. Fight and conquer. Let us anticipate the warrior's song: "O my soul, you have trodden down strength."

V. Our REWARD. All who win have their rewards; but some victories are harder to win; some more or less complete. And there is a difference in the degree of reward. The seven rewards promised to the seven churches are representative rewards. They represent seven different kinds or degrees of glory, set before the conqueror. Yet the least reward is unutterably excellent; worth all the struggle, and the sacrifice, and the sorrow. Brethren, let us fight! Let us aim at victory; at complete and perfect victory. Let us covet a high reward; let us be ambitious of no common crown. Our great Captain speaks to us, "Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me." How soon He may appear we know not. And He comes with the crown of righteousness, the crown of glory in His hand for His own. If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him!

02.1.10. The Kiss of the Backslider

BIBLE THOUGHTS & THEMES by Horatius Bonar THE KISS OF THE BACKSLIDER "Orpah kissed her mother-in-law good-bye. But Ruth insisted on staying with Naomi." – Ruth 1:14 In this book we have the Gentile sheltering the Jew, and the Jew in return inviting the Gentile to partake of Israel's land and blessing. Moab receives Judah, and feeds him in the day of famine (as the prophet in after years speaks, "Let my outcasts dwell with you, Moab," Isaiah 16:4), and Judah bids Moab welcome to his better portion. Israel's famine first sent Israel to Egypt for food; Israel's persecution drove Israel's true Son– Messiah, Son of David– to seek protection in Egypt; so now we see Naomi leaving Bethlehem, passing over the rugged hills of Judah, crossing the Dead Sea, and settling in the land of Moab, until the calamity was past.

Whether it was faith or unbelief that led her to flee from Bethlehem, we say not. It was faith that led her to return. It is as a believing woman that we now find her leaving her exile to seek her own land again, though as yet she knew not that Messiah was to spring of her line. She sets out with her two daughters-in-law, after a ten years' sojourn in Moab. They travel onward for a little, until they come to some particular spot– perhaps the shore of the Dead Sea, which they must cross. There Naomi tests them; and there the difference comes out between the two. It is to this difference we have now to attend. The difference is brought out in Orpah's kissing good-bye, and Ruth's cleaving.

There was great resemblance up to a certain point. Both were Moabites; related by marriage, if not by birth; both attached to Naomi up to a certain point; both linked to Bethlehem by their marriage; both going out with Naomi to dwell in Judea. There were many points of likeness between the two. It will be profitable to notice these.

There are many Orpahs among us– few Ruths; many Balaams, many Demases, many who follow a while, and then go back and walk no more with the Lord.

I. ORPAH AND HER KISSING GOOD-BYE. There are many kinds of kissing spoken of in Scripture; some evil, some good. There is the murderer's kiss– that of Joab (2 Samuel 20:9); the harlot's kiss (Proverbs 7:13); the kiss of the enemy (Proverbs 27:6); the kiss of idol worship (Hosea 13:2); the flatterer's kiss (2 Samuel 15:5, Absalom); the traitor's kiss (Luke 22:48). These, however, have nothing in common with Orpah and her kiss. Then there is the kiss of affection (Genesis 50:1, Joseph); the kiss of homage (1 Samuel 10:1, Samuel); the kiss of reconciliation (2 Samuel 14:33); the kiss of meeting (Luke 15:20, The prodigal); the kiss of parting (Acts 20:37). In some of these we find Orpah's kiss. It was the kiss of affection, and the kiss of parting. Thus far it was good and not evil. But we must consider its meaning in the circumstances. Everything depends on that. It meant that,

(1.) She was not prepared to leave Moab. The ties between her and it were still unbroken, though for a time a little loosened. Moab was still Moab to her, the home of her kindred, the center of her affections, the dwelling place of her gods. Thus millions are not ready to leave the world, though often in some measure broken from it. They cling to their old haunts of vanity, foolishness,

pleasure, lust, or literature. They cannot think of forsaking these. No, they soothe their consciences with the argument, that it would not be right to break off from all these. To them the world is still the world; attractive and excellent. They cannot think of crucifying it, or themselves to it. They have been born in it, lived in it, their friends are in it– why should they leave it? Their hearts are still here, their treasure is here; and they linger in it, though at times they feel the necessity of leaving it. What would life be to them without the novel or the ballroom, the theater, the gay assembly, the banquet, the revel, the folly, the wine-cup, and the song?

(2.) For the sake of Moab she was willing to part with Naomi. She was not without longings after Naomi and her city, and her kindred, and her God. But her old longings and ties kept her back, and in the end prevailed. Yet she wished to part in peace, to bid a decent farewell to her mother-in-law. She kissed that she might not cleave. Her kiss was a farewell; a farewell to Naomi, her land, and her God. Have we not many Orpahs? They would sincerely have both Israel and Moab. They would rather not part with either. Their heart is divided. They would sincerely cast in their lot with God's people, and obtain their inheritance. They are not scoffers; not openly godless; not reckless pleasure-seekers. But half-and- half, or rather not so much.

They would be religious up to a certain point– to the point when a choice must be made– and then their heart speaks out. They give up Christ, and turn back to the world. Yet they do so quietly, as it were, and kindly. They kiss at parting; but will that kiss avail them? Will God accept the kiss as an excuse for turning back, or as a substitute for the whole-hearted service which He desires? What does that kiss mean now? What will it stand for in the great day of the Lord? It is not the kiss of Judas certainly, but it is the kiss of the "fearful and unbelieving" (Revelation 21:8).

II. RUTH AND HER CLEAVING. Orpah kissed good-bye, but Ruth cleaved. Orpah kissed that she might not cleave. Ruth cleaves silently, and without show or demonstration. She lingers not nor halts. Moab is behind her, Israel is before her, Naomi is at her side. Her choice is made. She falters not either in heart or in step. Yonder are Judah's hills; behind them lies Bethlehem; she presses forward. Jehovah must be her God, and Jehovah's land her heritage. Nothing shall come between. She forgets her kindred and her father's house. What are Moab's hills, or cities, or temples, or gods? Jehovah, God of Israel, is now her God forever.

Here is cleaving; here is decision; here are faith and love; here is the undivided heart. It is this that God looks for still. Nothing else will He accept. Not half a heart or half a life. Not Orpah's kiss, but Ruth's cleaving. He needs decision. He abhors vacillation and compromise. If you prefer Moab, go dwell there; enjoy its pleasures, and worship its gods. If you choose Israel, pitch your tent there, and take Jehovah for your all. It is a low and poor thing to divide yourself between the two. Be decided, brave, manly, and determined.

Don't you know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Love not the world. Love the world to come. Love Him who is Lord and King of that coming world. Come out and be separate, and touch not the unclean thing. Indecision will profit nothing. Even in its gentlest and kindliest form, it is hateful to God. It will not satisfy you; it will not satisfy God. A whole world and a whole Christ you cannot have. Half of the world and half of Christ is equally an impossibility. Alliance with the world and alliance with Christ is out of the question. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils. Beware of carnal fascinations and snares. Beware of pleasures and vanities. Meddle not with worldly amusements. Suspect that with which the world is enamored. Blind not

yourselves by creature-love and creature-beauty. Lull not your conscience asleep by an outward religion, a fantastic, and pictorial, and sensual worship. It is not religion but Christ that God points you to. Forsake all for Him. Let Him be all to you.

Look to Bethlehem, where Naomi and Ruth were on their way. He was born there. Let your heart rest there. Look a little farther, to Jerusalem and Golgotha. There He died, the Just for the unjust. There He finished the work. There He shed the reconciling blood. There He gave full testimony to the free love of God. Let your conscience get its purging and peace there. Let your whole soul go forth and abide there, with Him who died and rose again, and who has promised, saying, "I will come again, and receive you to myself!"

02.1.11. Human Remedies

BIBLE THOUGHTS & THEMES by Horatius Bonar

HUMAN REMEDIES

"And whenever the tormenting spirit from God troubled Saul, David would play the harp. Then Saul would feel better, and the tormenting spirit would go away." 1 Samuel 16:23 Of Saul we may say, "You did run well, who has hindered you?" He began well, but ended ill. His first days and works were better than his last. So with Demas; so with the church of Ephesus; so with the Jews, whose following Jehovah at first was belied by their last apostasy. So is it still with souls, churches, nations, ages.

I. SAUL'S SIN. For the root of all was sin. This sin was simply disobedience to a command of God. He was bidden slay Agag and his people. A cruel command, some would say, to which disobedience was better than obedience. But it was a divine command, whether the wisdom, or the justice, or the mercy were visible. God had His reasons for it, and that was enough. Saul's sin was not misrule, nor oppression, nor wickedness, but simply disobedience to a command which some might call arbitrary, if not harsh and stern.

Such stress does God lay on obedience, simple obedience, unreasoning obedience. His will must be done; for He is Sovereign, and He is the God only wise. Saul's sin was the preference of his own will and wisdom to God's. Let our consciences be tender as to this; and let us beware of acting on our own reasons or ideas of fitness, or doing our own will. "To obey is better than sacrifice."

II. THE CONSEQUENCES. (1.) His crown is taken from him; he is rejected from being king. (2.) Samuel leaves him (1 Samuel 15:35). But the two special things mentioned here are these–

(1.) The Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul. I do not take up the question as to whether Saul were a true child of God; this passage does not determine the point. He might be so; and these words might be like Paul's: "Whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme" (1 Timothy 1:20); "deliver unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh" (1 Corinthians 5:5). But certainly "the Spirit which departed from Saul" was good, not evil. It was the reversal of what is said: "God gave him another heart,"– a heart for governing, which He now takes away. The good Spirit is grieved, and departs. Saul's last act of disobedience has quenched Him; he is left without heavenly guidance.

(2.) An evil spirit from the Lord troubles him. He is not left alone; for as one Spirit departs, another enters.

(a.) He is troubled. His soul is now the abode of darkness and fear. He becomes moody and sad; he is vexed, perplexed, desponding. This is the fruit of sin!

(b.) He is troubled by an evil spirit. The clean spirit goes out, and the unclean spirit comes in– comes in to torment, and sadden, and vex. He is troubled by an evil spirit from the Lord. God lets loose Satan upon him. The unclean spirit returns with others more wicked than himself, and his last state is worse than his first. These words are very awful: "I will choose their delusions;" and "God shall send them strong delusion!" Thus is his chastisement double– negative and positive; a departure of the good, and the arrival of the evil. And this affliction is Jehovah's doing. Not chance, nor disease, nor natural depression of spirits, but a visitation from God; judgment for disobedience, judicial punishment.

III. HUMAN CONTRIVANCES. Here is music, religious music– the music of the harp, the harp of David. This is soothing but it does not reach the seat of the disease. It is something human, something external, something materialistic and earthly, something that man can originate and apply. It is effectual to a certain extent; it drives away the evil spirit, and restores temporary tranquility; thus possibly deceiving its victim. In like manner we find the human spirit afflicted in every age, sometimes more and sometimes less. And in all such cases man steps in with his human and external contrivances. I do not refer to the grosser form of dispelling gloom; drunkenness and profligacy, in which men seek to drown their sense of need, and make up for the absence of God. I refer to the refined contrivances: those of art, science, music, gaiety, by which men try to minister to a diseased mind .

What is Romanism and Ritualism, but a repetition of Saul's minstrelsy? The soul needs soothing. It is vexed and fretted with the world, its conscience is not at ease, it is troubled and weary. It betakes itself to religious forms, something for the eye and ear; to chants, and vestments, and postures, and performances, sweet sounds and fair sights, sentimental and pictorial religion, which is but a refined form of worldliness. By these the natural man is soothed, the spirit tranquilized; the man is brought to believe that a cure has been wrought, because his gloom has been alleviated by these religious spectacles, these exhibitions which suit the unregenerate soul so well. They but drug the soul, filling it with a sort of religious delirium. They are human sedatives, not divine medicines.

IV. The RESULTS. A partial and temporary cure. It is said that the evil spirit departed, but not that the good Spirit returned. Saul's trouble was alleviated, but not removed. The disease was still there. The results of David's harp were only superficial and negative. So is it with the sinner still. There are many outward applications, which act like spiritual chloroform upon the soul. They soothe, and calm, and please, but that is all. They do not reach below the surface, nor touch the deep-seated malady within. Men try rites, sacraments, pictures, music, dresses, and the varied attractions of ecclesiastical ornament; but these leave the spirit unfilled, and its wounds unhealed. They cannot regenerate, or quicken, or heal, or fill with the Holy Spirit. They may keep up the self-satisfaction and self-delusion of the soul, but that is all. They bring no true peace, nor give rest to the weary. They do not fill, they merely hide our emptiness. Our age is full of such 'remedies', literary and religious, all got up for the purpose of soothing the troubled spirits of man. Excitement, gaiety, balls, theaters, operas, concerts, ecclesiastical music, dresses, performances– what are all these but man's contrivances for casting out the evil spirit and healing the soul's hurt without having recourse to God's one remedy? These pleasant sights and sounds may soothe the imprisoned soul, but what of that? They do not bring it nearer to God, they do not work repentance, or produce faith, or fix the eye on the true cross. They leave the soul still without God,

and without reconciliation. The religion thus produced is hollow, and fitful, and superficial, and sentimental. It will not save nor sanctify. It may produce a sort of religious inebriation, but not that which God calls godliness, not that which apostles pointed out as a holy life, a walk with God.

SPIRITUAL AND CARNAL WEAPONS

"Have you seen the giant?" the men were asking. "He comes out each day to challenge Israel. And have you heard about the huge reward the king has offered to anyone who kills him? The king will give him one of his daughters for a wife, and his whole family will be exempted from paying taxes!" 1 Samuel 17:25

Here are two men, and in these men two nations, two religions; two bodies or companies– the seed of the woman, and the seed of the serpent. Israel and Philistia are now brought face to face. There must be war, not peace; not even an alliance, not even a truce. The world's table is not spread for the church, nor the church's table for the world. The "earth" may sometimes help the woman, and swallow up the floods which would overwhelm her; but friendship with the earth is not to be cultivated or sought after. The friendship of the world is enmity with God.

Here are two men– the one the personification of power, the other of weakness; the one of self-reliance, the other of confidence in God. We see man, nothing but man, in the one; God, nothing but God in the other. In the Philistine we see man fighting against God, in David man fighting for God. What the world admires and prizes is to be found in the one, what it despises in the other.

One thing marks them both: they are full of courage and of confidence; both equally sure of success, though the one boasts, and the other boasts not. The sources and grounds of their confidence are very different; but their confidence itself seems very much alike. The object of each is, in one respect, different; in another, the same. They meet for battle– each bent on the overthrow of the other. But Israel has not provoked nor challenged the conflict; nor is Israel desirous of seizing Philistia. She has Jerusalem: why should she seek Gaza? But Philistia would sincerely have Israel and her land in her power, and she makes continual inroads for this end. She is not content with Gaza and Ashkelon; she must have Jerusalem and Bethlehem. But it is not the Gentile giant that I ask you specially to notice, but the Jewish boy, the stripling of Bethlehem. In him we have–

I. THE REJECTION OF HUMAN WEAPONS. He was fully aware (1.) of the greatness of the issue depending on this combat;

(2.) of the strength of the adversary;

(3.) of his own weakness;

(4.) of the great things to which he had pledged himself.

Yet he declines to avail himself of any of those things which would have helped to make up his deficiency, and made him, as man would say, adequate for the struggle. He takes only that which is expressive of feebleness– which would make him incur the imputation of being a fool, like the apostle in after years. He had to become "weak" as well as a "fool," that he might be both wise and strong. His taking unlikely and unsuitable human weapons was more expressive of his faith than if

he had taken none; for, through such, God got the opportunity of showing His power– His power, not as directly coming down from heaven, but as coming through the feeble instrumentality of a shepherd, and a shepherd's sling. It was God identifying Himself with David, and using the sling as His own two-edged sword.

Thus the true beginning of all strength is weakness; the starting-point for success is the abnegation of self-power and human contrivances. How often is it true, of individuals, and of churches, and of societies, that they are too strong for God to work by or with; too well equipped, or too well organized; too rich, or too numerous, or too great, for God to get glory from! He must have His work done by hands, regarding which there will be no mistake as to who is the doer of the whole work, and the author of all the success.

David did not reject these weapons because they were sinful. He often used the sword, and the spear, and the shield, in fighting the battles of the Lord. He had built a tower for an armory, wherein there hung a thousand bucklers, all shields of mighty men. But, in certain cases, that which is lawful is not expedient. Lawful instruments sometimes become, if not unlawful, at least inexpedient and useless, when they give God no room to make bare His arm.

We are, generally speaking, far too solicitous about our strength, and forget that it is always by weakness that God works. We are too solicitous about intellect, learning, numbers, money, as if we could have no hope of success without these. No one is too weak to work the work of God; many are too strong. We are slow to believe this, slow to act on it. Yet it is one of the great truths on which God has set His seal during the ages past.

II. THE ADOPTION OF DIVINE WEAPONS. David leaves the human weapons to the Philistine; he prefers the divine. The sight of human weapons in his adversary had not made him afraid to do battle with him, nor made him say, Oh that I had a sword like his! And as he drew nearer, and saw the giant's whole strength and array, his confidence does not sink; it rises. He sees in the giant an enemy of the living God, and his weapons as, therefore, directed against Him. That sword, that spear, that shield, are used against Jehovah, the God of Israel.

David is not dismayed, but goes forward triumphantly, assured of being more than conqueror. He has a weapon– only one– framed by no human hand, brought out of no earthly armory. It is called "the name of the Lord." With this he can face, not only Goliath and the Philistine armies, but Satan and the hosts of hell. This "name" is our weapon still. It is sword, and shield, and spear. Armed with it we can do any work, fight any battle, engage any foe. Only let us be sure that we are on God's side, and our enemy against Him, we can go forward with confidence.

"If God is for us, who can be against us?" is one side of the maxim. "If we are for God, who can be against us?" is the other. In using this name as a weapon, or as a plea, I come as if God and I were one; as if God, and not I, were on the battlefield. We stand in God's stead, and He in ours. We fight in God's stead, and He in ours. It is not so much we that work as He. Using His name, is simply confiding in His revealed character and sure word, and in nothing of ourselves– making use of no arm of flesh, no power of man's arm or man's intellect, but Jehovah's alone, the Lord God of Israel. Have faith in God! Not in man, nor in the flesh, nor in genius, nor in science, nor in numbers, nor in rank, nor in influential names, nor in great schemes, but in the living God– David's God and ours!

02.1.12. Spiritual and Carnal Weapons

BIBLE THOUGHTS & THEMES by Horatius Bonar SPIRITUAL AND CARNAL WEAPONS

"Have you seen the giant?" the men were asking. "He comes out each day to challenge Israel. And have you heard about the huge reward the king has offered to anyone who kills him? The king will give him one of his daughters for a wife, and his whole family will be exempted from paying taxes!" 1 Samuel 17:25

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numbers, nor in rank, nor in influential names, nor in great schemes, but in the living God– David's God and ours!

02.1.13. Divine Silence and Human Despair

BIBLE THOUGHTS & THEMES by Horatius Bonar DIVINE SILENCE AND HUMAN DESPAIR When Saul saw the Philistine army, he was afraid; terror filled his heart. He inquired of the Lord, but the Lord did not answer him by dreams or Urim or prophets. Saul then said to his attendants, "Find me a woman who is a medium, so I may go and inquire of her." "There is one in Endor," they said. 1 Samuel 28:5-7

"And when Saul inquired of the Lord, the Lord answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets. Then said Saul unto his servants, Seek me a woman that has a familiar spirit, that I may go to her, and inquire of her. And his servants said to him, Behold, there is a woman that has a familiar spirit at Endor." – 1 Samuel 28:6-7 The scene of this sad strange narrative, is the plain of Esdraelon, a place of battle-fields. The Philistines are in the north, at Shunem. Israel at the south, in Gilboa. It is a critical hour for Saul, and for his people. The enemy is in strength; Samuel is dead; Saul's conscience is not at ease; he has provoked the Lord; how shall he face the enemy? "He is afraid, and his heart greatly trembles." He knows not what to do. He does, however, the right thing so far: he consults God. But this inquiry is in vain. "The Lord answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets." Then in his despair he betakes himself to the woman with the 'familiar spirit'. Thus heaven, earth, and hell are brought before us. A little of the veil is drawn aside, and we learn something of the workings of the invisible as well as of the visible. We notice, (1.) God's silence; (2.) Saul's despair.

I. GOD'S SILENCE. Saul in his terror cries, but there is no answer of any kind. No dream of the night reveals the secrets of the future; no prophet comes instead of Samuel; no voice comes from the high priest. All is silent. Silent just when utterance was most desired and needed. Saul knocks at the gate of heaven, but it is barred against him; there is no response. That silence, how dreadful! The roar of thunder, the crash of the earthquake, the rush of the hurricane would have been a relief– though terrible in themselves. But that silence, it is absolutely intolerable. It is the silence of heaven; the silence of Him whose voice was so anxiously expected. We read of the silence of the desert, the silence of midnight, the silence of the church-yard and the grave; but this is something more profound and appalling: the silence of God when appealed to by a sinner in his extremity. There must be a meaning in that silence. It is not the silence (1.) of indifference;

(2.) nor of inability to hear;

(3.) nor of weakness;

(4.) nor of perplexity.

God is alive to the case; he can hear; he is able to deliver; he knows what would meet the case. Yet he is silent. It must then be the silence of refusal, of rejection, of displeasure, of abandonment. Terrible silence! Anything would be better than this. Such is the position in which God represents the sinner at certain times: "When they call I will not answer" (Proverbs 1:28); "I will not be inquired of by you" (Ezekiel 20:31). The foolish virgins going for oil too late; the knocking for admittance too

late; the crying "Lord, Lord", too late; the calling to the rocks and hills in the great day. The only answer is silence!

Oh, dreadful silence for the sinner! He would not call when he would have been heard, and now it is too late! God called on him during his lifetime, but he would not hear. Now he calls, but God keeps silence. Yet even this awful silence will be broken. God will speak; He will speak from the throne. "Depart, you cursed!" will be the breaking of the silence, and the answer to the rebel's cries!

II. SAUL'S DESPAIR. Danger presses; the Philistines are mustering; the crisis has come. Yet there is no answer. What will he do? There were three courses open to him:

(1.) he might sit down in quiet hopelessness, and let the evil come; or (2.) he might, in faith and penitent submission, commit the whole matter to God, even amid this awful silence: or (3.) he might betake himself to hell for counsel since heaven was deaf.

He chooses the last! In his despair he goes to the enemy of that God who was refusing to answer; he turns to the wizards whom he had himself put away; he turns from the living to the dead; he consults with hell. It must have been a dreadful day of suspense for Saul; a dreadful night, when having formed the fatal purpose, he sets out across the hill to Endor. What his thoughts and feelings were in that awful hour we know not. They must have been of the wildest and gloomiest kind. "God has cast me off, I will betake myself to Satan; heaven's door is shut, I will see if hell's be open." And when crossing the hill, and approaching the village of the enchantress, he must have felt, "Now I am going on an errand to Satan; I am going to try if he can do for me what God will not."

Oh terrible journey! Fit winding up to that silence and suspense! He is determined to get a glimpse of the future, though his prophet be the evil one himself. The past is dark; the present is gloomy; what is the future to be? God will not tell him. Will Satan? Thus he rushes on in despair– he the king of Israel, the friend of Samuel, the conqueror of Israel's enemies– the forty years' monarch and warrior, who has never trembled before an enemy– he, the tall, stately Benjamite. Thus, in melancholy madness, he moves in that dark midnight, over the heights that overlooked his own camp and that of his foes.

What a picture! Nothing in Milton is half so grand or sad– hardly anything out of hell is half so terrible– as this man of war, and might, and commanding stature, striding on over these hills to the gate of the pit! His despair had blinded him; he had not learned to say with one who was a greater sufferer than himself, "Though he slays me, yet will I trust in him." He despaired because God was silent. Yet the silence was meant to lead him to repentance and acknowledgment of sin. It was God's last appeal to his conscience. Let us learn,

1. THE PERILS OF BACKSLIDING. Here is one who once bid fair, whom God favored and honored; the friend of Samuel, turning his back on God.

2. THE TERRIBLENESS OF THE SILENCE OF GOD. It means something dreadful: it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God; to cry and get no answer; to find no light!

3. THE EVILS OF DESPAIR. No sinner here ought to despair. His case may be sad; God's silence long and deep; his sins many; yet on no account let him turn his back on God; rather let him fling

himself into His arms. This would be blessed despair!

JEWISH UNBELIEF AND GENTILE BLESSING

"The ark of the Lord remained in the house of Obed-edom the Gittite for three months, and the Lord blessed him and his entire household." – 2 Samuel 6:11

It was into the house of a Gentile that the ark was brought; a Philistine; a dweller in Gath; a "Gittite;" but one who knew the Lord God of Israel. It was the sin of an Israelite that led to its being brought here. Uzzah offended and was slain. He was afraid to trust the ark to take care of itself. He laid distrustful hands upon it when the oxen stumbled. Perhaps this was not his first offence of this kind. He seems to have been forward; perhaps proud– proud of his office.

It was David's unbelief that brought it. He did not rightly interpret God's dealing; and was afraid; afraid of God, because He was holy, and ready to vindicate His holiness. He began the work, but broke it off in the midst, through fear– unbelieving fear. He dreads danger to himself; but, strange, he does not so for Obed-edom. He was willing that Obed-edom should run the risk which he would not. In what a strange conflict of feelings this was done! There is more of unbelief and less of faith in David than we would have expected.

He thrusts the ark into Obed-edom's house, that whatever ill might happen might fall on him. It was not in love to Obed-edom, nor with a design of honoring him, nor with the wish to confer blessing on him. None of these motives seem to have influenced David; but blind fear– a wish to keep himself out of danger. He does not seem to have cared about this Gentile; it would seem as if he were saying, If there is danger, let it fall on a Gentile. He does not seem to have meant it for good to him, yet good came. The ark of the God of Israel came to Obed-edom. It knocked at his door seeking shelter, seeking a home. He received it gladly. He was not forgetful to receive this stranger; and truly he received an angel unawares. He seems to have been a man of faith, one who knew the God of Israel– who knew Him even better than did Israel's king! When David, in terror, would have nothing more to do with the ark, Obed-edom opened his door and bid the God of Israel welcome. Truly it might be said, "I have not seen such great faith, no, not in Israel." In this unexpected way, blessing entered this Gentile house; no, God Himself entered, and with Him all blessing. It was but a transient stoppage of the ark, a three months' sojourn; but God Himself had taken up His abode, and He would not depart. No doubt all kinds of blessing came in, temporal and spiritual; and these did not leave. What a gainer Obed-edom became by this failure of David! Through David's fall, salvation came to this Gentile! God was not unrighteous to forget his work of faith. Verily he had his reward. It was a high one. David was a loser, but Obed-edom was a gainer. Jerusalem was a loser, but Gibeah was a gainer! Thus wonderful are the ways and works of God! Now turn to the lessons.

I. HOW GOD PUNISHES IRREVERENCE. It was irreverence in Uzzah to put forth his hand. God had provided for the carrying of the ark by Levites. He will not allow this to be encroached upon. He will not permit men to do evil that good may come; or to be judges of what is right, when He Himself has spoken. Beware of irreverence in the things of God; irreverence in church; in touching holy vessels; irreverence as to the name, or book, or day of God. Woe to the irreverent! They are Uzzahs, and shall know it at length, though they be long spared.

II. HOW GOD'S PEOPLE MISINTERPRET HIS DEALINGS. David did so. He shrank from the ark; he dreaded it; he shrank from God; he dreaded Him; he went back to Jerusalem without that for which he had specially gone forth; all through misconstruing this judgment upon Uzzah and his irreverence. God in smiting Uzzah did not mean to repel or terrify David; He merely wished to warn– to check undue familiarity. David in haste and unbelief supposed it to mean that God was frowning upon him– that God was a hard Master– eager to take advantage of every slip or stumble. Thus David wronged Jehovah.

III. HOW MUCH THEY LOSE BY THIS MISINTERPRETATION. Professing to shun Uzzah's presumption, they fall into David's unbelief; and like David they lose the honor and the blessing which might have been theirs. Such is the way in which hundreds lose the blessings of the Gospel. They misinterpret God and His dealings; they flee from Him, they doubt Him, they suspect Him; and so peace is lost, fellowship is lost, God Himself is kept out of the soul.

IV. HOW MUCH THEY GAIN WHO RECEIVE GOD SIMPLY. While David was the loser, Obed-edom was the gainer. He was not afraid of God. The ark came knocking at his door asking admittance, and he gladly received it. And with the ark, God came in, and with God all blessing. Everything prospered in his house now that God had come in. See how God can overrule the unbelief and failures of his people.

1. Beware of flying from God, or shutting out God. He comes to you and knocks; be you Jew or Gentile. Do not be alarmed. It is a friend, not an enemy.

2. Let in God. Both into heart and home. Let God dwell in you and in your house. Bid Him welcome. Do not be forgetful to entertain Him. He comes in love. Fury is not in Him. He is seeking entrance for Himself, and shelter for His ark among the sons of men. Let Him not pass by your door. Go out to meet Him, and bid Him welcome. He will bless you.

02.1.14. The Restoration of the Banished

BIBLE THOUGHTS & THEMES by Horatius Bonar THE RESTORATION OF THE BANISHED

"For we must die, and are as water spilled on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again; neither does God respect any person; yet does he devise means, that his banished are not expelled from Him." – 2 Samuel 14:14

Such is "the wise woman's" argument, or rather Joab's, addressed to king David, in order to persuade him to be reconciled to Absalom. God does not deal with us as you are dealing with your son, though we have deserved his anger. He punishes, yet he devises means for the canceling of the punishment and the restoration of his exiles. He is just, yet the Savior. Mark the woman's statement.

I. All of us must die eventually. This is the law, the inevitable, inexorable law; not of nature or fate, but of God. "Unto dust shall you return;" "It is appointed unto men once to die." This is no probability, but a certainty, a necessity; greater than that the sun will rise and set tomorrow. "He died," is the conclusion of each man's history. Our world's story is one of death. It might be Methuselah's nine hundred or David's seventy, but it is death at last. Even when the Son of God took our nature, he must die. None have escaped this, except two; none shall, except those who shall be alive when Christ comes. You may have health, friends, riches, honors, but you must eventually die. When, where, how, you know not.

II. We are as water spilled on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again. Man lies down and rises not. He is not like some building, which when ruined may be re-erected; nor like fallen fruit, that may be gathered up; but like water, which mingles with the soil and cannot be laid hold of. He mixes with the earth, and cannot raise himself, nor be raised by his fellows. He passes away and returns not. Look at the churchyard, there is the water spilled on the ground. Look at earth's battlefield, there is the water spilled. Look at the depths of ocean, which have swallowed up tens of thousands, there is the water spilled. Not one drop has yet been gathered up of all that has been spilled since the world began, except one drop, one precious drop– even Him who saw no corruption. No grave has given up its dust. Each slumbering atom lies until the great morning. We may walk among and weep over them, and raise monuments with names and epitaphs, but we cannot gather them up. There they remain until He comes, who is the resurrection and the life, to put forth His hand and take up each forgotten particle.

III. God does not respect people. In His sight all are alike, as sinners, as creatures, as sons of Adam, as dying men– young or old, low or high. He cannot be bribed to spare. He accepts no man's person. The sickbed and the death-bed are spread for all. The tomb opens for all; the simple grass it may be, or some rich marble monument, but still it is a tomb, a receptacle for human bones and dust. No ornaments can make it otherwise. You must die, is the recorded sentence, and God makes no exceptions.

IV. He devises means for the restoration of His banished ones. He is righteous, and will not palliate sin, nor repeal His sentence. Yet He does not leave us without hope. Mark here, 1. His banished ones. We are God’s banished ones, no longer in our father’s house or the king’s palace, cast out like Adam from Paradise, or Cain from God’s presence, or Absalom from Jerusalem, or Israel from Canaan. Sin has done it all. The brand of exile is upon us; it is God himself who has banished us. Elsewhere we are described as prodigals leaving our Father’s house, here as criminals banished from His presence. O man, you are an exile! Perhaps you do not feel your loneliness, you have got familiarized with the place of exile, nevertheless you are a banished man, banished from Him who made you and in whose favor is life.

2. God’s love to His banished ones. He has expressed His displeasure against their rebellion by banishing them, yet He has not forgotten them. He pities them, yearns over them, beckons them back. Distance has not erased their names from his paternal heart. No other may pity them, but he does. The Father sees his prodigals in the far off country; their misery, loneliness of heart, weariness, call forth his pity. He stretches out his hands, and the words of his lips are, "Come unto me," return, return.

3. God’s design to restore His banished ones. He has a purpose of grace. The good pleasure of his goodness shows itself in a gracious design, a plan of mingled sovereignty and goodwill, righteousness and grace. He has resolved that they shall not remain afar off. His purpose shall stand.

4. His means for restoring His banished ones. These are not stated here, but the Bible is the revelation of these. He spares not His Son, but sends Him in quest of the exiles. He comes into the land of banishment, lies in an exile’s cradle, becomes a banished man for them, lives a banished life, endures an exile’s shame, dies an exile’s death, is buried in an exile’s tomb. He takes our place of banishment that we may take His place of honor and glory in the home of His Father and our Father. Such is the exchange between the exile and the exile’s divine substitute. Though rich, for our sakes He becomes poor. Though at home, He comes into banishment, that we may not be expelled forever. And here, in connection with our restoration through a substitute, there are three questions.

(1.) Will the Father accept a substitute? Yes, He will; no, He has! His purpose of grace has been carried out by His providing the Substitute. He has sent His Son! He has sent Solomon to seek Absalom, to bear Absalom’s penalty. He has not spared His Son that He may spare us.

(2.) Is the Son willing to become a substitute? Will Solomon leave Jerusalem and David’s palace, and take the place of the banished Absalom? He will. No, He has done it! He has come down in quest of us. He has borne our sins.

(3.) Are you willing to take this substitute? He has come. He offers the exchange– "Give me your guilt and take my righteousness." You rebellious son, you banished Absalom, you hater of your heavenly Father and conspirer against His government, will you not return? Your Father’s heart yearns over you, He longs to have you back. Return, return! If not, He weeps over you as over Jerusalem; and when you die He cries out, "O Absalom, my son, my son!" THE FAREWELL GIFT When they had crossed, Elijah said to Elisha, "Tell me, what can I do for you before I am taken from you?" "Let me inherit a double portion of your spirit," Elisha replied. "You have asked a

difficult thing," Elijah said, "yet if you see me when I am taken from you, it will be yours– otherwise not." As they were walking along and talking together, suddenly a chariot of fire and horses of fire appeared and separated the two of them, and Elijah went up to heaven in a whirlwind. 2 Kings 2:9-11 This is the parting of two friends; of the master and the servant, Elijah and Elisha. They journey together, they cross Jordan together, they come up to the gate of heaven together. They must separate; the one to go up to heaven, the other to remain a little longer here. They part, not in anger like Paul and Barnabas, but like David and Jonathan– in love. Elijah speaks first, and his love to his faithful companion shows itself in the words, "Tell me, what can I do for you before I am taken from you?" All that he possesses, all that is in his power, he will give. But Elisha's request goes beyond what he had expected, or what he could grant. "You have asked a hard thing," a thing beyond my power to give; a thing which only God can give. I must refer you to Him; but I am permitted to give you this sign, "if you see me when taken;" that is to be the token that God grants your request; if not, then the request cannot be granted. The sign was given. Elisha saw his master ascend; no, was allowed to obtain the mantle of his master, in token of his receiving his spirit. And acknowledging this sign, he rends his own clothes into two parts, as if putting his former self aside and putting on Elijah. But the request of Elisha is a striking one. It was not what Elijah expected or could grant; but it was in sympathy with his own feelings, and he therefore referred it to God. It was for the Spirit– that Spirit that rested on and dwelt in Elijah– no, a double portion of that Spirit. He admired and loved his master; and his desire was to be like him; no, to get beyond him; to rise higher; to do and say greater things than Elijah said or did. In this narrative we find, in Elisha, the indication of such things as the following–

I. SPIRITUAL SYMPATHY. He is of one mind and spirit with his master. He has been witness of his life and doings; he sees the spirit which has pervaded all his words and deeds; not merely the spirit of power and miracles, but of holiness, and zeal, and prayerfulness, and boldness. Sympathizing with all these, he longs to have the same mind; to be filled with the same spirit. How well for us if our sympathies were thus with the men in whom the Spirit of God dwells or has dwelt in ages past! Not with this world, nor with the spirit of the world, but with the world to come, and with the spirit of it, should our sympathies be. Not with the men of the world's genius, or science, or learning; not with earth's poets or philosophers; but with prophets and apostles. Whatever there is of truth and beauty in Homer, or Plato, or Demosthenes, or Shakespeare, or Bacon, or Milton, or Wordsworth, or Tennyson, let us accept; but let our spiritual sympathies ascend far higher; let us realize our true oneness with Enoch, and Elijah, and Elisha, and Isaiah, and Ezekiel; our fellowship with that Holy Spirit which dwelt in them. The sympathies of this age are confessedly not with prophets and apostles. These are looked on as fragments of obsolete antiquity and old-fashioned narrow-mindedness. Let us, however, go back to these ancient times and men, not concerned to be "abreast of the age" if we be "abreast" of the Spirit.

II. HOLY IMITATIVENESS. His desire is to be like Elijah. He wishes not merely to have "the Spirit," but "your spirit," the spirit that dwelt in Elijah. To be like him in the divine features of his character; like him in the possession of the Spirit and in that special form in which he possessed it; this was what he sought. There is certainly but one great model; but there are subordinate ones also. Paul said, "Be followers of me," and the eleventh of Hebrews is a collection of models, a book of patterns, in each of which we may find something to copy. While copying Christ, then, let us not overlook the inferior models, either among the inspired men of Bible-days, or the uninspired

worthies of later times. May the spirit of Elijah, and Paul, and John rest on us; the spirit also of Wycliffe and Huss, of Luther and Calvin, of Knox, and Rutherford, and Whitefield, and McCheyne.

III. DIVINE AMBITION. Elijah was not only full of admiration for his master, not only wished to be like him, but desired to get far beyond him. He asked a "double portion" of his spirit. This is true ambition; this is coveting earnestly the best gifts of which Paul speaks, and in connection with which he points out the more excellent way of "charity," in which especially Elisha seems to have risen higher than his master, Elisha's ministry being more one of love than Elijah's. In such things as these let us be ambitious. There is no fear of aiming too high or seeking too much. Let us not give way to the false humility which says, "Oh that we had but the hundredth part of what Elijah had!" Let us rather at once, with Elisha, seek to have far more. Let us seek a double portion of his spirit. This is true humility. It is desiring to be what God wishes us to be. It is honoring his fullness and his generosity. It is acknowledging the extent of blessing in reserve; reckoning on it as quite illimitable, and therefore not confining ourselves to what others have had before us, but going up into the divine fullness, for far more than has ever yet been obtained even by the fullest.

IV. QUIET EXPECTATION. He speaks and acts like one who fully expected to get what he asked. Elijah had referred him to God for "the hard thing" he had asked; it was in God's hand alone. "It is not mine to give" (as if anticipating the Lord's words). Elisha owns the divine sovereignty, and is calm; but he realizes the divine love, and expects. He believes, and therefore does not make haste, but goes quietly on beside his master to see the end. He believes, and therefore he assures himself that God is not likely to be less gracious than his master, nor to deny him what Elijah would gladly give if he could. Let us believe! Have faith in God. Trust Him for much, for he is able to do for us exceeding abundantly above all we ask or think.

V. CONSCIOUS POSSESSION. He accepts the sign: he sees the prophet caught up; he seizes his mantle, and returns by the way he came, conscious of having received the "double portion." He believes, and therefore he speaks and acts. The sign promised has been given; can he doubt that the thing promised is also given? He may have nothing new in feeling to corroborate it, but that matters not. He has it in simple faith in the bare word of the true God. The "double portion" is mine, he says to himself; and he goes back to exercise his prophetical calling, in the calm consciousness of possessing more than his master did. What is Jordan to him now? A stroke of the mantle divides it; and henceforth his life is to be one of mighty and gracious miracle. Let us speak and act as men who believe that God fulfills His word to us. Let us trust that word when we use it. There is more in it than in Elijah's mantle. It is living and divine. Let us not blunt or deaden it by our lack of confidence in its power.

02.1.15. Diverse Kinds of Conscience

BIBLE THOUGHTS & THEMES by Horatius Bonar DIVERSE KINDS OF CONSCIENCE

"The former governors....had laid heavy burdens on the people, demanding a daily ration of food and wine, besides a pound of silver. Even their assistants took advantage of the people. But because of my fear of God, I did not act that way." Nehemiah 5:15 When Joseph was dealing with his brethren he said, "This do, and live; for I fear God" (Genesis 42:18). Such was Joseph's motive. So when Nehemiah kept aloof from the evil ways of others, he gave his reason, "But because of my fear of God, I did not act that way." Here, then, is Nehemiah's principle of action, both in what he did and in what he did not do. The fear of God. This was the one thing that kept him right and prevented his turning aside to the right or left. Of the unrighteous it is said, The fear of God is not before his eyes. Of the righteous, The fear of God is before his eyes. This is the great feature of difference between the two. It was this that operated, and influenced all his proceedings, that molded his life. He was, as we say, a God-fearing man; and he showed this in what he did and in what he did not do.

He was conscientious, not only as to actual duties, but as to responsibilities. Here then we have true conscientiousness; not merely natural uprightness of character, but the desire to have a conscience void of offence towards God and man. It is conscientiousness arising from the sense of God's presence, the wish to please Him, the fear of offending Him, the desire to do all that is well-pleasing in His sight. As the love of Christ constrains, so the fear of God makes conscientious. Are we thoroughly conscientious? Is our conscience constantly at work? Not in the spirit of bondage or terror, but in that child-like gentleness and tenderness of conscience that desires to have God's approbation in everything we do, and every word we speak. What a regulator to our life and conscience would be this fear of God! Let us consider the different spheres and operations of conscience. There is,

I. The RELIGIOUS conscience. By this I mean the conscience exercising itself in the things of religion, in religious belief and actings. In our dealings with God, in the service of God, in our testimony for God, let us be thoroughly conscientious, not formal, superficial, perfunctory, but conscientious. If I act religiously simply because others do so, or because it involves my good name, or because of habit, I am not acting conscientiously. Let our religion mold our conscience, and let our conscience penetrate and pervade our religion. I do not merely mean that a religious man should be a conscientious man, but that he should carry his conscientiousness into all that concerns religion. He should be alive, not only to duty but to responsibility.

II. The SECULAR conscience. Though not of the world, we are still in the world. We are hourly coming into contact with the world in public and private. Every movement of our daily life comes, more or less, into contact with the world; it may be collision, or it may be communion and mutual help in common things; let us in all these be thoroughly conscientious, in what we do or in what we abstain from doing. Never let the world say of us, in reference to either word or deed, There goes a religious man without a conscience. In all secular and social things let us manifest a conscientious

spirit, and show to others that the fear of God is before our eyes. Let that fear regulate our daily communion and walk. Let a sense of responsibility toward God and our fellow men be ever on edge.

III. The COMMERCIAL conscience. By this I mean conscience throwing itself into all our business transactions, our buying or our selling, our giving or receiving, our bargains, our speculations, whether merchant, lawyer, banker, farmer, tradesman, mechanic, or whatever our worldly calling may be. Let us take counsel with conscience continually. Let the fear of God be before our eyes in the counting-house, the shop, the warehouse, the market, or wherever our calling may place us. Hard driven bargains, advantage taken of men's necessities, grinding of the poor, over-charges, unjust measures, dishonest statements as to goods sold or purchased– these are not things into which conscience can enter. Let every man of business, on whatever scale, be out and out conscientious, having the fear of God before his eyes.

IV. The FAMILY conscience. Into each circle of life, outer and inner, conscience must enter. The fear of God must reign in the family. We must be conscientious in our family dealings, making each member of it feel that we are acting in the fear of God. Let us be conscientious in our family rules, at our family table, in our treatment of our children, and in their education. Be conscientious with them and before them. Never let them say that we do an unconscientious deed. Conscience says to each father and mother, 'Train up your child in the way he should go.' Oh, be conscientious with your children! They know what conscience is, how conscience operates and shows itself. Let the fear of God be stamped on all family arrangements. Servants, be conscientious to your masters, and masters, to your servants.

V. The PRIVATE conscience. I must make conscience of all my individually private actings. I must be conscientious in all personal things, when alone, unheard, unseen. I must be conscientious in my closet as well as in my family. I must be conscientious about my solitary, hidden actions. The fear of God must fill every chamber of my heart. I must be upright before myself and before God.

VI. The LOCAL conscience. I must be conscientious everywhere, at home or abroad. I must carry my conscience with me when I travel, just as when I was at home. I read sometimes of Christian travelers spending their Sabbath in sight-seeing? I find that some think it no evil to climb mount Sinai or mount Hermon on the Sabbath because these are sacred scenes. They would not climb Snowdon or Ben Lomond, but they would climb these foreign mountains! What sort of local conscience is this? Ought not a Christian to carry his conscience into every place, and when tempted to do abroad on the Sabbath what he would not do at home, to be able to say, "But because of my fear of God, I did not act that way."

Cultivate a tender conscience, an enlightened conscience, a conscience void of offence; not morbid, or diseased, or crooked, or one-sided, or censorious, or arrogant, or proud. But simple, and bold, and sensitive. Beware of a blunted or seared conscience. Shun compromises where principle is concerned; they always leave a stain upon the conscience. Let the fear of God reign in you always and everywhere. Beware of the fear of man. Cultivate the fear of God. The gospel, as well as the law, makes demands on your conscience. Conscience speaks to you in the name of Jesus Christ as well as in that of God.

02.1.16. Man's Dislike of a Present God

BIBLE THOUGHTS & THEMES by Horatius Bonar MAN'S DISLIKE OF A PRESENT GOD "They say unto God, Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of your ways." – Job 21:14 The men who speak thus are not atheists. They do not say there is no God. They may be scoffers, blasphemers, ungodly, but they are not atheists. They whom Job describes are worldly men. The world, with its riches, its possessions, its pleasures, its friendships, is their all. They have nothing beyond it, and they do not wish anything beyond it. They are satisfied. They love the world, and are resolved to make the best of it that they can. When anything comes in between it and them, or threatens to prevent their enjoying it, such as pain, or sickness, or death, they thrust it away. They do not ask whether the intervention by God may not, after all, be true and important; it mars their enjoyment of the world, and so must not be for a moment entertained. In our text we have WORLDLINESS VERSUS GOD. For it is worldliness that is here speaking out. It is not man contending against man because of injury or encroachment, it is not man protesting against pain, or mortality, or life's brevity, it is man protesting against God. God seems to him as a dark shadow overclouding all his joy. How is this?

I. Not because God has injured him. He does not pretend that any wrong has been done or threatened to be done. He does not speak as an injured man, nor plead against God because of injustice.

II. Not because God hates him. He has no reason to conclude such a thing, either from what God has said or done. He cannot point to any mark of hatred.

III. Not because God has interfered with his prosperity. He is evidently a prosperous man, mighty in power; neither is the rod of God upon him (Job 21:7 and Job 21:9). It is not because of these things that he says to God, Depart from us. Indeed, he does not hide his reason altogether, "we desire not the knowledge of your ways." He has no liking for God or his ways, he looks on him as an obstruction, an unpleasant visitor, a dark cloud, a spoiler of his pleasure. But these worldly men in Job's time were but a specimen of the men of many ages– our own as well as others. In these different ages we find a variation in the feeling and in its expression. Sometimes there is more of infidelity in it, or even direct atheism, sometimes less. But in all there is a desire to get rid of God, God personally, though perhaps not God abstractly; to thrust him into a corner of his universe, where he will least disturb the children of men. In the present day we find this state of feeling widely spread and working, not only in the world but in the church. Men who call themselves Christians lend themselves to the outcry, "Depart from us." At the bottom of all this feeling is the love of the world. It is this that prompts men to seek to get rid of God.

I. They try to get rid of GOD HIMSELF. They tolerate Him afar off, but not near. They tolerate a religion of uncertainty, but not one of certainty, or fellowship, or conscious nearness. They would let Him alone, if He would let them alone; but if not, they raise the cry, "Depart." An abstraction, a creed, a system of theology, they bear with, because it does not interfere with their worldliness; but God Himself can only be tolerated as a shadowy, impalpable, far distant being. To anything else

they say, "depart."

II. They try to get rid of CHRIST. Some superhuman being, such as Paganism delighted in, they tolerate; but not the Christ of Scripture, the Word made flesh. A Christ that will assist them in their great endeavor to keep God at a distance they will admire and sing of; but the Christ that brings God near, that makes His love a reality, and His favor and forgiveness a certainty, they cannot away with.

III. They try to get rid of the HOLY SPIRIT. They dislike the supernatural, and do not wish to hear of a world outside their own, from which influences and operations are continually coming to modify things here, or transform men, or protest against sin. The Holy Spirit, as the special expression and representative of the supernatural and divine, in connection with man's nature and soul, they either refuse to believe in, or treat him as a mere afflatus, a breath, an influence.

IV. They try to get rid of God's BOOK. The Bible is God's visible representative and commissioner here. It is the silent protest in every house in favor of God. And hence it is set aside by many, or only read for its poetry, its morality, its antiquity. To believe as little of it as possible is the object of multitudes; to cast doubt upon its authenticity; to reject its inspiration– to treat it as not a book for this advanced age– these are the ways in which men are seeking to get rid of God's book.

V. They try to get rid of God's LAW. They say it was not for us but for the Jews; they tell us that the morality of Socrates was higher than that of Moses; they (in a more refined fashion) speak of it as buried in the grave of Christ; so that we have got past its exactions and sanctions. No restraint on us; the law is dead!

Thus the age tries to get rid of God. It does so, because it dreads Him; it has no relish for Him; His presence is a gloomy shadow; His nearness would interfere with all worldly schemes and pleasures. Therefore men say, "Depart." The old Pagans never said to Jupiter, Depart; for they looked on him as in sympathy with their sins, and lusts, and pleasure. But to the living and true God men say, "Depart", because they feel that they cannot have both Him and their sins. They cannot clothe Him with the robes of their own worldliness.

Yet He has not departed. In love He lingers, seeking to bless. He knows the blank His departure makes, and that nothing can fill it. Therefore He lingers; yearning over the sons of men; entreating them to take Him for their portion and all.

02.1.17. True and False Consolation

BIBLE THOUGHTS & THEMES by Horatius Bonar TRUE AND FALSE CONSOLATION

"So how can you console me with your nonsense? Nothing is left of your answers but falsehood!" – Job 21:34

Man needs consolation– "man who is born to trouble;" specially a man in Job's condition; overwhelmed with calamity. Not one day's consolation, but many; no, constant; for, what between the little cares and the large sorrows of life, its ripples, and its waves, and its breakers, there is no day exempt from trouble. Life has many burdens, heavy or light. But much depends,

(1.) On the state of mind in which the calamity finds us, or produces in us. Where irritation, murmuring, rebellion, and unbelief prevail, it is idle to speak of consolation. We are not in a fit state to receive it. We repel the hand and the medicine of the physician.

(2.) On the people who administer it. If they are not thoroughly trusted or respected; if they are suspected of selfishness, or insincerity, or unkindness, their words are useless, perhaps worse.

(3.) On the kind of consolation administered. Sometimes it is hastily and thoughtlessly poured in, or rather flung at us, as water is hastily snatched up and flung over a flame to extinguish it. Sometimes the most indiscriminate statements are made, and commonplace maxims uttered, as if anything would suit anybody, or everything would suit everybody. Much depends on these three things; as much on the last as any. In regard to this let us mark what is NOT consolation; for man is skillful in administering false consolation.

(1.) MERE SENTIMENTALISM is not consolation. This is often poured into the ears of sorrow; but this is not medicine; this is only the relief found in the intoxicating glass. Fine figures, poetical rhapsodies about the sorrows of life, these are dangerous things, they soothe for an hour, that is all.

(2.) Appeals to NATURAL SELF-LOVE will not do. How commonly do we hear a professed comforter reminding a sufferer of the multitude of his sorrows in order to make him feel as a martyr. All that thus appeals to pride, vanity, self, is worse than vain.

(3.) Taking refuge in FATALISM will not do. "We must submit," is the frequent language of the sufferer. This is not faith, but unbelief. It is man feeling himself overpowered by a hand stronger than his own; not falling back on love and wisdom.

(4.) Ascribing all to OUR OWN DESERT. Though there is truth in this, yet the way in which it is generally done is wrong. "If I had not deserved it, it would not have come." If we begin in this way, where shall we end? Our deservings! What is their measure? Hell! Let us be thankful that it is not according to our deservings that sorrow comes, but on a far higher principle. A sorrow may point to the kind of sin, or the seat of sin, but no sorrow of ours can measure the desert of sin; that is measured by the cross and sufferings of Christ alone.

(5.) Betaking one's self to PLEASURE will not do. This is the most wretched and perilous of opiates– it is "strong drink," "mixed wine," which ruins the soul while it makes us for a few hours forgetful of our sorrow. It is not in pleasure that we are to drown our grief; no, nor yet in business.

There is a vast difference between real consolation and unreal; between the true and the vain. It is of this that Job speaks. He needed consolation; never a man needed it more. He was thirsting for it. His friends came to administer it; but they failed. How and why? Because "in their answers there was falsehood." It was not the truth which they administered. There can be no real consolation, then, which is not founded upon the truth. It is the truth that comforts. There can be no consolation in a falsehood. A lie may heal our hurt slightly, but not effectually. The water of truth from the cup of truth can alone refresh, and heal, and console. That cup of truth is ever full.

(1.) There must be the true interpretation of God's ways. We must see their meaning, and bearing on us; what it is in us that they point to; and what God's purpose is in sending the calamity. We have to deal honestly both with ourselves and with God, asking what is God condemning in me? What sin is he seeking to extirpate? What truth to communicate? What scripture to illustrate?

(2.) There must be the true understanding and discrimination of our circumstances. We must know ourselves; and so apply well each dealing of the divine hand; tracing out the aim of each blow or each burden. The unforgiven sinner must not take hold of words that suit only the forgiven saint. There are words for all. Let us apply wisely, else the consolation will be vain.

(3.) There must be the right knowledge of God's character. No "consolation" or "answer" can be of any use which is not made to spring out of this. God is wise, God is great, God is holy, God is love. We must keep these things in mind in every dispensation.

It is the amount of TRUTH we speak that is the measure of the consolation imparted. It is not strong language nor soothing words that will do. Hence, in the day of trouble we should deal much with SCRIPTURE and its words. Then we are on sure ground. God's words are mighty for consolation; for he is the God of all consolation. The exhibition of CHRIST AND HIS FULLNESS is true consolation. The presentation of the SPIRIT AS THE COMFORTER– the Spirit and the Spirit's love, holy love– this is true consolation. At all times administer only truth, not error; but specially in the day of sorrow. Falsehood is not consolation; it is not peace; it is not medicine, but poison. Truth, the truth of God, that is consolation and strength.

02.1.18. Gain and Loss for Eternity

BIBLE THOUGHTS & THEMES by Horatius Bonar GAIN AND LOSS FOR ETERNITY "For what is the hope of the hypocrite, though he has gained, when God takes away his soul?" – Job 27:8 The word "hypocrite" means properly the "ungodly," and corresponds to the "wicked" and "unrighteous" of whom Job was speaking. To this passage, probably, our Lord refers when he asks, "What shall it profit a man, if he gains the whole world, and loses his soul?" Job asks, What becomes of the vain hope of the ungodly when this life is done? Whatever they may have of gain here, all is loss hereafter. This may be their "time to get," but that shall be their "time to lose." And their loss is not for a day, but forever. It is not all gain with the godly here. Paul says, "For whom I have suffered the loss of all things." He who casts in his lot with the people of God must prepare for loss as well as gain. He must count the cost beforehand, and be ready to pay it when the day comes for payment. There is the taking up of our cross and the denying self, and forsaking all. He loses,

(1.) This WORLD: whatever may be in it of pleasure, or satisfaction, or pomp, or gaiety, he loses; for he cannot have both worlds.

(2.) His NAME: perhaps he stood high in reputation with the men of this world, and had a name for many things; this he loses, for his name is cast out as evil.

(3.) His RELIGION: for the likelihood is that he had a sort of religion or religiousness like Saul of Tarsus; all this past religion of his must be left behind– it will serve him no more.

(4.) His GOODS: this may not always be demanded to the full extent, as in days of persecution; but still he must be prepared to part with everything; counting it no more his own. But his "hope" is never lost. He is "saved by hope"; his eye is on the "things hoped for"; "he abounds in hope." This well never runs dry. This treasure-house is never exhausted. Whatever of darkness there may rest on his present, his future brightens with "hope"; and that hope "makes not ashamed"; it contains the incorruptible and everlasting. And even now he has abundant compensation for loss and trial. Not so the "ungodly." He has indeed a "hope," a hope of being saved, or, at least, of not being lost; a hope of going to heaven, or, at least, of not going to hell. But his hope is not "the good hope through grace." It is a self-originated hope; an unscriptural hope; a groundless and unreasonable hope; a fallacious hope; a hope that will not be sickness- proof, nor deathbed proof; or if it be so, it perishes at death; it is wrapped up in his shroud, and buried in his grave; for it there is no resurrection.

Thus the one thing which seemed gain to him, goes from him at death; and all is loss, utter, infinite, irreparable, eternal loss! For him there is no morning, but only night; night without a star, or even a meteor-gleam. His losses cannot be enumerated or estimated, they are so many and so terrible. He loses such things as the following–

I. HIS SOUL. I might say his body too; for if the man is lost, then soul and body are gone. But it is the soul that is the special and supreme loss. The loss of that which moulders in the grave is after all subordinate, but the loss of that which cannot die is great beyond measure. He who has lost his

soul is poor indeed. Yet in the case of the ungodly man that fearful loss is incurred. He loses his soul! Not that the soul perishes or is annihilated. That would be some relief to the poor doomed victim of sin. The soul is lost, but cannot die. The loss of the soul consists in eternal condemnation and ruin. All is gone for which the soul existed. It exists now only for woe. Life is no longer life, for the soul cannot enjoy it. All that constituted life, true life, in time or eternity, is gone. Life is now become worse than death, for the soul is lost; lost in darkness, woe, anguish, and an endless hell; lost from God, and goodness, and blessedness, and from all holy beings forever and ever.

II. HEAVEN. The future state and place of blessedness has many names: a kingdom, an inheritance, a city, a new heaven. All of these are names of joy. "Heaven" is a noble and glorious name, embodying in it all that is excellent, and divine, and perfect. Its joy is perfect, its light is perfect, its holiness is perfect. Its songs are perfect, its service is perfect. It is day without night, it is the blessing without the curse. All this is lost to the ungodly. What a loss must a lost heaven be! To be shut out from such a kingdom, dispossessed of such an inheritance, no, made the heir of such sorrow and darkness– how infinitely woeful! Think, O man, amid all your losses, past or prospective, what a lost heaven must be! A lost kingdom, a lost city, a lost inheritance! Who can measure such a loss.

III. CHRIST. Yes, Christ is lost, and this is the heaviest loss of all. None like it, so infinite and so irreparable. This is the loss of losses, the woe of woes. A lost Christ! What can equal that! This is the loss of the ungodly. This loss is great, (1.) Because of what Christ is in himself– the glorious Immanuel; (2.) Because of what he has done on the cross; (3.) Because of his love; (4.) Because of his sympathy, and fellowship, and consolation; (5.) Because of his reward. This loss is indeed unutterable. Men do not see this, or think of it. Yet it shall one day be felt. In hell it shall be realized as the loss of losses, that which makes the place of woe so unutterably woeful. "I might have had Christ," will the lost sinner say, "but I would not have him, and now he is gone forever; I cannot have him now. Instead of Christ, I have Satan; instead of heaven, hell." Consider your losses, O you ungodly! They are unspeakable and eternal. Look at them now, and prevent them.

There is some little compensation now for such losses, in the world’s pleasure, or lust, or wealth. There shall be no compensation then. It will be unmingled woe, a cup of undiluted, unsweetened gall and wormwood. What a disappointment to you who have been hoping and hoping! To lie down with a false hope, and go up to the Judge expecting to be received! How dreadful the agony of such a disappointment! It is not too late. Your soul is not lost, heaven is not yet lost, Christ is not yet lost. All may yet be won! The gate stands wide open; go in, go in! God’s record stands still true concerning his Son; believe it and be saved.

02.1.19. Man's Misconceptions Works God

BIBLE THOUGHTS & THEMES by Horatius Bonar MAN’S MISCONCEPTIONS OF THE WORKS OF GOD "By them he judges the people." – Job 36:31 "By his mighty acts he governs the people." – Job 36:31 This verse suggests Acts 14:17, "He left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness." Both passages call on us to listen to the voice of God speaking to us through what are called "natural phenomena." By "judging" we understand more than inflicting judgment, more than sitting as judge, or sentencer, or executioner. It means "ruling" as well, wielding the scepter and governing. By "people" we specially understand the gentile or idolatrous nations of the earth; or generally the inhabitants of earth. Two things are here declared, first, that God judges the nations; secondly, that he does so by the changes and occurrences of nature.

I. He judges the peoples (or nations). This judging is not a thing of the past, or of the future merely; but of the present. He has been, and he is now "judging." Creation is past, the new creation is future, but governing is now. All are equally sure and true; and they who deny the present governing or the future interposition in the great day, might as well deny creation. God’s connection with earth is as close and as direct now as ever. Not so obvious or so visible, but quite as real. A thing does not need to be visible, or audible, or palpable in order to be direct and real. Many things are the latter which are not the former. The power of the silent and distant moon over the sea; of the atmosphere over all life; of the soul over the body in every movement: these are instances in point.

Only God’s connection with earth is more real and direct than these; for in Him we live and move and have our being. His purpose comes in contact with earth and its dwellers; not generally and by means of laws, but directly and minutely. His will, his voice, his hand, his arm, all come into contact with this world, as well as with all other worlds, the creations of his power. He has not left them alone. He sustains and rules as truly as he creates them. Not for a moment does he let go his hold. He is the governor among the nations. He rules by his power forever; his eyes behold the nations. He does according to his will in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth.

It is with no distant, unheeding God that we have to do; but with that God who fixes the bounds of our habitation, who counts our hairs, who feeds the ravens, notes a sparrow’s death, clothes the lilies of the field. He is nearer to us than the nearest earthly object or being; more closely in contact with us than we are with one another. All other links are as nothing compared with this; they are threads, this is an adamantine chain.

II. He judges the people by means of the changes of nature. We use "nature" for lack of a better word: we mean earth and sky with all their motions, and alternations, and transformations, great and small, all "natural phenomena" as they are called. These phenomena, or appearances, appear to us common things; by some ascribed to "chance", by others to "laws of nature." Here they are ascribed directly to God. They are His voice by which He speaks to us, His finger by

which He touches us, His rod by which He corrects us; His sword, by which He smites us. It seems to be the thought of many, that in none of these can we or ought we to recognize, directly and specially, the interposition of God; that it is fanaticism to interpret them so as to make them special messengers of God to us. But the words before us are very explicit, "By his mighty acts he governs the people." The things by which He is here said to judge and govern the people, are the common things of the day and year– the rain, the clouds, the lightning, and such like. He uses these as His voice in warning, or commanding, or chastising, or comforting. These common things do not come by chance, or at random, or by dead law, but go out from God as his messengers. Thus everything has a divine meaning and a heavenly voice. Let us listen and interpret and understand.

Summer speaks to us with its green fields and fragrant gardens; winter speaks to us with its ice and snow and frost. By these God judges the people. The pestilence, the famine, the earthquake, the lightning, the storm, the shipwreck, the overthrow of kingdoms and kings. Each of these has a special message to the nations– and to each of us. Let us see God drawing near to us in them– showing His care and love– manifesting an unwearied concern for our welfare.

Woe to us if we either misinterpret them, or refuse to interpret them at all. The common daily changes of personal or family life, all speak in the same way. Not only the sweeping calamity that carries off its hundreds, but the sickness, the pain, or the gentle indisposition, these have a voice to us. He that has an ear, let him hear! We disjoin God from creation, and so see nothing in it of divine life and power. We disjoin God from the changes of creation, and so find no meaning in these. We disjoin God from the beautiful or the terrible, and so realize nothing in them which overawes, or attracts, or purifies, or comforts. We have so learned to separate between God and the works of God, that we seem to imagine that they contradict each other. The fair sky, and the clear stream, and the green hills, all speak of divine goodness, and bring to us a gospel which can hardly be mistaken. But we have learned to deny the gracious meaning, and to say that all this beauty means nothing, and contains no message from God, and embodies no glad tidings of great joy. This separation of GOD from His works is one of the awful features of human unbelief. How much more of Him should we know, were we to interpret His works aright, and hear His voice in each, whether in love or discipline. These skies of His are not bent over us in beauty without a meaning. These seas of His do not roll for nothing. These flowers of His are not fragrant and fair for nothing. They do not say to us, God is your enemy, He hates you; but God is your friend, He pities you, yearns over you, wishes to make you happy. How full a gospel does creation preach to us, according to its kind and measure! The separation of the works of God from His WORD, is another sad feature of human unbelief. Creation and inspiration are in harmony. The Bible does not contradict the works of Jehovah. It means what they mean; and they mean what it means. Each little part of both speaks out most intelligibly. God wishes to be understood in both. Men would misinterpret both; they try to discover as little of God as they can in both. Yet both preach the same gospel. In both we see the goodness of God leading to repentance; in both we discern the loving-kindness of the Lord. The fact that we sinners are out of hell is one gospel; that we who should have been in hell, are dwellers on a fair and fruitful earth, is another; God in these ways showing that He has no pleasure in our death or misery, but in our life and joy.

02.1.20. The Two Cries and the Two Answers

BIBLE THOUGHTS & THEMES by Horatius Bonar THE TWO CRIES AND THE TWO ANSWERS

"There be many that say, Who will show us any good? Lord, lift up the light of your countenance upon us." – Psalms 4:6

Many are asking, "Who can show us any good?" Let the light of your face shine upon us, O Lord. – Psalms 4:6

There are two cries here– the cry of the sons of men, and the cry of the sons of God. They are very unlike. Yet they are both importunate. They go up unceasingly. Earth is full of them. Wherever you go, you hear either the one or the other. They are the cries of men like ourselves; of men who have souls to fill; who know what sorrow is, and what is joy. The men who utter them are made by the same God; placed in the same world; heirs of a common mortality; moving on to one eternity. We find them often side by side; in one city, one village, one family. Not the Hindu using one cry, and the European the other; but intermingled; the two cries constantly going up from the same places.

I. THE CRY OF THE SONS OF MEN. "Who will show us good." Let us mark what it is, and what it means.

(1.) It is the cry of EMPTINESS. These sons of men feel that there is something lacking. They were not made for this perpetual hunger and thirst. They are empty, and therefore they cry. They are poor and needy; but find no supply.

(2.) It is the cry of WEARINESS. They who utter it are seeking rest, but finding none; they labor and are heavy laden. They would sincerely rest, but know not how or where. UNREST! This is their portion. Unrest here; sad prelude of the eternal unrest, the never-ending weariness.

(3.) It is the cry of DARKNESS. All is darkness and blindness. They grope about, not knowing which way to look, or to turn; and they cry, show us, 'Show us something; for our eyes are blind; we have tried in vain to see.'

(4.) It is the cry of HELPLESSNESS. They have tried many expedients; tried to create good for themselves, or to get it from others; but in vain. They find themselves helpless.

(5.) It is the cry of EARNESTNESS. It comes forth often amid bitter tears and groans. Men are bent on being happy; they would do or give anything for happiness. They are mistaken, yet in earnest. They would take any good, if they could get it.

(6.) It is the cry of DESPAIR. Who, who, who? They have tried every one, everything. All in vain. They are emptier, hungrier, thirstier, sadder than at first.

(7.) It is a LOUD AND UNIVERSAL cry. Many. Yes, the whole world. It is Esau's loud and bitter cry reverberating through the earth. It is the cry of the many, not of the few. The world is unhappy. It

has no rest. It is thirsty, and knows not where to drink; it is hungry, and knows not where to find bread. It weeps, and knows not how to get its tears dried! Every man walks in a vain show; going about asking, "Who will show me any good?"

II. THE CRY OF THE SONS OF GOD. "Let the light of your face shine upon us, O Lord." Very different in all respects. They know what is written, "He has showed you, O man, what is good."

(1.) It is the cry of the FEW, not of the many. For the sons of God are a little flock. One here, and another there; not like fields of grain, nor gardens full of flowers, but plants in a desert– a few scattered ones here and there.

(2.) It is a CERTAIN AND DEFINITE cry. They know what they need, and how to get their need supplied. They do not grope about on all sides; they go straight to the source.

(3.) It is a cry TO GOD. It is God alone in whom their hope is. They go straight to Him. Whom have I in heaven but you? He is their portion and their all.

(4.) It is a cry FOR LIGHT. They have some light already, but they desire more. We have a sun, but we need it daily; more and more sunshine!

(5.) It is a cry for light FROM THE FACE OF GOD. Light! Light from God! Light from the face of God. The light of God’s countenance! This means that God was to gladden them with His favor and love, of which the beneficent smile of the countenance was the expression. Lift up the light of your countenance on me, is our lifelong prayer!

(6.) It is a cry which WILL BE ANSWERED. The cry of the sons of men goes up in vain. They speak to the rocks, and get merely the echo of their own voice. But this cry is heard; daily, constantly. Light streams down and into them. God’s countenance is their sun. There is health in it– "healing in His beams."

What a contrast between the two cries and the two answers! O you sons of men, how long will you love vanity? How long will you doat upon this vain world, and worship it as your idol? How long will you treat its broken cisterns as if they were the fountains of living water? Oh, love not the world! What will its good things profit in the day of the Lord? Will its pleasures cheer a death-bed, or brighten the gloom of the grave? What is the ball-room when "its flowers are fled, its garlands dead?" What can the music and the dance do for you when sickness comes, or the last trumpet sounds? Will that gay dress of yours do for a shroud? Or will it suffice instead of "the fine linen which is the righteousness of the saints? How will these "revelings and banquetings" appear to you in the retrospect of time, still more in the retrospect of eternity? What will you think of your "idle words," your "foolish talking and jesting," your "filthy communication," your riotous mirth, your luxurious feasting, when you stand confronted with the last enemy, or before the Judge of all? You have gone from scene to scene, from gaiety to gaiety, from party to party, from vanity to vanity, from novel to novel, from ball to ball, in the dreary emptiness of your poor aching hearts, crying, "Who will show us any good?" and when the end comes, what is your gain? Is it heaven, or is it hell? Is it joy, or is it woe?

02.1.21. Deliverance From Deep Waters

BIBLE THOUGHTS & THEMES by Horatius Bonar DELIVERANCE FROM DEEP WATERS "He sent from above, he took me, he drew me out of many waters." Psalms 18:16 "He reached down from heaven and rescued me; he drew me out of deep waters." – Psalms 18:16 We take these words as the expression, (1.) of David's experience;

(2.) of Christ's experience;

(3.) of every Christian's experience. In all these we learn much of God; David's God; the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; our own God. For it is His character that is thus unfolded to us. He is the God of all grace; no, God is love; in Him there is help, and with Him is plenteous redemption; He it is that redeems Israel out of all his troubles. It is He who is above; it is He who sends from above; it is He who reaches down; it is He who rescues us– and that out of many waters.

Such is the God with whom we have to do! He is infinite in power and grace. To know Him is life eternal; to rest upon His love and power is the true strength and solace of the soul! The knowledge of ourselves troubles and casts down; the knowledge of this God relieves and lifts up. The great use of knowing ourselves is, not that we may be qualified for receiving and being received by Him, but that we may become more and more dissatisfied with self, and more and more drawn to Him who is altogether unlike self, more and more emptied of everything; so that as empty vessels we may be in a state for containing Him and His fullness. For it is our emptiness that attracts and makes us suitable for His fullness; and it is in knowing self that we are emptied of self. We decrease, He increases.

I. DAVID'S experience. This whole psalm refers to this subject; and his whole life is an exemplification of the text. He was constantly in the deep and many waters, from the day that Samuel anointed him king. First Saul, then the Philistines, then Absalom, threatened to overwhelm him. They compassed him about; they raged against him; they poured their billows over him; until he seemed sinking in the waters; not once nor twice, but many times. In each successive peril God drew near to save; He sent from above, He laid hold of him, He drew him out of many waters.

Jehovah's love and power never failed. Low as David went down, they went down lower still. Whether as the young shepherd of Bethlehem he was exposed to any danger except that of the lion and the bear, we know not; but no sooner is he named king than enemies arise; the floods assail him. That which we should have expected to be the termination of trouble and danger, stirred up these, introduced him into conflict; raised the storm; drew the rage of enemies around. What could David have done, had it not been for Jehovah his God! His arm, His shield, His sword– they were his protection and deliverance.

II. MESSIAH'S experience. These psalms of David are the psalms of the Son of David; and this psalm is specially His resurrection psalm. All His life He was exposed to foes. He was made to feel the wrath of God, as the bearer of our sins, "Your wrath lies hard upon me, you have afflicted me with all your waves, all your waves and billows have gone over me." It was so during His life, as

when He said, "Now is my soul troubled;" it was so in Gethsemane, when He said, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death;" it was so on the cross, when He cried, "My God;" it was so when He lay under the power of death. But "Jehovah reached down from heaven and rescued me; he drew me out of deep waters." He "delivered Him because He delighted in Him." As our sin-bearer, our curse-bearer, our death-bearer, He had Jehovah's wrath poured upon Him. This was the depth out of which he was plucked by the Father's hand; and His deliverance is ours. It was as our Surety, our Substitute, that He was drawn out of many waters.

III. The CHRISTIAN'S experience. By nature he is in these many waters, though at first he knows it not. "Under wrath" is the description of his condition; "the wrath of God abides upon him." He is not sensible to this. His eyes and ears are closed. He sees not, hears not the roaring waves of wrath. Like Jonah, he is asleep in the storm. When the Holy Spirit shows him where he is, and what he is, terrors seize him. He is overwhelmed, and knows not how to help himself. All help is vain. He looks upward, and sees him who was drawn out of many waters, and Him who drew Him. He remembers the words, Whoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved. He appeals to that name; and forthwith the help comes down, and he is delivered, and henceforth his song of grateful joy is, "God reached down from heaven and rescued me; he drew me out of deep waters." So in after conflicts; so in daily troubles; so in times of sorrow; so on his bed of death; and so in the day when his body shall be delivered from death and the grave. Thus he ascribes all to God, from first to last; the sending, the taking, the drawing; all are of God. Salvation is of the Lord. Of Him, and to Him, and through Him are all things. Yes, Jehovah saves! He does not help us to save ourselves; He SAVES! However far down we may be; however deep the waters; however near the perishing– He can rescue! His arm is not shortened that it cannot save; nor grown so feeble that it should fail to grasp us or to draw us up. His is salvation to the uttermost; deliverance from the lowest hell.

All true religion must begin with salvation. God's hand must lay hold on us and lift us up. Untrue religion may begin in any way; and can go on without salvation, without pardon, without reconciliation, without any putting forth of the mighty power of God. But the true, the real, the divine, must begin with this conscious rescue, this plucking from the waves of wrath; and must, though perhaps with feeble voice, sing Messiah's song, "He reached down from heaven and rescued me; he drew me out of deep waters."

02.1.22. The Excellency Divine Loving Kindness

BIBLE THOUGHTS & THEMES by Horatius Bonar THE EXCELLENCY OF THE DIVINE LOVING-KINDNESS

"How excellent is your loving-kindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of your wings." – Psalms 36:7

"How priceless is your unfailing love! Both high and low among men find refuge in the shadow of your wings." – Psalms 36:7

"How precious is your unfailing love, O God! All humanity finds shelter in the shadow of your wings." – Psalms 36:7 There are two special things, fitting in the one to the other, (1.) Divine loving-kindness; (2.) Human trust.

I. DIVINE LOVING-KINDNESS. "How excellent is your loving-kindness, O God!" David speaks as one who had known it, who had tasted that the Lord is gracious. He is here telling his experience to God himself, but in the hearing of man, that he may know it too. He speaks because he believed and felt. His history had been throughout an exhibition of the loving-kindness of the Lord, as indeed is the history of each of us. And this loving-kindness is genuine, and true, and deep. There is no pretense about it. It is as true as God himself. "God is love," "God is rich in mercy," "God so loved the world." There is nothing more real than the love of God. But it is not of its reality that David here speaks. He takes that for granted. No one who knows Jehovah could doubt it. But it is of its excellence that he speaks. God’s love is such an "excellent and glorious thing"! It is "precious" beyond all gems or gold, for that is the meaning of the word. It is the most costly and rare of all things. It is beyond all price and all excellence of earth. What can equal in costliness the love of God! Its preciousness is measured by the gift it gave, and by the innumerable gifts contained in that one– life, pardon, salvation, peace, the glory to be revealed. In this love there are unsearchable riches– exceeding riches of grace. There are no riches to be compared to this great love of God. Having it we are rich indeed. Without it we are poor, life is blank, eternity is dark.

II. HUMAN TRUST. It is of Adam’s sons that David speaks. "Therefore shall the children of men put their trust in the shadow of your wing;" that is, betake themselves to you as their refuge. God’s character is then the basis of human confidence. That character is the attraction to the sinner, for it is just such a character as suits him– irrespective of his being anything but a man and a sinner. This love which so suits the sinner and calls forth his confidence is that which is exhibited in the cross of Christ. That cross is the revelation of God’s love as a righteous thing; and thus appeals both to man’s heart and his conscience. The love furnishes the ground for trust, and the cross removes every reason for distrust. Let us here note such points as the following–

(1.) Man’s IGNORANCE of God. With the Bible in his hand he yet knows not God, he worships an unknown God. "They know not me," is God’s testimony against man. Ignorance of God is a sin of no trivial heinousness.

(2.) Man’s MISTAKES as to God. He imagines Him to be such an one as himself. He entertains a bad opinion of Him. He thinks of him as a God yet to be propitiated by work, or prayer, or sacrifice. He mistakes His character, His words, His gospel.

(3.) Man’s DISTANCE from God. Departure from God is the sinner’s own act. He has fled from God, and he prefers this state of distance. He dislikes the idea of nearness. To get as far from God as possible is his object. And not only does he depart from God, but he says to God, ’Depart from me.’

(4.) Man’s DISTRUST of God. He not merely mistakes God, but he thoroughly distrusts Him. He cannot imagine God to be anything but his enemy. He has no confidence in Him. He cannot feel himself safe in the hands of God. To be simply at the mercy of God, without claim, or merit, or recommendation; is a hateful as well as dreadful thought. Let us mark God’s remedy for all these. It is a double one– subjective and objective.

(1.) SUBJECTIVE. The subjective is the moral or spiritual rectification of nature and character by the power of the Holy Spirit. "You must be born again." It is the re-begetting, the transforming the whole man, enabling him to love what he hated, and to hate what he loved. It is the renewal of every part of the man’s soul and being, creating him in Christ unto good works, for we are his workmanship, we are the clay and he the potter.

(2.) OBJECTIVE. This is the representation given of Himself in His revelation. He shows himself to the sinner in an aspect at once gracious and glorious. He makes Himself be seen as the sinner’s friend and not his enemy. He unveils and unfolds his whole character as the God of all grace, the Lord God merciful and gracious, pardoning iniquity, transgression, and sin. It is to the overshadowing, protecting wings of God that David here points us, those wings of which the Lord spoke as stretched out to shelter Jerusalem, those wings under which Israel encamped or marched through the desert.

He stretches out His wings and calls. He tells us of a sure and sufficient shelter, and bids us at once take refuge there. These wings are broad, and large, and strong, fitted to shelter all the sons of Adam. And thus stretched out they themselves invite us. They contain their own invitation. They say, Come and be safe, come and be blest, come and be sheltered from present wrath and from the wrath to come. Come, for all things are ready; the love is ready, the deliverance is ready, the protection is ready. Oh, it is well with those who have taken shelter beneath the shadow of the everlasting wing. To those who see no danger and desire no security, these expanded wings may be nothing; for what is a Savior to a sinner that knows not his peril. But to those who know what wrath is and what sin is, what condemnation is and what the judgment to come, who know that God is a consuming fire, and that the day of vengeance is coming, and that an unpardoned, unreconciled sinner must then have to face an angry God– that wing, that hiding-place, that covert, that Savior, are of infinite preciousness. And seeing in that outstretched wing the loving-kindness of the Lord, they betake themselves eagerly to its shelter, and as "the children of men," the "sons of Adam," the sinners of humanity, they put their trust beneath its shadow.

02.1.23. The Sickness, Healer, Healing

BIBLE THOUGHTS & THEMES by Horatius Bonar THE SICKNESS, THE HEALER, AND THE HEALING "I said, Lord, be merciful unto me: heal my soul; for I have sinned against You." – Psalms 41:4 This is the cry of the needy; of him who has no helper; of him who in the time of trouble finds that there is no refuge but in God. It is the cry from the soul's sickbed– more terrible than the sickbed of the body– to the divine Physician, for the application of his heavenly skill and medicine. It tells us–

I. SIN IS THE SOUL'S SICKNESS. Sin is an infinite evil; the evil of evils, in comparison with which mere pain is nothing. The end of all bodily sickness, if allowed to run its course, would be bodily death; so the end of all sin, if unarrested, would be eternal death. It is infinitely varied in its nature, though comprehended under some general descriptions, and capable of being classified under certain heads. All the diseases, or shades of disease, of the body, are but types of the awful varieties of sin. Palsy, leprosy, fever, blindness, and the like, are symbols of sin. The whole head is sick, and the whole heart is faint. There is the disease of unbelief, of impenitence, of lust, of enmity to God, of pride, of worldliness, etc.; all these have penetrated our spiritual system, and destroyed our spiritual health. Not that sin is mere disease or misfortune, to be got rid of gradually by a healthy regimen, or diet, or medicine; to be wrought out of the constitution by human skill and effort. It is guilt as well as sickness, to be dealt with by the Judge as much as the physician; no, by the Judge first, before the physician can touch it– for as the order of the evil was first, the guilt, and then the disease following thereon, so the order of the remedy is first the pardon and then the health.

II. GOD IS THE SOUL'S HEALER. Whether we look at sin as disease or as guilt, or as both together, we find that in regard to it we must deal with God alone. The medicine, the skill, the pardon, the deliverance, are in His hands. With no other must we transact in the matter of sin's removal; not with self, or man, or the flesh, or the church, or a creed, or a priest, but with God himself; and that directly, face to face, alone, without any medium or intervention. All others are physicians of no value. They heal not at all, or they heal slightly, or they increase and irritate the disease.

Health is with God alone. He heals effectually and eternally. He who is the soul's life is also the soul's health. Whatever be the sickness, deep or slight, of long or brief standing, connected with the eye, the ear, the hand, the feet, the head, or the whole spiritual being, the counsel which must be given to the sick soul is, "Go straight to God; deal with Him, and let Him deal with you."

III. GOD IS MOST WILLING THAT THE SOUL SHOULD BE HEALED. He has no pleasure in our sickness or death; His desire is that we should live and be in health. Our sickness is not from Him, but from ourselves, just as truly as our health is not from ourselves, but from Him. Yet He loves not the destruction of His creatures; He desires their good, not their ruin.

Why, then, does He allow sickness and death? For infinitely wise reasons, of which you and I know nothing, but which will be known sooner or later. Yet our present ignorance should not lead us to deny the sincerity of God’s desire for our welfare. The two things will be found perfectly reconcilable, and both equally true. Let us not take up with one-sided truth, but let us receive both sides, according to the divine revelation, whatever our perplexed minds may argue.

IV. GOD HAS MADE PROVISION FOR THE SOUL’S HEALING. The disease was so thoroughly beyond human skill that none but God could undertake the cure. He has undertaken it; He has provided the means, He has sent the physician. The MEDICINE is the cross. There is forgiveness which is indispensable as the commencement of the cure; righteous forgiveness through the death of the Surety. At and with the cross the cure begins, and begins by the pardon of the sinner. But pardon is not the whole of His remedies. There is fear, trouble, disquietude, weariness, darkness, and such like. For these also the cross provides. And with the medicine there is the PHYSICIAN Himself, Christ Jesus; or rather there is Christ and the Holy Spirit, Christ dispensing the Spirit, and the Spirit revealing Christ. The power and the skill are in their hands. They apply the divine provision. So that everything pertaining to the healing of the soul is truly divine. Hear the Lord’s own declaration regarding this, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up." We ask then,

(1.) Have you been healed? If so, give God the glory. Assuredly the health came not from man, but from the love and power of God, from the cross of Christ, from the hand of the Holy Spirit.

(2.) Do you desire to be made whole? Perhaps you are still unhealed? Be it so. The cross is here for healing; look and be cured, look and be saved, look and be forgiven. It is not working, or buying, or deserving, but simply looking. The sight of the cross is pardon, and health, and life. The leaves of this tree are for the healing of the nations.

(3.) Can you do without healing? Is your wound so slight, your disease so trivial, that you can do without the cross, and that you can heal yourself? Or though unhealed do you think you can go on as you are, well enough, without health? Suppose you could in this world, what of the world to come? Tossed upon an eternal sick-bed, think of that! Eternal disease pervading body and soul, think of that! Oh, look and be healed! Make at once the application of our text, "Heal my soul, for I have sinned against you."

02.1.24. The Consecration Earth's Gold Silver

BIBLE THOUGHTS & THEMES by Horatius Bonar THE CONSECRATION OF EARTH'S GOLD AND SILVER

"And the daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift; even the rich among the people shall entreat your favor." – Psalms 45:12

"The princes of Tyre will shower you with gifts. People of great wealth will entreat your favor." – Psalms 45:12 This is a latter-day scene; for the whole psalm is resplendent with latter-day glory; the glory of Christ the King; the glory of the Church the bride; the glory of the palace, the throne, the retinue, the kingdom. All here is glory, gladness, righteousness. It is the time of the restitution of all things. We ask,

I. WHO IS THIS DAUGHTER OF TYRE? She is the old Phoenician city, lying on the sea coast at the foot of Lebanon; the representative of the old world's commerce.

(1.) What She WAS. The great merchant-city of the old world, the representative of ancient commerce, and splendor, and wealth; the center of magnificent villas, extending for miles north and south– down to the water's edge and up the slopes of Lebanon.

(2.) What she IS now. Desolate; the old city swept away; a small sea-port; hardly more than a fishing village.

(3.) What she is TO BE. More than one prophecy foretells the resuscitation of Tyre in the latter day. (Isaiah 23:18.) Though the old city shall "not be found," yet there shall be a representative of it– the same great merchant-city, only "holy."

II. TO WHOM SHE COMES. It is to Christ and his church that she comes. She seeks them out and bows before them. For the position of all things and parties is reversed in that day. The Church is on the throne; the world seeks her out and does homage. What a contrast to the condition of things during these ages past! The church no longer dishonored, trodden on, persecuted, despised; but honored and set on high; sought unto by all the earth, even its greatest; "the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it." The saints, along with their Lord, receive the tribute of earthly homage. The Bride of Christ shares his dignity and glory.

III. WHAT SHE BRINGS. It is here simply called "a gift;" but in that how much is comprehended. As the wise men from the east brought their peculiar gifts, so is it with the daughter of Tyre. She comes and lays her merchandise, her wealth, her splendor at Immanuel's feet. In Ezekiel we have the full enumeration of her articles of value and beauty. All luxuries, all necessaries, all precious metals, all gems, apparel– everything that the world admires, gathered from every region. What a gift! Unsought by the church. Tyre brings her gift, hastening to do homage to the glorious King, and adorning the church with all that is beautiful, and precious, and perfect.

IV. WHAT SHE TEACHES US. To lay our all at Christ's feet– nationally and individually. That shall be the day of full consecration to God, the acknowledgment of Christ's right to the ownership of everything. As yet we have no true idea of consecration– the consecration of ourselves, all that we have, things common or precious, to God and His Christ. But we shall know it then, and see it as it has never been seen before. And what a consecration shall there be in the latter day, even were it only of Tyre. How much more when it is of far greater cities and kingdoms than Tyre, our own for instance, to which Tyre is a mere village, or merchant depot. As Tyre was the great commercial metropolis of the old world, so is Great Britain, with its mighty London, the great commercial metropolis of the modern earth. All that made Tyre great and glorious is to be found ten times magnified and multiplied in her. All things that God has made are precious, and meant to glorify him. Every creature of God is good. We are not to conclude that because gold, and silver, and gems have been abused for pride, and luxury, and vain glory, they ought to be despised by the Christian. They are all capable of consecration to God; all intended to glorify him.

It is not easy to consecrate the splendid and the beautiful things of earth to his glory just now. There are so many evil influences at work, perverting them, degrading them, defiling them. They are, and have been so long, the ministers of creature-pride; idols, vanities, follies. But still they are all capable of good and noble uses; and shall one day take their proper place in creation, like the stars above and the flowers below. Meanwhile let us use all we have for God. The widowed church just now does not need the gems of earth to adorn her; no, they would be incongruous with her widow's garments. We can dispense with ornament and show. God does not need these at present, though he will one day bring to light all the treasures hidden in his storehouse of the beautiful and glorious; and they shall adorn the new Jerusalem, and the new earth, where dwells righteousness. But our substance, our money, let us consecrate to God, lay out our gains for him. He calls on our commercial nation thus to honor him– to use their gains not for themselves, but for him. He asks for honor and service from our commerce. Men of business, consecrate your gain to him. Jesus is worthy to receive all you have. Give it to him; grudge not. He will repay you a thousandfold.

Chapter 40

02.1.25. The Speaker, the Listener, Peace

BIBLE THOUGHTS & THEMES by Horatius Bonar THE SPEAKER, THE LISTENER, THE PEACE

"I will hear what God the Lord will speak: for he will speak peace unto his people, and to his saints; but let them not turn again to folly." – Psalms 85:8

"I listen carefully to what God the Lord is saying, for he speaks peace to his people, his faithful ones. But let them not return to their foolish ways." – Psalms 85:8 Let us meditate on this verse under the following heads:

(1.) The listener; (2.) the speaker; (3.) the message; (4.) the confidence; (5.) the issue.

I. THE LISTENER. "I will hear," says the writer of this psalm. He speaks as a listener, as one whose ears are open. "He that has ears to hear, let him hear." This is our true attitude, into which we came at conversion. God said, "Hear and your soul shall live"; he "opened our ear to hear as the learned." So we began to listen; and in listening found life. Such is to be our life; a life of listening; not to man, nor self, nor the world, but to God. As creatures, listening is our proper attitude, much more as sinners. Let the willing ear be ours. How much we lose by the closed ear!

II. THE SPEAKER. God, the Lord; God, even Jehovah. Other speakers may win the ear of the multitude, but it is to God the Lord that the saint listens. His voice is powerful. Its tones are penetrating; its words attractive. God speaks as one entitled to be heard, expecting to be heard. He speaks with authority, waiting for our obedience to the heavenly voice. To less than such a speaker we do not feel constrained to listen, but to Him we must. He speaks, we cannot but hear.

III. THE MESSAGE. "He will speak peace to his people." It is peace that Jehovah speaks, for he is the God of peace; "he makes peace in his high places." Peace is the substance of the message that has all along been carried to us; peace, peace to him that is afar off, and to him that is near; peace in heaven; peace on earth; peace between man and God; the peace of pardon, the peace of reconciliation, the peace that passes all understanding– peace through the blood of the cross, through Him who is our peace. It might have been wrath, no, ought to have been wrath; but it is not wrath, only peace; for He is patient and slow to wrath; no, God is love!

IV. THE CONFIDENCE. The Psalmist knows what he is to expect from such a God. Before the peace comes, he knows that it is coming; for he knows the God to whom he is called upon to listen. This is the confidence which he has in Him. He does not listen uncertainly, as not knowing what will come forth. He has heard of this God before– of what He does and speaks– and he opens his ear in happy confidence. He is sure that no wrath will come, only love, only peace. This God is the God of salvation– the God who gave his Son. Shall He not then speak peace?

V. THE ISSUE. "Let them not return to folly;" or, and "they shall not return to folly." He does not say, Let them not turn to folly, and then he will speak peace to them; but he will speak peace first, and then they shall not return to folly. This is God’s order; the true and divine order; the reverse of

man’s. It is not first holiness and then peace, but first peace and then holiness. The root of all holiness is peace with God. Until the clouds are rolled away, and the sun shines out, we cannot be warmed and enlightened. Until the frost is gone, and the ice dissolved, the river cannot flow on and water the fields. Christ did not say, Go, and sin no more, and I will not condemn you; but, "Neither do I condemn you; go, and sin no more."

We are in rebellion. Our chief controversy with God is as to the gospel of peace. Our unbelief of this is our sin of sins, our master-sin, to which all others are subordinate. How can we abstain from the lesser sins so long as the master-sin remains; so long as there is no peace between us and God, but only rebellion and controversy. The first step to a holy life is being at peace with God. In order to a holy life God must come in and dwell in us. He cannot do this until he has brought us into peace with himself– until we have listened to and believed the tidings of peace which he has spoken. Reconciliation must be the beginning of all indwelling; and this reconciliation is the result of our believing His message of peace. Nor indeed has the soul leisure to attend to good works or growth in holiness until the question of peace has been settled. That question must ever be foremost, engrossing us absolutely, and leaving no time nor inclination for anything else. It is too momentous to be left in uncertainty; too vast to be taken up along with others. This great point between us and God once settled, we are free to devote our undivided energies to the work of progress; not until then. A saint then is one who has listened to God; who has heard the words of peace from His lips; who has believed them; who has been reconciled; and who knows that he is so. Therefore He seeks to be holy. He hates his former folly. He does not return to it. He does not make his free pardon a reason for returning to it. Brethren, be consistent! Beware of sin, folly, unholiness of every kind. Be Christians out and out. Show that the peace you have received is a holy peace.

02.1.26. The Book of Books

BIBLE THOUGHTS & THEMES by Horatius Bonar THE BOOK OF BOOKS

"My son, listen to me and treasure my instructions. Tune your ears to wisdom, and concentrate on understanding. Cry out for insight and understanding. Search for them as you would for lost money or hidden treasure. Then you will understand what it means to fear the Lord, and you will gain knowledge of God." Proverbs 2:1-5 The words "my son" are not spoken at random, or inserted without a meaning. In them God speaks to us as unto children (Hebrews 12:1-29). It is a father's voice that speaks to us in the book of Proverbs. Solomon's counsels to Rehoboam are God's messages to us. The subject here is the divine Word, its nature and use, with the way in which we are to receive it.

God's Word is assumed to be, (1.) True. Not partially so, but absolutely and perfectly.

(2.) Infallible. Not imperious or dictatorial, yet infallible.

(3.) Precious. Containing infinite treasures.

(4.) Profound. It will bear searching, digging, meditation. It has much on the surface; far more beneath. Go as deep as you like, the vein is not exhausted.

(5.) Intelligible. Though spoken by God, it is quite as intelligible as that spoken by man. A father's words to his child are meant to be understood. This Word is here called by many names: "my words," "my commandments," "wisdom," "understanding," "knowledge." The way in which we are to deal with it is spoken of under various figures: "receiving," "hiding," "inclining the ear," "applying the heart," "crying after," "lifting up the voice for," "seeking," "searching"; each of these implying honesty, earnestness, perseverance, faith– each successive word embodying some more meaning, some deeper truth than its predecessor. Let us mark then,

I. SOLOMON'S OBJECT IN THE PROVERBS. It is good to go back to the original speaker or writer; to remember the instrument through which the Holy Spirit spoke, whether Moses, or David, or Solomon, or Isaiah. This not only brings out better the human side of the book or passage; not only enables us to realize the words as thoroughly human words; but it gives a point and interest and meaning to those who otherwise is lost. Paul's words are not Peter's, nor John's; yet they are all the words of the Holy Spirit. So the words of Solomon the king, and Amos the Tekoan herdsman, are both the words of God, yet there are differences; and these differences have a meaning. The Proverbs of Solomon would have been equally true, though uttered by Amos, yet they would not have had the peculiar point which they possess when coming from the lips of the greatest, richest, wisest of kings. The royal lessons of this royal teacher and father are summed up in "the fear of the Lord, and the knowledge of God." This is his object, even in that book which seems filled with common life, and its maxims and scenes. Fear God; know the Lord; this is the sum of all that he has to say to us.

II. GOD'S OBJECT IN THE BIBLE. To teach us to know and fear Him. Many subordinate things, but this as the main thing; this as the result of all its precepts, warnings, facts, histories. The Bible terminates on God, as it begins with him. It comes from God, and goes back to him, leading us along with it. The Bible has specially to do with the world to come, even in those books which are occupied with the duties and concerns of this. Let your Bible lead you straight to God; let every perusal teach you more of him. As was God's object in writing the Bible, so let yours be in reading it. Be sure to find him everywhere.

III. The way in which He would have us treat the Bible.

(1.) Receive it. Take it as true, divine, infallible. Listen to it, as his voice, his message. Let its words flow in to both ear and heart.

(2.) Prize it. It is no common possession. It is treasure, riches, gold– all divine. As such it must be used lovingly, reverently, devoutly, believingly.

(3.) Study it. It must be "hid," laid up, sought out, searched, weighed. No surface work, no holiday work. Day and night, it must be studied with the whole vigor of our souls.

(4.) It must be prayed over. In the study of it we must deal with God. He has the key for unlocking its chambers; the light for showing us all its recesses. We must go to him to be taught: "If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God." Like old Bradford, we must study it on our knees.

Let us notice in conclusion the connection of all this with Christ. He is "the Word of God," and the Bible is "the word of God." He connects the two things together when he says, "If you abide in me, and my words abide in you." The testimony of all Scripture is to Christ; he is its Alpha and Omega. It is through him that we have the knowledge and the fear of God. To know him is to know the Father, and we find him in the word; the more we dig into the word, we find the more of him. They testify of him. Search the Scriptures! They contain life, and they contain The Life. Let us go to them for both.

How little of them do we know; how much we ought to know, and might know, if we would search! Would you be wise? Study the Word, and find the Wisdom of God there. Would you be holy? Study the Word. It sanctifies its readers. Would you be happy? Study the Word. In its words is blessedness– the peace and joy of God.

Chapter 42

02.1.27. The Secret Deliverance from Evil

BIBLE THOUGHTS & THEMES by Horatius Bonar THE SECRET OF DELIVERANCE FROM EVIL "By the fear of the Lord men depart from evil." – Proverbs 16:6

There is "evil" in the world. The world is now the opposite of what God made it, "good," "very good." It lies in wickedness. There is evil within and without; evil moral and material. "Every creature of God" was made good, but each one has become evil. There is evil in the sense of disorder, pain, disease, sorrow, death. There is evil in the sense of sin. It is this last that our text points to; for evil in the sense of disease, or death, or sorrow, is not to be cured just now, by the remedy our text suggests, or by any remedy whatever. For such cures as these we wait until the resurrection of the just.

What then is this evil which God calls sin? To know this we must go to the Bible; and the Bible points us to the fall, to the deluge, to Sodom and Gomorrah, to Sinai, to Calvary, that we may learn what it is, and what God thinks of it. Specially the two last, Sinai and Calvary; not Sinai without Calvary, nor Calvary without Sinai; the law must be read in the light of the Cross. There is another revelation or declaration of sin; but it is not yet come; the second death, an eternal hell. And yet when it does come it will not tell us more than the cross has done.

Men make light of sin; fools make a mock at sin. At the worst they treat it simply as a calamity, an unavoidable misfortune, a hereditary evil, for which they are not wholly responsible. God’s estimate of sin is unspeakably dreadful. "It is the abominable thing which I hate; it is an evil that I cannot bear; it cast the angels out of heaven; it ruined the world; it brought the deluge; it drew down the fire and brimstone; it slew my Son; it will yet set the world on fire; it will kindle hell."

God does not look on sin as man looks. We wonder at all this, and say, Why then does God allow it to remain? Why did he let it enter? Why does he not sweep it off? We answer, God allowed it to enter, just that it might spread and unfold itself; and yet also that it might at length be utterly rooted out. He did not destroy it at once, because he wished to show its awful nature, its power to propagate, its manifold aspects, the utter impotency of mere creaturehood; and yet also to crush it forever. God at this moment is carrying on these two processes– letting sin spread and develop itself, getting rid of it.

One great object in redemption is, to destroy sin from man’s heart and from man’s earth. The Bible is a revelation of God’s means for thus extirpating sin. The Son of man came to deliver us from it; and he does so by bringing us back to the fear of God. How am I to get rid of this evil? This is the great question.

1. Not by TIME. Time cures many things, but not this. Time wears the rock away, but it cures not sin. Sin only grows more inveterate when left to itself.

2. Not by EFFORT. Strength of human will is no more successful against sin than the helm of the little skiff in the day of the raging tempest. Human resolution will not do. The enemy is too subtle

and too strong.

3. Not by HUMAN WISDOM. Science and philosophy can do nothing. Human skill, human devices and physical appliances– laws social, or sanitary, or political, can do nothing. Sin is too terrible a disease for MAN to heal.

4. Not by LAW. By the law is the knowledge of sin, not the cure of it. Law is powerless in such a case. It is but a torch held up at midnight to show the ruin, and havoc, and woe.

5. Not by TERROR. By terror evil may be pent up– compelled to hide itself, not driven out. No terror nor force can make a man holy.

If not by these, then by what is evil expelled from us? By the fear of Jehovah, our text replies. It is only this that goes to the root of the matter. This is the true medicine, the true corrective, the true deterrent, the true expulsive energy, acting both from without and from within: from without, because He whom we fear is without; from within, because this fear of Jehovah is implanted within us. By the fear of God we do not mean the dread of God or the terror of the Lord. Dread may restrain evil, but cannot extirpate; it may make a man a plausible hypocrite, but not a saint. The true fear of the Lord, the moment that it begins to act upon the soul, leads men to depart from evil. This fear of God has its root in pardon. "There is forgiveness with you that you may be feared." Forgiveness, ascertained forgiveness, conscious forgiveness; this is the beginning of all true fear. The lack of pardon, a doubtful pardon, a pardon to be worked for all the days of our life, may produce dread, but not fear. This true fear of God, resting on an ascertained forgiveness, expels a world of evil from the human heart, and keeps it from re-entrance. It loosens the hold which sin has on us; it liberates us, that we may be free to be holy. The evil things which God hates: bondage, gloom, moroseness, doubt, hard thoughts; as well as love of the world and love of sin, are all detached from us, and we from them. Like sunshine falling on a frozen river, the fear of God dissolves our frozen faculties, and sets a flowing the waters of the soul.

It works itself out, unfolds itself in such things as–

1. OBEDIENCE. We obey because we fear. This is the true obedience, the result of filial, happy fear. We are constrained to obey; and yet we obey freely and joyfully.

2. FELLOWSHIP. Without the fear which springs from pardon there could be no fellowship. Dread keeps the soul from God; true fear brings it near. Dread shuts up the soul against communion with God; true fear leads it to unbosom itself without reserve, yet with reverence.

3. LOVE. Fear produces love, and love produces fear. They minister to each other. God’s forgiving love kindles love in us; and yet it is reverential love, for he who has forgiven and loved us is so infinitely great and glorious.

4. ZEAL. Work for this God becomes our second nature. We cannot but work. The effect of this blessed fear upon us is to set all our faculties in motion, to make us zealous men. Slothfulness, and selfishness, and indifference, when touched by this fear, flee away like unclean spirits.

Thus we say to ourselves,

1. I fear God, therefore I must LISTEN to him. I am not terrified into listening, I am attracted to it. The voice of that infinite Jehovah who has freely forgiven me is to me the sweetest as well as most solemn of all voices. I love to hear Him speak; and I am always saying, "Speak, Lord, for your servant hears."

2. I fear God, therefore I must try to PLEASE him. I must not merely seek to avoid offending or displeasing, I must try to please him; and I must live, like Enoch, a life of God-pleasing; not man-pleasing, nor self-pleasing.

3. I fear God, therefore I must GIVE UP SIN. This new fear of God has turned my love of sin into hatred. I hate sin, because I fear God. He hates it, therefore I hate it, and give it up. The more I think of him, the more am I disposed to part with all sin.

4. I fear God, therefore I must DO HIS WILL. The will of him whom I fear must ever be my rule of duty. The more that I fear him, the more will his will become my rule. Not my will, but may yours be done, is what we say to the God whom we fear.

5. I fear God, therefore I must SEEK TO BE LIKE HIM. Mere dread would never lead us to desire conformity to his image; but fear does. It is God’s glory that we thus stand in awe of; and beholding it, we are changed into the same image from glory to glory.

Thus it is that by the fear of the Lord men depart from evil. Yes, this is the divine cure for sin. This is our strength against temptation; our refuge against the fear of man; our help against every adversary. And what a glorifying thing it is to God when we say that his fear would deliver you from all sin. And what a solemn thing it is to tell the sinner– it is the lack of this fear that is making you what you are. "Sin whispers to the wicked, deep within their hearts. They have no fear of God to restrain them." Yes, the lack of this fear is the cause of all the evil, and the presence would be the introducer of all good.

02.1.28. The Voice of the Heavenly Bridegroom

BIBLE THOUGHTS & THEMES by Horatius Bonar THE VOICE OF THE HEAVENLY BRIDEGROOM My beloved spoke and said to me, "Arise, my darling, my beautiful one, and come with me. See! The winter is past; the rains are over and gone. Flowers appear on the earth; the season of singing has come, the cooing of doves is heard in our land. The fig tree forms its early fruit; the blossoming vines spread their fragrance. Arise, come, my darling; my beautiful one, come with me." – Song of Solomon 2:10-13 The speaker is the heavenly Bridegroom, the Lord Jesus Christ. It is his voice we hear; the voice which is as the sound of many waters; which spoke the "gracious words" the like of which were never uttered on earth. It is to his bride he speaks; "the bride, the Lamb's wife;" his chosen, redeemed, called, sanctified one; given him by the Father before the world began; his one spouse, his "love, his dove, his undefiled;" of whom it is written, "Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it." Of the saints of all ages is this "bride," this "body," composed; all of them washed in the same blood, and clothed with the same righteousness.

1. It is the voice of LOVE. "My darling" is his name for his church. Other names of endearment he has for her, but this is chief. All in him betokens love. All that he is, and says, and does, intimates love; a love that passes knowledge; a love stronger than death and the grave; a love which many waters cannot quench nor the floods drown. It is in tender love that the Bridegroom thus addresses the Bride.

2. It is the voice of ADMIRATION. "My beautiful one" is his name for her. "You are all beautiful, my love, there is no spot in you." The "fairest among women, "is his name for her, even as her name for him is the "chief among ten thousand." The heart of the Bridegroom is full of admiration for the beauty and perfection of his bride. She is "perfect through the loveliness which he has put upon her." He has ravished our heart, and we have ravished his!

3. It is the voice of AUTHORITY. The husband is the head of the wife; so is Christ the head of the church; and though it is love that speaks, it is authoritative love. "Arise," "come with me." Obedience is our true position; and no amount of love in him can ever alter this. It is not bondage; but it is obedience. It is not sternness on his part, yet it is authority. Our Bridegroom is Jehovah, Immanuel, King of kings, and Lord of lords. Shall we treat his voice as that of an inferior or an equal; or as the voice of him whom no amount of condescension and endearment, and admiration, can ever make less truly the Head of the church, Head of principalities and powers, the Head of the universe, of whom it is said to the church, "He is your Lord, worship him." But when and in what circumstances does he speak these words to his church? Doubtless at his second coming, when calling her to the honor and glory prepared for her.

I. When he calls her up into the clouds to meet him in the air. He comes for her; and he finds her in the grave. He speaks to her as once before to Lazarus, Come forth! "You shall call, and I will answer; awake and sing, you that dwell in dust." He summons her from the tomb; he summons her up into the clouds, into his pavilion, where the marriage is celebrated– "Come up here." He

speaks, she hears, and goes up to meet him for whom she had waited so long. "Arise, my darling."

II. When he calls her into the marriage chamber. The marriage feast follows the ascension. She goes in with him to the marriage; blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper; she goes in and sits down beside him as his bride, his queen, in gold of Ophir. "Arise, my darling."

III. When he calls her into the new Jerusalem. Out of the marriage supper they come. They rise up from the feast. They enter the city. He calls her into the city which he has prepared– the place which he had gone to prepare for her– the "many mansions." "Arise, my darling."

IV. When he calls her up to his throne. This is the final act of blessing. Come sit with me on my throne; come reign with me over a redeemed creation. Now the crown is put upon her head; and the royal robes invest her. The everlasting kingdom is now hers. She is heir of God, and joint heir with Christ Jesus. "Arise, my darling."

Thus he shall speak to his church in the day of his coming glory; for then shall this 'Song of Songs' be realized to the full. Meanwhile he speaks thus to us singly. As he said to Abraham in Ur, 'Get out of this land', so does he speak to each of his Abrahams, his chosen ones– 'Come out and be separate; arise, shine, for your light is come; arise, leave the world; become a pilgrim; arise, leave your sins, become holy; arise, take up your cross and follow me.'

He spoke thus to each of us at first; he speaks thus to each of us still each day; for each day is a repetition of the first message on his part, and the first obedience on ours. Arise– come away– follow me. He speaks as the Savior, and as the Bridegroom. Let us hear, let us follow. Upward, still upward; onward, still onward, is his beckoning. This present world is no place of tarrying; no congenial air or climate or company for the bride, the Lamb's wife. This is not our rest; this is not the resurrection-land; nor the marriage-hall, nor the new Jerusalem, nor the kingdom. We must not tarry here. We have foretastes here, but that is all; the Lord's supper reminds us of the marriage supper. It is well to sit for an hour at the earthly table, but it is better to sit down forever at the eternal table. With such a summons and such a hope, let us not sleep as do others; let us awake and arise, and come away; away from sin, and death, and sorrow; away to the everlasting hills, the everlasting city, the everlasting glory. We are joint-heirs with him; partakers of his throne and crown!

02.1.29. The Love That Passes Knowledge

BIBLE THOUGHTS & THEMES by Horatius Bonar THE LOVE THAT PASSES KNOWLEDGE

"Many waters cannot quench love; neither can rivers drown it. If a man tried to buy love with everything he owned, his offer would be utterly despised." – Song of Solomon 8:7

Let us take this verse as descriptive of the love of Christ, the "love that passes knowledge." It is he who speaks in the fifth verse, "I raised you up under the apple tree"; and his words here remind us of similar ones elsewhere: "I have loved you with an everlasting love, and with loving-kindness have I drawn you"; "I drew them with cords of love, and with the bands of a man"; "he found him in a desert land, and in a waste howling wilderness"; "Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it." We might say that the passage carries us back to Eve, "the mother of all living,"– Eve under the fatal tree. The redeemer comes and raises up her offspring under that tree, for she is the mother of the living; and there this mother of the living brought her children forth in sorrow, according to the original sentence on woman, "In sorrow shall you bring forth children."

Jesus thus declares his love to his church, and she replies, "Set me as a seal," not only on your heart, but on your arm also, your inner, and your outer part– your place of love; your place of strength; your place of energy and action. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? His love is invincible and irresistible as death; it is a jealous love, unyielding and inexorable as the grave. Its true figure is that of fire– coals of fire– the very flame of Jehovah. Here, then, is the love of Christ! Its breadth, length, height, and depth, are absolutely immeasurable! But our text singles out two things especially concerning this love–

I. It is UNQUENCHABLE. It is not all love that is unquenchable; but the love of Christ is. It is love forevermore. Beyond a father’s, or a mother’s, or a brother’s, or a sister’s, or a lover’s love, is this great love of Christ; the one and only love that passes knowledge; the one love that nothing in heaven, or earth, or hell is able to extinguish or cool; the one love whose dimensions are beyond all measure.

It is here spoken of as a thing of FIRE; and of it as such it is affirmed that "waters," "many waters" (Psalms 69:1-2) cannot quench it; as a thing of LIFE which the floods cannot drown (Psalms 69:15; Psalms 93:3).

(1.) The waters of SHAME AND SUFFERING sought to quench and drown it. They would have hindered its outflowing, and come (like Peter) between the Savior and the cross; but this love refused to be arrested on its way to Calvary; it would not be either quenched or drowned. Herein was love! It overleaped all the barriers in its way; it refused to be extinguished or drowned. Its fire would not be quenched, its life would not be drowned.

(2.) The waters of DEATH sought to quench it. Their waves and billows went over him. The grave sought to cool or quench it; but it proved itself stronger than death. Neither death nor the grave could alter or weaken it. It came out of both as strong as before. Love defied death, and overcame

it.

(3.) The waters of OUR UNWORTHINESS could not quench nor drown love. In general we find love drawing to the loveable; and when anything unseemly occurs, withdrawing from its object. Not so here. All our unfitness and unloveableness could not quench nor drown his love. It clung to the unlovely, and refused to be torn away.

(4.) The waters of OUR LONG REJECTION sought to quench it. After the gospel had showed us that personal unworthiness could not arrest the love of Christ, we continued to reject him and his love. Yet his love surmounted this unbelief, and survived this rejection. In spite of all it remained unquenched.

(5.) The waters of OUR DAILY INCONSISTENCY sought to quench it. Even after we have believed, we are constantly coming short. Ah what inconsistencies, coldness, backslidings, lukewarmness, doubtings, worldliness, and such like, are daily flowing over this love to quench its fire and drown its life! Yet it survives all; it remains unquenched and unquenchable.

All these infinite evils in us are like "waters," "many waters"; like "floods"; torrents of sin, waves and billows of evil– all constantly laboring to quench and drown the love of Christ! And truly they would have annihilated any other love; any love less than divine. But the love of Christ is unchangeable and everlasting.

II. It is UNPURCHASABLE. "If a man tried to buy love with everything he owned, his offer would be utterly despised." The full meaning of this will come out under the following heads. All that a man has, can do nothing in such a case. Love is not merchandise; it is no marketable commodity. It has nothing to do with gold and silver. A man’s whole substance is unavailing and useless,

(1.) As a GIFT to persuade him to love. Love does not come by gifts, least of all does divine love come by human gifts. Christ’s favor cannot be purchased by money. He loves without gifts, and before all gifts. Let us do justice to his free love!

(2.) As PAYMENT for having been loved. Neither before nor after has gold anything to do with love. Pay a man for loving? How revolting the thought! Pay Christ for loving? What a wickedness and what an impossibility in the thought! Love is altogether free.

(3.) As a bribe to tempt him NOT to love. Should the whole universe be offered to Christ on condition of his ceasing to love us, it would be utterly despised. Who or what shall separate us from the love of Christ? All earth and heaven together would be ineffectual to cool or quench this mighty love. He cannot but love, whatever may be the gifts offered to stay his love.

(4.) As a SUBSTITUTE for love. As if a man should say to another– a father to a son, or a brother to a sister– I cannot love you, but here is money to make up for my lack of love! Would not such a proposal be utterly despised? Were Christ to say to us, I cannot love you, but I give you heaven, would that suffice? Would not the answer be, ’What are all these gifts without love?’

Though we give our body to be burned, what would this be without love? Or what can Christ say to us for bringing him gifts, offerings, prayers, tears, money– everything but love! Without love, what are the riches of the universe? It is love he asks; it is love we need. Love we must have. What shall be given in exchange for love? The love of Christ truly passes knowledge. It is infinite like

himself. It emerges out of every storm or flood. It survives all unworthiness, and unbelief, and rejection. It is this that fills the soul; that liberates us from bondage; that gladdens us in the most sorrowful hour. Love is the true sunshine of life; and with this love Christ is to fill, not heaven only, but also earth, when he comes again in his glory!

Chapter 45

02.1.30. The Day of Clear Vision to the Dim Eyes

BIBLE THOUGHTS & THEMES by Horatius Bonar THE DAY OF CLEAR VISION TO THE DIM EYES "The eyes of those who see shall not be dim." –Isaiah 32:3 These blessed words tell us four things, (1.) There are eyes that do not see;

(2.) there are eyes that do see;

(3.) of the eyes that see, some are dim;

(4.) the time is at hand when they shall not be dim.

I. THERE ARE EYES THAT SEE NOT. Of the dead idols this is said– "They have eyes but see not;" and this is not amazing. But that the same should be said of living men is amazing. It is not true of angels; it is not true of devils; they have eyes and see. It is true of men; of millions; of the greater part of our race; they have eyes but see not. They shut them; they turn them away from their proper objects; they allow scales to grow over them; they deliberately veil them. O fearful calamity! O bitter curse! And yet for all this, they themselves are responsible. It is not God that blinds them, or veils, or darkens. They are their own undoers. They did not wish to see; they were resolved not to see. Self-blinded, not God blinded! They allow this world to blind or dazzle them; so that their eyes are useless. They let Satan, the god of this world, put his hand over their eyes; or bewilder them with his snares and enticements. Thus, having eyes they see not.

II. THERE ARE EYES THAT SEE. These are they whom God has enlightened; whose eyes the son of God has opened; for it is his work to open the eyes of the blind. They did not open their own eyes. Their eyes did not open by chance. Once they were blind– quite as blind as others; but now they see. There are not many of whom this can be said; yet there are some. And what do they see?

(1.) They see God;

(2.) they see Christ;

(3.) they see themselves;

(4.) they see the word of God;

(5.) they see the things within the veil.

They are not like the men of this world, with eyes that see outward things, sun, moon, and stars, earth and sea, woods and hills and fields. They see beyond all these– that which is spiritual and divine; that which is true and glorious. Yes; they see! In a blinded generation they see! How great a thing and how blessed to be able to say this of them– they see! They have eyes that are not useless; eyes that do not mislead; eyes that present things in their proper light and proportions and distances! Their eyes have been anointed with the heavenly eye salve, and they see! They no longer stumble nor grope in the dark, nor go after false objects. They see, and they know that they

see!

III. OF THESE EYES THAT SEE, SOME ARE DIM. They see; but they do not see afar off (2 Peter 1:9). They see; but it is dimly. Their vision is defective. They see men as trees walking. They are near-sighted, short-sighted. Their eyes require further purging. They ought to see fully and truly; but they do not. They were not meant to be dim. God has no pleasure in their being dim. The objects are vivid and distinct; yet they are seen dimly. In what respects is this the case?

(1.) They see but part or parts of the truth;

(2.) what they do see is imperfectly realized. The gospel is but half a gospel. The cross is not so full of peace and light as it ought to be. The way of life is but partially known. The coming glory has but a feeble radiance. The advent of Christ has but little value to them. Christ himself has but little of the excellence which he ought to possess to them, and is but poorly appreciated. There is no doubt something in the atmosphere of this present evil world that hinders vision and beclouds the eye; but still, after all, it is the dimness of the eye that is the evil. How many are all their lifetime afflicted with this imperfect vision. How much they lose by this! Their faith is not the substance of things hoped for; it is but the shadow of that substance. Hope is to them a vague expectation, with little of certainty or brightness in it. Their life has more of the cloud than of the sunshine about it.

IV. THE TIME IS AT HAND WHEN THESE EYES SHALL NOT BE DIM. There are many partial removals of this dimness even now; times when we see farther and more clearly. At Pentecost this was the case. At the Reformation also. In times of revival it has been so. In individual cases this has been known. Paul was a man that saw clearly. Augustine, Wycliffe, Luther, Calvin, Knox, Rutherford, Edwards; these were clear-sighted men, from whom the Holy Spirit had purged the scales and the dimness. But the reference here is prophetical. The prophet points to a coming era of perfection, when we shall see Him as he is; see as we are seen, know as we are known. No dimness then; no defective vision; no cloudy atmosphere; no diseased organ of sight. All brightness and distinctness. The cross clear and bright. The light and love unclouded. Christ seen face to face, no longer in a glass darkly. Every ray of glory coming freshly from his revealed countenance; every feature fair and perfect; Himself the chief among ten thousand; His kingdom infinitely glorious. No doubting either as to the things of Christ, or our interest in them. No unbelief; no error; no mist. All the perfection of vision, and the perfection of light. O day of brightness and true vision, dawn! O Morning-star, arise! O Prince of light, light of the world, make haste, end the long darkness of humanity, and cover earth with celestial sunshine!

Chapter 46

02.1.31. The Unfainting Creator Fainting Creature

BIBLE THOUGHTS & THEMES by Horatius Bonar THE UNFAINTING CREATOR AND THE FAINTING CREATURE

"Have you never heard or understood? Don’t you know that the Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of all the earth? He never grows faint or weary. No one can measure the depths of his understanding. He gives power to those who are tired and worn out; he offers strength to the weak. Even youths will become exhausted, and young men will give up. But those who wait on the Lord will find new strength. They will fly high on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not faint." –Isaiah 40:28-31 This was God’s answer to Israel of old in their day of trouble; it is still his answer to a desponding spirit which thinks its case hopeless and itself forsaken of God. God himself thus speaks in his love to such. Instead of taking each clause separately, let us thus classify the various points here brought before us–

(1.) an unfainting God;

(2.) a fainting sinner;

(3.) an unfainting saint.

I. AN UNFAINTING GOD. It is to himself that he draws our eye in our disquietude– "Look unto me;" "trust in Jehovah." He wonders that we should not have known nor heard of him and his greatness; or that having heard of him, we should ever give way to despondency. With such a God to go to, how can we be careful or troubled?

(1.) His NAME. It is fourfold, and each of its four parts most full and suitable– "God," "The Everlasting," "Jehovah," "Creator of the ends of the earth." What a name; what a declaration of himself is this! Excellency, duration, life, power, all are here! Ah, surely those who know such a name will put their trust in him.

(2.) His CHARACTER. "He faints not;" "he is not weary;" "he is unsearchable in wisdom." Here is the unfainting God– the only wise God. Past ages have proved him such; the experience of those who have known him has borne testimony to him. Time, work, difficulty, cannot make him faint or weary. Nothing in earth, or heaven, or hell can affect him. He has been working hitherto, and is still working (John 5:17), but he is not weary.

(3.) His WAYS. They are not as our ways. They are the ways of bountifulness and love. He is the giving one; he is always giving; giving more and more; never weary of giving; giving power, strength, all that is needed. Yes, he that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him freely give us all things. This is the God with whom we have to do! Such is his name, his character, his ways! Have we not known him, nor heard? To know him is life; to listen to him is peace forevermore.

II. A FAINTING SINNER. The object toward which the power of this mighty God is turned is a sinner; one who is "faint," who "has no might." It is the utter helplessness of the object that attracts him. It is not "like drawing to like"; but to the unlike. It is the unlikeness that constitutes the attraction and the fitness. "When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." Thus the two extremes meet, the weakness of the creature, the power of the Creator; each so exactly suiting the other, and each requiring the other.

It is this state of things that shows the folly of those who despair of being saved because they are so weak. The truth is, they are not yet weak enough for God to save them. They must come down to a lower degree of helplessness before God can interfere. Yes, it is our strength, not our weakness, that is our hindrance and stumbling block. It is the weak that God is in quest of, not the strong; the weaker the better for the display of his strength. "To those who have no might he increases strength." "In the Lord I have righteousness and strength." "When I am weak then am I strong." It is our "infirmities" that God uses as his opportunity for the magnifying of his grace and power. Are you willing to take the place of weakness which God assigns to you, and in which alone he can interfere to save?

III. AN UNFAINTING SAINT. The saint is here described as one who "waits upon the Lord." He has come to give up his waiting on all else; to wait on this living and mighty God alone. It is thus that out of weakness he becomes strong. His weakness is not less than it was, but he gets a substitute for it, in the strength of Jehovah. Everybody else, even the young and vigorous shall fail; but he shall not. When everyone gives way he shall stand; he shall lift up his head. This is described under four figures.

(1.) Those who wait on Jehovah shall renew their strength. Our strength wastes by daily use; theirs increases and is renewed. That which would fatigue and exhaust others shall invigorate them. They shall become stronger and stronger. The greater their former weakness the greater their present power.

(2.) They shall mount up with wings as eagles. Many a lofty height shall they ascend and look down on the world beneath them, soaring higher and higher, gazing from Lebanon, and Hermon, and Amana (Song of Solomon 4:8), from the mountains of myrrh, and the hills of frankincense. As God bore Israel through the desert on eagles' wings, so shall they be borne. They who once had not strength to creep or move, have now strength to fly aloft as eagles. Such is the way in which strength comes out of weakness.

(3.) They shall run and not be weary. They are not always flying or soaring; but when running– running their race here– they shall not be weary. They shall run with patience, perseverance, success, triumph. Theirs shall be a blessed and untiring race.

(4.) They shall walk and not faint. The greater part of their life is to be a walking. Occasionally they may fly or run; more generally they walk; ever moving onward without ceasing. In this walk they shall not faint. It may be long, but they shall not faint. It may be rough and dark, but they shall not faint.

Here then is the unfainting saint, made out of a fainting sinner, by the power of an unfainting God. Wait then, O saint, on God, and you shall know his power; how he can uphold and strengthen you even to the end, that you may be presented faultless before him at his coming. "He keeps the feet

of his saints."

02.1.32. The Heritage and Its Title-Deeds

BIBLE THOUGHTS & THEMES by Horatius Bonar THE HERITAGE AND ITS TITLE-DEEDS

"This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is from me, says the Lord." Isaiah 54:17

It is of "servants" that God is here speaking– this is the name he gives them; "servants," yet "heirs;" for it is in connection with the "heritage" that he calls them "servants." The apostle joins together "sons" and "heirs;" here the prophet joins "servants" and "heirs." Israel gets this name– "servants of Jehovah;" the church gets it; apostles get it; each saint gets it. The dwellers in the old Jerusalem had it; the citizens of the New Jerusalem have it too. "His servants shall serve him." We are to serve as angels do; no, as Jesus did; for He was the Father's servant. We are to serve the Father; and to serve the Son "the Lord Christ;" we are to serve the church; we are to serve the world; all in love; for it is to loving filial service that we are called. But it is specially of these two things that the passage speaks: (1.) the heritage; (2.) our title to it.

I. THE HERITAGE. It is fully described in the previous part of the chapter; and in reading it we may say, "the lines have fallen unto us in pleasant places; yes we have a goodly heritage." It contains–

(1.) Deliverance from sorrow and tempest (Isaiah 54:11). The time of these has been long; but the day of deliverance longer. It is everlasting deliverance.

(2.) Glory and beauty (Isaiah 54:11-12). All that the eye of man or the eye of God delights in, and pronounces good, in earth or heaven, shall be ours.

(3.) Knowledge (Isaiah 54:13). We shall be "taught of God;" all of us. No ignorance then, nor unbelief; only wisdom ; not the wisdom of this world, but of the world to come.

(4.) Peace (Isaiah 54:13). "Great peace;" peace like a river; peace that passes all understanding; God's own peace; within and without; and with the certainty that no future disquietude shall ever arise. Eternal peace; in the land of peace, under the reign of the Prince of Peace.

(5.) Stability (Isaiah 54:14). We are to be steadfast and immoveable here; we shall be still more so hereafter; for our heritage is the kingdom that cannot be moved.

(6.) Security (Isaiah 54:14). No possibility of evil from any quarter; nothing but good. Security (1.) from oppression, (2.) from alarm, (3.) from enemies,

(4.) from war, (5.) from accusations and evil reports.

All these things, negative and positive, go to make up the inheritance of Israel in the latter days; still more the inheritance of the saints in light, the kingdom which cannot be moved, the inheritance which is incorruptible and undefiled. It is the very heaven of heavens; glorious, and marvelous, and perfect beyond conception. Ah, surely this is what eye has not seen nor ear heard. Because of it God is not ashamed to be called our God.

II. OUR TITLE TO IT. "Their righteousness is from me, says the Lord." This righteousness avails not merely for personal acceptance, but for giving us the inheritance. This is the tenure by which we hold it, and shall hold it forever. Thus it is secured to us– secured by God himself; not simply made ours once, but secured to us forever. Our title, then, or tenure, is,

(1.) DIVINE. It "is from me, says the Lord." He gives the heritage, and he gives also the title by which it is secured to us. No, he gives us a divine title; such as our father had not to Paradise; a title not of self, nor of man, nor of earth, but of God; a title so truly divine that we may say, God himself is my title to the heritage which God has given me; for the righteousness by which it is secured to me is the righteousness of God. My title-deeds are truly divine; the purchase-money is divine; the conveyance is divine; the security is divine. One with him who bought the heritage for us, we have the same title to it that he has; for we get it through means of his righteousness. As the righteous one, He was the purchaser of the kingdom which He gives to us. His righteousness bought it.

(2.) RIGHTEOUS. This is implied in the expression, "their righteousness is from me," intimating that it is by righteousness that the heritage is secured to us. This heritage is more than the mere gift of love; it is the gift of righteousness. We get it in a righteous way; we hold it in virtue of a righteous price paid for it; our security for it is more than the grace of God; it is the righteousness of God. Our pardon is a righteous pardon, so is our title a righteous title– divinely righteous– a title which the law recognizes, and which the law will make good to us against all opposers or counter-claimants, if such there be. "If God is for us, who shall be against us?" In our title-deeds there is no flaw nor ambiguity, for they are drawn up by a righteous God, subscribed by a righteous God, and presented to us by a righteous God. Everything connected with our entrance into, and possession of, the heritage is in righteousness.

(3.) FREE. Our heritage is a "purchased possession;" purchased for us by another; fully paid for by a divine equivalent; so fully paid for that there is nothing for us to pay. All is free. Canaan was God’s free gift to Israel, so the inheritance is God’s free gift to us. We could not pay, were it needed; and we do not need. All payment is refused. It is so precious that none but God could pay a price for it: and He has paid the price. As life is free, and salvation free, so is the heritage; absolutely and unconditionally free; free in the sense of unbought; free in the sense of undeserved; free in the sense of its being the gift of God.

(4.) ETERNAL. Our title, being thus divine and righteous, must be everlasting. It must stand forever. An eternal title to an eternal inheritance– this is what we rejoice in. Hence the inheritance itself, and all connected with it, are described in language that intimates perpetuity absolutely unending and unlimited. No second fall; no second loss of Paradise. No future tempter nor temptation. We enter to go out no more. For the church is "the blessed of the Lord," to whom it shall be said, "Come you blessed by my Father." One with the Son of God, "partakers of Christ," "joint heirs with Christ Jesus," our tenure of the inheritance must be as sure and as everlasting as His own.

It is this heritage that God in his gospel is presenting to us. He points to it, as he pointed Israel to Canaan, and says, Yonder is the glory, trust me for it, and you shall enter in. Israel could not enter in because of unbelief; and so it is only this that shuts the sinner out of the kingdom. We preach the kingdom, and we announce that he who receives God’s testimony concerning his

only-begotten Son shall obtain it freely. But the word preached does not profit, not being mixed with faith in them who hear it. God’s testimony is true; it is a testimony intended specially for sinners. Shall we disregard it? Shall we treat it as worthless? Shall we make Him a liar? Shall we shut the open gate against ourselves? Shall we refuse to enter in? We that have believed do enter into rest. How free, how simple, how ready the entrance! It is God himself who stands at the open door and bids us come; beckons us in. Shall such a heritage be lost to us? Shall such a glory be despised?

02.1.33. The Meeting Between Sinner God

BIBLE THOUGHTS & THEMES by Horatius Bonar THE MEETING BETWEEN THE SINNER AND GOD

"You meet him that rejoices and works righteousness; those that remember you in your ways." – Isaiah 64:5 The verse preceding is quoted by Paul (1 Corinthians 2:9), in reference to "the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world unto our glory," so that we may take it and our text, as indicating God's thoughts of wisdom as coming out in his dealings with us in Christ; his dealings with Israel, his dealings with the church; as seen both at the first and the second comings of Christ; his dealings with man in grace, that is, according to his own free love. "My thoughts are not your thoughts; neither are your ways my ways." In our text we have a specimen of God's thoughts and ways.

I. GOD MEETS MAN. "You meet." Distance is our natural condition; sin produced it; Adam showed it; man loves it. As far from God as possible. Depart from us, men say. So the prodigal went into the far country. Man wants no meeting with God. He would rather that the distance were preserved forever. The thought of meeting God is unpleasant. Hence the irksomeness of religion, the weariness of Sabbaths, even though the meeting be of the vaguest and most formal shadowy kind. He must meet Him at the judgment day, but he tries not to think of this, and hopes that he may be ready when it comes. But though man will not draw near to God, God draws near to man. He does not love the distance and separation. He comes near. He did so in the person of the prophets and such like messengers. He did so specially in the Angel of the Covenant, and in the Word made flesh. But his object is not merely to visit earth, but to come up to, to draw near to each of his creatures. He is desirous of a meeting, a loving friendly meeting, not of judgment, or reproof, or vengeance, but of grace. Isaiah speaks as one who knew this. "You meet," he says; that is, you are in the habit of doing so. It is your practice, your desire, to meet the sinner. This is our message in the gospel, God desires to meet you– to meet each of you. He proposes a meeting. He tells you that there is no coldness nor unwillingness on his part; that all things are ready. Come, meet with me, I wish to meet with you.

II. HOW does he meet man? In love. As the Lord God merciful and gracious. He meets him as Jesus met the Galilean fishermen, and said, follow me; as Jesus met the woman of Sychar, Zaccheus, Mary Magdalene. He meets him with pardon and reconciliation. He meets him as Melchizedek met Abraham, to bless him. Man dislikes the meeting, either for blessing or cursing; God desires it, that he may bless.

III. WHERE does he meet man? At the cross. That is the meeting-place. There is no other. It is a safe one, and a blessed one. There is no wrath there, no condemnation, no darkness. God stands at the cross and cries aloud, 'Meet me here. Not on a spot of your own choosing, but here on the spot which I have chosen; here where the blood was shed, and Christ's sacrifice offered up.' This is the meeting-place. There are two meeting-places; one the cross, now; the other the judgment-seat, hereafter. Which do you choose? One you must have.

IV. Which men are those whom he meets. Now in what follows we are not to understand that the class is narrowed or restricted; that he shuts out the worst, and will have none of them. The description given refers simply to the footing on which he receives them– on that footing he is willing to receive any, all. On that footing all may place themselves, and so be sure of a welcome. Our text, however, evidently does not refer exclusively to the first meeting, but to the whole subsequent communion, and describes the footing on which that fellowship is to go on and be maintained. There are three things declared as to those with whom God meets; and these three things follow each other in a certain order.

(1.) The REJOICING man. He is one who has found in the gospel glad tidings of great joy; one of those described by David in the 32nd Psalm, a man of blessedness. He has found the rejoicing of the hope; and he holds it to the end. He has accepted the good news, and as such he is accepted by God. God meets him.

(2). The man that works RIGHTEOUSNESS.

(1.) He works– he is not slothful;

(2.) he works righteousness– good works;

(3.) he works righteousness, because he rejoices. He does not rejoice because he works, but he works because he rejoices. His joy makes him a worker– a doer of the will of God; able for suffering or laboring. His life is a doing of righteousness.

(3.) Those that REMEMBER YOU in your ways. This corresponds with the apostolic "looking unto Jesus." We remember God– we remember him in his ways, his footsteps, his doings, as recorded in Scripture. When we call him to remembrance we do so in connection with some of his many ways recorded there. This meeting is a life-long one. Not yesterday, nor today, nor tomorrow, but continual; begun at conversion, carried on through life, consummated in the kingdom. It is a meeting for pardon; a meeting for fellowship; a meeting for the bestowal of all love and blessing; prelude of the more glorious meeting when Jesus comes the second time to begin his endless reign.

Chapter 49

02.1.34. God's Love God's Way Blessing

BIBLE THOUGHTS & THEMES by Horatius Bonar GOD’S LOVE AND GOD’S WAY OF BLESSING

"Go and proclaim these words toward the north, and say, Return, you backsliding Israel, says the Lord, and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you: for I am merciful, says the Lord, and I will not keep anger forever. Only acknowledge your iniquity, that you have transgressed against the Lord your God, and have scattered your ways to the strangers under every green tree, and you have not obeyed my voice, says the Lord." – Jeremiah 3:12-13

Therefore, go and say these words to Israel, "This is what the Lord says: O Israel, my faithless people, come home to me again, for I am merciful. I will not be angry with you forever. Only acknowledge your guilt. Admit that you rebelled against the Lord your God and committed adultery against him by worshiping idols under every green tree. Confess that you refused to follow me. I, the Lord, have spoken!" Jeremiah 3:12-13 Let us mark here two things: (1.) God’s message of love; (2.) His way of blessing.

I. GOD’S MESSAGE OF LOVE. He is evidently in earnest about this. There is nothing of coldness, or delay, or insincerity. He calls a messenger, a special messenger, for the occasion. He sends him out with, "Go," as did our Lord, "Go into all nations"; like an arrow from a bow. "Proclaim," speak, lift up your voice like a herald, that all may hear, and that there may be no mistake. "Toward the north," where "backsliding Israel" dwelt, and where her idolatries were practiced, as Bethel and Samaria; it is like, "Begin at Jerusalem"; go to the worst, to the very center of the sin and the evil; go to Bethel, go to Samaria, go to the chief of sinners; go to the backslider, the apostate, the idolater. And go and proclaim what message? The message of love and reconciliation! The chief point of the message is the word "return." Like the prodigal they had departed; and the Father’s voice calls to them, "Come back," come back to me. God speaks as one in earnest; as a father; as a father who has lost a child, and yearns over his lost son. "How shall I give you up" is his feeling; how can I part with you.

God is not indifferent to our departure or our absence. Though he has all heaven, with all its angels, he feels the blank made by one sinner’s departure. The sea feels not the abstraction of a drop, nor the sun of a ray; the monarch of a mighty empire does not feel the departure of one subject, but God feels and mourns over the revolt and alienation of one sinner.

While urging home this word, "Return," God enforces it with encouragements and arguments.

(1.) I will not cause my anger to fall upon you. This is more exactly, "I will not cause my countenance to fall on you"; that is, I will not frown upon you; the words are the same as in describing Cain: "his countenance fell." Instead of the frown shall come the smile upon my countenance: "I will lift up my countenance upon you." This is grace and tender love. The sinner is thus told what he is to expect from God in returning. "When he was yet a great way off, the father saw him..."

(2.) I will be merciful. With Jehovah there is mercy; for his name is the Lord God, merciful and gracious. Israel had tested his mercy to the uttermost, but it was not exhausted. Its fullness was undiminished. Where sin had abounded, grace had much more abounded; and the announcement here of his mercy is to tell Israel that all their backslidings, and apostasies, and idolatries had not altered or lessened that mercy. It was mercy to the uttermost, mercy to the ultimate.

(3.) I will not keep anger forever. Indirectly this tells the terrible truth that there had been, and was still, anger against them. In wrath he had smitten them and scattered them. It had lain heavy and sore upon them. But it was not to be perpetual anger. "His anger is but a moment"; it passes away, and he teaches Israel to sing, "Though you were angry with me, your anger is turned away." Such is God's message of love; sent in truth and earnestness to Israel; sent with no less truth and earnestness to us! Return and be forgiven! Return and be blest! Return and let me pour out on you the fullness of my forgiving love!

II. THE WAY OF BLESSING. There is but one way to this; not merit, or goodness, or labor, or earnestness, but simply acknowledgment of sin. In this acknowledgment there is nothing meritorious, nothing in itself fitted to attract or secure blessing. But it is the way of God's appointment; it is the channel through which the forgiveness flows; it places us on that footing in which alone God can bless the sinner. So long as there is on the part of the sinner the slightest thought that he deserves to be blessed, that God ought to bless him, that he has done or felt anything which makes him more fit or qualified for blessing, he is not in a position in which God can be glorified in blessing him; no, he is retaining that self-righteous position which renders it impossible that God can honorably and righteously bless him. But the moment that he forgoes all claims, and takes the sinner's place before God, as one deserving nothing, that moment he is in the position in which God can and will bless. "Only acknowledge"! These are his words to us, announcing the way of blessing. "Only acknowledge"! Thus he speaks to us still (1 John 1:9). The particulars of the acknowledgment follow:

(1.) iniquity;

(2.) transgression against the Lord our God;

(3.) going after idols;

(4.) not obeying the voice of Jehovah.

Just the sins in particular that Israel had committed. It is this particular enumeration of sin that he asks of us. Go into particulars when you come before the Lord. Beware of general confessions. They do not touch the conscience, and they do not reach God. Be very special and minute in all that you tell God concerning your sins. Yet with the full confidence of receiving pardon; for if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins. Only acknowledge! This is the one thing that God asks; it is the one thing that the sinner shrinks from. For it brings him down so far. It strips him absolutely of all goodness. Yet on no other footing will God deal with any sinner. So was it in the case of the Pharisee and the publican. This was Laodicea's special sin; refusal to acknowledge poverty. It was to this that the Lord urged her. So he urges us. It is our pride that stands between us and blessing. Take the sinner's place and all is ours. Let us deal with him now as sinners; and when he comes again he will own us as sons and heirs.

02.1.35. Divine Jealousy For the Truth

BIBLE THOUGHTS & THEMES by Horatius Bonar DIVINE JEALOUSY FOR THE TRUTH "O Lord, are not your eyes upon the truth?" Jeremiah 5:3 "O Lord, do not your eyes look for truth?" Jeremiah 5:3 This first clause of this verse should be connected with the two previous verses, in which the Lord complains that truth was gone from his city and his people; that even when swearing by his name men disregarded it. Jerusalem had become a city of falsehood; Israel a nation of false men. They said, 'God regards it not. He allows the speaker of falsehood to go on unpunished. His eyes are not on such men or such things. They are of no importance to him.' The prophet breaks in here with his question, his appeal, "O Jehovah, are not your eyes upon the truth?" Whatever men may say, Do not you regard it? Do not you abhor the untrue? Do not you cut off the liar? Do you not condemn him who utters error? The word "truth" in Scripture refers both to doctrine and practice. It points both to the "error" and the "lie." It classes both together. It condemns both. False speaking, whether in reference to teaching or witness-bearing, is declared to be abominable to God. His eyes are upon the truth. They watch over it, to guard it and to maintain it. The eyes of Jehovah are upon the truth, whatever men may say; and that which is untrue, whatever form it takes, he marks and will avenge; the untrue thing, whatever its nature or object, the untrue word, the untrue look, the untrue act, private or public, is not tolerated by him, though tolerated by man, and though God himself bear long with it. The theory of many is that God's eyes are not upon the truth, and that therefore a man may believe what he pleases, and say what he likes, without fearing God's displeasure. It is only when the untrue thing which he thinks and says interferes with human rights, or social privileges that he is to be visited with punishment. But Jehovah's eyes are upon the truth– the truth as found on earth among the sons of men.

I. They are WATCHFUL eyes. They close not. He whose eyes they are, neither slumbers nor sleeps. Not a sound, a thought, a word from pen or lip, but He notices. He who sees the sparrows, numbers the hairs, and feeds the ravens, has His eye on all human utterances, all writings of man, books or tracts, all openings of man's lips in private or public.

II. They are DISCERNING eyes. They are like flames of fire. They search and try everything. There is no indifference about their gaze. They are keen to discriminate between truth and error. They are the eyes of a judge who loves the true and hates the false. Man thinks whatever is earnestly spoken is good; not so with God. He discerns, he judges, he sifts, he tries every word, every phrase, every thought, every plan. There is such a thing as divine censorship, minute but unerring criticism.

III. They are JUST eyes. They do not make a man an offender for a word, yet they weigh everything in equal balances. There is no over-valuing nor under-valuing what is spoken or written. Each thing is judged without favor or partiality, and it is approved or condemned according as it is true or false. The standard of measurement is divine and perfect. No bribery here, no special favor to the rich. It is "just judgment," a just verdict that is pronounced. The righteous Lord loves righteousness. With nothing less than truth, in every sense, will he be satisfied. Truth from man;

truth between himself and man, truth between man and man; the true word, the true thought, the true look, and voice, and tone. In this watchfulness, this discernment, this justice, there are some things specially to be observed.

1. There is but one standard of truth. God fixes the standard and acts on it, without caprice, or partiality, or compromise. Error is a thousandfold – pliable, moveable, uncertain. But truth is ONE. On this God calls on us to act, on this he acts himself. So that man cannot excuse his error or his falsehood on the ground that there were more standards than one.

2. This one standard of truth is definite. It is not vague or shadowy. It does not merely settle certain great principles, but smaller ones as well. It is so very definite and precise as to leave man without excuse. It lets man know explicitly God's present estimate of truth and falsehood, as well as his future judgment on these. It is so distinct that no one with an open ear and eye can misunderstand it. In our day men call this narrowness, bigotry, intolerance. But if we only insist on being of one mind with God, he that condemns us condemns God himself. Let us be as broad as he is, but no broader; that is enough, whatever the age may say.

3. That one standard of truth is universal. It is for every age and location. It never becomes obsolete. It is like God himself– unchangeable; like the Christ of God– the same yesterday, today, and forever. It was given to our fathers, it is given to us. It suited the East, it suits the West. It suited the Jew, it suits the Gentile also; barbarian, Scythian, bond, or free. It suited the Asian, it suits the European. It suits the Briton, it suits the Indian, and the African. It suits the unlearned, it suits the learned too. One standard for all! One universal test or measurement of truth.

4. That one standard of truth is the Bible. It is no secret standard that He judges us by, or by which He tests truth and error. The test which He gives to us He acts upon himself. The Bible is His book of truth as well as ours. That book contains what God calls truth– truth definite, fixed, certain, not moveable, nor becoming obsolete, nor falling behind the age. The Bible is the one book of the age, no, of the ages– of all ages and all territories. Man's present unbelief seeks to loosen its authority, to dilute its statements, to render indefinite its doctrines. But the word of the Lord endures forever. God is not a man that he should lie. His word is sure, his truth is everlasting, his book is like the sun in the firmament; a light for all ages and lands.

Thus God's eyes are on the truth. It is truth that he delights in, it is error that he abhors. It is truth that he is seeking for among the sons of men. What a condemnation to the laxity of thought in the present day! As if man were at liberty to think as he pleases, irrespective of God and his book! God watches over the truth; he marks each error, each deviation from his one standard.

O man, have you received the very truth, and the whole truth of God? He has given man a book for a standard, not that he may speculate, but that he may not speculate, but believe. What God, in and by that book, demands of men is not criticism, opinion, speculation, but BELIEF. God's eyes are on the truth, to see if men believe it. The day is at hand, the great day of the Lord, when TRUTH only shall be set on high, and error put to shame. O man, God's eyes are on the truth, let yours be on it too. Be true to truth; be true to yourself; be true to God.

Chapter 51

02.1.36. Divine Love Human Rejection It

BIBLE THOUGHTS & THEMES by Horatius Bonar DIVINE LOVE AND HUMAN REJECTION OF IT

"I hearkened and heard, but they spoke not aright: no man repented him of his wickedness, saying, What have I done? every one turned to his course, as the horse rushes into the battle. Yes, the stork in the heaven knows her appointed times; and the turtle, and the crane, and the swallow, observe the time of their coming; but my people know not the judgments of the Lord." – Jeremiah 8:6-7

"I listen to their conversations, and what do I hear? Is anyone sorry for sin? Does anyone say, 'What a terrible thing I have done'? No! All are running down the path of sin as swiftly as a horse rushing into battle! The stork knows the time of her migration, as do the turtledove, the swallow, and the crane. They all return at the proper time each year. But not my people! They do not know what the Lord requires of them." Jeremiah 8:6-7 The prophet is predicting judgment upon rebellious Israel; he is depicting the woes that were suspended over Jerusalem, like the sword of the destroying angel, sorrow upon sorrow, terror upon terror, death upon death. Through this infinite gloom there shoot rays of light, as once and again God makes mention of his love; and how brightly do these words of love gleam through the terrible darkness! But Israel quenches all these beams; he will have none of them, he loves the darkness rather than the light; he says, 'Darkness, you be my light; evil, you be my good; night, you be my day.' And at last God leaves him to his doom– "The Lord has rejected and forsaken the generation of his wrath."

Let us now look at the two sides of the picture– the divine and the human, the heart of God and the heart of man, God's attitude towards man, and man's towards God. For what is written here for Israel is written for us. God's love, and man's rejection of it, are the two points.

I. GOD'S LOVE. "I hearkened and heard, but they spoke not aright." He speaks as one on the watch for good, not for evil; like the prodigal's father, looking eagerly out for his son's return. The scene reminds us of Christ's– "Oh that you had known." It reminds us of "How shall I give you up, O Ephraim"; of "Since I spoke against him I do earnestly remember him still." It tells us of God's eager desire to hear the faintest sigh of the returning sinner, His longing to get one word of remembrance from His alienated sons and daughters. It tells us also of God's disappointment at hearing nothing from us– at man's silence, and distance, and refusal to return.

God is not indifferent to man's position, and danger, and wretchedness. He does not say as we do, "It is his loss, not mine," or, "He has none but himself to blame for it– let him take it." No such hard-hearted speeches ever come from the lips of our loving God. He never loses sight of us, he pities us, yearns over us, longs to hear the inquiring voice, and the sound of the returning footstep. And when He hears it not, it "grieves Him at the heart," His heart is turned within Him– His repentings are kindled together. He is hearkening and listening at our doors, to catch the lowest word or sigh. Each day He listens– He listened this morning when you rose, He listens now! Oh

the joy it would give Him to hear from any of you, "I will arise, and go to my Father." Will you not give Him this joy? Will you grieve him by your silence? Shall His patience not melt you?

II. MAN'S REJECTION OF IT. This is very strongly put in our text; and in several ways and forms.

(1.) THE WRONG WORDS. He did hear words from them, but not those He wanted; perhaps the words of pride, of self-righteousness, of blasphemy, of worldliness, of lust; not the prodigal's words, "I will arise," which alone are sweet to Him. The self-sufficiency of the Pharisee, "I thank you that I am not as other men," or, "We are lords," or, We are the temple of the Lord; not, God be merciful to me a sinner. "They spoke not aright."

(2.) The IMPENITENCE. "No man repented of his wickedness, saying, What have I done." Their hearts were hardened. Goodness and severity had both failed. There was no sense of sin, no shame because of evil, no dread of danger. Israel's was the impenitent heart. And such is the heart of multitudes among us; the heart of our nation, we may say, no, the heart of our world; would to God that we could not say, the heart of the churches. Impenitence! How dreadful the condition of one to whom this description belongs! Do you repent of your way, O man; do you say in bitterness of soul, "Oh what, what have I done!"

(3.) The RECKLESSNESS. "All are running down the path of sin as swiftly as a horse rushing into battle!" Man is blind, madly blind, both to danger and to sin. Furiously he plunges on in evil, from sin to sin, from lust to lust, daring every venture, defying God, braving his anger, ridiculing his threats, scoffing at his judgments, rushing against his sword, mocking at his hell. How much is there of recklessness among us! Recklessness in sin, crime, self-indulgence, pleasure, lust. Utter defiance of God– bold, unblushing audacity, which nothing will daunt; which mocks at judgments, sorrows, trials, sermons, ministers, and plunges on in evil, treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath.

(4.) STUPIDITY. "The stork knows the time of her migration, as do the turtledove, the swallow, and the crane. They all return at the proper time each year. But not my people! They do not know what the Lord requires of them." We were going to say brutish stupidity, but God means to tell us that it is something worse than that. Beast and bird obey the ordained laws and keep to their appointed seasons; they return when the season calls them. But man discerns nothing, heeds nothing; times, laws, seasons, instincts, are all disregarded by him. He is void of understanding, he has closed the eye and ear, his whole intellect has lost its power of perception, not only of duty but of danger.

"My people know not the judgment of the Lord." Their heart has become calloused. They go down lower than the beasts which perish. Yet God leaves us not. He does not say, Let him alone, in the sense of leave him to perish. He stretches out His hands to us, He bends over us, He is patient, not willing that any should perish; He listens and listens. As He does at the door of the saint (Malachi 3:16), so of the sinner. What shall He hear? Ephraim bemoaning himself? Or the words of unbelief, and impenitence, and sin?

02.1.37. God's Desire Bless Sinner

BIBLE THOUGHTS & THEMES by Horatius Bonar GOD'S DESIRE TO BLESS THE SINNER "Woe unto you, O Jerusalem! will you not be made clean? when shall it once be?" – Jeremiah 13:27

Without dwelling on Jerusalem and her apostasy, which this verse specially brings before us, we pass at once to the application of the words to man in general.

I. MAN'S UNCLEANNESS. The uncleanness here spoken of is spiritual, and refers specially to unfaithfulness to God– the soul's lust and lewdness, its preference for another husband, and its desire for another love than that of God. It was with this spiritual adultery that God so often charged Israel and Jerusalem; it is with this he charges the church; and with this the whole race.

We are unfaithful to God!

(1.) IN HEART. It was meant that God should have the first place in the heart. But alas, he has the last, if any place at all. He is shut out from our love. We love others, but not God; the world, but not God; friends, but not God; money, but not God. O man, your heart is false to God; unfaithful in all its movements.

(2.) IN LIFE. As is the heart, so is the life; as is the inner, so is the outer man. God is not in our life. He is excluded from every part; thrust into a corner. Life is devoted to other objects. It is false to him. Word, deed, plan, behavior, business, education; life in all its movements, life in all its enjoyments, is false to God.

(3.) IN RELIGION. A man's religion is often the most untrue and hollow part of his life. In it he is more false to God than in any other of his actings. In religion he professedly comes nearest to God; yet in it he is often farthest away. In it he is like Jerusalem committing spiritual adultery– worshiping false gods, while pretending to worship the true. Such is man in relation to God! All falsehood, unfaithfulness, lewdness. There is no part clean.

II. GOD'S DESIRE THAT WE SHOULD BE CLEAN. He desires truth in the inward parts. He is faithful to us, and he wishes us to be faithful to him. God is not indifferent to our unfaithfulness, as if it mattered not to him. Nor does he treat it as a mere affront, or only as a sin, with which he is angry and which he condemns and will avenge. He needs our heart, our whole undivided heart; he needs it all for himself; he needs to fill it. He is a jealous God.

Moreover he pities us because of the misery which our unfaithfulness brings on us. He sees us gaining nothing, but losing everything by it; and he pities us; he yearns over us; for our own sakes he desires to see us faithful to himself. Such is the God with whom we have to do. He is one who takes a deep and loving interest in our welfare, and who pities us even when he judges us.

III. HIS ADMONITION WITH US. "Will you not be made clean; when shall it once be?" These are earnest words; words of solemn and urgent appeal to us. His pity is not idle. He comes down to us.

He speaks to us. He stretches out his hands to us. Will you? Will you not? When shall it be? Shall it not be now? Can words be more energetic, more personal, more explicit and direct? Every man must feel himself spoken to; spoken to most urgently; entreated, besought, expostulated with. He wants us to be cleansed– to turn, to seek his face, to give him our loyal love; he wants this immediately. Not a day to be lost. The time past has been enough, no, too long. He presses us with his solemn, urgent, loving now! No delay, no lingering, no hesitation. Give up your unbelief, and give it up now. Give up your idolatry, and give it up now. Turn to me, and turn now. Love me, and love me now.

IV. OUR REFUSAL. The passage takes for granted our refusal. Man rejects God, refuses to give him his heart– deliberately persists in hypocrisy, insincerity, and unfaithfulness. As much externalism as can be asked he will give; but nothing beyond this. Words he will give, but nothing more. Sacrifices, ceremonies, incense, music, the bended knee, the religious voice and tone; all these he will give, but not the heart. That he deliberately refuses – refuses to love God, to trust God, to obey God, to give God anything but the service of the outer man– of the lip, the knee, the body.

V. GOD'S CONDEMNATION. Woe unto you, O Jerusalem! It was this word that our Lord took up, when he uttered woes against the cities of Galilee. How much is involved in that woe! It is the woe of God! He means what he says. His threats are not empty. He will execute his vengeance in the day of vengeance. Woe to every one that loves not God; that loves the creature better than the creator; that has given his heart to the world in preference to God. Woe to him who is unfaithful to God; who worships him with the outer man but withholds the heart. Woe to him whose religion is all unfaithfulness; who exhibits his dislike of God in those very acts in which he deals with God.

Yet he who utters woe, utters also come (Matthew 11:21; Matthew 11:28). And between these two are the sons of men. These are the two words which he sounds aloud to us; making us to feel his profound sincerity and his unutterable love.

02.1.38. The Resting-Place Forgotten

BIBLE THOUGHTS & THEMES by Horatius Bonar THE RESTING-PLACE FORGOTTEN.

"They have forgotten their resting-place." – Jeremiah 50:6

It was of Israel's apostasy that the prophet spoke. As Moses said, "Of the rock that begat you, you are unmindful, and have forgotten the God who formed you" (Deuteronomy 32:18). So here Jeremiah says, "They have forgotten their resting-place." Thus it is with man! He has forgotten his resting-place! He has left God! "There is in him the evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God."

I. THE RESTING-PLACE. Israel had a resting-place. He is compared to a sheep who had a fold, and a shepherd, and pasture. That fold or resting-place was Jehovah's temple in the holy city; or you may say, Jehovah himself. They forsook him and his temple to serve other gods. Yet still he was their resting-place; a place for their rest, if they would but have taken it. So is it with man, the sinner. There is a resting-place for him. He needs it, and God has provided it. It is his resting-place. It is God himself– Christ Jesus, in whom there is "rest,"– "I will give you rest." As he is our "hiding-place," so he is our "resting-place." In him there is divine provision made for giving rest to the weary. He is the God-man, and that is rest; He is the propitiation for our sins, and that is rest; so that, as the sin-bearer, and the burden-bearer, he is our rest. In him is contained, and presented to us, the great love of God. As the protection from wrath, as the shadow from the heat, as the security from danger, as the divine fullness of all needed blessing, he is our resting-place. The Father knowing what we needed, has made provision in him for us. All that can give a sinner rest is contained in him; for Christ is all and in all. There is but one resting-place; not many. He who gains it has enough; he who misses it, misses everything; for there is no other resting-place for Israel or for us. One rock, one refuge, one foundation, one salvation, one resting-place!

II. MAN'S FORGETFULNESS OF IT. The simple charge here against Israel is that of forgetting the resting-place. No strong words are used, such as despising, or dishonoring, or rejecting. All these may be true, but God confines himself to the mildest and simplest, that no man may evade the charge, or console his conscience with the thought that the description is exaggerated. God simply charges him with "forgetfulness." This "resting place" is not prized nor used; it is forgotten; it is out of sight, out of mind, out of heart. This forgetfulness is strange and unaccountable.

There are so many reasons why he should not forget it.

(1.) It is so NEEDFUL. He cannot dispense with it. Other things may be, this must be. To a weary soul, what so necessary as a resting-place?

(2.) It is so BLESSED. It contains both rest and blessedness. It is not like sleep, or the insensibility produced by opiates. It is blessedness, as well as rest.

(3.) It has been PROVIDED AT SUCH A COST. God knew that man needed it, and how much he needed it, and he provided it at an infinite cost. Yet in spite of all this the fact remains– he does

forget it.

How and why is this?

(1.) He does not feel his need of it. He thinks he can do without it. He has others. He has Abana and Pharpar, which are to him better than Jordan.

(2.) He does not know how blessed it would make him. What a rest it would be to him in his day of weariness. His thoughts of blessedness are all earthly and carnal.

(3.) He hates the God that provided it. The natural heart is full of this hatred. Hatred of God must lead men to seek to put all remembrance of the rest out of mind.

(4.) He hates its provisions. Its provisions are holy and righteous. They are all connected with God himself. And hence man's object is to close his eyes and ears against a rest whose provisions and characteristics are all holy and divine.

III. MAN'S PREFERENCE FOR OTHER RESTS. We ought not to call them rests, for they are not so. They are labor and weariness, sorrow and trouble. Israel wandered like lost sheep, from mountain to hill, in search of other rests, as if anything were better than God's. So does man. He wanders about seeking rest, and finds none. But poor as the other rests are, man prefers them to that of one in whom he has no delight. The sinner is weary, and he seeks rest. He seeks it for himself. He goes from place to place, from object to object, seeking rest. Each one is poor, but he prefers it to God and to God's rest. This preference of creature-objects as the soul's rest is unspeakably sad and sinful; yet it is universal. There is hardly any object in creation which man has not tried, in preference, deliberate preference, to God. For it is all deliberate. It is not hasty, nor sudden, nor transient, but prolonged and resolute– thoroughly willful. It is this deliberate preference of other resting-places for the soul that is the great aggravation of his apostasy.

IV. THE EVIL OF ALL THIS. It is thoroughly evil; evil without palliation or excuse; evil towards God, and evil to himself. It brings punishment with it; it leaves the soul unsatisfied.

(1.) IT BRINGS PUNISHMENT WITH IT. God avenges this forgetfulness, this preference of other objects; for God is jealous. He chastened Israel; he does so to the sinner, both here and hereafter. God does not let us suppose that he overlooks the sin. He judges the sinner, and will judge him hereafter. He shows us how he resents the dishonor. Many a sorrow of earth is God's stroke of vengeance because of this forgetfulness. And will not hell be the completed vengeance of Jehovah because of this? God sends blight here on man for this contempt of the resting-place. But the eternal blight hereafter is infinitely terrible.

(2.) IT LEAVES THE SOUL UNSATISFIED. It fills no part of it; it does nothing to make it happy. It may drown the awful sense of emptiness for a while, but that is all. The weariness returns; and still the soul asks, Who will show us any good? No amount of pleasure, or excitement, or gaiety, or business can remove the weariness. Rather is that weariness increased the more it is tried to be removed.

1. Do you know that there is a resting-place? Have you not heard the report of it? There is such a thing as rest in a weary world. The goodness of it has gone abroad, Do not say then, it is vain to think to be happy; rest is impossible here. There is a resting-place.

2. Do you know what and where that resting-place is? It is to be found in God and his Son Christ Jesus. It is not afar off, but near. It is not inaccessible, but quite open and approachable. It is not costly, but free: "Come unto me, and I will give you rest."

3. Are you forgetting if, and preferring other rests to it? Most men are doing so. Are you? This is the way of the world; is it your way? Are you a forgetter of the rest? You may be no open sinner, but are you a forgetter of the rest?

4. Do you know the peril of so doing? It is misery here, it is woe hereafter. The wrath of God abides upon you. That soul of yours is sad even in the midst of pleasure. Your prospects are fearful in the extreme; for what but everlasting burnings are in store for those who forget God, or forget the resting-place? Take the resting-place as it is. It is sufficient for you. It will remove your weariness. Go then and rest.

02.1.39. The Day That Will Right All Wrongs

BIBLE THOUGHTS & THEMES by Horatius Bonar THE DAY THAT WILL RIGHT ALL WRONGS "Oh, bring the day you promised." Lamentations 1:21 This is the voice of faith; sorrowful faith, yet still faith– faith anticipating the coming day of right and truth. Jerusalem had fallen, her sons had gone into captivity, her walls and gates were in ruins, her streets were red with blood, her enemies were triumphant, and worse than all, her own sins had gone up to the heavens and brought down on her this terrible vengeance. In the midst of all this Jeremiah sits and mourns. All around is dark. There is only one bright spot, and that is in the distant future; the arrival of the day which God had "called" or summoned. For he looks up to God as the righteous Judge, the avenger of the wrongs of Israel as well as the punisher of her sins. He comforts himself by the thought that "God has appointed (or called, that is, proclaimed) a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness." This is Jeremiah’s one hope, the solitary ray of light in the midst of utter gloom. So is it with us now. We are troubled with the evil that surrounds us. The wicked triumph. The good are few, and their names are cast out as evil. Evil men and seducers wax worse and worse. We are helpless in the midst of all this sin and blasphemy and defiance of God. What, then, is our consolation? That God will bring the day that he has "called;" that man’s day and Satan’s day shall not last forever, but that God’s day is at hand; for he that shall come will come and will not tarry. Having done our utmost to arrest the flood of iniquity, to maintain the cause of God, to lift up a banner for the truth; and feeling that we are wholly impotent against the powers of earth and hell, we call to mind the promise that God has appointed a day for setting all things right, and we fall back on this sure word, comforting ourselves with the thought that the cause is really God’s, and not ours, and that He will vindicate it in due time. This enables us to possess our souls in patience.

God, by his prophet Amos (Amos 5:18) speaks of this day, and of those who look for it, thus, "Woe unto you that desire the day of the Lord, to what end is it for you? "As if he would say, You know not what you are doing; why do you desire that day? It is darkness, and not light. And this is, indeed, one awful aspect of the coming day. It is not to be desired, but dreaded. But there is another aspect of it, so that it is a day to be desired, not dreaded. Let us speak of the reasons why a believing man should desire the judgment-day and the judgment-seat, and looking up calmly, should say to God with longing heart, "Oh, bring the day you promised"; and why he should respond to words of Christ regarding his arrival, with "Amen, even so come, Lord Jesus."

I. GOD SHALL NO LONGER BE SHUT OUT OF HIS OWN WORLD. He is now excluded. Jehovah is not the God of this world. Man shuts Him out, and has done so from the first. Depart from us, is the world’s all but unanimous voice. In so far as the individual will, or the united will of humanity can do it, God has been shut out. But when the day that God has called shall arrive, God shall interpose. He shall come in and show Himself. He shall take to Himself His great power and reign. What a world it will be when God shall no longer be shut out! In vain men strive to banish Him. They may do so for a little, but the day of God is coming. He will force open the world’s long shut gates, and enter triumphantly.

II. CHRIST SHALL NO LONGER BE DENIED AND BLASPHEMED. The special enmity of the race has been directed against the Son, the Christ of God; against Him in whom God specially reveals himself. It is Him that men deny and blaspheme. A Christ in some shape they may own, but not the Christ of God. The Christ of Socinius, or Strauss, or Renan, or Colenso, they will tolerate, but at anything beyond this they scoff and gnash their teeth. How often are our souls troubled, and our hearts all but broken, at the sounds of blasphemy, the utterances of hatred against Christ. Then we fall back on the promise regarding the coming day, when Christ shall be exalted and His name honored! O day to be desired, when thus it shall be! Lord, hasten the day that You have called.

III. EVIL SHALL NO LONGER PREVAIL. God's will shall be done on earth as it is in heaven. The world shall be no longer what it now is. Satan shall no more have dominion, as the god of this world, the prince of the power of the air; he shall be dethroned and bound. Antichrist shall no longer have power, but be smitten. Iniquity shall no more overflow. The curse shall pass away, and creation be delivered. The cry of the preacher (Ecclesiastes 1:8) shall no more be heard– that all things are full of labor, vanity of vanities, all is vanity. Man shall not put light for darkness, or darkness for light, nor call evil good and good evil. The vile person shall no more be called liberal, nor the churl said to be bountiful. The effects of the fall shall disappear, and all things be made new.

IV. ERROR SHALL GIVE PLACE TO TRUTH. The first sin was at once an error and a disobedience. Man allowed dark and untrue thoughts of God to come in. Since then error has overflowed the earth like a deluge. It has spread, and ramified, and multiplied. Out of God's book of truth men have (in perverse ways) drawn errors and falsehoods innumerable. Some of the worst untruths have been those professedly deduced from the book of truth. No, and men boast in error, provided it be either clever or earnest. They call it speculation, philosophy, free thought. Yet all error is sin. And we find error everywhere; in the world and in the church. God is dishonored by it. His Son is denied. His book is set aside or misinterpreted. But when man's day is over, and God's day shall come, then error shall depart, and truth shall flourish. False science, vain philosophy, impure literature shall no more be known. True knowledge shall cover earth and fill the souls of men. Truth shall then be prized and exalted when He who is the truth and the true One shall reign. His throne shall be the throne of truth; His crown the crown of truth. His light shall put darkness to flight. Every falsehood and unreality shall disappear. All shall be real and true.

V. THE SAINTS OF GOD SHALL BE NO MORE MALIGNED. All along, hatred, contempt, misrepresentation, have been their portion. All manner of evil has been spoken and written concerning them, both in life and after death. They have been treated as the offscouring of all things. But when that day shall come which God has called, this shall be all reversed. Their lives shall be all re-written, and that by a divine hand; no misrepresentation, no falsehood there. The one-sided or malevolent histories that have calumniated them shall vanish. God himself shall proclaim their true character and noble deeds or sacrifices, which the world denied or sneered at. We shall have new and noble volumes of "worthies," of saints and martyrs whose names the world never introduced into its histories.

What a day of requiting injuries and righting the wronged shall God's day be! Let us then be patient under the calumnies of evil men. Let ungodly historians vilify our noblest men– our

Reformers, our Covenanters. Let them slander Knox and Calvin– or Melville and Rutherford– or Whitefield and the evangelists of his age; the day of recompense is coming. The falsehoods will not always lie upon their memories. God himself shall undertake their vindication, to the confusion of their slanderers. What a day for the clearing up of characters, and the placing of events, and words, and deeds in their proper light. Then shall the lie be answered, the accusation confuted before the universe. Then shall the righteous shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.

Let us then rest in hope. Let us be patient. Let us meekly bear wrongs and reproaches. He that believes does not make haste. This is night; but the morning comes. Let us rejoice in the prospect of it, and do our work regardless of present censure and reproach, anticipating the "well done" of the great Master and Judge. He stands before the door.

Chapter 55

02.1.40. False Religion and Its Doom

BIBLE THOUGHTS & THEMES by Horatius Bonar FALSE RELIGION AND ITS DOOM "I will scatter your bones round about your altars." – Ezekiel 6:5 "I will lay your corpses in front of your idols and scatter your bones around your altars." Ezekiel 6:5

It is of Israel's idolatries that the prophet is speaking; her false gods, her idol-altars, her lying prophets and priests. Jehovah abhorred them, for he is a jealous God, and with him there is but one religion, one creed, one Bible, one God. Men may speak of their right to believe as they please, and worship as they think fit. But God claims the right of deciding for us in these things. We are not under man's rule in these things, but we are under God's. He will not tolerate falsehood, or error, or unbelief, or superstition, or anything inconsistent with His revelation. Every false religion He will destroy, every false religionist He will condemn. The true and the false religion are in His eyes as far asunder as east and west, as unlike as night and day. There can be no compromise, no fellowship of light with darkness, of Christ with Belial, of the believer with the infidel. God is not a man that he should lie, or that he should overlook the lies of others. If he is the true God, let us follow him, let us worship him in spirit and in truth.

Man says that he needs sincerity and earnestness; but what God asks is truth, THE truth, the one truth, the one religion which he has revealed. Mark these four things, (1.) false religion;

(2.) its uselessness;

(3.) its hatefulness;

(4.) its doom.

I. FALSE RELIGION. There is such a thing as false religion. It may be earnest and zealous, yet false. No amount of sincerity or zeal will make that true which is in itself false. False religion is the worship of a false god, or the false worship of the true God. In general both are mixed, though in different proportions. To worship Baal or Molech would be to worship a false god. But have we not, unconsciously, perhaps, many Baals and Molechs, which we worship under the name of Jehovah, as the statue of Jupiter at Rome is adored as that of Peter. We worship a false god when we do not worship the very God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; and we worship the true God untruly when we give him only half a heart, half a soul, when we go to Him with the doubt, and the gloom, and the unbelief that belong to Baal. Go to Baal with your uncertain and doubtsome worship, go not to the living God, and do not think that the utterance of some true words or the expression of a little sentimental devotion is the true worship of the true God.

II. ITS USELESSNESS. It profits nothing and nobody, either here or hereafter. It is not acceptable to God. It will not be counted a substitute for the true. It does not satisfy the conscience. It does not make the man happy. It does not fill the heart. It does not heal diseases nor remove burdens. It does not give a man a good hope toward God, or brighten his prospects for eternity. It is irksome and unprofitable, only cheating the poor worshiper into the belief that he has felt or performed

something good and worthy. It will not stand the fire. It is but wood, and hay, and stubble. The judgment will sweep it all away. It is useless both for time nor eternity, both for earth nor heaven. It is so unreal.

III. ITS HATEFULNESS. God abhors it. It has not one feature that is pleasing to Him. It is external, it is untrue, it is against His revelation, it is dishonoring, it is self-exalting. Therefore God abhors it. He needs the heart, it has not that. He needs love, trust, peace, joy, child-like confidence, reverence; it has none of these. It is deficient in every essential element that God expects in worship. Against false worship His prophets were commanded to speak. It was as smoke in His nostrils– abominable in His eyes. It is hateful in itself, it makes the worshiper hateful, it is pure mockery. It is rottenness and death; a skeleton, not a thing of flesh and blood, a mouthful of words, a handful of dust and ashes. Surely it is hateful to Him who is true, who desires truth in the inward parts.

IV. ITS DOOM. The worship shall be destroyed and the worshiper covered with shame and everlasting contempt. The scattering of the bones of the worshipers round the altars (2 Kings 23:16), like that of mingling their blood with their sacrifices, was the indication of utter contempt as well as condemnation. It was vengeance extending even to the dust!

(1.) Certain condemnation, for God is to do it, and he will not lie.

(2.) Utter condemnation, for here is God's hand interposing to judge completely.

(3.) Visible condemnation. Before men's eyes, in a visible and striking form, so that there may be no mistake, not in a corner but in open day before all.

(4.) Expressive condemnation, such as will mark the sin; not at random, nor general, each man's sin shall bear its own peculiar brand of punishment.

(5.) Contemptuous condemnation, mingling the worshiper and his worship in one common ruin. Both shall perish– perish together, perish in the same doom; God shall laugh at their calamity, and mock when their fear comes.

(6.) Everlasting condemnation. Their altars shall never rise again. They and their false religion shall perish forever. No falsehoods in hell. No hollow religion amid the everlasting burnings. See that your religion is true– your worship real. Beware of hollowness, falsehood, externalism– of everything that will not stand the fan of the great Husbandman when He comes in his glory for sifting and for judgment.

02.1.41. No Breath No Life

BIBLE THOUGHTS & THEMES by Horatius Bonar NO BREATH, NO LIFE

"And when I beheld, lo, the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them above: but there was no breath in them." – Ezekiel 37:8

"Then as I watched, muscles and flesh formed over the bones. Then skin formed to cover their bodies, but they still had no breath in them." – Ezekiel 37:8 This scene has two aspects (contains an event and a truth), the prophetical, which specially points to Israel's restoration in the latter day; the spiritual, pointing to the case of individual souls, or churches or congregations. There are four stages presented to us–

(1.) the bone-heaps in the valley, "very dry;"

(2.) the gathering and re-construction of these bones;

(3.) the clothing with flesh, sinews, and skin;

(4.) the infusion of breath or life.

It is through the last of these that the living man is constituted; and without it there is but the picture or statue of a man. The "breath" is manifestly the "life;" communicated by the Spirit of life. This life may have different stages; but wherever it is there is a true and complete man. The disciples had life before our Lord breathed on them, but then they attained more. They had life before Pentecost, but then they obtained more. It was life that God communicated when he created man; it is life (of a higher kind) that the Spirit of God communicates to the soul at conversion. The last Adam, as the possessor of the Holy Spirit, is thus a quickening Spirit.

Thus a man may be very like a saint and yet not be one. A church or congregation may be very like a Christian one, with a fair appearance and compact organization; all in excellent bustling order– numerous, liberal, united, earnest after a sort– and yet lack one thing which neutralizes and paralyzes all the rest– the breath of life.

I. Our creed may be sound, and yet we may not be Christians. Balaam's creed seems to have been sound; also that of Judas and Demas. It may be the creed of apostles and reformers, the creed of the Synod of Dort, or the Assembly of Westminster; yet all within may be wrong. It will form part of the bones, or the sinews, or the flesh; but that is all. No, its soundness may be the occasion of serious self-deception; we may mistake orthodoxy for life– the correctness of our confession of faith for the "breath." An inanimate, unproductive creed, what will it do for you in the day of the Lord? What will it do for you now? Does it give you real peace– real liberty– real fellowship with God?

II. Our religion may be externally complete, and yet we may not be Christians. By religion I mean all that pertains to the worship and service of God, private or public; our praises, our prayers, our sanctuary services, our family worship. What are all these without the inward breath? What is

routine without life? Mechanical religion may do for the gods of Greece and Rome, but not for the living and true God. Mechanical religion may do for those who fancy that religious performances, or works done, or money paid, in order to ward off divine anger, and persuade God to keep them out of hell; but not for those who know that they are the channels of fellowship with God. Your sanctuary attendance may be regular and reverent; but what if there be no breath in it? Your prayers and praises may be punctual and exceptional, but what if there be no breath in them? Will God accept them? Will they satisfy you? Will they make you happy? Will they not be irksome and intolerable? And the more you multiply them, the more intolerable.

III. Our good works may be numerous and praiseworthy, yet we may not be Christians. It is not the work that makes the Christian, but the Christian that makes the work. This is a day of good works; of benevolent schemes; of societies great and small; of organizations for the relief of the poor, and the reformation of the wicked. They who conduct them may be earnest and self-denying men. But is the breath there? They often wonder why so much should be done with so little fruit. But is there not a cause? Is there breath, life, in all this? Can statues, or machines, or steam-engines do the work of the living God? No; it is life that does real work; it is life that is successful; it is life that God honors, and by which He works. Let us see that in doing Christian work, we ourselves are Christians; else we shall be but Noah’s carpenters after all. We may do many good works, and yet not be Christians. Many shall come in that day, saying, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in your name. But the answer is, "I never knew you."

IV. Our life may be exemplary, and yet we may not be Christians. There may be bones, and sinews, and flesh, and yet no breath, no life! There are many who mistake a fair external deportment for Christian life. A man may be so like a Christian that another could not suppose that there was anything wrong; and yet there might be no breath! A life with "no breath" must be–

(1.) A very IMPERFECT life. Many features lacking– even outward ones, much more inward. The light will be dim; the salt will lack savor.

(2.) A very UNHAPPY life. There is the secret feeling that all is wrong. Everything is irksome; for lack of the divine internal reality.

(3.) A very UNSUCCESSFUL life. It is not mere bustle, or earnestness, or zeal that does the true work for God. If there be no breath, what are these? All will be labor in vain. There is breath for you, O sinner? You will not be able to say, I perished, or I was unhappy, or useless, because God would not give me this breath.

02.1.42. Every Christian a Teacher

BIBLE THOUGHTS & THEMES by Horatius Bonar EVERY CHRISTIAN A TEACHER "Those who understand among the people shall instruct many." – Daniel 11:33 "Those who are wise will give instruction to many." – Daniel 11:33

We do not receive knowledge for ourselves alone. We must share it with others. Like our High Priest, we must "have compassion on the ignorant," and must remember Him who said, "Learn of me." In the days here spoken of by Daniel there shall be some, it is said, "who know their God" (Daniel 11:32). These are "those who understand"; for it is the knowledge of God that is alone accounted understanding in the Bible. He who knows God is a man of understanding, he who knows Him not is "void of understanding,"– "a fool." For this is life eternal, that they might know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.

Those who have understanding are evidently few. They are described as "among the people," as if they were a light in a dark place; a few who are of God, while the whole world lies in wickedness. "Not many wise" are called, is the law of this age; no, not many of the world who become wise. To be wise in Christ is the privilege of few; in order to this they must become "fools,"– fools in the eye of men– "fools that they may be wise," for the wisdom of God is foolishness with men. It is a great thing to know God– to understand the things of God. Happy they who thus know and understand. Taking these words as applicable to every Christian man and woman, let us see what they teach us.

I. A Christian is ONE AMONG THE PEOPLE. He is in the world, but not of it. He has been delivered out of it. He is of the same stock as the rest of mankind, just one of the people, one of Adam’s race. He is one of a small band, not one of a multitude; one of those of whom our Lord spoke when he said, "Few there be that find it." He was born of the flesh before he was born of the spirit; he bore the image of the earthly before he bore the image of the heavenly.

II. He is one that HAS UNDERSTANDING. It is this that specially marks him out from "the people." He knows what they know not. He has come to be of an understanding heart. He may not have much of earthly literature or human science, but he knows God; not only knows about him, but knows him. He has not much to say for himself except this, that he knows God. The special distinctiveness of a Christian is that he is a man of understanding. He may be poor, obscure, unlearned, untraveled, yet he understands what millions understand not. He may not know the world and its wonders, but he knows Him who made all these, he knows His greatness and His love.

III. A Christian is one who DOES NOT KEEP HIS KNOWLEDGE TO HIMSELF. He is not proud because he knows what others know not. He pities others, and longs to share his treasures; not to divide his inheritance, for that is impossible, but to impart what he possesses. He gives, yet he retains; he shares, yet he is none the poorer. He has got a loving and unselfish heart as well as an understanding one. He becomes a liberal giver of what God has given. He is like the clouds, which

cannot contain their water within themselves; like the sun, which cannot but shine; like the river, which cannot but scatter fertility; like the flower, which cannot but dispense fragrance.

IV. A Christian IS AN INSTRUCTOR. He has been taught, and he becomes a teacher. He has found the preciousness of knowledge and he seeks to impart it. He feels that what he formerly needed so much was teaching, that what the world still needs is teaching, and so he becomes a teacher. Not as if setting up for superior powers or knowledge, but simply as one who has had a treasure imparted to him, and who therefore longs to impart to his poorer fellow-creatures his divine gold and silver. He sees that the great need of humanity is teaching, true teaching, teaching in the things pertaining to the true God, and he sets himself fervently to teaching an untaught world. Christians, you must be teachers. This is your vocation, as those who have themselves been taught of God. Teach by your lives. Teach also in words. Lose no opportunity of instructing others, young or old. Let your lips keep knowledge for all. Live an instructive life!

V. A Christian is AN INSTRUCTOR OF MANY. He does not confine himself to a small inner circle, but he has his eye on everybody. Not with one or two is he content. He remembers the words of commendation to Levi, "He walked with me in peace and truth, and did turn away MANY from iniquity." Many, many, is his watchword. Like Joseph Alleine, he becomes "insatiably greedy of souls." Many, many is the burden of his prayers. Many, many is inscribed on all his plans. His spirit widens and widens, his eye and heart take in larger and larger circles. He remembers the multitudes whom his Master taught, the thousands in the early days of the Church, and he seeks many, many.

Chapter 58

02.1.43. Work, Rest, and Recompense

BIBLE THOUGHTS & THEMES by Horatius Bonar WORK, REST, AND RECOMPENSE

"Go your way until the end be: for you shall rest, and stand in your lot at the end of the days." – Daniel 12:13

"As for you, go your way until the end. You will rest, and then at the end of the days, you will rise again to receive the inheritance set aside for you." – Daniel 12:13

Daniel reminds us of John. The one was the "man greatly beloved," the other "the disciple whom Jesus loved." The one had frequent revelations and visions, specially of the times and seasons, so had the other. The one fainted and was without strength at the sight of Messiah's glory; the other fell at Christ's feet as one dead. Both were comforted by the hand of Jesus laid upon them. Both were exiles in a Gentile land. Both were very aged men. In our text we are reminded of the last words of our Lord to John, "Follow me." To Daniel it is, "Go your way until the end."

Here we have three things for God's Daniels, God's saints, in these days:

(1.) a saint's present work;

(2.) a saint's coming rest;

(3.) a saint's future glory.

I. A SAINT'S PRESENT WORK. "Go your way until the end be." This reminds us of, "If I will that he tarry until I come." These visions are not to make you remiss in duty, heedless of common things, neglectful of daily work. No, go your way until the end be– work while it is day. It was meant–

(1.) TO CALM. That which he previously had seen and heard was fitted to trouble, and excite, and discompose. He had been in the presence of God, like Paul, in the third heaven. He had been carried forward into the marvelous events of the latter day. He needed a calming word. And here it is, "Go your way until the end." Do your ordinary work; walk in the simple way of common life. In the midst of this age's convulsions, and storms, and heat; in the prospect of what is coming on the earth in the last days, we need calming words too. Let us listen to the calm, holy voice that speaks to us ever from heaven, "Be still, and know that I am God;" "Let not your hearts be troubled;" "Keep yourselves in the love of God;" "What is that to you? Follow me."

(2.) TO EXHORT. The words are those of command or exhortation, like those of Jesus, "Follow me." It is not that we are permitted to attend to our daily duties in the midst of all these vast events, present or to come; we are commanded to do so; to work while it is day. Sow your seed. Do not be slothful in business. Be careful and scrupulous in filling up the common daily outline of life. Do its little things well, no less than its great.

(3.) TO CHEER. The word speaks of an end. It is not perpetual toil– endless weariness. There remains a rest. The end comes! It may not be long. Life will soon be done. Or the Lord may soon be here. Do not be weary or disheartened. Be of good cheer. What are a few years of toil in prospect of the eternal rest! How needful to keep in mind these words, "Go you your way until the end be." Let us not be turned aside from the plain path; nor troubled in mind; nor disconcerted in plans; nor led to slacken our diligence. Let us press on, fight on, work on, run on; steadfast and unmoveable in the work of the Lord. We have a daily work to do in the sight of God; let us do it well. Let us be faithful in all things; men in earnest; bent on doing the work which lies to our hand.

II. A SAINT'S COMING REST. There remains a rest! Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord; yes, says the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors. The great rest is when the Lord comes. But there are two other rests. There is present rest in Jesus; and there is rest in the grave. And it is this rest in the grave that seems the one promised to Daniel, as to Abraham, "You shall go to your fathers in peace" (Genesis 15:15). He was to live long, but not always; and as soon as his time here was done he was to rest. This rest is the same as that which is called "sleeping in Jesus." He that sleeps in Jesus rests.

We are warranted then to set this rest before our eyes. Though death is our enemy, not our friend; and though death is not the same as the Lord's coming, still death does introduce the saints into rest. It is the "saint's rest," an pledge of the saint's everlasting rest; when we shall toil no more, and be vexed no more, and be weary no more, and be pained no more, and be burdened no more. Work well, then, for the work-day is not long, and the rest-day comes! "You shall rest," is God's promise to us as well as to Daniel.

III. A SAINT'S FUTURE GLORY. "You shall stand (or rise) in your lot at the end of the days." Here we have,

(1.) THE DAYS. The days are those mentioned in the previous verses; the end of these days is the beginning of blessedness; "blessed is he that comes to the 1335 days." It seems intimated to Daniel that the end of these days is not to be in his lifetime. As for us, we know not when the end shall be; we know not the times and seasons; we know not when the Lord comes.

(2.) THE STANDING. To "stand" or "rise" are used as synonymous. "The ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous" (Psalms 1:5). This "standing" is evidently resurrection, in both passages, as in Daniel 12:2. "Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake." It is of resurrection that God here speaks to Daniel. He shall arise! This is the great promise, so often reiterated in the New Testament: "You shall be recompensed at the resurrection of the just." Intermediate blessing there is; promises of intermediate rest abound; but the final glory is yet in reserve; both for Daniel and for us. Resurrection. The first resurrection! Resurrection unto life! The better resurrection! Corruption exchanged for incorruption; dishonor for glory!

(3.) THE LOT. Daniel has a lot, or portion, or special recompense of his own. To this he shall arise after he has rested in the grave from his weary work on earth. There may be a twofold reference here–

(a) General. The first resurrection, or resurrection of the just, or "resurrection from among the dead," or resurrection unto everlasting life, or the better resurrection; these expressions refer to

the saint’s reward when the Lord comes. "Blessed and holy is he that has part in the first resurrection." This glorious resurrection is held before Daniel’s eyes as his recompense. It is held before ours! "My dead body shall you arise" (Isaiah 26:19).

(b) Special. There seems something more special promised here to Daniel (as to Zerubbabel, Haggai 2:23); some personal and peculiar reward. What that may be, we know not. "A prophet’s reward" is referred to by our Lord as something special and great. Each saint shall have his own crown, his own weight of glory, his own inheritance, "your crown" (Revelation 3:11). The message, then, in these last days (days of excitement, and change, and darkness), is, labor on–perseveringly, calmly, joyfully, hopefully. The Lord is at hand. The resurrection comes. The glory of that day will be an ample recompense.

Chapter 59

02.1.44. Human Heedlessness Divine Remembrance

BIBLE THOUGHTS & THEMES by Horatius Bonar HUMAN HEEDLESSNESS AND DIVINE REMEMBRANCE "They consider not in their hearts that I remember their wickedness.'' – Hosea 7:2

"They do not realize that I remember all their evil deeds. Their sins engulf them; they are always before me." – Hosea 7:2 Let me present this passage to you under these two heads: (1.) human sin; (2.) the divine remembrance of it.

I. HUMAN SIN. What is sin? It is not-- (1.) an accident, (2.) nor an imprudence, (3.) nor a misfortune, (4.) nor a disease, (5.) nor a weakness.

It may be all these, perhaps; but it is something beyond all these; something of a more fatal and terrible character. It is something–

(1.) with which law has to do, (2.) which righteousness abhors, (3.) which the judge condemns, (4.) which calls for the infliction of punishment from God. In other words, it is GUILT– it is CRIME. Man's tendency is either to deny it or to extenuate it. He either pleads not guilty, or he smooths over the evil; giving it specious names. Or if he does not succeed in these, he casts the blame off himself; he shifts the responsibility to his nature, his birth, his circumstances, his education; no, to God himself. But human sin is not thus to be diluted or transformed into a shadow. It is infinitely real– true– deep– terrible in the eyes of Him with whom we have to do. It is the transgression of law; and as such must be dealt with by God, and felt by ourselves. Let us not trifle with sin, either in the conscience or the intellect. Let us learn its true nature from the terribleness of the wrath and condemnation threatened by God against every sin, great or small.

II. THE DIVINE REMEMBRANCE OF IT. God remembers. His memory never fails in anything. Nothing escapes it, great or small. Nothing effaces anything from it.

(1.) Time does not efface it. Ages blot out nothing. The past is as clear and full as the present.

(2.) Other events do not efface it. With man one fact expels another; today's doings destroy the recollection of yesterday's. Not so with God.

(3.) Our own forgetfulness will not efface it. Our memory and God's are very different. Our forgetfulness does not make Him forget. God remembers! Nothing can make Him forget. He may seem to do so; but it is only seeming. He remembers the person– the time– the circumstances– the thing itself; public or secret; bad or good; negative or positive. He remembers SINS.

Let no one say that God is too good to remember them. He cannot but do so. He would not be God if it were otherwise. God can forget nothing; for memory is but the knowledge of the past, and He knows everything. It may be found hereafter that man forgets nothing either; and that the bitterness of a ruined eternity will lie in memory. But though man should forget, God remembers; and He can call up sin to remembrance. It will and must come up at last. Men may try to forget it;

to drown all thought of it; to efface all traces of it; but it will come up! As even Job said, 'My bones are full of the sins of my youth.' For a season here men succeed often in forgetting sin. And having forgot it they conclude that God has done the same. "They consider not in their hearts that I remember their wickedness." They conceive that God's memory is as treacherous as their own. For this God reproves them. "You thought that I was altogether such a one as yourself,"– that my memory was as untrue as yours. But the day is coming which shall show how foolish, how criminal was such a thought! The opening of the books will show this if nothing else will. But there is such a thing as forgetfulness with God. "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." This is the true oblivion; divine oblivion of sin; perfect and eternal oblivion. And how is this? The prophet in the Old Testament, and the apostle in the New, tell us that this is one of the provisions and results of the New Covenant; that covenant which has been sealed with the blood of the Son of God. It is the blood that enables God to forget sin; that blots out all sin of ours from His eternal memory; so that it becomes as if it had never been. But this oblivion is no accident; no mere result of time and intervening circumstances. It is righteous oblivion! Oblivion which righteousness constrains! O blessed oblivion which is the result of righteousness. Had it been accomplished in any other way, there would always have been the danger of reviving memory; memory rousing itself from dormancy, and calling for vengeance after all. But where righteousness has produced the forgetfulness, all is well forever. Sin is buried beyond the possibility of resurrection. But when does God cease to remember sin in my individual case? When I have accepted the covenant; when I have fixed my eyes upon the blood; when I have received the divine testimony to that great propitiation which has made it a righteous thing in God to remember my sins no more! Is not this a description of our world? It is not here the fool saying, "There is no God;" nor is it men saying, God has forgotten us; but it is, God has forgotten our sins! Indifference to sin like their own, forgetfulness like their own, they ascribe to Him! "God does not remember sin," is this great world's motto. And so they neglect the sacrifice for sin, and put away all fear of hell. "They consider not in their hearts that I remember their wickedness." What will they say when the Judge arrives?

Chapter 60

02.1.45. Lies the Food of Man

BIBLE THOUGHTS & THEMES by Horatius Bonar LIES, THE FOOD OF MAN

"But you have cultivated wickedness and raised a thriving crop of sins. You have eaten the fruit of lies; trusting in your military might, believing that great armies could make your nation safe!" Hosea 10:13 The subject suggested by these words is, "lies, their fruit, and man's eating it;" or simply, "lies and their fruit." The word 'lie' is used in a twofold sense– a lie as to fact, and a lie as to doctrine; untrue reports and unsound teaching, false testimony and false knowledge (or theology). This falsity may be negative or positive, as "You shall not surely die," and "You shall be as gods." The lie comes sometimes from man, sometimes from Satan, but never from God, for God is not a man that he should lie; never from the works of God when rightly interpreted and understood. By two great lies man was led away from God. By the same two lies has the estrangement been kept up. On these two lies the world has been feeding ever since the fall. Their fruit has been woe and death. These lies are those referred to above– the one a denial of Godhead perfection; the other, an assertion of creature-perfection; the one saying, there is no such thing as sin and punishment, the other, that there is no such thing as creature-hood limitation and dependency. "You shall not die," "You shall be as gods." For these two lies, God has written his Bible to contradict, for the whole divine word is a confutation of them. But the special confutation is to be seen in the life and death of the Christ of God. His death, as the sinbearer, said, 'You shall surely die'; and His life, as the dependent Son of Man, showed, that no circumstances, no progress, no knowledge could ever make man God, the creature the Creator. But the human, however blessed, and holy, and wise, must ever be the human, and the divine the divine.

Israel's history, to which our passage refers, is the history of the fruit of lies. "They believed not God," is the accusation brought against them. They rejected the truth, they received the lie, and the fruit of this was judgment. Every sorrow that came on them was the fruit of a lie. Their last great sorrow, the ruin of Jerusalem, and the slaughter of its citizens, was the fruit of a lie. And are they not now, in their dispersion, eating the fruit of lies? The world's history is the same. Our race has been eating the fruit of lies; not simply of sin, but of lies. The sorrows, sighs, tears, pains of our race are the fruit of lies– the original lie of Paradise, and a thousand such since then. The sweating-toils of man, the travail-pangs of woman, the cries of suffering infancy– what are they but the fruit of a lie? Yon tossing sick-bed, yon weary death-bed, yon swelling churchyard, yon shroud, yon coffin, yon funeral, yon open grave, what are they? The fruit of a lie. It is bitter, poisonous, long-lasting fruit. And the world's last days are no improvement upon its first, for in them comes "the strong delusion that they should believe a lie." What is every false religion but the belief of a lie, and the judgments with which God has visited its professors, the eating the fruit of a lie. Anti-Christianity is the special and pre-eminent exhibition of the belief of a lie, and the doom of Antichrist will be the especial and awful exhibition of "eating the fruit of lies."

Each soul's history resembles the above. It is the history of the belief of lies– of a thousand lies. We begin to believe lies as soon as we can believe anything at all, and we act daily upon believed

lies. The two original Satanic lies are continually coming up, and along with them myriads of others, all leading us astray. Each day brings forth the lie, the fruit, the eating thereof. Satan, or the world, or the flesh, or a friend, or a book, or a scene whispers the lie; it is fair and specious, we believe it; it brings forth fruit, we eat of it, and the end is bitterness and disappointment. We "feed on lies."

What is pleasure, or lust, or revelry? It is the belief of a lie, the feeding on a lie. What is worldliness, the love of gaiety, the absorption of the heart in business? The belief of a lie, and the feeding on a lie. We persuade ourselves that this world is good, and pleasant, and excellent, and so we pursue it in preference to the world to come. But the belief of the lie is quickly followed up by disappointment, the sense of hollowness and dissatisfaction. God makes us thus eat of the fruit of lies, that we may be torn from them and betake ourselves to the truth.

What keeps us from Christ? A lie, or lies! What makes us choose the broad way? A lie, or lies! What is unbelief but the belief of a lie? Where do our doubts and fears but from come? The belief of lies in preference to the truth; no, from our making God a liar, in not believing the record which he has given of his Son? Where comes backsliding, or the loss of first love, but from our returning to the lie which we had rejected?

God, in his gospel, meets the lie, and all the lies which have sprung up on earth. He sends us the truth; He sends us the true One. And while He meets the lie, He does it in His own divine way. He says, Yes, you shall not surely die– but that deliverance shall not be in the way you think. Death is the wages of sin, yet I bring life to the sinner, everlasting life, life through the belief of the truth, even as death came through the belief of a lie. He says, "Yes, you shall be as gods, but not in your way. I will make you partakers of the divine nature, not by eating the forbidden tree, but by eating of Him whose flesh is food indeed and whose blood is drink indeed."

What stress God lays on truth, and on our believing it! What sin He declares to be in a lie and in our believing it! All untruth, all error, all false doctrine, as well as false statement, has in it the nature of a lie. Men in our day think man is not responsible for the truth, and that there is no sin in the reception of error. God protests against this, and calls on men to receive truth, his truth, as expounded in his one revelation! Gloriously yet awfully shall all this be manifested, when He who is the Truth shall come the second time to vindicate both truth and righteousness!

Chapter 61

02.1.46. The Love and the Calling

BIBLE THOUGHTS & THEMES by Horatius Bonar THE LOVE AND THE CALLING "When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt." – Hosea 11:1

God’s words to Israel by this prophet are hard and stern. Though intermixed with expressions of tenderness, as, "How shall I give you up?" this book is full of fearful things. In the midst of these God here stops and reminds them of his love– his first love– the kindness of their youth, the time of their espousals. It was sincere and deep; all along it had been so; and all his messages by the prophets were no proof of hatred or enmity. He loved them in Abraham; he loved them in Jacob; he loved them when they went down to Egypt; he loved them in the days of their bondage; and he showed his love in calling him– even Israel his son, his first-born– out of Egypt. The deliverance from Egypt was always in after ages the great standing proof to which God appealed, of his love: "When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt." This calling out of Egypt was done more than once. The most marvelous was that under Moses; but in after ages, when they were carried into Egypt, God interposed and called them out. Neither Egypt nor Babylon was to be the home of his people; only a sojourn, a place of exile; no more. Out of it they must be called. They whom God did not love might remain there; they whom he loved could not be allowed to do so. Servants or friends might, but not sons. For sons there was Canaan and Jerusalem– the land flowing with milk and honey. The last fulfilling or "filling up" of these words, was in the case of God’s only-begotten Son. Israel’s history was the rehearsal of his. He was in certain points to tread in their steps, to go over their history in himself. And what a closeness of connection, what a oneness between Him and them does this imply! Thus in him many words of the prophets received a filling up, a completion, a fulfillment, which makes every one who reads feel how true, how accurate, how overflowingly full are the words of God.

It is not by accommodation, or allusion, or figure that these words are applied to Christ. No; in him they receive their last filling up, their perfect accomplishment; the last drop of the purposed metal is poured into the mold; it can contain no more; it needs no more. Then was that fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet: "Out of Egypt have I called my son." Egypt was not to be the home of Jesus; and yet it was to have the honor of sheltering him; yes, sheltering him when Israel cast him out. But out of it he must be called. God’s purpose and God’s word demanded it.

O marvelous fullness of the divine word! O superhuman perfection of exactness in each announcement! Not one jot or tittle fails! Heaven and earth may pass away; star after star may be broken or blotted out; but the divine word remains unharmed and glorious amid the universal wreck. All that is on earth of beauty and excellence may come to nothing; the grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God shall stand forever! In both these cases we see the word literally fulfilled. The nation of God and the Son of God were called out of the land of Egypt and the house of bondage. Why this calling? Could they not remain? Was not Goshen as fruitful as Canaan? In the case of Jesus, the reason is obvious. It was in no sense his home or native land. He had fled to it for shelter, and it had received him, even as it did Israel at first. But he had work to

do elsewhere; work which could not be done in Egypt. It was to the lost sheep of the house of Israel that he was sent. In the case of Israel, we may say also, they could not remain. Though born in Egypt, it was not their true home. They were the heirs of another heritage, given by God himself; they too had work to do which could not be done in Egypt; there was a purpose to be fulfilled in them by their settlement in Canaan; too long connection with Egypt would have corrupted them with its idolatry, and worldliness, and pleasures; they had a testimony to bear in behalf of the true God which could not be borne in Egypt, so that even though they had never been oppressed, they could not have remained.

It was to Jerusalem, to Canaan, to Zion, to Lebanon that they were bound. Not out of the Nile, but of Jordan, are they to drink; with streams from Lebanon are they to quench their thirst. Whatever attractions Egypt might have (in the case of Moses it was riches, and royalty, and learning, and luxurious ease), they must not tarry; nor look behind, like Lot’s wife; nor sigh, as they did afterwards in the desert, for its carnal plenty. But the word is for us figuratively what it was for Israel literally. It is for us, for we are one with Israel, and one with the Son of God.

Out of Egypt the church is called; each chosen one, each saint, each son, each Israelite indeed is called. Let us consider our history under the following chapters–

(1.) Our birthplace;

(2.) Our calling;

(3.) Our journey;

(4.) Our home.

I. OUR BIRTHPLACE. It is this Egypt world– "this present evil world." It is evil, yet it is fair to look upon, with its pleasures, its gaieties, its riches, its glories, its pomps, its glitter, its songs, its magnificent palaces and gorgeous array. Egypt was one of the best specimens of the world. Into it were gathered all the world’s wealth, and art, and science, and philosophy, and splendor of every kind. It was a fascinating region; every object in it magnetic to the natural man, and intoxicating to the unregenerate heart. Everything was there but the true God. The world’s religion was there decked out in its goodness of temple, picture, statue, and image of every kind. The world’s wisdom was all there; its 215 astronomy, its natural science, its mechanical arts, its architecture, its skill in ornament, with all fascinations for the natural man, all stimulants for the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life. All natural knowledge, natural beauty, natural progress, are here; intellect, power, greatness, pomp, splendor– all are here.

Yet amid all these the true God is not. When human intellect is at its highest, true religion at its lowest! The world by wisdom knows not God. All idolatry, of the vilest and most foolish kind, is here. All sensuality, oppression, wickedness are here! As was Egypt, so is this world! It is this "present evil world"; it "lies in wickedness"; and it is our birthplace! Not Bethlehem, as in the case of the Son of God, nor Jerusalem, but Egypt is our birthplace. Children of wrath; sons of the evil one; born in sin– these are the figures which describe us. We are by nature men of Egypt.

II. OUR CALLING. We did not rise and flee of ourselves. We would have remained there forever. We loved Egypt, and delighted in its vanities. It was the home of our hearts. But God called us. He "called us with a holy calling." He called us as he did Abraham out of Ur; as he did Israel out of

Egypt; as he did the fishermen out of their boats. With his own almighty voice he called us. We could not but obey. It was irresistible. Hence He made us willing in the day of his power.

Many voices within and without had called us. Conscience said, Arise, and depart. The soul's deep longings after something higher said the same. Every pain, trial, disappointment, vexation, bereavement said, Arise, and depart. But all these failed. Then God spoke the word, and we found it irresistible, He spoke, and it was done. Then all those former voices which we had hitherto slighted gathered strength. Pain, grief, weariness, affliction, all spoke out now; and God spoke in them. Even the feeblest voice of all seemed irresistible. It was not so much one call as a thousand; each one irresistible. Yes, out of Egypt God called us. Blessed and holy calling!

III. OUR JOURNEY. It is through the desert. Not at once into the kingdom; not at once to heaven; but circuitously. And this long journey is characterized not by smoothness, but by roughness! It is a waste howling wilderness; a land of barrenness, of heat, of thirst, and hunger, and weariness. It is the right path, for God is our leader; it is safe, for God is our keeper; it is blessed, for God is our companion; but still it is rough, and dark, and dreary.

Yet it is needful, (1.) The LENGTH of it is needful, that patience may have her perfect work;

(2.) the ROUGHNESS of it is needful, that we may be purified;

(3.) the INTRICACIES of it are needful, that God may have his opportunities for guiding us;

(4.) the DARKNESS of it is needful, that Christ may be realized as the sun;

(5.) the SORROW of it is needful, that the Holy Spirit may be known as the Comforter. How much less would we know of God and of ourselves were this journey different! How much should we lose were we taken at once into the kingdom; as there can be no second opportunity hereafter of going over the way again! Let us prize the journey in all its aspects.

IV. OUR HOME. Canaan is our promised land, and Jerusalem our city. For God has prepared for us both a land and a city; a home for eternity; not merely better than the desert, but better than Egypt; a home that more than makes up for all that we have left behind; eternal in the heavens, an incorruptible inheritance; the many mansions; God's home and ours; Christ's home and the church's forever; better than the earthly Jerusalem or the earthly paradise; in which we shall never be disturbed; from which we cannot be driven; in which we can neither be tempted nor sin; everlasting and glorious. It is to that we are bound, and we lay up our treasure there.

It is God's love that has done all this: "When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt." God's love has done it! It is love that calls us out and draws us out; the mighty love of God. It is love that takes us as we are, and which we are to take as it is. It is love like that to Abraham and to Israel. It is the love of the shepherd to his sheep; of the woman to her lost piece of silver; of the father to his lost son. It is love to which he himself bears witness: "I loved him,"– loved him even from the days of his childhood. It is love exhibited in the cross; love realized in the tens of thousands that have been called out of Egypt by it!

Chapter 62

02.1.47. The Anger and the Goodness

BIBLE THOUGHTS & THEMES by Horatius Bonar THE ANGER AND THE GOODNESS

"Who can stand before his indignation? and who can abide in the fierceness of his anger? his fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by him. The Lord is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; and he knows those who trust in him." – Nahum 1:6-7

"Who can stand before his fierce anger? Who can survive his burning fury? His rage blazes forth like fire, and the mountains crumble to dust in his presence. The Lord is good. When trouble comes, he is a strong refuge. And he knows everyone who trusts in him." – Nahum 1:6-7

Throughout this chapter, and specially in these verses, let us note these two things, (1.) Jehovah's anger, (2.) Jehovah's goodness. They stand out very strongly in this "burden."

I. JEHOVAH'S ANGER

(1.) It is REAL. There is such a thing as anger in God. Many are the expressions used concerning it both in this chapter and elsewhere– jealousy, vengeance, fury, wrath; all to indicate its existence, and to show us that the human theories of divine universal benevolence are not true; being created for a purpose, and that purpose to persuade the sinner's own conscience that he need not be alarmed because of his guilt; and that no one need dread the infliction of punishment, except perhaps a few of the most wicked of our race. But God's words are not exaggerations, nor words of course. There is a terrible truth contained in these often repeated words of Scripture, "His anger was kindled." Loving and gracious as Jehovah is, his anger is real. When Jesus comes the second time he comes to "take vengeance."

(2.) It is RIGHTEOUS. It is not the rage of selfishness, or passion, or affront. It is judicial anger; the anger of the righteous judge. It is anger against sin, against the sinner; anger because of insulted law and dishonored righteousness. Nothing in it is unjust, or cruel, or arbitrary. Then the condemned soul will be compelled hereafter to say, it was all right and just; it shall be right and just to all eternity.

(3.) It is DREADFUL. Though calm, it is unutterably dreadful; no, overwhelming. No power and no numbers shall be able to stand before it. It shall sweep everything before it like a whirlwind. The expulsion from Paradise, the deluge, the ruin of Sodom, are specimens of its terribleness. The lost soul shall be utterly overwhelmed.

(4.) It is INEXORABLE. Nothing shall turn it aside or soften it when once it is kindled. "The vengeance of eternal fire," the "everlasting burnings," the "worm that dies not," these are dreadful words. No bribery, no argument, no influence shall prevail against it. Not even pity to the poor soul. God will forget to be gracious; repentance shall be hid from his eyes. O anger of Jehovah, how real, how righteous, how terrible, how inexorable!

Yet, let me say one thing, should you be one of the eternally lost, and should you, in the course of your weary and tormented eternity, say to yourself, 'Oh that God were not so just;' then think what a wish that would be for yourself. Your security against unjust and over-severe punishment is that very justice against which you petition. Bad as your case may be at the hands of a just God, it would be unspeakably worse at the hands of an unjust God. The anger of a righteous God is no doubt terrible, but the unbridled fury of an unrighteous God is something too horrible even to think upon.

II. JEHOVAH'S GOODNESS. He is good, and he does good. He is kind to the unthankful and the unworthy. God is love. God loves the sinner.

(1.) His goodness is SINCERE. He does not utter words of course, nor pretend to feelings which are not in him. His words mean just what they say; his deeds mean just what they indicate; the works of his hands have a most substantial and authentic expression of goodness. God is not a man that he should lie, either in his words of goodness or of anger.

(2.) It is POWERFUL. It is Almighty goodness. He is able to deliver those whom he loves. Their interests are safe in his hands. "He is slow to anger, and great in power." Who can withstand his love? "It is God that justifies, who is he that condemns?"

(3.) It is WATCHFUL. His eye is on us at all times, specially in the day of trouble. His is watchful goodness. His is the unsleeping eye, and the untiring hand. He is not weary of blessing. He delights in opportunities for pouring out his love; and our extremities are his opportunities.

(4.) It is UNCHANGING. Like himself, his goodness is without variableness; not ebbing and flowing, but always flowing. His heart is the heart of the unchangeable One. Not like the tides, or the seasons; but like the sky above us, ever one calm arch of gentle, loving azure, embracing earth.

Such is the God with whom we have to do. He is righteous and cannot allow sin to go uncondemned and unpunished. Yet is he good and gracious, not willing to destroy or to take vengeance; a God before whom the sinner may tremble; a God in whom the chief of sinners may find forgiveness. I remind you of two passages which will form the practical improvement of all I have said.

(1.) "The great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand!" It is not yet come; but it is coming! Judgment lingers not, damnation slumbers not. It will be a day of terror for the sinner when the pent up wrath of God shall pour itself out, not in seven vials, or seventy times seven, but in an eternity of vials without number.

(2.) "He is patience toward us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." Such is his goodness now. He is rich in mercy. His patience is beyond all conception or measure. And in his patience there is salvation– salvation to the uttermost. He pities, yearns, pleads, beseeches, spares, prolongs the day of grace, presents pardon, salvation, life to the ungodliest, free. Yes, freely to the last! Let this patience goodness draw us, melt us, awaken confidence, and win us to love.

02.1.48. Darkness Pursuing the Sinner

BIBLE THOUGHTS & THEMES by Horatius Bonar DARKNESS PURSUING THE SINNER "Darkness shall pursue his enemies." Nahum 1:8

"But he sweeps away his enemies in an overwhelming flood. He pursues his foes into the darkness of night." Nahum 1:8

It is of Nineveh and Assyria that this prophet utters his fearful burden. That city and its inhabitants were to bear the judgments of Jehovah. It was to be swept from the earth, and they were to be driven out, pursued by destruction from the Lord. "The Assyrian" was Israel's great enemy, God's great enemy; type of the Church's great enemy in the last days. The capital city had been warned, had repented, and had returned like the dog to its vomit. Now the last blast of the prophetic trumpet is sounded; a warning to Nineveh, a consolation to Israel. Darkness has settled down on Nineveh from that day to this, and has pursued its dwellers– a type and pledge of the blackness of darkness forever. Let us take Assyria as a specimen of sinners; and this prediction as a declaration of God's way of dealing with them.

I. A SINNER IS AN ENEMY TO GOD. This is a strong word, and worthy of solemn thought. It means much. Scripture speaks of the sinner as, (1.) not loving God;

(2.) forgetting God;

(3.) disobeying God;

(4.) departing from God. But this is more than all these; stronger, more decided, more terrible. It means such things as the following–

(1.) He hates God. Hater of God is his name; hater of Christ also– hater of his whole being, his righteousness, his truth, his holiness, his power, his sovereignty; no, his love.

(2.) He tries to injure God. He would sincerely carry his hatred into effect by injury, in every way; he robs God, he mocks God, he tries to dethrone Him, and to oppose Him.

(3.) He tries to do away with God. Enmity, when it runs its course, ends in murder. So man, if he could, would take the life of God. When the fool says in his heart there is no God, he speaks as a murderer. When the Son of God came to earth, they rested not until they had slain him. Crucify him, crucify him, was a cry, the intensity of whose bitterness and malignity arose from the suspicion in the hearts of the Jews that he was really the Son of God. Thus every sinner is an enemy of God, an injurer, a rebel, a robber, a murderer. All sin is the indication of this, and when fully carried out ends in this. And all unbelief is crucifixion of the Son of God.

II. GOD MEANS TO DEAL WITH THESE HIS ENEMIES. He is not indifferent to their enmity, he is not blind to it, he does not mean to overlook it. But he is patient, not willing that any should perish. He wishes to give them time to repent; he tries by this love of his to melt them, but, if all fail, he will at length arise and deal with them. They shall know his power and righteousness, his wrath and

vengeance. Darkness shall pursue his enemies. He does not use many words, nor strong language; the threat here is very decided no doubt, but it is very calm; all the more terrible and certain from being so calm. It refers both to time and eternity; present darkness, eternal darkness.

(1.) There is darkness in store for the sinner. It is not fire or torment that is here spoken of, it is simply darkness. As such it is,

(1.) The absence of all that gives health, and gladness, and life; for without light there is no life, no verdure, no bloom, either for man or man's earth. A world without a sun! How dismal!

(2.) The presence of that which produces gloom, uncertainty, perplexity, terror, despair. How cheerless is a cloudy day; how much more days of never-ending cloud and darkness. No knowledge of the way, groping perpetually, exposure to dangers and enemies. How dismal would life be with nothing but darkness! Yet such is the portion of God's enemies! They have rejected the light of the world, and darkness must be their lot, a common lot with him who is the prince of darkness.

(2.) This darkness is from God. It does not come by chance, nor from man, nor from natural causes. It is produced and sent by Him who has both light and darkness at disposal. It comes as punishment– specially for their rejection of the light. Darkness coming in any way is sad, but coming from God it is infinitely terrible. We must go astray, we must stumble, we must wander forever. O enemy of God, think what it will be to be enveloped in darkness and followed by darkness forever.

(3.) This darkness shall pursue them. It shall be to them as an enemy, or as a beast of prey– ever following them, seeking their destruction. Wherever they go this darkness shall be upon their heels, and they shall not escape. In vain shall they seek for light, gross darkness shall compass them about. Eternal darkness shall be their portion, the blackness of darkness forever. Darkness like a rushing whirlwind shall sweep them before it– "they shall be driven to darkness."

(4.) Every enemy of God must expect this. It is a certainty. It is not possible to be an enemy of God and yet escape the darkness. However swiftly they may flee, the darkness shall overtake them like a tempest. Their enmity to God must be avenged! For the darkness does not come at random; it follows in the track of the enmity. It marks the enemy, and follows him; it finds him and pursues him.

02.1.49. Looking to the Pierced One

BIBLE THOUGHTS & THEMES by Horatius Bonar LOOKING TO THE PIERCED ONE

"They will look on me whom they have pierced and mourn for him as for an only son. They will grieve bitterly for him as for a firstborn son who has died. Zechariah 12:10 Let us take up this passage under the following heads, which will bring out all its parts:

(1.) the pierced one;

(2.) the piercers;

(3.) the lookers;

(4.) the mourners.

I. THE PIERCED ONE. Messiah– the seed of the woman; the man with the bruised heel; he is the pierced one. It is He, Himself, who speaks. He was pierced by the nails and by the spear; by the nails to effect his death, by the spear to prove it; both of these, the exhibitions of man's hatred, before and after death. It is as the pierced one that we see him in the twenty-second Psalm and in the fifty-third of Isaiah; as such on the cross; as such in heaven, the Lamb slain. Divine yet human; human yet divine; both of these perfectly; human, that he might be pierced; divine, that his piercing might be efficacious. By his stripes we are healed.

II. THE PIERCERS. These in the first place are the Jews and the Romans, at the cross; Jew and Gentile uniting in this act, the Jew the planner and counselor, the Gentile the executioner. It was the united hatred of Jew and Gentile that did the deed. The crowd surrounding the cross, they are consenting and partaking– and all to whom the proclamation of this piercing comes, who do not come out from the crowd and protest against the deed by believing in the pierced one. In this way it is that all the world is guilty of the deed.

III. THE LOOKERS. In one sense the first piercers were lookers. They looked and pierced; they pierced and looked. But that looking wrought no change; they looked and hated only the more. Jew and Gentile then looked, but they remained the same. The lookers in our text are not those who surrounded the cross, but those who came afterwards, not looking at the actual cross, but listening to the story of the pierced one. How idly they talk who say, Had we seen the cross we should have been melted down! At Pentecost we find these lookers; in many places, and times, and ages we find them; we find them still. In the latter day our text is to be more fully verified to Jew and Gentile, "Behold he comes with clouds, and every eye shall see him," that is, look upon him. The whole world shall be lookers then– "every eye." In our day we may say that it is by the ear we look; it is the record that brings the cross before the eye, and presents to us the pierced one. We preach the story of the cross and say, Look!

IV. THE MOURNERS. The actual piercers at the cross did not mourn; they railed and wagged their heads; the sight of the pierced one then produced only hatred and mockery. A man might see the

cross and remain hardhearted. The cross and the crucifix in themselves can do nothing for a soul. Yet the pierced one is the object to which God turns our eye. It is of him that the Holy Spirit makes use in breaking the hard heart and binding up the broken one. He does not work except in connection with the cross of Christ. He uses the cross for producing godly sorrow. Mark,

1. The sorrow here referred to is VERY DEEP. It is like mourning for an only son; it is like the bitterness of soul for a first-born. It is not the sorrow of a moment or an hour, but prolonged; not surface-sorrow, but deep; not sentimentalism, but genuine grief– the grief of the whole man.

2. It is sorrow PRODUCED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT. His hand is in it, else we might look a thousand times over at the cross and remain unmoved. It is not the sorrow produced by pictures, or statues, or the sight of Sinai or Jerusalem, or harrowing descriptions, or sad poetry, or plaintive music, like the "Miserere" of Rome, or by the darkness of a gloomy chamber– these are artificial and mechanical ways of calling up apparent religious feeling; but it is only the sorrow of the world which works death, not godly sorrow working repentance unto life, nor is it even so deep as that of Judas when he said, "I have sinned." It is manmade conviction, if it is conviction at all, not the sorrow of the Holy Spirit.

3. It is sorrow FLOWING FROM LOOKING AT THE PIERCED ONE. We do not first mourn and then look; we look and mourn. Not the one without the other; and not the mourning before the looking. Many, in their self-righteousness, would first mourn, and then carry their mourning to God as a recommendation. But there is no genuine sorrow except that which flows directly from looking at the pierced one. What do we see in this pierced one that produces such a result?

(1.) We see INFINITE LOVE. This melts the heart and draws tears from the eyes. It is love that is bleeding on that cross.

(2.) We see OUR OWN REJECTION OF THAT LOVE. We have long been rejecters, despisers of it. Our years of rejection come up before us and fill us with bitterness. What, so long despise such love!

(3.) We see SUFFERING. It is suffering beyond all suffering of man. It is the suffering of love. The sufferer is love itself. He suffers because he loves. He loves and suffers!

(4.) We see that suffering CAUSED BY OURSELVES. We not only rejected the love, but we nailed the loving sufferer to the tree. This is sin; this is our sin. We are the murderers. We hated, mocked, nailed, slew. Oh, what sin is ours; and what must sin be! Yet hear his voice, "Look unto me, and be you saved!"

Chapter 65

02.1.50. The Holiness of Common Things

BIBLE THOUGHTS & THEMES by Horatius Bonar THE HOLINESS OF COMMON THINGS

"On that day even the harness bells of the horses will be inscribed with these words: Set apart as Holy to the Lord. And the cooking pots in the Temple of the Lord will be as sacred as the basins used beside the altar. In fact, every cooking pot in Jerusalem and Judah will be set apart as holy to the Lord Almighty. All who come to worship will be free to use any of these pots to boil their sacrifices. And on that day there will no longer be traders (Canaanites) in the Temple of the Lord Almighty." Zechariah 14:20-21

It is of millennial days that the prophet is speaking; days when Paradise shall be restored, and earth shall be as heaven; when Israel shall be restored, Jerusalem rebuilt, and the great kingdom set up that cannot be moved. Of this period it is the holiness that he specially points to; so unlike everything in Jerusalem or on the earth in preceding days. "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty," shall then be the theme of every song. Jerusalem shall be truly what it is now, and has been hitherto, but in name, "the holy city." But it is the holiness of common things that he yet more specially dwells on. Not holy men merely, or holy service, or holy songs, or holy Sabbaths; but holy vessels of every kind; holy bells (or bridles), holy pots, holy bowls, with the holy use of all these; so that every sight and sound shall proclaim holiness. On wall, and gate, and bar, on houses, and doors, and posts, and lintel, shall be inscribed "holiness." On leaf, and flower, and tree shall be holiness. The following paraphrase will bring out the exact meaning of each clause. "In that day shall there be even upon such common things as the horse-bells, holiness unto the Lord; every vessel in the temple shall be holy, and even the common boiling pots shall be as sacred as the altar-bowls; no, not the temple-pots alone, but every pot in Jerusalem and throughout the land shall be holiness to the Lord of hosts; and all those who come from afar to sacrifice shall make use of them: and there shall be no more the Canaanite (like the present Moslem) in the house of the Lord of hosts."

Thus the commonest of common things are selected to illustrate the great truth or fact of that day, that is, the universality of consecration. Nothing shall be left unsanctified. Everything shall be for God; everything shall glorify him; exhibiting the full meaning of the text, "Whether you eat or drink, do all to the glory of God." It is not then the spiritual nature of the things themselves that is needed for the consecration. The things named are evidently chosen to prevent that mistake. It is of the holiness of things that are not in themselves spiritual that the prophet speaks. These common things we are to lift up out of their low position– to ennoble and dignify them. And how is this to be done? Not by changing their nature; not by spiritualizing them. But by the right use of them. By connecting them with God, and God with them. By refastening the link between the material and the spiritual; not by transforming the material into the spiritual. It is the right use of common things, in connection with God, that is the true consecration. They are not consecrated by some mysterious process, in order to their glorifying God; but the right use of them in the service of God is the true consecration. God is here dealing with us about common daily things; common, daily,

and as men would say, carnal duties. He desires Holiness in our common works and words; our eating and drinking; our ploughing, and sowing, and reaping; holiness in the shop, holiness in the market-place; holiness in each room of the house; in journeying and in resting, in buying and selling; holiness in the railway carriage, and upon the highway; holiness in our reading, our conversation, and our letter-writing; holiness in our business, and our recreation; holiness in our mirth, in our feasts, in our ordinary communion. All our common works so done that God shall be glorified in them.

Many forget all this. They think that a religious life should omit as many as possible of common duties, whereas it is by the right doing of these that we are to exemplify true religion. A religious life is not a life by itself, the life of a recluse or hermit; it is common life, sanctified. Many say, Were I but a minister, with nothing to do but with religious subjects and acts, it would be well. Ah, a minister has not the opportunities of glorifying God which others have; he has not so many of life's every-day duties to discharge. Or they say, Had I more time to spare, I could glorify God more. Ah, it is seldom the idle man, the man of leisure, that does this. A life of leisure is not so easily managed or sanctified as many think; self comes in; irregularities come in; time is not properly valued; efforts are haphazard. It needs much grace to regulate and lay out for God a life of leisure. There is much meaning in the words, "six days shall you labor." The little things of life are to be attended to; the common, menial, earthly things. In these Adam served God when he tilled the ground; Abel when he kept sheep; Amos when he gathered sycamore fruit; Joseph when he labored as a carpenter; Paul when he made tents. It is thus that we are to glorify God– inscribing "holiness to the Lord" on everything we do; so transacting daily business that men shall say of us, "They fear God;" so making our plans that in them God shall always have a place; so speaking the little or common words of each hour, that men shall recognize in us the servants of God.

It is easy, and it is well, to hang up a text upon the walls of our chamber; but let our words and deeds be a continual recognition of the holy Lord God, and this shall be more efficacious. Let us make ourselves the texts. Regulate your house (with every room in it) so that it shall speak of God. Make your family arrangements such that they shall all speak of God. It is not at family worship, or in asking a blessing, alone that God is to be seen. These are mockeries, if God is left out of all the rest of the day. Let him be everywhere seen and felt. Do all to his glory. While consecrating common things, beware of profaning holy things. Reverence and godly fear become us in dealing with all that is divine.

Chapter 66

02.1.51. Wearying Jehovah With Our Words

BIBLE THOUGHTS & THEMES by Horatius Bonar WEARYING JEHOVAH WITH OUR WORDS

You have wearied the Lord with your words. "Wearied him?" you ask. "How have we wearied him?" You have wearied him by suggesting that the Lord favors evildoers since he does not punish them. You have wearied him by asking, "Where is the God of justice?" Malachi 2:17 The prophet's charge against Israel is of "wearying the Lord"; as Isaiah had long before this said to Ahaz, "Will you weary my God also?" And while God charged them with wearying him, he solemnly denies having wearied them, and asks, Wherein have I wearied you? The charge is not of "provoking," but of " wearying"; and is one of deeply touching pathos, indicating sorrow, patience, love; the profound affection of a heart that yearns over unworthy objects, unwilling to abandon them to their deserved doom, that bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things, is not easily provoked, thinks no evil.

There are many ways in which we weary God. Such as, by our (1.) Carelessness. Worldliness, love of self, and vanity, and folly.

(2.) Opposition. Dislike of God, his law, his gospel.

(3.) Unteachableness. Foolishness, hardness of heart, perversity.

(4.) Unbelief. Distrust of God, rejection of his love.

(5.) Lack of zeal. "This did I for you, what do you do for me."

(6.) Inconsistency. Life and creed at variance. A name, no more. In many such ways we weary God continually; we vex, grieve, resist; Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. To this wearying he might at once put an end, and refuse to be so treated by us any longer. But he has long patience, he bears much before he interposes in his wrath. Knowing the fearful consequences to us of his being worn out by us and allowing righteousness and vengeance to do their work, he waits, and pities, and entreats, and expostulates with us to the last. The prophet's words, "Oh that you had hearkened to my commandments," are expressive of this feeling; and our Lord's tears over Jerusalem are the intimation at once of God's unutterable patience, and of the exhaustion of it at last. But let us mark the particular kind of wearying, to which the prophet points.

I. It is wearying WITH WORDS. "You have wearied me with your words'' Words in themselves do not weary God. They are pleasant sounds. He delights in listening to what his creatures say. All sights and sounds, coming from the works of his hands, are meant to be "good"– sunshine, starlight, earth's green, heaven's blue, ocean's brilliance, the music of birds, the voice of the wind, the roar of the thunder, the noise of many waters, these are among the things which He pronounced "good." So also with the human voice and human words. But when they are dissociated from the feeling within, so as not to be the expression of the heart but only of the lip; or when they are the utterance of error or falsehood, unmeaning and hollow, then they cease to be good, they displease him; and when repeated, and reiterated, they weary Him. Talk, talk, mere

talk, the talk of the lips, it may be respectable, religious talk, but if mere talk, it not only wearies man but God. And think of the innumerable millions of words uttered every hour by the millions of earth, all of which go up unto the ear of God! Think of the discords, and dissonances, and impurities, and follies, and blasphemies, and hypocrisies that are hourly heard by God! Oh how He must be wearied with the words of men! How He must be grieved with the sounds of earth!

II. It is wearying BY QUESTIONS. We say, "How have we wearied him?" Men do not like to be challenged by God, and yet they shrink from the denial of the charge. Instead of honest confession or bold denial, they speak like Cain, and ask, Am I my brother's keeper? "How have we wearied him?" What more fitted to weary God than such a course of hypocritical questioning, captious questioning, fault-finding, pretending surprise at what they could not but know they were committing. O mockery of God! For men to look up in his face, and say, "How have we wearied you?"

III. It is wearying BY DENIAL OF THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN GOOD AND EVIL. One of the most explicit of all Bible teachings is as to the difference between the evil person and the good person, the evil thing and the good thing, the evil opinion and the good opinion. Man sees often little of this difference; God sees it strongly. Man likes to efface or smooth over this difference; God keeps up the line, broad, and deep, and clear– as between sea and land. He is wearied by man's asseverations of the little difference between things and people, and by man's attempts to obliterate moral and spiritual distinctions, to call light darkness and darkness light. Is not the present age wearying God in this way?

IV. It is wearying BY DISBELIEF OF COMING JUDGMENT. "Where is the God of judgment?" is the infidel question, like that of the scoffer in the last days: "Where is the promise of his coming?" No judgment, and no God of judgment, is the watchword of many. Every man a judge to himself; a judge of all truth and error; the measurer of God, and the judge of his character and ways. This is not exactly the fool's saying, "There is no god," but it is next to it; for it means that there is no god but such an one as suits man's philosophy. God's non-interposition for so many ages, and his allowance of confusion and error, lead men to conclude that there is no God of judgment. This "wearies God"; this semi-atheism; this misinterpretation of his love and patience. God's patience, instead of leading to repentance, leads to unbelief. The Lord will come. He may come soon. Let us be ready. The Judge stands before the door.

Chapter 67

02.2.00. BIBLE THOUGHTS & THEMES

BIBLE THOUGHTS & THEMES Volume 2, the Gospels by Horatius Bonar (1808—1889)

01 Matthew

02 Mark

03 Luke

04 John http://www.gracegems.org/Bonar/bible_thoughts%20volume%202.htm

02.2.01. Matthew

BIBLE THOUGHTS & THEMES Volume 2, the Gospels by Horatius Bonar (1808—1889) The gospel of MATTHEW Jesus the Seed of the Woman "Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ." Matthew 1:16 "Mary was the mother of Jesus, who is called the Messiah." Matthew 1:16 This is the great event or fact in earth's history; out of which are unfolded the eternal issues of this globe and its inhabitants. This is the little fountain out of which the greatest of rivers flows. Reading this verse in connection with the whole chapter, we mark such truths as the following: 1. Jesus is the Christ. In Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of the carpenter, himself a carpenter (Mark 6:3), we see the Christ of God. His name is Jesus, Jehovah the Savior (or Joshua), because He saves his people from their sins; and also Christ or Messiah, because He is the anointed One, filled with the Spirit, without measure. The expression, "called Christ," like the words, "you say," means that He is what He is called: "the Christ of God," the Messiah promised to the Fathers. 2. He has a human ancestry. Here we have "the book of the generation of Jesus Christ." His whole ancestry is as thoroughly human as ours can be. Every link of the chain is human; not angelic, not miraculous. It is a long chain, sometimes almost broken or worn through; but thus all the more thoroughly human. He is the seed of the woman; the man Christ Jesus. He is very man, out of the loins of Abraham, and of the substance of the Virgin; son of Mary and son of Adam. 3. He has a Jewish ancestry. He is of the seed of Abraham. Salvation was to be of the Jews, and He is a Jew; it was in the seed of Abraham that all nations were to be blessed, and He is a son of Abraham. He took not the nature of angels, but He took the seed of Abraham. Such was God's purpose, and such was the fulfillment of it in Jesus the Christ. The Savior of the world was to be a Jew, The King of kings now sitting on the throne of heaven is a Jew. 4. He has a Gentile ancestry. That is to say, there are Gentiles among his forefathers, such as Rahab the Canaanite, and Ruth the Moabite, and Bathsheba the Hittite. Though, strictly speaking, his ancestry was Jewish, yet Gentiles mingled with it, to show that all nations were interested in Him, and in his work. Far off and near are connected with this Jesus, who is called Christ. Salvation begins at Jerusalem, but does not end there. "God so loved the world that He gave his Son." In Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, but Christ is all and in all. 5. He has a royal ancestry. He is son of David and Solomon, the last of a long line of kings. He is the root and offspring of David; the rod from the stem of Jesse, the branch from his roots. All that is regal in a human pedigree is here. In one sense this is but a small thing; yet it was befitting Him who is King of kings to be thus honored, and to have his divine prerogatives symbolized by his human. 6. He has a lowly ancestry. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are not great or mighty men; they are but shepherds, dwelling in tents. So was David a shepherd boy, taken from among the flocks. So was Joseph, and so was Mary—poor in this world; a carpenter and his wife. There is a singular mixture of the high and low, of the rich and poor. For He is the Savior of rich and poor. His gospel is equally for both. 7. He has a holy ancestry. The line through which He comes is the Church, the election of God, the believing men of Israel. In his pedigree, we have Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Boaz, Jesse, David, Solomon, Asa, Hezekiah, Josiah. Thus God has honored Him; thus He has honored these holy men; thus He has put honor upon holiness. He is the Holy One; and He comes of holy men and women. 8. He

has an imperfect ancestry. In two ways is this the case. (1.) Even these holy men from whom he sprang were very imperfect, as we see in the sins of David and Solomon; (2.) Among his ancestors are many open sinners and idolaters, kings of Judah such as Rehoboam, Ahaz, and Jehoiakin, &c., of whom it is said that they did evil in the sight of the Lord. Yes; his genealogy is a very mixed one; but all the more on that account indicative of that which He had come to do, and of those whom He had come to save—the ungodly, the chief of sinners, the lost, the unrighteous. 9. He has a mortal ancestry. These all died. Their connection with him did not make them immortal. Whether shepherds, or patriarchs, or kings, or carpenters, they were mortal. For out of the mortal was to come the immortal; life out of death; the everlasting One out of those whose life is a vapor; the resurrection and the life out of those who were dust and who returned to dust. Thus He is linked with our sin, though He is sinless; with our curse, though He is the blessed One. 10. He has an immortal ancestry. This is only alluded to here (in his names Jesus and Christ), not expressly stated. But as Matthew brings out the human and the mortal, so does John the immortal and the divine. He is the only begotten of the Father, the eternally begotten. Thus the "pedigree of the Lord of the hill," as Bunyan calls it, is eternal. It was "the Word" who was made flesh. Thus is Jesus in all respects fitted for his mighty work of redeeming. He is very man and very God. He is the seed of the woman, the seed of Abraham, the seed of David, the son of Mary, yet God over all, blessed forever. Thus He can bear our sins; He can sympathize with our sorrows; He can fight our battles; He can love as a man, a fellow man, bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh.

Jesus the Troubler of Jerusalem "When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him."—Matthew 2:3. So quietly had the Son of God stolen into our world, that his arrival was unknown in Jerusalem until these wise men came from the East. Either the Shepherds had not told their tale of the heavenly vision, or they had been unheeded, perhaps ridiculed as fanatics. As the morning star rises without noise; as the seed shoots up and the flower opens in silence; so was it with the Christ, the rose of Sharon, the bright and morning star. No thunder woke up the hills of Palestine; no trumpet-peal went through its cities; no herald went before him, nor royal salute greeted him. His mother, and the few of her circle who believed in "the child that was born," made no proclamation of the heavenly wonder; they received all in silent happy faith, and pondered the things in their heart, leaving it to God to bring them forth in his own time and way. They did not get excited; it was too great a thing to excite, and they were too calm and child-like in their faith to be fluttered, or agitated, or elated. They allowed these great things that had happened in their family circle to take their course, assured of their truth and magnitude, and therefore confident that they would before long grow until they could not be hidden, but must inevitably make themselves known. Such is the confidence which faith has in the great things of God! A man who has got hold of something which is great and true, need not be afraid but that it will spread. Let him hold it fast. These wise men come with a tale, and a vision, and a miracle. They are not of Israel, though more ready of faith than Israel. They are not from Nazareth, or Bethlehem, or any part of Palestine. Their testimony is independent of Israel’s; it is a Gentile testimony; from the land of Israel’s enemies. They are recognized as "wise men,"—magi, Chaldeans, perhaps; or men from the land of Balaam or Job. Men of the East, the seat of all human science; the wise and far-seeing East; the thoughtful and star-gazing East. They come, not with an uncertainty, or an opinion, or a fable, or a vision of the night, but with actual and personal eyesight—"We have seen"! Yes, it is with "we have seen" that they come—a word like that of John’s, "We beheld his glory,"—"That which our eyes have seen." They come to Jerusalem! They

come seeking Jerusalem's King; as if Jerusalem were to them the center of hope; as if there were nothing in their own land like what they expected to find in Jerusalem; no king worthy of the name, or to whom they could pay homage, but the King of Jerusalem! This is Gentile faith, fixing its eye upon the star of Jacob. But Jerusalem has not heard of Him, and is amazed; no, her king does not know where He is to be born until he has consulted the scribes. The visit and errand of these Eastern Gentiles take Israel by surprise. Nor are they roused to take any interest in the matter, save, as we shall see, that of being troubled. He was in the world, yet the world knew Him not; would not recognize Him when pointed out! He came unto his own, and his own received him not! This is strange. Had the like happened elsewhere—in Babylon, or Rome, or Egypt—it would not have surprised us. Or had these been "troubled," it would have been natural enough. But it is Jerusalem! She is troubled! No, it is "all Jerusalem." Troubled at the news of her King's arrival! Not excited, or agitated, but "troubled." Had it been said, "rejoiced," we could have understood it, but "troubled,"—how strange! Let us inquire into Jerusalem's trouble and its causes. The simple visible cause was the statement of the wise men that one had been born King of the Jews. And how this could trouble Jerusalem is not easy to see. For— 1. It contained nothing alarming. It was but of a babe that the wise men spoke; only the birth of a babe—no more. They did not come to tell that some Eastern King had espoused the cause of this babe, and was on his way, with an army, to secure a throne for him. Their question simply pertained to a babe whom they desired to worship. It was a religious act entirely that they had come to perform. The name they gave the babe, "King of the Jews," might trouble Herod; but surely there was nothing to alarm Jerusalem. Herod was a tyrant—a foreign tyrant, moreover—only indirectly a Jew; he might be troubled; but it ought not to have awakened fear in any Jew, especially in any citizen of the royal city. 2. It was good news. A king born to Jerusalem; this was a good report, even had it afterwards turned out untrue. The people might have said, it is too good news to be true; but the very mention of it ought to have called forth gladness, not trouble. 3. It was just what they were expecting. Messiah, King of Israel, Redeemer of the nation, son of David, heir of David's throne, He was the great national hope; a hope that had been cherished age after age, and had not died out; no, was now more cherished than ever because of present oppression, and because the time foretold was fast running out. Now wise men came from the far East telling them they had seen the star of their new-born King; now the Gentile came to say that he had heard of the glorious birth. Should they be troubled? Should they not rejoice? Should they not say like Jacob, "I have waited for your salvation," or like Simeon, "Now let your servant depart in peace, for my eyes have seen your salvation." But the announcement that their hope is realized, their great national expectation fulfilled, occasions only trouble! How is this? Why are they troubled? Some might be troubled because the tidings had come upon them in this strange and unlooked for way; others might be so because they did not know what such tidings foreboded. But the chief trouble, and that of the greatest number, would arise from the consciousness of their not being prepared. The tidings would go through Jerusalem—poor and rich, Priest, Levite, citizen, Scribe and Pharisee—the Messiah has come; and then this would awaken within the immediate question, am I ready for his coming? For every Jew had, more or less, an idea of Messiah, according to the prophets; so that carnal as many of their notions were, they yet knew He was coming on an errand against evil—on a righteous mission—and they could not help asking, in such a case, am I ready for Him? They knew He was to be great, glorious, just—could they then meet Him face to face? Ah, yes, they are troubled, because they are not ready! The news went to their consciences. They might desire his

advent on some accounts, but the thoughts of it troubled them because of others. He was to be the messenger of a holy God. He was to be himself a holy one. He was coming to do holy things and speak holy words. This could not but alarm them. Hateful as was the Roman yoke and Herod's tyranny, these were better to them than the scepter of a holy king. The news of his coming searched them. It awoke within them thoughts and fears that had lain dormant. They expected Messiah, they wished him to come; but there were so many things connected with his character and reign that made his presence undesirable, that they could not hear of his arrival and not be troubled. A man's conscience is sometimes more enlightened and better instructed than his mind; and when an appeal is made to it by some solemnizing piece of news, it immediately responds. Some sudden stroke of God's hand upon a man, or his family, or his nation, hits his conscience with special force; and conscience asserts her supremacy. As when the Sareptan widow's son was taken from her, immediately her conscience responded with, "O man of God are you come to call my sin to remembrance, and to slay my son?" A holy man of God enters a worldly man's house, or the house of an inconsistent Christian, and immediately the man is uneasy. His conscience is disturbed. He is troubled as was Jerusalem when the tidings came, He is come! Yes; Christ came not to send peace, but a sword; and it was the flash of this sword that troubled Jerusalem. There is something in Christ that troubles—alarms. We know that it shall be so when He comes the second time. They shall look on him and mourn; all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. But his first advent has something about it to trouble, too. It is not all peace. Even apart from the glory, and terror, and judgment of his second, there is something in the announcement of his first that startles the man and rouses the conscience. The very grace that is in it is of an awfully solemnizing kind; and no man can hear of that grace without feeling that there is something in it from which he must of necessity shrink, unless he is prepared to surrender himself unreservedly and believingly to Him whose grace it is. He comes as an infant, yet He comes as a King. He comes, offering rest, and forgiveness, and life; yet He, at the same time, makes a claim upon us which none will accept save he whose heart has been touched by the Holy Spirit. He speaks to us in grace, he looks at us in grace; yet in doing so He presents us with a cross which we must bear, with a yoke which we must take on. He announces himself as Jesus the Savior, yet, in doing so, He lets us know that He is as a Savior from sin, a deliverer from this present evil world. Therefore it is that He is not always welcomed; no, so often rejected. Therefore it is that his presence in love and lowliness troubles the sons of men. They are disarmed—perhaps attracted, by that love and lowliness; but the demands which these make upon their whole being and life, their allegiance, their obedience, their affection, are such as they will not submit to. So they are troubled, and bid Him depart out of their coasts. The wise men were not "troubled." They were eager and earnest in pursuit of Israel's King. They saw his star in the East, and they made haste to seek Him out. They saw nothing to alarm them, for they were prepared at once to own Him for what He was revealed to be no, to worship Him. And being thus minded, what had they to fear? "Fear not; I know that you seek Jesus." Being prepared to take Him, at any cost, they had nothing to shrink from. For it is only they who are not disposed to admit his entire claims that can be troubled at the announcement of his advent—either his first or his second. Take Him for what He is; take Him for what He contains and offers; take Him for what the Father testifies of Him—take Him entire, and you have nothing to fear. It seems strange to say, and yet it is true, that Christ comes to trouble us—"Be troubled you careless ones." Woe to those who have never been troubled by Him; into whose hearts or consciences He has never looked with his solemn eye, as in

that day when He troubled Jerusalem. Elijah of old was counted the troubler of Israel, so is Christ the troubler of the world. He will not let men alone. He is ever and anon announcing himself, coming into the midst of them, now here and now there, and troubling them. He came to Corinth, and it was troubled. He came to Thessalonica, to Philippi, to Derbe, to Lystra, and they were "troubled." He did not come with fire, or sword, or sweeping judgment, yet they were "troubled." Wherever He comes, He troubles. He came to Germany in the 16th century, to Switzerland, to Scotland, to England, and they were troubled. He comes to a town, a city, a village, or a family, and they are "troubled." He comes to a soul lying asleep or dead, and it is "troubled." What is at the bottom of all the persecutions of various ages? It is Christ troubling the world. If He would let it alone, it would let Him alone. What means the outcry, and alarm, and misrepresentation, and anger, in days of revival? It is Christ troubling the world. What means the resistance to a fully preached gospel? It is Christ troubling the world. A fettered gospel, a circuitous gospel, a conditional gospel—a gospel that does not truly represent Christ—troubles no man; for in such cases it is another Christ that is announced, and not the Christ, the King of the Jews, that troubled Jerusalem. But a large, free, happy, unconditional gospel, that fully represents Jesus and his grace, Jesus and his completeness, does trouble men. It troubles all to whom it comes, in some measure. Some it troubles and then converts; some it only troubles. But its announcement does, more or less, for all who hear it, what it did for Jerusalem in the days of Herod—it troubles. The world’s only hope is to be "troubled" by Christ. If He lets it alone, all is over. Christ’s errand just now is to trouble men—to awaken them—to call them to repentance. And the more fully He is preached, the more are men troubled. Has a preached Christ ever troubled you? Has the thought of his coming near you troubled you more? And have you found that the only quieter of such alarms is receiving Him as King and Savior? But Christ troubles the churches. As He did to Jerusalem, so does He often to his churches. He troubled Ephesus with, "You have left your first love." He troubled Sardis with, "You have a name that you live, and are dead." He troubled Laodicea with, "You are neither cold nor hot." So does He oftentimes trouble his backsliding churches. He speaks, He comes, He acts; and they are alarmed. They feel they are not ready to meet Him. They are troubled. Yet all this troubling is in love. He sounds his trumpet to awake the sleepers. He comes to us in grace as he came to Jerusalem. Why should we be troubled? We need not, if we be willing to receive Him and to worship Him. He does not wish to terrify or to repel. His desire is to attract: to get entrance for Himself into our hearts. Of course, if the world is there, and you are unwilling to part with it, his coming will trouble you, his knock will alarm you. If your idols refuse to be displaced, if another king reigns within and is resolved to keep his throne, the coming of Messiah must be the cause of unmingled trouble. It cannot be otherwise; for He demands your whole person complete and without reserve. But if, through grace, you are weary of your present occupants, and would sincerely be dispossessed of the world and Satan, then here is the Christ, the Son of God—He needs to come into your city, your house, your heart. Give Him free welcome and glad entrance. Let Him come in and sup with you. Let his grace constrain you to willing obedience. He is your Lord, worship Him. The Christ has come! The angels announced Him, the shepherds sought Him, the wise men worshiped Him. Unto us a child is born! O glad tidings of great joy! Tidings not meant to terrify or overwhelm, but to gladden and to comfort. And we can add to this, the Christ has died! No, He has risen! Ah! this is not sorrow, this is joy. It is the silver trumpet sounding out love—the love of God; not the iron trumpet, breathing vengeance in its blast. O men of earth, sons of Adam, hear the proclamation. Seek his face and live. Deal with Him

in simple trust; He waits to deal with you in free and boundless love.

The Desert Voice "And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which brings not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire."—Matthew 3:10. This is the voice of one crying in the wilderness; the voice of a second Elijah; the man of the desert; the burning and shining light; the forerunner of Messiah; the prophet of warning. He spoke to Israel; he speaks to us. It is the voice of warning; a trumpet voice; prelude to the last trumpet; herald of coming wrath and woe. It spoke first to Israel; it speaks to the church; it speaks to Christendom; it speaks to the world; it speaks to each of us. I. The axe. This is judgment; destruction. The axe is not for planting, or pruning, or dressing, or propping, or protecting, but for cutting down. It is spoken of as used for trees (Deuteronomy 20:19); for the carved work of the temple (Psalms 64:6); for towers (Ezekiel 26:9); for a whole forest (Jeremiah 66:22, 23); for a battle-axe (Jeremiah 51:20). In all cases for overthrow, utter overthrow. The axe against Israel was the Roman host, and many such axes has God wielded, age after age. Every judgment is an axe; pestilence is God’s axe; famine God’s axe; adversity God’s axe. At Christ’s second coming will be the uplifting of the axe against antichrist, against Christendom, against every false church. There is a great difference between the axe and the pruning knife. Yet some of God’s judgments are both in one. An axe to the ungodly; a pruning knife to the saint. It is God’s axe, not man’s; its edge is sharp; it is heavy; it will do its work well. II. The forest. He is speaking, not of a tree, but trees; a forest. He is likening Israel to a forest. It may be an olive-wood or a palm-wood, the oaks of Bashan or the cedars of Lebanon. Israel is the forest, God’s forest, planted by God, on God’s own hills and valleys. So also is the church; and each member is a tree in that forest. On that forest God has his eye; from its trees God comes seeking fruit. From the forest of Lebanon trees were once cut down for the temple; but this is for destruction, not for building nor ornament. III. The warning. The axe lies at the root of these trees. He who placed it there placed it for a warning. He saw his trees not prospering, not growing, not bearing fruit, and He resolved to proceed against them. He cannot tolerate fruitlessness, for which there is no excuse. But He is patient; so He contents himself simply with laying down the axe, leaving it to speak its own lesson, to tell its own tale, a tale of coming judgment, which yet may be averted by fruitfulness. It is laid down and left to die; not cast down, as if hastily or at random. It is laid down at the root, for it is not against leaves or branches, but against the root that the vengeance is to be directed. IV. The execution. The axe lies idle for a time, its sharp edge glittering in the sun. But it is to be lifted up. The forest is to be cut down, not stripped as by the hurricane, nor blasted as by lightning, but cut down at the very root; laid upon the ground; no longer its waving branches and leaves making a goodly show, but "cut down," separated from that soil out of which it was extracting no fruitfulness. "Cut it down" is the command! Why does it pretend to be a fruitful tree with its leaves and branches? Cut it down; why does it thus impose upon the eye? why cumbers it the ground? V. The doom. Cast into the fire. Not left to wither, but cast out to be consumed. It cumbered the ground when living; it must not do so when dead. Let it be burned! Nothing for it but the fire. Its end is to be burned. And the fire is everlasting; it shall not be quenched; and yet the tree shall never be consumed. Awful doom. Never quenched, never consumed! It’s smoke rising up forever and ever. No possibility of restoration! No hope for this tree (as in that of which Job speaks, Job 14:7); no water to make it bud again. Nothing but the ever-consuming fire. VI. The cause. Unfruitfulness in good. Not extreme wickedness, but simple unfruitfulness in good! How searching this announcement. O you that count on going to heaven because you have done no harm, look here. If you have done no

good, borne no good fruit, that is enough! And the sentence is as sweeping as it is searching, for it is "every tree that brings not forth good fruit." No exception, no sparing, "They shall not escape." This, then, is the process that is now going on; this is the nature of the present dispensation. If it were to be depicted by emblem, it would be an axe lying at the root of a tree! Christ, at his first coming, laid the axe there; at his second coming He will lift it up and smite! The axe was laid down when Israel least thought of such a thing; when they were boasting of privilege, and calling themselves children of Abraham; so it shall be lifted up to smite, when men are saying "peace and safety;" boasting of progress and reform, and deliverance from the 'bigotry of narrow-minded men'. Now is the age of trial, of probation. Israel's forest was found barren, and was cut down. Now Christendom is on its trial. Shall it be cut down? It has been long spared. Is it fruitful? You, O man, are on your trial! What is to be the issue when the Lord comes?

Jesus in Season and out of Season "And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness, and all manner of disease, among the people."—Matthew 4:23. It is Christ himself that comes before us here; Christ in his life and doings here below; Christ as the God-man, the sent of God, the revealer of the Father; Christ as the sinner's friend and helper. By looking at Him as He was on earth, we learn what He is now in heaven; our faith gets a soil in which to root it self; a foundation on which to rest. We see Him on earth full of grace and truth; in heaven the same; just such an one as a sinner can approach, and trust, and love; just such an one as possesses all that a sinner needs. Mark these three things here (1.) Jesus the teacher; (2.) Jesus the preacher; (3.) Jesus the healer. I. Jesus the Teacher. He is the great giver of instruction to the sons of men; for He is the word and the wisdom; He is the lesson as well as the teacher. "Who teaches like Him" who says, "Learn of me." They who come to Him He calls "disciples,"—men who enter his school, and come to Him for instruction. As such He receives them and deals with them; for He has "compassion on the ignorant." Not in one thing, but in all things does He teach. He teaches the inner man, for He has access to the spirits of men. He speaks to ear, and heart, and conscience. There is no teaching like his for completeness, for efficacy, and for the molding of the whole man. He speaks, and we hear. We speak, and He hears. He comes to us; we go to Him. And in this blessed interchange between the scholar and the Master, the great work of enlightenment, renovation, expansion, and consolation takes place. Of all teachers, He is the wisest and most learned, as well as the most patient, loving, and painstaking. He opens our ears to hear, and our eyes to see. As He did in Galilee in the days of his flesh, so does He now over all the earth, though at the Father's right hand. II. Jesus the Preacher. That is, He is the herald, the proclaimer of news from God. He is specially noted here as the herald of one thing, that is, "the gospel of the kingdom,"—the good news about the kingdom. What had He to proclaim in this respect? (1.) That there was a kingdom. Not merely a state of blessedness or safety; not merely pardon and salvation; but a kingdom; with all its royalty, and glory, and grandeur. "There is a kingdom" is his message. (2.) That the gate of this kingdom is open. Once closed, now thrown wide open; once fenced with the flaming sword, now unguarded and unfenced. (3.) That this gate has been thrown open by God. It has not been man that has accomplished it: God has done it, with his own hand and power—and all in love. (4.) That God has thrown it open in righteousness. It has not been forced open, nor merely opened because of importunity or pity—but righteously. Righteousness closed it, righteousness has opened it. Righteous entrance for unrighteous men! This was his message; this is ours. (5.) That the entrance is free. No payment of any kind. The poorest, neediest, unfittest, most unqualified

may enter at once. It is for such! Not for the good, but for the bad! (6.) That it is near. The kingdom of God has come near unto you, was his message. Its gate is at our gate. There is but a step from the one to the other. These were glad tidings! And they came from Him who knew them well; who knew the kingdom; who had a right to speak of it; for He was its King. He has come to earth seeking to fill that kingdom of his; to obtain kings for it; fellow-kings along with himself. This is our proclamation still. A kingdom! A kingdom! Heavenly, holy, glorious, blessed! An open gate! Messengers sent out to entreat and compel men to come in! Oh enter in! Oh become kings; heirs of a throne! III. Jesus the healer. He has come to a hospital, a city of the plague, a world where all are sick and dying; both in soul and body. Heavenly skill is his; no, divine. Medicine is his; love to the sick is in his heart, and the balm of Gilead in his hand. He healed "all manner of sickness, and all manner of disease among the people." He did so in fulfillment of his divine errand. He did so to manifest his divine fullness and skill. He did so to show his power and willingness to heal worse diseases. He did so to attract and invite the spiritually sick—the blind, the deaf, the lame, the leprous, the palsied—all that are sick, whatever the nature of their disease. He is the great healer still! And we come to Him for health. He is the tree of life, both in leaf and fruit. He beckons us to his shade and healing. Will you be made whole? is his question to each. He needs to be made use of by us. He entreats as a favor that we employ Him as our physician, and that we apply for his medicines. We need not specify them—indeed, we cannot—He knows what they are, as He knows what our sickness is. There is not one sick soul here that He is unwilling to heal. Oh, apply—apply at once!

His Sun "He makes his sun to rise."—Matthew 5:45. Here is the true link between God and "nature" (as men call it), and between us and nature. Here is the divine claim to proprietorship, to lordship over "nature." All things are God’s. No created thing is the proprietor of itself or of any other created thing. There is but one proprietor, one universal proprietor, one to whom all things belong in a way in which they cannot belong to any other, one whose proprietorship cannot be dissolved or sold; for it is an everlasting proprietorship resulting from the great truth that God is God, and that no creature is or can be God. He who says, "All souls are mine" (Ezekiel 18:4), says also, All things are mine. Creatures are divine property. Hence the shepherd comes seeking his own lost property (Luke 15:4); the woman searches for her lost property (Luke 15:8). Heaven and earth are God’s property; the Sun is "his sun"; far more his than ours. For, (1.) He made it. May He not then claim it as his own? Is not creatorship the basis of the truest proprietorship? Yes, He made the sun. Is it not then his? Is not every ray of it—morn, and noon, and eve—all his? (2.) He kindled it. It would appear that it was not lighted up, or at least for our earth, until the fourth day. Then He who made it, kindled it, and charged it to shine for us. Is it not his sun? He commanded it to shine, and it shone. (3.) He keeps it burning. It is not allowed to burn low or to go out. He supplies it with all that is needful, and says to it, Burn on, burn on. He leads it up each morning, and over the arch of noon, and down into the west. All this rising and setting, this daily shining and shading, this coming and departing, are his. It is his sun emphatically. Were it not for Him it would go out in obscure darkness. (4.) He makes it do his work. It has done his work in ages past; it has shone in past generations, and is shining still. The same sun that shone on Adam, and Noah, and Abraham, and Paul—no, and on Jesus the Christ of God—shines on us, doing its work for us. Yes; the same sun in Europe as in Asia, in Palestine as in Scotland! Let us see how it does God’s work; how it has been doing this, and is doing so still. In this work we notice, mercy, miracle, type, judgment. I. Mercy. Yes; God set his sun in the heaven for mercy; He makes it to arise on the evil

and the good, to speak of his free love, and lead men to repentance. (1.) It enlightens. What a world without the light of the sun. Herein is love. (2.) It heals. There is health in the sunbeam as well as in the fresh air. The sun's rays are healing. Light is medicine. (3.) It gladdens. Sunshine is joy. It gladdens all earth, poor and rich. It diffuses joy over hill and dale; in the hut and the palace. (4.) It fructifies. It makes all living things to grow and bring forth fruit. No sunshine, no life; no growth, no fruit. For man and beast, for herb and tree, for flower and leaf, sunshine brings growth and fruitfulness. Such is God's love in sunshine. Ah, yes, it is his sun! It does his work. II. Miracle. It has been associated with miracle in past ages. We call to mind Joshua, Egypt, Hezekiah, the Crucifixion-darkness. God has used it for miracle; for the display of his power. He kindles or quenches, He sends it on its course, or arrests it, or makes it turn backward, all according to his pleasure. That sun is to us the memorial of the mighty power of God—his miracle-working hand. By it, and in it, He does wonders (Psalms 19:4, Psalms 19:6). Praise Him then O sun and moon, praise Him all you stars of light (Psalms 148:3). III. Type. God has made use of his sun and its light for types in many ways. It is the type of the inner light; of Him who is the light of the world, of the Sun of righteousness. It does God's work in serving as a type for such things as these. Let it thus do his work to us, and for us each day that it shines. Type of the true light, the light of heaven, the light of the soul, the light of Christ, how glorious are you, O Sun! IV. Judgment. It spoke of judgment to Egypt when for three days it was blotted out. It spoke of judgment to Judea and to earth, when for three hours it was shrouded, when Jesus was dying. But it specially is connected with judgment in the book of Revelation. It became black as sackcloth of hair (Revelation 6:1-2; the third part was smitten (Revelation 8:1-2); the fourth angel's vial was poured out on the sun, and it had power to scorch men with fire (Revelation 16:8); an angel stood in the sun to summon all beasts and fowls to the great banquet of slaughtered kings and captains. These are some of the ways in which God has connected his sun with judgment. Yes, it is his sun. Jesus has taught us the expression; let us not lose it. That little word means much. It is his sun; then is it also ours; ours because his; made by him for us. His sun; then it speaks to us of Him. It is a bright and golden link between Him and us. His sun; then let us enjoy it as such; for it shines not by chance or by mere laws of nature. He who made it bids us enjoy it. His sun; then let us learn his love; his love even in its radiance, much more in that light of which it is the type. His sun; then let us love as He loves, and shine as He shines. Let us love the unthankful and the evil, doing good to all; and liking to bless and gladden all. His sun; then it is Himself whom we behold; it is He who shines. We say, "it rains," as if chance or nothing were the author of the rain. So we speak too of sunlight; forgetting that it is God himself that is shining in every ray.

Human Leprosy and its Divine Cure "When he was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him. And, behold, there came a leper, and worshiped him, saying, Lord, if you will, you can make me clean. And Jesus put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will, be clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed."—Matthew 8:1-3. The Lord ends speaking and begins working; He comes down from the pulpit and enters the hospital. Such is his whole life: words and deeds intermingled; words of health and deeds of health. His lips breathe fragrance, and in his hand is the balm of Gilead. Crowds follow him; but it is with one only that we have here to do. Let us mark, (1.) the leper; (2.) his healer. I. The leper. He is one of the vast multitude; but there is a difference between him and them. They flock to and follow Jesus; but not as men full of needs; only to see and hear some new or curious things. But there is one exception—the leper; one whose whole head was sick and heart faint; one who not merely needs Christ, but knows that

he needs Him. (1.) He comes. All are needy in some way or other; he only so feels his need as to step out from the crowd and draw more closely to the Lord. It is his need, his disease that prompts and brings him. So is it still. Crowds following Jesus, only a few dealing personally with him. Yet what else will do? (2.) He worships. He kneels before the Lord. What he has heard has given him high thoughts of Christ. Surely He is the Son of God, the Christ of God. It is with high thoughts of Him that we must come; poor thoughts of ourselves. (3.) He pleads. He has something to say, and he says it briefly and well. It is with no labored or set speech that he comes. He tells his need, and utters his thoughts of Christ: "Lord, if you will, you can make me clean." He knows that He can; and he casts himself upon his sovereign will for the exercise of this power in his case. The "if" is not so much an expression of doubt as to his willingness as an appeal to his will. It is not unbelief but faith that speaks the "if." He needs to be made clean, and He casts himself on Christ for this. He is the hyssop, the water, the blood, the ashes, the priest, the physician, all in one. Thus we still come, doubting neither the willingness nor the power, yet casting ourselves on the will of the Lord; not presuming to dictate, yet appealing to his sovereign grace. As the needy, the sick, the unclean, we come; for the whole need not a physician, but those who are sick. II. The Healer. He is Jesus of Nazareth; the physician of Gilead, with the balm in his hand; He who tells us, "The whole need not a physician, but those who are sick"; who asks, "Will you be made whole?" He carries with him all the health and the skill of heaven. He was known as such when here; He is known as such still. The healer of the world! (1.) He put forth his hand. He does not shrink from nearness to the leper; he is not afraid of infection. He invites approach; and in token of his sympathy and kindness, He puts forth his hand. That hand now wields the golden scepter; it is the nail-pierced hand; and it is still put forth. It contains as much of health, and power, and blessing, as when he was here. (2.) He touched him. Not nearness merely, but touch; the one might indicate the willingness, the other brings the cure itself. It is contact with the Healer that we need; nothing short of this! We touch him, He touches us! This is all. A touch draws out the heavenly electricity, and pervades us with its divine energy. (3.) He spoke. Voice and hand go together. "I will, be clean." He lets him know that the will in him is no obstacle. The leper suspected that the sovereignty might be a barrier. Jesus removes the fear. No. My will is not the hindrance. You will not; not I will not. This was never found to be an obstacle when Jesus was here; nor is it so now. To each coming one his language is still, "I will, be clean." Our will is the hindrance, not his. (a) It is the voice of love. He pities the leper, and hastens to let him know this. He has compassion on him, and does not keep him in suspense. He has no pleasure in delays. (b) It is the voice of authority. It reminds us of Genesis 1:2-3. He speaks as one who knew that he could cure. Not hesitatingly. Nor are the words a prayer, but a command. He speaks, and it is done. (c) It is the voice of power. He has the power to carry his authority into effect. He speaks, and it is done. He said once, "Let there be light, and there was light" He speaks now, "Be whole," and the leprosy is cleansed. Thus love, authority, and power are all conjoined. It is the voice of Omnipotence. He is the same Christ still; with the same love, and authority, and power. He is still the Healer, and the worst of diseases fly from his touch and voice. Let us go to Him with all that afflicts us. He can and He will heal us of all. It is hard to persuade men that this is really the case; that the Son of God has to do with lepers still; that he is the physician for the worst of diseases; and that as He asks no reward for the cure, so He asks no preparation nor qualification in the diseased one. With our whole leprosy we come; He takes our case in hand; He touches and heals. There is no case of evil too hard for Him; no human leprosy too incurable for His skill; no human leper so repulsive as to make Him shrink back. Jordan did not flee from the

touch of the Syrian leper, but bade him welcome when he came to its waters; so Jesus turns not away from the most loathsome specimen of diseased humanity that ever presented itself to His gaze or touch. He needs to heal! Will you not, O man, give Him the opportunity which He seeks of healing you? Your whole head may be sick, and your whole heart faint. But what of that? Is He not able to heal to the uttermost? Be persuaded to present yourself to Him, just as you are. Give this divine Healer your simple confidence. Take Him for what He is, and He will take you for what you are. Thus shall you meet in love; you to be healed, and He to heal; you to have the joy of being healed, and He to have the joy of healing you, and to announce to heaven, in the presence of the angels of God, that another leper has been healed!

Man’s Dislike and Dread of Christ "And, behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus; and when they saw him, they besought him that he would depart out of their coasts."—Matthew 8:34. "The entire town came out to meet Jesus, but they begged him to go away and leave them alone." Matthew 8:34 I scarcely know a verse of Scripture where there is such a melancholy contrast between the beginning and the close. The first part is so hopeful, the second so disastrous. The first seems to lift us to heaven, the second to cast us down to hell. The whole city flocks to Jesus; but its multitudes have scarcely reached him when they ask Him to leave their coasts; not their city merely, but their region; as if the farther off the better. They do not turn their back on Him, but worse: they ask Him to turn his back on them. Yet the scene was not an uncommon one in our Lord’s history. It was much the same as in the synagogue of Nazareth; and in Capernaum after the miracle of the loaves (John 6:24-66); and afterwards at Jerusalem when one day they shouted "hosanna," the next, "crucify." Alas, that it should be still the same in our own day! Let us mark— I. The coming. "The whole city came out to meet Jesus." Not some—not the city—but the whole city! It was a universal movement; and a most interesting one. A whole city flocking out to meet Jesus! Surely this would make angels glad. It was one of the most marvelous and blessed sights that had been seen. Ah, how seldom had such a thing been seen, or is seen now! They had heard that He had done a miracle, that He had cast out devils, and they flocked to Him. The report of those who kept the swine had moved the city! A swineherd’s tale had made all the city turn out to meet Him! O wondrous spectacle! II. The seeing. It would appear that Jesus was on his way to their city— so they soon met Him—saw Him—heard Him. They did not remain afar off, but came near. So that their feelings towards Him, and treatment of Him, were not founded on mere report. They heard what others had to say; but they also saw for themselves. And it is this seeing that so aggravates their guilt. What they did and said, they said and did in the full knowledge of what He was. III. The refusing. They besought Him to depart out of their coasts. An awful request, in many ways. They had sick among them, did they not want them to be healed? They had others, perhaps, possessed with devils, did they not want them to be delivered? The sick beseeching the physician not to visit them! The famished city entreating the benevolent storekeeper not to bring them bread! The thirsty traveler filling up with dirt, the one well in the desert! The shipwrecked sailor’s requesting the lifeboat to keep away from them! Was there ever a request so sad, so fatal? Why was this? There was something in Jesus that drew them; but there was more that they disliked. What they heard about the devils and the swine made them afraid. If He came, He would drive out their herds of swine; He would not spare their sins. They would like Him as the physician of the body, but not of the soul. His company seemed dangerous and terrible. The destruction of that herd of swine was his doing, no doubt; and He who could send the devils into the swine could send them into themselves. It was dreadful to be near one who had such power over spirits. So they besought

Him to depart. And it would appear that He departed. He took ship immediately, and sailed to the other side; and as they saw Him departing, and the white sail vanishing out of sight, they would be relieved as by the retreat of some fearful enemy. The departure of the Son of God was matter of mutual congratulation to these Gadarenes! The scene is a fearful one; the lessons most impressive. Their "depart from us" is a foreboding of his "depart from me" (Matthew 15:41) (1.) How near salvation they were. It was on its way to them. It would soon have entered their gates. They were going to meet it, and it was coming to meet them. How blessed! Was salvation ever nearer! It seemed now as if nothing could hinder their being blest. Yet it passed away; and they were the cause. They would not have it. Thus near is salvation to us every hour; yet we put it away. "I would," and "you would not" are still the words of solemn truth. No, they themselves at first seemed bent on having it; a whole city bent on being saved—rushing in one multitude to the Savior! But it turned out to not be the kind of salvation which they wanted; and He not the kind of Savior they cared for. So they would have none of Him! Thus we neglect the great salvation though so near, and despise the Savior though coming to meet us; no, standing at our side! (2.) How they wronged the Savior. "They were taken with great fear" (Luke 8:37). What had He done to alarm them or to create distrust? He had healed their sick, cast out devils, restored the lunatic to his right mind; ought these to have raised hard thoughts of Him? Especially, should not the sight of Him have proved attractive? Yet it was when they saw Him that they besought Him to depart. Or was the destruction of their swine enough to outweigh these miracles of mercy? Yes; He smote their covetousness, and reproved them for their unlawful gains. And this they could not bear. But how grievously did they wrong Him in this, putting false constructions on His works of mercy and of righteousness. They wronged his love, his interest in their welfare, his desire to break the power of hell among them. Do we not thus wrong Him constantly? Is not all unbelief a wronging of Christ, a repetition of the sin of the Gadarenes, and with less excuse than theirs? (3.) How they wronged themselves. When beseeching Him to depart out of their coasts, they were sending away their one friend and physician, quenching their one light. The word "pleaded" implies that he was bent on remaining; and they desisted not in their entreaties until they had constrained Him to depart. O awful importunity of sin and unbelief! And is not this still the attitude of unbelief? Does it not say, Depart from me? Is not its meaning just—O Jesus I beseech you do not convert me; do not save me, do not cast out Satan—let me alone—what have I to do with you or you with me? And Jesus yields at length. He sails away; and with Him all heaven; with Him salvation, and life, and joy.

The Rest and the Rest-Giver "Come unto me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."—Matthew 11:28. I. The Speaker here is the Son of God. It is not man speaking to man and sympathizing with man, but it is God himself coming up to us and uttering his divine compassion. He sees our case. He knows exactly what we need. He is able to bless us to the full. It is not helpless love giving vent to kind but unavailing sympathy; it is the love, the pity, the tenderness of Omnipotence. It is heaven that is pouring out its compassionate yearnings over earth, and stretching down to it the helping hand of power. It is the great Creator drawing near to his alienated but sorrowful creature, and presenting him with rest. After the great work of Creation God "rested"; he invites his weary creatures to share his rest. Rest in me and rest with me is his gracious message. It takes omnipotence to give rest to the weary sinner. II. The people spoken to are the inhabitants of Galilee. That region was reputed the worst in the land; yet it was to those who the Son of God spoke. The crowd that he was speaking to was composed of the inhabitants of Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum—the worst in Galilee. They were compared with Tyre and

Sidon, Sodom and Gomorrah, and declared worse than these by our Lord himself. They had more advantages than others. They were the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done. They were the least deserving of favor of all the inhabitants of the land; the most deserving of wrath. III. The character under which they are spoken to is that of toiling, burdened ones. "All you that labor and are heavy laden." They were sinners; but that was not all; they were sinners "toiling" and "borne down with heavy burdens." The word "labor" is frequently used to denote the toiling process itself (Luke 5:5), or the result of it in weariness, as when it is said, "Jesus being wearied with his journey," sat down, thus wearied, to rest by the well (John 4:6). The "burdens" are such as those with which the Pharisees loaded their followers (Luke 11:46). It is no particular kind of labor or burden that is meant here; but any labor, any burden whatever. It may be worldly toil, and vexation, and disappointment; it may be the wretchedness, and weariness, and soreness of spirit which sin brings after it; it may be the feeling of those who are asking, Who will show us any good? what does it matter? It is human wretchedness and weariness from whatever cause—human thirst, human hunger, the emptiness of an aching heart that would sincerely be happy, but knows not how or where to find happiness. They who are spoken to are spending their money for that which is not bread, and their labor for that which satisfies not. The words then are very wide, wide as the wide earth. They are broad and full. They are unconditional and universal. They mean every one. They take in every weary son of Adam. The question is not, "Is your labor of the right kind?" or, "is your weariness a true and spiritual weariness?" but, "are you a weary sinner?" And who is not? Though indeed some are more weary than others. But now let us mark the substance of the Lord’s invitation, as thus given out to the worst and most weary of the sons of men. That which is promised here is rest. This rest is for the weary. This rest is a gift. This gift is from Christ. This gift is obtained by going to this Christ. (1.) Here is rest. It is what God calls rest; and therefore must be truly such. It is what man needs; and without which he must drag on a weary sorrowful life. You need rest, O man! Here it is for you. Never did you need it more than in this restless, noisy, bustling, pleasure-loving age. Do not reject it. Rest for the weary! This is our message. (2.) This rest is a gift. It cannot be bought with money, nor found by search, nor obtained by travel. It is a gift. Free rest! This is our gospel. Rest to all who need it. Rest to any one who will take it. O free gift of rest, how are you despised by the sons of men! They are weary, and would buy rest at any price; but they will not take it free! (3.) This rest is Christ’s gift. "I will give you rest." I will refresh you. I will be as the dew unto Israel, refreshing and reviving, after the heat of the day. From the hand of Christ alone it comes. He brought it with him from heaven, and he gives it to us. It is blood-bought rest. It is love-given rest. Jesus stands with this precious blessing in his hand; or rather He goes up to every weary child of Adam and offers him rest—his own rest—the rest of the Father and the Son. (4.) This rest is for the weary. Simply for those who need it! For all Christ’s gifts are suitable. I am the resting-place, He says; weary sinner, sit down here; sit down, just because you are weary. As the thirsty man drinks because he is thirsty, and the hungry eats because he is hungry, so the weary rest, because they are weary! How near is rest to us! How simple is God’s way of giving it! (5.) This rest is gotten by coming to Christ. It is only from Him that we can get it; and there must be a direct dealing with Him concerning it. The knowledge of Him is rest! His words are rest! His cross is rest! All we know concerning him is rest! We try other resting-places; let us try this. We go to others; let us go to Him. Let us transact with Him. It is the weary that He welcomes! It is with the weary that He delights to share his blessed rest! Go to Him for rest, O weary one! He will not deny it. He invites. Come unto me! Is not that enough? Do you

need further warrant? He beckons. It is as if he were stretching out his hands—beckoning you to draw near! He beseeches. His are earnest words, and He himself is in earnest, thoroughly in earnest. He entreats you to take his rest; as if rest were no rest to Him until you shared it. He commands. The words before us are imperative. He commands you to come. You cannot lose this rest, but by deliberately disobeying his command! Could rest be brought nearer than this?

The Three Exchanges "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and you shall find rest unto your souls."—Matthew 11:29. The previous verse contains the Lord’s promise of rest; free, large, immediate, universal. The present verse is added to show the way in which He carries out that promise. Three things are implied as producing the unrest of man: the kind of yoke, the kind of burden, and the kind of teaching. He has had a yoke of a most galling kind, a burden intolerably heavy, and teaching which has made these unspeakably worse. From these three sources of weariness the Lord proposes to deliver. Not simply by loosing the yoke, and removing the burden, and condemning the false teaching, but by substituting others in their place; a yoke of his own, a burden of his own, teaching or his own. The figure of the "yoke" is taken from the agricultural apparatus fastened round the neck and shoulders of the animals used in plowing, which, in the east, is very cumbersome and painful, subjecting them to great restraint, bending them down, and preventing their eating, as well as their free motion, in any direction. Eastern harness is both clumsy and cruel. In Leviticus 26:13 it is used for the bondage of Egypt, "I have broken the band of your yoke, and made you to go upright." In Deuteronomy 28:48 we have reference to the Roman yoke, "He shall put a yoke of iron upon your neck." Other allusions of this kind are frequent, and we may notice that God, in speaking of his love to Israel, says, "I was to them as those who take off the yoke on their jaws, and I laid food before them." In the passage before us we may take the "yoke" as referring to the yoke of sin, and the yoke of the Pharisees, which was more grievous to the spirit and conscience than the yoke of Egypt, or Assyria, or Rome, was to the body or the outward estate. The word "burden" refers sometimes to the load upon a "beast of burden," and sometimes to the freight of a ship, or the weight upon the shoulders of a carrier. See Isaiah 46:1 where the innumerable idols of Babylon are predicted as being carried off by the conqueror; "Their idols were upon the beasts and upon the cattle; your carriages were heavy laden, they are a burden to the weary beast." It was with heavier burdens that the Pharisees loaded the shoulders of their followers (Matthew 23:4, Luke 11:46). The expression, "Learn of me," may mean either "take me for your teacher," or "take me for your copy or model." In both these senses the teaching of the Pharisees was fitted only to produce unrest. Such then are the three sources of a sinner’s unrest. Our Lord offers to abolish them. Yet not simply to abolish them, but to give something in exchange, far more blessed. He has a substitute or exchange for each of these respectively—a substitute which will not merely remove the unrest arising from these three causes, but will give in exchange three corresponding things fitted to impart rest at each of the points where formerly the unrest had proceeded. I. The exchange of yokes. "Take my yoke upon you." As if He said I too have a yoke, but very different from that which has hitherto galled your shoulders; here it is at your side; take it; put it on; it is easy and pleasant: thus you shall find rest for your souls. Yokes are for the purpose of constraining the unwilling and resisting animal to submit to its owner’s will, and do its master’s work. Christ’s yoke is certainly for the purpose of fitting us for doing his will and work; but then it does this by making us thoroughly willing, by making the service pleasant, by removing everything that galls or wounds. It is an "easy yoke," so easy that it makes the work easy and delightful; we would not part with this yoke; it is pleasant to

bear, and the work is pleasant to do. We may understand it thus. The yoke is that which He says to us or bids us do; it is also the way in which He says this, so tender and gracious, it is the spirit He infuses, the spirit of love and liberty. It is the yoke of forgiveness and peace. Did not he lay this yoke upon the sinning woman when He said, "Neither do I condemn you; go, and sin no more." Did He not lay it on Zaccheus when He said, "Come down, for today I must abide at your house." Did He not lay it on his disciples when first He said, Follow me, and when afterwards He said, "As the Father have loved me, so have I loved you; continue you in my love." It is not the yoke of bondage, or gloom, or penance, or uncertainty, or terror, but the yoke of the "new commandment," which springs from his love to us, and leads us to love and serve in return. Thus we get a new Master, we enter on a new service, with new and blessed laws, of which the beginning and the end is love. Hear Him saying, "Take my yoke upon you; for my yoke is easy." II. The exchange of burdens. "My burden is light." Your present burden is hard and heavy, it weighs you down, it makes you faint under it; you are like Israel under the burdens of Egypt. Let me take that off, and give you one of my own in exchange. You will find the difference. Mine is light; it not only does not press you down, but it raises you up, it makes you lighter and more buoyant than before. This "burden" is his whole service or the things which he calls us to do or suffer for Him. For in taking his yoke we do not become idlers. We work. But all our work for Him is gladness; every new piece of work raises instead of depressing us. Such is the power of his love shed abroad in our hearts, the love that casts out fear, the love that passes knowledge. III. The exchange of teaching. "Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart;" not in word or outward demeanor like the Pharisee, but in heart. Take me for your teacher; take me for your model; learn of one who will not be angry at your ignorance and stupidity; imitate one who will show you what it is to be lowly. Learn of me, He says to you. All other teaching is unrest; this is rest and peace. It is the teaching of love; it speaks of love it offers love; it exhibits love; the love of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The reception of this teacher and his teaching is liberty, is rest, is deliverance, is gladness. It is this which heals the soul, which binds up all its wounds, which dispels all its clouds. O man, let Jesus teach you. Give up your intellect, your heart, your whole soul to his teaching. He knows what to teach and how to teach. His teaching is rest! Of no other teaching can this be said; all besides this is unrest and weariness. Of this only it is not true, that increasing knowledge increases sorrow.

Nineveh and Her Testimony "The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and, behold, a greater than Jonah is here."—Matthew 12:41. It is sometimes good to compare the present with the past; to mark the likeness or contrast; the progress or the regress. We may thus get a warning, or an encouragement, or a stimulus. Let the past speak to the present. The day is coming when the present shall speak to the future. Each day, each year, each age, has a voice to its successor, no, to all its successors. Our Lord here interprets the past. He bids it speak to the present. He bids the present listen. He re-animates past scenes; he gives life to the dead. Out of their graves He calls up a voice. Let us hear their message to Israel, and their message to us. I. Nineveh and its sin. It is of a heathen city that He speaks. He does not overlook heathenism or heathendom. It is a city wholly given to idolatry; immersed in pleasure; elated by its greatness; ambitious of universal dominion; a city of palaces and temples; a city of chariots and horses; a city of princes and warriors; a city of pomp and splendor; a city that knows not Jehovah, that scorns his people, and abhors his city and his land. The cup of its guilt was deep and full (Nahum 3:1-9) Its character resembles that of our cities. Its sins are ours. Pride, fullness of bread, love of pleasure,

intoxication, covetousness, vanity, lust, gaiety—these mark us as they did the men of Nineveh. Our sins are multiplying. Our cup is fast filling. II. Nineveh and its repentance. It was a heathen city, yet it repented; a proud and lofty city, yet it repented—king and people. It had no knowledge nor wisdom, yet it repented. Jonah was its first prophet, yet it repented. One sermon did the work. One trumpet-blast shook the city. It was not a word of terror, yet they repented like the jailor at the earthquake. It was (1) immediate repentance. (2) It was true. (3) It was deep. (4.) It was universal. (5) It was acceptable. Was the like ever heard! Noah preached one hundred and twenty years in vain, yet Nineveh repented in a day. Two angels went to Sodom in vain, yet Nineveh repented under one sermon of one prophet; and that a very feeble and inconsistent one. How marvelous that such a city should have repented under such a prophet! How marvelous that God should have so honored such a prophet. How sovereign He is in his dealings; how unlike us in his counsels; how unsearchable in his ways. God speaks to us, to our cities, to our villages, and says, Repent! Yet we repent not! With bibles and ministers bringing before us the heavenly messages all our lives, we repent not! O hearts of stone! Harder than the rock! III. Nineveh and its testimony. That city has two testimonies. (1.) A past testimony. It speaks to us, and says, Repent. Its sackcloth says, Repent! Its fasting says, Repent! Its cry for mercy says, Repent! Are we better? Do we need no repentance? Has Nineveh's repentance no voice for us? (2.) A future testimony. Its inhabitants shall rise against us in the day of judgment. Its testimony is not over. It spoke to Israel; it speaks to us; and it shall yet speak to both again in the solemn day of recompense. Nineveh will condemn Israel and us; if we repent not verily we shall be inexcusable. In the presence of the men of Nineveh we shall not be able to utter a word of excuse or extenuation. For we have a greater than Jonah for our prophet—the Son of God himself. We have Moses, and a greater than Moses; we have Elijah, and a greater than Elijah. Yes; Jesus speaks to us; He spoke on earth; he speaks from heaven! He says, Repent! He makes our land re-echo with, Repent! He makes our churches resound with the same voice, Repent. He speaks down through all the ages; he speaks now, and says to us, Repent! The day approaches, when the men of Nineveh shall rise up against the men of Israel, and when the men of Israel shall rise up against the men of Scotland. That rising up shall be for condemnation! The greater the light rejected, the greater the condemnation incurred. Men of the nineteenth century, look back three thousand years, and see Nineveh on her knees in sackcloth before God, broken down under one sermon of one prophet! Is not that a sight to break you down and make you cry for mercy, while the Lord tarries, and before the last trumpet sounds. Oh seek the Lord while He may be found!

The Two Sowers "But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way."—Matthew 13:25. There are two sowers in this parable, yet but one field; two kinds of seed, yet but one field. The one field is this world, called in verse 41, "his kingdom;" the sowers are the Son of man and the devil; the two seeds are the wheat and the tares. The field belongs to the Son of man; the enemy had no part in its proprietorship; he does his mischief by stealth and cunning; he climbs over the wall in the night while men sleep. He is the enemy of the Son of man; and his desire is twofold, (1) to choke the good seed, and (2) to fill the field with tares. He is the same enemy that stole into Paradise, and wrought ruin there. The parable exhibits him as full of (1) enmity, (2) cunning, (3) determination, (4) patience, (5) confidence. All these we find brought out in this simple and apparently very useless expression, "he went his way," or "left the place" Why did he thus go his way? I. He did not wish to be seen. He came by night, and he went by night. He came while men slept, and he went before they awoke. He did not wish it to be known

that he was there. He did not care for the fame of doing the thing; all he cared for was, that it should be done. How different from us! We care more about the honor of doing a thing than the work itself. How single-eyed is Satan in his evil! He does his work unknown. He steals quietly to his work and from his work, without sound of trumpet. Besides, he does not want to excite men's fears, or to alarm the servants of the Master by his visible presence. That would defeat his object. Ah, it is with an invisible devil that we have to do; mighty, but unseen; the ruler of the darkness of this world—himself loving the darkness—dwelling and working in it. Surely we need to watch, whether in keeping our own vineyard or that of others. II. He had done his work. It might be on a greater or a larger scale, that mattered not. He had done his work. It did not require repetition or re-sowing. The sower had done all that, as a sower, he could do. Sowing is not a process repeated daily; it is done once; he did not come night after night to sow and re-sow. He needed but one sowing-time; and so he went his way. III. He had confidence in the seed. He knew of what kind it was, its vitality; its indestructibility. It could lie long in the ground before it sprung. It would not fail. It was the true seed of hell. It was sure to spring, sooner or later. So he went his way. Ah, what confidence does this exhibit in the vigor and vitality of error. Have we like confidence in the life and power of truth? Do we speak it as those who trust it? IV. He had confidence in the soil. The soil had not been meant for error, but the curse was on it, and its fruitfulness had become fruitfulness in evil. In a cursed soil, his seed was sure to be nourished and grow. The seed was evil, and the soil was evil. No one knew these things better than this enemy, this sower of the tares. It was then, with confidence in the soil, that, having done his work, he went his way. The soil would not fail him; it would do its work. V. He had confidence in the atmosphere. He is the prince of the power of the air; the ruler of the darkness of this world. It is on the air as much as on the soil that the harvest depends. He knows the peculiar elements with which this atmosphere is filled; how it is charged with all that fosters evil; how it will nourish the tares, so that they shall grow without fail, even though the wheat should die. And, accordingly, having done his work, he goes his way; he trusts to the evil air and the evil seed suiting each other. VI. He had other work to do. He is not omnipresent nor omniscient. He goes up and down in the earth, walking to and fro in it, doing his work here and there. He does not abide in one place; he goes about to do work elsewhere; he visits place after place in succession; he never folds his hands nor shuts his eyes; he knows no night, and he needs no slumber. Incessant work, all round and round the globe; in every kingdom, in every church, in every soul. He has always something on hand; some new error; some new departure from the faith; some new snare; some new vanity; some new delusion to deceive, if it were possible, the very elect! Sometimes the prince of darkness, sometimes the angel of light; always the god of this world, the prince of the power of the air. His first seed sown was in the ear and heart of our first parents, and what fruit of evil has it borne, what tares has it produced! Since that, he has been sowing constantly the tare-producing seed. So will he continue to do until the Lord comes to bind him. Oh, what an enemy have we to fight with! What strength, what subtlety, what wiles, what perseverance! How he works! How he sows! Error upon error; a little seed at first, yet producing a vast harvest of error and sin; a race of evil-doers, evil-thinkers, evil-speakers, perverters of the truth, enemies of God; fields of tares —so like the wheat, that man cannot discern the difference. Resist the devil, work against him, for we are not ignorant of his devices.

Herod's Ball-room "But when Herod's birthday was kept, the daughter of Herodias danced before them, and pleased Herod."—Matthew 14:6. This birthday ball of Herod was held, in all likelihood,

at Machaerus, a fortress beyond Jordan, not far from the Dead Sea. It was a high and royal festival. Pomp, splendor, luxury, and lust were all gathered there. In the midst of the song, and the glitter, and the mirth, there was one troubled conscience, that of Herod—one trembling man, Herod. His soul was ill at ease, though surrounded with all that the world could give to banish care. He, Herodias, and John the Baptist, may be said to be the chief personages brought before us in this scene. But let us take up the narrative in another form; (1.) before the ball; (2.) during the ball; (3.) after the ball. I. Before the ball. The news of Christ's miracles had overspread the land, and reached Herod. He was startled and troubled. Who is this Jesus! Can he be John? Can John be risen? But why these fears on the part of Herod? The answer carries us back to the time before the ball. John had reproved Herod for his wickedness more than a year and a half before; for Herod had taken his brother's wife, and John had proclaimed the unlawfulness of the deed. This had roused the king's anger. He would really liked to have slain him, and was only kept from doing so by fear of the multitude, who reverenced John. But he imprisoned him, and kept him in the castle of Machaerus for eighteen months. The guilt of an unlawful marriage was on his conscience, as well as the guilt of imprisoning a holy man. His course of sin had been begun and persevered in. He was braving out his crimes; and like worldly men in such circumstances, he rushes into gaiety to drown his troubles and terrors. The pleasures of the feast and the ball-room, the song and the dance—these are welcomed to induce forgetfulness, and "minister to a mind diseased." In how many cases do men fly to the ball, the theater, the card-table, the tavern, the riotous party, not simply for pleasure's sake, and to "taste life's glad moments," but to drown care, to smother conscience, to efface convictions, to laugh away the impressions of the last sermon, to soothe an uneasy mind, to relieve the burden or pluck out the sting of conscious guilt! O slaughter-houses of souls! O slaughter-houses, reeking with blood! O "lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revelings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries"; how long shall men "run on in this excess of riot"? O lust of the flesh, lust of the eye, and pride of life, when will you cease to intoxicate, and lead men captive at your will? O God-forgetting gaiety! O dazzling worldliness! O glittering halls of midnight, where "Youth and pleasure meet To chase the glowing hours with flying feet," when, when will you cease to be resorted to by the sons of men to "heal the hurt" of the human soul, to still its throb and heartache, and to medicate the immedicable wound? II. During the ball. It is a gay scene. The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life are there. All that can minister to these are there. Herod is there, feeding on lust, drinking in pleasure, stupifying conscience. The fair daughter is there, in all the splendor of gay wantonness. And the vile mother is there, lascivious and revengeful. And the courtiers are there, in pomp and glitter. Music and mirth are there. The dance and the song are there. No note of gloom, no indication of trouble. What a scene of mirth and revelry! But some are absent—conspicuously absent, we may say. John is not there. A prison holds him. His disciples are not there. They can but weep and lament. And Jesus is not there, nor his disciples. They were at the marriage festival in Cana; but this ball-room is not for them. It is not the place for a follower, either of Jesus or of John. The beauty of "this world" is one thing, and the beauty of "the world to come" is quite another. These scenes of royal vanity are instructive; for they present the world in its most fascinating aspects. All that regal state, and princely beauty, and wealth, and gold, and silver, and gems, and tapestry, and blazing lamps can do, to make this world fair, is in such scenes and haunts. These balls are the most seductive specimens of pure worldliness that can be found. Surely the god of this world knows how to enchant both ear and eye. In an assembly like this, the natural man is at home. Here the

unregenerate heart gets scope to the full. It is a place where God is not where the cross is not; where such things as sin and holiness must not be named. It is a hall where the knee is not bent, except in the voluptuous waltz; where the music whose theme is the praise of Jesus is unheard; where the book of God, and the name of God would be out of place; where you may speak of Jupiter, or Venus, or Apollo, but not of Jesus; where you may sing of human love, but not of the love that passes knowledge; where you may celebrate creature-beauty, but not the beauty of Him who is fairer than the children of men. It was during that ball that the murder of John was plotted and consummated that a drunken, lustful king, urged on by two women, perpetrated that foul deed. Such are the haunts of pleasure! Such are the masquerades of time. Lust is let loose; revenge rises up; murder rages; conscience is smothered; the floor of the ball-room is spotted with blood; the dancers may slip their feet in it, but the dance goes on. Such was the coarse worldliness of old days; but is the refined worldliness of modern times less fatal to the soul? The ball is finished, and John lies dead in prison. What a picture of gaiety! What a specimen of ball-room revelry! And this is pleasure! This is the world’s joy! "You adulterers and adulteresses, don’t you know that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?" III. After the ball. Of the chief actors in this ball-room murder, nothing more is said. They pass to the judgment-seat, there to receive sentence for lust, rage, revenge, and murder. They have sent John before them to the presence of his Judge to receive his reward. They have got their revenge, and they leave his body to be dealt with in any way. His lips are silenced; that is all they care for. But his disciples find their way into the prison; they gather round their Master’s body; they bury it in silence. They can do no more. That ball has robbed them of their master. It has been a costly festival to them! Then they go and tell Jesus, knowing his sympathies, and feeling that they have no one else to whom they can unbosom themselves so confidingly. Jesus hears of the murder, and is silent! Not a word escapes him. He had come to suffer both in himself and in his members; so he is dumb. This is the day of silent endurance and patient suffering. The day of recompense is coming. O gaieties of earth! Feasts, and revelings, and banquetings, how often have you slain both body and soul! Men call you innocent amusements, harmless pleasures; but can you be harmless, can you be innocent, when you steal away the soul from God, when you nurse the worst lusts of humanity, when you smother conscience, when you shut out Jesus, when the floors on which your votaries dance off their immortal longings, are red with the blood of souls!

Man’s Ways and God’s Ways That evening the disciples came to him and said, "This is a desolate place, and it is getting late. Send the crowds away so they can go to the villages and buy food for themselves." But Jesus replied, "That isn’t necessary—you feed them." Matthew 14:15-16 The scene of this great gathering was the desert of Bethsaida, the open and uninhabited region on the north-east of the Sea of Galilee, and evidently close upon the sea, so that Jesus, when He fed the multitude, did not need to create water for them, and also when He was done feeding them, he could at once dispatch his disciples by a boat. The time is toward evening. All the day Jesus had been teaching and healing. The afternoon drew on; the sun was getting low; the people were weary and hungry; some of them far from home. There was still time enough to provide a meal for them before sending them home; for it would be about three o’clock, but still the day was far spent. The people in this transaction may be arranged into three classes—the multitude, the disciples, the Lord himself. As for the multitude, they are merely presented to us (1) as the objects of his compassion; (2) as the objects of his bounty. They come to hear and to be fed; to give Jesus an opportunity of showing his love and fullness; they come not to minister, but to be ministered to, by

the Lord. As for the disciples, they were of little service here. The Lord would have used them, but they would not be used. They show coldness, not compassion; littleness and narrowness, not generosity. It is the Lord himself who is shown here, in solitary and unapproachable love and pity. But it is with the mode or manner of blessing that we have specially to do here. It is this that brings out the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and draws us to him as the great provider for our needs, the great feeder of soul and body; and as is the Son, so is the Father; and he that has thus seen and known the Son, has seen and known the Father. This mode of blessing will be best seen by contrasting the disciples with the Master, their proposal for supply with his. Before he does anything himself, he goes to them, for we read in John (John 6:5) that the first thing was his question to Philip, "Where shall we buy bread that these may eat"? Thus He gives them the opportunity of providing, before He undertakes it himself. This only draws out their emptiness and inability to do anything in the matter; for the whole twelve now come to Him upon the subject, and it is their proposal that meets us first in this scene, "Send them away, that they may go and buy." It did not occur to them to appeal to the Master and his bounty. They were slow of heart to believe. Had it been a blind man brought for cure, they would have done this. But the feeding of five thousand was such an enormous miracle, that they never thought of this; and, besides, they had not yet exhausted human help, they were not yet at an extremity, for there were villages a few miles off. They do not apply to Him until they can do no better; He is the last, not the first, to whom they go. Their remedy is quite characteristic, quite like man: "send them away that they may buy." But this brings out the Lord and his mode of meeting human needs all the more wonderfully. "They need not depart; you give them something to eat." Such is the contrast between the disciples and the Lord, between man and God, between the heart, the thoughts, the ways of man, and those of God. "My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor your ways my ways, says the Lord." Man’s way of relieving man is, "Send them away that they may buy." God’s way is, "They need not depart; you give them something to eat." And this, too, is our way of relieving ourselves; we would go and buy, instead of at once, and on the spot, taking the blessing at the hands of Jesus. Let us mark then the way in which Christ relieves, in which God deals with us, as the God of grace. The supply He gives is. (1.) Immediate. It is given upon the spot; it comes to us just as we are, hungry and weary. It does not keep us waiting; it does not send us away to be fed. It is put into our hands, our lips, at once. (2.) Free. We need no money; all is without price. God is the great giver; we are but receivers. We are only blessed when we learn this. God has respect simply to our needs, not to our qualifications or our means of purchase. He does often indeed make use of others to impart his bounty, "you give them something to eat" ; but whether directly or through a medium, all is free. The water that flows to us through the river’s channels, is quite as free as that which descends in showers. (3.) Suitable. He gives the very thing we need. His eye sees our need, and He supplies it exactly. We are sure that what we get from Him will be suitable. (4.) Abundant. He gives liberally. His stores are plentiful. It does not matter what the greatness of our need may be, or the number of the needy, He has enough, and He pours out liberally. He fills us; there is enough, and to spare. (5.) From his own hand. Sometimes more directly than others, but still the supply comes from himself. Take it as either from the Father or the Son, it matters not. It is the Divine hand stretched out to give. We get all from himself, from his fullness, from his love. It is with Him we are to deal, and in dealing let us trust, let our transactions be ever those of simple child-like confidence.

The Helpless One and the Helper Matthew 14:24-31 Meanwhile, the disciples were in trouble far away from land, for a strong wind had risen, and they were fighting heavy waves. About three

o’clock in the morning Jesus came to them, walking on the water. When the disciples saw him, they screamed in terror, thinking he was a spirit. But Jesus spoke to them at once. "It’s all right," he said. "I am here! Don’t be afraid." Then Peter called to him, "Lord, if it’s really you, tell me to come to you by walking on water." "All right, come," Jesus said. So Peter went over the side of the boat and walked on the water toward Jesus. But when he looked around at the high waves, he was terrified and began to sink. "Save me, Lord!" he shouted. Instantly Jesus reached out his hand and grabbed him. "You don’t have much faith," Jesus said. "Why did you doubt me?" Faith’s home is in the future; so is her heritage. At present she has nothing but God himself to live upon—to feed upon; all else is within the veil. It will come in due season; but meanwhile the only real thing is God. Him she knows, she trusts, she walks with, she converses with. But from the visible she is disengaged, and dwells in the invisible—present and future. "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Thus we live by faith. Yet though thus living by faith, in another atmosphere, and above the level of things seen, we cannot help being affected by matter, and time, and motion, and change, and pain, and death, and fear, and hunger, and thirst, and the various conditions of the body. Sometimes there is brightness, sometimes there is dimness; sometimes we are lifted up and expanded, sometimes we are depressed and straitened. We are too like a revolving beacon-light, with its alternate flash and gloom. Sometimes a word of Scripture warms and brightens wonderfully; sometimes it seems cold and dark. Sometimes we are brave and fervent, ready to confront any danger or trial, because of the peace within; sometimes we turn pale, and shrink from sorrow or peril; so variable is our pulse; so uncertain our spirits; so feeble our spiritual health; so sickly our spiritual frame. It was night upon a stormy sea. The boat was but a fisherman’s, unfit to weather wind and wave. The night-blast was right against them. They toiled, but made little progress. The night wears on. Watch after watch passes by. It is now the fourth; the last, just before the dawn; still dark. In the darkness, a form is dimly seen, the outline of a human figure in the gloom. What is it? Who is it? Is it from beneath or from above? Is it material or spiritual? The disciples are in terror; Peter, no doubt, among the rest. But it is not with the disciples that the narrative has chiefly to do; it is with Peter—or rather with Peter and the Lord. These two stand out before us here, inviting our attention. Or we might say, we have first the disciples and the storm; then the disciples are lost sight of, and we see only Peter and the Lord; then Peter disappears, and we behold no one "save Jesus only." I. Christ’s words of cheer. He saw their terror, and He knew its cause. The storm and the darkness had alarmed them; but more than these, the figure in the distance. It might be a spirit from beneath let loose upon them; it might be the prince of the power of the air—the ruler of the world’s darkness—coming to increase their danger, to accomplish their destruction. Christ corrects their thoughts, and in so doing removes their fears. His words of cheer are brief, but full of power. In our translation they are ten; in the original only five. "Be of good cheer: it is I; do not be afraid." The first of these clauses is but one word, and it is the keynote of the passage. "Be of good cheer," or simply, "Courage"! "Do not be cast down or troubled." Right through the darkness, and over the storm, came this cheering word. But it was not the mere word that thus sounded, it was the well-known voice, the tones of which they would at once recognize. And then it was followed up with the "It is I"; which is again followed up with "do not be afraid,"—"dismiss all your fears." The special cheer of these words was, however, the "It is I," and without this all the rest would have been vain. It is the announcement of his presence that was the specially cheering thing; it would have been enough even had he not (in his love and anxiety to relieve their fears) added, "Be of good cheer: do not be afraid." What was

the storm to Him? What was it to them, if He were with them? What were night, and storm, and darkness, with all their perils, if He were there? They needed no more to comfort them than "It is I." It told them of power and love more than sufficient to meet all danger, and to deliver from all evil. II. Peter's response. "If it be you, bid me come to you on the water." The other disciples were silent. Their fears were quieted, and that sufficed. But Peter must have more. He must have the Master with him; no, he must run to meet Him, even on the water. There does not seem to be any use in Peter's going to meet his Master. The request was prompted simply by affection, and a desire to be where He was. It looks very like one of Peter's hasty utterances—"It is good to be here;"—"Shall we smite with the sword?" But still it is faith that is working. The desire to go was, no doubt, affection, but the feeling which overlooked all the difficulties of the way—the impossibility of walking on the water—was faith. So boundless was his confidence in his Master's power and love. A word, he knew, would be enough! Oh for Peter's faith in Jesus;—even in little things; things which seem to have no large object in view, but merely the exhibition of affection towards him! Here is faith that could remove mountains! Faith that can do miracles—that makes light of impossibilities! Peter saw Jesus only; darkness and storm were nothing! There might be the desire to get out of this sinking vessel, which had for hours been buffeting with the wind; and the feeling that with Jesus he was safer on the bare water than in the ship without Him. In Peter's estimation, security was only at the side of Jesus! Anywhere, anywhere with Him; in the fiery furnace, or in the raging sea. Is this our estimate of Jesus, and of all things, or places, or perils in connection with Him? Safety with Him; but nowhere else, even in the stateliest vessel or the strongest fort. The form of Peter's request is remarkable, "bid," or "command" me to come to you on the water; not "permit." In a case like this, mere permission would not do. Had it been the highway or the mountainside, permission would have been enough. But it was the sea. To venture there, he must have a command; and in obeying that command, he could count upon omnipotence being placed at his disposal. Jesus commands; shall not all the elements and powers of nature unite in ministering to the fulfillment of the command? There is here, also, the contrast between the Peter of yesterday and the Peter of today; fitfulness both in faith and feeling. One day it is "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord;" another it is "Lord, bid me come to you." One day he forsakes his Master; another he casts himself into the sea to get at Him, as he stood on the shore. Yet fitful as these were, impulsive as Peter was, all his fitfulness and impulsiveness centered in Jesus. The many currents of his wayward being—sometimes rushing right forward, sometimes going backward, sometimes eddying round—yet all took their motion from Jesus, and their direction from something connected with Him. It might be difficult, at times, to analyze or understand Peter's feelings; but various as they were in their upper or their underflow, this was still uppermost, "Lord, you know all things, you know that I love you." III. Christ's response to Peter. "Come"! One word; no more. It was all that Peter needed; and he got it. The request was a bold and a great one; but it was granted at once. It was a request made without any previous promise or warrant; yet there was no reluctance nor delay. Peter knew to whom he was speaking. He had seen Him do miracles for others—strangers—why not for himself, a disciple? Thus he casts himself upon the Master, and the Master at once responded. He honored his disciple's confidence. How comfortably must that word "come" have sounded in the midst of the darkness! It was so gracious; and it was so exact an answer; an answer to an apparently useless request. The requests for healing and the like were all for some needful purpose; and we the less wonder at the Master's grace in granting them. But this seems so useless—the mere utterance of warm impulse—that we are struck with

the marvelous grace of the Master, who, instead of keeping silence, or rebuking his hasty disciple, grants his request for a miracle—a stupendous miracle—and bids him "come." This is singular condescension, and fitted in many ways to rebuke as well as remove our unworthy suspicions of the Lord. He who so graciously responded to his disciple's request for a needless miracle, will not deny us when petitioning for what is needful. With what power should the promise come to us, "Ask, and you shall receive"; and what an illustration is this of the text, "This is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us." IV. Peter's venture. He came down out of the ship, and walked on the water. I call it venture; and yet it was not venture, for that implies hazard, whereas here there was no risk. It was rather leaving a leaking, sinking boat to go on board a noble ship. Still to human eyes, though not to angels', it was a venture. Frail as the vessel was, it was to human eyes safer than the sea. Out of this vessel he lets himself down into that raging sea, and began his walk. He was now wholly in the arms of Jesus; nothing between him and the waves but these everlasting arms. What his feelings were in letting go his hold of the ship we do not know; perhaps very peculiar; but with that word "come" sounding over the waves, why should he fear? His was the venture of faith; a faith which showed itself, not in its power to grasp but to let go the vessel's side—the human stay. Yes, we often speak of faith as taking hold; but here it is seen in letting go. And is not this oftentimes the very point of the difficulty we experience in believing? We cling to the visible, the palpable prop—the human rope which we hold in our hand—unwilling to let go. We speak of our inability to believe; but what is this save our tenacity in holding on to the very things which God asks us to quit? We say that we "cannot lay hold"; should we not rather say that we "cannot let go"? We complain that we have no power to cling and grasp; whereas it should be that we have no will to let go. How much power is needed to let go a rope or to drop into the sea? Never let us forget the thought of Peter quitting the vessel and dropping into the sea; but let us treasure it as one of the best exhibitions of true faith. How many, though they hear the Master's voice saying, "Come," linger in the vessel, cling to it, look over its sides, as if resolved to drop down, and then shrink back into it, afraid to venture from the visible into the invisible, from that which sense and touch can feel, to that which we know nothing of save by the bare word of God. V. Peter's failure. He had bravely dropped into the sea, and was walking along; but he soon began to be alarmed. The wind did not lull; it blew as violently as ever. His fears awoke, and his faith shook. He began to sink; and in his terror cried out, "Lord, save me." The visible and sensible had reassumed their power; and under their evil influence, faith gave way; the things unseen vanished; the power and presence of Christ seemed now as nothing when compared with the power and presence of the storm. Peter was, in fact, trying to resume his hold of the things he had let go; he was clutching or groping after the visible. Thus unbelief was regaining its power. His eye at first saw nothing but Jesus, now it sees the raging billows. His ear at first heard nothing but the Master's "Come"; now it hears the roar of the blast. It was thus that the evil heart of unbelief was re-displaying itself; the storm was coming between him and Christ; terror came in, and he began to sink. Jesus was for the moment lost sight of, and Peter was in despair. The Master had granted his request; had bid him come; and now he knew not what to do; perhaps he repented his petition, and wished he had never left the vessel. But thus Jesus shows His disciple his weakness, and takes this opportunity for magnifying his own power. What is Peter now, and where, if Jesus does not help? He is like a withered olive-leaf tossed upon the foam. Without Jesus he sinks, he perishes. But though faith has given way, Jesus still remains; and even in spite of unbelief he supports and saves. VI. Christ's deliverance and rebuke. It is not, like man,

first rebuke and then deliverance; but first deliverance and then rebuke. How like Him who came, in love, to bless the unlovable, to save the lost, to bring near those that were afar off! How like the good Shepherd, bent only on laying hold of his strayed one! How like Him who spoke the parable of the prodigal son, and who in it has shown us how God receives back the very worst of his lost ones, without upbraiding, or coldness, or delay! (1.) Jesus stretched forth his hand immediately. Instantaneous deliverance! He would not have the fears of his disciple last a moment. He supports at once. In that outstretched hand the marks of the nails were not yet seen. These were still to come. But the love was there; the power was there; the security was there. In our day we have the same outstretched hand; only the prints of the nails, the marks of love are now there. The outstretched and the pierced hand are one! To his sinking Peters he stretches the pierced hand. To each sinking, perishing son of Adam, he does the same. Take hold, O man, take hold! (2.) Jesus caught him. Nothing is said of Peter's laying hold of Jesus; it is Jesus laying hold of Peter that we have here. Jesus caught him; whether by the hand or not, we are not told; nor does it matter. "Jesus caught him," that is enough. How, like this to the apostle's words, "apprehended by Christ"! What now are winds and waves? What matters it whether the boat is at hand or not? Rage on you winds! Rise up you waters! Darken the heavens you clouds! Jesus has caught him—Jesus holds him, is not that sufficient? O man, sinking in the world's stormy sea, let Jesus lay hold of you, as he is most willing to do, and all is well! For what is all salvation but Jesus seizing hold of the sinner! "He sent from above, he took me, he drew me out of many waters." (3.) Jesus spoke to him. Hitherto he had heard but his own voice, "Lord save me"; now he hears the Master's voice responding. His own cry could not allay his fears; but the words of Jesus do this at once. His first word is rebuke (for it is but one word in the Greek), "O you of little faith"; or as it should simply be, "O little-faith!" This is all. He does not dwell on this, nor continue his upbraiding. What gentleness and tenderness are here! O little-faith! Might he not say to us, "O no-faith"? And then he adds, "Why did you doubt?" or, "For what purpose do you doubt?" "What is the use of your doubting?" Perhaps the words involve such questions as these: (1.) Where does this doubting come from? (2.) What means this doubting? (3.) Of what service will this doubting be? Thus speaks Jesus still, "It is I, do not be afraid." By his tones and words, no less than by his gestures (his stretching out of the hand), he cheers us, he beckons us, he comforts us. Why then do we doubt? What reason have we for so doing? Why not fling all distrust away? Such is the attitude of Jesus to his church in her darkest and stormiest nights. He comes to her on the water. He places himself near. He waits to support. O church of God, accept the offered hand, and listen to the gracious voice. Such is his attitude towards our world. "All the day long (and all the night long too) have I stretched out my hands." Yes; he stretches out his hands. O sinking world do you not heed his hands and his voice? Do you not welcome his interposition? Or will you reject Him utterly?

The Gracious Welcome "Bring him here to me."—Matthew 17:17. 1. Whose words are these? They are Christ's own. They are authoritative words. He commands. He has just come down from the transfiguration hill, and what a contrast between that mountain glory and this valley of tears and disease; but he returns to his old work of healing and blessing, just as before. The glory has not changed Him. And so with Him now in the midst of that glory. It has not altered his love. He is the same Savior still; as ready to receive sinners as in the days of his flesh. 2. To whom are they spoken. To his unbelieving disciples. Their faith was small indeed, and they are rebuked for it; they are called a "faithless and perverse generation." Yet He does not, on their account, repel the poor possessed lunatic, no, He makes them the instrument of bringing the sick man near. How easily

can the love and power of Jesus break through all barriers, and find their way to the sinner through a wall of unbelief! 3. Concerning whom are they spoken? A poor lunatic, possessed with a devil. It is one of the worst cases that has come before Him, "This kind goes not out but by prayer and fasting." But best or worst, what matters it to Him who created the heavens and the earth; who is Lord of principalities and powers; master of Satan and his angels; who has the keys of hell and death. Others had failed; He could not fail. In this confidence He speaks. The worst case is nothing to Him. 4. What do they teach us? Much indeed. (1.) Something as to Christ; (2.) Something as to ourselves. (1.) Something as to Christ— He is the great healer; the sinner's one physician. His words are health. His touch is health. His look is health. No, his very garments are health; for as many as touch either Him or them are made perfectly whole. Leprosy, lunacy, fever, blindness, death, possession by Satan, are nothing to Him. In Him all fullness dwells; and that fullness is dispensed by love. There was much here to quench that love, much to repel Him, but He will not be repelled, and his love cannot be quenched, even by the waters of unbelief. He is "mighty to save"—"able to save to the uttermost." Omnipotence is in his touch, his look, his word. Let us do justice to his fullness and his grace, lest He have to say of us, O faithless and perverse generation. (2.) Something as to ourselves. He comes looking for faith, but finds only unbelief; looking for child-like simplicity, and He finds only perversity. Yet He invites us still. He invites us to come ourselves, and He invites us to bring others. What He desires is personal contact with Himself. In one sense distance is nothing to Him, but in another it is. He needs to have us near Him. For He speaks and acts as very man. And, besides, whatever might be His power to heal or to pardon at a distance, He knows that nearness to Him is our blessedness. Contact with Him is health, and life, and warmth. Creeds, doctrines, truths, words, are all good in their way, but they are not the living Jesus, nor can they be substitutes for Him and for His love. But into this close contact He invites us to bring others, "Bring him here to me." He does not say, "Come," neither does He say, "I will go to him;" He says, "Bring him." And was any "brought one" ever sent away? Each coming one gets the blessing, and each brought one too. In the present case this is the more remarkable, because there was little faith (if any) in any of the parties concerned. Yet Jesus must warn and bless, not for our sake, but for His own. In spite of sin and unbelief and perversity He must bless! Such is the Christ with whom we have to do, full of grace and truth. Let us draw near; let us keep near; let us allow Him to pour out His love on us; let us bring others to Him to be partakers of the same overflowing love.

The Peerage of the Kingdom About that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Which of us is greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven?" Jesus called a small child over to him and put the child among them. Then he said, "I assure you, unless you turn from your sins and become as little children, you will never get into the Kingdom of Heaven. Therefore, anyone who becomes as humble as this little child is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven.—Matthew 18:1-4. It was for a kingdom that Israel was looking; a heavenly kingdom. In spite of many low views, they believed in "the kingdom of heaven"; "the kingdom of God"; and in "the kingdom of Messiah," as the same with these. Being persuaded of their Master's Messiahship, his disciples wanted to know from him something about his kingdom. They took for granted that it was theirs; that they were sure of entrance; and they wished him to tell them who was to have the highest place in it. They were too sure of getting in. Alas, how many now are not sure at all. Let us mark (1) the question, (2) the answer. In that question we find something right and something wrong. Let us look at it; and then see how exactly the answer meets it. I. The question. Who is the greatest in the kingdom? Besides

the belief in a coming kingdom, there was an appreciation of its glories and honors. It was not wrong to wish for the kingdom; nor to desire a high place in it. We ought to "press forward;" for if it is worth our while to get in at all, it is as much so to get a high place; for all that God gives is to be earnestly sought after by us; we cannot be too greedy of these. "Covet earnestly the best gifts." This was right; but the wrong thing was the spirit and the way in which the question was put. (1.) It showed ignorance. They had forgotten the words spoken to Nicodemus, "except a man be born again." They were going too fast, and overlooking the question of entrance. They were deficient in their knowledge of the kingdom, and of the way of entrance, and of the principles on which honors were bestowed. (2.) It showed pride. It was a self-sufficient question; indicating high thoughts of themselves and of their own title to its privileges. "We are the people." (3.) It showed selfishness. Here was earthly ambition working its way into heavenly things; a spirit of selfish rivalry, each one wanting to get above his fellow—to push up to the highest seat and room. II. The answer. It goes to the very root of the matter; it deals first of all with the question which they were overlooking, that is, of entrance. Thus it rebukes, it warns, it instructs; answering not merely the one question put, but many others along with it. When man puts a question to God, he does not see the whole bearings of it. When God answers, he takes up all these, and does not answer a fool according to his folly, but lovingly condescends to take up the whole case from the beginning. The Lord here answers partly in a similitude and partly in words. He takes an infant, and holding it up, he asks, how is this babe to get in? They believed that babes belonged to the kingdom; He had told those who "of such was the kingdom of heaven." Well, how did they get in? Had they said or done any good? None. They get in as mere nothings; as those who have no good word or deed to recommend them. Our Lord’s two cases of entrance are, the thief on the cross—a man who had done nothing but evil all his days, and an infant who has done no good. These show us the way of entrance. Hence the passage means not, except you become humble, teachable, meek, gentle, &c., as infants (they are not so); but except you turn round, completely change your mind (be converted), and humble yourselves (come down from your high thoughts), you shall not get in at all. Not only, you shall not have a high place—an "abundant entrance," but no entrance at all. The way, then, of becoming great is to become little—of being the greatest, is to become the least. This was the Master’s way; he took the lowest place, and he was exalted to the highest. He made himself of no reputation, therefore he gets the name above every name. Before honor is humility—stooping to the consciousness of having deserved nothing. The Master went far beyond us here, for we truly deserved nothing, and therefore ought to take the lowest place; he deserved everything, yet lived and acted, as if he had deserved only sorrow, and pain, and shame, and the death of the cross. Let us then learn, (1.) The way of entrance. Go in as an infant, carried in by another—without claim, merit, goodness; owing all to the free love of God; of Him who spared not his own Son. Faith acknowledges this nothingness, and goes in; unbelief refuses to do so, and is kept out. What keeps us in darkness or doubt, but the desire to have some goodness either in life or feeling to secure our entrance and recommend us to the King? (2.) The principle of recompense. Not merit; not personal worth and greatness. The acknowledgment of unworthiness even to get in at all. Yet we must work for God—suffer for God, deny ourselves for God—and all these (even the cup of cold water) will be remembered and recompensed. Yet in that recompense (even of these whose crown shall be the brightest) there will be the distinct consciousness of undeservedness all the while. "Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you?" How simple! how blessed! Ah surely God’s thoughts and ways are not our thoughts and ways.

The Seeker and Savior of the Lost "For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost."—Matthew 18:2. "For the son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."—Luke 19:10 Many of our Lord’s words were spoken twice over, if not oftener. He did not think it beneath Him to repeat Himself; and the Holy Spirit did not think it unnecessary or unbefitting to record the repetition. Here it is in connection with little children that the words occur, "The Son of man is come to save that which was lost." Elsewhere it is in connection with Zaccheus, the publican. In the former case his errand is said simply to be "to save," as if "seeking" were not needed in the case of infants who have not yet plunged into the labyrinths and thickets of earthly wickedness. In the latter his errand is, "to seek and to save," as if search were needed in order to find the lost object. A very particular and personal message this to our children! The mission of the Son of God has a special bearing on them. The good Shepherd came very specially for them. He singles them out as most prominent objects of his love. So far from their being overlooked or getting salvation in some side way, his errand was particularly to them. And does He not plainly tell us here that they need salvation? They can only get into heaven by being saved. They were as truly lost as others; and they need salvation as truly; and they get it as fully. But let us put the two passages together and take them as embracing our race. "The Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world." "Preach the gospel to every creature." I. The Son of man. This means, of course, one who was truly and thoroughly man—very man. Adam was man; but he was not a "son of man," or "the son of man." This name brings out very expressively his true humanity. It is like, and yet unlike, to the ancient words of the first promise, "the seed of the woman," and the expression of Paul, "made of a woman." It is more than these, for "son of man" means "son of humanity;" son both of the man and the woman. He is indeed "the Lord from heaven" (1 Corinthians 15:47); yet is He "the second man," the "last Adam." There must have been something in Ezekiel which made him in this respect resemble Messiah, for upwards of ninety times he is addressed as "son of man," and it is in his prophecies that the expression occurs so often. Daniel uses it in reference to Messiah, and David uses it as expressive of complete and true humanity. He whose name is Jesus, Emmanuel, Christ, the Lord, is truly Son of man. II. The Son of man came. He came! From the beginning He had been known as the coming one; now He is the one who has come. The Son of God has become the Son of man. He has descended to earth. He came to Bethlehem first, and afterwards He might be said to have come to all Judea. For ages the coming was prospective; yet even as such it was replete with gladness; now it is accomplished; He has arrived; how much more of gladness is contained in this fact! "We know that the Son of God is come." "Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord." III. He came to seek. "I will search my sheep, and seek them out," says He by Ezekiel (Ezekiel 34:11). He was the Shepherd who had lost his sheep, and He missed it, valued it, left the rest, went after it, sought for it, all the world over. His was a seeking life, a seeking ministry. His were seeking words and seeking works. He is the great seeker, the heavenly seeker. His days were spent in search. He sought when He was here; He is seeking still. His is the same seeking attitude and earnestness now in heaven as formerly on earth. He seeks in love. Not as the officer seeks out the hiding criminal; but as the mother seeks her lost child. It is the search of love, divine yet human love; love that will not wait until the desired object of search shows symptoms of concern or willingness to return, but love that pursues the flying, the unwilling, the resisting. Many are the places in which He finds and has found his stray ones: one He found upon a cross, one by a well, one in a boat, one in a sycamore tree. It matters not. IV. He came to save. His name is Savior; his errand is salvation. Nothing less than this. It is salvation that man needs; it is salvation

that Christ brings. He is "mighty to save." He is "able to save to the uttermost." He says, look unto me and be saved. He came not simply to make men moral, and raise them from savage coarseness; to give wisdom or teach science; to "elevate the masses;" to make men regular church-goers or obedient citizens. He came to save; and his gospel is the power of God unto salvation. The Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world. He "comes in the name of the Lord to save." Salvation is a wide and big word, as used by God. In man's lips it may and often does mean very little. It means sometimes sacramental grace, or ritualistic drapery, or supercilious churchmanship. But, according to the divine use and interpretation of the word, it means much, very much. It means something whose greatness can only be measured by the greatness of the Person who came; by the greatness of the work which He accomplished; by the greatness of his toil and suffering; by the greatness of the price He paid. It is something which apostolic succession and baptismal regeneration cannot give—something far beyond the power of church, or priest, or sacraments, to confer. V. He came to save the lost. The lost! And who are they? Not simply those whom man describes as lost to shame, lost to decency, lost to all human motives of right, but such as are lost to God; lost to their great Maker and Owner; lost in the sense in which the sheep is lost to the shepherd; the piece of silver to the woman; the son to the father. They are they whom God has lost. The great Father has lost a son; man has lost God, and God has lost man. They are lost in respect of separation from God—distance from God. They are lost in regard to present favor and future hope. They have lost everything; they are lost to everything. Shepherd, and woman, and father, have sustained an awful loss; but what is this to the loss of those who have lost God, and are lost to God. To be lost is to be dead in sin; to be condemned and under wrath; to be banished and shut out; to have unpardoned sin overhanging them, and a deadly disease preying on their whole man. To have the heart empty of God, at war with the Spirit, and in alliance with the evil one; to be reduced to such a state of unholiness that all spiritual life, or relish, or love, is gone—this is to be lost; lost even now: apart from the woes of that hell that is at hand. O man, you are lost; and that word means something unutterably awful; something which only the Spirit of God can reveal to you. But the Son of man has come to seek and save you. He is bent on this. It is his errand, his mission. No matter how lost you are. He is not willing that you should perish. He has no pleasure in your death. He seeks your life. He desires to save.

The Stone of Salvation or Destruction "And whoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder."—Matthew 21:44. What is there about the "stone" or the "rock," that makes God so often point to it, when speaking of Himself and of his Son? Many are the truths which cluster round it, or are wrapped up in it. It is one of these mines out of which one digs some of the most precious thoughts of God—thoughts in which we sinners of earth have the chief share. He gives us his own name as the "Rock of Israel" (1 Samuel 23:3), and his Son's name, as the "Stone of Israel" (Genesis 59:24). He speaks of Himself as the "Rock of Ages" (Isaiah 26:4), and of his Son as the "tried stone," the "precious cornerstone" (Isaiah 28:16). He calls Himself "the rock that begat us" (Deuteronomy 32:18), and his Son, "the living stone" (1 Peter 2:4). He taught Israel to say, "Their rock is not as our Rock" (Deuteronomy 32:31); "neither is there any rock like our God" (1 Samuel 2:2). He taught his believing ones to take up this as their song: "Unto you will I cry O Lord, my Rock" (Psalms 28:1); "Lead me to the Rock that is higher than I" (Psalms 60:2); "Be my strong Rock" (Psalms 31:2). "God is the Rock of my heart" (Psalms 73:26, margin); "Make a joyful noise to the Rock of our salvation" (Psalms 95:1). It is plain, then, that God has much to say of this stone or rock, and it is His desire that we should learn

the meaning of what He has said, and enter into his thoughts respecting it. He points us to this stone, and bids us look at it that we may see in it what He sees, and so may, at once, get the manifold benefits which it contains. For such is the nature of that stone, and such its virtues and benefits, that to enter into the mind of God concerning it, is to make these virtues and benefits our own. One special aspect under which God asks us to look at this stone, is as a foundation-stone; and we need hardly say that it is to his only-begotten Son that he is pointing, when He says, "Behold I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone (Isaiah 28:16, 1 Peter 2:6). "On this rock," said the Lord, "will I build my church," pointing to Himself; just as He said at another time, "Destroy this temple, and in three days will I raise it up." Often is the "rock" or "stone" thus referred to in connection with Himself. The passage before us brings out four things in connection with this stone—four aspects or bearings of it. These are as follow: I. It is the stone of rejection. Probably there was some stone which Solomon's builders or architects set aside at first as unfit, which was afterwards found to be altogether suitable. This is used as a symbol for Messiah's rejection by Israel. He was meant to be the foundation-stone, the cornerstone; but Israel would have none of Him as such. He was not the stone of their choice or approval. He was "disallowed of men" (1 Peter 2:4). He is the rejected stone; the rejected Savior; the rejected king. He is rejected specially by the builders, not only by the common workmen. Everything connected with Him has been rejected; He came unto His own and his own received Him not; He was despised and rejected of men; He was one in whom men saw no beauty. It is at this point that God is standing and presenting Christ to the sons of men. What do you think of Christ? Do you receive Him or reject Him? Decide. This stone is the test or touchstone in the real character and standing of men. Man's estimate of this stone is the ground of God's estimate of Israel or of humanity. On this everything is made to turn. What is this stone to you, O man? What is its value in your eyes? This is about the last test that man thinks of in determining character; but with God it is the first; or rather, it is both the first and the last. He who accepts God's estimate of this stone is saved; he who rejects it, and prefers his own—takes the estimate of the builders—is lost. On our estimate of this stone our eternity turns. II. The stone of honor. God has made it the head of the corner. God reverses man's estimate of this wonderful stone. He declares it worthy of the highest and most honorable place. This place he has assigned to it. The sign or emblem of man's rejection was the cross; the sign of God's acceptance and honor was the throne of the majesty in the heavens. In the one, we see man's contempt, in the other, God's admiration and approval. It was as a temple-stone that it was rejected; it was as a temple-stone that it was honored. It was the last thing that man would have thought of in building his temple; it is the first thing that God thinks of; he makes it both foundation stone and cornerstone. It was the stone that man could do without in his temple; it was that without which God could not build his temple; no, without which there could not be any temple at all. "God has highly exalted him and given him a name that is above every name." This exaltation to the highest point of the universe, of that which man had tried to cast down to the lowest, is the thing which shows this pre-eminence to be truly divine; altogether superhuman; something which God only could accomplish. "This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes." Surely this is the man whom the Lord delights to honor. III. The stone of stumbling. It is called by two peculiar and somewhat similar names; "a stone of stumbling," or a stone against which people strike and injure themselves; a rock of offence, or a rock over which people trip. This stone has both of these characteristics. These two things are comprised in our Lord's expression, "shall be broken." These are the two ways in which men are affected by it just now; for these two things refer plainly to the

present dispensation—the state of things since Messiah came, which is to continue until He comes again. These are the two ways in which unbelief shows itself; it strikes against, or it stumbles over the stone; it resists and assails it to its own injury; or it makes such mistakes concerning it, that it upsets the man. For all unbelief either denies the cross or makes it void. It is thus that the human race (not Israel only) is brought into contact with this stone; this Messiah; Jesus of Nazareth. How many in the present day are dashing themselves against it, and so perishing by bold rejection? How many are refusing to believe simply what God has told us about it—either adding something of their own to it, or taking something from it?—and so, with the name of Jesus on their lips, missing the pardon, and the life, and the glory which He came to bring. They are not satisfied with Jesus as He is; with the cross as it is; or at least they imagine that Jesus cannot accept them as they are, and that the cross cannot avail them as they are. So they would wait, and work, and pray, and feel, and repent, and add one thing to another, to make the Savior sufficient, and the blood effectual, for them. They shrink from taking Jesus as He is; they shrink from accepting His fullness as they are. Jesus, "the Son of God," the "Savior of the world," the "receiver of sinners," the "seeker of the lost," is not to them what the Father represents Him. There is still, if not a gulf, at least a line between them and Him; there is still something needed to be done and felt by them to effect the junction between them, and to draw out His riches. In other words, "they stumble at this stumbling stone." They will not, just as they are, take Him for just what He is. It is this "stumbling" that is keeping multitudes from peace. God’s testimony concerning Jesus does not satisfy them. They, in fact, want another Savior; for they insist that they must be different from what they are before they can expect Him to save them. Alas! "Who has believed our report!" IV. The stone of destruction. This is when He comes the second time. Just now the first part of his statement is fulfilling, "Whoever falls on this stone shall be broken;" before long the second part shall be fulfilled, "On whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder." This is the falling of the mighty stone upon a Christ-rejecting world! This is the final ruin of unbelievers. This is the "everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and the glory of his power." He comes not only to break his rejectors in pieces, like a potter’s vessel; but to grind these pieces into powder. That day of destruction comes! Christendom is preparing for it. The vine of the earth is fast ripening for the treading of the terrible vintage—in the day of the vengeance of the Lord.

The Things Touching the King "What do you think of Christ?—Matthew 22:42. The Lord’s question here was specially meant for Jews. They were expecting Messiah, the Christ; studying Scripture to know what had been written of Him; and so our Lord asks, What is your opinion of the Christ? Is it according to the Scriptures? Are you of one mind with Moses, with David, with the prophets, with God himself, concerning Him? This was Christ’s question to the Jews; it is his question to us in these last days. What are your views on the points connected with Jesus of Nazareth? Are they true or false? scriptural or unscriptural? 1. As to his person. Is He God to you? Is he man to you? Son of God and Son of man?—Immanuel? the Word made flesh? God manifest in flesh? 2. As to his work. Is it to you the work of a sin-bearer? Is it finished? And are you enjoying it as finished or only half finished? His blood, his righteousness, his cross, what are they to you? 3. As to his kingdom. Is it a righteous yet also a glorious kingdom to you? Do you understand the mode and the terms of entrance? the new birth, and simple faith in the King? On these three great points are your views right or wrong? Are you of one mind with God as to each of them? To be of one mind with God is faith; not to be of one mind is unbelief. By nature, we are wrong on these points. The Scripture, through the teaching of the Holy Spirit, sets us right. 1. Is your understanding right as to

these things? Do you know them? 2. Is your heart right as to them? Do you feel them? Have you not only got hold of them, but have they got hold of you? 3. Is your life right as to them? Are you a better, truer, holier, and more earnest man because of them? Is your whole life, your whole being, outer and inner, molded by them? Or are there still other influences working more powerfully than these? If your understanding and heart have received these, then your life will show this. There will be fruit unto holiness. The truth, the joy, the light will shine through you, and shine out from you, on all around. What then do you think of Christ? Is He such as you can love and trust? 1. As a Savior. Is He the Savior that suits you? And do you appreciate his great salvation? Are you glad to have Him for your Savior? Or have you any fault to find with Him as such? Would some change in his person or work have made Him more suitable? 2. As a friend. Is He the friend you need? Is his the friendship, the kind of friendship, that suits your circumstances, your feelings, your temperament? Is his the kind of sympathy, and counsel, and wisdom, which you feel you need from a friend? 3. As an advocate. You need intercession; one to plead for you. Does his advocacy suit you? Can you trust Him with your case? Can you put everything in his hands, that He may manage all your concerns for you? Do you see how successful He has been with every case He has undertaken; not losing one; and can you trust Him with yours—his skill, wisdom, love, argument, eloquence? Is Jesus Christ the righteous, just the kind of advocate you need? and are you just the client for such an advocate? 4. As a King. Is He just such a King as you should like—as suits you—as suits this earth—as suits the universe? 5. And what say you to Him as a Judge? You that shall never come into condemnation, do you enjoy the thought of Him as the Judge? You that are still under condemnation, what do you think of Him as a Judge? What do you say to his being your Judge? What do you think of standing before Him and giving in your account to Him? What do you think of Christ? Do you say, "I think Him the chief among ten thousand"?—It is well. Do you say, I know not what to think? Ah, take heed, there is something wrong within you, if not all wrong together. Do you give no answer? It matters not. We shall soon find it out. By the company you keep; the books you read; the way in which you lay out your talents and time and money; the way you transact business; your dealings in the market; your conduct at home; your letters and correspondence; your conversation with neighbors—by these we shall find out what you think of Him.

The Chill of Love "Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold."—Matthew 24:12. This is to be specially true of the last days, so that, as our Lord elsewhere said, "When the Son of man comes, shall he find faith on the earth?" Here he may be supposed to be asking a similar question, When the Son of man comes, shall he find love on the earth? But while this is to be fulfilled in the last days, it is not confined to these. Such is the tendency of every age, every church, every saint. In this present evil world the tendencies are all evil; downward, not upward. Increasing evil and decreasing good; this is the general statement. But our Lord’s words are more special. It is of decreasing love that he speaks: "You have left your first love." Let us notice some of the things which decrease when sin increases. 1. As iniquity increases, faith decreases. Unbelief overflows like a deluge. One sin lets loose another. Faith withers down; dies out, like a flower in a desert. 2. As iniquity increases, truth decreases. For error is sin, and sin is error; so that truth and sin cannot co-exist. Sin expels truth, both from the heart and from the world; from the individual saint, and from the church at large. Darkness dispossesses light. 3. As iniquity increases, righteousness and holiness decrease. A man cannot be both holy and unholy; the encroachments of sin can leave no room for holiness at all. Inch by inch, iniquity creeps in and creeps along. 4. As iniquity increases, religion decreases. Sin drives religion out of the heart, out

of the church, out of the world. With abounding iniquity prayer dies out, and praise, and zeal. The service of God becomes irksome; the form without the power is the first stage of the declension; and the second is the abandonment of both power and form. 5. As iniquity increases, delight in the things of God decreases. Sin soon shuts the Bible, and takes away all relish or appetite for it, except as a book of poetry or antiquity. Pleasure in sin cannot co-exist with pleasure in the Word of God, or the day of God, or any of the things of God. But the special thing of which our Lord predicts the decrease is love—love to God, love to Himself love to one another. The atmosphere of sin is poisonous to everything sacred; but the thing which it first especially acts upon is love. It chokes this immediately. Hence the first thing noticed by our Lord in regard to Ephesus, was her leaving her first love. Love is the tenderest of all the plants of heaven, and the most easily affected by the deleterious or cold atmosphere of earth. The first step backward and downward is failure in love. A chill comes over us. Something intervenes between us and Christ, between us and our fellow-saints. We begin to grow cold, and then we freeze. This is specially to be the case in the last days, but the tendency is the same throughout the whole dispensation—increasing sin, decreasing love. The Greek word for iniquity is "lawlessness"; regardlessness of that law of which love is the fulfilling; assimilation to the great Antichrist, who is specially the lawless one; and as the characteristic of this lawless one is hatred of Christ and of his church, so is every step in "iniquity" an advance to this great image of sin, this model of hell, Satan’s truest representative. The evil predicted by our Lord is threefold. It is love (1) frozen out of the world by abounding iniquity; (2) frozen out of the church; (3) frozen out of the saint. A world without love, a church without love, a saint without love! It is not of a few, but of the multitude, "the most," that this is affirmed. Cold-heartedness will be all but universal; and even those who do love will love but little. Theirs will be but cold love—half a heart given to Christ; less than half a heart given to the saints. Let us watch against sin—all sin; tremble at its increase. Cherish the flame of love; for "if any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ he shall be anathema maranatha." True Vigils "Watch therefore; for you know not what hour your Lord does come. Therefore you be also ready: for in such an hour as you do not think the Son of man comes."—Matthew 24:42, Matthew 24:44. We take this warning as meant for us, as truly as for the early church; we might say more truly, or at least, more forcibly; for eighteen centuries have brought us so much nearer the consummation. It is the Master’s own warning. It is very explicit; very practical; very searching. Let us take it in the following order:. I. Our Lord will come. (1.) His name is Lord; Master; Ruler; the very word applied to Jehovah. (2.) His name is ours, or yours, Lord—"Your Lord." He is thus connected with us and we with Him, as friend, master, teacher, king. Our Lord will come! This is one of the great certainties of the unknown future. He may tarry; but He will come at last. Many obstacles may seem to rise up, but He will come. Men may not desire Him but He will come. The Church may be cold; but He will come. Earth may think she has no need of Him; but He will come! The scoffer may say, Where is the promise of his coming? but He will come. Satan may do his utmost to oppose; but He will come. This is the great future certainty which Christ and his apostles have proclaimed to us. Our Lord will come! II. We know not at what hour. The Father knows, but we know not; no man nor angel; nor the church, nor any saint; no, it is said, "not the Son." This is one of the great secrets of God. That it should be made so to man is easily accounted for; why it is so to angels, and why it was so to the Son, is not for us to say. It must be an important one, when thus restricted to the Father himself. It must have some peculiar purpose to serve. What that is we know not now, but we shall know hereafter. The hour is, no doubt, fixed in God’s purpose, but the knowledge of that

time is kept from us. They do wrong, then, who try to fix the hour, thus seeking to extract a secret from God. They do wrong who neglect the whole subject because this secret is connected with it. They do wrong who scoff at the whole subject because of the rash attempts or wretched failures of some pretended interpreters of prophecy. Thus, "we know," and "we know not;" we know that He will come; we know not when. III. Watch. Like the watchman on his tower; like the soldier with the enemy in view; like the pilot with rocks and straits on every side; like the householder with the dread of the midnight robber—"watch"! (1.) Do not fall asleep; (2.) Do not grow slothful; (3.) Be ever on the outlook. The reason given, then, is that the Lord is coming, and we do not know the hour. He illustrates the warning thus—If a householder knew that the thief was coming at a particular hour, he would have watched; much more if He did not know the hour, but simply that He was coming sometime. So with us; the simple knowledge that the Lord is to come, is to make us watchful—even if we knew when; how much more when we do not know when. Let us beware of being thrown off our guard by self, or the flesh, or Satan, or the world. Let us not sleep as do others, but let us watch and be sober! IV. Be ready. We may watch and yet not be ready. Our Lord insists on both. You are my disciples, be ready! You are saints, be ready! What is the readiness? There is (1.) readiness of standing—"complete in Him,"—"by grace you stand;" (2.) readiness of clothing—we are to have on the fine linen, clean and white—Christ's righteousness; (3.) readiness of heart and soul. We must love Him and love his appearing. Our longings must be towards Him; we must have the Spirit dwelling in us and sealing us. (4.) Readiness of spiritual state—oil not only in our lamps, but in our vessels—even the Holy Spirit himself. Be ready! The Master still cries. The message here is thus a warning— (1.) To the slothful saint. Sleep not. Awake! Beware of falling under any influences that would make you indifferent to the Lord's appearing. Beware of worldly arguments; beware of pretended spiritual arguments; beware of confounding death and Christ's coming; beware of the errors and seductions of the age. (2.) To the undecided. You are anxious, but you are not decided. You would sincerely be a Christian, but not just yet. You wish to be a follower of Jesus, but you wish to compromise—or delay. Do not be deceived; God is not mocked. Be decided at once; lest the Lord come and end your wavering. (3.) To the careless. The world at large is thoroughly careless—sleeping sound—dreaming its dreams of vanity;—enjoying sin, vanity, luxury, pleasure, gaiety. Christ speaks: Awake; sleep no more! Awake, lest the Master be upon you. Awake, lest the flash of his avenging sword be the first thing that awakens you!

Religion Without the Holy Spirit "They took no oil with them."—Matthew 25:3 This parable has many sides and aspects. It is prophetical; it is also practical. It suits all ages, but especially the last days. It suits the world, but specially the church of God; "if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear." It is searching and sifting; it is also quickening and comforting. It suits us well in these days of profession and fashionable religion and religiousness. It divides the church into two classes—the wise and the foolish wise in God's sight, not man's; foolish in God's sight, not man's. Thus it is not a parable for the heathen, as if they only were foolish; nor for the profligate, as if they only were foolish; nor for the infidels, as if they only were foolish. But for the church. It comes in to the inner circle of Christian profession, and sifts it, divides it. Let it sift us and test us. Better to be weighed and found lacking now than hereafter. Better to be undeceived now than when it is too late. Let us notice, I. The points of likeness between the two classes. (1.) They get the same name, virgins; (2.) they wear the same dress; (3.) they are on the same errand; (4.) they both have lamps; (5.) they both have vessels; (6.) they both slumber and sleep. They have thus many features in common. Man could not discern the difference, at least for

the time. The peril of mere externalism is that which our Lord points out here. No doubt there must be 'externalism'. Religion must have an outside as well as an inside. The lamp must not only have oil, but it must burn: the external must indicate the internal. And we may say that our Lord intimated the necessity of a thorough consistency and completeness in the outward religious life of a man, so that as a fair external is no excuse for internal unsoundness or incompleteness, so a sound internal is no excuse for an inconsistent life. Our Lord, then, here depicts, (1.) a complete externalism; (2.) a beautiful externalism; (3.) a deceptive externalism; (4.) a prolonged externalism; (5.) an unavailing externalism. Up to a certain point in a man's life, or character, or religion, externalism may avail; but beyond that it gives way; it breaks down; it exhibits its unprofitableness. This externalism may not always be hypocrisy, but it is imitation. It is not the flower in its natural color and growth, but painted, artificial. Let us watch against an artificial life, and an artificial religion. What does it profit now? what will it profit in the day of wrath? The name, the dress, the lamp, the outward show, will all go for nothing in that day of universal discovery and detection. II. The points of unlikeness. Though in most respects they were all alike, yet there was a difference. It was within; it was imperceptible from without; it could only be discovered when the bridegroom came. Up until then all were completely similar. Only then the deficiency came out in the foolish. Then was it seen who were wise, and who were foolish. That day is the day of certain and unerring detection. It is the day of weighing in the balances! It is the separation of the false from the true. The difference was confined to a single point—the lack of oil. Some have supposed that the foolish took oil in their lamps, but not in their vessels. It appears, however, that they did neither. The lamps were not required to be lighted until the bridegroom came; and so the oil was not poured in, nor the wick inserted until then. For it was at midnight that the cry was made, and then all the virgins arose and trimmed their lamps, that is, supplied them with the wick and oil, and lighted them. Then it was that the foolish discovered (1) their need of oil; (2) their lack of it. Then they went to the wise to beg for a supply; then they (being wisely refused) went to buy, and returned too late. There was "oil in the dwelling of the wise " (Proverbs 21:20), but the foolish were without it. The oil is the Holy Spirit. He is likened to oil throughout all Scripture, though in some places to fire, and to water, and to wind or air. There is the oil of consecration (Exodus 30:25); of daily food (1 Kings 17:12); of fragrance (Esther 2:12); of joy (Psalms 47:1-9, Isaiah 61:3); of healing (Luke 10:34); of light (Zechariah 4:12). The Holy Spirit is all these. But it is as the light-giving oil that He is specially spoken of here; and the lack of Him as such makes the difference between the foolish and the wise. "Having not the Spirit" (Jude 1:19). Thus a man may be very like a Christian, and yet not be one. He may come very near the kingdom, and yet not enter in. He may have all the outward features of a Christian, and yet be lacking in the main one. He may have the complete dress of the saint, and yet not be one. He may have a good life, a sound creed, a strict profession; he may be one who says and does many excellent things; he may be a subscriber to all the religious societies in the land, a member of all their committees, or a speaker at all their meetings, and supporter of all their plans; he may profess to be looking for Christ's coming, and going forth to meet the bridegroom, yet not necessarily a Christian! He may lack the oil, the Holy Spirit. A religion without the Holy Spirit profits nothing. There is the religion of the intellect, of the sense, of the imagination, of the flesh, of the creed, of the liturgy, of the catechism, of nature, of poetry, of sentiment, of mysticism, of humanity. But what are these without the Spirit? Christianity without Christ, what would that be? Worship without God, what would that be? So religion without the Holy Spirit, what would that be? Yet is there not much of this among us? Is there not much of dry

formalism, lifeless doctrine, sapless routine? I do not call it hypocrisy; I simply call it unreal religion. And what can unreal religion do for a man? Will it not prove irksome and vain? Will it make him happy and free, or liberal, or zealous, or holy? No. It can do none of these things. It is bondage, and darkness, and weariness. Yet here is the Holy Spirit in the hands of Christ for you. Go to them who sell, and buy for yourselves. Not to men, or churches, or creeds, or ministers, but to Christ. Go to Him. He is exalted to give it; and He will. Apply to Him before it be too late.

The Great Separation "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left."—Matthew 25:31, Matthew 25:33. Let us enter at once into the practical teaching of this parable, leaving its prophetical aspects untouched, as well as its connection with the two previous parables. The name Christ takes here is the Son of man. This is always his name in connection with judgment. It is Daniel's name for Him in this connection; and it is as Son of man that He is judge of all. We are to be judged by a man like ourselves. it is before a human judge that we shall stand and plead. God takes no advantage of us. I. The coming. (1.) The Son of man shall come! Yes, He that shall come will come and will not tarry! These heavens shall rend and He shall appear. (2.) He shall come in his glory. Not in weakness, and poverty, and shame; not as a babe, or a carpenter, or a bearer of the sin and curse. (3.) He shall come with all his holy angels, What a retinue! (a) Angels; (b) holy angels; (c) with Him! As his retinue, his attendants, his executioners; as in Daniel. Often have angels visited earth, but never on so solemn an occasion. II. The sitting. It is not a momentary appearance. He comes as the lightning flash, but does not, like it, depart. He takes his seat on a throne—the throne of glory, not grace now. It is a great work He comes to do; a work not done in a moment. He took his seat when He went up to the Father, and has been thus sitting for ages, for the work was great and long. So when He comes again He "sits," for the work is great and long. It will be thorough, searching, sifting. III. The gathering. Who shall gather is not here said. In other places angels are mentioned. But the gathering shall be: (1.) It is a gathering of men, not devils. (2.) It is a gathering of nations; all nations; a universal gathering. It is a gathering "before Him"; before his throne; before his face. No hiding, no escaping, no resisting, no refusing! However reluctant, they shall be gathered. He shall see it fully done. Mountains, rocks, seas, cells, cannot hide men on that solemn day. IV. The separating. They come as one great multitude, but soon they are divided. (1.) They are divided into two classes, only two; one good and one evil; sheep and goats. (2.) They are divided by Himself. How He does it, we know not. But He shall do it completely, effectually, without mistake—one mistake. The separation shall be perfect and final. (3.) The sheep are set on the right hand, the place of honor, power, acquittal, favor; the goats on the left, for shame and condemnation. V. The convicting. He gives the reasons for what He does—reasons to both classes; these are all summed up in one great reason, that is, What they did or did not do for Him. The righteous are told that what they did for his brethren they did for Him; the wicked, that what they did not do for his brethren they did not for Him. Thus the one class is made to feel how truly all their works are accepted, and the other left without excuse, not being able to say, You were not here for us to do anything for you. "Ah, but my brethren were here. You did it not to them." This stops their mouth. VI. The sentencing. This is from the Judge's own lips. Angels may gather them, He must sentence them, for He is Lord and Judge of all. First, He turns to the right, and speaks to the sheep. (1.) Come, have done with all your wanderings and tribulations; come, end your pilgrimage. (2.) You blessed. Oh, precious name. the blessed, the "well spoken of"; among men perhaps only cursed! (3.) Blessed of my Father; not of man, nor of

me only, but of my Father; beloved of God and blessed of God; this is the beginning, the foretaste of endless blessedness. (4.) Inherit the kingdom; exile, oppression, weariness, end in a kingdom; they are kings and priests; an everlasting kingdom, long since prepared! This is the recompense of toil, and work, and weariness for me—of every service, however little, done to one of mine. Secondly, He turns to the left, and speaks to the goats. (1) Depart, come not near me, nor my kingdom. I once said, Come to me, and you would not; I now say, Depart. (2) You cursed; not blessed, but cursed; not merely under the curse, but with the curse poured down. (3) Into everlasting fire—fire—everlasting—prepared for the devil and his angels. Why? Simply you did me no service! Not that you were drunkards, thieves, liars, Sabbath-breakers; but you did nothing to me! VII. The executing. These go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal. "So he drove out the man," is the first execution of judgment. "They enter in through the gates in to the city" is the fulfillment of the gracious verdict. God carries out both his love and his vengeance. He falters not. "Judgment lingers not, damnation slumbers not." The day of the carrying out of all God’s purposes and sentences will certainly arrive. What shall be the end of those who obey not the gospel! Oh terrible doom! woe, woe, woe, everlasting! What shall be the joy of the saved! Joy unspeakable, the crown of righteousness. These are the two great masses. They are mixed now; they shall be separated soon. The day of sifting is at hand.

The Denying Disciple But Peter denied it in front of everyone. "I don’t know what you are talking about," he said. Matthew 26:70 It takes almightiness to lift up a soul from death; and it needs no less to hold up the soul that has been raised. Hence the need of a divine quickener; hence the preciousness of the blessed Spirit. He only can keep us from falling. Were He to let go, in a moment we fall. In Peter’s case we see all this. It was an Almighty voice that called to him, "Follow me;" and it was an Almighty hand that drew him out of his boat, and from his nets. It was an Almighty arm that sustained him. And now for a moment that arm lets him go, to test him and show him his weakness. In a moment he falls. His fall is one of the saddest and most solemn that the Bible records. He denied his Lord. He denied him when he ought most to have confessed Him. He denied Him with oaths and curses. Let us throw the statement of the evangelist into the following questions: (1.) Who? (2.) Whom? (3.) What? (4.) When? (5.) Where? (6.) How? I. Who? Judas? No. Nicodemus! No. Thomas, the doubter? No. Philip, the questioner? No. Peter? Yes; Peter. Simon, son of Jonah. Peter, the rock! Peter, the confessor of the Christ of God. Peter, the fervent proclaimer of his fidelity and love. Peter, who took the sword against Malchus. Peter, who had been with the Master on the transfiguration-hill, and in the garden of his agony. Yes; Peter denies. Poor human heart! Lord, what is man! What is even a converted man? What is a disciple? Let him that thinks he stands, take heed lest he fall. II. Whom? It is his own Master whom he is thus treating; Jesus, whom he had followed; whom he had confessed; and whom he seemed so truly to love. Jesus of Nazareth! Jesus the Christ, the Son of God; the Son of the blessed! It is not a fellow disciple whom he thus treats; it is his blessed Master! O incredible mystery of human evil! O desperate wickedness of the heart of man! III. What? He denies Him. It is not forsaking Him merely. They had all done that. But it is denying Him. In this he stands alone. No one but Peter had said, I know not the man—he who had so lately said, We know that you are the Christ! What ingratitude, what falsehood, what inconsistency, what cowardice, are here! But would we have done anything else had we been there? IV. When? Immediately after the supper and the garden scene; after those wondrous words recorded by John as spoken in the upper room; after listening to the solemn cries of Gethsemane! So soon after these! Does it not seem impossible! Yet with all

these in remembrance, he denies his Lord. V. Where? In the High Priest's hall; within sight and hearing of his Lord he does it. In circumstances in which we should have expected him nobly to confess Him. In the hour of danger. Surrounded with enemies. Forsaken by friends. Yes, in the very presence of his Master he denies Him. Untouched with pity for his desolation, and sorrow, and torture, he denies Him. VI. How? He did it three times! He did it after being warned by the Lord. He did it through fear of a woman. He did it in the most decided way. He did it with oaths and curses. Oh, what a denial! "Woman, I know not Him!" Then, "Man, I know Him not." Then, "Man, I know not what you say." And then the oaths and curses burst forth. O dreadful and incredible wickedness! The old fisherman of Galilee had, it would seem, been a swearer before his conversion. This swearing fisherman had been called by the Lord and become his follower. Three years' communion with Christ had done much for him. But the 'old man' was not dead. The temptation was presented, and the old habit returned, the old blasphemies broke out. The old oaths came forth again; aye, and they came forth to clench his denial of his Master. "May I be cursed forever if I know the man," he says. Simon, son of Jonah, is it you? Is that your voice? Ah, if your Master heard, what would He say? He heard! Yes, He heard the threefold denial, and the curses with which it was enforced. Yet no anger came from either lip or eye! The curse only drew out the love. Yes, at the sound of the last denial, invoking damnation on himself if he knew the man, the Lord turned and looked. He looked in love, and the love conquered. Peter went out and wept. It was his last denial and his last oath. Satan had sifted him; but the Lord steps in.

The True Confessor and the False "I have sinned."—Matthew 27:4. This is confession; so far as words go; we shall see what it amounts to. God lays great stress upon confession in his dealings with sinning man. It is as a confessor of sin that he draws near to God; and it is as such that God receives him. This is the only position, the only character in which God can deal with him. Covering sin will do nothing for us. It doubles the transgression. Confession is the closest and most personal of all kinds of dealing with God. As praise is the telling out what we see in God, so confession is the telling out what we see in ourselves. It specially comprises matters which can be spoken in no ear but God's. There is, no doubt, public confession; but the largest part of confession is private. Man cannot be trusted with it; man must not even hear it. Hence, the wickedness of any man setting up for a confessor. Hence the sin of a dishonest confession; and the necessity of dealing honestly with God and our own consciences in a matter so entirely private and confidential. The attempt to deceive God, or to hide anything from Him, is as dangerous as it is wicked and inexcusable. There are two kinds of confession, a false and a true. We have instances of both of these in Scripture. They both make use of the same words, "I have sinned"; yet they do not mean the same thing, nor indicate the same state of feeling. Let us note some of the instances of the false. There is (1) Pharaoh. Twice over he says, "I have sinned against the Lord (Exodus 9:27; Exodus 10:16). (2) Israel. After deliberate disobedience, and as a declaration of farther disobedience, "We have sinned" (Numbers 14:40). (3) Balaam (Numbers 22:34.) He said to the angel of the Lord, "I have sinned." (4) Achan. (Joshua 7:20), "Indeed, I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel." (5) Saul. (1 Samuel 15:24), "Saul said unto Samuel, I have sinned, for I have transgressed the commandment of the Lord." (6) Judas. (Matthew 27:4), "I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood." These are examples of false confession. And its falsehood consisted in this— (1). It was constrained. It was extorted by terror and danger. It was not spontaneous or natural. These men would rather not have made it; but they could not help themselves. It was merely the natural heart crying out in trouble. (2). It was selfish. It was not the

dishonor done to God, nor the injury to others, that they thought of; but the consequences to themselves. It was not sin, as sin, that was confessed and hated. (3). It was superficial. It was not the conscience, the inner man, that was stirred; but the mere external part of man's being. The real nature of sin was unfelt. Self was not abased nor loathed. There was no broken nor contrite heart. (4). It was impulsive. Some judgment smote, or was to be averted; some affliction overwhelmed them; some sermon roused them. And under the impulse of such feelings they cried out, "I have sinned." (5). It was temporary. It did not last. It was like the early cloud, it passed away. The words of confession had hardly passed their lips when the feeling was gone. Let us beware of false confessions. Let us not cheat our souls, nor lull our consciences asleep, by uttering words of confession which are not the expressions of contrition and broken-heartedness. Let us deal honestly, searchingly, solemnly, with God and our own consciences. Godly sorrow is one thing, and the sorrow of the world is quite another. "Do not be deceived; God is not mocked." He needs real words. But we have some examples of no-confession. We have Adam trying to hide his sin; Cain refusing to confess; and Lamech glorying in his shame. They are specimens of the immoveable and impenetrable; showing the lengths to which a human heart can go. But we have many notable instances of true confession; proclaiming to us the truth of the promise, "Whoever confesses and forsakes his sins shall have mercy" (Proverbs 28:13); "If we confess our sins he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins" (1 John 1:9). David said, "I have sinned," and his confession brought forgiveness. Daniel said, "we have sinned," and he found forgiveness. Yes, true confession brings certain pardon. We have but one Confessor and one Confessional; and both are heavenly, not earthly; we need no more. In true confession we take our proper place. We take the only place in which God can deal with us; the only place in which it would not dishonor him to pardon us—the sinner's place. And he who is willing to take this place is sure of the acceptance which the forgiving God presents. The Spirit's work in convincing of sin is to bring us to our true place before God. He who takes this but in part gets no pardon. He who tries to occupy a higher or better place must be rejected. He who tries to deal with God as not wholly a sinner, as something better than a mere sinner, shuts himself out from favor. He who goes to God simply as a sinner, shall find favor at the hands of him who receives sinners, who came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance. Everything depends on this. If he goes to God with some goodness to recommend him; some good feeling; some softness of heart; some excellence in his own faith or repentance to recommend him, he cannot be received. But he who goes simply as a sinner, will taste that the Lord is gracious. In true confession we come to see sin somewhat as God sees it; and ourselves somewhat as God sees us. I say somewhat; because we cannot here fully enter into his mind regarding sin and the sinner; we see but in part, and feel but in part. It is but a faint glimpse we get of sin and of ourselves. But it is with this that we go to God, having learned something, though but in the remotest degree of what sin is and deserves, and of what He thinks of it. We take his report of what sin is, and of what we are, whether we feel it or not. We believe what He has said about these things; and accepting His testimony to the evil of sin, even in spite of our own lack of feeling, we confess it before Him, and receive at his hands that forgiveness which, while it pacifies the conscience, makes sin more odious, and our own hearts more sensitive and tender. We take the prodigal's words, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight." We turn our eye and our feet homewards. We remember the past; we look round us on the desolation of the "far country"; we listen to the good news of our Father's open door and loving heart; we arise and go. And at every step, as we draw near, our view of sin intensifies, our self-abhorrence

increases, our sense of ingratitude deepens; and yet the certain knowledge of our Father's profound compassion and unchanged affection sustains us, cheers us; so that we draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith; knowing that if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins.

02.2.02. Mark

BIBLE THOUGHTS & THEMES Volume 2, the Gospels by Horatius Bonar (1808—1889) The gospel of MARK

Relationship to Christ "For whoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother." Mark 3:35. Relationship to Christ is the special theme of our Lord's statement here. It was started by the appearance of his earthly relations on the outside of the crowd that was listening to Him. His mother and his brothers (brothers in the common sense) stood without, and sent to call him. The crowd conveyed the message, and that message drew out the scene and the words that followed. There was presumption in the conduct of his mother and brothers; yet He does not directly rebuke this interference, though indirectly he does, asking, "Who are my mother and brothers?" As the answer to this question, he looks at the crowd close around him, not at the relatives standing without and calling; as if seeking for truer kindred among the former; as if earthly kinsmanship were quite an inferior thing. The relationships of blood were, after all, external and perishable; it is not in his own family, but among the stranger multitude, that the deeper and more enduring kinsmanship is to be sought—a kinsmanship of which all may be partakers—for the earthly connection could of course belong only to a few, the heavenly was capable of illimitable extension. Relationship to Jesus is presented freely to the sons of men. Thus our Lord disposes of the question of mere blood relationship, of which man has made so much. It is human, not divine; earthly, not heavenly. He also himself thus shakes off the claims which mere earthly ties would have made upon him. He does not deny the lower bond, but he shows that it is merged in the far higher one, as taper-light is lost in sunlight. Thus far he severs the one bond, that he may knit the other more closely and firmly; showing himself in a far higher and diviner association than men conceived, and thereby correcting the carnal mistakes into which unbelief and self-righteousness and superstition are so prone to fall. Christ still speaks, and speaks to us, concerning this matter. He still stands with outstretched hand, as he has been doing throughout the ages, saying, "Who is my mother and my brothers?" He still invites the crowds of earth, in the center of whom he is standing, to partake of the blessing, and to become his kindred, his own nearest relatives—mother, brother, sister, all in one. Mark these three things regarding this relationship (1), its importance; (2), its formation; (3), its manifestation. I. Its importance. Rank and relationship are among men reckoned things of moment. They involve so much, not only of privilege, but of affection and sympathy. How important are these human affinities and alliances! To be related to kings, to have royal blood in our veins, this is one of man's highest boasts. How much more to be related to the King of kings! Earthly relationships do little for us, but this will do everything; and what it does is forevermore. It is an everlasting relationship. (1.) It delivers us from what is earthly and vain. It is only by the formation of a higher kinsmanship that we can be severed from the drag of the carnal and the common. Thus we are set free from the bondage, and the routine, and the vanity of earth. It breaks the chains of hell. (2.) It connects with salvation and eternal life. It is the grafting into the living stem of the vine. It not only severs us from destruction, but it links us to life and joy. He whose kinsmen we become, quickens and saves us. Because He lives we shall live

also. (3.) It connects us with honor and glory. All that our kinsman has, becomes ours; his rank, his property, his rights, his honors, his prospects. Our interests are henceforth bound up with his for evermore. He is a son, so do we become. He is an heir, so we become. He is a king, so we become. "We are made partakers with Christ," no, "partakers of the divine nature." II. Its formation. This is given us in these memorable words, both positively and negatively, "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to those who believe on His name, which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:12). This is the first point at which we commence doing the will of God. Thus we have the formation of the new tie declared to us. We become sons of God, and we do so by our acceptance of the Son of God; or we may say by our acceptance of Jesus of Nazareth, as being what God declares him to be, the word made flesh, the Son of God. "He who believes that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God." The internal process itself is the work of the Holy Spirit, the result of a sovereign purpose, a new creation. But the visible or conscious part of it is our receiving Christ. Not prayer, nor reformation, nor repentance, but simply our reception of Christ; this is all. This introduces us at once into the new relationship; the new rank, the new position, the new glory. Reception of Jesus as the Son of God is the one link that binds us to God, and brings us into the new family, and makes us partakers of the household of faith in all their privileges and honors. Acceptance of Jesus! Do you know that, O man? Acceptance of Jesus according to the Father's testimony, that is all! Have you received Him as God manifest in flesh, the Lamb of God? If not, you are not his kinsman. You are still of the kindred of earth; no, of hell. III. Its manifestation. A life of service, of doing the Father's will. Our first act of faith was our first doing of that will. Our whole subsequent life is a doing of it; and in doing it we make manifest whose we are, to whose kindred we belong, of whose family or household we are members. Every real doing of this divine will is a proof and exhibition of our relationship; every non-doing of this will, or opposition to it, is a manifestation of our earthly kindred. Here, then, we have the test of our Christianity, a life of divine will doing. We say that we are Christians, Christ's kinsmen; well, let us try ourselves. Are we doing the will of our Father in heaven—his Father and our Father—and so openly identifying ourselves with him? (1.) Are our hearts doing the Father's will? Is that will our will? (2.) Are our intellects doing the Father's will? In the present day man's intellect is utterly in revolt against God. Has ours been brought into glad subjection? (3.) Are our purposes doing the Father's will? Each day is full of purposes and schemes. What are these? Earthly or heavenly? Holy or unholy? (4.) Is our life doing the Father's will? Life, be it short or long, is made up of many parts. What is the nature of these myriad things that make up what we call our daily life? (5.) Is our family life doing the Father's will? And are we by the way in which we regulate it, showing that we are kinsmen of the Lord Jesus Christ? (6.) Is our business life doing the Father's will? Have we taken God into partnership with us, and are all our transactions regulated by a sense of His presence, and a desire for His approval? Thus let us test our relationship to Christ. Not he that says, "Lord, Lord," but he that does the will of our Father in heaven; he is the kinsman of the Son of God; he it is to whom Jesus points and says, "the same is my brother, and sister, and mother."

The Great Calm "The wind ceased and there was a great calm."—Mark 4:39. It is written, "He makes the storm a calm" (Psalm 117:29). Of this our text gives a notable instance; even more notable than in the case of Jonah. In the Psalm it is Jehovah that does it; here it is Christ; identifying the calm-maker, the storm-stiller; and showing that Jehovah and Jesus are one. "He makes the storm a calm;" he, not man; nor chance; nor the laws of nature. He raised the wind; he

stilled it; just as truly as did Jesus on the sea of Galilee, when He arose and "rebuked the wind and the sea, and there was a great calm." The one is as directly his doing as the other. The "calm," then, is the voice of God. It is not the fire, or the earthquake, or the whirlwind; but still it is the divine voice; the still small voice which, like the goodness of God, ought to melt our hard hearts, and lead us to repentance; to revive, and comfort, and cheer. It is the voice— (1.) Of power. The calm is as truly the manifestation of power as the storm. What power to still such storms; to bind such winds; to smooth such waves! Think of God's power in the calm. (2.) Of love. He does not delight in the storm or its havoc, in the wind and its terror; his delight is in the calm; for God is love. It was the voice of love that on the lake of Tiberias produced the calm; and, in the calm, love is speaking still. (3.) Of peace. The calm reminds us of pardon, and reconciliation, and friendship. "Peace be still" are the words of grace to us. "Be of good cheer: it is I; do not be afraid." The calm is truly the peace-speaking voice of God—of God, willing to be at peace with us, and asking us to be at peace with Him. (4.) Of warning. No earthly calm lasts. It is often the prelude of a greater storm. The four angels held in the four winds; but it was only until the servants of God were sealed. Their very holding in, was the warning. They were pent up for a brief season, that they might break loose the more terribly. There are many storms and calms here; of all kinds, inner and outer; of the inner man, of the church, of the nation, of the world. All of them speak to us. Let us advert to two of these—the present calm for the soul, and the future calm for earth. I. The inner calm of the soul. There has been a storm. In every soul there has been this. Even in man's careless state there is enough of tempest to disturb his quiet. But when aroused by the Spirit, then the greatness of the storm begins. It rages through the man's whole being. But there is a ruler and a stiller of this storm; one who gives rest; who calms every tumult within. Jesus is He whose word produces the great calm in the tempest-driven soul of the awakened sinner. It is a calm in three aspects, or three parts of man's being. (1.) In his conscience. For it is chiefly in the conscience that the storm rages. The sense of guilt, remorse, terror, wrath, the prospect of judgment and eternal woe—all these work together to raise a storm such as man cannot quell. Only the Son of God can calm these winds and waves. He speaks peace to the conscience through his cross and blood; his gospel of righteous peace, meeting all these different points of conflict and commotion, calms the conscience. It produces what the apostle calls no more conscience of sin. (2.) A calm in his heart. That heart was the seat of conflicting feelings; loves, fears, hopes, joys, sympathies, antipathies. It was made to be filled; it needed to be filled; and it had none to fill it. There was a storm in his heart. But now God has come in; Christ has come in; he has something now to love worthy of love; something to fill his heart; it is no longer tossed to and fro with the uncertainties and changes of creature-love. Divine love fills it; and that is calm for the heart; present calm; calm that grows more stable every day; the earnest of the everlasting calm. (3.) A calm in his intellect. His mind was distracted. He was perplexed, puzzled, torn in pieces by doubt. What is truth? he asked himself. But no answer was to be had. The ever-rising, ever-shifting opinions of the world kept him in perpetual motion. His mind was not at rest. There was storm in his intellect; and all his powers seemed loosened, broken, unable to fix themselves. But the Son of God has come! With Him the true knowledge has come; the knowledge of the Father and the Son; the knowledge of God's righteous love; the knowledge that satisfies—that diffuses light through the intellect. There is a great calm. Jesus is teaching him; and in that teaching there is unutterable calm—a true intellectual calm. His mental distraction and weariness are at an end. Each word from the lips of the great prophet seems so true, so real, so certain, that his whole intellectual being finds repose;

it is the repose of activity, yet the activity of repose. There is a great calm. II. The future calm for earth. In every aspect ours is a stormy world. In every sense, materially, morally, spiritually, intellectually, externally, internally—there is the earthquake, the volcano, the whirlwind, the breeze, the tempest, the tide. All is restless. For sin is here. Alienation from God is here. The curse lies still on creation—the kingdoms of earth are still hostile to God. Satan is still ruler of the darkness of this world. But its day of calm is coming. Jesus will yet speak to it and say, Peace be still; and there shall be a great calm, the calm of the new heavens and earth wherein dwells righteousness. He comes— (1.) As a prophet; to impart wisdom and knowledge to its inhabitants. That calm shall be the calm of true wisdom—the calm of the heavenly light—the calm realized in the fulfillment of the word, "They shall be all taught of God." (2.) As a priest; to impart universal pardon and cleansing to earth and its dwellers, through his one sacrifice. It shall be priestly calm; calm diffused over this tempestuous earth by the word of the great High Priest. (3.) As a king; to impart royal calm; the calm of heaven; the calm which He only can give who is the King of kings. It is as a king that He comes; it is as a king that He shall say, Peace be still; and then shall be the great calm such as earth has never known.

Only Believe "As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoke; he said unto the ruler of the synagogue, Do not be afraid; only believe."—Mark 5:36. Most of Christ's mighty works had to do with disease and health, with death and life. Not all of them; for we have the water turned into wine, and the multitude fed. But most of them were as we have said. Here it is death with which He is brought into contact; and He deals with it as the Prince of life. At three different stages does he meet with and overcome death, and him that has the power of death. (1.) The newly dead, as here in the case of Jairus' daughter. (2.) The dead of a day, as in the son of the widow of Nain. (3.) The dead of four days. Each time He encounters more of death, and has to go down deeper into the horrible pit. But in all the three (and no doubt there were many such) He is the conqueror—the resurrection and the life. But let us look at the whole miracle; it is one of sickness and death; and in connection with these there is the persuasion that Christ was the only deliverer. We see (1.) faith; (2.) faith giving way; (3.) faith strengthened and encouraged; (4.) faith victorious; (5.) unbelief rebuked. I. Faith. The faith of Jairus—of both father and mother; for both seem to have turned their eye to Jesus. He is probably a Pharisee; like Nicodemus, a master in Israel; the ruler of the synagogue—a well-known man in Capernaum. But he has heard of Jesus—of his wonders—how he can overcome disease; and as his little daughter lies dying, he leaves her bedside to go in quest of Jesus. It is faith that sends him on this errand; faith in Jesus as the healer; for at first his faith only reached thus far. But Jesus leads him on; and the faith that began with trusting Him as the physician, ends with realizing in Him the raiser of the dead. For faith often begins with little, and ends in much; it begins with a trickling streamlet, and ends with a full broad river; it begins with a few streaks of light, and ends with the glorious dawn, or more glorious noon. II. Faith giving way. I do not say that the father's faith gave way—though from the words of Jesus it seems to have wavered. But the mother's faith had done so; for she had sent the messenger with the desponding message, "Your daughter is dead, why trouble you the Master any further?" Her faith had found its limit (as in the case of Martha and Mary—Lord, if you had been here, my brother had not died); it took hold of Jesus as the healer of the sick, but it went no farther. She knew something of Jesus; and that something had led her to think of Him; but it was little that she knew; and her faith soon came to an end. Had she known Him better, she would have either sent no message, but calmly waited his arrival; or it would have run very differently—"Your daughter is dead, urge the Master to

come." Ah, does not our faith often thus fail—just at this point? We can go to Him for a little thing; we cannot go to Him for a great thing. We count it presumption to expect much. Instead of feeling that the worse the case, the greater the glory to his power and love, we stop short, and cease to expect anything from Him at all. I need not trouble the Master, we say, my case is so desperate; instead of saying, because my case is so desperate, I will trouble Him, I will give Him this opportunity of magnifying his skill and grace. Thus faith shows its feebleness. It gives way when any strain is put upon it. We can trust Jesus for a little, but not for much, not for all! O we of little faith! III. Faith strengthened. Christ speaks—"Fear not; believe only and she shall be made whole." He saw his faith staggering. The news he received was a blow to it. He believed that Christ could heal her; but can He bring her back from the dead? There is a wide difference between these two things; the one is human, the other superhuman. Christ's words are for the strengthening of his faith in that which is superhuman. They are an intimation of the far greater fullness in Himself. They bid the man believe in that fullness, and dismiss all the fears which the sad intelligence had awakened. They assure him that it was quite as easy for the Master to raise the dead as to heal the sick. Fear not; believe only; and she shall be made whole. It is thus that He leads faith on and up, step by step; making use of failure and evil tidings for this end. As the road grows darker the torch blazes brighter. IV. Faith victorious. The dead child is raised. Your faith has saved your child. Jesus and the believing father enter the house together—go to the chamber of death. The father has taken Christ at his word; he has believed; he has recognized in Christ not merely the healer of the sick, but the resurrection and the life; and in response to his faith his child is given back to him; the chamber of death becomes the chamber of life. Faith has won the victory. That victory is resurrection—He that believes on me, though he were dead yet shall he live. V. Unbelief rebuked. The father and mother believe, and they are admitted to see the great sight—the pledge of that which shall be seen over all the earth when the trumpet shall sound. But it is an unbelieving household; and the mourners make known their unbelief in mockery of Christ's resurrection words. They are put out. They are not allowed to see the sight—the gate of death unlocked by Him who has its keys; and the prisoner brought forth. They only see the issue afterwards; but from the glorious spectacle itself they are excluded. From how many blessed sights does unbelief shut us out. Into what chambers of life and blessedness does faith bring us! Only believe!

Jesus Wondering at Man's Unbelief "And he marveled because of their unbelief."—Mark 6:6. I. Who marveled? It was the Son of God. Man's marveling may not be much worth; but Christ's has a deep meaning. His estimate was correct. He did not marvel amiss. It is not said that He grieved or was angry; but He marveled! It was a sore disappointment. He came seeking fruit and found none. II. At whom did He marvel? At the men of Galilee. He had been brought up among them, and they knew Him well. He had done most of his miracles there; spoken most of his gracious words there. But He came to his own, and his own received Him not. No wonder that He marveled. III. At what did He marvel? Not at their sins, their blasphemies, their profligacies; but at their unbelief. He did not marvel at the disease, but He marveled at their rejection of the physician and his medicine; not at their being lost, but at their refusal to be saved. But why at their unbelief? The unbelief of any poor sinner was a thing to be marveled at—how much more their unbelief? Their unbelief of what? His power and love! Why? Because, (1) It was so unreasonable. He had done every thing to remove or prevent it. He had given them the fullest evidence of his divine errand, and of the truth of his words. Their unbelief then, was truly without a cause—without excuse or palliation, altogether foolish. "If I say the truth, why do you not believe me"? (2) It was so unkind.

He had gone out and in among them for so many years. He had spent and been spent for them. He had loved them, yearned over them, invited them; but they would not believe. He had raised their dead, healed their sick, given sight to their blind, fed their multitudes; yet they would not believe! How unkind! (3) It was so sinful. To refuse the Son of God! To treat his miracles as if they were tricks, and his words as if they were lies, and Himself as if He were an impostor! Unbelief does all this. Must it not be the sin of sins? (4) It was so unprofitable. They made nothing by it. It did them no good. It was a useless provocation of God, to say the least of it. It was like children preferring toys to gold. Oh the folly of unbelief! Oh its unprofitableness! (5) It was so dangerous. It put away present peace and love. It made them miserable here. But it also treasured up wrath for them. It set God against them for rejecting his Son. It was the throwing away of everlasting life. It was the deliberate choice of hell for their portion. No wonder that he marveled. (6) It was so willful. This sums up the whole. Their unbelief was a deliberate rejection of Christ and his Messiahship. They did it freely, of their own will and choice, no one compelling. No wonder that Jesus marveled at their unbelief! 1. Sinner, Jesus marvels at your unbelief. He wonders that you should prefer the world to Him; death to life; hell to heaven! 2. Anxious soul, Jesus marvels at your unbelief. It is your unbelief that is keeping you from peace; and what reason can you give for it? for refusing to believe the record? Jesus marvels at your darkness—your doubts—your distrust. 3. Backslider, Jesus marvels at your unbelief. Unbelief is the root of backsliding. It is the evil heart of unbelief rising up again. He says, Return O backsliding children, for I am married unto you. 4. Believer, Jesus marvels at your unbelief. For is there not more unbelief than faith in you? With such a Savior should you ever doubt at all? O slow of heart to believe all that the Lord has spoken. We believe but a little; we are contented with that little. What different men would we be if we believed all! All the things concerning Him, his first coming and his second!

Christ’s Teaching, the World’s Great Need "And the people saw them departing, and many knew him, and ran a-foot there out of all cities, and out went them, and came together unto him. And Jesus, when he came on; saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and he began to teach them many things."—Mark 6:33-34. We get here, first, a description of the people, and then of the Lord himself, in His dealings with them. Each word is descriptive and full. I. The People. (1.) The people saw Him. He was withdrawing to a desert place, beyond the sea of Galilee, for rest to himself and his disciples; but he could not be hidden. He might have hid himself wholly; but he did not; he allowed himself to be seen. (2.) They knew Him. They recognized Him. This is Jesus of Nazareth! Blessed recognition to them! Have our eyes seen him, and our hearts recognized him? Recognition of Jesus by the sinner! How much there is in that! It may be but a glimpse, but it leads to more. (3.) They ran a-foot there. They saw Him embarking near the head of the lake. They had no boat or boats to follow with; but they ran round the head of the lake to get to the other side. It was quite a crowd, more than five thousand men, out of all the cities, flocking to Jesus. Blessed running; blessed eagerness, when Jesus is the goal! (4.) They outran and reached Him. They were first at the spot. As they were going round the lake, they could easily see the spot where he and his disciples were going. There they ran with all might, and reached the place before him. Blessed outrunning! Thus they reach Jesus, and crowd around him. Nor does he withdraw himself. He allows himself to be outrun and reached; for surely he could easily have outstripped them, as his was the shortest course, but he allows himself to be overtaken. He lingers for them. How willing to be reached! How accessible! How gracious! II. The Lord. It is His grace that we find

specially here. (1.) He came. The "coming out" may be the coming out of the desert place to which he had gone for rest, or coming out of the boat in which the sea had been crossed. It matters little which, though probably it is the latter, as it would seem as if they had intercepted him on his way to the desert place. He came out! He did not hide himself; he allowed the crowd to meet him. He turns not away from any one, nor makes it a difficult thing to reach him. (2.) He saw. His eyes lighted on the crowds that were gathering round him. It was no unwelcome sight, this "gathering of the people,"—earnest of the great gathering of the people unto Shiloh. He saw everything with human eyes, exactly as they were; and they made on him impressions such as they make on us, for he was man all over, with human eyes and ears, and a human heart beating within. (3.) He pitied. He was moved with compassion toward them. The sight of the thousands was to him touching and affecting. He could not but feel, for he saw through and through them, understanding their temporal and their eternal needs; all their hunger and thirst, of body and soul. He saw them as they were at the moment. He saw their eternal prospects. And he pitied them! With all their sins about them, he pitied them. The special thing at present which excited his pity, was their shepherdless condition. They were wandering sheep, with none to gather, none to feed them, none to guard them. It is a sinner's friendlessness, helplessness, forlornness, that awakens the pity of the Son of God. And that pity is sincere. He feels for the wandering sinner. He stretches out his hands to him; he says, "I would have gathered you." Oh the true, the profound pity of the Son of God! He, the great Shepherd, is touched with the scattered, weary, forlorn condition of his wandering creatures. He is "very pitiful." His "compassions fail not." (4.) He taught. "He began to teach them many things." It was to this that his pity prompted him. He saw what they needed so specially. They were perishing for lack of knowledge. He knew what would bless them, what would cure and comfort them—teaching, divine teaching. This is the soul's true cure. That which Jesus speaks is the cure of the soul. His words, his truths, are all we need. For in them is contained that which alone can heal all our diseases, and fill all our emptiness—the great love of God. Hence he said, "Learn of me;" for He has compassion on the ignorant, and on those who are out of the way. Yes, it is teaching that we need; the teaching of Jesus. He has "many things" to teach them; and all of them contain the heavenly medicine. His words are health, and rest, and food, and joy, and liberty. That teaching is all we need. Having it, we can dispense with self-teaching, or man-teaching, or church-teaching, or priest-teaching, or book-teaching. Who teaches like him? Let us resort to him for the heavenly instruction which alone can profit. It is with him that we have to do for instruction—"wholesome words," true teaching. He is now in heaven, yet he teaches the multitudes still. He is as accessible as ever, as compassionate and condescending. His gracious words are still flowing down to us, for the health and joy of the inner man. In these days, we need to keep this in mind especially. Amid the Babel of human words, and the contradictions of human teaching, let us resort to Him for the one teaching which profits. There is at present a tendency to turn away from him, and listen to others. Other teaching seems more intellectual, more learned, more eloquent, more "abreast of the age." But what profits it? There is but one teaching and one teacher that can make wise for eternity. The strong delusion is abroad. There is no remedy for it but the teaching of Jesus. The enticing words of man's wisdom are misleading millions. Let us be on our guard, lest we too be led away by the error of the wicked. Satan is working with his snares and sophistries, to deceive, if possible, the very elect. Let us close our ears against him, and listen to Jesus only. All other teaching is poor and vain. This only fills, and gladdens, and leads us to God. The world has but one teacher after all. Jesus the Son of God. So also has the church. Only

one teacher. He has wisdom; others have only folly. This one teacher offers himself to us. Allow him to teach you, and he will! Beware of the world’s folly coming under specious names—the verifying faculty, the higher criticism, spiritual intuition, advanced liberalism, enlarged views, emancipation from bigotry. Try the spirits, whether they are of God; for many false prophets are gone out into the world.

Jesus and His Fullness Mark 6:53-56. "And when they had passed over, they came into the land of Gennesaret, and drew to the shore. And when they were come out of the ship, immediately they knew him, and ran through that whole region roundabout, and began to carry about in beds those that were sick, where they heard he was. And wherever he entered, into villages, or cities, or country, they laid the sick in the streets, and besought him that they might touch if it were but the border of his garment: and as many as touched him were made whole." We may take up the topics of this passage in the following order: (1.) the landing; (2.) the recognizing; (3.) the gathering; (4.) the touching; (5.) the healing. I. The landing. They had been on the east of the Jordan, near Bethsaida; they had taken ship and crossed the lake; and now they draw to the shore of Gennesaret, which was a well-watered plain on the north-west side of the lake, where Magdala and other towns lay. It was no common landing this. History records many a landing—of conquerors, liberators, benefactors, heralds of peace or war. But here is a landing which surpasses all. Wherever the Son of God landed there was blessing, peace, liberty, health. He carried all these with Him; and wherever He landed He dispensed them. We may say that his first great landing was at Bethlehem, where He arrived from heaven. After that He had many a lesser landing at other places; and wherever his heavenly vessel touched, there He distributed its heavenly freight. He is still landing in our different cities and villages, and still dispensing liberally his rich stores of health. Wherever the good news are proclaimed there He is landing; He is seen drawing to the shore; no, He is heard proclaiming his grace, and shows Himself as the distributor of pardon, and life, and blessing. For all fullness is in Him; the fullness of divine love, and health, and joy. II. The recognizing. "Immediately they knew Him"; He could not be hidden; they recognized Him at once; Jesus of Nazareth, the healer of the sick. It is specially as such they recognize Him here and now. It is not as the teacher but as the healer, that He approaches the shore of Gennesaret. No doubt He teaches also; but specially He heals. The first thing He does is to heal. Their first felt need is the need of healing, and He does not despise this, but owns it, responds to it. It was then as the healer that they recognized Him, when He came on shore. They knew Him. This is the man we need! Thus they met Him—not as others, praying Him to depart out of their coasts, but as those who were eager to bid Him welcome. "If you knew," He once said to another; and so He speaks to us. If you knew Him and his gifts, O sinner, would not you hasten to Him and partake of his fullness? He comes to you; will you not go to Him? III. The gathering. The news spread. The healer has come! They run through the whole region round about; they tell the tidings, they bring the sick. Wherever He goes in this region—country, cities, villages—it is the same. He goes to them; they come to Him. The whole region is stirred. What a gathering; what a time of healing; what a casting out of evil spirits; what a removal of disease from the land. The center of the gathering is the Son of God. Here, as elsewhere, Christ is all. He is the great attraction for the sick and needy. They hear of Him, and they flock to Him, as was written of old, "To Him shall the gathering of the people be." It was the need that was in themselves, and the fullness that was in Him, that was the reason for all this gathering. He had what they lacked; and they came to Him for it. So round Him the publicans and sinners gathered, feeling that He had just

what they needed. Thus sinners gather unto Jesus still. They hear of his grace and truth, of his love and his fullness; they learn how He has been in the habit of receiving sinners; how many millions have, in ages past, gone to Him and been blessed. They hear the report of what He is, of what He has spoken, of what He has done. They go to Him; they crowd around Him; they say, This is the Being who suits us, whom we need, who has all for us, who is willing to give us all. They make the discovery that distance from Him is the cause of all their poverty, and disease, and wretchedness. So they draw near. They form the one great universal circle of which Jesus is the center! IV. The touching. "They besought Him that they might touch if it were but the border of his garment." It was nearness to Him, in any way, in any shape—that they sought. Contact with Him—no, with his garment—no, even with the border of his garment—this was what they desired. He could have healed them at a distance, without a touch, by a word; but He did not, that He might teach those who it is nearness to Him that is the thing so infinitely desirable; that there might be no mistake as to where the healing came from. There are many ways of contact; He looks on us, we look on Him; He speaks to us, we speak to Him; He touches us, we touch Him. It matters not which of these it may be. Only there must be contact or connection of some kind or other; communication opened between us and Him. Then all his fullness flows out, and our need disappears. It is not some meritorious act of touching; some laborious effort skillfully put forth. It is contact in any way. They who touched Him and his garment were not particular as to the manner. To touch Him was enough! He does not stand on ceremony with the sinner, saying, Touch me in this way or that way, else you cannot be healed. All He needs is that you draw near and apply to Him. You will soon experience his welcome, for He is love; grace and truth are in Him. V. The healing. "As many as touched Him (or it) were made whole." The cure was immediate, it was free, it was complete. No uncertainty, no failure. All who applied were received; all who touched were healed. The medicine was all efficacious; the physician was all-skillful and all-powerful. Disappointment there was none, and could be none. The kind, or the virulence, or the obstinacy of the disease mattered not; the healing power was irresistible. How much more healthy must Judea have been during these years! What an amount of sickness taken away! We have the same healer still to deal with; all his old skill, and love, and power. Time has not weakened Him, nor hardened his heart against our diseases and our sorrows. Our sins have not produced unwillingness on his part, nor placed us beyond his power as incurables. He is still the same. He receives sinners. He bids us come. "Him that comes to me, I will in no wise cast out." He does not now say to any one, "Touch me not, for I have not yet ascended." He says rather, "Touch me, for I have ascended," as if the very fact of his ascension made Him more accessible, more easy to touch. Touch me, look to me, hear me, follow me—these are some of his gracious words. Shall we remain afar off? Shall we continue unhealed, unsaved? He is in earnest; shall we not be so? He is disappointed if we do not come. He needs an opportunity of blessing us. We need Him, and He needs us. Let us go to Him at once as the sick, the sinful, the weary, the sad!

Christ’s Recognition of Faith "And Jesus said unto him, Go your way; your faith has made you whole. And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way."—Mark 10:52. The Lord is going about on his errands of grace, as one whose heart was full of love, and his hands of blessing. He came, not to condemn, or to curse, or to smite; but to pardon, to bless, to heal, to save. He has to do with body and soul; with the soul specially, but with the body also, both for its own sake, and also to furnish out a type of that which is spiritual, both in the sickness and in the cure. He comes as the physician to the sick; not with the balm of Gilead, or the skill of its

physicians, but with the balm of heaven, and the skill of heaven. Let us look at this sick one here, and his cure. We may learn much. The disease symbolizes something more terrible than itself; a deeper darkness; a sadder blindness; a more incurable deprivation. To be blind to man and this world is sad; but to be blind to God and to the world to come, infinitely sadder. Man has no idea of the terribleness of such a blindness; a disease that shuts him out from all that is glorious, and beautiful, and divine. O blindness of the soul how terrible are you! Rendering us incapable of seeing and knowing God! With blindness of the soul, what would heaven be to us! Heaven without seeing God! Let us mark— I. The application. Conscious of blindness, he longs for eyesight. Incapable of curing himself, despairing of cure from his fellow-men, he betakes himself elsewhere. Necessity brings him. (1.) He applies in the right quarter. Leaving man, he comes to God. He has heard the fame of Jesus; the cures that He has done; and he concludes, this is the healer for me. He is one who can do what only God can do. He recognizes the necessity for a divine healer. Such is the healer we need; one who is divine; who can do mighty miracles. (2.) He applies in the right spirit. He has no promise to trust in, but what he has heard calls up faith. He comes in faith. He comes earnestly. He comes defying opposition and hindrance. He casts away his garment in haste. Earnestness, coupled with confidence in Jesus—these are the feelings with which he comes. He knows exactly what he needs. He is in good earnest about the matter; and he has confidence in Jesus. He will take no denial. He presents what Bunyan calls his "note of necessity." (3.) He applies at the right time. When Jesus was passing by. I would not say that any time can be a wrong time; but there is truth in what Rutherford says, that a man is converted just "in the nick of time." There is a tide of which it behooves us to take advantage. "Seek while He may be found; call while He is near." II. The reception. It was just such as we should expect count upon. It was. (1.) Most gracious. Jesus stood still and commanded him to be brought; when he comes He receives him lovingly, and grants his request at once. He does not keep him waiting. It is truly the grace of Him who said, "Come unto me." He came without a promise; but that matters not. (2.) Most satisfactory. He got the very thing he wanted. He got it immediately. He got it without price or grudge. It was a full response to his appeal. He got good measure, pressed down, and poured into his bosom. It was thus that the divine physician did his work on earth. It is thus he does it still. For he has carried up into heaven all his love, and skill, and accessibility. He waits for the blind soul; He stands still; no, He commands him to be brought. We can use the words which the bystanders did to the blind man of Jericho—"Be of good comfort, rise, he calls you." Poor, blind sinner, rise—come! Make haste, throw away every impediment, carry your blindness to this heavenly healer. Trust Him for the cure. You will meet with as gracious and satisfactory a reception as did the blind man here. III. The effect of the cure. He followed Jesus in the way up to Jerusalem. He did not return to his own house or friends, but at once attached himself to Jesus. The love of Christ constrained him. He could not remain behind; he must follow. Thus gifts from the hand of Jesus attach us to his person. They form a link between us and him. They are as a magnet to draw us. He followed Jesus; and so does each one whose eyes He opens. He follows Him in the way. Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem, and Bartimeus follows him there. And thus we follow Him too—to the heavenly Jerusalem—his home and ours. He did not say to the blind man, Follow me; yet he did it; love compelled him: he did not need a command. Unbidden the healed one follows; so follow we. He leads the way; we follow. Anywhere; it matters not where; enough if Jesus leads the way, though it be to the wilderness or to the cross. How much more blessed when it is to Jerusalem that He is going. There we follow Him; and there we shall abide with Him. He was on

his way to the cross when the blind followed Him. It is not the cross now, but the throne and the glory. How eagerly and delightedly should we follow Him. He speaks to us and says "Follow me."

The Fruitless Life "Nothing but leaves."—Mark 11:13. It was the eye of the Son of God that searched this tree, and made this discovery. It must have been true that there was "nothing but leaves." Man's eye might be deceived; God's could not. That which He found barren must have been really so. No fruit could be concealed from Him. And He who searched the fig tree is the searcher of souls, and the searcher of churches. "I know your works." He found leaves, but nothing more. Leaves are proper to the tree, but not the main thing. They are something, but not all; no, they are the least part of that for which the tree is made. They are ornaments; they are shade; they cover the bare branches; they protect the fruit from the sun. But they are not substitutes for fruit. Leaves and something more would have been the thing. Not fruit without leaves, nor leaves without fruit. Leaves and fruit would have been the true condition. Leaves are necessary, but not for satisfying hunger. It was the hunger of the Son of God that led to the discovery. He was "hungry," for He was truly man. He thought that on this tree He would find something to satisfy his hunger. It promised well at a distance; and he judged of it at first simply as a man does who sees a thing afar off. But the verdict against the tree is, "nothing but leaves." (1.) It is a remarkable description. It is the least offensive way of describing barrenness. Everything is here but fruit. No exaggeration. This is Christ's simple description of a fruitless Christian. Nothing but leaves. Nothing to satisfy the hunger of the Son of God. Much that looks well; but that is all. Nothing but words! Nothing but forms! Nothing but profession! (2.) It is an expression of disappointment. It was a fig tree, not a fir tree; it was not planted in the wilderness, but in a fruitful soil. There ought to have been fruit, for the harvest had not yet been gathered. Leaves are promises. As they wave in the wind, or glisten in the sunshine, they say there is fruit here. All Christian profession is a promise—to man and to God. Christ comes to satisfy his hunger, and his verdict against the promising but fruitless professor is, "Nothing but leaves." This is the language of disappointment; as in the case of God's vine in Isaiah (Isaiah 34:4), or of the fig tree planted in the vineyard (Luke 13:6). (3.) It is a declaration of uselessness. The purpose of the tree has not been served. It was made for fruit, and there is nothing but leaves! It was planted in a fruitful soil, in one of the pleasant Bethany hollows; but it bears no fruit. Nothing but leaves! (1.) Nothing to do credit to any one; to the gardener, or the garden, or the soil, or the owner, or the root itself. (2.) Nothing to be of any use to any one; all a cheat, a sham, a mockery; something for the eye, but no more; a fair outside, but useless; not perhaps a white sepulcher, but a useless growth; a well without water; a pretense, an unreality, a falsehood. (3.) Nothing to satisfy the hunger of the Son of God; He craves fruit, not leaves. (4.) It is a sentence of doom. Or at least it is preliminary to it. Nothing but leaves! Then wither away! Leaves and branches perish! This is the condemnation of the fruitless professor. This fruitless fig tree is a symbol. Though a real tree on the Bethany road, yet a symbol: of Jewish unfruitfulness; of Christian unfruitfulness; unfruitfulness in the individual and in the church; words without deeds, or deeds that contain neither life nor love, and make the doer as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. It is simple unfruitfulness that is represented here, as in the fig tree of the vineyard. It is not corrupt or poisonous fruit; it is not immorality or even total death; nor the twice-dead tree; nor the cloud charged with fire; nor the star shedding baleful fire; nor the whited sepulcher; but simply the absence of fruit. It is form with some show of life; a tree with foliage, with sufficient sap to produce leaves and verdure; a profession sufficiently fair to excite expectation; a fair-promising Christianity, an excellent external religion. The class described

here is not that of the profligate, the scoffer, the drunkard, the theater goer, the ball attender, the card-player, the turf-haunter, the Sabbath-breaker; but the brisk religious talker, the bustling planner, the church-frequenter, the man of the committee and the platform. The professor depicted here may be found at our communion table, among our elders, or Sabbath-school teachers, or visitors, or, perhaps, our ministers. He goes far; he promises much; he raises high expectations. Yet, after all, there is nothing but leaves! Nothing but leaves; then, I. Our creed is vain. It may be excellent and sound; without a crack or flaw; orthodox, ancient, evangelical; with Christ as its alpha and omega. It may be noble and venerable; the creed of apostles; the creed of primitive days; the creed of the reformation; the creed of all protestant churches; the creed of our fathers, in which we have been instructed from childhood; yet if it produce no fruit, it is vain. We may be most intelligent in our apprehension of it—zealous in our appreciation, and defense, and propagation of it—yet if we are without that which God calls fruit, which is the offspring of life, and love, and faith, we are but as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. A man may say, "Lord, Lord," and yet be shut out from the kingdom. II. Our religion is vain. By "religion" I mean the whole of a man's transactions with God; his whole worship and service; all the ways in which his creed acts itself out. If there be nothing of what God calls fruit, his whole religious life is vain; all his religious acts, whether of devotion, or service, or benevolence, are vain. In him the whole routine of religion may be perfect and unexceptionable, and there may be no specific inconsistency to contradict this—no irreverence, no neglect, no contempt—yet his religion may be unfruitful. It may look well, and promise well, yet after all there may be "nothing but leaves." III. Our Bible is vain. We may read it intelligently, reverently, and regularly—we may teach it to others, in the family, the Sabbath school, the Bible class—yet it may profit nothing. It may be relished by us sentimentally or poetically, yet find no entrance into our conscience, no dwelling in our inner man. With our Bible in our hands and on our lips there may be no life. The Bible with all its glorious gospel may be in vain. That gospel itself may be in vain. IV. Our churchmanship is vain. Zeal for a true church will not serve nor profit; it may sometimes cover lack of zeal for Christ. Love to a church and love to Christ are very different things. Churchmanship is not religion; it is not fruit, it is often mere "leaves." V. Our faith and hope are vain. What is faith if it does not show itself in fruit? What is hope if it has no loving, living, practical manifestations? Let us see what is the nature of our faith and hope, lest after all we have "nothing but leaves." VI. Our whole life is vain. Not one part of it, but every part of it. All is unreal and hollow, beginning, middle, and end; the civil and social as well as the religious. It is one great unreality throughout; to bring forth nothing. All wasted! A mere show, or shadow, or piece of acting. How sad that our whole life should be vain! Nothing but leaves! Woe to the fruitless! They have had all advantages, yet they bear nothing but leaves! Woe to the fruitless? The whole end of being is frustrated! Woe to the fruitless! Their whole course is a pretense, a falsehood! If it be so for time—then what for eternity? There is no possibility of improving the tree hereafter. No transplantation, nor grafting, nor pruning, nor digging hereafter. It is felled and given to the fire! Or put it in this way—eternal barrenness! How awful, how wretched! Eternal unreality! Even now the axe is laid at the root, in token of coming judgment; it will soon be lifted up; it will soon smite. So that, while pointing to the cross, we point also to the axe; while telling of the husbandman, planting, pruning, fertilizing; we must tell also of the same husbandman, examining, condemning, cutting down. Yes, the cross is yonder, but the axe is here. Ah yes! these are solemn words, Let no fruit grow on you henceforward forever! The curse of eternal barrenness! To be stripped of our green foliage as Adam of his fig leaves; to wither away!

O fruitless sinner, think of your doom. Bear fruit or perish! Fulfill your promise or wither away.

Faith in God "And Jesus answering, said unto them, Have faith in God."—Mark 11:22. Two things suggest themselves here, in connection with these words of the Lord: first, the command; and secondly, the reasons for compliance with it. The command brings before us the obligation under which we lie to give to the God who made us, our entire and unreserved confidence in everything, great or small—in regard to our own salvation, and in regard to every matter that comes before us, every duty that devolves on us, every plan that we form, every perplexity that overtakes us, every trial which comes down on us. Have faith in God. This is the Lord’s counsel; no, his command. "Have faith in God." Not in self, not in man, not in churches, not in princes, not in intellect, not in gold, not in the creature at all. Have faith in God. Everything else is a broken reed, on which if a man lean on it shall not only give way beneath him, but pierce him through with many sorrows. God’s demand on us here, then, is for our complete and full trust, just as in the law his demand is for our absolute and undivided love. This is Christ’s demand upon us in behalf of the Father. He had come to reveal the Father. He had day by day been revealing Him and showing how truly he was entitled to this confidence. He had himself set the example of trusting Him, and that in the most adverse and untoward circumstances in which a son of Adam was ever placed. And speaking to us as one who had faith in God, who had altogether trusted Him from the time that he was "made to hope upon his mother’s breasts," he makes this solemn but most blessed demand in the Father’s name and in the Father’s behalf, "Have faith in God." It is not, however, as if He were binding on us a burden; or issuing a new law, upon obedience to which life depended. In these words He is proceeding upon the great truth that the life has come—that God has given to us eternal life, and that this life is in his Son. He is claiming our confidence, not for a God who is yet waiting to see if we will fulfill certain conditions, and comply with certain terms, and obey his whole code of laws (modified or unmodified); but for a God who without waiting for anything in us, has of his own infinite grace, without one stipulation or condition, sent his only begotten Son into the world, with the gift of everlasting life in his hand for the lost sons of Adam. It is in behalf or this God that He is speaking; and it is by the declaration and exhibition of what this God has already done of his own free love, unsought by us, that he seeks to draw back our alienated affections from other objects, and to win our lost confidence from the worthless creature, to the infinitely worthy Creator—the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. "Have faith in God." Such is God’s claim upon you now in his own behalf; such is the Son’s claim upon you in the behalf of the Father. The claim is made in the voice of authority, yet also of love. It is truly both. It is loving authority; and it is authoritative love. He asks it without reservation; and in a way which plainly indicates that the claim is one which admits of no rivalship. It is one which completely silences and sweeps away all competing claims, however venerable, however attractive these may seem to be. No divided heart! No divided obedience! No divided love! No divided confidence! There cannot be two Masters—two Saviors, two Christs, two Gods. If the creature is God, let us give it our trust; but if it is not, then woe to the man who leans on it. If the church is God, then let us give it our trust, that it may save and bless us; but if it is not God, then woe, woe to the man whose trust is here. If the world is God, then let us trust it as such, and trust it for our all; but if it is not, then woe, woe to the poor soul that gives to it that confidence which belongs to the living God alone. In these days, when men are everywhere making or finding for themselves objects of trust, some in one thing and some in another, let us hold fast the words of Christ, "Have faith in God." In these days, when men are forsaking the fountain of living water, and hewing out cisterns, broken cisterns which can hold

no water, let us take our stand beside the one living, infinite, everlasting well. There is nothing else that can quench our thirst for a single hour, or keep us from thirsting again. "Have faith in God." This is meant to apply to everything; for as there is nothing too small or common for God to guide, or keep, or bless us in, so there is nothing too small for us to trust Him in. In things religious, things common, things domestic, things public, things national, things pertaining to the world—let us have faith in God. The less of faith that there seems to be in the world, the more let there be in us. Nations do not trust Him; let us trust Him (as it were) for them, and go carrying their case to Him on our faith, since they refuse to carry it on their own! Statesmen and politicians do not trust Him; let us trust Him for them, and take their cares, their burdens, their perplexities to Him, since they will not do it themselves. It was the friends of the sick man that had faith, and that brought him to the Lord. Their faith prevailed, and he was healed. The world has no faith in God; few, very few, either rich or poor, have faith in God for anything; let us make this a reason for having stronger faith, that we may carry the world's needs, and the world's sins, and the world's sore maladies to God. He will not overlook any case that is brought to Him by the hand of faith, whose faith soever it may be. The world's great sin is not trusting God. Cursed is the man that trusts in man. The world's great need is faith in God. Let us take up the world's case while we take up our own. But let us ask the reasons for our compliance with this. Why are we thus urged to have faith in God—What should lead us to this? (1) There is Christ's command itself. This of itself would suffice. As the Father's commandment is that we should believe on the Son, so the Son's commandment is that we should believe on the Father. Christ here lays his solemn command on each one of you and says, "Have faith in God." He makes this explicit demand upon you on behalf of the Father. He knew what it is to have faith in God. It was one great part of his low estate on earth that He should live by faith upon the Father. This He had done in circumstances much more untoward, much more fitted to produce unbelief, much less calculated to cherish faith, than those in which you can possibly be placed. Having done this Himself, He turns around to you and lays His injunction on you, that you should do the same. More especially now, when He is gone up on high, should this command weigh with us. For who is there on earth to comply with it now, if His followers do not. He trusted in God when He was here, and He expects that now, when He is away, we should do what He did, and show to an unbelieving, untrusting world, what it is to have faith in God. Christ's command then, enforced by His example, urges on us this duty. So that in declining it, or at least not complying with it, we are refusing to obey one of the most explicit injunctions ever laid on man. Often we hear it said that it would be presumption to trust God thus implicitly, and that we have no warrant to do so. No warrant! You have much more than a warrant, you have a command which cannot be mistaken. Presumption! How can it be presumption to obey a command? Is it presumption in you to keep the Sabbath, or to refrain from taking God's name in vain? It is presumption not to trust, not to have faith in God—it is the worst of all presumptions, the presumption of refusing to obey a divine command—a presumption which nothing in or about you can possibly justify or extenuate. (2.) God's own character demands this faith. It is not enough to say that God's character warrants and encourages us in this faith; we must say that it demands it. For less than this is a refusal to recognize God's character as He has made it known to us; it is in having faith in Him that we make the true and proper recognition of God as the God of all grace. To withhold this faith or confidence, is to say that God is not such a being as the Bible represents Him to be; not such a being as warrants our trust, or affords us reason for having faith in Him. Now, we know that God has revealed to us his name and character. That revelation exhibits Him

as altogether trustworthy; altogether such an one as invites the sinner's confidence. Nowhere in scripture is there any light cast upon God's character which has not this tendency. Nowhere has He done or spoken anything which would repel our advances to Him, or would inspire suspicion or distrust. All his words bear one uniform testimony to his character as the gracious Jehovah—forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin—thrusting none away, but sincerely inviting all; reproving men for standing aloof, but upbraiding none for drawing near; discouraging none, but most kindly encouraging all; sending out messages of welcome the most generous, and loving, and honest, that ever proceeded from the most loving and large-hearted of the children of men. Christ Jesus was Himself the exhibition and embodiment of this gracious character. He could say, "He that has seen me, has seen the Father." He who saw the grace of the Son, saw the grace of the Father. He who heard the Son say, 'Come', heard the Father say, 'Come'. He that saw the Son dealing with sinners, saw the Father dealing with the sinners. And thus revealing the Father and the Father's grace; pointing to Himself as the expression of the Father's mind and heart; making known in every way both by word and deed the Father's mind of love, He could say, with urgency and with authority, "Have faith in God." (3.) God's gifts claim and warrant faith. That we are still on earth, not in hell, is of itself such a pledge of grace as to bid us, even the ungodliest, have faith in God. The suspension of the law's righteous sentence against us, even for an hour, is a manifestation of mercy on the part of God, which, even in the absence of all positive gifts, is enough to show us how thoroughly we may trust this God. When, however, He adds to this the gifts which are thrown all around us, like the manna round the tents of Israel, He gives us something more direct and positive to rest upon. That this earth should be so green and these heavens so blue; that these flowers should be so lovely and these streams so clear; that this body should be kept in health in spite of disease and death around; that there should be so much of comfort here, and so many intervals of ease and joy, even in such a world of sorrow; and that all this should be vouchsafed to the unthankful and the unworthy, to those whose rightful portion was the ever-burning lake, surely all this is an amount of free gift which invites our fullest confidence. These gifts can have no meaning at all, if they do not mean that God's desire is that we should thoroughly trust Him. He who gives so much to sinners unasked and undeserved, is surely one who wishes us to trust Him, and who is well entitled to our confidence. But above all these other gifts, there is one which says to us, in a way that cannot be mistaken, have faith in God. It is the gift of his beloved Son. That gift has but one meaning. It is not capable of being interpreted save in one way, and that way is one which leaves us in no doubt either as to God's desire for our confidence, or as to our duty in this matter. If after hearing of this gift we still continue doubtful or distrustful, it is plain that we either altogether question the fact of God's having given his Son, or we willfully put a false construction upon that deed, making ourselves believe that God did not really mean the love which that gift so gloriously reveals. (4.) The way in which we specially honor Him is by having faith in Him. As the special revelation which He is making of Himself is that of grace, so it is by our recognition of this that we honor Him; and it is by our non-recognition of this that we dishonor Him. Faith in Him is just the recognition of his character as the Lord God merciful and gracious—and lack of faith is our refusal to recognize Him in this character. It is then by faith that we honor Him, and it is by unbelief that we dishonor Him. He has sent forth his gospel for the very purpose of calling forth your faith, and so obtaining from you this honor. Shall we then withhold it under any pretext whatever! Surely nothing can justify our refusal of this honor? It is vain to speak of its being presumption in such as you to trust God assuredly. You might as well

say it is presumption in you to love Him, or to honor Him, or to keep his commandments. The greatest and most daring of all presumptions in the world is that of refusing Him the special honor which He so specially claims—the honor of being trusted by the sinner. And when you think that in this world there are almost none to give Him this honor, when you think that the millions of earth are with one accord denying it to Him, will you not feel yourself under irresistible obligations to testify against such unbelief and such dishonor, by giving Him your unreserved faith, and so bringing to Him the honor which He so specially and so earnestly desires at your hands? (5.) Unbelief profits nothing. There are some sins that profit the sinner for a season, so that by reason of this profit or pleasure he persists in indulging them. Covetousness profits the lover of gold for a season, by giving him earth's riches. Gaiety profits the lover of pleasure for a season, by making him happy while the vanity lasts. But what does unbelief do for us? It does not comfort us or make us happy. It does not secure for us any blessing, either earthly or heavenly. It does not bring forgiveness or give us peace with God. It does nothing for us, absolutely nothing. It has it not in its power to do anything but make us miserable. The more you indulge in it, or allow it to have the mastery over you, the more evil it does you, the more wretched it makes you. It has nothing in itself to recommend it; and it has nothing in what it does to overcome its nature and intrinsic hatefulness, or to make it seem desirable, or excellent, or profitable in your eyes. It is evil, only evil; it is unprofitable, wholly unprofitable; its fruits are only darkness and sorrow. It weakens, but does not strengthen the soul. It wounds, but does not bind up. It poisons, but does not heal. It saddens, but does not comfort. It darkens, but brings no light. And as is its sorrow, so is its sin. It is the sin of sins; and all the while we are indulging in it we are not only making ourselves uncomfortable, but we are committing sin of the darkest color and malignity—sin which is the very root and source of all other sins. (6.) Faith has done wonders in time past, and it can do wonders still. The whole Bible is a record of the marvels which have been accomplished by faith; and the eleventh chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews is a summary of these marvels. God has taken great pains to show us what faith can do; and our Lord when on earth taught the same blessed truth without ceasing. We seem to hear his voice saying to us, not once, but constantly, Have faith in God; for what is there that faith cannot achieve. It is faith that brings us into connection with Omnipotence, and it is faith which makes use of that omnipotence continually. By faith we engage Omnipotence on our behalf. By faith we make use of the Omnipotent arm, so that by it we are enabled to do mighty signs and wonders; there being nothing too much for us to expect, even as there is nothing too great for God to do. It may be as difficult as tearing up the mountain by its roots, and casting it into the sea, yet even a thing so difficult, a marvel so great as this, shall be done. Is anything too hard for God? Is there anything which He is unwilling to perform for those who trust in his arm, and cast themselves upon his grace? Is it the revival of God's work in yourself or in your land that you desire? Have faith in God. Tell Him your desires, and tell Him in confidence. Is it the conversion of friends that you are bent on? Have faith in God. Put your case in his hands wholly, but do so believingly, not as one thinking it impossible, or supposing that He can be unwilling, but as one perfectly assured of his love and power. Is it the removal of temporal difficulties and perplexities that you are concerned about? Have faith in God. Trust Him with them all. You cannot remove the briars and thorns with your own hands, but He can; and if faith asks Him, He will. Is it the state of the nation or the world that troubles you? Have faith in God. It is his world, not yours, and he must be far more concerned that things go right than you can be. Only He expects that his believing ones should bring all these things before Him. He is waiting for your

faith, to do great things for your land, and great things for your world. Have faith in God. He will yet do great things for earth. He will smite Antichrist; He will bind Satan; He will restore Israel; He will sweep off the evil, and bring in the good; He will make all things new, and set up the glorious kingdom of His Son. Look beyond the cloud, and the storm, and the night. Trust Him with this earth's future, and trust Him with its present. Live as men who believe that the Lord God omnipotent reigns; that He is the King of kings and Lord of lords. Have faith in God.

Watch and Pray "Take heed, watch and pray: for you know not when the time is."—Mark 13:33. There is a threefold exhortation here in reference to the coming of the Son of Man; (1.) take heed; (2.) watch; (3.) pray. I. Take heed. Or "look;"—look about you;—have your eyes on the alert; mark every object—people and things; let nothing escape your notice. A Christian is not to close his eyes and see nothing here. He is left here that he may both see and hear. And out of every sight and sound he is to extract something that will profit, quicken, stimulate, sanctify. What he sees each hour as he goes out and in; what he hears in conversation, or reads in books and newspapers; all are to furnish materials for his growth. But perhaps the special reference in the expression "take heed," is to the previous discourse concerning the signs of his coming. Keep your eyes open to these. Understand what is passing day by day; interpret events; connect them with the coming of the Son of Man. You see false Christ's; you hear a Babel of opinions; you mark the new forms of immorality and infidelity; you are startled with the bold assaults made on Scripture, and on Christ, on his blood, and cross, and righteousness—connect all these with the coming of the Lord; interpret them as signs of the last days; do not treat them as common things; do not close your eyes upon them; do not be indifferent to them; do not admire them as tokens of intellectual development and human progress. Understand them all according to God's purpose and mind. Examine them in the light of apostolic teachings and warnings. Do not be deceived concerning them. Beware of the strong delusion. "In under-standing be men." II. Watch. Keep awake. Do not be like the virgins who all slumbered and slept. Let us not sleep as do others, but let us watch and be sober. How often was that word "watch" upon the Lord's lips! His apostles took it up in their epistles; and in the Apocalypse the Lord resumes it—"Blessed is he that watches." There is a tendency to slumber. As the disciples, both on the transfiguration hill and in Gethsemane, fell asleep, so do we in the most solemn circumstances and times. The spirit may be willing, but the flesh is weak. The atmosphere of earth seems loaded with slumberous vapors. This present evil world exercises a soporific influence; Satan, its god, the prince of the power of the air, does all he can to lull us asleep. It is a struggle to keep awake. Hence the necessity for the solemn and startling words "awake," "arise," "watch." Be ever on your guard, as sentinels at their post; as watchmen on the towers of some beleaguered fort; as seamen navigating some difficult stream with windings, and sand banks, and rapids; or as servants sitting up at night to wait for their master's return. "What I say unto you, I say unto all, watch." "Be vigilant, for your adversary the devil walks about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." In the midst of a heedless world and an unwatchful church, how needful the perpetual warning, "Watch." And all the more as we see the day approaching. The more that we see a world "sleeping;" or wasting its hours in vanity, and pleasure, and lust, and gaiety, the more let us feel the necessity for resisting the wide-spread influence and keeping awake. "Let us not sleep as others do." III. Pray. "Watch and pray that you enter not into temptation." "He spoke a parable that men ought always to pray and not to faint." "The end of all things is at hand, be sober therefore, and watch unto prayer." Prayer is the attitude of a helpless, needy man; whose only refuge is in God. No help within; no help from

man; only help in Jehovah's omnipotence—that is the meaning of prayer. Prayer is always needed; most in days of evil and trouble. Do we feel our need of prayer? Do we know what it is to pray? Do we delight in prayer? Do we pray in faith? John Welch's knees were hard with his constant prayer—are ours in danger of becoming so? "Pray much," said Alexander Peden; "it's praying folk that will get through the storm." (1.) Pray for our own needy selves. Nothing but prayer will keep us steadfast, or enable us to grow, or make us more than conquerors. (2.) Pray for the needy church of God. God has a church, and will have a church everywhere on earth; but in some ages that church is low and barren; more earthly than heavenly; her light dim; her step feeble; her strength small. It is so now. Pray, then, for a needy church, that in all these respects God would visit her; raising her up; reviving her; re-kindling her light; re-invigorating her strength, re-adorning her with all gifts and graces; re-clothing her in apostolic clothing, and sending her forth to do his work with the old power and success of primitive days. (3.) Pray for a needy world. It is blind, and knows it not; poor, and thinks itself rich; foolish, and thinks itself wise. It is doubly needy. It is not aware of the extent of its ruin, and alienation, and depravity; not alive to its danger and hopeless prospects; not anticipating its doom. There is a hardening, and searing, and blinding process going on in connection with "modern progress." The men of earth now are like the Antediluvians in the days of Noah; like Sodom, on its last day before the judgment came; like Pompeii, before the volcano poured its torrents of fire upon it; like Babylon, in the night when Cyrus seized it; like Babylon the great, in the day of its pride. Oh, pray for a needy world! Not merely for its civilization, or its reformation, or its intellectual and moral elevation; but for something deeper and more decided than these; something without which morality, and literature, and intellect will profit nothing; something without which its science, its eloquence, its wisdom, its music, its proficiency in the fine arts, will not avail. Our Lord's reason for all this is solemn—"You know not when the time is." The "time" is that referred to in the previous verse; the unknown and untold hour of his arrival. It is this great event that forms the urgent reason for taking heed, for watching, for prayer. He is coming! We know not when. He is coming! It may be soon. This is no time for carelessness, or sleep, or prayerlessness. Church of the living God! up from your bed of sloth; to your knees; watch and pray. Man of God, enter into your closet—plead with all your might. O heedless sinner! will you not awake? Arise, call upon your God. Betake yourself to the great refuge.

The Master Comes "The coming of the Son of Man can be compared with that of a man who left home to go on a trip. He gave each of his employees instructions about the work they were to do, and he told the gatekeeper to watch for his return. So keep a sharp lookout! For you do not know when the homeowner will return—at evening, midnight, early dawn, or late daybreak. Don't let him find you sleeping when he arrives without warning. What I say to you I say to everyone: Watch for his return!"— Mark 13:34-37 Work and watch! Watch and work! This is the substance of this parable. The message comes straight from Christ's lips; it comes to us; it seems specially meant for us in these last days. Let us arrange it thus: I. The house. We may, in one sense, call this the earth, in another, the visible church on earth. The scene of the parable is evidently laid here, and concerns men dwelling here. It was here that He himself came to abide: "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." His tabernacle was then with men. II. The householder. It is the Christ, the Son of the living God. This world is his by creation and by inheritance. He is proprietor of the estate; possessor of the house. He was in the world, and the world was made by Him. He came unto his own. "Christ as a Son over his own house," says Paul. III. The journey. He has gone to another land, like the nobleman who went to the far country to receive the kingdom. Here the

object of the journey is not stated, for the parable is complete without it. He wishes to show the state of the house in his absence; and his regulations for the household when left to themselves. For the condition, order, behavior, &c., of servants in the presence of the master, is one thing, and these in his absence, quite another. There is room for eye-service in the one case, but not in the other. The time of absence is one of testing. Faith, love, obedience, fidelity are tested. The present dispensation is the testing-time for men—specially for the church. IV. The servants. All who are occupied with the management of Christ's affairs are his servants. They are expected to do the Master's will, and to work the Master's work. In one sense all men are his servants. He created them to work his work; and hence He speaks to them as such. He speaks to all kings and rulers throughout the earth as those from whom service is expected. But specially are the members of his church engaged for service. Frequently does He give them this honorable name. He has called them to a kingdom, yet also to service. Kings, priests, friends, brethren, and servants, are the names he gives them. Serve the Lord, is his message to each member of his church. For each Christian is a servant of this household; and each one who calls himself a Christian says, "Christ is my Master, and his work will I do, for I am his servant." V. The charge. Our translation, "authority," conveys less than the Greek implies. The master summons the servants, tells them of his intended absence, and gives them charge of the house—devolves its responsibilities upon them, so that they shall feel the master's absence even more influential than his presence. They were to act for him, to represent him, to conduct the affairs of the house in his name. How great the responsibility of the master's absence! Even more solemn, more urgent than his presence. The servant is put upon his honor, his right feeling, his conscientiousness. Instead of being rendered more careless by the absence, he ought to be doubly diligent and conscientious. VI. The individual work. To each one his separate work. As each member of the body has its own office, so has each servant of the household his separate work. The eye cannot act for the ear, nor the foot for the hand; so can no servant do the work of another. There is work enough for all, and each has his own. It is for our own that we are responsible, and for no more. This should check ambition, and envy, and disappointment. Each servant has his own work, which no one can do for him. Let him do it well. VII. The command to the porter. As he leaves the house he gives special command to the gatekeeper, to watch. The servants are inside, the porter at the door. His special duty is to watch. 1. Watch against thieves and robbers. This is one of the main purposes for which he is there. He frightens away the enemy, and he warns the inmates against his approach. 2. Watch for the master. Be ready to receive him; to open the gate to him; to give notice to the inmates; at whatever hour he may come. It is taken for granted that it will be some night hour; like the bridegroom at midnight. Ministers of Christ are specially the porters. To them the command is, Watch. To all it is given; but specially to them. They watch for others as well as for themselves. In the master's absence, enemies, thieves, robbers will come—watch. "Be sober, be vigilant, for your adversary the devil walks about." Watch, the master may come at any time! Be ready, on your own accounts; be ready, for the sake of others. Sleepy servants are evil; but sleepy watchmen are worse. Behold he comes! Behold I come as a thief!

The Coming of the Son of Man "And Jesus said I am: and you shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven."—Mark 14:62. This is at once a confession, a prophecy, and a warning. It is Christ's confession, Christ's prophecy, Christ's warning. I. Christ's confession. Are you the Christ? asks the High Priest. "I am," He answers. It is a confession of his Messiahship and Sonship; a "good confession" (1 Timothy 6:13); it is a bold

confession ; it is a public confession; it is a confession before Israel, before Israel's High Priest. It is the summing up of all his mighty deeds and words, and the true interpretation put upon them. "I am He." Before Israel rejects Him, they are first to hear his open and direct avowal of Messiahship. He has not yet borne witness before the Gentiles. That is to come. It is now before "his own"; and they are the foremost to condemn Him. They are waiting for Him; yet when He comes they will have none of Him. Is this confession responded to by you? Do you say, Amen, you are the Christ, the Son of the Blessed? If so, blessed are you, for flesh and blood has not revealed it; and he that believes that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God. But if not—how great your guilt, how terrible your doom! II. Christ's prophecy. It is a prediction of his second coming. It must have seemed strange to the High Priest to hear Him in the hour of weakness and condemnation proclaim his coming and his kingdom. Yet what more suitable? He had just before announced that event to his disciples; now He does so in the midst of his enemies. Behold, I come! I come to judge, I come to reign. Let us mark the predicted circumstances of this advent. They are all of them in keeping with his name, Son of God, and with his character and office, Messiah. (1.) It will be a royal coming: He comes as King; King of kings, and Lord of lords. Throne, and crown, and scepter shall then be his. (2.) It will be a judge's coming. He comes to judge—to sit upon the solemn seat of judgment—acquitting and condemning; executing judgment on his enemies. (3.) It will be a conqueror's coming. He comes from heaven with his mighty angels. He comes for victory and triumph. He comes from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah. (4.) It will be an avenger's coming. That shall be the day of vengeance; when He rises in his wrath to break his enemies in pieces like a potter's vessel. (5.) It will be a public coming. Every eye shall see Him. As the lightning shall it be. All kindreds of the earth shall mourn. In the clouds of heaven. (6.) It shall be a glorious coming. In great power and glory shall it be. The angels with Him. His saints with Him. Invested in glory. Glorious in his person, his clothing, his retinue. (7.) It shall be an unexpected coming. When men are not looking for Him—not wishing Him. Sudden as the thief. Without preparation, it shall burst upon the world. "Behold, I come quickly." Yes, the Son of God shall come! Not to be judged, but to judge! Not to hang upon a cross, but to sit upon a throne! Not to be smitten, but to smite! Are we looking for that day? III. The warning. Christ evidently speaks these prophetic words as a warning to the High Priest and his fellows; as a warning to his enemies, whether Jew or Gentile. How terrible shall that day be to the unprepared! Like the flood of waters, like the fire and brimstone from heaven. It shall be the day of darkness, and death, and doom! Be warned! The time is short, and the coming of the Lord draws near. Be warned, for the signs of that coming are multiplying. Oh, make sure; make sure of everything connected with eternity and the kingdom. Have you secured salvation? Have you taken refuge in Christ? Or are you hesitating and halting? Do you not know what your hope is, or whether you have any hope at all? If the Lord come before you are ready, where will you be?

02.2.03. Luke

BIBLE THOUGHTS & THEMES Volume 2, the Gospels by Horatius Bonar (1808—1889) The gospel of LUKE

The Gracious One and His Gracious Word. Luke 4:16-30 He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. And he stood up to read. The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him, and he began by saying to them, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing." All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his lips. "Isn't this Joseph's son?" they asked. Jesus said to them, "Surely you will quote this proverb to me: 'Physician, heal yourself! Do here in your hometown what we have heard that you did in Capernaum.'" "I tell you the truth," he continued, "no prophet is accepted in his hometown. I assure you that there were many widows in Israel in Elijah's time, when the sky was shut for three and a half years and there was a severe famine throughout the land. Yet Elijah was not sent to any of them, but to a widow in Zarephath in the region of Sidon. And there were many in Israel with leprosy in the time of Elisha the prophet, yet not one of them was cleansed--only Naaman the Syrian." All the people in the synagogue were furious when they heard this. They got up, drove him out of the town, and took him to the brow of the hill on which the town was built, in order to throw him down the cliff. But he walked right through the crowd and went on his way. Looking at this scene generally, we notice three outstanding points (1.) The grace of Christ; (2.) The sovereignty of God; (3.) The pride of man. But in connection with these there are several others which fall to be noticed. The place is Nazareth. The scene is a Jewish synagogue. The actors are (1) the Son of God and (2) the congregation of Jewish worshipers. Christ is not a stranger here, they know Him well, for He has been brought up among those hills of Galilee. Here He began his ministry; and it might have been expected that his first sermon in a place where He was so well known would have been welcomed. The scene consists of two parts—the sermon, and the remarks of the hearers—and then the strange events which followed up the sermon. The sermon is just like the only begotten of the Father—full of grace and truth. The grace of Father, Son, and Spirit is here. It is the gospel of the grace of God that comes from the speaker's lips. The hearers wonder at the gracious words. The first impression is good. But the wonder dies away; the admiration passes into cavil: "Is not this Joseph's son?" Can we listen to the carpenter, the son of the carpenter? This is the sermon-scene. It brings out the narrowness of the human heart, and shows the folly of those who say that were the genuine truth but presented to man, he would receive it. Here was the best discourse ever preached—no error either in word or doctrine—full of grace—the very gospel—and that from perfect lips—yet man only wonders, and cavils, and rejects. What proof of our need of the Holy Spirit in order that we may believe. That Spirit could

have taken out the stony heart from these Nazarenes, and made them receive instead of rejecting Christ's sermon; yet he did not put forth his power, even though the Son of God was the preacher. And why? Even so Father, for so it seemed good in your sight. But let us look at the after-sermon-scene, which brings out these points more fully. I. Man's thoughts as to Christ's work. Man does not indeed at first speak. It is Christ who reads their thoughts and interprets their question, "Is not this Joseph's son?" The unbelief that lay at the root of it He brings out. They were seeking a sign. They wanted miracles. Do your Capernaum wonders here! Heal your own fellow-townsmen! Thus their unbelief scoffed. But more. They wanted to direct or manage Christ's work; to tell Him where and how to work! They would have Him take their advice. If He works at Capernaum, and not at Nazareth, He is acting unfairly; showing partiality; He is respecting people and places! Vain, proud, selfish man! He would be God! He would control and manage Christ! II. Christ's answer. (1.) You would not receive me though I worked miracles here. My whole life among you has been one long miracle of holiness and love, yet you despise it, and ask for more! You would not honor a prophet who was one of yourselves. You want some unknown worker of miracles from afar! Such is man's heart as interpreted by the Son of God. (2.) God is sovereign. He selects people and places according to his own good pleasure. He selected Sarepta, and He chose Naaman, passing the cities of Israel and the thousands of other lepers. For He does what He pleases. He cures some, and passes by others; He does miracles at one city, and not another; He heals one leper, but not another. Is He, therefore, a respecter of people? This is the language of infidelity and blasphemy; of men who say God has no right to rule according to his will. He does not indeed respect a rich man because he is rich, nor a king because he is a king; but He does choose one and pass by another. He chose Israel, not Egypt; Jerusalem, not Babylon; is He therefore an unjust respecter of people? He chose David as his king; He chose a Sidonian widow; He chose the Syrian captain; is He a respecter of people? Is He not entitled to do as He sees best? Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? III. Man's anger. They were filled with wrath, and rose up to slay Him! Their anger was kindled by this solemn assertion of God's sovereignty. They thought they had a right to blessing. The Lord denied this; and showed them that sovereign pleasure of the infinite Jehovah on which all creation hangs. He gives or takes; kills or makes alive; wounds or heals; as it pleases Him. It is He who makes one man, or one nation, or one city to differ from another. Britain has the Bible, China has not. So God has willed. Spain is in the darkness of Popery, Scotland in the light of Protestantism. Even so Father, for so it seemed good in your sight. He does according to his will. Behold He breaks down, and it cannot be built again. He opens, and no man shuts; shuts, and no man opens. The deniers of God's sovereignty cannot account for any of the differences that exist on earth. They must maintain either universal perdition or universal salvation. Few things make man so angry as the assertion of God's sovereignty. It was so in the case of Christ. Why? Because it prostrates man, and makes him feel wholly in God's hands. Health in Jesus "And the people all tried to touch him, because power was coming from him and healing them all." Luke 6:19 Jesus is here the center of a great crowd from all parts of Palestine. They have heard of him, and they flock to him. His words and deeds attract them. He has what they want; so they gather round him. The scene teaches us such lessons as the following: I. There is health in Jesus. He came from heaven with all the health of heaven in him; health, like sunshine, flowing out irrepressibly; health of every kind; health without measure; health inexhaustible. The balm of the mountains of Gilead might wither down and die out; this heavenly balm could not; it was like the leaves of the tree of life, never falling, ever growing and evergreen.

The physicians of Gilead died, until none was left; this physician dies not. He is the everlasting Christ, the Son of God. All health, and skill, and kindness are to be found in him; for not only is He perfect man, but very God; no, and the fullness of the healing Spirit without measure dwells in him. II. There is sickness in us. We are sick, near unto death; sick in body, sick in soul; the whole head sick, the whole heart faint; our wound incurable by man; our hurt grievous. It is sickness pervading our whole system; sickness accompanied with pain and weakness; with sorrow, and sadness, and heaviness of spirit. It prostrates the body and clouds the mind. We may cover it over, but it is still there. We may soothe with anodynes and administer sleeping draughts, but the disease is unremoved. We may deaden or drown the pain in worldliness, or business, or vanity, or lust, but the mortal malady is still working in every part. O deadly disease of sin! what a world have you made here—what an hospital, a lazar-house, a city of the plague! O pains of earth, not temporary or occasional, but constant and abiding; fore-runners of the eternal pain, the eternal sickness, the eternal agony and woe. III. Contact with Jesus heals. The medicine must be taken; the physician's hand must touch us; we must in some way or other come within the circle where the divine virtue is flowing out. It is indeed the Holy Spirit that applies the remedy; but he does so by bringing us within this healing circle, by making us touch Him who is the divine treasure house of health. There was no healing for Israel without looking at the brazen serpent; so there is no healing for us without the look, the touch that brings us into contact with Jesus. It is not a clasping or embracing, but a touching; a touching even the hem of his garment; a touching his shadow, as in the case of Peter. Such is the resistless efficacy, the irrepressible virtue that is lodged in Him. And as we are healed by touching, so our health is continued by our continuing to touch. It is to be a constant touching; a lifetime's contact; no, an eternal contact. Thus is our new health begun and prolonged. Does this seem a hard thing? A hard thing to be always in communication with Jesus; to be always under the shadow of the tree of life; to be always on the brink of the crystal river of the New Jerusalem. If some think it hard, they show that all is yet wrong with them; and that it is sheer necessity and force that is bringing them to entertain the thought of contact with Jesus at all. Should we call it a hard thing to be daily obliged to breathe the fresh air and bask in the glorious sunshine? Is it a hard thing to be obliged to eat that we may be fed, or to sleep that we may be refreshed? Is it a hard thing for the friend to be in company with the friend, or the parent with the child? Is there not among multitudes who call Jesus, Savior, a feeling that they would rather only use Him in times of great necessity, but at other times have the fellowship of others in preference to Him? But the disease which brings us to Him keeps us at his side. There is no health away from Him; neither is there joy. We come for the cure of our pain, but we find this only a small part of what we obtain from Him. We find all in Him; and so we hold Him fast, and will not let Him go. It is our very life, our very joy to remain in contact with Him. IV. This health and this contact are free to us. There is no fence around Him to keep us off; no guard to forbid or warn us away. Anyone, everyone may come at once to be healed. It is the sick, not the whole, which He invites. It is the leper, the palsied, the fevered, the blind, the lame, the deaf, the devil-possessed, which He bids welcome to. On every side we may approach Him. At any time, and in any way, we may come. Whatever be the duration or the deadliness of our disease, we may come. The Physician is divinely skillful; the medicine is free, the cure is certain. Health for sin-sick humanity! Medicine for a diseased world! A Physician for a dying race! Such are the messages which we bring. All of them overflowing with God's great love to sinners; to sinners simply as such. The depths of divine compassion are infinite. So are its heights. God's pitying love takes in the worst sinner that ever

breathed the air of earth. Wide as earth; wide as the bounds of sin; wide as the evil of human hearts wide as heaven; wide as His own infinite heart; such is the pitying love of God.

Much Forgiveness, Much Love Luke 7:36-50. Now one of the Pharisees invited Jesus to have dinner with him, so he went to the Pharisee’s house and reclined at the table. When a woman who had lived a sinful life in that town learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee’s house, she brought an alabaster jar of perfume, and as she stood behind him at his feet weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them and poured perfume on them. When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would know who is touching him and what kind of woman she is--that she is a sinner." Jesus answered him, "Simon, I have something to tell you." "Tell me, teacher," he said. "Two men owed money to a certain moneylender. One owed him five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. Neither of them had the money to pay him back, so he canceled the debts of both. Now which of them will love him more?" Simon replied, "I suppose the one who had the bigger debt canceled." "You have judged correctly," Jesus said. Then he turned toward the woman and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I came into your house. You did not give me any water for my feet, but she wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You did not give me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing my feet. You did not put oil on my head, but she has poured perfume on my feet. Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven--for she loved much. But he who has been forgiven little loves little." Then Jesus said to her, "Your sins are forgiven." The other guests began to say among themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?" Jesus said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace." This is a feast of worldly hospitality on the part of Simon; probably little more. It does not look like the table of a believing, loving man; but of a hospitable Jew, who, puzzled, perhaps curious, about the character and claims of Jesus, is anxious for an opportunity of closer and freer communion. The expression in the thirty-ninth verse, "if he were a prophet," seems to indicate some such state of mind—an oscillation between faith and unbelief. Simon, though inviting Christ, has not been over-kind to his guest. "You gave me no water for my feet." He has shrunk, too, from all expression of intimacy, all acknowledgment either of friendship or of discipleship. "You gave me no kiss." He withholds the token of festal gladness. "You did not put oil on my head." Simon is evidently not at home with the Lord; nor does he wish to be thought at home with Him. Whatever might be his anxious questionings of soul, he is still "one of the Pharisees." He is no disciple. The Lord knew his heart and understood his invitation; yet he went to his house and sat down at his table. For whether it were Pharisee or publican, Simon or Matthew, that invited him, it mattered not. He went wherever he was desired, like the physician in a city of pestilence, putting himself at the disposal of sinners, and turning his footsteps in the direction of their varied needs. Nor did He take offence at the incivility of Simon in not washing his feet, or anointing his head. He mentions these afterwards, to humble his pride; but He is not affronted thereby; for he ever acts and speaks as one who "came not to be ministered unto, but to minister"; ’not to be served by any, but to be the servant of all. The four following things are brought out in this narrative: (1.) The sinner’s approach to Christ. (2.) Christ’s reception of the sinner. (3.) The Pharisee’s interference. (4.) Christ’s rebuke and judgment. I. The sinner’s approach to Christ. It is not enough that she knows that a prophet has arisen, and that the Son of God has come. The report of others will not do. She must see and hear for herself. It will not do for her to stand afar off; she must draw near. (1.) She comes earnestly. She must get at Him. She must encounter difficulties; she must brave scorn and sneers,

and the risk of being thrust out; for she is "a sinner"; and the house of a Pharisee is the last place she would think of going to. But she is in earnest. She will not be hindered. Access to this wondrous man, whom she has heard of as the forgiver of sins, and the friend of sinners, she must have. What are the taunts or jests of Scribe and Pharisee to her? True earnestness breaks through every barrier. (2.) She comes directly. She makes use of no mediator or messenger. She brings her own case in her own hand, and approaches him directly. She comes just as what she is, and as nothing else. She does not come as what she may be, or hopes to be, or is making herself to be. She does not come with excuses on palliations, but with confessions only; and He is her one confessor, and this is her one confessional. She deals directly with Jesus Himself; for the sinner and the Savior must meet each other face to face; both just what they are: the one the sinner, the other the Savior. (3.) She comes trustfully. She may not yet know Him fully; but she knows something of Him, and of his grace; and that something is enough to call up her trust. She "trusts, and is not afraid." Man may look coldly on her; Jesus will not. Man may thrust her out; Jesus will not. She has few else, perhaps none, to trust; but she has Him, and it is enough. What she knows of Him, and of his love, removes all misgivings. She believes; but it is not in her faith, but in Jesus that she trusts. She weeps; but it is not in her tears that she confides. She repents; but it is not on her repentance that she builds. She loves; but it is not on her love that she leans. She trusts in the Son of God. She trusts Him for what He is. She has already learned something of the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, who, though He was rich, for her sake became poor. (4.) She comes thankfully. She comes to show her love—then grateful love. She brings her precious ointment; she brings her tears; she brings her kisses; she brings her reverence; she brings her thanks—thanks not the less true and warm because uttered not in words, but in deeds. Her sin, and his love to the sinning one; her unworthiness and his overflowing grace; her outcast condition as far as man is concerned; her admission without upbraiding into the presence of the Son of God—these are the things that call up gratitude. "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift," are the words which we seem almost to hear from her lips as she kneels behind his couch, kissing and anointing his feet. Thus it is that the sinner draws near with the "true heart" to the Son of God. Her knowledge of Him is very imperfect as yet; she has not yet realized all the glory of his person, nor known his coming death and resurrection; but she knows enough to give her confidence, for she sees his grace towards the sinner, and understands that he came to seek and to save that which was lost. II. Christ’s reception of the sinner. In the scene before us, it is his reception of one who is in unqualified phrase, even according to man’s judgment, a sinner, that is shown us. She is not one of the best of sinners, but one of the worst; without goodness, or merit, or recommendation. She has nothing to prepare or qualify her; nothing to make her less unworthy to stand before the Holy One. Just as she is, she comes! And how is she received? (1.) Immediately. She is not kept waiting for a moment. The Son of God does not hold her in suspense; does not bid her go and come again; does not send a message telling her to wait a little outside and make herself more fit for a reception. He receives her immediately; yet in a way which does not make light of her past sin, or lead her to forget who and what she is. Ah, yes! It was immediate reception which the Lord gave her; and it is immediate reception which he still gives to each coming one among ourselves. He does not stand on ceremony with us, nor repel us, nor, either by word or deed, give one sign of reluctance to receive us. As the Father received his prodigal son—so He receives his returning wanderers with wide arms, seeing us afar off and running, and having compassion, and falling on our neck and kissing us. (2.) Freely. "When they had nothing to pay, he

freely forgave them both." The forgiveness was the free gift of love; a love which the many waters had not quenched, nor the floods drowned; a love which had survived years of sin, and ungodliness, and lust, and vanity; a love which, now meeting its object face to face, can no longer restrain itself; but like Joseph on the neck of Benjamin, gets vent to its long pent-up yearnings, in forgivenesses and blessings, as frank, and free, and generous as they are unearned and undeserved. Man's love of man is according to merit, on expectation of response; God's love of man has no reference to deserving or to return. Man's love of man is contracted, exclusive, and grudging; God's love to man is as boundless as it is free. He forgives without condition; He loves without reserve; He blesses without measure or end. (3.) Without upbraiding. There may be immediate and frank reception; yet afterwards there may be reproof and upbraiding. Not so with the Lord. Man's forgivenesses may be compatible with upbraiding; but the forgivenesses of God are too large, too generous, too free, to admit of this. As He "gives," so he "forgives," "liberally, and upbraids not." He does not bring up the woman's past life to remembrance. He reminds Simon of his unkindnesses; but He has no such remindings for the woman; He has not a word of upbraiding for her. He shows us in her case what He means when He says, "I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." III. The Pharisee's interference. Simon does not feel comfortable in the midst of this scene. He does not like the sinner's free approach, or the Lord's free reception. He finds fault with both. The root of his interference is his idea of how a prophet or godly man ought to act, and of how a sinner ought to act. In other words, it was on religious principles that he would thus object to what was going on, and would step in between the Lord and the sinner. The basis of his religion was man's goodness, not man's sinfulness; and his idea of reconciliation between God and the sinner was that of a compromise on both sides; the two parties meeting each other half way; man improving himself in moral and religious feeling, and so doing his part; God abating somewhat of his solemn righteousness, and modifying the stern integrity of law, so as to give man a chance of reaching Him by a little exertion and strictness of life. The basis of what God calls reconciliation is altogether different. It assumes that God must come the whole way to meet man, and that that meeting must be as truly one of highest righteousness as of deepest love on the part of God. God takes man as he is, simply a sinner, "without strength," and without goodness. He does not ask man to meet him half way between earth and heaven; He comes down all the way to earth in the person of his incarnate Son. He does not resort to half measures, nor is He content with half payment. He comes down to man in absolute and unconditional love; without terms or bargains; himself paying the whole price, and thus leaving nothing for the sinner but to accept the full and free forgiveness which his boundless love has brought. Of these things the Pharisee understood nothing. Wrapped around with his own religiousness, and merit, and goodness, his prayers, and fastings, and tithe-givings, he could not enter into the mind of God, nor comprehend the nature of his love to sinners, his way of forgiving and receiving the guiltiest. Hence it is that, in his thoughts at least, if not in words, he steps in between the sinner and the Savior. He would blame both. (1.) He blames the sinner. He thinks she ought to have been more respectful, more distant. He does not like the idea of a well-known sinner coming into his house without invitation, and kissing the feet of Jesus without asking permission. He sees in this step, an undue and unwarrantable boldness; the taking of a liberty with this reputed prophet, such as she should have been the very last to take. He does not understand how a sense of need draws the sinner irrepressibly into immediate contact with the Lord. They who have not known their sin, nor felt their need, may hesitate, or stand at a respectful

distance; but he who has realized his own sin and need cannot thus keep aloof. He must go at once to the Son of God. Let self-righteousness forbid him, and formalism frown upon him—he cannot stay away from Christ any more than can the prodigal from the arms of his father. Men may say this is too free, too direct, too simple, too easy; and blame him who thus acts; but if ever they come to know their own need, they will feel that nothing else would do but this. (2.) He blames the Lord. He demurs to this manner of treating the sinner. Can he who does this be the Son of God? Can he be even a prophet? He either knows or does not know—that the woman is a sinner. If he does not know, he is no prophet; and if he knows, he is acting most inconsistently with his character and office. He ought to have kept her at a distance; to have refused to allow such liberties, and to have reproved her for being so bold. As the Scribes and Pharisees at another time did, so Simon does here. He murmurs. What! Be so kind to a common sinner! What! Allow a profligate to kiss his feet! This is trifling with sin, and countenancing the sinner. Thus man blames God for his love—at least for its freeness. Were it love bought or deserved, he would say nothing; but it is love to the undeserving, love to the guiltiest, this he cannot tolerate. This frank, and free, and immediate forgiveness is something which his religion abhors. But let man's religion turn away from God's free love to the sinner; still this is God's way. His thoughts are not our thoughts; his ways are not our ways. High as heaven is above the earth, so high are his thoughts of grace and blessing above all our thoughts and ways. IV. Christ's rebuke to the Pharisee. He defends Himself; He defends the woman; He reproves Simon. Assuming Simon's ground, that he was much less a sinner than the woman, He still reasons with him as with one who professed to have received forgiveness to some extent. Both needed forgiveness; and the question was thus one of more or fewer sins; not one of sin and no sin. Look then at the fruits. On the one hand you have the fruits of one who knew that she had sinned much, and had been forgiven much. These were overflowing love, gratitude, and reverence. On the other, you have the fruits of one who thought himself a man of far fewer sins, and therefore needing fewer pardons. They are so scanty that they cannot be named. No washing of the feet, no anointing of the head, no kiss of affection—no manifestation of love at all; bare worldly civility and hospitality—no more. It was as if Christ had said, Look at the fruits of the woman's pardon, and look at yours! How different? What warmth in her, what coldness in you? What love in her, what indifference in you! To you I am nothing; to her I am all. You have given me your table and your house; she has given me her heart and soul. Simon's religion was founded upon the idea of needing little forgiveness; of so making up for past sin by a strict life of ritualism, that when the day of settlement came between him and God, the balance against him might be very slight. He judges himself by this; and he judges the woman by this. He has few arrears to pay off; she has a fearful amount. Should both be treated in the same way? Should Christ show as much favor to the one as to the other? Christ shows him the fruits of this false idea, this self-exalting religion; and bids him judge of himself and of his religion by these. Man may think well of him, and of his prayers, and alms, and sacrifices, by means of which he hoped to pay off his debt; but what could God think? How could God look upon a religion that led to no love, no gratitude, no fond allegiance of the soul? God can do without our sacrifices and services, but he cannot do without our love. The religion that is founded upon the idea of few sins and a small forgiveness—a trifling debt, and man's power to pay it off by a good life—must lead to little love; so by it we are made more debtors to self than to God; no, we are hardly debtors to God at all. The religion founded upon the truth of man's utter evil, and his need for infinite pardons, must lead to much love; for it makes us wholly debtors to God, and to his free, forgiving love. When pardon is to

be bought or deserved, there can be little love, if any; when it is wholly undeserved and unbought, coming straight to the sinner from the free love of God, there must be much love; love in return for love; the pardoned sinner's full-hearted love, responding to the mighty, the stupendous love of God! Oh, if we would learn to love God, let us do full justice to the love of God to us.

How Much More! The Bible is not only a revelation from God, but it is the revelation of God; of his mind, his heart, his whole character. It is given to us for the purpose of leading us to place our trust in Him, drawing us to Him, removing our suspicions, rooting out the evil heart of unbelief. "Those who know your name will put their trust in you"; "how excellent is your loving-kindness, therefore the sons of men shall put their trust in the shadow of your wings." "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him?"—Luke 11:13. Here the earthly parent and the heavenly parent are brought before us, for the purpose of showing us the confidence which we ought to place in the latter. The argument rests on the natural confidence which the child has in its father's bountifulness; and runs thus, "If in spite of all the drawbacks arising from a naturally evil being, a narrow heart, and limited love, an earthly father is trusted; how much more should our heavenly Father be trusted, in whom there are no such drawbacks?" The argument of the whole passage turns on this. Ask, seek, knock! You shall not, cannot fail! If a son ask bread, will his father mock him by giving him a stone? That cannot be. If a fish, will he be so cruel as to give a serpent? Far more impossible! If an egg, will he present him with a scorpion? Much more impossible and incredible. No parent, however unnatural, would do any of these. If impossible with men, how much more so with God? There is here both a comparison and a contrast; a likeness and an unlikeness between the earthly and the heavenly; and it is on this that the argument of our text turns. The comparison is just this: If an earthly father will give his son what he asks, how much more our heavenly Father? For our heavenly Father is truly what his name indicates, "Our Father in heaven." That name is no mere figure when applied to him. The figure is all the other way. It is far more real when used in reference to Him than to any other. In all the others it is a figure, in Him it is real and literal. He has all a Father's heart and feelings; he made that heart, and knows what it is, and what is in it. That human heart is formed after the model of the divine. Our parental feelings tell us what his are; our yearnings show us what his are. He knows, if one may say so, what are a father's responsibilities—to provide for his own. He made us, and will He not support us? will He not bless us? As a father is the source of blessing to his children, so is God. But we have specially to mark the contrast or difference between the earthly and the heavenly parent. For the point of our text turns more especially on this. It is from this that we get the force of the "how much more." I. Earthly parents are feeble—He is almighty. He has all a father's ability, and far more. He is always full—full to the uttermost; He can always afford to give, and is always able to do for us. His is the fullness of omnipotence. How irresistible the argument of our text! II. Earthly parents are ignorant—He is wise. They do not know what, or when, or how to give. His mode of giving is wise; his skill is infinite. He commits no mistakes in giving. His is a wise giving; He knows our needs; He does not give at random. III. Earthly parents are easily provoked—He is patient. A father needs patience in dealing with his children; and love lends him patience. But his patience is not inexhaustible. It wears out. He is at times provoked. Not so with God. His patience is infinite. He can put up with affronts, and bear coldness; always ready to give when asked, whatever the past provocation be. IV. Earthly parents are changeable—He changes not. Even the love of earthly fathers does not exempt them from frailty and caprice. They are fickle; giving and refusing

according to their mood or temper. He changes not. His feelings, his mode of acting and giving remain the same; without variableness or shadow of turning. V. Earthly parents are often perplexed—He is never at a loss. Their resources are limited, and they sometimes know not what to do. He is not harassed or distracted by the number of petitions and petitioners; never bewildered, never at a loss, because of the variety of the needs of his vast family. He can give to each case as much attention as if He had no other to care for. His hand, his heart, his mind are large enough for all. VI. They are but imperfectly happy—He is the blessed One. Our giving depends much on the state of our minds at the moment. When depressed, we have no pleasure in giving; we either refuse, or we give merely to get quit of the applicant. Darkness of mind shrivels us up, makes us selfish, neglectful of others. When full of joy, giving seems our element—our joy overflows in this way; we cannot help giving; we delight in applications; we seek opportunities of giving. So with the blessed God. Being altogether happy, his delight is to give; his perfect blessedness flows out in giving. We can never come wrongly to such an infinitely happy being. He teaches us by his own example, that it is "more blessed to give than to receive." VII. Earthly parents cannot be always giving—He can. His heart and his treasure are inexhaustible. Their past gifts are no pledges for future ones; his are; all his gifts; specially his beloved Son. We count upon the future because of the past. What will He not give! We have but to open the mouth; to stretch out the hand. There is no unwillingness on his part. All is love. Asking is not unnecessary; it is the expression of dependence, the attitude of creaturehood. But he loves to give—freely—to all. Let us come boldly to the throne of grace.

Jesus Watching For Sinners "This man receives sinners." Luke 15:2. Such was the conclusion of the Pharisees respecting Jesus, from what they saw of his daily life. Between Him and them there was mutual repulsion, as if not suited for each other; between Him and the publicans there was mutual attraction, as if exactly suited for each other. It is sinners that this man receives. He does not care for the righteous. He passes them by. Were these Pharisees right or wrong in their conclusion? They were right; and the parables which follow are meant as both an admission and a vindication of our Lord’s proceedings. He accepts their interpretation of his life, as the true one, the only true one; and He proceeds to furnish the key, the divine key to what appeared to so many unaccountable. He gives the solution to the difficulty raised by the Pharisees in his days, and continually resuscitated and re-stated in other ages by the descendants of those Pharisees, self-righteous men. Thus those men, who hated Christ, preached his gospel. We must call this "the gospel according to the Pharisees." They meant it not; yet they spoke the true gospel when they said, "This man receives sinners, and eats with them." The word "receives" is in the original singularly expressive. It means waits, watches, looks out for, lies in wait. It occurs fourteen times in the New Testament; and in all other places it is translated in some such way: as Mark 15:43, "who waited for the kingdom of God"; Luke 2:25, "waiting for the consolation of Israel"; Luke 2:38, "looked for redemption in Jerusalem"; Luke 12:36, "men that wait for their Lord," Acts 23:21, Acts 24:15, Titus 2:13, Jude 1:21. Jesus is looking out for sinners! Paul waited to receive all who came to him (Acts 28:1-31) ; but Jesus goes out in search for them. He lies in wait for sinners; for Mary’s, and Matthews, and Zaccheuses. Let us see (1) what this lying in wait implies; (2) how He lies in wait. I. What it implies. Many things; all of them favorable to the sinners, for He does not lie in wait as the lion for his prey, but as the Shepherd for his stray sheep. It implies then: (1.) Love. Indeed otherwise it has no meaning. The three parables which follow indicate this. It is love, tender, compassionate, forgiving love, that is the mainspring of this waiting for sinners. (2.) Patience. As

the huntsman or the fisher waits patiently hour after hour to seize his object, so does this waiting, watching Savior. Unwearied patience with the ungodly, the wandering, the hard-hearted, the profligate, marked his life on earth; and He is still the same patient one in heaven. "He has long patience." (3.) Earnestness. He is intent on his object; thoroughly in earnest. His patience is not indifference; his love is not mere good-natured benevolence. It is all earnestness with Him. It was so on earth; it is so in heaven. (4.) Desire to bless. His direct and honest object is blessing. He longs to bless. He has no pleasure in the death of the wicked. He longs for their life. "Oh that you," are still his words to the sinner. "How often would I have gathered you," He says with profound sincerity to every lost one. II. How He does it. His life on earth is a specimen of how He does it. His days and nights were spent in seeking the lost. By the sea of Galilee, in the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, on the highways of Judea, in the synagogue, in the temple, in the village, in the city, by Jacob's well, He was seeking the lost. How does He do this now? How or where is He lying in wait for sinners? (1.) In the word. Of that word He is "the spirit," the Alpha and Omega, and out of that word He speaks to us. From Genesis to Revelation we hear his voice. It is the voice of love. "Come unto me" is the burden of the Old Testament as well as of the New. It is not merely that each chapter speaks of Jesus; but in each chapter Jesus speaks to us. In each verse He is lying in wait for us. (2.) In sermons. For sermons are not disquisitions, nor declamations, nor orations—but messages from Christ. In them we hear God and Christ beseeching men to be reconciled; ministers, in speaking Christ's gospel, "beseech men in Christ's stead." Thus each Sabbath He is looking out for sinners; stretching out his hands from the pulpit to them. (3.) In providences. What a meaning there is in that word providence when used not a substitute for God, but as a word to denote his doings! In each providence, great or small, private or public, personal, or family, or social, or national, or universal; in mercies or in judgments; in wars, famines, pestilences, shipwrecks, railway disasters; in the seasons, in the sunshine, in the storm; in all, Christ is lying in wait for sinners; out of them comes his loving voice. Thus Christ lies in wait for sinners: not merely waits in his house to receive them, but watches for them, looks out for them, goes out in quest of them. The expression is beautifully applicable to the three cases in the parables which follow. The Shepherd is looking out and going out for his sheep; the woman with her lighted candle is going through every room, turning over all the lumber, and looking into every nook, for her piece of silver; and the father is watching at the door for his wandering son. Ah, "this man lies in wait for sinners." Yes; in his work of saving, Christ is aggressive and compulsory. He goes out in order to find them. He is ever on the outlook. He does not merely sit above on his throne, willing to receive the applications of those who come. He comes down among us. He goes to and fro in the earth; He walks up and down in it. His daily, hourly work is going in quest of sinners. His doings on earth imply this; his words as well. It is the same in heaven. His doings from Pentecost onwards to this hour imply this. Every soul saved shows this. His words spoken after He left earth intimate this. "Behold, I stand at the door and knock," implies this. Thus we are compassed about with love. For the lost, there is the compassionate love; for the saved, there is the love of delight. We cannot escape from it whatever we are. It follows us, pursues us, cries after us, surrounds us! Why the love of an almighty heart should ever be ineffectual is a mystery beyond our power to solve, But for all this the love is the same—sincere and true.

God's Joy Over The Returning Sinner "Likewise, I say unto you, There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."—Luke 15:10. Let us not overlook the words with which this statement is introduced, "I say unto you." He speaks as the faithful witness; testifying of

what he knows; what He has seen and heard in that heaven where He came. It is of a sinner that he speaks—a sinner such as those who were now gathered round the Lord—a publican, a profligate, a harlot; not some worthier sinner, but one of the worst. He wishes the Pharisees to understand the feelings of God above—to these sinners below; to see that God's thoughts were not their thoughts. Whatever earth might do, heaven took an interest in them. The "religious" ones of earth might turn away; the holy ones of heaven did not. It is of a sinner's repentance that He speaks; of that mighty change whereby old things pass away, and all things are made new. It was to produce this change—this change of the whole inner man—this total renovation of being, that the Son of God came. He came to "call sinners to repentance." It is of one sinner that He speaks; not of multitudes; so that no one may think that it is the number that is the occasion of his statement. It is one sinner; one of Poor publicans that He thus so graciously holds up to view; it is one poor fragment of lost humanity, despised by all else—which He here declares to be the object of his own and of the divine compassion. So was it always in his life here; one woman of Sychar; one woman of Tyre; one Zaccheus—thus He declares his interest in individual souls. He cares for each. But it is specially of the joy which the Lord speaks of that I ask you to think. It is not simply pity or love—but joy. (1.) It is joy in heaven. There is always joy there, but sometimes it swells up and overflows. On the occasion of the event referred to, there is peculiar joy—an outburst of irrepressible gladness in that glad and glorious heaven which the presence of God fills. (2.) It is the joy of God. It is He himself who is thus represented as rejoicing. The joy is in heaven; and it is the joy of God himself; the joy of the Shepherd on finding the lost sheep; the joy of the woman on finding her lost silver; the joy of the father on finding his lost son. (3.) It is joy in the presence of the angels of God. As the shepherd and the woman call together their friends and neighbors, so God calls his heavenly hosts. In their presence He utters his joy; and He calls on them to rejoice with Him. He is full of this joy of love, this joy at recovering the lost, that He must have them to share it with Him. There is something in this representation of the divine joy that brings it very close to us, as it makes it so like our own in its way of manifestation. How like ourselves is this way of dealing with his joy and getting vent to it, and making others partakers of it. Is it not a strange truth this—that the infinite Jehovah should need, and should ask for, the creature's sympathy in his joys? How like that infinite heart must be to ours! How near to us does this bring the Eternal One! From all this we learn much; chiefly such truths as the following: (1.) The knowledge in heaven of what is going on here on earth. How far this extends we cannot say. It refers here only to what concerns the great redemption-scheme; and even as to that, the knowledge is only that which is directly communicated by God, when He has something special to announce. But heaven knows this at least: that there is such a place as earth; that it is full of God's lost property; that God loves it; that it is not hell; that salvation is there, and that God is every day getting hold of some lost one there. News is constantly going up to the heaven of heavens; and God is making known so much of it as suits his purposes of sovereign wisdom and grace. Probably, they do not know all; but certainly they know what is fitted to augment their gladness, and call forth their songs. (2.) The delight which God has in saving. This is manifest from the pains He takes about this; the perseverance and patience; the patient endurance of rejection and hatred; and all this in the desire to rescue the captive, and to win him back, heart and soul, to himself. He seeks and saves "with his whole heart and soul" (Jeremiah 32:41). He loves to bless; and when He has blessed, He rejoices over the sinner to whom the blessing has come. As the father receives the prodigal, so does the great Father receive his wanderers; calling all heaven to join in his song over them, "This

my son was dead and is alive again—he was lost and is found!" (3.) The appeal which He is thus snaking to the sinner. No appeal could be more forcible than that which is thus made by the great love of God—the overflowing joy He has in saving. Will you continue in sin, and rob both God and the angels—yes, and yourself too—of such a joy? All heaven would rejoice over your salvation, and will you not be saved? Will you persist in wandering, in worldliness, in ungodliness? Are you determined to be lost when God is so bent on saving you? (4.) The encouragement thus held out to the returning sinner. Look at all the three parables! Is there one word of discouragement? Does not each of them say, Come! Is God not bidding you welcome, stretching out his arms? What joy it would give God to pardon and to bless you! What a song would be sung in heaven over your repentance and return! Shrink not back; turn not away; do not be afraid, the gate is open, and your God stands beckoning you in. What a comment is this verse on Christ's tears over Jerusalem! His sorrow was sincere and true; so is his joy in the day of the sinner's return. His tears were real and genuine; so are his songs. All is real, both the sorrow and the joy. What a force does this passage throw into such words as these: You will not come to me; him who comes to me I will never cast out; if any man thirsts, let him come unto me and drink; we beg you in Christ's stead, be reconciled to God. What a great thing must salvation be! And what an important and precious object must a sinner be! So much love, so much sorrow, so much seeking, so much joy in connection with him!

The Father's Love "And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him." Luke 15:20. It was hunger, not love—which drew the prodigal back to his father. There was no noble nor unselfish motive in his return. He stayed away as long as he could; he only came back when he could not help himself. It was not the thought of his father—but of the plenty of his house, as contrasted with his own want—which led him out of the far country to seek his father's face. So with the sinner. It is need, misery, danger—not love nor any noble motive which leads him to seek the face of God. How foolish the thought of those who would shrink back from God because they have not come to Him with a pure and unselfish motive! But it is with the Father that we have now specially to do. (1.) Paternal watchfulness and far-sightedness; (2.) paternal haste; (3.) paternal compassion; (4.) paternal tenderness; (5.) paternal reconciliation. I. Paternal watchfulness and far-sightedness. "When yet a great way off, his father saw him." He had doubtless been watching; "this man looks out for sinners." How quick-sighted is the paternal eye, made keen and clear by the yearnings of the paternal heart. The figure seen thus far off was no doubt very unlike his boy; it was one of rags, and filth, and disfigurement. Yet it is recognized. There is my son at last! Poor wanderer, God's eye is on you in yon far land of famine. He has not forgotten; He has his reasons for not coming out and taking you back by force, like the shepherd the sheep; for He needs your heart, and that cannot be won by force or gold; yet He is on the outlook for you, however far off you be. II. Paternal haste. "He ran." The son was coming to him, yet he ran to meet him, eager to shorten the distance. He did not keep state or ceremony. He did not think of what might comport with dignity or with offended authority; he did not wait nor move slowly towards him; he ran, as if every inch of distance or moment of separation were intolerable. What eagerness to meet did that haste imply! What heedlessness of all ceremony! No fear of seeming too eager, no thought of thus encouraging sin, or making the prodigal think lightly of his wickedness. Haste was the best for the prodigal, as well as most congenial to his own feelings. What a rebuke does that word "ran" furnish to those who think that a sinner can come to Christ too soon; can be reconciled too quickly. God runs, sinner, to you—will you not run to God? He makes haste, oh make you haste. III. Paternal

compassion. "He had compassion." It would seem as if the pity were stirred by what he saw. The nearer he came the more he had compassion. The rags and filth—instead of repelling him, only awoke still more his pity. Instead of turning away from the loathsomeness, his paternal heart was moved by the sight of it. As we read that Jesus, when He saw the multitudes, was moved with compassion, so was it with the father here. Poor wanderer, you need not then try to cover your rags, or to hide your filth, or to try to make yourself more respectable—in order to attract your father. It is just your desparate condition—which excites his compassion. Your wretchedness, ignorance, defilement, squalor, will be no obstacle. They awake his pity. Go to him then just as you are, and see if his compassions are not infinite. Whoever and whatever you may be, He pities you. The tears of Jesus over Jerusalem are the expressions of that pity—sincere, and true, and deep. IV. Paternal tenderness. "He fell on his neck." So was it when Jacob and Esau met; and when Joseph met Benjamin. Falling on another's neck is the expression of tender love—love that, for the moment, cannot express itself in words, but buries its face (and with it, past griefs and wrongs) out of sight—on the neck of the beloved one. Ah this is tender love! He fell on his neck! It is the tender love of God. Yet all these manifestations of human love, these tokens of family endearment, are poor to express his unutterably earnest yet tender grace. In listening to God's gospel we too often feel as if it were the mere intimation of his consent to our salvation, implying but a cold willingness to save us from hell. How much we mistake. His is true parental fondness, pity, tenderness, yearning; his is the eagerness to bless us, which words cannot express. Yes, God is in earnest in his tender love. V. Paternal reconciliation. "He kissed him." This is the completion of the whole the consummated and manifested reconciliation. There is the kiss of affection—Jacob kissing Joseph's sons; the kiss of sorrow—when the disciples fell on Paul's neck and kissed him; the kiss of reconciliation—when Jacob and Esau kissed, and when righteousness and peace are said to kiss each other. How much is implied in that paternal kiss—love, joy, pardon, pity, reconciliation. Thus God comes up to the sinner with the fullness of reconciliation in his heart. He does not wait to be entreated, or pleaded with, or persuaded. He hastens up to us, and embraces us in the fullness of his heart. Ah, this kiss is the seal of pardon to the prodigal; and it is this kiss that He is longing to imprint now on your polluted lips! He comes up to you with the reconciliation of the cross; for He is reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing unto them their trespasses. God's Free Love "But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet!" Luke 15:22. There is among many a secret dread of the gospel in its freeness. They may not deny that freeness, but they shrink from it as dangerous, if not pernicious. There is among others not so much a dread as a distrust of that freeness. They hesitate, for they are not sure but that freeness may be abused; and they take precautions, as they think, by a long and deep preliminary law-work to place the sinner in circumstances in which he will not abuse the gospel; as if they knew better than God what these circumstances are, and as if any circumstances, any convictions, any law-work could prevent the sinner from abusing the gospel; or as if the gospel itself did not contain within itself, in its own good news, the best safeguards against abuse. They do not deny it; but they do not give it fair play; so modifying, circumscribing, clogging it, guarding it—that it ceases to be good news to the sinner as he is—convinced or unconvinced, penitent or impenitent, sensible or insensible. These words of the parable rebuke all such unworthy ideas of the gospel; as if it could be made more free; as if it could not guard itself; as if its sanctifying power did not lie in that very element of free love which it contains, and which some dread as the destruction of all holiness. The distrust of a free gospel is the reflection of the

old spirit of the Pharisees; the modern arguments against its freeness, are a mere reproduction of the old self-righteous murmurings of the Scribes. And the answer to all this is contained in the parable of the lost son. No doubt some of those who heard Christ's words cried out—How dangerous such statements, how prejudicial to the interests of morality, how fitted to encourage laxity, how certain to end in backsliding! Nevertheless these are the words of the holy One, of Him who is true as well as holy, and who spoke these words for us as well as for the publicans and the Pharisees of old. It was misery, poverty, hunger, straits—which brought the son to the father. No high, pure, holy motive. He comes as he was—with nothing about him but evil. He speaks few words; and these are simply the declaration of what he was. Yet he is received at once. He had no promise, no message, no encouragement. He had never heard of such a case as his before. But be ventures; he makes an experiment. Not so with us. We make no experiment. We undertake no venture. We do not come unbidden. We are invited and besought. We have a thousand promises of reception and proclamations of free love. We have heard of, and seen multitudes go in before us. What a gospel is that which we have to go upon! So free; so full of love; so rich in promises! I. There is here the difference between man's THOUGHTS and God's thoughts. Man despises, God pities; man hates, God loves; man repels, God attracts; man rejects, God receives. God's thoughts are love, and forbearance, and paternal patience, and pity. The Pharisee speaks out man's mind, Jesus speaks out the mind of God. And what a difference! As heaven is above earth, so are God's thoughts above man's. II. The difference between man's ways and God's WAYS, between man's treatment of the sinner and God's. This difference has many aspects, and comes out at many points. But let us take that of our text: "Bring forth the best robe and put it on him." Here is God's way, God's treatment of the sinner. It is the treatment of love. It assumes that the sinner is all in rags and filth—half naked; and that God must deal at once with this wretched condition. It does not assume any previous preparation, or preliminary treatment. God must take him as he is; deal with him as he is; not that the sinner must deal with himself, or fit himself, or wait, or work, or amend; but that God must take up his case just as it stands. (1.) The robe. He came for food, not thinking of his rags; hunger made him forget all else. But the father sees his nakedness, and at once removes it. Clothe him! he says. There is a robe for him. Ask not whether he is worthy of it; he is in rags—let him be clothed at once. (2.) The best robe. There were different robes in the house: for the servants, for strangers, for the eldest son. Would these not do for him? If he must be clothed, any robe will do for such a wretch. So man would have said. Not so with God. There is hardly a robe in the house good enough for him. He must have the best. The best robe for the vilest son. What love is here. What delight in loving and in blessing! We poor prodigals must be gloriously clad! Not sackcloth, nor cast-off clothing, nor a servant's dress; not Adam's nor an angel's righteousness; but something better than all—the robe of Jesus! (3.) Bring it forth. He must have it at once. He is not to go in search of it. It must be brought out to him. On the spot; just where he is and as he is, bring it out, bring it to him. Out of the wardrobe bring it; select the best, the very best, before he moves another step, that he may enter the house even better clothed than when he left. (4.) Put it on him. It is not, "Give it to him, and let him put it on himself"; but, "Put it on him." He has but to stand still and allow himself to be thus clothed and blessed. He does nothing. He does not need to do anything. Love does it all. The Father does it all. Ah, herein is love! Free love! Love to the uttermost. Love without measure. Yes, such is the love of God to the sinner. He is rich in mercy, and abundant in loving-kindness. There is nothing like it in earth or heaven!

Noah Days "Just as it was in the days of Noah, so also will it be in the days of the Son of Man. People were eating, drinking, marrying and being given in marriage up to the day Noah entered the ark. Then the flood came and destroyed them all!" Luke 17:26-27 Our Lord's comparison between the days preceding his own coming and the days of Noah throws us back on the sixth chapter of Genesis, from which we learn. (1.) The state of the world in Noah's days. There was ungodliness, corruption, violence, lust, flesh-pleasing, vanity, pleasure, engrossment with business—so that there was no room for God—either in man's thoughts or man's world. Genesis 6:5 and Genesis 6:2. (2.) Gods inquiry. It is said that He saw and that He looked; as in the case of Sodom (Genesis 18:21), He "makes inquisition." He does not judge hastily or at random, but calmly and deliberately. Hence his condemnation is such a solemn thing, and his vengeance so dreadful. (3.) God's feelings as to all this. It "repented the Lord, and it grieved Him at his heart." Though He is speaking after the manner of man, yet these words are the utterance of profoundest feeling. He is not indifferent as to our treatment of Him; He speaks like a broken-hearted father, disappointed in his fondest hopes. (4.) Gods thoughts in consequence of this. He must withdraw his Spirit. That Spirit must strive no more. God cannot allow Him to be thus grieved and quenched. He must retire. (5.) God's sentence. (Verses 7 and 13), "I will destroy"; "the end of all flesh is come before me." He must now declare his judgment and indicate the course He means to pursue. In this sentence man is to read his guilt, and God's abhorrence of his crimes. (6.) God's long suffering. (Verse 3, and 1 Peter 3:20) He pronounces the sentence on the spot, but He delays its execution, for He has long patience, not willing that any should perish. He gives man one hundred and twenty years to turn and live. How long He bears! How much He loves and pities! How desirous to bless and love; how reluctant to curse and to destroy! (7.) God's sovereign grace. The world would not be saved, but God would have some one whom He might deliver. His free love fixes on one man. Him it selects; him it lays hold of; him it carries through; and for his sake the whole family. Such is grace. "By the grace of God—we are what we are." It is grace that makes the exceptions in a world of evil, and shows itself in some saved ones, however few. Such is a sketch of Noah's days. Let us compare these with the days of the Son of man. Mark the resemblance which our Lord suggests. I. In the characteristics of evil. All that marked Noah's days is to mark the last days; only evil is to be yet more developed and pronounced in all its forms. God allows sin to ripen and unfold itself, that its true character may be seen, and that the human heart may be fully revealed in all its aspects of opposition to God. He has sought to check it; He has given his fiery law; He has raised up prophets; He has inflicted judgments; He has sent his Son. But all in vain. Man will not turn to God. He will not be restrained; and God gives him over to a reprobate mind. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and the flesh is ever showing itself. The seed of the serpent is the same to the last. Satan is the same throughout. Iniquity is to swell, and deepen, and overflow, and toss its waves of darkness, until earth becomes a suburb of hell. 2 Timothy 3:1; 2 Peter 3:10; Jude 1:18. They desire no law, no restraint, no Bible, no Christ, no God, no religion, no heaven, no hell, no eternity! All evil, from Cain's downward, concentrated and expanded in the days of the Son of man! It is to this that we are hastening on! Nothing but self; self-will, self-pleasing, self-indulgence, flesh-pleasing, lust, pleasure-seeking. Let us eat and drink. Our lips are our own; who is Lord over us? Universal apostasy; rejection of God and of his Christ, prophet, priest, and king. All this on an earth marked with frequent judgment. In Noah's days there had been no previous judgment; not so in the last. Everything in the world's long history tells what sin is, what it has done, how God hates it, how He will avenge it, and how He will utterly sweep away

the transgressor. The whole history of man, as well as the whole Bible, gives the lie to the fable that sin is just men's misfortune, and that God will not be very hard on the transgressor; and as for eternal punishments, they are a libel on God's character! Such is modern progress—modern development! II. In the patience of God. (2 Peter 3:1-18) Truly it is long-suffering. Noah's days were nothing compared to the last days—as a revelation of long-suffering. Ages of long-suffering! So many mercies, so many warnings! This patience cannot be measured. It passes knowledge. It is infinite and divine. What a gospel do we preach to the world when we tell of ages of long-suffering! In Noah's days it was one hundred and twenty years; in ours it has been already thousands. Reckoning from the cross, we can point to eighteen centuries of long-suffering. What a message to rebellious man! The message of divine compassion and the good news of infinite grace and love. III. In the warnings given. Noah's message was, "I will destroy"; and "the end of all flesh is come before me"; He made the world ring with these warnings. So our warnings are yet more terrible and quite as definite, "The end of all things is at hand." "Behold the Lord comes." "The Judge stands before the door." Vengeance, sword, fire, the blackness of darkness forever. Read Matthew 24:21, Matthew 24:31; 2 Thessalonians 1:6-9; 2 Peter 3:7-10; Revelation 4:12, Revelation 8:13; Revelation 14:8-11; Revelation 14:15-20. Dreadful warnings! And they shall all come to pass. Careless man of earth, can you hear them unmoved! Is it nothing to you that such infinite wrath is being prepared for the world? Oh flee from the wrath to come! IV. In the handful of witnesses. Only Noah and his family. He is the one preacher of righteousness. He condemns the world! So shall it be in the last days. When the Son of man comes shall He find faith on the earth? Satan shall deceive, if it were possible, the very elect. God shall send strong delusion. Only a few shall be found faithful. Iniquity shall abound, and the love of many wax cold. A few out of millions! A few even among professing Christians and in Christian churches! "Few that are saved"; fewer at the close! Let us hold fast our testimony in an age of unbelief. V. In the deliverance of these witnesses. The deluge comes, but Noah is safe. The flood touches him not. God has provided an ark. So with the saints in the last days. They shall be delivered from the fiery deluge. Some tribulation they may have to pass through, but the last and terrible one they shall escape from. "Watch and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape these things, and to stand before the Son of man." VI. In the suddenness of the judgment. They knew not until the flood came! So shall the coming be. He comes as a thief; as a snare; as the lightning. One taken and the other left. The world might have known, but they would not. They said, "peace and safety" to the last. Then in a moment the trumpet sounds—the fire comes—the Lord appears! Oh be ready! In the last days perilous times shall come. They shall end in the coming of the Son of man. Enter the ark and be safe forever.

The Lowest And Highest Luke 19:11-27 (The Parable of the Ten Minas) "While they were listening to this, he went on to tell them a parable, because he was near Jerusalem and the people thought that the kingdom of God was going to appear at once. He said: "A man of noble birth went to a distant country to have himself appointed king and then to return. So he called ten of his servants and gave them ten minas. 'Put this money to work,' he said, 'until I come back.' "But his subjects hated him and sent a delegation after him to say, 'We don't want this man to be our king.' "He was made king, however, and returned home. Then he sent for the servants to whom he had given the money, in order to find out what they had gained with it. "The first one came and said, 'Sir, your mina has earned ten more.' "'Well done, my good servant!' his master replied. 'Because you have been trustworthy in a very small matter, take charge of ten cities.' "The second came and said,

’Sir, your mina has earned five more.’ "His master answered, ’You take charge of five cities.’ "Then another servant came and said, ’Sir, here is your mina; I have kept it laid away in a piece of cloth. I was afraid of you, because you are a hard man. You take out what you did not put in and reap what you did not sow.’ "His master replied, ’I will judge you by your own words, you wicked servant! You knew, did you, that I am a hard man, taking out what I did not put in, and reaping what I did not sow? Why then didn’t you put my money on deposit, so that when I came back, I could have collected it with interest?’ "Then he said to those standing by, ’Take his mina away from him and give it to the one who has ten minas.’ "’Sir,’ they said, ’he already has ten!’ "He replied, ’I tell you that to everyone who has, more will be given, but as for the one who has nothing, even what he has will be taken away. But those enemies of mine who did not want me to be king over them--bring them here and kill them in front of me.’" This parable is spoken to correct a mistake among his followers. They thought that the kingdom of God was immediately to appear or be "manifested." It does not seem that their views of the nature of the kingdom were incorrect. These were not so carnal as we sometimes suppose. They believed in the promised kingdom; and in Jesus as the promised King; and in Jerusalem as the center or metropolis. Our Lord does not interpose to correct these beliefs; but assumes them as true. But they were wrong as to the time. They thought it immediate. He corrects this in the following parable. He shows them that He must first suffer many things, and be rejected of this generation. Let us bring out the meaning of the parable under the following heads or points, the three people or classes of people, the three events, the three transactions. I. The three classes of people. 1. The nobleman. It is literally the "high-born man." This is Christ’s name; the name of Him who is the Son of God, the only begotten of the Father. He is higher than the kings of the earth. His is a heavenly parentage; and His relationships are all divine. In all senses He is a nobleman; the heir of a kingdom. 2. The servants. Not His disciples only of that day; not the Jews only; but all who enter His service by believing in His name and following him. As He was the Father’s servant, so are we his. Each one who calls himself a Christian undertakes this service. These servants are not all alike faithful, or alike zealous; nor are they all alike gifted. But they all profess to be doing his work. 3. The citizens. Not the men of Jerusalem only or Judea, but the men of this earth. They are subjects of his kingdom, in so far as they are dwellers on his earth. They hear of him and of his claims to rule; but they hate and reject him. These are the open rejectors of the Lord. Yet they are called citizens, "His citizens." II. The three events. 1. The departure. This nobleman comes to the region where his kingdom is to be; but there is a hindrance as to his immediate occupancy of the throne. He must leave and go to some far country to receive the kingdom and to return. So Christ came to earth, the seat of his promised empire; but not as monarch, or at least not to exercise his sovereignty. He must depart. He must go to the Father to receive the kingdom. He has gone; and He is in that country now. 2. The absence. He is now absent. He is preparing for the day of sovereignty. He is receiving the kingdom; and proving the servants and the citizens in his absence. He proves the servants, making this day of his absence the special day of service; and giving to each one work to do, as well as gifts to do it with. It is in his absence that we are specially called to show our service—to be faithful and zealous. 3. The return. He is not always to remain in this far country. He is to return when the fullness of the times has come. He comes back with honor and glory to a kingdom. His shame and sorrow are done. He has come to be glorified, to reign. This same nobleman, this same Jesus will come—He will not tarry. Such is the Father’s purpose; such is His own promise, "Surely I come quickly." III. The three transactions. 1. The commission. He calls his

servants, and assigns them their work, apportioning their gifts and spheres. He deals with them personally and directly. He does not send them to his work at their own charges or in their own strength. It is not a commission to some servants, but to all, to each—not to ministers only, but to each one who names his name. He gives you a commission when he gives you pardon; He not only says, "I forgive you all your iniquities, go and sin no more"; but, "I forgive you, go and work for me." If we have had any personal dealing with Christ about salvation, we have received this commission. 2. The judgment. He comes to judge as well as to reign; and his first act is to examine his servants. Have you done my work? Have you made use of my gifts? I left you to yourselves for awhile, but I am now come to ask an account of your doings. What have you to show in the shape of work done for me? Each is examined according to what he has received, and questioned as to what he has done. None exactly alike. Some more, some less faithful; some wholly unfaithful and unprofitable. 3. The recompense. All are not only judged, but recompensed; each receiving according to his deeds. (1.) The faithful. They receive His "well done," and a glory proportioned to their work. (2.) The unfaithful. They are stripped of everything, and cast into outer darkness (Matthew 25:1-46). (3.) The citizens. These were never servants; always rejectors, enemies, rebels. These are the multitude, who hear of Christ, but yield no obedience, choose another master and another service—the hosts of Anti-Christ—the men of the world, the mixed multitude in our churches. They are summoned only to be "slain," destroyed by the breath of His mouth and the brightness of His coming.

Christ Must Have Praise "I tell you, if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out." Luke 19:40 The meaning of this passage is briefly this."Christ must have praise somewhere; if not at one place and by one class, then assuredly somewhere else and by another class: rather than that He should not have this, a miracle would be wrought, and the stones made to cry out." Christ must have praise. Why? I. Because it is His due. It is due to His person. He is Son of God, and Son of man; the possessor of all created and all uncreated excellence; the center of every divine and every human perfection. Praise is his due, his right, his lawful and necessary claim. It is due to him as the Word made flesh, as Messiah, as the King who comes in the name of the Lord. It is due to his work and office. He comes as the revealer of the Father and the Father’s will; the executor of the Father’s purpose; the object of the Father’s love; the doer of the mighty work in which the Father was to be glorified and peace made, and love carried out to the sinner in a righteous way. II. Because it is the Father’s purpose. That purpose is that Christ should be praised, that He should receive honor, and glory, and blessing. The Father presents Him to us as the great object of universal praise. He says, "Let all the angels of God worship Him;" let all men worship Him; let creation worship Him; let this earth worship Him, even its stones. For such a purpose (namely, concentrating all praise on Jesus), He must have infinitely wise reasons, even though we did not see them. But what has been made known concerning the person and work of Messiah, shows how infinitely reasonable and glorious that purpose is. There are some who dislike this praise and this purpose. Such were the Pharisees. Not the "publicans and sinners." Self-righteousness, a self-justifying, self-exulting, religion is the most opposed to the praise of Christ. The professors of it hate such praise. They cannot bear to hear it from others, far less to give it them selves; the voice of praise calls forth their enmity. There are others who are simply silent. They are engrossed with other things, or indifferent. They do not trouble themselves about the matter. They close their lips and their ears. Does either of these classes describe any here? Are there some disregarding the Father’s purpose, and giving no praise to Him whom He delights to honor? What! Neither praise nor love!

Neither homage nor obedience! Now what will this refusal, this silence, this anger do? 1. It will not profit themselves. It will not make them happier. It will not secure any favor or honor for them. It will not forward their prospects for eternity. It will not avail them in the day of wrath, or serve them at the judgment-seat. 2. It will not lessen Christ's honor. He will still deserve the honor, though they refuse to give it. He will still be the infinitely loveable, infinitely glorious one, possessed of the name that is above every name. 3. It will not silence others. Heaven will still praise Him, the redeemed will still praise Him. His enemies may be dumb, but that will not silence angels. It will not close one lip, nor cause one tongue to falter. 4. It will not hinder the fulfillment of the Father's purpose. That purpose shall stand, whoever may resist. If these be silent, the stones shall immediately cry out. If one will not praise Him, another shall praise Him; and that praise shall never sink lower than a certain amount. If it should do so, from the silence of those who were expected to praise Him, others—even the unlikeliest—even the dead creation, the stones, will cry out—cry out in praise, and cry out against the wretched men who have refused the honor. God's purpose concerning Christ, and the praise due to Him, shall be carried out to the uttermost, both in time and eternity, both in earth and heaven. That purpose is even now unfolding itself. Christ is glorified even here. There are some that praise Him, in every kingdom and out of every kindred, and every new soul gathered in adds to the song of praise. All earth shall yet praise Him. Creation's universal song of praise shall begin when He returns in His glory to make all things new. All heaven praises, and shall praise Him. Every angel glorifies Him. The multitudes of heaven ascribe blessing to the Lamb. No, all the universe shall yet praise Him. Everything that has breath and being shall praise Him. Sun, moon, and stars shall praise Him, throughout the widest space! Are you praising Him, brethren? By lip and life, by word and deed? Helping others to praise Him; gathering in the unpraising ones of earth—that they may praise Him? Will you praise Him, O men? You who have praised self, the creature, the world, "nature," as you call it—will you now begin to praise Him who is infinitely worthy of all your praise and love?

Signs Of The Times "And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draws near." Luke 21:28. The things here referred to are the signs of his coming; the sure tokens given by himself that He is at the door. When these are just beginning to unfold themselves, then be of good cheer; your deliverance is at hand (redemption, see Romans 8:23). He uses two remarkable words to indicate the effects which ought to be produced by these premonitory signs: (1.) lift yourselves up (stoop no more—lift up your bodies); (2.) lift up your heads; do not merely stand with erect body, but turn your head and eyes upward. The church's posture has hitherto been that of one bowed down (Psalms 14:1-7, Psalms 38:6, 40:25) under the heavy burdens of an evil day and an evil world. Both body and head are bent towards the earth in grief. But so soon as she hears the signal of her Lord's approach, she rises up from her stooping posture, she looks upwards to observe the coming deliverance and glory. It is of great importance, then, that we read the signs aright; not only as given here by our Lord, but afterwards by his apostles. It is of little consequence in what order we take them. They are numerous, and scattered over the New Testament. I take them alphabetically for the sake of memory. I. Anti-christianity. I mean not Popery merely, but all the forms, in which opposition to Christ shows itself; whether false doctrine or active hostility to Christ. A false Christianity; error regarding the person and work of Christ; subversion of the cross, and blood, and righteousness of Christ; all the ways in which Christ is opposed, directly or indirectly; in which men are uttering the cry, "We will not have this man to reign over us"; let us break their bands and cast away their cords (Luke

14:14; Psalms 2:3; Acts 4:27). There are many antichrists. II. Disbelief of the advent. The advent of Christ itself shall be one of the things which scepticism shall assail. There are two classes which shall be found rejecting it—the professing Christian who says, "My Lord delays his coming," the scoffing world that says, "Where is the promise of his coming?" III. Error. The fruit of the tree of knowledge is still being eaten by man, and still infusing its poison. Love of knowledge is the professed starting-point. But in the pursuit of this, God is not acknowledged as the teacher, nor the Bible as the infallible textbook. Speculation abounds; inspired trammels are flung off; pride of intellect operates; man worships his own mind; every day brings forth some novel opinion; revelation is thrust down from its high position; every form of error gives vent; until God gives men over to a reprobate mind, and sends them strong delusion that they should believe a lie. "They will not endure sound doctrine," but are "carried about with every wind of doctrine." IV. Energy of evil. Evil men and seducers are to wax worse and worse. Sin will unfold itself to the uttermost. The human heart will speak out. It will not be dormant or inactive evil; it will be energetic to the utmost in seeking to counteract the good—no, to destroy it utterly. In some ages evil seems to sleep. In the last days it will awake to full life and activity. It will seize every instrument, the press, the pulpit, the platform. It will enlist every science and art—music, sculpture, painting, poetry, philosophy—making them all subservient to its development. Satan, both as the prince of darkness, and as an angel of light, will come down, having great wrath, to put forth his wiles, his powers—to the utmost. The multiplication of crimes, contempt of laws, blasphemies—these are specimens of the energy of evil. V. Formalism. The apostle, after enumerating the sins of the last days, adds this: "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof." There is to be the appearance of religion to suit the "religious" part of man’s nature; but this is to be coupled with all sin, and error, and ungodliness—more, infidelity. Whited sepulchers; wells without water; trees without fruit; lamps without oil; a religion without the Holy Spirit! VI. Latitudinarianism. Indifference to revealed truth, no, to all truth; making light of error; holding that all religions are right and acceptable, and that there are a thousand ways to heaven, if there is a heaven or a hell at all. Laxity of opinion, and laxity of morals, will prevail. Immorality is to overflow in every form, and will not be condemned. A loose faith, and a loose practice, an easy law, an easy gospel; all the evils described in the third chapter of second Timothy, unfolding themselves, and not disapproved of. VII. Missions. Towards the close of the last days, we are to expect special efforts in behalf of Jew and Gentile. The gospel is to be preached to all nations. The Jew is to be sought out. The Bible is to go over the earth. The messengers of Christ are to make their errand known. At no time since the apostles has this been the case so much as now. VIII. Political changes. European changes; the reconstruction of the ten kingdoms; the breaking up of old land marks; the confusion of all political principle; the placing of government in the hands of the lowest; the speaking evil of dignities. IX. Pride and self-will. The pride of power; the pride of knowledge and intellect; self-reliance; belief in self-regeneration, without the power of God, or the Holy Spirit. Unwillingness to brook restraints: "Our lips are our own; who is Lord over us?" This willfulness or lawlessness is to come to a head in Antichrist; but it is to be manifested everywhere, in the church and in the world. Self-will! That is to be the characteristic of the last days. X. Restlessness. Many shall run to and fro. The whole world shall be in motion; fermentation everywhere; rushing here and there; unable to be still. As the man possessed by a devil could not rest, so our world in the last days, possessed by the devil, shall exhibit the very restlessness of hell—of him who is ever going to and fro in the earth, walking up and down in it. XI. Satanic influences. We see this not only in the errors

and blasphemies that are abroad—infidelity and atheism. But we see it in the pretended communications with the invisible world—the spirit-consulting, which is spreading everywhere; so that millions are under these subtle and potent influences. XII. Wars. The world's great crisis is the Armageddon battle. Up until that time there are to be wars and rumors of wars. XIII. Worldliness. This present evil world is to be the object of man's idolatry. In this way materialism will show itself. Religious materialism, ecclesiastical materialism, political materialism. This material world in all its aspects will be worshiped. Luxury, lust of the flesh, lust of the eye, &c., all mingle together to make up the intense worldliness of the last days.

Deliverance In The Day of The Lord "Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man." Luke 21:36 This chapter, though relating at its commencement to the days of our Lord, runs on far into the future, and carries us down to his second coming. The "last days" are the times more especially referred to; the days which end with his arrival as Judge and King. I. These days are days of calamity. Both for Israel and for the church; no, for the world also, these were to be days of sorrow. These sorrows were to be various, as if all past calamities were summed up and gathered together in these. Then are the vials of divine wrath to be poured out. Nothing in the past can equal them. Judgments, terrors, persecutions; earthquakes, overturnings, darkenings of sun and moon and stars; these and such like are to mark that solemn day. The destruction of Jerusalem was only a shadow of this. The Indian horrors are but preludes of what is coming. The day of the Lord will be a day of darkness and gloominess. II. These calamities are to be very widespread. They are to be terrible as the doom of Sodom and Gomorrah, but far more universal. They are not mere judgments on a city or a land, but on a world! The heavens and the earth; the sea and the land; Israel and the Gentiles; Jerusalem and Babylon; Judea and Idumea; all are to share the judgments, for all have sinned. God's sword shall smite and not spare; for it is the day of His vengeance; vengeance against sin, against idolatry, against anti-Christian rebellion, against Jewish unbelief, against apostate Christianity; vengeance for dishonor done to Himself, to His Son, to His Spirit; to His Bible, to His gospel, to His law. Like the deluge, the vengeance will overflow the earth. III. There will be some that will escape. Such has always been the way in the execution of judgment. The great mass of the ungodly have perished, for God's purpose was to show His hatred of sin; but a few have been preserved to declare His grace and sovereign pleasure in saving whom He will. The flood swept the world away; but Noah and his family were saved. The fire of heaven consumed the cities of the plain, yet Lot and his two daughters were preserved. Tens of thousands perished in the overthrow of Jerusalem, but the Christians in it escaped. So is it to be in the last and most terrible of God's visitations. A remnant shall be saved. Balaam asks, Who shall live when God does this? And certainly it will be a time of trouble such as never was upon the earth, such as seems to make escape impossible. But some Noahs, some Lots, shall be delivered. God will show how He can preserve—as well as destroy; how He can rain down judgment on Egypt—and yet keep Israel in safety. IV. This deliverance shall be by the direct hand and power of God. This passage does not say so. But others intimate that God will interfere to deliver. Indeed, in such a burst of universal vengeance, it seems difficult to conceive of any escaping save by miracle; either by being caught away from the judgment just before it begins, as in the case of Enoch, or being carried through the midst in safety, as in the case of Noah, or the three children in the furnace. God speaks of "chambers," into which He calls His people to enter until the indignation be overpast; and He speaks of the righteous being taken away from the evil to

come; and the 91st Psalm will be specially fulfilled to these preserved ones in that day of trial and destruction. V. Those who are saved are they who watch and pray. There are many allusions in the prophets to a chosen few of faithful worshipers who are to be delivered. We commonly give these passages a mere general application, as referring to any time of calamity; and no doubt they are so written as to bear this meaning, and to afford comfort to God's believing ones in any day of sorrow. But like many other words of the prophets, they have a fuller meaning, and point to a prophetic application in the last days. Such is Psalms 91:1-16. Such is Isaiah 24:13-14; Isaiah 33:14-16; Malachi 3:16-17. And in these passages the characters of the delivered are fully described. But our Lord in His exhortation here sets them before us in two words, Watch and pray; two words which He elsewhere used, and which the Apostle Peter, doubtless remembering the Master's words, makes use of, "The end of all things is at hand, be therefore sober and watch unto prayer." (1.) Watch. Beware of sleep. It is a drowsy world; or rather it is a world fast asleep in sin. It is the world's night, and this induces drowsiness. It is to be specially the temptation of the church in the last days, "while the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept." Many things in the present day tend to lull us asleep; worldly prosperity, the progress of the arts, outward comforts, luxury, freedom from danger, lack of persecution. We are in danger of being overcome by these opiates, these soporifics of the evil one. Therefore let us watch. Let us be ever on our guard against the drowsiness that is constantly overtaking us. Let us beware of being led into this by pleasure, or covetousness, or vanity, or love of ease. Let us watch. It is not for nothing that God has spoken to us during these late years in such appalling judgments abroad, such afflictive disasters at home. He says, Wake up! to those who are asleep. He says, Watch! to those who are drowsy. Let us not sleep as do others. (2.) Pray. While watching, let us pray. Let us watch upon our knees. A watching time should be a praying time. It is to more than merely keeping ourselves awake that the Lord calls us. Pray! Pray always! or literally, in all times and seasons; not yesterday only, but today; not in darkness only, but in the light; not in adversity only, but in prosperity; not in the day of bereavement, and terror, and weariness, but in the time of security, and comfort, and peace. Pray always. Pray without ceasing. It is the watchers and the prayers who shall be saved out of, or carried through, the coming storm. Only they. If you fear the day of trouble that is at hand, watch and pray. That only will avail. How God is to deliver in that day, I cannot say; but He will, though it should be by a fiery chariot, or by an ark, or by his angel sent down from heaven. He will deliver. VI. These delivered ones shall stand before the Son of man. This standing has a twofold reference: (1) A standing in judgment (Psalms 1:5), that is, being acquitted in the day of the Lord; (2.) a standing in the presence of the Lord, as in Revelation 7:9, Revelation 14:1, Revelation 14:5, Revelation 15:2, Revelation 22:4. There is not merely deliverance in that day for these, but glory and triumph in the presence of the King. They shall see his face, and his name shall be in their foreheads. They shall stand before him as part of his glorious retinue, his honored ones, his chosen ones, his blessed ones. Having suffered with Him, they shall reign with Him; having been partakers of his shame, they shall be sharers of his glory. Watch and pray always; and so much the more as you see the day approaching. For the time is short, and the coming of the Lord draws near. This year may unfold much; be ready for what is coming. Whether it ushers in the advent of the Lord or not—be ready. Watch and pray. Your own spiritual prosperity demands this. Your exemption from impending judgment demands this. Your usefulness in the world, during the world's brief remaining day, demands this. The glory of your Lord demands this; and the Lord himself expects it at your hand. Watch therefore, and pray always!

The New Wine Of The Kingdom "For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come." Luke 22:18. Two feasts had just been celebrated by our Lord and his disciples immediately before these words were spoken. The first was the Passover, and the second was the Supper. Both of these were festivals of rejoicing, the one for Israel after the flesh, the other for the spiritual Israel—the saved and called ones of every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people. It might seem then to the disciples as if this were now at last the beginning of their joy, a joy no more to be overcrowded or withdrawn. It might seem as if this were the final cementing of their happy union, a union no more to be broken up. Notwithstanding all that the Lord had said about his approaching sufferings, they were so "slow of heart to believe," that they might be even at this moment imagining that the time of their tribulation was now about to close and the hour of their triumph to begin. In a prospect such as this they would be disposed greatly to rejoice, not for their own sakes only, but for the sake of a Master whom they loved so well, and over whose unceasing sorrow their loving hearts had often mourned. Perhaps it might be then, to counteract some such rising feeling of exultation, that our Lord addressed to them the words of our text: "But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." They were right in their anticipations of the coming kingdom, with all its fullness of joy, but they had altogether miscalculated the time of its approach. They still overlooked the suffering which lay between. They refused to admit the idea of Messiah's shame and death as being the only way to his final glory and honor in the everlasting kingdom. In the verse before us He makes reference to the interval that still lay between Him and the kingdom. He tells them that though there should certainly come a day of festal joy, in which He and they should rejoice together; yet that day was not immediately at hand. It would assuredly come—but not now. They must prepare for separation, not for union; for sorrow, not for joy; for fasting, not for feasting; for the Bridegroom's absence, not His presence. This was His farewell-feast with His disciples until the day of the eternal meeting in the heavenly Jerusalem. And the words are evidently similar, in reference and import, to those of the apostle: "As often as you eat this bread, and drink this cup, you do show the Lord's death until He come." It was as if he had said to his disciples, "You may think this the beginning of my joy and your joy, the dawning of a bright day of happy fellowship and union with each other. It is not so. It is the commencement of my deepest agony; it is the last time that we shall thus feast together, until the kingdom shall come. Between that period and this, there is a long and dreary interval to elapse. But after these dark days are over, then shall I sit down with you once more in happy communion, and drink of the fruit of the vine new with you at a better table; not in this poor upper chamber of the earthly Jerusalem, but in one of the many mansions of my Father's house, prepared for us in the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from God." There is a calm melancholy in these words which at once touches and subdues us. Simple as they are, a deep solemnity pervades them. Both He and they were sad; yet it was expedient that He should go away. He would gladly have remained and feasted with them, but he had other work to do—both in earth and heaven. He must go. "I say"; "truly I say"; thus he assures them of the unwelcome truth of his departure. He thus speaks, I. Of a time when He DID drink of the fruit of the vine. This He had been doing since they had come together, at each feast, each passover, at their accustomed meals, at Simon's house, at Cana in Galilee; partaking with them of their common food, and interchanging fellowship. He had expressed his desire to do so once more: "With desire have I desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer." He is now doing so—presenting to us the bread of blessing and the cup of blessing. Thus Jesus delighted in

human fellowship. He came not only to give joy to us, but to receive joy from us. He sought communion in every way. His delights were with the sons of men. See the whole of the Song of Solomon. Let us give Him the fellowship He seeks; He longs for admittance to our house and table, let us not shut Him out. His promise is, "I will come in and sup with him, and he with me." II. Of a time when He would NOT drink of the fruit of the vine. "After this I shall not taste it again." He puts away from Him that cup, which was expressive of fellowship and joy. The period here alluded to consists of two parts: (1.) the period of his agony onward to his resurrection; (2.) the period from his resurrection to his second coming. (1.) His agony and death. He had hardly uttered these words when his enemies seized Him, led by a disciple. There was his betrayal, desertion, denial, scourging, crucifying, the myrrh and gall, and crown of thorns. Truly this was another cup; not the fruit of the vine which makes glad, but bitterness, and trembling, and death. As if he were now saying, "I have another cup to drink, a cup of gall and wrath—to drink alone; this cup I must drink—that you may not drink it. I must forego your fellowship and love—for the presence of enemies; now is the hour and power of darkness." What deep sadness is here! It is the language of the man of sorrows; of one who delighted in the love of his disciples, and would rather that this cup had passed from Him, but who was yet willing to drink it to the dregs. What deep love is here! It is love which many waters could not quench. (2.) From his resurrection to his coming and kingdom. The present interval is one of absence. Not that this is a period of suffering; that is all over. But it is not the period of his full joy. That fullness is still future; his great joy is still postponed. It is not perfected yet; so long as He is absent from His church and His kingdom; so long as His chosen ones are not gathered; so long as the bride is not ready, and the marriage not consummated, and the bodies of his beloved are still lying in the grave. Thus he reserves or postpones his full joy until the great day of resurrection and reunion. III. Of a time when He SHALL drink again of the fruit of the vine with them. That is the day of his coming and kingdom; the day of his crowning is the day of the gladness of his heart (Song of Solomon 3:2). It is the day of feasting (Isaiah 25:6). It is the day of his royal glory. It is the marriage day; the day of full fellowship with his own. He shall then drink the wine of the kingdom, and drink it new with them; not as in Cana, the guest; but himself the bridegroom; the governor of the feast as well as the provider of the wine. Let us mark here, (1.) His deep SORROW. He is like one surrounded with friends, yet having within him a grief too deep for utterance. (2.) The calm RESIGNATION. As if He said, "I leave this happy company to suffer." He shrinks not, murmurs not, though foreseeing the cup he is about to drink. He goes calmly, like a lamb to the slaughter. "The cup which my Father has given me, shall I not drink it?" (3.) The gentle LOVE. It is love which utters these words; love willing to be torn away from the beloved object, if by this he can be of service to it. He pleased not himself. It was our happiness he sought. (4) The joy in our FELLOWSHIP. Interchange of affection is what he seeks. His desire is for nearness and communion. (5.) The anticipation of the GLORY. There is glory to be revealed; glory for Him as for us; when he returns to his kingdom. For this he longs. "I come quickly," he says. Let us answer, Even so come, Lord Jesus! Come to raise your saints! Come to the marriage supper! Come to the crown and throne! Come to the joy and glory!

The Heavenly Feast "And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you." Luke 22:19-20 This was Passover-night; the anniversary of "the night much to be remembered," when the Lord God of Israel led Israel out of Egypt. Jesus kept all the passovers; and specially He

desired to keep this, the last of the long series of memorable nights in which Israel commemorated the grand deliverance. The roasted lamb disappears, and in its place come the bread and wine; the symbols of the new and better covenant. It is with these that we have to do in the ordinance of the supper. And, as of the passover, so of the supper—Jesus is all. I. The taking of the BREAD. It is bread that he takes; one of the passover cakes; made of the produce of this soil—earth's wheat, sown, watered, springing up and ripening here. For he took not the nature of angels, but He took the seed of Abraham. Himself the incarnate One, the Word made flesh He presents to us. He is very man, of the substance of the virgin, of the flesh of man, true seed of the woman, true Son of Adam; not angelic, but human, thoroughly human in His nature; man all over in everything but sin; for that passover cake was without leaven. II. The thanksgiving. The other evangelists call it "blessing." The meaning is the same. He "gave thanks" and He "blessed;" not the bread, but God; for "it" is not in the original. He praised God in connection with this bread. Jesus gave thanks for the bread, and specially for that of which it was the symbol. He gave thanks to the Father for his now almost completed work, and for all that that work was to accomplish. III. The breaking of the bread. He broke the thin passover cake in pieces, that thereby He might complete the symbol. For the breaking was a most important part of the feast. The bread was to be first broken before it was eaten. Not a bone of Him was to be broken, and yet his body was to be broken. The "bruising of the heel" and the "breaking of the body" were the two expressions used to denote his suffering work as the substitute or sacrifice for sin. It is not incarnation merely, which we have in the supper, but death—sacrificial death; the body broken by the burden of our guilt laid upon Him. Christ crucified is the alpha and omega of the Lord's supper. It is his cross that is set before us there; his cross as the place where our guilt and our curse were borne. IV. The giving. In many ways Christ gave himself to us; but here it is specially as the sin-bearer that He does so. It is his broken body that He presents to us. This is his gift to us. That broken body, with the sin-bearing work which it accomplished, He gives to us. It is the gift of his love; the love that passes knowledge. V. The word of explanation and command. The explanation is, "This is my body, given for you." The command is, "This do in remembrance of me." Thus, we learn these two things: (1.) that it is the body of Christ—Christ on the cross—that we have so specially to do with here; "my flesh is food indeed;" (2.) that the Lord's supper is a memorial of Christ himself; not a sacrifice, but the memorial of a sacrifice. That bread is to be received by us in remembrance of Christ. It fixes our eye on Jesus only. Such is the first part of the supper; that concerning the bread or body of the Lord. The second is like unto it; concerning the wine or blood of the Lord. The process is repeated. As was done with the bread, so is it done with the WINE. (1.) He took the cup. It was the cup of blessing. He took to himself not only the flesh but the blood of man. (2.) He gave thanks (Matthew 26:27). For the wine as well as for the bread He gives thanks; double thanksgivings in this ordinance. (3.) He gave the cup. The cup He meant for them as specially as the bread. Yes; He gave it; who then can take it away? Can man, or priest, or church take the cup from us? Does not He who takes the cup from us prove himself to be an Antichrist? (4.) He bade them drink. "Drink from it, all of you" (Matthew 26:27). And "they all drank of it" (Mark 14:23). It is by his command that we drink. He says to us, "Drink"; not, Gaze on it; but, Drink of it. (5.) He interprets the cup. "This cup is the new testament in my blood." In Mark (Mark 14:24) it is, "This is my blood of the new testament." In 1 Corinthians 10:16 it is called "the cup of blessing," and the "communion of the blood of Christ." Thus the cup connects us: (1.) with the new covenant; (2.) with the blood; (3.) with blessing; (4.) with communion. In that cup we see the covenant, the blood, the blessing, the communion. Let us fully

understand it, and realize its contents. Of these symbols—of this whole ordinance—we may say truly: (1.) The love of Christ is here. It is the feast of love. The symbols tell of love. The whole scene is love. His banner over us is love. (2.) The joy of Christ is here. It is not the man of sorrows that we hear in this feast. Joy and peace are here. "My peace;" "my joy." (3.) The glory of Christ is here. For though the symbols take us back to the cross, they bid us look forward to the coming and the glory. We show his death until He comes.

The Three Crosses Luke 23:32-43. "Two other men, both criminals, were also led out with him to be executed. When they came to the place called the Skull, there they crucified him, along with the criminals--one on his right, the other on his left. Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." And they divided up his clothes by casting lots. The people stood watching, and the rulers even sneered at him. They said, "He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Christ of God, the Chosen One." The soldiers also came up and mocked him. They offered him wine vinegar and said, "If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself." There was a written notice above him, which read: THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS. One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: "Aren't you the Christ? Save yourself and us!" But the other criminal rebuked him. "Don't you fear God," he said, "since you are under the same sentence? We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong." Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." Jesus answered him, "I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise." The place of this transaction is Jerusalem; the holy city; outside its walls. The scene is that of three crosses, three criminals, soldiers, priests, a Jewish crowd, a great execution, a few weeping women, and one or two afflicted men in the distance. It has much to say to us; most of it not upon the surface, but hidden and silent; something of God, of the Savior, of the sinner; something of sin, of salvation, of damnation; something of heaven, of earth, of hell; sin pardoned, sin unpardoned; a soul won, a soul lost: Christ received, Christ rejected. Let us select a few lessons. I. Man's hatred of God. Human enmity, malice, envy, come out in every part of the transaction. Pilate's hall; the scourging, mocking, spitting, smiting; the cry, Crucify Him! the nailing, the wagging the head; the thief's railing. The very idea of placing Him between two malefactors, is a reproof of desperate malice; the refinement of hatred. Here are man's heart, hands, tongue, all coming out against God and his Son. If there were a spark of love in man, it would have come out. But only hatred! "Haters of God" is written on each forehead yonder; "enmity to God" breaks forth in word and deed. It was not love, it was not mere indifference that came out at Calvary, but hatred; the hatred of the human race, to the God who was yearning over it in love. II. God's love to man. Herein is love! Love to the uttermost; unquenched and unquenchable by all that man can do. Man pours floods upon this love to quench it, but it grows more intense. What patience with man's utmost malice; what forbearance with his sin! "Father forgive them; for they know not what they do." Was ever love like this? So large, so free, so overflowing. Sin abounding; grace much more abounding. The tide of divine love meeting that of human hatred, and overcoming it. III. God's purpose to finish the work. He will not allow Himself to be provoked to leave the propitiation half finished, the sacrifice half offered. Man does his utmost to provoke God to let him alone, to withdraw the salvation and the Savior. But God's purpose shall stand. Every part of it shall be carried out. The wrath of man shall praise Him. All the indignities heaped upon the holy Son of God shall not cause Him to draw back in his work of righteous grace. It shall be finished! The altar shall be built—built by man's enmity; the sacrifice shall be slain—slain by man's enmity. The work shall be done. IV. The divine interpretation of the

work. The saved thief is a specimen of what it is appointed to do. Sin abounding, grace super-abounding. What is yon cross erected for? To save souls! See, it saves one of the worst; one who had done nothing but evil all his days. What does that blood flow for? To wash away sin. See, it washes one of the blackest. What does yon sufferer die for? To pardon the guiltiest. Not merely to save from hell, but to open Paradise to the chief of sinners—to open it at once; not after years of torment, but "today." Today "with me." Yes, Jesus goes back to heaven with a saved robber at his side! What an efficacy in yon cross! What grace, what glory, what cleansing, what healing, what blessing, yonder! Even "in weakness" the Son of God can deliver, can pluck brands from the burning, can defy and defeat the evil one. Such is the meaning of the cross! Such is the interpretation which God puts upon it by saving that wretched thief, whose hanging yonder proves that he is under condemnation—the first saved by the cross after it had been set up; and Christ Himself goes up to join in the joy over one sinner that repents. V. How near to hell a man may be—and yet be saved. That thief, was he not on the very brink of the burning lake; one foot in hell; almost set on fire by hell? Yet he is plucked out! He has done nothing but evil all his days—down to the very last hour of his life—yet he is saved. He is just about to step into perdition, when the hand of the Son of God seizes him and lifts him to Paradise! Ah what grace is here! What boundless love! What power to save! Who after this need despair? Truly Jesus is mighty to save! VI. How near a man may be to Christ—and yet not be saved. The other thief is as near the Savior as his fellow—yet he perishes. From the very side of Christ he goes down to hell. From the very side of his saved fellow—he passes into damnation. We see the one going up to heaven from his cross, and the other going down to hell from it. In Judas we see one who had been with Christ in His life, go down to hell; in the lost thief, one who was beside Him in His death. This is astonishing; and it is fearful! Oh what a lesson, what a sermon is here! Was there ever such a warning given to us! Can any of you be nearer to Christ than that thief was? Looking at Him, hearing Him, speaking to Him! Yet he was lost after all! Oh make sure. Not outward nearness; not religion; not contact with the Word of God; not eating and drinking the symbols of His body and blood; not all these can save! You may be very near Christ, and yet not be in Him. Your next neighbor may be saved, and you lost; one taken, the other left. Take heed; make sure. Salvation is too precious to be trifled with!

The Disciples' Invitation To The Master "They constrained Him, saying—Abide with us." Luke 24:29 Here it is not the Master to the disciple, but the disciple to the Master, that is saying, Come. It is not the Lord that is standing at the door and saying, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hears my voice, and opens the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with me"; it is the disciple that is saying, "Come in you blessed of the Lord." As of old, He said to Jacob at Peniel, "Let me go, for the day breaks," so here it is said, "He made as though He would have gone further"; but as Jacob said, "I will not let you go except you bless me," so do the two disciples here, "They constrained Him, saying—Abide with us"; and as He blessed Jacob before He parted from him, so here He does go in and sit down with them, and when He leaves them He leaves a blessing behind Him, for the house was filled with the odor of the ointment, doubtless to retain its fragrance for many a day. The request seems to have been made for two reasons—on their own account, and on his. They had enjoyed his converse and fellowship by the way so much that they are unwilling to part; and, besides, the evening is coming on, and He must not expose Himself to the dews, and cold, and darkness of the night. The latter of these reasons we cannot use now in the sense in which they were used by the disciples. The risen Christ is now far beyond the days

and nights of time; beyond the mists and clouds of earth; far beyond the chills and the gloom of this world. He needs no earthly roof to shelter Him, and no earthly table to sit at. He is now in his Father’s house, and on his Father’s throne, compassed about with light, and majesty, and glory, and honor. But in his members He is now passing through the same hardships, and sufferings, and privations as when He was here. "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me" is still his admonition; and still He so identifies Himself with his saints that we may use the words which originally meant Him personally in reference to ourselves as one with Him. Without, however, confining it to this sense, let us meditate as follows upon these words, "Abide with us." 1. Abide with us—for past days have been so pleasant. Since first we apprehended You, or rather since You apprehended us—since you did overtake us on the way, we have found such blessedness, that we cannot bear the thought of parting. Your fellowship has been so sweet that we must have more of it. The little that we tasted in the past, makes us long for more. Abide with us. 2. Abide with us—for the world would be a blank without you. Life would not be life if you were gone. We would be like the disciples on the stormy sea—"It was night, and Jesus had not come to them." Night and tempest, without moon and stars, would be nothing to this world without you. A house left desolate without an inhabitant, without a sound, or a voice, or footstep—would be nothing to the dreariness of our earth and of our homes without you. All would be blank and chilling. It is You who fills hearts, and lights up homes, and gladdens even wildernesses with your presence. 3. Abide with us—for we know not what our future is to be. We know the past, we know the present, but the future is hidden. For that future and all its uncertainties, we need a guide and a protector; one who will light up our path, who will fight for us, who will deliver us and keep us to the last, in all changes, trials, sorrows, joys. Abide with us. Leave us not, neither forsake us, O God of our salvation, O rest of the weary, O light of the dark, O Savior of the lost, O joy of the sorrowful, O helper of the helpless—unchanging companion, friend and kinsman, with whom there is no variableness nor shadow of turning—the same yesterday, today, and forever! Lead us out, leads us in, lead us along the way, lead us by the still waters, lead us into your banqueting house, and let your banner over us be love! 4. Abide with us—for earth’s night is at hand. Time’s shadows are lengthening; its sun is going down behind the hills of earth. The end of all things is at hand; the day of the Lord hastens greatly; the time of vengeance and judgment comes; Satan is about to do his worst; Antichrist will rage; evil men and seducers will wax worse and worse; perilous times will come; wars and rumors of wars will disquiet us; earthquakes shall be in diverse places, the sea and its waves roaring, men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after the things that are coming on the earth. Oh abide with us! Abide with us in all your love and grace; in all your strength and help; in all your joy and peace. Abide with us for evermore!

02.2.04. John

BIBLE THOUGHTS & THEMES Volume 2, the Gospels by Horatius Bonar (1808—1889) The gospel of JOHN Reception of Christ—our introduction into sonship "Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God." John 1:12-13 Of the Christ, the Christ coming into the world, yet rejected by the world; coming to Israel, yet rejected by Israel, the evangelist had been speaking. Then he reminds us that the rejection was not universal. He was acknowledged by some, however few; and these some were made partakers of no common honor; yet were they by nature no better than their fellows; owing all that they received—to the sovereign God alone. There is here (1.) the honor; (2.) the giver of it; (3.) the way of attainment; (4.) the personal change through which it is reached. I. The honor. To become "sons of God"—not merely by adoption, but by birth. It is the word used in Romans 8:16—"the Spirit bears witness that we are the children of God, and if children, then heirs;" and in 1st John 3:10—"Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called sons of God!" On our side there is sonship—on God's side fatherhood. Sonship is (1.) higher; (2.) nearer; (3.) more blessed; (4.) more glorious, than creaturehood. There is sonship in the angels, sonship in unfallen man; but this is beyond these; resting on a different foundation, introducing us into more intimate communion; making us partakers of the divine nature; partakers of Christ; one in nature, privilege, honor, dignity with Him who is "the Son of God." This is the honor to which God is calling us—us who were children of wrath, children of the evil one! He invites us to this. He beseeches us to receive the honor, the dignity, the blessedness; to accept his divine fatherhood, to enter on the divine sonship! Such is the love! II. The giver of it. It is Christ himself. Elsewhere it is the Father; here it is the Son. The Son makes us sons! "He gave!"—the sonship is Christ's free gift. For all gifts are in his hands. "I give unto them eternal life." He gives the living water; He gives the bread of life, which is his flesh. So here he gives the right or power of sonship. It is not, however; simply the sonship itself that is spoken of here; but the right to it—the power. This right, or power, or title, He has purchased for us—for those who had no right, nor power, nor title—He has so earned it, and so secured it, that it becomes a lawful and righteous title; and being so, it is secure and eternal. This He holds out, presents to us, as his own and the Father's free gift. Become sons of God is the message of the gospel! Not, as some say, you are sons now, act on this, and be happy. But become sons! Take the right, the title, so dearly bought, so freely given. It is not merely, Come unto me, and I will give you rest; but, Come unto me—and I will make you sons! III. The way of attainment. There is no bargain, no price; no terms, no conditions; yet there is an appointed way; and he who will have the sonship, must have it in this one way. This way is "receiving Him;" and this receiving him is explained as "believing in his name." (1.) Receiving Him. Doing the reverse of what Israel had done; accepting Him as "the Word;" the "light;" the "life;" the "Son;" the "Christ;" the Messiah sent of God; accepting and owning Him for all that God had announced Him to be; confessing with Peter, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God;" with Thomas, "My Lord and my God." (2.) Believing on His name. (1.) Believing, that is, receiving God's testimony to Him, and his own testimony to Himself. (2.) Believing on his name. We need not

confine this to his actual name Jesus, but to all that has been revealed concerning Him; his person, and character, and work. We get to know Him through his name—through that revelation of Him which we find in the gospels. There we find Himself and his name. Thus accepting all that has been testified concerning Him; and joining with that the promise given of sonship to every one who thus accepts, we become sons of God. Faith in Him and in His name identifies us with Him who is the Son of God; and as He is, so are we in the world. IV. The personal change through which this is reached. We are "born," and so by birth become sons. We are born into the heavenly family; begotten again unto a lively hope. This is more than adoption, it is birth. As to this birth, the evangelist first tells us what it is not, before he tells us what it is. (1.) We are not born of blood. Not of natural descent; not of circumcision. Human blood has nothing to do with our divine birth. We are not sons by nature. (2.) Not of the will of the flesh. Not by natural generation. The flesh, or old nature, has nothing to do with the new birth. That which is born of the flesh is flesh. The flesh neither wills to make us, nor can make us sons. (3.) Not of the will of man. Not by adoption. No man, and no will of man, whether self or another, can produce this new birth. Man can only adopt children like himself; children of wrath. Then he adds, "but of God"; out of Him; by means of Him; through His will; His power. He alone can make us sons: can choose the honor for us, and us for the honor. It is He who begets sons; it is He who calls them to this honorable name: "Of his own will He begat us with the word of truth (James 1:18). Yet this fact should hinder none. His will and His grace do not contradict each other. Go to Him for sonship. Receive His Son, and He will make you sons. "He who believes that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God."

The World’s Need of Something More than a Teacher "We know that you are a teacher come from God." John 3:2 We take Nicodemus as one of the best specimens of "religious humanity"; educated, moral, of high position and culture; a strict observer of religious rites, and seasons, and ordinances; a "ruler of the Jews," a "master of Israel," and a believer in Israel’s promised Messiah. He ought to have known fully Messiah’s errand, and to have recognized Him at once when He came. But even Nicodemus, this well-instructed religious ruler and master, one of the leaders of the straitest sect, fails to understand Him. He approaches Him only as a teacher. He accepts Him as such, but as nothing more. Like the rest of his nation and race, he was in quest of "knowledge"; and for such he went to Jesus. Like our first parents, he saw that "the tree was good for food, and pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise"; this was all. He had no deeper sense of need. "We know that you are a teacher come from God," was the intimation of his state of mind; it showed how little his conscience was at work; how superficial, as well as self-righteous, were his views as to his own spiritual condition. He knew not that he was poor, and wretched, and miserable, and blind, and naked. Thus we have in him a specimen of man—educated, moral, religious man—unconscious of his own true need, and blind to God’s provision for that need. I. Man’s unconsciousness of his true need. Nicodemus, with all his religious advantages, has not fathomed the depth of his own spiritual needs. He knows that he needs something; but he does not know how much; nor does he know what is the real nature of his great need. He needs a teacher—that is all! He thinks that will suffice. But farther than this he goes not; deeper than this he descends not. He thinks there is but one empty chamber in his house; unconscious that all are empty, or if filled at all, filled with that which must be cast out and cast away. He thinks there is but a slight bruise in one of his limbs, when there is poison in every vein; when the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. He needs pardon; yet he is unconscious of condemnation. He needs reconciliation; yet he is unconscious of distance, and wrath, and doom. He needs life; yet he is

unconscious of the death in which he lies. He does not know what sin is; what enmity to God is; what distance from God is; what it is to be lost; what it is to be without the favor and love of God; what the world is in which he dwells, and of which he forms a part; what Satan is, his great adversary. He has no idea of the extent of his ruin, and the greatness of his danger. He does not see that, apart from hell and wrath, the simple absence of God from the heart would be unutterable wretchedness. He does not see that simply to be left unchanged and unconverted would be of itself hell. But of all the evil of sin, the evil of his own heart, he is utterly unconscious. He is not in the least alive to his need—either as to its nature or its extent. Yes, humanity is unconscious of its ruin! The human heart knows not the vacuity that has been made in it by the absence of God; it knows not the malignity of one single sin—one single act of disobedience, one moment's insubordination of the will, one moment's ceasing to love God with all the heart and soul. Unconsciousness of his own need; insensibility to his own sin; palsy of the conscience—this is man's great evil. To remove this unconsciousness, and to impart true consciousness in regard to these things, is the first great work of the Holy Spirit in the soul. That this unconsciousness is voluntary and deliberate we cannot doubt. This is the aggravation of the evil; this is the consummation of the guilt. Man shrinks from knowing the worst of himself; no, he refuses to know it. He willfully shuts his eyes to the nature and to the extent of his spiritual evil. He tries to make himself believe that his case is not so very serious after all. He takes pride in owning himself a little in the wrong, needing some help, some light, some teaching; but beyond that he refuses to go. Thus far Nicodemus went when he came to Jesus; but at that time he was not prepared to go farther. But the Lord led him on. He did not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax. II. Man's blindness to God's provision for his need. He to whom Nicodemus came was God's provision for man's need. It was the provision of love and bounty; "He spared not his Son." But man does not appreciate this provision, because he does not apprehend his own need. He thinks he needs a teacher—that is all. Not a deliverer; not a priest; not a healer; not a cleanser; not a renewer—only a teacher! Not a divine teacher; only a teacher come from God. God's provision for our need assumes that our need is unspeakably great; so great as only to be supplied by one who is divine; a divine teacher (or prophet), a divine priest, a divine king. Man shuts his eyes to this. He refuses to interpret the provision which God has made for him, and in that infinite provision, to read the nature and extent of his own need. He shrinks from the acceptance of a Savior, not willing to see that he really needs one, or at least one that is divine. He thinks he can do with less than salvation; he cannot think himself wholly lost. Yet what is the meaning of God sending His own Son, if less than salvation was intended; if less than incarnation will do, less than blood, less than death, less than resurrection? Oh let us understand the greatness of God's provision for us, and in that greatness, read at once our death and our life, our condemnation and our deliverance. Jesus met Nicodemus at once with the necessity of being born again. Mere teaching will not do; there must be the new birth; not a few new and good ideas—but regeneration! Nothing less. How this astounded the religious Jew. You must be born again. Yet one thing in Nicodemus is praiseworthy. He came directly to Jesus, and dealt with Him face to face. So say we to every one. Go and do likewise.

Life in Looking to Jesus "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life." John 3:14-15 Let us here first read the history, and then mark the symbol. The HISTORY. The narrative begins with Israel's sin. It is the old sin of murmuring; distrust; dislike of God's provision; discontent

with his dealings; preference of Egypt to the prospect of Canaan; disbelief of God's love, and denial of his faithfulness. And all this at the close of their forty years' desert sojourn! Forty years of the manna, of the water, of the pillar-cloud, and of all the love which these imply—had left them still the same! The narrative proceeds with Israel's punishment. It was death; death from the hand of the Lord; a death of agony; a death by poison and fire; death by the instrumentality of serpents, which would not fail to remind them of the serpent of Paradise, by which our first parents were poisoned. The punishment was so ordered as to be the means of symbolizing the remedy. Out of their destroyers, the symbol of health is constructed. The image of destruction becomes the emblem of health and deliverance. The remedy was simple, complete, divine. The image of their destroyers in brass, lifted up on a banner-pole, so as to be visible to all. Thus sin, punishment, and remedy were all brought into view at once. They were reminded of their sin; they read their punishment; they received the cure. The application of the cure was as simple as the cure itself. They had no hand in it; nothing to pay for it; nothing to do; no distance to walk; no effort to put forth. The cure was wholly of God; its power was resistless; no strength of disease could withstand it; however near death they might be, it mattered not. They looked and were cured. Let us now mark the SYMBOL. "All these happened unto them as examples." It is this example, or type, or emblem that our Lord here indicates; it is this that we are to read. The sin in both cases is much the same; rebellion against God; unbelief; distrust; making God a liar; refusal to believe His word, or to receive His love. Of this sin the punishment is death; death by the hand of him who has the power of death, the old serpent, the devil; certain, agonizing, burning death; the fire that is never quenched; the everlasting burnings; our veins filled with deadly poison, and every part racked with pain. The sin is not the less hateful for being unfelt; the punishment not the less deadly, because we may be insensible to its deadliness. Let us now mark the manner of the CURE. I. Christ made sin for us. The deliverer takes the likeness of the destroyer. The Son of God not merely becomes the Son of man, but He assumes the likeness of sinful flesh. Not sinful flesh, nor a sinful nature; but still flesh—true flesh; true manhood—manhood under the curse, in its weakness, frailty, and mortality. Moses was not commanded to take an actual serpent, a dead serpent, and hang it on the pole; that would have implied that Christ was actually sinful; but he is to do the nearest thing to this, to make the image of a serpent, formed out of brass—such brass as the brazen altar and brazen layer were made of. Thus, as Christ was represented by the emblem of a goat on the day of atonement—a goat, the figure of the wicked on the left of the Judge—so is He here represented by a brazen serpent; "made a curse," "made sin for us." Thus on the cross, we see at once our condemnation and our pardon, our sickness and our cure, our destroyer and our deliverer. We see Christ carrying up to the cross our sin, our punishment, our enemy, and nailing them all to that cross along with Himself. God inflicts death on Him as if He were the sinner, as if He were man's enemy, as if He were the cursed one. II. Christ lifted up. The lifting up of the serpent on a pole was necessary for Israel's cure; so the lifting up of Christ on the cross was for ours. He was lifted up, (1.) As a sacrifice. He was laid on the altar. The cross was the altar on which the Lamb of God was placed. (2.) As a criminal. It was a cursed place: "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree." There He hung as a malefactor, the Just for the unjust! (3.) As an object visible to all. The serpent was lifted up that Israel might see it; so Christ was lifted up that all men might see Him; that He might be the most visible object in creation. III. Christ giving life. He hangs in the place of death, yet thence He gives life. He delivers from death by dying. Life streams out, like rivers of water, from that center, the cross. The cross is the tree of life. There He hangs—the life-giving One; the

healing One; the attractive One; the loving One. "Look unto Me," is the voice coming from Him there. We are healed, not by working, or praying, or striving, but looking. Israel's physicians could do nothing; the look at the serpent did it all. So it is in looking that the cure comes to us. There is health, there is life at the cross. We get them simply in looking; all may look. "Whoever," is the wide message—"whoever believes,"—has eternal life.

The Filling up of Joy "The bride belongs to the bridegroom. The friend who attends the bridegroom waits and listens for him, and is full of joy when he hears the bridegroom's voice. That joy is mine, and it is now complete." John 3:29 These are among "the last words" of John; just as he is about to step into Herod's prison. His was a brief life and ministry, yet was he the greatest among the prophets. His last words carry us back to Jacob's (Genesis 49:1-33), "I have waited for your salvation"; to Moses (Deuteronomy 18:15), "A prophet shall the Lord raise"; to David's (Psalms 72:20), "The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended"; to Simeon's (Luke 2:29), "Now let your servant depart in peace." They are the words of the martyr about to enter the prison, and to lay his neck under the sword of the executioner. They are the last words of the shortest, but perhaps most important ministry on record. They are an answer to the jealous appeal of his own disciples. Hitherto he had been the man of the time; all crowded to him. Now the crowds were leaving him for Jesus. This tried the faith of his disciples, and roused their jealousy. "Rabbi, the One you testified about, and who was with you across the Jordan, is baptizing—and everyone is flocking to Him." (John 3:26), were the words of disappointment and envy. But John has no such feeling; nor had ever said anything to produce or foster it (John 3:28). In his answer he first tells who he is not. "I am not the Christ." Why wonder at the crowds now going past me? "I am not the bridegroom," the bride belongs not to me; why wonder at the crowds flocking to the Bridegroom? Is not this just what you should expect and rejoice in? Next he tells us who he is. He is the, foresent one. This is all he can say for himself. His honor is not his own, but comes from Him whom he heralds. He is the friend of the Bridegroom; the groomsman; like the virgins in attendance on the bride. As the foresent one he has been looking out for the Christ; should he not then rejoice that He has come? As the friend of the Bridegroom, he is watching for the Bridegroom's arrival; should he not rejoice when he hears His voice? For thus his errand terminates; his great mission is consummated; his joy fulfilled; his life no longer needed. But the figure here used carries us back very strikingly to Song of Solomon 2:8, "The voice of my beloved"; Song of Solomon 2:10, "My beloved spoke, and said"; Song of Solomon 2:14, "Let me hear your voice"; Song of Solomon 5:1, "Eat, O friends"; Song of Solomon 8:13, "Cause me to hear it." So with the words, bridegroom and friend. They are from the Song; and John the Baptist, no doubt, had its figures before his eye. 164 John's feelings are therefore just what we would have expected of a true man, a true friend, a true forerunner in such circumstances. NEGATIVELY, they are: (1.) Not disappointment. His mission has not failed; he is not a disappointed man. Theme is no bitterness in his words. (2.) Not distrust. As if he knew not where unto all this would lead; as if he dreaded the result. (3.) Not envy or jealousy. Whatever jealousy might be in his disciples, there was none in him. He envied not. (4.) Not pride. It is not wounded pride that speaks in him. He is the forerunner of the meek and lowly One; and pride has been cast out. Self-love and self-esteem have ceased. Self has passed away in the presence of the Son of God. He is content to be nothing. But, POSITIVELY, they are the feelings of one. (1.) Who admires and loves the Bridegroom. His admiration and love are true. Hence that Bridegroom is ever uppermost in his thoughts. There is no attractiveness, but in him. (2.) Who has been eagerly looking for Him. In John we have the true personification of one "waiting for Christ,"

"looking for and hastening unto the coming of the day of God." And when He for whom he is looking comes, his joy is full. (3.) Who has actually found him. "I found him whom my soul loves." "We have found the Messiah." John has found him, and rejoices. (4.) Whose delight is in his voice. He long listened; it came at length; "the voice of my beloved!" He stands and listens to the conversation of the marriage party—specially of the bridegroom. It is His voice that he delights in. It is converse with Him that is his joy; "he stands and listens." (5.) Whose joy is in Him alone. All his springs are in Him. Apart from Him joy exists not to John; no, is an impossibility. It is joy unspeakable and full of glory. (6.) Who is content to be nothing. "He must increase; I must decrease." This is no hardship. He is glad to vanish and give way to the greater and more glorious one. Thus, in this answer we have the full acknowledgment of what John is, and of what he knows Jesus to be. What are we? We are friends of the bridegroom, if believers in the name of Jesus. Friends! Like John. Like the virgins who went forth to meet Him. By nature we are friends of the world. We break with it, and become friends of the Bridegroom. We hear a good report of this Bridegroom, his love, his loveableness, his beauty, his glory—and so we betake ourselves to Him. We accept the Father's testimony to Him; the Holy Spirit's testimony to his person and his work. We join ourselves to the number of his friends. He at once admits us as such. If "friends" (as Jesus himself calls us) then the following things will mark us as they did John. I. Admiration for Christ as the Bridegroom. For himself as "altogether lovely"; the perfection of beauty. We admire His person, His life, His work; all these separately, and all of them together. We count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ. We love and admire; we admire and love. The more we know, the more we love; the oftener we gaze, the more we admire. What do you think of Christ? Do you admire Him? Do you love Him? We love Him because He first loved us; yes, loves us to the end, with the love that passes knowledge. II. Delight in his voice. John stood and listened as one entranced. He heard (as well as saw) no man save Jesus only. The tones of his voice are sweet; but the words are unutterably precious; each word a gem, a treasure, a joy. This is my beloved Son, hear Him! Yes, hear Him in these days of uproar and confusion; hear his voice amid the chaos of human views. Say to Him, "Let me hear your voice." His "speech is lovely"; "honey and milk are under his tongue"; his lips "drop sweet smelling myrrh"; his "lips drop as the honeycomb"; "into his lips grace is poured." III. Joy in his glory. He has now "increased"; He is crowned with glory and honor. This is our joy; yes, in this our joy is fulfilled. He is now blessed and glorified. And He will yet be more so when He comes again. We joy in what He is; we joy in what He shall be. He comes to be glorified in his saints and admired in all those who believe. Behold the Bridegroom comes, let us go forth to meet him!

The Fullness of the Sent One "For God sent Him, and He speaks God's words, since He gives the Spirit without measure. The Father loves the Son and has given all things into His hands." John 3:34-35 John came as a witness to Jesus—"to bear witness of the Light" (John 1:7-8). Marvelous office and honor! A spark to bear witness of the Sun! He does his work well, bearing true, full, blessed testimony to the Son of God! He bore this testimony, that all men through him might believe (John 1:7). Yet who believed his report? "No man receives his testimony." They honored him, flocked to him, spoke well of him—but received not Him of whom he testified. Let us listen to John's testimony concerning Messiah, the Word made flesh, that we may receive it, and receive Him of whom he testifies. I. He is the sent of God. "The Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world." He comes to us on a mission from the Father; He comes not of himself, nor speaks of himself. It is with the Father's voice that He speaks; the Father's errand that He discharges. What

a link that word "sent" forms between us and God, between earth and heaven, between the sinner and the love of God. God sends Him, and He comes; He comes to earth; He comes to us; messenger, ambassador, servant. Angels are "ministering spirits, sent forth to minister." But in a higher and more peculiar sense is the Son who is "sent," sent by the Father. O loving Sender, and O blessed Sent One! Let us gladly receive the message, the messenger, and Him who sends. II. He is the speaker of the words of God. He has come to "speak"; not to keep silence; to speak words which a man can understand; words with a human voice, and in human language. Yet the words are the words of God; and the speaker is from heaven; He is divine; and His revelation is divine; and His words are divine—divine though human. Let us listen to this speaker of the words of God. He speaks thus: "Repent"; "You must be born again"; "God so loved the world"; "I am the light of the world"; "Come unto me." Thus He spoke on earth; and thus also He speaks from heaven: "Behold I stand," etc. For in heaven He is still the speaker of the words of God. "Hear, and your soul shall live." The words of God are perfect; they are grace and truth; filled with love and wisdom. Let us listen to this glorious speaker, and we shall find health and peace. III. He is the possessor of the Holy Spirit. The fullness of the Spirit is with Him, and in Him; the Spirit "without measure" has been given to Him. The Word made flesh is the Messiah. The anointed One. Through the eternal Spirit—He spoke, and acted, and lived, and died. The Spirit without measure is given Him. This fullness He possesses for us; for His church; He is the possessor and the dispenser of the Holy Spirit. Let us welcome Him, and deal with Him as such. It is for us that the Father has filled Him. There is enough in His fullness for us. We need not be empty so long as He is full, nor poor so long as He is rich. IV. He is the object of the Father's love. "The Father loves the Son." This love of the Father to the Son is the greatest of all. There is none like it. It is perfect, in finite, eternal, divine, passing all knowledge. Never before had there been such an object for the Father to love; so glorious, so loveable; so full of all created and uncreated excellencies. This love of the Father to the Son, is the foundation of His treatment of us. He deals with us according to this love. It is the greatness of this love that makes Him so desirous of blessing us; because in blessing us, He is honoring the beloved Son. Thus He gratifies his love to the Son by blessing us. What security for blessing does this give us! It is not simply His love to us that makes Him so long to bless us—but his love to his own Son. We might suspect His love to ourselves, and say, How can we count upon blessing? but we cannot suspect His love to his Son, so that we may boldly say, We are sure of blessing, because we are sure that the Father loves the Son. Let these words sink into our hearts, "The Father loves the Son." V. He is the heir of all things. The Father has given all things into his hand. He is head over all things; He is Lord of all; He is King of kings; He is judge of all. He has put all things under His feet, and left nothing that is not put under Him. He is the head of principalities and powers. This universal authority and dominion is the consequence of the Father's love. It is thus that God honors Him, and shows that He is the man whom He delights to honor. All things are given into His hand, because He is the beloved of the Father. Nothing in heaven, or earth, or hell is beyond His sway. He is the blessed and only Potentate. Learn then, (1.) A sinner's REFUGE. Christ Jesus—the sent of God; the speaker of the words of God's love; the possessor of all power. Go straight to him, O man! There is safety in Him—but in no other. He is willing to bless; able to save to the uttermost. He can deliver you from every sin and enemy. You have all in Him. Go to Him now; as you are; with all your worthlessness and evil. (2.) A saint's SECURITY. The church of God, and each saint of God, is daily exposed to peril. All things are against us. But in Him whom the Father loved we have a strong tower, a refuge in the time of

trouble. Who shall prevail against those whom Christ has undertaken to protect?

The Living Water God’s Free Gift Jesus answered, "If you knew the gift of God, and who is saying to you, ‘Give Me a drink,’ you would ask Him, and He would give you living water." John 4:10 The three Persons of the Godhead are here. The expression "the gift of God" shows the Father; the living water is the Holy Spirit (John 7:36), and the Son of God is the speaker. The love of God shines brightly in this verse—the love of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—love to the chief of sinners—love which seeks and saves the lost. Every word here is love; love that many waters cannot quench; love which passes knowledge. Sin abounds—but grace super-abounds. The interest which God takes in individual souls is seen vividly here. The three thousand at Pentecost tell us something quite different from this. This is Godhead stooping down to visit and care for one solitary soul; it is the good Shepherd casting his eye on a stray sheep by the wayside, and stooping to pick it up and carry it off on his shoulders. The way in which God meets with the sinner is shown us here. God deals with the sinner alone, and face to face; God speaks to the sinner and the sinner speaks to God. There must always be this close personal dealing, this individual transaction of the soul’s business for eternity, this settlement of the question between man and God; not in a crowd—but alone; not through the medium or intervention of another—friend, or priest, or church—but directly and alone. The time and place and circumstances of such a meeting are brought before us. Any day, any hour, will do. Not the set hour of morning or evening sacrifice—but any time will do. And any place will do. Not the temple merely, or the closet—but a well-side, as here, or a sycamore tree (as Zaccheus), a tax-gatherer’s office (as Matthew). Yes; any time, any place, will do for Jesus. His grace is not circumscribed by temple walls, nor tied to ceremonies, nor limited to hours. Samaria, Jericho, Tyre, Jerusalem are the same to Him. The temple, the highway, the hill-side, the sea-beach, the synagogue, the house, the boat, the graveyard, are all alike to Him and to his grace. The meeting looks a chance one—but it is not so. In God’s eternal purpose that place had been fixed upon—that well. And Jesus comes to it as the fulfiller of the Father’s will, the accomplisher of his purposes, in the minutest jot and tittle. He was seeking one of those whom the Father had given Him, when He traveled that forenoon, and sat down at length, wearied, by the well. It was not the woman seeking Christ—but Christ seeking the woman. She came for one thing—He gives another. She came in quest of the earthly—He gives the heavenly. She knew not Him nor cared for Him—He knew and cared for her. In spite of sin, and unbelief, and hard heartedness, He draws near to her, lays hold of her, wins her to Himself, and then, after all his weariness, "rests In his love." Yes; Christ was weary, and it is thus that He rests. Do we find our rest where He found his? He was hungry and thirsty, and here He found both food and drink. Do we satisfy our hunger and quench our thirst where He did? The doing of the Father’s will, the gathering in of the lost one, was to Him rest, and food, and drink. Is it thus that we find refreshment? Is it thus that we eat and drink? When Jacob dug this well, how little he thought of what was to be transacted here in after ages; who was to sit here; what eternal words were to be spoken here; and that here a soul was to be saved, and from this spot joy was to be caused in heaven. In building a sanctuary we naturally think of who may be born again here; but who, in digging a well, would ever think of such a thing, or dream of inscribing on it, "this man and that man was born again here." But we have here (1) the gift of God; (2) the bringer of it; (3) man’s ignorance of these; (4) God’s way of bestowing it. I. The gift of God. God has more gifts than one. Christ is his gift; the Holy Spirit is his gift; eternal life is his gift. Sometimes two of these gifts are conjoined; "This is the true God and eternal life"; "in Him was life"; "I am the life." So that we may

take the words here as having this reference, "If you knew God’s gift of eternal life in me—me who now ask for water—you would have asked of me, and I would have given you that Holy Spirit, who is the living water, and through whom the eternal life is poured into the dead soul." Yes; the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord! "This is the record, that God has given to us eternal life; and this life is in his Son!" II. The Bringer of it. It is "He who says to you give me to drink." This weary, hungry, thirsty Jew, is the Bringer of the glorious gift. In Him is life! All fullness of life dwells in Him. He, this Jesus, this man like ourselves, He has come down from the Father filled with this eternal life for us. Could it be brought nearer? placed more within our reach than thus it is in Him? III. Man’s ignorance of it. The woman did not know the gift nor its Bringer. She had no sense of its value, or of her need of Him. The life that now is she knew—but not the life that is to come. The water of Jacob’s well she prized—but not the water from the eternal well. Such is man everywhere! He knows not God; nor the love of God; nor the gift of God; nor the Son of God. IV. God’s way of bestowing his gifts. "You would have asked—and He would have given." This is all! How simple, how easy, how near, how free! Living water! This is what the Son of God has to bestow. Living water! That is the Holy Spirit (John 7:39). For blessing we must have to do with Jesus. It is in communicating with Him that we receive what we need. There must be direct application on our part; direct bestowal on his. But how close at hand is this divine life! How welcome are we to have it from the hands of the Son of God. This living water He would pour into us at once, and without upbraiding. Ask, and you shall receive. "I will give to him who is thirsty." There is something in the expression "if you knew," that makes the gracious announcement here yet more gracious. It is the same as in Luke 19:1-48, "if you had known," or "would that you had known." It is the Savior yearning over the needy and the thirsty. Oh that you would come to me for living water! This is one out of the many memorable texts often quoted and preached upon; such as, "God so loved the world"; "Come unto me"; "It is a faithful saying"; "Behold, I stand at the door and knock." Any of these might well be enough to win the human heart; how much more all of them together.

Bible Testimony to Jesus—and Man’s Refusal of it "You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life." John 5:39-40 In opposition to the denial and disbelief of the Jews, the Son of God produces his "witnesses." He has many—but He calls only four—John the Baptist, his own miracles, the Father, the Scriptures. These all testify of Him before men, that they may believe and be saved. It is the last of these that we have to consider, as here put by our Lord, to meet the unbelief of Israel and to establish his own claims. I. The Scriptures. God has "spoken" ("thus says the Lord"); and God has "written" ("it is written"). That which He has spoken and written make up what we call "the Bible," or "the Book," which Paul calls "Scripture" (2 Timothy 3:16), which our Lord here calls "the Scriptures," or the "Writings." He has spoken by human lips and written by human pens, yet all that is thus given to us is divine, superhuman, supernatural. The thoughts are the thoughts of God, and the words are the words of God. That our Lord should refer to them to prove his Sonship and his Messiahship, shows the stress which He laid upon them, the divine accuracy which He ascribed to them. It is with confidence in their accuracy that He appeals to them. If the words are inaccurate or unintelligible; if they are but the results of man’s efforts to clothe divine thoughts in human language, then the demonstration goes for nothing, the proof fails; Jesus may not, after all, be what the words imply that He is—the Son of the Highest. If the words are not of God, there is no security for the thoughts; if the words are not correct, the thoughts

extracted from these words are not to be relied upon as God’s; and if the words be incorrect, and the thoughts doubtful, we have no "Scripture," no "Bible." The one fragment of the supposed superhuman has been stripped of its divine glory. II. The search. The word "search" is the same as is used concerning God as the searcher of hearts, and implies the thoroughness of the search. In our translation this is a command—"Search the Scriptures," bringing out an admirable meaning. But it may be, "You diligently study the Scriptures"; and this accords better with the argument of the speaker, and with the state of those to whom he was speaking. The Jews were great searchers of the Scriptures. They had profound reverence for the word of God. They never made any question as to its accuracy or verbal inspiration. They were almost superstitious in the way they affixed meanings, not to words only—but to letters. Our Lord appeals to them as searchers of the word—careful and reverential searchers of the word. They had, in truth, no other book to search. Their literature was almost wholly divine. We are overwhelmed with books; and hence in the matter of "searching" we come far behind old Israel. It would be well for us to study, to search, to reverence the book of God—the one fragment of the supernatural which exists on earth—the record of divine utterances, the exponent of the mind of God. III. The reason of the search. "You are persuaded that in them you have eternal life." It was not in mere curiosity that Israel searched the word, though they did so in much ignorance and unbelief. They had some idea of the hidden treasure that was there. They knew, or professed to know, that not only was knowledge there—but life was there; that God had given them his book, that by it they might obtain life. Yes; in that book is life—eternal life. It is the revelation of life—of the living one—of Him who said not only, I am the way and the truth—but the Life. We search in this book for life! Other things, no doubt, are there; this but especially. For other things we dig into this wondrous mine of heavenly gold; but above all for this—the life that is deposited there. Its truths are living truths; its words are living words—"The words that I speak unto you they are spirit and they are life." IV. The divine testimony. "They are the scriptures which testify of me." No other writing contains a testimony to Messiah. There are many books, and many speakers; and in their utterances we hear of many gods and many lords; but only one book contains a testimony to the Christ of God. We have philosophers, poets, logicians, orators—but no witnesses for the Son of God. Augustine admired Cicero—but after his conversion he lost his relish, for the name of Christ was not there. Only of one book can it be said "it testifies of me." Yes; the testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of prophecy and of all Scripture. The theme of the book is Messiah; the seed of the woman; the seed of Abraham; the star out of Jacob; the prophet like unto Moses; the righteous One; the tender plant; the righteous King. It is one unbroken testimony to the Christ and his sacrificial work that we get in this volume. The testifier is the Holy Spirit (John 15:26). It is His voice we hear throughout Scripture, speaking of Jesus. It is His testimony that is presented to us as the resting place for our faith; for when God bids us believe, He gives the fullest and surest evidence for us to rest our faith upon. Wherever, then, we turn in Scripture, we find Jesus. There He is all in all; the alpha and the omega of every book. It is the light of Jesus which is diffused through every page. It is the glory of Jesus that we find in all its revelations. He is everywhere in that volume; and He is so in connection with eternal life; in connection with the undoing of the sentence of death passed against our race. The first Adam comes before us at the beginning; but he is the introducer of death; with his name and doings only death is linked. But he soon passes away, and in his place there comes the "second man," the "last Adam," the giver of life, no—the life! And over all Scripture the quickening, life-giving fragrance of His name is diffused. Christ and life; life in Christ; Christ our life—these form the very

essence, the sum and theme, of the Scriptures. "They are those who testify of me." V. Human perversity. "You will not come to me that you might have life." Here is rejection of the Christ; refusal of the life; deliberate standing aloof from the fountain of life; professing to seek the life, yet disjoining that life from the living one; turning away from that living one, when in the form of true humanity he stood before them presenting to them this life of God; pressing to their parched lips the full cup of living water from God's eternal fountain. (1.) There is life for the dead. The Bible assumes that the world is dead; that it needs life; that nothing less than life will meet its case. It speaks of life; proclaims life; reveals its fullness. O dead in sin, there is life for you! (2.) This life is in Christ. Only in Him. None anywhere else. In Him is life, and the life is the light of men. All else is death. "The last Adam was made a quickening spirit" (1 Corinthians 15:45). (3.) Life is to be had by coming to Christ. 'Come and live,' He says, just as He said, 'Come and rest.' Communion with Him is the only source of life. Nothing more is needed; nothing less will do. Are not men trying to do with something less than this? Something less than conversion, less than the Spirit's work, less than the blood and righteousness and salvation of the Son of God! (4.) Lack of life is the result of our own deliberate refusal to deal with Christ. We need not try to throw the blame on God's sovereignty or the need of divine power. These do not alter our responsibility, nor make it less true, that we have deliberately rejected the Christ of God and refused his gift of life.

Night With Jesus "When evening came, his disciples went down to the lake, where they got into a boat and set off across the lake for Capernaum. By now it was dark, and Jesus had not yet joined them." John 6:16-17 Many a dark night has rested over this sea of Tiberias unrecorded. Many a storm has swept it; many an earthquake has convulsed it; many a wave has risen and fallen over its blue expanse; many a scene and hour of danger its steep hills have witnessed—all unrecorded; passing away in silence. But here is one night, of which record has been kept; one blast written down in history; one storm made memorable forever. At what exact part of that lake the occurrence took place we know not; it must have been somewhere towards the north, where Capernaum lay. Let us read this brief record, and learn its everlasting lesson. 1. It was night. The sun had long set over the western steeps of Tiberias. Darkness was over all. The distant twinkling of the city lights in Capernaum or Chorazin was all which broke the gloom. Yes, it was night, and the disciples were alone. The Master was away. Jesus had not come to them. This made it double night. 2. It was night at sea. Not indeed a sea broad and wide, like that which swept round Jonah, and wrecked Paul; but deep and wide enough for danger. They had left the green slopes, where they had been all day with their Master (5:10). To shorten their journey, by cutting off the north-eastern bend of the lake, they had taken ship; but night had overtaken them before they had gone far; midnight had fallen, and they must row through the thick gloom over the eight or ten miles which lay between them and the northern shore. Besides, they were alone. Jesus had not come! They had looked for his joining them before they embarked; and they were looking for Him still, expecting Him by some other boat; but He had not arrived. To be without Him on land, and by day—was sad; but to be without Him at sea, and by night—was sadder still. 3. It was a night of toil. They had rowed some four miles—but they had as many more before them; and it was severe toil after the incessant bustle of such a day as they had spent in feeding the multitudes. They were alone. The Master's presence would have cheered them; and, no doubt, as He had often done, He would have taken the oar along with them, weary as He might be. But He was not with them. They were toiling at the oar in this dark night, and Jesus had not come to them. This made their labor doubly hard, their weariness doubly sore. 4. It was a night of danger. "A strong wind was blowing

and the waters grew rough." The storm had broken loose, and was rushing down from the mountains upon them; the waves were heaving round them and dashing over them. Peril encompassed them. Perhaps they were saying one to another, had the Master been here this storm would not have arisen, as if they would reproach Him for delay, forgetful that distance was nothing to Him. They were alone in this tempest. Jesus had not come to them. This made the storm seem more terrible. Had He been with them, even though He were asleep on the pillow, it would have calmed and cheered them. But He had not come! How much of trouble and despondency may have filled the hearts of the disciples on that night, we know not. The words certainly imply something of these—"By now it was dark, and Jesus had not yet joined them." His delay was a trial of faith. It looked neglectful and unkind. They might be ready to say, "Master, don't You care that we are perishing?" But He loves to test, not to break, their faith. He will not test it beyond what they can bear. He tries it only to strengthen it. Let us look at these words in their more general aspect, as relating to the history of each saint and of the church at large. (1.) Night. (2.) Night without Jesus. (3.) Night with Jesus. (4.) Day with Jesus. 1. Night. All have their nights. The sinner's history is all one long starless night. But the saint has his night too; his night of sorrow, of bereavement, of pain. The Church, too, has her night. She is "not of the night"; but she has "nights." Darkness, tempest, danger, are around about. Persecution, poverty, desertion; "famine, and nakedness, and peril, and sword." She has had many such nights, and will have them until her King arrives. There shall be no night then. But there is night now. 2. Night without Jesus. The sinner's night is altogether without Jesus; no, this is the very gloom of its darkness. But the saint has nights in which Jesus seems distant. "By night upon my bed I sought Him whom my soul loves. I sought Him—but I found Him not." Without Him altogether, he cannot be; for the promise is, "Lo, I am with you always." But there are times of sorrow, weakness, suffering, when He is not realized. And though the outcome of these is to bring Him nearer, yet for a time He seems absent. The bond is not broken—but the joy is not tasted. The Church, too, has her nights of weariness and persecution in which He seems to stand aloof. It is dark—and He comes not. 3. Night with Jesus. His presence is everything. It cannot indeed make it not night; but it makes the night to seem as day. With Him the darkness is as the light. For having Him we have, (1.) Companionship; (2.) Protection; (3.) Safety; (4.) Comfort; (5.) Strength; (6.) Assurance of coming day. With these may we not rejoice in the night? It is the night which draws out these blessings; which makes Jesus more suitable, more necessary. Blessed night that introduces us more fully into the fellowship of Jesus. 4. Day with Jesus. Hitherto it has been night; yet during it the Church has had the Master's presence; "Lo, I am with you always." It has been good for her, indeed, to have Him with her during the world's darkness. But He does not leave her when the day breaks. He does not say, Let me go, for the day breaks. More than ever shall He be with her during the long day of glory which is at hand. "So shall we ever be with the Lord!" He with us, and we with Him. And if his presence made night not only endurable but even pleasant, what will not that presence make the coming day!

The Bread of Immortality "This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. " John 6:50. There are four points here which form the sum of our Lord's statement: (1.) the bread; (2.) the coming down; (3.) the eating; (4.) the not dying. But before taking up these, mark in the wondrous gift here referred to, (1.) the great love of God; yes, "Herein is love"; (2.) the wisdom of God, providing the right food for hungry souls; (3.) the power of God, imparting to that food its nourishing properties; or rather, giving effect to these properties in

causing them to nourish us; making that bread omnipotent, so that no amount of human hunger can withstand it. We cannot think of the gift without calling these things to mind; the gift carrying us back and up to the love, the wisdom, the power of the giver; no, embodying these in all their fullness. The giver of the bread is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. I. The bread. Bread is that which feeds the body; nourishes it, strengthens it, makes it grow. Without it, weakness comes, disease, and death. It is of bread for the soul that the Lord here speaks; of something that will sustain the life of the soul; no, make it grow. He announces Himself as that bread. Not some truth or doctrine—but Himself; the Word made flesh; very man and very God; His whole and complete person; not the manhood without the Godhead, nor the Godhead without the manhood; but His person, God man. He is the bread; not merely bread—but the bread; the one true bread; without whom the soul cannot grow, nor its life be sustained; for only by this life sustaining bread, can such sickly souls be nourished. As such (no less than as the sin-bearer), he is despised and rejected of men (our soul loathes this light food!) yet none the less is He necessary to the soul as its food—its bread. Out of Him; apart from His person, there is no nourishment, no sustenance. He feeds; He alone; He feeds us on Himself. All else is husks, or mere air and vapor. He alone is bread; He, the Christ of God; He, the eternal Word and Son; He, God manifest in flesh; He, in His glorious person, is our food; His flesh is food indeed. That which His person reveals to us of Godhead—of God, and the love of God; of God, and the wisdom, power, righteousness, majesty, and grace of God—is bread, the bread of the soul; the true bread and sustenance of creaturehood; the hidden manna; better than angels' food; "the grain of heaven" (Psalms 78:24); the divine provision for the love and nourishment of humanity. Our Lord applies various names to it: (1.) "bread from heaven"; (2.) "true bread"; (3.) "the bread of God"; (4.) "bread of life"; (5.) "living bread." All these are names indicative of its excellence, its power, its suitableness. It is the very bread we need; no other would do; only Immanuel's person; the Son of God Himself. This is the true unleavened bread; holy and incorruptible. The curse is not in it—but only the blessing. The Word made flesh, is the soul's eternal food. II. The coming down. In one aspect this bread came "up" as well as "came down"; the human part coming up, the divine part coming down. But as it is the divine part that gives all its vitality and power of nourishment to it, so it is said, as a whole, to come down from heaven. The word is such as to refer to past, present, and future. (1.) It came down; (2.) it is coming down; (3.) it will continue to come down. In the first promise, it came down; in all subsequent ones, it did the same. It especially came down when the Word was made flesh. That was the great descent of the divine bread; the like of which had not been in our world, nor can be in any other form. It was the bringing down of the granary and storehouse of heaven to earth. That storehouse is inexhaustible; ever accessible; its contents may be said to be either always open to us here on earth, or to be always coming down. In either aspect we see a perpetual supply; a never-failing fullness; ever-present bread; like the manna, ready for us each morning; in double amount each Sabbath; in seven-fold amount each communion. Let us open our mouth wide. Alas for our want of appetite! There is bread enough and to spare—but we have no relish for it; we do not hunger for it. Hence our leanness; the poverty of our blood; the paleness of countenance; the feebleness of our limbs. We do not feed on it sufficiently. What different Christians should we be did we fully partake of it as God presents it. Eat, O friends! Eat, and live! Eat, and be strong! Eat, and be in soul health! Eat, and go forth to do the work of God. Not on earth will you find the eternal bread; the bread which feeds the immortal spirit. Only in Him who came down from heaven—the Christ of God. III. The eating. Faith eats, and

fills the soul; unbelief refuses to eat, and so starves us. We eat by, and in believing. We take into our souls the words of the Holy Spirit concerning this bread; concerning Him who is the bread; and in doing so, we feed on it; we feed on Him. We receive His body, we take His flesh into our mouth, not in some carnal or mystical way—but in taking in the testimony, in studying and receiving the truth—the divine words are food: "Your words were found, and I did eat them"; but the special word which we eat, and by which we are nourished, is the word concerning Him who came down from heaven, the Christ of God, the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. God bids us eat. He does not say, "Lest they put forth the hand, and take of the tree, and eat, and live forever"; He commands us to do this; "put forth the hand, take, eat, and live forever." IV. The not dying. All food is for the production and sustaining of life. The tree of life indicated this. We are to eat that we may live. Immortality is maintained by the provision which God has made for its upholding. This immortality corresponds to the food which produces and nourishes it. Ours is a divine immortality: "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." Christ's flesh is life to us. It quickens us. We eat it, and live forever. It is the bread without leaven; without anything in it which can weaken or corrupt; but everything fitted to produce immortality, and incorruptibility. The expression, "and not die," refers specially to the death of those who did eat the desert manna. That manna could not keep them from dying; but this hidden manna can. We may, however, connect the words here with those in Genesis, "In the day you eat thereof you shall surely die." To eat of that tree of Paradise was fatal. Death must follow. To eat of this better tree, this heavenly bread, is not fatal; is not mortal; no, it is life-giving. To eat it is not to die—but to live. No, there is no life—but in eating it. In the day you eat thereof, you shall not die—but live. Eat and live! is our message to a dead world. The expression, "that a man," should rather be, that "any one," may eat thereof. It is not a mere statement—but an invitation—to all that this hungry, famished world contains. Israel only had the manna; to the world is offered this better bread. "Any one," is God's message! "Whoever"; "everyone!" God places this bread in the world, and bids all eat of it. Empty, starving world, come and partake! "Bread enough and to spare" (Luke 15:17), is God's message. There is enough for all and each. It is free to every one. "My flesh I give for the life of the world." There is no restriction, no exclusion. Anyone! Ah surely, O man, that takes you in; as you are—a poor prodigal, starving on husks! Oh, eat and live!

Christ's Flesh—the World's Life "My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." John 6:51 Of the Word, the eternal Word of God, it is said, "In Him was life" (John 1:4). It was as the Word, or Son, that He was the life. In Him, as the second Person of the Godhead, is the infinite fountainhead of life. But between Him and us there is a great gulf. This divine well of life is inaccessible to us so long as "the Word" remains simply "the Word." For the communication of the life, He must be something more than the Word. The fountain is infinite; but it is unapproachable by us. We cannot climb to the heaven of heavens. A well must be dug on earth into which the heavenly waters may flow, so as to be within our reach. Earth cannot ascend to heaven; heaven must descend to earth, bringing with it all its riches of life. "The Word was made flesh;" and thus life was brought down to us. A man, with flesh and blood such as we have—was made the depository or storehouse of the life. As "the Word" he was the life; but only as "the Word made flesh" is He our life. As the Son of God he is "light;" but only as the God-man is he the "light of the world," the "light of men." It is as the Word made flesh that He speaks when He says, "The bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give as the life of the world;" and again, when He says, "My flesh is food indeed—except you eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of Man, you have no

life in you." But food of itself does not produce or commence life; it only sustains and nourishes it. Dead men cannot eat; the dead body digests no food, however excellent. But He who is the Word made flesh actively quickens, as well as passively feeds. "The Son quickens whom He will." As the Creator of the universe, He speaks and it is done; He creates all things new. From himself goes forth directly the quickening power by which souls are raised from the dead. And having been made alive from the dead, they begin to feed on Him—and find in this food their daily life, and strength, and growth. Thus He is "the life of the world." It is as "the world's life" that we have fellowship with Him. It is as "the world's life" that faith recognizes Him and rejoices in Him. "Christ our life!" This is our watchword and experience. To say that Christ is our life is not only to say there is life in Christ for me—but that life is flowing down for me and into me. It is just such life as we need in all respects, recovering and refreshing the soul; not only rescuing it from the death of condemnation—but acting with resurrection-power in restoring it to right spiritual feeling and action. It is life which, when it comes in, fills up the void within as well as comes down like rain upon the mown grass, and like showers that water the earth. It is life most full and ample; it is life abiding and unbroken; it is life undeserved and unpurchased; it is life which no power of death nor influence of disease can affect or impair. I. It is connection with Christ, which brings the life into us. Cut the wires of the electric telegraph, and all communication ceases between city and city. Restore them, and the communion is resumed; the current flows again. So, it is connection with Christ our life that vitalizes, quickens us spiritually. He is in heaven, and we are upon the earth; but the greatness of distance matters not, provided there be connection, the connection, as it were, of a single wire. That single wire is faith. This is the one connecting medium. Not love, nor holiness, nor goodness, nor earnestness—but faith, simple faith. Our belief of the divine testimony concerning Christ, is the one thing that links us to Him. Other things follow upon this; but they are not the connecting wire. Faith, as the only grace which admits of being thoroughly insulated and separated from earthly things—is the true and only conducting wire. Unbelief is the great non-conducting medium which arrests, in a moment, all communication between heaven and earth. Faith only restores this—establishing the surest and most blessed of all connections between Christ and the soul, between heaven and earth. II. It is connection with Christ that CONTINUES the life. The life is not like a treasure of gold brought to us, and deposited with us, to serve us for a lifetime. It is not like a lake or cistern of water formed within us, rendering us independent of all without us. It is something laid up for us in heaven, and transmitted down to earth, hour by hour, as light is deposited in the sun, and at each successive moment emitted from him to us. The connection between us and Christ must be kept up unbroken, else the life in us will fail. It is not said, he who "has believed," but he "that believes," has everlasting life. There is a well near Jerusalem, called by the Jews the well of Nehemiah, which is chiefly fed by the rain. When the showers fall abundantly, and the Kedron flows like a river, this well is filled and the city rejoices. But this is only once or twice in the year. But there is a deep well underneath the temple, which is fed by water from the great pools of Solomon, near Bethlehem. This is always full, being fed from a perennial spring whose waters fail not. Only when the aqueduct is broken which leads the water along, mile after mile, into Jerusalem, can this temple-cistern fail. Such is to be the manner of our life. It is not like the inconstant well fed by an intermitting stream; but like the great temple cistern, ever full, because fed from a never failing spring. Faith is the aqueduct which brings the water from the pools of our true Solomon into us—his spiritual temples. Every moment this divine aqueduct should be discharging the waters of life into our souls from the unfailing

fountain above. By day and night, in calm or storm, through gardens or barren hillsides—that stream flows on, and shall flow on forever! Time has broken Solomon's aqueduct and interrupted the communication between the fountain and the temple-cistern; but no time can break the connection between us and the heavenly fountain; for who shall separate us from the love of Christ? "Because I live, you shall live also." Thus the soul is kept always full and fresh. III. Connection with Christ introduces us into the everlasting life hereafter. For the present is but the pledge of the coming life. It is into a glorious flower, which the present bud expands; and its future expansion it owes to that same connection which quickened it and nourished it here. For faith is the substance of things hoped for; and it is into these "things hoped for" that faith introduces us at last. The fullness of the life is yet to come. "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory." And it is for eternal life and glory that our present course of faith on earth is the preparation. "It does not yet appear what we shall be"; but we know that the future life of vision, into which the present life of faith is leading us, will be as unutterably blessed and glorious as it is abiding and everlasting. Such is the beginning, the middle, and the end, or at least the consummation, of this life. And this threefold blessing is linked with the one thing—faith. Our belief of the divine testimony concerning Christ, our life, is the one connecting link or line between the past, the present, and the future of our better life. He who believes has Christ for his life—now, and for evermore. He who has the Son has the life; and he who has the life, the adoption; and he who has the adoption, has the kingdom and the glory. This connection with the living One, with Christ our life, works in many ways. Having been thus brought to the life, or rather the life having been brought into us, everything about us partakes of this life. As every part of the flower or tree gets the sap, so every part of our being gets this life out of the divine fullness of life deposited in the living One. Our religion becomes a living religion; our prayers living prayers; our praises living praises; our service living service; our words living words; our labor living labor—our whole being is now pervaded with life, spiritual life, divine life. How different everything is now to us! For it is life which looses our bondage and brings in the liberty. It is life that casts out the darkness and fills us with light. It is life that gives us eyes to see, and ears to hear, and feet to run in the heavenly way. The coming in of Christ, our life, is the new creation of the man! And what is there that that new creation will not work within us! This life is that of the Word made flesh. It is a new and divine life; for we are "made partakers of the divine nature"; we are "made partakers of Christ." And it is as if the same blood that flowed through his veins, flowed through ours. It is not a restoration to us of the first Adam's life; it is the impartation of a far higher life from the second Adam; for the first Adam was made a living soul—but the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Nor is it simply the flesh or body of Christ that is our life—but that flesh or body broken. It is not merely an incarnate Christ—but an incarnate Christ crucified! That flesh of the Son of man, in order to be the food of our souls, must be bruised! And that in which we find our food and life is the broken body and shed blood of the Lord. On this flesh and blood we feed when we receive the Father's witness concerning it, and dwell upon the truths which that testimony contains. Thus Christ's flesh is food indeed, and his blood is drink indeed. Consider this life under the following aspects and bearing: 1. It is life from the dead. Like Lazarus, we are dead and buried. The living voice of the Word made flesh speaks to us and says, Come forth. We hear it and obey. We arise from the dead at the call of Him who is the resurrection and the life. This is conversion. This is the new birth; a resurrection from the dead. 2. It is life in the midst of death. From the day of conversion the life is like a spark in the midst of a stormy sea, or like our body exposed to the polar frost. Everything is against its

continuance; and, were it not divine, it could not remain. But it is divine; and maintains its vigor in the midst of a world of death. 3. It is life in death. On a deathbed the life shines out in its brightness; and when death seizes us, this life remains untouched. Over it the last enemy has no power. Nor can the grave extinguish it. It is life which survives mortality and corruption; life which defies the tomb; life which he, who has the power of death, cannot reach. 4. It is resurrection life. For a while it becomes invisible, while soul and body are parted. But it soon rekindles, or rather re-appears, like a returning star, as soon as soul and body are re-united. It never indeed leaves the soul, even when the body crumbles down. But it remains unseen by us until the resurrection-day. Then it rises like a sun—a sun to shine forever! When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory. Take these LESSONS: (1.) Despise not this life. Some have too long slighted it. Trifle no more with a thing so glorious. (2.) Receive it now. For this we make known the divine testimony; for it is with our reception of it that the life is connected. (3.) Cherish it evermore. Let it reign within you, triumphing over death; and making you feel, and act, and speak as living men! (4.) Anticipate the resurrection day. Then we shall know that life in a way such as we have never known it here. It will be infinitely fuller, mote blessed, and more glorious!

Come and Drink "On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink." John 7:37. Here we note, (1.) the time; (2.) the place; (3.) the giver; (4.) the gift; (5.) the people; (6.) the love. I. The TIME. The last and great day of the feast of tabernacles; when Israel’s joy was fullest; at least in appearance and expression; just when men would have thought there was least need of any other joy; and no propriety in diverting their minds from the scene before them; when many days of religious service would have seemed quite enough to fill them. Just then the voice is heard and the message strikes on their ear, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink." II. The PLACE. Jerusalem—the temple. What need of anything else than what that temple afforded. Was not David’s experience still true, "How lovely are your tabernacles"; "I was glad when they said to me." Besides, the temple was now filled with crowds; and a scene was enacting in its courts of striking aspect. The Levite was now bringing in the water from Siloam in the golden pitcher, or pouring it on the sacrifice; and Israel was about to burst forth in one loud shout of joy. Imposing scene and place! III. The GIVER. It is the Son of God who stands up in the midst of these ten thousands; with something in his hand for them; something which he counts worthy of their acceptance. The giver is divine and heavenly; not merely a prophet or teacher sent from God—but the Son of God himself; who knew what they needed, and what He had to give; who saw into their hearts; had sounded their depths of emptiness; had measured the intensity of their thirst. He is himself God’s gift; yet He is also giver; the dispenser of a fullness which is absolutely infinite. To himself he turns their eye—here as always elsewhere. "Come unto me." They were dealing with other things or people; he bids them deal with himself. Feasts, altars, sacrifices, doctrines, ceremonies, were all in vain; they must deal with himself. IV. The GIFT. Living water; something with which to quench their thirst; the Holy Spirit. Here is a gift in Christ’s hands for them; a divine gift from a divine giver; a gift sufficient to fill the soul of the emptiest, to quench the thirst of the thirstiest; a gift not only great enough to fill them—but to overflow upon others; a gift personal, infinite, free. There are two gifts of God which stand aloft and alone in their priceless greatness—the gift of his Son, the gift of his Spirit; both of these presented to man, pressed upon him "If you knew the gift of God, you would have asked and he would have given you living water." V. The PEOPLE. Who are they who need this living water?

Not heathens; not profane and irreligious; but Jews; religious Jews; engaged in the worship of God, at one of their most joyful feasts. This is remarkable. In the fourth chapter it is to the Samaritan that he presents the cup of living water. In the book of the Revelation, it is offered indiscriminately to all, Jew and Gentile. So also in the fifty-fifth of Isaiah. But here it is to the Jew, the religious Jew. He is the thirsty one, he needs living water. His rites, and feasts, and sacrifices cannot fill him, nor quench his thirst. He has still a deep void within—an intense thirst, which calls for something more spiritual and divine. It is not then to the idolatrous pagan that the Lord speaks; not merely to the lover of pleasure or lust; the heedless sinner. It is to the men who frequent the sanctuary—who pray and praise outwardly; who go to the Lord's table. It is to them He speaks. Perhaps the thirstiest of our race are to be found among our so-called religious men—and I do not mean the hypocrite or Pharisee—but those who, with devout conscientiousness, attend to what are called religious duties in all their parts. They go through the whole round and routine of service—but they are not happy. They are still thirsty and weary. This external religiousness helps to pacify conscience—but it does not make them happy. Sabbath comes after Sabbath, and finds them in their place in the sanctuary—but they are not happy. It is a form or a performance; an empty vessel. They are just where they were. There are multitudes of such in our day; in our churches; at our communion tables, To them Jesus speaks, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink." Duties, ceremonies, and performances cannot make you happy. They are a weariness. They leave you often more thirsty than before. But deal with Jesus, as God's gift, as the dispenser of God's gift—you will find in Him the fountain of living water. VI. The LOVE. It is all love, from first to last. In love Jesus stands up and speaks. In love He presents the full vessel of living water, and presses it to their parched lips. Here is the love which passes knowledge; love yearning over unhappy man, and pitying his unhappiness. Come to the waters! Come, and quench your thirst. Come, and be full! Come, and be happy for evermore!

Jesus Our Light "Then each went to his own home." John 7:53. "But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. Then Jesus spoke to them again: "I am the light of the world. Anyone who follows Me will never walk in the darkness but will have the light of life" John 8:1, John 8:12. If we group together the scenes of this and the succeeding chapter, we might head them thus—a day with Jesus; in which we have not merely his answers to the disputing Jews—but his proclamation of love; a night with Jesus on the Mount of Olives; dawn with Jesus in the temple, listening to his early teaching; sunrise with Jesus, as, pointing to the east, He says, I am the light of the world. Let us follow, however, another division, which will, perhaps, bring out the truths of the passage more fully, in connection both with man and the Lord; (1.) man at home, Jesus not at home; (2.) man the listener, Jesus the teacher; (3.) man the sinner, Jesus the forgiver; (4.) man the child of darkness, Jesus the light of life. I. Man at home—Jesus not at home. "Then each went to his own home." "But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives." The crowd which had surrounded Him all the day gradually drops off, one by one, as the evening draws on, and Jesus is left alone. Each one has a home to go to, a roof to shelter him, and retires to rest with his family—Jesus has nowhere to lay his head. They go one way—He goes another. They keep within the city walls—He goes outside the gate to Olivet, there to spend the night in prayer. He is not at home; even in the temple, which is his Father's house, He must not stay; its gates are closing, and He is shut out; the temple shuts Him out, the city shuts Him out. He can only go to the places where man is not; to the solitudes where, outside of Jerusalem, outside even of Bethany, He can meet with God. This homelessness of the Son of God was for us. He became homeless that we might have a home—a home in his

Father’s house. He went outside the gate that we might enter in. He became an exile, taking our place and life of banishment, that we might have an entrance ministered to us into the celestial city, the Paradise of God. Have you, O man, availed yourself of this great work, and returned to your Father’s house? Or are you still an exile from God, though at home on earth? II. Man the listener—Jesus the teacher. That to which God calls us is "listening." "Hear, and your soul shall live;" "faith comes by hearing." Christ came to us as the Word—to speak to us; his very coming was God saying to us, "Now listen to me." Seldom do we find man in this attitude, and hence so little faith; and, when Christ comes the second time, He will find little faith, because few listening. But here we have a group of listeners, and that in the early dawn, gathered round the eternal Word. And He teaches! How willing to teach! How glad to get a listener, an open ear! How eager is He to pour in all his wisdom; to teach the ignorant; to unteach them the evil and error; to teach them the good and the true! Are our ears ever open? Are we eager listeners? As ready to hear as He is to speak? Oh how much we lose of happy wisdom, simply from not listening! Jesus Himself knew what it was to hear the Father, "He awakens morning by morning; He awakens mine ear to hear as one who is taught." And having thus learned, He comes to teach. Learn of me, He says. The Lord make us willing learners! The Lord give us open ears! III. Man the sinner—Christ the forgiver. In the midst of the teaching and the listening, a scene occurs; an interruption, yet not truly so; an interruption which only illustrates the character of the teacher. Vile sin has just been discovered, and the culprit is brought in. It is flagrant transgression. How will He deal with it? Will He palliate it, or will He say, Go and stone her! If He does the former, what becomes of his holiness and professed veneration for the law? If the latter, what becomes of his kindness to publicans and sinners. He does neither. And yet He pardons the guilty! How marvelous the grace! How wonderfully He deals with sin and the sinner! He condemns—no, He makes his hearers condemn it—and not only the woman’s—but their own; yet He forgives! He shows them sin in a worse, a wider, a more universal aspect than they dreamed of; yet He also shows that nothing can obstruct his forgiving love. His is pardon to the uttermost. He came to save sinners! Who is there that He is not willing and able to save? IV. Man the child of darkness—Christ the light of the world. These are solemn words, "children of night," children of darkness—worse even than the world’s phrase, children of the mist. The world is dark—darkness itself. Each soul is dark. Man’s efforts to enlighten himself has only left him darker. But the light has come; the true light now shines. The Christ has come, and He is the light of the world, the light of the soul, the light of life. In the present case He is pointing to the rising sun and saying, "I (not yon sun) am the light of the world." Until I appear all is night. Then, all is day. Christ as the revealer of the Father, of his grace and righteousness—Christ as the possessor and dispenser of the Holy Spirit—is the light of the world. 1. Light cheers and gladdens. Thus Jesus gives joy and peace. 2. Light purifies. Jesus renews, sanctifies, assimilates. 3. Light quickens. Jesus removes death; imparts life. 4. Light heals. Jesus heals wounds, diseases; He cures. 5. Light liberates. Jesus sets us free. No bondage where Jesus is. Oh the difference between night and noon, darkness and sunshine! Have you made the exchange? Will you make it now? He who believes in me shall not abide in darkness.

Truth and Liberty "Then said Jesus to those Jews who believed on him—If you continue in my word, then are you my disciples indeed; and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." John 8:31-32. "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God"; accordingly we read in verse thirty, "As he spoke these words, many believed on him." So He taught, and so they believed; as the apostle puts it "So we preached, and so you believed." It is always in connection

with the word of truth that the Holy Spirit works in us. Christ's voice and the Spirit's hand go together. We find this in our text; but we find more than this. I. The reception of Christ's word begins discipleship. There may be many an anxious thought before this; many a tear; many a bitter groan. There may be alarm, and disquietude, and inquiry. But these are not discipleship. They are but as so many gropings after teaching; so many inquiries after a school and a teacher which will meet the soul's capacities and longings. All the world is, in its poor, dark way, stretching out its hands after something which can only be realized in Christ. But this is not discipleship. All men are saying, Who will show us any good; but this is not discipleship. That begins with receiving His word; not with doing some great thing; but with receiving His word; receiving it as the scholar receives the master's teaching. He is the Word; and He speaks the word. What is this word which He speaks? It is a word (1.) concerning the Father; (2.) concerning Himself. He comes as the revealer of the Father, and as the declarer of Himself and His work. From the moment that we receive what He tells us concerning the Father and Himself, we become His disciples, His scholars. Thus we are taught, not of man—but of God. This is the true, the authentic beginning of discipleship. II. Continuance in that word is the test of true discipleship. Our Lord evidently lays great stress on this point, continuance in His word. It is not continuance in general adherence to His cause—but continuance in His word—in that word, by the reception of which we became disciples. As it is by holding the beginning of our confidence that we are made partakers of Christ, so it is by continuing in the word, that we make good the genuineness of our discipleship. "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly," says Paul; and it is this word that contains everything we need. (1.) It is an expansive word; ever widening its dimensions; growing upon us; never old, ever new; in which we make continual discoveries; the same tree—but ever putting forth new branches and leaves; the same river—but ever swelling and widening; losing none of its old water, yet ever receiving accessions. (2.) It is a quickening word; maintaining old life, yet producing new; "Your word has quickened me." (3.) It is a strengthening word; nerving us and invigorating us; lifting us up when bowed down; imparting health, and courage, and resolution, and persistency. (4.) It is a sanctifying word. It purifies; it detects the evil, and purges it away; it pours in holiness into the soul. It works a blessed work within. Let us continue in it; not weary of it; not losing relish for it; but abiding in it. III. Knowledge of the truth is the result of discipleship. We have seen the properties and virtues of the word in itself; mark the impartation of these to the disciple. All who enter this school, and who put themselves under the teaching of this instructor, are taught of God; as it is written, "They shall be all taught of God." He shall know the truth; not a truth, nor part of it—but the truth, the whole of it—the truth, and not error—Him who is the truth. He shall be wise; wise in Christ; in Him who is our wisdom. He shall know it; not guess at it, nor speculate on it; nor get a glimpse of it; but know it; realize it; make choice of it; appreciate it. The truth is Christ himself; the teacher of the truth is Christ; He is both teacher and lesson. The knowledge of Christ is the knowledge of the truth; ever growing, both in extent and in depth. Christ's promise to the disciple is, "You shall know the truth." Blessed promise in a day of doubt and error. IV. This truth is liberty. All truth is, so far, liberty; and all error bondage; some truth is greater liberty, and some error greater bondage. Blessed are these words of the Master: "The truth shall make you free." Bondage, with many, is simply associated with tyranny, bad government—civil or ecclesiastical despotism. Christ's words go far deeper. They go to the root of the evil. The real chains, the real prison, the real bondage—are within, not without; so the true liberty is within, not without. It springs from what a man knows of God and of his Christ. Seldom do men realize this. Error, bondage!

How can that be, they say, if the error be the man's own voluntary doing; if it be the result of his own intellectual effort; if it do not be connected with prison-walls or the oppression of power? But the master is very explicit. The truth shall make you free! There is no other freedom, worthy of the name, of which this is not the root. "He is the freeman whom the truth makes free—and all others are slaves." Be free, says the Son of God to the Sons of men! How? By becoming my disciples; knowing the truth which I shall teach; and following me, If the Son make you free—you shall be free indeed!

The Father Honoring The Son "It is my Father who honors me." John 8:54. To honor is to do or to speak that of a person, which shall not only show him our own esteem for him—but shall let others see that, and make them esteem him likewise. Thus God honored Abel by openly accepting his sacrifice, and showing him to be the man of his love and favor. Thus He honored Enoch by translating him; Noah, by singling him out to be the saved one of his generation; Abraham, by appearing to him as the God of glory, and calling him out of Ur of the Chaldees; Joseph, by bringing him out of the pit of Dothan and the prison of Pharaoh to the second rank in Egypt; Moses, by drawing him out of the Nile, and making him king in Jeshurun; David, by calling him from the sheepfolds of Bethlehem to the throne of Israel; Solomon, by giving him wisdom, and power, and riches, and a peaceful kingdom, and making him so pre-eminently the type of Messiah and his glorious kingdom. Such is honor, and such is the way in which we see it conferred. By what God said and did to these individuals, He not only manifested his sovereign choice—but his love for them, his appreciation of their character, his sense of their fitness for the honor conferred. All this is specially seen in the Father's dealings with his Son. We see his love and admiration for him, as well as his desire to make him the loved and admired of others. We see his delight in him, and his purpose to make him the delight of all in earth and heaven. We see his sense of his infinite excellency, and beauty, and perfection; his fitness for, and worthiness of the honor bestowed already on him since the day that he ascended on high, and to be yet more abundantly conferred on him at his second coming, when he comes to be glorified in his saints, and admired of all those who believe. Let us consider— I. The BESTOWER of the honor. It is the Father. The value of the honor depends greatly on him who bestows it. Honor bestowed for a price, or by self or by unworthy hands, or by one incapable of judging—is worthless. Flatterers have honored kings, as Tertullus did Felix—but that was no honor at all. Napoleon put the crown upon his own head—but that was no honor. The Father, however, knows what He is bestowing, and on whom He is conferring the gift. He is fit judge both of the person and the honor. We may then be well assured that the honor received by Christ is well bestowed. The Father loves the Son; and this assures us that He is worthy of the love; He honors the Son, and this assures us that He is worthy of the honor. II. The RECEIVER of the honor. It is the Son, the Christ. He it is whom the king delights to honor. He is one whom the Father knows well; and has been acquainted with from all eternity. He is God—true God. He is man—true man. He is God-man, the person in whom the two natures meet, and therefore altogether unique, a new thing on earth, and a new thing in heaven; one in whom all created and all uncreated perfection meets; one in whom all that is glorious in the universe centers; one in whom all that is excellent, both in heaven and earth, is displayed. He is the most marvelous revelation and incarnation of divine wisdom that can be found throughout the universe. He is the infinitely perfect handiwork of the infinitely perfect Jehovah; the only thing brought forth in time and into whose composition creaturehood enters, in which there can be found no flaw, and of which we can say there is not the possibility of fall or failure in all the eternal future.

III. The nature of the HONOR bestowed. As in the constitution of his person we have something peculiar, so in the honor bestowed we have something corresponding to this. It is divine honor; but it is more. It is not only all the honor which the Father receives and which the Spirit receives—but it is something in addition, something which they cannot receive, something arising out of the superadded humanity; and humanity in connection with divinity. What this is we may not understand—but we know that it must be so. Again, it is human honor, honor in connection with his perfect manhood; for He is the only true specimen of perfect manhood, and as such is entitled to all the honor which God intended for our race. No more, He is entitled to honor such as Adam could not receive—the honor arising to his manhood from its connection with the Godhead; honor, therefore, of a far higher kind than could possibly be given to any creature not connected with Godhead, yet, still human honor. Thus the Godhead gets an honor such as it could not have gotten, except in virtue of its connection with creaturehood; and the creaturehood gets an honor such as it could not have got save by reason of its connection with Godhead. There is in this way a peculiar honor created, and a peculiar vessel prepared for receiving it; honor such as could not have been received by any other being in the universe, except the Christ of God, the Incarnate Son. From this, too, there springs, peculiar honor to the Father from this God-man—honor at once divine and human; honor such as no one in heaven or earth can give but he. No one can honor the Father as the Christ of God can. IV. The times and ways in which this honor is bestowed. At his birth, baptism, transfiguration, resurrection, ascension, still more at his second coming. Every day the Father honored Him when here. Dishonored by man, He was honored by God. At present, in heaven, He receives glory and honor. Hereafter, in his kingdom, the full honor is to be bestowed. When He comes again, He comes to be glorified. Thus the Father declares his worthiness, and shows his admiration and love of the Son; his purpose to fill heaven and earth with it, to spread it over all time and all eternity. V. The results of this. The bearings of this honor on the whole universe are immeasurable and inconceivable. This honor is at once the pledge and the measure of the blessing which the universe receives, and shall receive forever. These results are such as the following— 1. To the FATHER. It is through the honor conferred on the Son that the Father is more fully unveiled and manifested, as well as more abundantly glorified. The honor bestowed on the Son comes back to the Father; for all that the Son receives, and all that He does, is to the glory of God the Father. 2. To the HOLY SPIRIT. The Spirit's office is to glorify Christ; it is through Him that the honor comes to the Son. By means of this shall the Spirit be made fully known and glorified; His Godhead declared and illustrated; His wisdom and power displayed. 3. To the whole GODHEAD. The three-one Jehovah is glorified through means of the honor bestowed upon the second Person, the Incarnate Word. Each Person is more fully manifested and more abundantly glorified; and the One Jehovah, Father, Son, and Spirit receives new and everlasting honor. 4. To the CHURCH. Christ's honor is hers; for all that He has is hers. She is made partaker of Christ, joint-heir with Him. The Bridegroom's glory is not for himself alone. His bride shares it with him. She shares His riches, His inheritance, His kingdom, and His crown. This she does by faith even now; she will do so in reality when He returns as King of kings, to place her beside himself upon His throne. 5. To HEAVEN. The greatness of the King's honor adds to the glory of his palace, his metropolis, lighting up the great bridal-hall with new splendor, and irradiating with new brightness, the heavenly Jerusalem, whose brightness is already beyond that of the sun. Infinite is the addition of glory to the heaven of heavens, from the glory of Him who is its King. 6. To ANGELS. He is their head, as well as the church's—though not so closely knit to them, as to us. Principalities and

powers are his hosts, his servants, his royal retinue, and in his honor they are honored. Each angel shines more brightly from the glory put upon the Incarnate Son. 7. To EARTH. At present we do not see any change. The curse is still here. Creation still groans. Shame is over all. But the curse is to pass away. Creation is to be delivered. Earth is to be clothed upon with a new and immortal robe; made more fair than Paradise. All this through the honor put upon the Son. For earth is specially His country, His home—the birthplace of the Man Christ Jesus. His body is composed of the dust; and here he found not only his cradle—but his grave. Above all other places, it has a claim to share his glory. 8. To the UNIVERSE. The whole wide stretch of infinite space shall be irradiated with this glory. Every planet, every star, every fragment of creation, far and near, shall receive fresh luster from this new-lighted sun. Let us honor Him now. He will be honored hereafter. We are sure of that. Such is the Father's purpose. But let us honor Him now, when He is getting no honor from men. Let us honor Him here where he gets only dishonor. In the great day for which we are waiting, the day of His second coming, he will be abundantly glorified. But let us who know him not wait for this—but glorify him in this day and age of evil and unbelief. Sinner, honor Christ! Honor him by coming to him and getting salvation at his hands. The honor which the Father puts on Him as Savior, is the security for a present pardon to you. Your pardon is Christ's honor. God glorifies Him in receiving and blessing you. Kiss the Son!

The Honor Given To Faith "Then Jesus said, "Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?" John 11:40 That which alone is worth the seeing; that which fills and gladdens the soul, when seen and known; that, without which we must remain unsatisfied and unblest forever; that, in comparison with which all other sights are as nothing—is "the glory of God." That which righteous men of old desired to see—but saw only in glimpses and at intervals; that, for the seeing of which Moses prayed, saying, "Show me, I beseech you, your glory"; that to which the eye of every creature should turn, in longing earnestness—is "the glory of God." That which everything in heaven and earth is intended to reveal, for the "heavens declare the glory of God," and the earth everywhere shows it forth; that, for the beholding of which our eyes were made, and for the appreciation of which our minds were formed; that, for the unfolding of which sin came in, and is yet to be expelled by holiness, and death came in that it may yet be succeeded by more blessed life; that, for the revelation of which the Son of God took flesh, and died, and was buried, and rose again—was "the glory of God." It is not God Himself that Christ here speaks of our seeing, though in another place He says, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." It is his "glory," or the revelation of that which is in Him—some visible display of the invisible excellencies that are in Him. In one sense we "shall see God"; in another, we cannot see Him; for no man has seen nor can see Him; only the Son of God, who is in the bosom of the Father, can see and declare Him. But without noticing this point farther, we observe that it is His "glory" that is spoken of here as that which we are to see. The glory of God is that which shows Him to be the glorious being that He is; and it is through the knowledge of His glory that we reach the knowledge of Himself. This glory is spread out before us in all His works; it is written out at length for us to read in the Scriptures of His truth; and it is centered and embodied in his incarnate Son, who is the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person. But the one special point of which our Lord here speaks, is His glory as the bringer of life out of death. It was this that the Son of God came so fully to reveal, and did reveal, both in His own person, as the dying and rising One, and in the works of his hands. Elsewhere He speaks of this glory being manifested in his opening the eyes of the blind, and so bringing light out of darkness; here He speaks of showing it in the raising

of Lazarus from the dead, and so bringing life out of death and the grave. That this was a signal display of divine glory is evident from the greatness of the thing itself, and from the stress which the Bible lays on resurrection and the power needful to accomplish it. To remove the penalty of death; to undo the work which death had done; to conquer him that had the power of death; to swallow up death in victory—these are things in the accomplishment of which man could have no share. They are altogether the doing of God; and their accomplishment is the special manifestation of his glory. Resurrection, then, is that which Christ has taught us to regard as one of the most signal revelations of the glory of God. How it is so, I do not now ask; I take the statement of Scripture as to the fact itself. And if in the resurrection of one that glory was to be so conspicuously seen, how much more so in the resurrection of the millions of the saints in the day of the Lord. The glory that God is to get from the resurrection of his saints, is, next to that from the resurrection of his Son, the greatest that He shall receive. Whatever we may have seen or known of this glory before that, will be as nothing when compared with the abundance and the brightness of the glory to be manifested then. One Lazarus raised from the dead was to show His glory, what will not myriads do? That which had blotted the work of God, which had marred that which God pronounced good, which had seemed to bring discredit upon God, and to call in question his power, his wisdom, his foresight, his goodness—was death. It seemed to have come in spite of God, and to possess the power of undoing all that God had done; it seemed to intimate the existence of a being stronger than God, and capable of throwing down all that God might build up; it seemed to track the footsteps of the Creator, so that wherever He went to create, it followed to destroy. From this, what glory could accrue to God? Did not death seem to mock Omnipotence, and bring his excellency to shame? It did; and hence the stress that is laid upon the undoing of death and the emptying of the grave. Hence the glory that is said to be brought to God by resurrection; and hence the name which Christ takes to himself, "the Resurrection and the Life," and the work which he is specially said to have accomplished, that is, to have brought "life and immortality to light." It is in life, not in death, that the glory of God is seen; and it is to Him specially as the bringer of life out of death, who we are to look, in order to behold his glory. Let us look more minutely at the words of the Lord before us. I. God’s purpose to reveal his glory. To show his glory, is his design in creation; still more so in his work of resurrection and redemption. Man may hide himself, because he possesses nothing of his own at all; but God cannot do so; forth at which is in Him must of necessity come forth, seeing all his fullness is his own, borrowed from none, either in heaven or earth. For his own sake, and for the creature’s sake, He must show himself. Not to do so would be to wrong both Himself and the creature. Were the sun to withdraw its shining, how grievous the loss to us; yet not half so terrible as were God to refuse to reveal himself. It is God’s purpose to show himself, to manifest his glory, that thus he may rejoice in the honor flowing to him from all that He does, and that the creature may be gladdened, and comforted, and blessed in beholding the glory thus presented by God for him to gaze upon. II. Christ’s desire is that we should see the glory of God. He is the revealer of the Father, and as such He came to earth. Sin had hidden the Father from our world, as the dark, thick cloud blots out the face of the sun. Christ came to unveil the Father’s face, to make known the Father’s character, to manifest the Father’s glory, to roll off the clouds that covered the face of the Sun. This was his errand; and his desire is to speed in his errand, and to show us the glory that He came to reveal. Love to the Father makes Him desirous of this, for He desires the Father’s glory; love to us makes Him desirous of this, for He seeks our blessedness, and He knows that the creature’s blessedness is in beholding the glory

of God. O man! What are you without this glory? A world without a flower, or tree, or blade of grass; a sky without a sun or star. Will you not behold it? The Son of God longs to show it to you. For this end He came into the world, and died and rose again. Will you not turn your eyes to this blessed object, that in beholding it, your soul may be filled with heavenly light and gladness? To say that Christ desires your salvation, and your holiness, and your comfort, is indeed to say much; but to say that He desires your beholding of the glory of God, is to say more than all this; for it is to tell you that He longs to show you that which, as soon as beheld, would bring life, and gladness, and consolation, and holiness to your soul. When He says, "Come unto me, and I will give you rest," He means to say, "Come unto me, and I will show you that which will at once give you rest." When He says, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink," He means to say, "Let him come unto me, and I will show him that, the sight of which will be more refreshing to him than all the waters of earth." III. It is unbelief that hinders our seeing this glory. The thing of which the Lord most complained, not only among the people—but among his disciples—was unbelief. They were slow of heart to believe all that the prophets had spoken; they put away from them the good news of God's free love in visiting them from on high; and they shut both eyes and ears against the wonders done and spoken by the Son of God in the very midst of them. Had their unbelief shown itself in putting away from them the evil day, and rejecting the message of judgment, it would not have been so marvelous or unaccountable. But it showed itself in refusing the tidings of good; in rejecting the grace vouchsafed so abundantly; and in discrediting the signs and wonders displayed so blessedly by Christ before them—signs and wonders in which God was revealing himself to them, and unfolding the marvels of his glory. It was this UNBELIEF that obstructed their vision of the glory; and it is this same unbelief that does the same evil work still to us. Let us see how it does so. (1.) Unbelief hinders Christ from working those works which show the glory. This seems a strange saying, and one which we could not have ventured to utter had it not been written down for us by inspired men. That a child's hand held up against the sun should hinder it from shining; that a withered leaf thrown into a stream should stop its flowing or dry up its source; that the breath of man, breathed up against the sky, should quench the light of its myriad stars—these things would not really be so marvelous as that man's unbelief should prevent God's power from being sent forth, and the Son of God from doing those things which would reveal the glory of the Father. Yet we find the strange truth thus recorded. The evangelist Matthew thus writes—"He did not do many miracles there because of their unbelief" (Matthew 13:58); and Mark uses still stronger language—"He was not able to do any miracles there, except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed them. And He was amazed at their unbelief." (Mark 6:5-6). The sad and all but incredible truth is thus explicitly declared, that the sinner's unbelief does really hinder Christ from working. His hand is not stayed from working by our unworthiness, or by the multitude of our sins—but simply by our unbelief. It was unbelief which arrested Christ's miracles in Galilee; it was unbelief which (if we may so speak) almost hindered the raising of Lazarus from the dead. It was unbelief which Christ referred to, when He said to the father of the demoniac, "If you can believe, all things are possible to him that believes;" and it was on the acknowledgment of this that the man so eagerly replied, "Lord, I believe, help my unbelief" (Mark 9:23-24). Yes, it is unbelief which lays its arrest on Christ's hand, and says, Work not. It is unbelief which thrusts away both the power and the grace of God; it is unbelief which says, "Depart out of our coasts." (2.) Unbelief hinders us from perceiving the glory that is in the works, even when they are wrought. Christ's hand was not always stayed by man's rejection of his love and power. It did work the works of God before

human eyes; works in which the glory of God did shine most brightly. Men saw the works—but they saw not the glory. They saw the healing of the leper—but they saw not the glory of God revealed in that. They saw the opening of the eyes of the blind, the unstopping of the ears of the deaf, the giving feet to the lame, the casting out of devils; but they saw not the glory of God in these—even as they saw neither God Himself, nor his glory in Him who did these works. In the case of the feeding of the multitude, they saw the miracle, they partook of the food, yet they did not see God in this at all; no, they followed Jesus for a while because of the wondrous supply thus administered by Him—but they perceived nothing glorious or divine in it. "You seek me, not because you saw the miracles—but because you ate the loaves and were filled" (John 6:26). The glory wrapped up in these miracles could only come forth to faith. To unbelief they appeared common things, or, at the most, only striking facts in which there was little meaning. It was faith which pierced beyond the shell; it was faith which drew aside the veil; it was faith which saw God in all of these, and drank of the living waters of his grace, of which each of these miracles was the blessed well. (3.) Unbelief hinders us enjoying the glory—even after we have in some measure seen it. Christ's disciples saw the glory shown forth in his miracles; yet, after all, they realized it but little. It seemed to come to them in glimpses and at intervals, not continuously. Like men with a telescope at their side, and sometimes looking through it, and sometimes closing it up; so these disciples entered but little into the glory which they yet acknowledged, and at times enjoyed. Faith was not always in exercise. There was more of unbelief than of faith in their history. They had faith enough to show them something; but their unbelief hid more than their faith revealed. And it is even more so with us—than it was with them. For the full glory has been manifested now in the dying and rising of Him who is the brightness of Jehovah's glory. Our eye rests on it, and at times we can say truly, "We beheld his glory"; yet how faintly does it shine to us! How much oftener is it hidden than revealed! How seldom do we receive from it the joy, and the comfort, and the quickening which it should unceasingly impart! We get but a few rays when we might get the whole sun. We get but these rays at intervals when we might have unbroken sunshine every hour. Ought not Christ's words to rebuke us and to recall us to faith? "Did I not say unto you, that if you believe, you would see the glory of God." IV. Christ's reproof of unbelief, and call to faith. Both of these things are implied in the words, "Did I not say unto you, that if you believe, you would see the glory of God?" He is evidently not giving this reproof for the first time. He is but repeating what He said to them oftentimes before; and He is reminding them of his former lessons and exhortations, which they were on the point of forgetting: "Did I not say unto you." The words are simple, and the rebuke is gently spoken; but not the less on that account is the question fitted to reach the conscience and humble the unbelieving spirit. "Did I not say unto you" that is, "Have I not, not only on this occasion—but often at other times, told you what faith would do for you, and what unbelief is shutting you out from; and shall I say it all in vain?" Yes, it is to faith that the Son of God is here calling us; it is against unbelief that He is warning us. Unbelief never did anything for a soul, and never will; faith has done wonders in time past, and will do so in all present time, as well as in all time to come. "Have faith in God!" "Only believe." Do not be faithless—but believing. Trust God for everything, and say, even in the most unlikely circumstances, Is there anything too hard for the Lord? The circumstances in which the two sisters of Bethany were placed were trying. What could they hope for? Had the Lord arrived in time, they might have hoped that He would have healed their brother. But He had, apparently, arrived too late. Lazarus was dead; and were they to hope for resurrection? Our Lord did not exactly say this; but He evidently meant to tell them that, if they

would but trust Him, they would find that He would do something for them far beyond what they could ask or think—that there was nothing which He would not do for them—no length to which He would not go in the putting forth of his power to show them the glory of God. Their position was, after all, not more trying than Abraham's, when called on to offer up his son; and if he believed and staggered not, if he hoped against hope and was strong in faith, giving glory to God, why should not they? As children of believing Abraham, to whom the "God of glory" appeared, might not the Lord well address them, "Did I not say unto you, that, if you would believe, you would see the glory of God." In these words of Christ there is a tone of sorrowful complaint; more, we may say of vexation and disappointment, because of the slow faith of his disciples. It is like that indicated in his words to the disciples, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet have you not known me, Philip?" He expected something else; and He had reason to do so. He looked for confidence, and He had given them full ground for such confidence. Might He not well be disappointed at the poor result? What, after all He had said and done, still as hesitating, as suspicious, as distrustful as ever! Could He have expected this at their hands? Let Christ's words shame us out of our unbelief. The rebuke is mild—but all the more fitted to find its way into our hearts. Be ashamed of your hard thoughts of this gracious One, after all that He has done. Be ashamed of your misgivings, your doubtings, your dark distrust. Trust Him wholly and fully. Trust Him according to this infinite trustworthiness. Trust Him in everything. Trust Him now. Trust Him in your days of darkness, as well as in your days of light. Trust him in your sorrows as well as your joys. Say not, My case is hopeless, my wound is incurable; I may bear it; but as to deliverance, or blessing, or glory as the result, that is impossible. Your case is not more hopeless than that of her whom the Lord thus rebuked for her unbelief; "Did I not say unto you, that, if you would believe, you should see the glory of God." Good out of all evil, life out of all death, glory out of all shame, joy out of all sorrow; this is God's law and purpose for everyone who believes in his name. Time may be needed for the unfolding of the outcomes; patience may be long and sorely tried; the results may be long of emerging from beneath the dark surface under which they were pressed down; but of the end there can be no doubt. Let faith hold fast; let patience have her perfect work; and, according to our faith and patience, no, far beyond them, shall be the recompense. Hannah found it so; and was made to rejoice in a long-sought son. Naomi found it so; and her old age was brightened beyond all her hopes or fears. Job found it so; for, having held fast his confidence, he lived to see his latter end better than his beginning. Yet we forget this gracious law of the kingdom, and often times lose heart, when the trial is long and the shadows hang thickly over us. We take hold, and again we lose hold. We are cheered, and again we despond. How continually we need to be reminded of the sure reward of faith, and to have the Lord's words spoken to us, "Did I not say unto you, that if you would believe you should see the glory of God."

Inquiring After Jesus "We would see Jesus." John 12:12 It was from Gentile lips that these words came. A Jew would perhaps have said, in such circumstances, We would see this Christ; the Greek, who knows nothing about the Messiah—but hears of a wonder-working Galilean, says, "We would see Jesus," that is, "we wish to see Him." Was this a genuine Gentile longing, expressive of the world's desire, for "the Desire of all nations,"—the utterance of a poor human heart that had heard of something likely to fill up its void—the outgoing of feelings, such as drew the publicans and sinners to hear Him—the vague cry of humanity, "Who will show us any good"—brought at last to a point? We know not. We cannot answer these questions, for there is nothing in the narrative to illustrate the words; to tell who these Greeks were; in what spirit they put

the request; or what was the answer. The narrative is abrupt and isolated. The words stand alone. "Philip comes and tells Andrew: and again Andrew and Philip tell Jesus." That is all we know. That Jesus received them, or showed Himself to them, or spoke directly to them, is not said. Probably the discourse that follows was spoken in their hearing, though mainly intended for the disciples. They were brought in to the circle of disciples, as listeners to the gracious words which He proceeded to speak concerning Himself—his life, his death, his resurrection. There are three kinds of inquirers after Jesus mentioned in the gospels. (1.) Herod who desired more than once to see Him (Luke 9:9, Luke 13:8). His was curiosity that came to nothing. How many Herods are there! (2.) Zaccheus. He sought to see Jesus who He was. His curiosity came to something. It ended in a visit of Jesus Himself. There are Zaccheuses, too, whose first inquiries are vague—but who are led on by the Spirit to Jesus. (3.) The Greeks, These seem to have been farther on than Zaccheus in their inquiries. Theirs was more than curiosity; it was the earnest longing of men who had got a glimpse of Him. We have Greeks, too, in our day; men whose souls God has touched, and across whose eyes He has flashed some rays of the glory of his Incarnate Son. Are there any Greeks among us? Rest not; keep not aloof; come near; learn of Him; look to Him and be saved. For thus it is that the far-off Gentile is brought near; and the Greek becomes a Son of Abraham. Is there a Herod here? Beware and tremble. You may be lost. Your curiosity may end in nothing. Be a Zaccheus or a Greek. Jesus was not unwilling to be seen. He was the most accessible of men. Talk of kind, winning, accessible, large-hearted men! Was there ever one like Him? He did not hide Himself; He did not turn from his fellow men, as if shrinking from their communion or disliking to be troubled. He made everybody feel at home with Him. He laid Himself out for meeting them, and being visited by them. He received sinners, and made them feel that He had come to save them. Modestly these Greeks first approach the disciples, and through them are introduced to the Master. They needed not to have recourse to this circuitous manner of approach. Had they known Him thoroughly, they would sooner have gone to Himself He would say, "Allow them to come," even when the disciples rebuked and forbade. And so is it still with us. We trust the disciple more than the Master. We go with confidence to a minister—but we go distrustingly to the Lord. What unbelief, what perversity, what ignorance! How little have we learned his love! "We would see Jesus" is the daily utterance of our heart. If we have seen little, we want to see much; if we have seen much, we want to see more. Show us Jesus! is our cry. Why do we so desire to see Him? What does this vision do for us? 1. It gives rest. To see Him as the resting-place is to rest. There are some objects so calm and restful, that the very sight of them is rest. This is one of them; the chief of them. 2. It pacifies. He is our peace; and to see Him is to have peace. The sight of Him as the atoning sacrifice for sin pacifies the conscience. 3. It quickens. He is our life; and the sight of Him as such puts life into us. It is a quickening vision. 4. It heals. As the Sun of righteousness. He rises on us with healing. There is health in looking to this sun of health. 5. It enlightens. He is the light of the world; and to see Him as such is to have day within us. It is an enlightening vision. 6. It sets free. He and his truth make us free. Connection with Him is liberty. The vision liberates. It thaws the soul, and melts all our ice. 7. It strengthens. All power is in Him; and the sight of Him draws it out to us. We become strong in looking. 8. It fills. In Him is all fullness; and in looking we are filled. Every void in our souls disappears. 9. It gladdens. We are made partakers of his joy. We are satisfied. It is a gladdening and satisfying!

The Great Attraction "But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself." John 12:32. This is Christ’s own testimony to the power of his death and resurrection. Both of these are

included. The Christ of God is lifted up to the cross—and there is power in that; the Christ of God is lifted out of the grave—and there is power in that. Mark the kind of power. It is not destructive, or repulsive, or punitive; it is attractive. It draws. It is not compulsive or harsh—but simply attractive. The sun draws up the vapors from the sea, and then hangs a brilliant rainbow on them; so Christ draws up the sons of men from the depths of our low world, and glorifies them. His attraction is like that of the sun. His attraction is magnetic, too; it is the attraction of the magnet to the pole. As the far-distant north pole, by an unseen influence, lays hold on the motionless iron and turns it to itself, so does the far-off Golgotha, our truer, better pole, draw the sons of men, and cluster them round itself. Have you felt the magnetic virtue of the cross and grave of Christ? Have they acted upon you? It is not simply the Christ that is the magnet; it is the crucified Christ. It is crucifixion that has imparted to Him his attractive power; just as it is death that has given Him his life-giving power. It is not Christ without the cross; nor is it the cross without Christ; it is both of them together. But mark the greatness of the power. It is sufficient to draw all men. It has not drawn all men. There are millions in hell who shall never be drawn. There are millions upon earth who are not yet drawn. Yet there is virtue in the crucified one to draw every one. It is almighty influence; irresistible power; power which no human heart could have resisted, had it so pleased the Father to put it forth. A power that could draw the myriads of stars and planets, and cluster them round itself, must be great; but a power that can draw millions of human hearts must be greater far. But wherein consists its magnetic power? Apart from its being the center from which omnipotence goes forth; the place in which, and the way by which, righteous power is savingly put forth for the arrestment of the sinner, it contains everything that the sinner needs. It is suitable— I. Because of the LOVE which it embodies. Herein is love! The love which passes knowledge! The love of God in Jesus Christ our Lord. Christ crucified, dead, buried, risen, is the great revelation of the grace of God. What so magnetic as love? II. Because of the RIGHTEOUSNESS which it exhibits. This "great sight" is one of infinite righteousness. It is the cross of righteousness; the resurrection of righteousness. It is for the unrighteous, and yet it is righteous. It is righteousness combining with love and taking the sinner’s side against law and judgment and the eternal penalty. How attractive is righteousness like this! III. Because of the TRUTH which it proclaims. All God’s revealed truth is connected with the cross. Divine wisdom is concentrated there. In Jesus, the crucified, there is the wisdom of God, and He is made unto us wisdom. In the cross we have the refutation of man’s errors and Satan’s lies; the great embodiment of heavenly and everlasting truth. Here all truth and all wisdom are centered! How can it but be magnetic! IV. Because of the RECONCILIATION which it publishes. It proposes peace to the sinner; for it has made peace. Jesus has made peace by the blood of his cross. Peace to him that is afar off and to him that is near! Here is the meeting-place between man and God. Here we stand and say, "Be reconciled." V. Because of the HEALING which it brings. There is healing in its shadow. He who touches is healed—healed in every part. The healing begins now in the soul; it is completed hereafter in the resurrection of the body. Jesus, the dead and risen One is our healer! In this healing we include not simple relief from pain, or weariness, or spiritual infirmity—but deliverance from sin. The cross purifies. The fullness of the crucified One is the fountain of our holiness. Thus the cross—the gospel—the crucified One—all these make up the "power of God"; the power which attracts, quickens, saves, purifies! It draws—draws irresistibly; for in it is the strength of omnipotence.

Light and its Little While "Then Jesus told them, "You are going to have the light just a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, before darkness overtakes you. The man who walks in the

dark does not know where he is going. Put your trust in the light while you have it, so that you may become sons of light." John 12:35-36 The speaker here was one who knew what light was, what it could do, where it was to be found, and how terrible it must be to be without it. He had come from the land of light, where there was no darkness, and where all were walking in the light. In that home of light there were angels of light and spirits of light. All sons of light! He speaks, therefore, with authority, and we know that his words are true. I. The light. Light is that which shows or reveals all objects, as darkness is that which hides. Our earthly sun daily reveals to us man and the things of man; the heavenly sun reveals to us God and the things of God. Christ is Himself that light. He is both the light and the sun. As the life, He is the light. The life is the light of man. He is the light of the world; the true light; beside which all other lights are false and unreal. That which shines from his face, from his works, from his words, from his cross—is light. "We look to Him and are lightened." He reveals the Father; the Father's love, the Father's righteousness, the Father's character; all the riches of his grace; and we, opening our eyes to take in this light, are thereby enlightened. That which shines into us is "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ." Light for a dark world! Light for a dark soul! This is our message. II. The light with us. The first gleam of it came in the first promise. After that the rays multiplied. But still "the light" had not come. But when "the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us," then it came. It remained here in human form for thirty-three years. It is still, though impersonally, "with us "; and it will yet be more gloriously with us when He comes again. After Jesus had spoken of the light being with them, he withdrew Himself—to show that his presence was the light, and to show the difference between light and darkness, his presence and his absence. Yes; the light is with us still. In a sense it is withdrawn, yet still with us ; still in our world; still shining in its brightness out of the testimony concerning "the light" left us in the gospels. There the true light still shines. We may withdraw from it—but it never withdraws from us. We may shut our eyes and our windows—but the light still shines. God is light, God is love, is still the theme of that testimony. The light is not far off nor clouded—but near and clear; not starlight nor moonlight—but sunlight—pure, bright, and gladdening. The light shines in darkness, and the darkness comprehends it not. O dark world, when will you let in the light! O dark soul, O child of darkness, when will you be enlightened. III. The little while of light. The special little while referred to here was that of our Lord's presence on earth—a blessed little while indeed! He so near, so gracious, so willing to bless! But there are other little whiles. Jerusalem had her little while. Israel had her little while. The churches have all had or are having their little while. The nations have had or are having their little while. Each congregation has its little while. Each soul has its little while. A little while of the gospel, a little while of invitations from God, a little while of Sabbaths, and sermons, and sacraments, and providences—and all is done. The light departs. O man what has the light done for you? How have you been dealing with it? Have you let it in or shut it out? Your little while of light may soon be at an end. The night comes! The eternal darkness is at hand! Jesus is coming; but not with light; only with darkness to the despisers of the light. IV. The using of the light. Walking is here a general expression for the whole of a man's life, in all its actings, and changes, and movements. Our Lord's meaning is, "Use this light for whatever you do, so long as you have it: do everything in your daily life, in this light." Use this light then, is the Lord's message to us. The process of using it is then described. (1.) Believe in the light. Receive the Father's testimony to this light, to its genuineness, its excellency, its divinity, its suitableness, its varied qualities and fitnesses to meet the needs of a child of darkness. Believe in this light, and believe in no other. The light of reason,

intellect, literature, science, will do nothing for your soul. At best it is but starlight, "distinct but distant; clear—but oh how cold"; still oftener is it the meteor, or the lightning, or the volcano, or the candle or the spark of your own kindling. Believe in this heavenly and divine light. It will suffice. There is no darkness too dense for it either within you or without. There is light for the darkness. God proclaims his testimony concerning this true light. Receive that testimony, and, on receiving it, receive the light. It needs admission into you! Oh admit it! (2.) Become children of the light. He into whom the light enters becomes a child of light. The light rests on him; surrounds him; abides with him; dwells in him; pervades him. It guides him; heals him; comforts and cheers him; purifies him; assimilates him to himself. He becomes in all senses a child of light and of the day. He becomes, also, a light to others—a light to the world. And walking in the light, he is not only filled with holy gladness—but he shines; his light shines; the dark world is the better for his being in it. He shines in his daily walk and public life. He is in his own way a measure what "the light" was when here—a "light of the world." V. The refusal to use the light. This may be called neglect, or delay, or hatred, or rejection—still it is refusal to make use of the light. It is preference of the darkness to the light; it is preference of the works of darkness to the works of light. It is something positive and willful whatever men may say. No man remains in darkness for lack of light—but because of his own shutting out the light. This refusal to make use of the light leads to stumbling, to straying, to complete mistaking of the way, and losing the destination. It leads to this now; it ends in this more terribly. For the withdrawal of the light is at hand. The darkness comes—the deep, the eternal darkness, in which men, who have rejected the light, shall stumble and wander forever. O these eternal stumblings! These everlasting wanderings! O these dark mountains, on which the sinner’s feet shall stumble! O that gross darkness, that palpable darkness, that blackness of darkness, which is to be the sinner’s portion and dwelling-place forever! Night without morning! Everlasting midnight! The true light now shines! This is our message. All the love of God is in it. All the joy of heaven is in it. All the glory of the kingdom is in it. It shines now; it may soon pass away! Oh use it sinner, use it. Allow it to enter; and, in entering, to transform that dark dungeon of your soul into a very heaven of light.

Light for the World’s Darkness "I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness." John 12:46 It is Christ who is the speaker. He speaks of two things: of Himself, and of our world. Let us hear what He has to tell us concerning both. I. Our world is dark. God did not make it so at first. He said, Let there be light. But man has darkened it; Satan has darkened it; sin has darkened it. Every soul in it is darkness. Night is in all, and over all. (1.) It is the darkness of sleep. The sleeper sees not the light. He may dream that he sees it—but that is all. His eyes are closed. (2.) It is the darkness of death. Life has left the limbs and organs; and with life all light has fled. Darkness reigns. (3.) It is the darkness of the tomb. This is the very death of death. Buried beneath the earth, the darkness is doubled. (4.) It is the darkness of Satan. He is the ruler of the darkness of this world; and of this darkness we are partakers. (5.) It is the darkness of hell. Our dark world is a pledge of the blackness of darkness forever. Little as men believe it, it is the shadow of hell that covers our earth, and it is a part of hell itself that fills the sinner’s soul. Such is our world’s darkness. Such is the condition of each sinner’s soul. How sad, how terrible! II. There is light for it. Deep as the darkness is, it is not hopeless. There is enough of light in God and in heaven yet. Light has not been quenched throughout the universe though driven from our world. Darkness is wide—but it is not universal. The report has come to us of light. And this is good news. There is light. III. This light has come. It is not afar off; but near. Not in

heaven merely; it has come down to earth. Oh, what an arrival! The richest freight that ever reached our shores! The gospel announces not light merely—but its arrival. It has come! He himself has said, "I am come." IV. Christ is the light. He is the brightness of Jehovah's glory; the true light; the sun of righteousness; the daystar; the bright and morning star. All the light of Godhead is centered in him. All the light of heaven; all the light of the universe is gathered into him. He has come to be the light of the world. He is the alpha and omega of the Bible, which is the one book of light. He is the light of the world in three ways: (1.) Because of what he shows us of the Father. He is the revealer of the Father, and of the Fathers love and holiness; as such, He is the dispeller of the clouds that have long rested over earth, hiding the face of God. The glory of Godhead is embodied in Him, and shines forth from Him to us; and He who has seen Him has seen the Father. (2.) Because of what He does to us. He pardons, heals, comforts, blesses, saves. As the Savior, He is our light. As the Christ of God, He is our light. As Prophet, Priest, and King He is our light. (3.) Because of what He is yet to do for our world. When He comes again He shall be fully known as the world's light. Then shall be earth's true morning and noon; until then it is but twilight. His throne shall be the throne of light; his reign shall be the reign of light. All earth shall rejoice in his light. V. The way in which the light enters. It is in believing. Not in working or waiting—but in believing. Faith ends the darkness, and lets in the glorious light. Believe in Jesus and all is light. The day breaks and the shadows flee away. VI. The freeness and universality of the light. That word "whoever" is enough to make every sinner feel that the light is for him; that he has liberty to use the light; that he has a right to the light; and his right is that he needs it. The darkness needs the light; so the sinner needs Christ. No, and Christ needs the sinner! For the light needs the darkness, else would its glory be wasted. Oh, what a glorious gospel do these words of Jesus preach to us. "I am come a light into the world."

The Judging Word "The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day." John 12:48. 1. There is a last day. This world shall not always roll on. There shall be a stoppage, a break. God shall interpose at length. He shall speak and not be silent. He shall make bare his arm. It is God's day that is coming. "He has appointed a day." Not "the last" in one sense; for there shall be no last day either to righteous or wicked. But in reference to the existing state, and order, and run of things and events, there is a last day, a winding up, a reckoning. The world's great river shall at last reach the sea. "Tomorrow" shall then cease, and that word of mystery, and procrastination, and suspense be known no more. 2. That day shall be one of judgment. The long unsettled cases of earth shall be settled then. Time's riddles shall all be solved. Time's mysteries shall all be cleared up. Time's wrongs shall all be righted. The oppressed shall be vindicated; the triumphing of the wicked shall cease; the evildoer shall be put to shame. No more error, or unbelief or falsehood, or wrong judgment upon men and things. No calling good evil, and evil good; no putting light for darkness, or darkness for light. No shams, no shadows, no mockeries, no dishonesties, no hypocrisies. All shall be transparency, light, truth, righteousness. The judgment shall be just; undoing the evil; establishing and perfecting the good; no partiality; no respect of people; no fear of man; no bribery nor corrupt influence; no hesitations nor imperfect decisions. The Judge is righteous, and his sentences will be righteous like Himself. 3. Christ's word shall judge us. Not that this word is to supersede the Judge—but it will form the test, the ground of judgment. We can imagine, in connection with that word, such questions as these arising. (1.) Did that word reach you? Were you within the circle to which that word came? Did it fall on your ears? (2.) Did you listen to it? Did you open both ear and heart to it? Or, did you spend your lives in

listening to something else—other words, other people? (3.) Did you treat it as a true word? It is true, infinitely true, altogether true; did you treat it as such? Or, was the treatment you gave it that of one who saw no truth in it? Did you profess to receive it as true, and yet treat it as untrue? (4.) Did you treat it as accurate? It is thoroughly so. There is no flaw, no mistake, no imperfection in it. Did you treat it as such, or did you try to find fault with it to prove it to be incorrect and imperfect, perhaps contradictory? Did you cavil at it as not quite satisfactory or sufficient, in order to get quit of the tremendous pressure of responsibility on the conscience arising out of a perfect word. (5.) Did you treat it as divine? It is divine; for He who spoke it is the Son of God. His word is not merely perfect and superhuman—but divine; divine in its origin, in its substance, in its form—directly (not indirectly like the works of creation) divine. Did you treat it as such? Did you reverence it, submit to it, implicitly receive it? If not, then you are truly guilty—just as if you refused to worship God. He who does not treat Christ's words as divine, is in the same sense guilty of blasphemy, as he who denies His person to be divine. Men are to honor Him and His words, even as they honor the Father and His words. (6.) Did you accept it as suitable to yourself? It does concern you, very closely and powerfully. It bears on you just now in time; still more so hereafter in eternity. He meant it for you. He spoke it for you. He directed it so as to suit you, and to reach you. It meets your case. It contains what you need—peace with God and life eternal. Did you accept it as such? Did you receive it not only as a faithful saying—but as worthy of all acceptance? Or did you pass it by as unneeded and unsuitable? Did you treat it with indifference as if you were not concerned in it? Did you reject it? Did you say, I needed it not, and so I flung it from me? By this word, then, let us judge ourselves just now, that so we may not be condemned by it in the great day. It is a living word; quick and powerful, like Him who spoke it. Let us apply it. What has it done for us? Has it brought us near to God? Has it set us in the position of pardoned men? Has it poured in peace and light? Has it done, and is it doing for us, such things as these? It was meant to do so. Is it doing so? If not hitherto, shall it not do so now? Remember, it is a judging, testing, discerning word with which you have to do. It is sharper than a two-edged sword. It will not allow itself to be trifled with. It carries its own judgment, its own vengeance within it. It demands immediate reception; and it promises, upon that reception, immediate forgiveness, and an everlasting salvation. He who receives the word of the Amen, the true and faithful witness, shall be saved. There is no "if," no "perhaps," no doubting about it. It is a present certainty; and a certainty as absolute as it is present. In that word is life, peace, pardon, reconciliation; and the moment that faith touches that word, all these flow out into the soul. Yes; he who believes shall be saved; but he who believes not shall be damned.

The Revelation of the Father Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us." Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work." John 14:8-10 Frequently did Jesus speak to His disciples of the Father. Sometimes "my Father," sometimes "your Father," sometimes "the Father." They knew whom He meant, Jehovah, Israel's God. But when He spoke of their knowing the Father, and of having seen Him; of His going to the Father, and preparing a place for them in the Father's house, and taking them to be there with them, they seemed bewildered, some asking one question, and some another, in their ignorance and perplexity. His words had roused their interest—but not satisfied it. He had pointed them to an object and a Being

of whom they felt they knew but little. What is this place, and where is this way, and who is this Being of whom He speaks? Eye and ear are turned in the direction to which He is pointing. I. The request. "Show us the Father, and it suffices." Philip spoke for his brethren as well as for himself. He speaks for us also. (1.) It is a proper request. It is not curiosity nor foolishness which dictate it. It is one naturally and obviously suggested by the words of Christ; one which he meant to be suggested, and which He meant to comply with. Just the request for a creature, for a sinner. (2.) It is an intelligent request. Philip knew what he was asking, though there was much ignorance about His question. It is not vague, like those who cry blindly, Who will show us any good? It bears on a definite object. It fixes on a certain desirable point, which it would sincerely have cleared up. It knows what it needs. (3.) It is an earnest request. He who utters it is not using mere words of course. He is thoroughly in earnest. Christ's words have roused him into earnestness. He feels as if he ought to know and must know the Father. Other requests may take a denial, this will not. It is a life and death request; "For this is life eternal, that they may know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent." (4.) It is a noble request. There is something elevated about it; nothing low or paltry. It was worthy of Him to whom it was addressed, and about whom it was made. (5.) It is a satisfying request. "Show us the Father, and it suffices." The blessing asked would fill the soul. The knowledge of the Father would be all that was needed. Other sights might fill it in part, this would fill it all, so that it would say, "It is enough." Have their longings found their way into you? Has this request been the expression of them? Do you know the Father? And what has the knowledge of the Father done for you? Has it filled you? Has it weaned you from all other knowledge, and made you say, This is enough! Are you recognized among men as those who "know the Father ?" II. The rebuke. It is the utterance of surprise arid disappointment. The request was not a wrong one; but it need not have been put, had they not been so slow of heart to see and to believe. The reproof is gentle, yet very decided. In it Christ lays his finger on the seat of the evil, and shows how the question betokened an ignorance which ought not to have existed. It is an appeal to themselves, to their past history and converse with Him; to their opportunities of knowing His words, His doings, Himself. Have these years of communion been of no avail? Have my words and miracles done nothing? Have you not fathomed me, seen through me, interpreted me? Has all been in vain? "Have I been so long time with you, and yet have you not known me?" After all that has been said and done, is it not strange that you should still put the question? At first it was natural; now, after so long a time, it is strange—all but incredible. How is it that you have not known me? Have I kept back anything? Have I used obscure words? Has my life been ambiguous? Have you not known me? How can you say, Show us the Father? III. The answer. I have shown you the Father. How and where? In myself. When? All the time I have been with you. I and the Father are one. You could not see me truly without seeing the Father. Christ, then, is the Revealer of the Father; the exponent of the Father's mind; the interpreter of the Father's character and purpose. The Word was made flesh in order to show us God—that we might see Him with our eyes, hear Him with our ears, touch Him with our hands, converse with him face to face as a man with his friend. "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the word of life; for the Life was manifested" (1 John 1:1-2). When asked, How shall I realize God? we answer, Realize Christ. How shall we go to God? Go to Christ. Look into his face; kneel before Him, as the leper did; deal with Him, as did the blind and deaf when He was here. He is in the Father, and the Father in Him. His works and words are the works and words of the Father. His love, and grace, and pity

are those of the Father. Know Christ, then, and you know the Father. Let us take from all this the following LESSONS: 1. We are slow to learn. "Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." When we might have been teachers, we need to be taught the principles of the oracles of God. Slow to hear, slow to learn, slow to believe—this is our character. 2. Jesus is swift to teach. Strange contrast. We so slow to learn, He so swift and ready to teach. If we are not wise, it is not our teacher's fault. "Learn of me," is his message to us daily. 3. He teaches us about the Father. The Father shows us the Son, and the son shows us the Father. The invisible is seen in the visible. If we want to know the unseen God, let us go to Bethlehem, to Nazareth, to Calvary. If we are perplexed about Him who is a Spirit. let us go to Him who has a body like ourselves. He will reveal the Father.

The Abiding Comforter "And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Comforter to be with you forever—the Spirit of truth. The world cannot receive him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you." John 14:16-17 Christ expects us to love Him. He claims our love, and He deserves it all. He has done enough to win it. May He not then most reasonably ask the question, "Do you love me?" Christ expects us to "keep his commandments," that is to listen to his teachings, and to observe all his "instructions," for this is the meaning of commandments. This is the necessary result and manifestation of our love. Love and obey; love and listen; love and follow; love and keep my words. To those who thus love and listen He promises much. What is there that He will withhold from them? But here, it is of one thing only that He speaks—the Holy Spirit. This Spirit He is to obtain from the Father for those who thus hear his voice; and in this Spirit is contained everything they need for life, and peace, and consolation. O gift of the Holy Spirit, what is there that you do not contain for us! Let us mark the things connected with this gift, of which the Lord here speaks to us. I. A Comforter. The word is a wide one. It means one who comforts, or who pleads, or who exhorts; one who "calls us to his side," as a father does his child when he has some special thing to say. The Holy Spirit is all this to us. How little we use Him, or trust Him, or lean on Him, or love Him, or deal with Him. And how much we suffer loss by this neglect! How much do we grieve and vex Him! We might be so much more full of peace, and light, and love, and holiness, and strength, and comfort—did we but employ this "Comforter" more constantly, more trustfully. Our desponding complaints are all of them indications of our slighting Him! We will not allow Him to do his work nor to bestow his love. II. Another Comforter. This word "another" is full of meaning, and helps to link the Holy Spirit and Jesus together. His office is hot to hide but to show Jesus; not to make us forget—but remember Him. (1.) Another instead of myself; I am going—but He is coming. He will fill up my place; my place of fellowship, counsel, comfort, and love. He will be to you, for consolation, what I have been to you. (2.) Another like myself. He will be another, and yet not another; one in mind and sympathy with myself towards you. In having Him you have me. (3.) Another in addition to myself I am still with you, though I go away. And in addition to my presence, you shall have the presence of another like myself divine. Two Comforters instead of one; the outward and visible presence gone—but the inward and invisible presence doubled; and thus double blessing, double consolation, double strength. Surely the "love of Christ" and "the love of the Spirit" will prove sufficient for our joy, as the power of Christ and the power of the Spirit are enough for our help. III. A Comforter the gift of the Father. At first He was the "promise of the Father," and then He is "the gift of the Father." It is He of whom Jesus speaks (John 4:10), "If you knew the gift of God." He is as truly the gift of the Father, and the sent of the Father, as is Christ himself. Thus we are doubly

linked to the Father. Both of these are "unspeakable gifts"; both are presented to us freely, that we may use them and be blessed. "If you, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him." It is the Father's good pleasure that we should receive the Holy Spirit; that we should be baptized with the Spirit from on high. Then shall we live in the Spirit, and walk in the Spirit, and pray in the Spirit, and be filled with the Spirit. We shall be vessels which the Father fills, and keeps forever full. IV. A Comforter the fruit of Christ's intercession. "I will pray the Father—and He will give." The word pray seems here to refer to Christ's priestly dealings, his consultation or communication with the Father, like the High Priest with Urim and Thummin, "I will pray—and He will give!" He speaks as our High Priest dealing with God for us. He specially deals with God regarding the gift of the Comforter. He did so when He ascended on high and was glorified. He does so continually still. There is always the praying, and always the giving. He has received the Holy Spirit as the Father's gift; and with Him and in Him all other gifts; gifts the expression of the Father's love and of his own. Thus we deal with Him; and He deals with the Father for us. Him the Father hears always; more, to Him the Father says, "Ask of me and I will give you" (Psalms 2:8). V. A Comforter who shall abide with us forever. The words are more exactly "unto the age," that is until the coming age or time of Christ's return, implying the Spirit's special presence during Christ's absence. Not as if He were to leave us on Christ's return. But his special work as Comforter is during his absence. He comes to fill up a blank made by the Lord's departure; to cheer the afflicted widow; to care for the little flock; to console and defend the orphaned family. These offices are peculiar to the interval between his first and second comings. But He himself is the Church's everlasting guest. As the Comforter He will not always be needed; but as the Holy Spirit He will be needed forever. The temple cannot be without that which is its glory; and we are the temple of the Holy Spirit. At present we receive Him specially as the Comforter; hereafter we shall know Him in other characters and offices. As He is the "eternal Spirit," so He is the Church's eternal guest; each saint's eternal indweller. "The communion of the Holy Spirit" (2 Corinthians 13:14) is that which no time, no change can affect; which neither life nor death, things present, or things to come, can dissolve. VI. A Comforter who is the Spirit of truth. In Him is all truth; He is the Spirit of Him who is truth; He is the Spirit who communicates the truth to the soul. In a world of falsehood and an age of error, how needful is such a Spirit. Truth is that which is congenial to Him; error that which He hates. It is in opposition to this Spirit of truth that the lie of the last days comes specially forth—"the strong delusion" leading men to "believe the lie." It is this Spirit of truth whom we are to seek fellowship with; and to do so specially by cultivating the knowledge of the word of his truth. VII. A Comforter rejected by the world. The world, or "seed of the serpent," or race of the ungodly, see no need for such a Spirit at all. It can do without Him. It is bondage to recognize Him. By means of science or reason—it can do without the Spirit; it can find its way to truth without surrendering its liberty! The world "cannot receive" Him; that is, repels and rejects Him; for it perceives not Him nor his doings nor his sayings; it is thoroughly ignorant of Him. It prefers to remain without the knowledge of Him at all. The world is not only the rejector of Christ—but of the Holy Spirit. Is not this the special sin of our intellectual age? VIII. A Comforter accepted by all Christ's disciples. "You know Him!" He is no stranger to you. He is your companion, teacher, advocate, friend, comforter. You cannot do without Him. He "dwells with you"; He is ever at your side; He is and shall be in you; filling you as his house, his temple, his holy vessels. Filled with the Spirit—is not that the description of a Christian man? "Having not the Spirit," is that not the description of a man of the world? O disciple

of the Lord, prize this gift of the ascended Christ, even the Comforter. Cherish Him, and delight in his fellowship. Live in the Spirit; walk in the Spirit; pray in the Spirit. Thus shall you be a holy and blessed man.

The Mighty Comforter "But the Comforter, who is the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name—he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatever I have said unto you." John 14:26. Christ's presence with his disciples was a blessed thing, and his absence would be a blank. Yet there was to be a substitute or successor; one who would comfort them in the Master's absence, and carry on his instructions; bringing the old to remembrance, yet adding new of his own. It is of this Spirit that our text speaks; not as if He were an unknown being hitherto; but still revealing Him more fully and gloriously than heretofore; the church's birthright; seal; everything needed during her Lord's absence. To bring out this let us take up the designations here given to Him; not in the exact order in which they occur; but with a slight change in order to bring out the connection of the one with the other. He is, then— I. The Holy Spirit. As Christ is called "the Word," so He is called "the Spirit," intimating his nature as well as his office. The third person of the Godhead is specially "the Spirit," and "a Spirit;" the truest manifestation of the spiritual character and being of that God who is a Spirit. He is "the Holy Spirit" through whom the holiness of Godhead specially reveals itself, and is communicated to the creature. He is specially the doer of holy deeds, the speaker of holy words, the maker of holy men. As the Holy Spirit, he dwelt in the Holy One—and dwells in the church, and in all "saints." II. The sent of the Father. Christ gets this name also—"he whom the Father has sent." Both are "sent of God." But the Holy Spirit comes because of Christ ("in my name"). Christ came simply as the gift of the Father's love. Christ is the first gift, the Holy Spirit is the second. He comes to us, then, from the Father; the Father's messenger, to do the Father's will in us; the glorifier of the Son; He comes in love, in holy love, as the fruit of Christ's intercession, as the seal set to Christ's name, and the token of the honor with which God honors that name. III. The Comforter. This is his special name in connection with the church—the Paraclete, or Comforter. "Another Comforter." This is his special office and errand. It is his mission, and He discharges it, not simply because of the covenant or commandment—but in love. He is the Spirit of love. He comes, then, to comfort. To comfort because of what—under what? (1.) Christ's absence. Not to make us content with it—but to cheer us under Christ's absence. (2.) The sorrows of life. These are many—"Many are the afflictions of the righteous," but under them there is an all-wise, almighty, all-loving Comforter. What sorrow can withstand his consolations? (3.) The delay of the kingdom. Even had there been no tribulation, the delay of the inheritance would have called for patience, and this He supplies. He sustains us under the sickness of deferred hope. Thus He is "the Comforter." He has been so; is so; and will be so until the Lord comes. Have we used Him as such? Have we partaken of his fullness? Have we tasted the abundance of the everlasting consolation which He administers? Or do we try to be our own comforters? Do we seek human comforters? Do we try to forget our sorrows? Or do we take all to Him, acknowledging his name and mission, and rejoicing at all occasions and opportunities of employing Him as the Comforter? How much we lose by not going to Him as such, using him as such? IV. The Teacher. This is another of the names which He has in common with Christ. Christ taught; Christ teaches still. But now He does this not through the living voice or visible example—but by the agency of the Spirit. He teaches as no man can, as no book can, as no school nor college can. He teaches all things; there is not anything which we need that He will not or cannot teach. He teaches truly, effectually, lovingly. He suits himself to the mental

and spiritual state of every scholar. Like Christ, He has "compassion on the ignorant." Let this teacher teach you! V. The Remembrancer. Besides teaching "all things," He is specially to recall the Lord’s own words. How often the disciples must have wished for more retentive memories to keep hold of the precious words daily spoken! Here is something even better than that—a divine memory put at their disposal—memory perfect, complete, unerring. Is not this blessed? How seldom we think of the Spirit’s work upon the memory. We speak of his enlightening the understanding, renewing the will, changing the heart; how seldom do we dwell upon his work on the memory. Yet here it is. For surely this is not meant to be confined to the disciples. Go, then, to the Holy Spirit for a memory; and He will make it as retentive as you need; not, perhaps, as you would like; that may not be good for you. Oh, let us cultivate acquaintance with the three persons in the Godhead. Let us deal with the Spirit about Christ; and with Christ about the Spirit.

The Divine Legacy of Peace "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid." John 14:27 Surely "never any man spoke like this man!" Well might men wonder at "the gracious words which proceeded out of his lips." Grace was poured into his lips, and out of his lips grace flowed forth to the sons of men. He had the tongue of the learned, that he might speak words in season to the weary (Isaiah 1:4), and blessed were the words he spoke to such. Never did anyone enter so deeply and tenderly into our feelings; anticipating, with his words of sympathy and consolation, every sorrow and need! What love is here! What thoughtfulness and sympathy! What majesty too! For who but one who knew that He had come from God and was going to God—that He Himself was the infinite source of peace—could say, "Peace I leave with you," etc. The words here uttered are certainly the assurance to us of the love and power of the Promiser. What He has promised, He is able also to perform. The words are still fresh and new. They can never grow old; for He who spoke them is the same "yesterday, today, and forever." They were spoken for us in these last days as truly as for the ages past. Christ meant us when he uttered them. Mark here, (1.) the legacy; (2.) the gift; (3.) the contrast; (4.) the consolation. I. The legacy. "Peace I leave with you." This is the parting gift of one who was about to depart. He Himself was bidding farewell—but he was not to take his peace away along with him. He brought it when he came ("peace on earth"); and He leaves it behind him as a heavenly relic. His presence had been the source of peace to them, and His absence was not to dry it up. That source would remain the same. Present or absent, far off or near, on earth or in heaven, He was still to be the fountain of their peace. The world would be a blank without Him no doubt; but he was leaving behind Him a peace which would cheer and gladden. It was not all that they had when He was with them, nor was it all they were to have when He returned; but still it was much; enough to comfort, to bless, to shed light upon the darkness of their way. In the world there was to be tribulation, in Him peace. The peace of God was to rule in their hearts. They were to abide in peace, and peace in them! II. The gift. "My peace I give unto you." This is evidently something in addition to the former clause. The peace is not merely something left—but positively given: "I give." It is not lent or sold—but given; it is Christ’s own gift; free and unconditional; His peace is like Himself, a gift to us; unsolicited, unpurchased, unmerited. But the striking expression here is "my peace"; Christ’s own peace; peace altogether peculiar; transcending in nature and in fullness all other peace. What then was Christ’s peace? (1.) It was the peace of a conscience on which there never rested the shadow of a sense of guilt. It was pre-eminently "a good conscience"; a conscience void of offence. Where comes our unrest? From a sense of guilt upon the conscience. It is an evil conscience that disquiets us. The least

speck or shadow of guilt breaks our peace. Now in Jesus there was the perfection of a good conscience. Not a shadow ever rested there. It is a blessed thought that there was once here a man like ourselves, whose conscience was never touched with the slightest stain of guilt; who never had to regret one thought, or recall one word, or wish one action undone. What must have been the peace possessed by Him; profound, unutterable; even in the midst of a stormy world. It is into this profound peace of conscience that He would lead us. Of that very peace He would make us partakers. The result of our "receiving" Him, or "believing on his name," is to bring us into that same state of conscience and that same kind of peace which He who knew no sin, possessed. Our vessels are indeed small, and can contain little; His was large, and could contain much. But the kind or quality of that peace which fills them is the same. He has made peace by the blood of His cross; yes, He is our peace; and as soon as we come to know this and take Him as our peace, we are made partakers not merely of peace—but of that which he here calls "my peace." 2. It was the peace of one entirely obedient to the Father's will. It was to do that will that He came; and His life was the doing of it. "I delight to do your will, O my God." "Not my will but your be done." As in all obedience there is peace, so in obedience to such a will, from such a being as the Son, there must have been a peace passing all understanding; a peace altogether infinite; a peace proportioned to the entireness and perfection of the obedience. Such an obedience had never been rendered before; and such a peace had never been possessed, either on earth or heaven, by man or angel. It is into this peace that He leads us—peace perfect and profound; peace not springing from nor proportioned to our obedience—but to his; the peace of which his obedience to the Father is at once the foundation and the measure. 3. It was the peace of one whose peculiar constitution of person made him partaker of peculiar peace. He was "the Word made flesh"; Son of God and Son of Man; and as such He was a vessel of infinite dimensions; capable of containing a peace such as no one else could do. Into this vessel of infinite capacity all fullness of peace was poured by the Father; and out of this vessel, this peace is poured into us—not to the same extent—but still in proportion to our capacity. It is of the divine peace of the God-man that we are made partakers. What peace is there like this? As the grapes of Eshcol were of peculiar delicacy, and the cedars of Lebanon of peculiar beauty, and the gardens of Solomon of peculiar fertility and fragrance, so was this peace which filled the Christ of God peculiarly excellent; and of this peculiar peace He gives his saints the promise—"My peace I give unto." 4. It was the peace of one whose peculiar relationship to the Father made him possessor of peculiar peace. There is something in filial peace, the peace of a son, as resulting from the connection between his father and himself, and his own peculiar standing in the house, which cannot well be described. How much more is this true of the peace of Him who is the only begotten Son of God? His must have been peace as special as it was infinite—the peace poured into the bosom of the beloved Son by the Father himself. This is not the peace of a servant, or a friend—but the peace of a Son—and such a son! This divine and filial peace, the peace of the only begotten of the Father, He makes over to us as his free gift—"My peace I give unto you." And this becomes all the truer and more blessed when they to whom He gives the peace are themselves sons of God! The Father pours a special peace from his paternal bosom into the bosom of his beloved Son; and that Son pours this special peace into the bosom of those who are partakers of his sonship—truly sons of God! 5. It was a peace that could never be destroyed. The peace is like Himself, and like Him from whom He receives it—eternal and unchangeable—peace partaking of his character as the eternal One, the same yesterday, today, and forever. It is peace begun now—given even here—it is peace to be

perpetuated in the eternal kingdom; peace without end, or interruption, or change forever. Such is Christ's gift to his own! It is precious, perfect, divine. It is like himself. It is a peace which passes all understanding. What a treasure for earth! And what a pledge of the fuller treasure in store for us when He comes again. For great as is the peace which He gives just now, it is nothing compared to the peace in reserve for us hereafter. He gives it to his own; and He bids all men draw near to become his own! Come unto me and I will give you rest, is his first message; and his second is like unto it—"My peace I give unto you." III. The contrast. "Not as the world gives, give I unto you." In all aspects there is a contrast between Christ and the world; with nothing of likeness or sympathy. But it is not of himself that He here speaks—but of his gifts and manner of giving. Christ's peace and the world's are opposites; so are his giving and the world's. As to the PEACE— (1.) Christ's peace is perfect, the world's is partial and imperfect; no depth, no greatness about it. It is and has been a poor meager thing at its best. (2.) Christ's peace reaches the conscience, the world's does not. It soothes the conscience asleep—but that is all. It intoxicates—but gives no rest to the inner man. It is not the offspring of a purged or pacified conscience. (3.) Christ's peace is satisfying, the world's unsatisfying. The peace which comes in any way, from any region of this evil world, cannot fill. It meets none of our spirit's cravings and longings. It does not feed our hunger or quench our thirst. It leaves us as empty as before. It speaks peace when there is none. (4.) Christ's peace is steady, the world's wavering. The world itself is unstable, and so are all its gifts; especially that of peace. This is easily ruffled, easily broken, ever changing. (5.) Christ's peace is holy, the world's unholy. Christ's peace is everlasting, the world's soon ended. At the longest, the world's peace is but for a lifetime; but seldom does it last half as long; more generally, a day or an hour. Eternal peace is Christ's gift! As to the GIVING— (1.) Christ's giving is free; none of the world's gifts are such. He gives like himself, and as He gave himself. The world bargains and sells. (2.) Christ's giving is genuine; the world's is a pretense. The world wishes us peace; this is its daily salutation; but all is hollow. Christ means what He says when He wishes us peace! (3.) Christ's giving is ungrudging. The world has no pleasure in giving; is not generous and loving. Christ gives as a King—in full-hearted love; He upbraids not. (4.) Christ's giving is immediate; that of the world is tardy. The world keeps us waiting. Christ does not. His word is now! (5.) Christ's giving is irrevocable, the world often takes back what it gave. His peace is sure, He does not recall it; nor shall, forever. How vivid the contrast! Can any one hesitate in choosing? To reject the world's false peace and to take Christ's true peace, is of all things the most reasonable that can be proposed to man! Consider the contrast well, and act accordingly. IV. The consolation. "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." There will be many things to trouble and terrify in such a world; a world where all is hatred, enmity, persecution. But against all this provision has been made; and that provision is the peace of Christ. No doubt, He gives other things also for days of trial—strength, faith, hope—but it is his peace that is the special antidote—the pre-eminent sustainer and comforter in evil times. It is peace; and it is such a peace! It keeps the soul unmoved when the tempest is raging round. It makes us feel as if hidden in the hollow of Christ's hand; defended by his shield; embraced by his arm. It is light in darkness; it is a strong tower in the midst of assailing hosts. Let the world reproach or persecute; we have a peace within which more than meets all its reproaches and persecutions. Let Antichrist and Satan rage; the divine peace within keeps us immoveable. Let bodily pain assail us; we are sustained by the peace of Christ. Let sorrow, bereavement, losses, compass us about; we are kept calm and cheerful by the peace of Christ. Our hearts are not troubled with anxiety or trial; nor are they afraid in the midst of

persecution and reviling. Christ's peace within us, and Christ himself as our companion by our side, we go forth on our pilgrimage as men who are in possession of a heavenly charm which preserves them in patience and tranquility; which makes them invincible; no, victorious; more than conquerors through Him who loved them.

Christ in Heaven—the Church on Earth. "Though I have been speaking figuratively, a time is coming when I will no longer use this kind of language but will tell you plainly about my Father. In that day you will ask in my name. I am not saying that I will ask the Father on your behalf. No, the Father himself loves you because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God. I came from the Father and entered the world; now I am leaving the world and going back to the Father." John 16:25-28 These words seem specially to apply to the state of things, both in heaven and on earth, during the present dispensation. Christ in and from heaven speaking to us plainly of the Father, as well as acting as the High Priest with Urim and Thummin, inquiring and interceding for His own. The Church on earth listening to these revelations of the Father, and asking in his name. In the Old Testament, Messiah (for He is the speaker) spoke in types; when He was here on earth he spoke in parables, or hidden words, figures; but since Pentecost He has spoken "plainly," without a veil or figure. It is this plain revelation of the Father that we have in the Acts of the Apostles, and in the Epistles. During this dispensation, too, we have the asking in Christ's name we have Christ's intercession for us; we have the Father's special love; and we have the special reasons for that special love. Such is a sketch of the passage. Taking these words then as referring to the present dispensation, we see in them (1) Christ in heaven; (2) the Church on earth. I. Christ in heaven. He was on earth; but he has left, and is gone to the Father. It was expedient for us that he should go away, that he might send the Comforter, as if both He and the Spirit could not be spared from heaven at once. But it is not of this mission of the Comforter that he here speaks. He has gone to heaven. (1.) As the revealer of the Father. He came to do this; He did this while here; but chiefly in parables—figures, dark sayings. These were a sort of veil over what he said regarding the Father, even in his last discourses. But when He went up to heaven all that dimness was gone. From the day of Pentecost there was the plain and full revelation of the Father. The Spirit whom He sent down on his apostles, enabling them to preach and to write, spoke plainly. The Epistles contain this plain revelation of the Father. There may be in them something hard to be understood—but still they are the plainest and fullest revelations of God that man has had. It is this unfolding of God and his ways and thoughts that the world so specially needed and needs still. Acquaintanceship with God is the removal of the world's darkness, and the healing of all its wounds. We look upwards to the heaven of heavens where Jesus is; we listen to His voice, and in what He speaks we have the plain discovery of the Father. (2.) As the medium of communication between us and the Father. He is in heaven as Advocate, Intercessor, High Priest. As such He carries on the communion between us and God. Through Him we have access by one Spirit unto the Father. "I say not that I will pray (or make inquiries for you like the high priest with Urim and Thummin) the Father; for the Father himself loves you"; that is, "I need not say that I will thus act as your High Priest, and yet this is not because the Father requires to be persuaded to love you, for He loves you already." Christ, then, is the communicator between us and God. Whatever we need, let us take it to Him; if any man lacks wisdom, let us thus ask. Jesus is our High Priest. Let us deal with him. II. The Church on earth. Jesus leaves his saints here, yet He keeps up constant communion with them. Heaven and earth are brought together; as if all were nearness and not distance. In this passage we have the Church on earth. (1.) Receiving Christ's revelations of the

Father. He speaks, and she listens. His lessons are all of the Father; and thus she learns from His lips more and more each day of the Father's character, and ways, and mind, and works. As a willing listener to what Jesus speaks of the Father, she goes upon her way here, and does the Father's work. She learns each day more fully the meaning of the marvelous words, "God is love; and he who dwells in love dwells in God, and God in him." It is this revelation of the Father that we preach as glad tidings of great joy. This fills our hearts and imparts the unearthly peace, the unworldly joy, which, as believing men, we possess. (2.) Praying in Christ's name. In a sense that name had been known from the beginning. The seed of the woman, with the bruised heel, was known as he through whom all communications were made between the sinner and God. On the credit of His name prayer got its answer all along. Not one petition was accepted, except in virtue of that name. But still the name was but dimly known; and besides it was not known as the name of Jesus of Nazareth. Henceforth round that name all prayer was to cluster. In that name it was to be presented. That name was to bear it aloft. That name was to secure its success. That name was, by its own omnipotence, to make everyone connected with it omnipotent too. Christ gives us this name to make use of in all our dealings with God. We need nothing else. This will secure the abundant answer. Never let us go to God without that name; and going with it, let us be confident; trusting, not distrusting; believing, not doubting. Let the virtue, the power, the efficacy of that name be ever realized. Let us not dishonor it by distrust. He who goes to God without it, dishonors it. He who professes to go with it, yet doubts whether it will avail to secure an answer for his prayers, no less dishonors it. Let the thought of that name remove all doubt on our part. That name removes all ground for refusal on the part of God. It enables him to give full vent to its infinite liberality and love. (3.) Enjoying the Father's love. "The Father himself loves you." This is no doubtful thing; but as sure as it is blessed. It is this love that is the sunshine of life. The Father's love! Yes; it is written, "That the love with which you have loved me may be in them." He loves them as lovers of his Son. He loves them as believers in the mission of that Son to earth. What love is there like this? And what can brighten or sweeten life like this? (4.) Loving the Son. "You have loved me." The Church is the lover of Christ. In an unloving world she loves Him whom the Father loves. This marks her out from all around. To her He is the chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely. "My beloved" is the name she gives Him. What He desires is love, our love. What He needs is possession of our hearts. The question that He asks is "Do you love me?" (5.) Believing that He came out from God. This is the first thing, though here it comes last. The Father presents him to us as His beloved Son; sent from God, to do the work of God. The first way in which we honor Him is by receiving Him as the Son, the Sent of the Father. Our recognition of Him as such brings us into the circle of discipleship. Believing the Father's testimony to the Son, we ourselves become sons, and as such receive the fullness of the Father's love. What then do you think of Christ? Do you believe that He is the Son of God; that He came out from God, and has gone back to God; not only as the Father's servant to do the Father's will—but in love to us, and as the messenger of the Father's love.

Tribulation, Peace, and Victory "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me you might have peace. In the world you shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."—John 16:33. Here are four special points—the peace, the tribulation, the victory, the cheer. It is Christ himself who is the speaker of these words. He speaks them to us. Let us listen. I. The peace. Peace is the great Bible subject; the theme of God's message to men. Peace on earth; peace with God; the peace of conscious reconciliation. But it is not so much "peace with God" that

is here referred to, as "the peace of God"; not the peace obtained by receiving the embassy of peace, the reconciliation—but the peace of the reconciled soul. Into this region of peace reconciliation is the entrance. Here no wrath can reach us, no storm can ruffle us, no terror can appal us; we are "kept in perfect peace"; "the peace of God rules in our hearts," and is perpetual sunshine, like an island of bright verdure in the midst of a stormy sea. It is peace in Christ; not out of Him, nor apart from Him—but in Him. It flows out of Him to us; or rather we are in Him, and so get that peace. We get it by means of his words; "These things have I spoken unto you, that in me you might have peace." His words are the words of peace. The soul that listens to these words drinks in the peace, or, we may say, breathes the air of peace. Look at his words, "Let not your heart be troubled"; "In my Father's house are many mansions;" "The Father coming in and abiding;" the love of the Father; the little while; the coming joy. Yes, every word is loaded with peace; his own peace; the Father's peace; the Spirit's peace; the peace of heaven; peace even here on an earth, where all is trouble and disquiet. II. The tribulation. Though not of the world, we are in it still. We are partakers of its sorrows, though not of its sins. And besides, the men of the world hate us and trouble us, as they hated and troubled our Master. So that we have tribulation both in and from the world. The prince and god of this world is against us, and assails us on every side, as the old serpent, the tempter, the roaring lion, the ruler of the darkness of this world. Our separation from it, and non-conformity to it, make it the more hostile. It will not let us alone. It is a waste howling wilderness; a land of storms, and barrenness, and enemies, and thorns, and briars. The law of the Church's present state is "tribulation"; "Through much tribulation we must enter the kingdom;" "These are they which came out of great tribulation." There is also the weakness of this "vile body"—weariness, vexation, disappointment, bereavement, breaking of ties, farewells and partings, bodily diseases, pain, affliction, poverty, loss, disaster, straitened circumstances, persecutions, coldness, hatred, the sneer and taunt—of these things the world is full. Its atmosphere is impregnated with the evil, and sadness, and gloom. Thus has it been from the beginning; we see it in Abel, Noah, Joseph, Moses, David, Jeremiah, and all the saints. It is the Christian's portion here. It was the portion of our Savior. He was a man of sorrows. And all this not because of inconsistency—but consistency; the more we are unlike the world, the more it hates us; the more we are like the Lord, the more will the world persecute us. The seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent cannot agree or love. Hence we must come out from it; stand aloof, whatever may be the consequences. And this non-conformity—this quarrel between us and the world—only makes us long more for the day of the great advent. Tribulation makes us long for the coming; death makes us long for resurrection; weariness makes us long for rest; partings make us long for meetings. Thus we look for, and hasten unto, the coming of the day of God, the ending of the sorrow, the beginning of the fullness of joy. III. The victory. "I have overcome the world." It is a powerful world—but not all-powerful. It has been fought with and overcome. One greater than it, or than its prince, has come and vanquished it. The world did its utmost in this battle—but the Son of God prevailed. The seed of the woman bruised the serpent's head. Noah condemned the world—but Christ overcame it. It has now no longer any power left to it but what He permits. He overcame it both by weakness and by strength; He slew death by dying; He conquered Satan, the god of this world, by allowing Satan to conquer Him. He did it alone. None could help Him in such a battle. Yet the victory was complete, final, and irreversible. He is the conqueror; and, as the conqueror, led captivity captive. When He comes again, the victory will be manifested; now we only know it by faith. God has proclaimed the victory of his Son both in heaven and earth—but the

world believes it not. Yet the victory was great and glorious. It was a victory which decided the long battle between heaven and hell; between God and Satan; between the Church and the spiritual weakness in high places. IV. The cheer. Be of good cheer or courage. Do not be afraid of the world, or its prince, or its tribulations. (1.) It is a conquered world. Not in its full strength or flushed with victory—but routed, defeated. Even at its strongest it had but creature strength, and "Who are you that you should be afraid of a man that shall die?" It is now creature-weakness; a broken world. Be of good cheer! (2.) It is conquered for you. The victor fought your fight and won your victory. The world is his foe and yours; as both He fought and won; He was a leader and commander to the people, the Captain of your salvation. It was you He had in view when He was fighting. He will make you more than conqueror. Be of good cheer. (3.) It is conquered by Christ. Conquered by your Savior, your friend. The conqueror is almighty, and his victory has been acknowledged by the Father. It was Jesus who fought and won. Be of good cheer. Not merely do not yield to despondency, like Elijah and Jonah—but rejoice and be exceeding glad. Be cheerful in days of darkness. You have still a battle which you must fight cheerfully and hopefully. It is "that which is behind of Christ's battle," the last relics of the fight. Fight, and yield not. Love not the world—but contend against it. Be faithful to death; the promise is to him that overcomes.

The Declaration of the Father's Name "And I have declared unto them your name, and will declare it; that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them." John 17:26. Here is (1.), the name; (2.) the Declarer of it; (3.) the end or object of this declaration. I. The name. It is the Father's name; the name of Godhead. The name of a thing expresses its qualities and characteristics. The name of a person of old did the same. So the name of God is that which reveals the mind, and heart, and character of God. The name of God is manifold, bringing out various aspects of Godhead. This name may be read on the works of God; this world He created; sun, moon, and stars. But the word contains the name more fully: "You have magnified your word above all your name." But there are portions of the word in which the name is summed up, as in Exodus 34:6: "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious." And this especially was that which the Son of God came to declare. That name of grace shone out legibly and brightly in Him. He came in the Father's name, to reveal that name; to embody it in His person, so that everyone who saw or heard Him, might see and hear the name. "God is love"; "God rich in mercy"; "God so loved the world." These are fragments, or letters, or syllables of the great name. II. The Declarer of it. Man had often tried to utter the name of God—but had failed. He could not comprehend it, and he could not utter it, nor make it known. There was but stammering and distortion. Only He could utter it who came from the Father, and who knew Him, as only the Son could do. He came to earth as the revealer of the Father, and the Father's name. He knew that name well; and when He said, "Abba, Father," and "righteous Father," and "holy Father," and "our Father," He spoke as one who knew it; as one who was seeking to make others know it, and so to be partakers of His confidence and joy. But how, and when, and where did He declare it? In every way, at every time, and in every place during his sojourn here. As every star, and leaf, and flower, and mountain, and stream are, in their province, declarers of the name of God, so (only much more) were each look, and word, and deed, and step of the Lord Jesus declarers of the Father's name. He declared it: (1.) By His birth. Bethlehem was the first place made to echo with the Father's name. The lowly birth, the stable, the manger, all said, "God is love." (2.) By his private life. His thirty years at Nazareth were all, though in ways unknown to us, declarers of the Father's names. These unrecorded years were not wholly silent nor inarticulate. They said, "God is love." (3.) His words. They are few in

comparison with what might have been received. Yet they are enough to declare the name most fully. Each word He spoke is a revelation of the Father. It tells us something of the mind and heart of God, which otherwise we could not have known. It says to us, "God is love." (4.) His deeds. His life was one of miracles; and all of these illustrative of the Father's character; all of them utterances of the Father's name. Each of them spoke out articulately, and said, "God is love." (5.) His death and resurrection. His cross and grave, each of them in its own way, declared the Father's name." He who came to die, and to rise, did so because "God so loved the world." How clearly, how loudly, how fully, did the death and resurrection of the Son of God proclaim, "God is love." In all these ways He was the declarer of the Father's name; the revealer of His character; the embodiment, as well as the proclamation of His grace. And He not only says, "I have declared," but "I will declare"; as if all the future as well as all the past were to be one glorious declaration of the divine name. That declaration is not done. It is now going on in heaven. It will go on, on earth again when He returns to make all things new. Then God's name shall not only be revealed—but "hallowed"; and on the forehead of the redeemed is to be written in the ages to come, "their Father's name." Throughout the ages of the eternal kingdom, that name shall continue to be declared, on earth and in heaven. That name is what the creature needs to know; specially what man needs to know. In it are wrapped up the blessedness, the glory of the universe. III. The end and object of this declaration. "That the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them." The declaration of the Father's name is for our sakes, that we through the knowledge of that name might have the fullness of the Father's love poured into us, and that Christ Himself might make his abode with us. It is not directly of the love of the Father to us that Christ here speaks—but the love of the Father to Himself, "the love with which you have loved me." Elsewhere He speaks of this love as one with, or commensurate with, His own to us: "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you." But here it is of the Father's love to the Son as poured into us through the knowledge of the divine name as given us by Christ, that He is speaking to us, so that the result of Christ's revelation of the Father's name, or rather of our believing that revelation, would be twofold. (1.) The Father's love to the Son would come in to us. What a love! In His case it was all merited; in ours, unmerited; but still, not the less is it true and boundless. It comes in and dwells in us. It is shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Spirit; and thus we are filled with all the fullness of God. (2.) Christ Himself would come in to us. He would abide with us and fill us. Through the knowledge which He gives us of the Father's name, He himself comes in to us! How simple, how immediate, and how free. Believing Christ's revelation of the Father's name, we get all Christ Himself.

Ritualism and the Cross "Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment; and it was early; and they themselves went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the Passover." John 18:28 "Then the Jews led Jesus from Caiaphas to the palace of the Roman governor. By now it was early morning, and to avoid ceremonial uncleanness the Jews did not enter the palace; they wanted to be able to eat the Passover." John 18:28 These "rulers of the Jews" and the multitude that followed them, were thorough "Ritualists." It was their Ritualism which urged them on to crucify the Son of God. For Christ and Ritualism are opposed to each other as light is to darkness. The true cross in which Paul gloried, and the cross in which modern ceremonialists glory, have no resemblance to each other. The cross and the crucifix cannot agree. Either ritualism will banish Christ, or Christ will banish ritualism. They cannot possibly co-exist. It is the ritualism of these Jews—Pharisees, and Scribes, and Priests—which

comes out here. It was this which kept them out of Pilate's hall—for the touch of a Gentile, or anything belonging to a Gentile, would pollute them. They could not, in that case, eat the Passover. And the Passover was simply to them a rite by which they thought to recommend themselves to God and pacify their own consciences. It was their God, their Messiah, their Savior, their religion. Ritualism, or externalism, or traditionalism—are all different forms of self-righteousness; man's self-invented ways of pleasing or appeasing God, or paying for admittance into heaven. These forms of self-righteousness are a human apparatus for performing a certain thing called worship, or procuring a thing called pardon. They are the means by which the performer of them hopes to win God's favor—perhaps, also, man's praise—most certainly, his own esteem. If there could be a righteousness or merit from any kind of human performances, it would have been under the Old Testament, for then all the ceremonies were divine. Man did not originate or invent them. They were all ordained by God. Awful as was the mistake of the Jew in making a savior or a righteousness of these, it was not half so awful or so unnatural as making a Savior or a righteousness out of the performance of certain rites called Christian, invented wholly by man, without God's command—no, in defiance of it. And every act, or performance, or ceremony, which honors self, exalts self, gives prominence to self—is an accursed thing; an abomination in the sight of God, however religious, or sacred, or solemn, or devout, it may seem to man. It is to self-righteousness in some form or other that man is always tending; under Christianity no less than under Judaism. On the one hand, we see men trying to believe that human nature is not so very bad after all and on the other, men professing to believe that it is bad, trying to make up for this badness, or to cover it over, by works, and devotions, and ceremonies. All this is pure self-righteousness. "All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away." Isaiah 64:6 The touch-stone of this ritualism, or religionism, or self-righteousness—is the true cross of Christ. Let us look at it in this light; especially as exhibited in the narrative under notice; for here it is that, for the first time, self-righteousness comes in direct contact with the cross. I. The religion of self-righteousness. In the case of these Jews it was keeping the passover; observing a feast. That was religion! It was all the religion they had; it was their all for acceptance with God; their all for eternity. Their answer to the Judge at the judgment seat would be, "I kept your passovers." As if there were any religion in eating and drinking! The religion of self-righteousness in our day is like this—works, feelings, fancies, music, rites, festivals, fasts, gestures, postures, garments—that is religion! It is something which gratifies self; which pleases the natural man; which makes a man think well of himself; which gives a man something to do or to feel in order to earn pardon and merit heaven. II. The scruples of self-righteousness. These Jews would not enter a Gentile hall. The touch of its floor or walls would be pollution. Religion and irreligion were to them something outward; something with which the body, not the soul, had to do. After touching these, or breathing such air, they would themselves be defiled. Their scruples all turned on their own self-esteem. Pride, religious pride, was at the root. They were thoroughly blind to all that constituted real pollution, and saw only the false. They were scrupulous about entering a Gentile hall, when yet they were seeking to slay a righteous man, no, to crucify the Lord of glory. What was the value of such scruples? What was their meaning? These men could swallow the camel while they were straining out a gnat. They could murder the innocent; yet they were too holy to set their foot on a Gentile floor! Such is the way in which self-righteousness acts itself out! Such is the pride of ecclesiastical caste! III. The deeds of self-righteousness. These were many. Some looked very

religious—fasting, praying, almsgiving, Others not so. In the present case, the great deed of self-righteousness is the crucifying of the Lord of glory. That cross was the monument of self-righteousness. It was this that cried, Away with him! crucify him! not this man but Barabbas! So with modern self-righteousness in every form; especially in the form of ritualism and formalism. It is ever against Christ that self-righteousness shows its hatred, and aims its strokes. Ritualism is man's expression of dislike to Christ. It is the modem way of crucifying Christ afresh, and putting Him to an open shame. IV. The connection between this deed and the religion. Christ and self-righteousness cannot be on terms of friendship, for Christ, in his grace and finished work and free salvation, is wholly antagonistic to all forms of self righteousness. The Jews felt that He was crossing their path, that He was hewing down their temple, that He was utterly making void all their religion; and hence they hated Him; hence they crucified Him. It was self-righteous religion which crucified the Son of God. All rites and ceremonies, whether old or new, are man's ways of getting rid of Christ. They get rid of real religion by means of that which looks like religion—but which is not religion at all. What can all these things do? Can they save? Can postures save? Can dresses save? Can candles, lighted or unlighted, save? Can music save? Can architecture save? Can cathedrals save? No, can they even point the way to Jesus? Do they not lead away from Him? Do they not make void the cross, and trample on the blood? "He saved us—not by works of righteousness that we had done, but according to His mercy, through the washing of regeneration and renewal by the Holy Spirit." Titus 3:5

The Greater Sin "You could have no power at all against me, except it were given you from above: therefore he who delivered me unto you has the greater sin." John 19:2. These words are directed against the Jews, though spoken to Pilate. They are a declaration of the great guilt of the Jewish nation and its rulers, in asking Pilate to exercise his God-given authority against the Son of God. Pilate has not yet committed the sin of condemning Christ; he was urged to it; he hesitated; he shrunk from it; and our Lord here utters the words of warning, to deter him from the consummation of his great crime. "Not the Roman emperor; but my Father; not the people—but my Father, gave you this power, and set you in that place where you have now to judge me, His Son; and these, His enemies and mine, are now asking you to exercise this power given you from above against me, the Son of God, who came from above." As when speaking to Simon (Luke 7:44) he turned to the woman, so here, when speaking to Pilate, he turned to the Jews. The sin here spoken of is not so much Pilate's as Israel's. He did what he did "ignorantly and in unbelief"; they knew, he knew not; he thought he was only exercising his lawful power in the usual way, as a Roman governor. Israel knew the Scriptures concerning Messiah; Pilate did not; and the "greater sin" was committed by men who, with the Scriptures in their hand, called on him who had not these Scriptures to condemn their own Messiah. This power of Pilate was acknowledged by the Jews, by Judas, by Annas, by Caiaphas. They appealed to him as one who had the power to "crucify" and to "release." Hence their sin, their special sin; their "greater sin"—greater than in any ordinary case, greater than that of Pilate. It was "greater sin," because they knew what they did; and because they were making use of the God-given power of another, as well as taking advantage of his ignorance, to perpetrate a crime, which, in its lowest aspect, was the condemnation of the innocent, in its highest, the condemnation of their own Messiah, the Son of the living God. Pilate's power was "from above"— (1.) As governor. There is no power but of God, the powers that be are ordained of God; the source of earthly power is heavenly; not in man or from man—but from the King of kings, the Prince of the kings of the earth. The recognition of this lies at the root of all true

politics. Earthly crowns and thrones and scepters are thus linked with that one heavenly crown and throne and scepter. Kings and magistrates are, by reason of their office, responsible to God. Not personally, as other men merely; but officially, as rulers, they are directly responsible. It is just because of their office that they are so peculiarly accountable, and so solemnly bound to do everything to the glory of God. It is just because of their office, and not merely as other men, that they are bound to consecrate everything which their office gives them power over to the service of Him from whom they have received their power. (2.) As a Gentile governor. The Jews had, for their sins, been given over to Gentile dominion, until the times of the Gentiles should be fulfilled. So that in a double sense Pilate's power was not his own, nor from Rome, nor from the people. In a double sense it came from God, and was therefore to be specially used for God. He might not know all this; but Israel knew it; for their prophets, Daniel especially, had taught them this; and therefore they had the "greater sin." That God's purpose embraced something more than this, and had reference to the crucifixion of Messiah, is true; but that the appeal here made by our Lord to Pilate, though having special reference to Himself, is founded on a broader and more general truth seems evident. (1.) Even a bad man's power is from God. Our Lord affirms this of Pilate; and of Pilate when using that power for the perpetration of the greatest crime ever committed in our world. Let no one therefore point to the crimes of kings, or the sins of magistrates, and say, Can the power of these men be given them from above? Look at Pilate. Listen to our Lord's words; or hear Paul when, in the days of Nero, he said (referring to the words of our Lord), "Let every man be subject to the higher powers" (authorities holding from above) and when he proclaims civil government to be "the ordinance of God"; more—when he calls the monarch or magistrate "the minister of God." (2.) His using his God-given power for a bad purpose is allowed of God. He is free to act; but he is responsible to God for his actings. God overrules his wickedness, and employs him as His instrument for carrying out his purposes. He ought to use his power for a good purpose; not for condemning the Son of God—but for honoring Him; and when he abuses his authority, he is doubly guilty; though that guilt is made use of by God for the development of His own purposes, as in the death of His own Son at the hands of Pilate. That the power which Pilate used was conferred by God only, made his act, as well as that of the Jews, the more criminal. What a reckoning is at hand with the kings of earth, for the abuse of their power! (See Psalms 82:1-8) (3.) God makes him His instrument. He is free. He might use his power for a good purpose; yet even when he uses it for a bad one, he is overruled of God. It is God's "determinate counsel" that comes out here (Acts 2:23). Like Pharaoh working out Israel's deliverance, so is Pilate here working out the Church's deliverance, according to the purpose of God. The following TRUTHS come out here— (1.) The thing which Pilate was preparing to do would have been sin in any circumstances; even if his power was not given from above. It was the condemnation of an innocent man. It was might trampling on right. (2.) It was greater sin, because the power was from above. It was abusing, for unrighteousness, the power received from the God of righteousness. (3.) It was still greater sin to use this God-given power to crucify the Son of God. The moment man gets into power, he uses it against God and against his Christ. (4.) It was yet greater sin in Israel to deliver up their own Messiah to be crucified by him who had this power. It was as much as calling on God to crucify his own Son. It was daring sin, committed with their eyes open. Pilate's sin was great; Israel's was greater far. Pilate, beware of your sin, for it is great; Israel, beware of your sin, for it is far greater. Thus He warns both at once; and bids them beware of the sin of crucifying the Lord of glory.

Christ’s Work in Heaven—and Ours on Earth "Jesus said unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God." John 20:17 This passage is very generally taken to mean, "Do not so cling to me, you will have other opportunities of meeting me, for I shall not be going to my Father for some time yet." But (1) it is doubtful whether "touch" can mean this; (2) this meaning does not accord with the reason, which is "I have not yet gone," not "I am not yet going"; (3) the treatment of Thomas, who was allowed to touch, is at variance with this. Looking into the words, we shall discover a truer sense. The command is, "touch me not"; the reason is, "I am not yet ascended," etc. Very little had passed between the Lord and Mary. He had said, "Mary"; she had replied, "Rabboni," accompanying the word with some significant look and gesture, which the Lord quite understood. To this look and gesture, or rather to the thought which they indicated, our Lord replies. For it was his custom to direct his answers to the thoughts more than to the words of his disciples; Luke 9:47, "Jesus perceiving the thought of their heart." Christ’s words, then, are directed to Mary’s thought. She had sprung forward to embrace Him, under the impression that all He had spoken of before his death was now done; that He had been to the Father, and that He was now come again to receive his own to Himself. "Now all is fulfilled," she thought; "He has returned from the Father; He is going to take us to his kingdom; we shall be forever with Him." No, not yet, is Christ’s answer; you speak and act as if all were done. Not so. I have more work to do, and you have more work to do; we must separate again; I to do my work, you to do yours. There is a remarkable difference between Mary’s case and that of Thomas. She believed too much; he too little. She was all faith—faith too hasty in its conclusions; he was all unbelief—unbelief refusing to believe even that this was his Master. Her too eager faith is corrected by the Touch me not—but Go, etc.; his unbelief is removed by the "Reach here your hand," etc. Each is treated with marvelous wisdom, and gentleness, and love. How unlike man’s way of dealing! We think He would have said to faith, Touch me; to unbelief, Touch me not. But the skill of the divine physician is as conspicuous in his treatment of the two cases as is his love. The mistake which is here corrected by the Lord, is a very natural one, and of a very blessed kind. It is simply that of too great eagerness; ante-dating the joy of the kingdom, of the marriage-feast; saying too soon, "the winter is past, the rain is over and gone," etc. It is a mistake not so common with us as with the early Christians, who, like Mary, seemed to be every moment counting on entering into the joy of the Lord. The substance, then, of the Lord’s exhortation is, "be calm and patient; he who believes does not make haste; I have work to do, which must be done before we sit down together in my Father’s house; and you the same. Let us consider these two things then—Christ’s work, our work. I. Christ’s work. He has gone to the Father; He is now at his right hand; and when that work is done we shall be admitted to touch Him; admitted to his joy; to drink the new wine with Him in his kingdom. What, then, is the work He has gone to do? He has gone. (1.) To get the Spirit for us. Not until He was glorified was the Spirit given in its fullness. Now He has received for us the promise of the Father—gifts for men. He is now the possessor and dispenser of the Holy Spirit. (2.) To intercede for us. His work of intercession is now going on in heaven; He ever lives to intercede for us; He is our advocate with the Father; our forerunner, appearing in the presence of God for us. (3.) To prepare a place for us. In his Father’s house are many mansions; more than enough for the great multitude that no man can number. In these He has gone to prepare a place for us. What that preparation is we know not; how long it may take we know not. But it is going on just now and when it is done He will come again and receive us to Himself, that where He is there

we may be also. (4.) To give repentance and forgiveness. For this specially He is exalted. This work He has been carrying on since Pentecost, when the first installment was exhibited. He is doing it daily still. Thus, then, He cautions us—be calm, be patient, haste not, fret not; I have gone to do my work. It must be done, and then no more delay. II. Our work. Touch me not, said the Lord—but go—go and tell. Mary hastened, and did what her Lord commanded. She had something else to do than touching or enjoying. She had work. So have we. We have. (1.) Work for ourselves. It is work expressed in such exhortations as these: follow me, take up your cross, deny self, work while it is day, let your light shine, grow in grace, pray without ceasing. (2.) Work for the church. We are members of one body, helping each other, bearing each other's burdens, comforting each other, strengthening each other's hands, binding up each other's wounds, supplying each other's needs. (3.) Work for the world. We are called out of the world, not to take no interest in it—but to pity and pray for it. Let our eye be on dying men; seeking to save them, pulling them out of the fire, reproving, warning, inviting, beseeching. We have much of this work to do, and little time to do it in. Christ's work in heaven and ours on earth will soon be done. Then it will no longer be, Touch me not; but, Come you blessed. We shall sit down under his shadow; He shall say, Come with me from Lebanon; open to me my sister, my love; and it shall be said, Who is this that comes up from the wilderness leaning on her beloved; and we shall say, Let Him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth. Then shall we touch Him without rebuke, sitting down with Him at the marriage supper, and shall ever be forever with the Lord.

The Tender Love of the Risen Christ "Children, have you any food?" John 21:5 It was a risen Christ who asked this question; thus He is shown to be the same Savior still. The cross and grave have not quenched His love; nor has resurrection made Him forget them, or raised Him above sympathy with them. The question pertained to the needs of the body. His resurrection-body was still in sympathy with their body. He felt their pain, and want, and cold, and hunger, just as He did before. The higher He rose, the deeper and more perfect were His sympathies. He could hunger no more, neither thirst any more, nor be weary more; yet all this but made Him the more keenly alive to such sufferings and privations in His brethren. The question which He asked is one which He did not need to ask; He could have answered it Himself; He knew they had no food—that all the night they had toiled—but caught nothing. Yet He wishes to speak to them as a man—as a friend interested in their welfare. That question is His method of approaching them; His morning salutation; the first link between them; the going out of His heart to call out theirs. He awakens their confidence, as a stranger, an unknown friend; and then, before they are aware, the stranger-dress is dropped, and Jesus, their Master, is revealed. Blessed surprise! Such as that with Mary at the tomb; such as that with the disciples on the Emmaus road; as if He delighted in these surprises of love. Jesus is man all over, in everything but sin—both before and after his resurrection. The question here indicates such things as these—watchfulness, pity, bounty; and though these were exhibited in connection with bodily need, not the less are they found in Him, in connection with the soul and its deeper, more eternal needs, and in connection with the church, His body, and her infinite needs. Let us note then, I. The watchfulness of the risen Christ. He looks down on His flock, and marks each sheep and lamb with more than a shepherd's eye. The glory, the blessedness, the abundance with which He is surrounded, do not make Him unwatchful. Amid His own plenty, He remembers the poverty, and hunger, and cold, and nakedness of His scattered flock below. He watches each one. The lack of one meal for the body was observed by Him, that morning in Galilee; we may be sure that He marks the lack of sustenance, whether for soul or

body, in the least of his members. Poor saint, you never lacked a meal, a crust—but Jesus noticed it, and asked the question, on purpose to supply your need, "My child, have you any food?" You never lacked even one spiritual meal, at any time—but He put the same question. He watches the hunger and thirst of His church on earth, and is unceasingly putting the question to it—to each congregation—to each saint: Children, have you any food? Nothing escapes his vigilant eye. "I know your poverty," He says; I know your hunger, your thirst, your weariness, your weakness, your sighs and tears. II. The pity of the risen Christ. "I have compassion on the multitudes," He once said, "because they have continued with me three days, and have nothing to eat." Such was His pity before His resurrection. Our text shows us His pity after it. And we are sure that the throne has not lessened that pity. He pities His church's hunger and leanness; each saint's hunger and leanness. It is in profoundest pity that he asks the question of each of us, Children, have you any food? Surrounded by the abundance in His Father's house above, he pities us in this wilderness, this land of famine; where need compasses us about. Oh. let us lean the compassion of the risen and ascended Christ. Let us trust in Him in every hour of want. Never did an earthly father pity a starving child as He pities us. III. The bounty of the risen Christ. His is no empty pity. He does not say merely, Be warmed and filled. He at once opens his treasure-house, and supplies us, as Joseph his brethren. His stores are boundless. He has bread enough and to spare. He has no pleasure in our hunger. He delights to pour out His plenty; no, and to provide channels for its flowing down to us—as in the case of His disciples, when He filled their nets, and kindled the fire; and prepared the meal with His own hands. He opens his hands, and supplies every want. He replenishes the church's basket and store. He fills the cruse and meal barrel of his widowed church here in the day of famine. And this is His voice to her now—His voice in every age, His voice in these last days: "Children, have you any food?" Perhaps we have to answer, No. There is cleanness of teeth; a famine, not of bread, nor water—but of hearing the words of the Lord (Amos 8:2). No; we are famishing; our spiritual meals are scanty; our leanness, our leanness! Then He comes and spreads a table in the wilderness. He feeds us with the finest of the wheat. He gives us His own flesh to eat; and His flesh is food indeed. Such is His tender love, His infinite bounty. After He has fed them, and thus renewed the tokens of His love and care; after that, in silent awe, they had feasted together by that wondrous lake, He breaks silence by putting the question, "Do you love me?" He puts it to the most jealous of His disciples, much more to all of us. And this is the sound of His voice; which we now hear, putting to us the question, "Do you love me?" What is our answer? We said at once; No, when He asked about our food; shall we not as explicitly say, Yes! when He asks, "Do you love me?"

Chapter 72

02A.00 Development of Antichrist

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Foreword The Council of the Sovereign Grace Advent Testimony have great pleasure in republishing this work by Andrew Bonar, D. D. The book was first printed in 1853 and although that is about a century and a half ago it has not been necessary to alter any of the arguments raised by Dr Bonar. Because his teaching is based on the infallible Word of God, the book is as much up-to-date, and in fact more so, than when it was written.

Dr Bonar obviously saw, at the time of writing, that the tendencies in his days were leading towards the events spoken of in Holy Scripture which have yet to be completely and precisely fulfilled. This is a reminder that we have to wait God's time. The events could occur very quickly or there may still be some time before the culmination of this age. This is all in the sovereignty of God.

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wild and unbridled speculator to enter upon, or that men may venture to assign to terms occurring there a meaning altogether different from what truth and soberness assign to them elsewhere?

If the great enemy of all truth can no longer bury prophetic truth, as till of late years he has pretty nearly succeeded in doing, it would seem as if his efforts were now directed to deluge the world with false suggestions, so as to bewilder and perplex men’s minds, and it would therefore be well for us to recall, in the deceivableness of our days, how our Lord Himself met the delusions in His. Was it not by a constant and consistent appeal to the inspired literality of Scripture? "It is written," was His answer, and it is to the same refuge His followers must betake themselves, if they would escape the increasing confusion in which the neglect of this great principle is involving prophetic as well as all other Scripture investigation. That prophetic study, in an especial degree, should have been attended with so little practical benefit, might well of itself create a suspicion that the prevailing system has been, and is intrinsically wrong. By it the inquiry has been directed chiefly, as it would seem, to gratify a vain curiosity as to dates, etc. on which it was not to be expected any blessing could rest: nor indeed has it rested nor will rest, until the same consistent principle of fulfillment, recognizable in prophecies declared by Scripture itself to have been already fulfilled, is acted upon in respect to those that are not. But besides all this, let us bear in mind there is something else to be attended to. Our principle may be right, and yet there be no practical benefit to ourselves individually from the study after all. The question is not how much we are interested or how correct our conclusions may be, but how are we profiting by the disclosure we shall find of such terrible, and, at the same time, such glorious realities as the "sure word of prophecy" declares to be coming upon the earth? Without a corresponding result on our life and conversation, we are but trifling with this as with other Scripture, for all there is bound up in indissoluble harmony together, prophecy as well as doctrine being alike declared to be profitable for our correction and instruction in righteousness (see 2 Timothy 3:16) by the same inspiration which has taught and commanded us to "search the Scriptures," without separating them as we have been doing. The different portions, when so taken, will be found to be all in explanation and support of each other, whilst the comfort given by an assurance of ultimate triumph will indeed be found distinctly helping God’s people into a "patient waiting," as the knowledge imparted will keep them from being "shaken in their minds," if not altogether overborne by those things which, as they will see, are coming upon the earth.

Leamington, November 1852.

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Leamington, November 1852. reformatted for e-Sword

02A.1. The Personality of Antichrist

Chapter 1 The Personality of Antichrist

Christians are called to tread nowhere with greater circumspection than when dealing with unfulfilled prophecy, and it is owing to want of due caution here that so many a humble inquirer has been left, amidst the confusion that is within and ridicule without the Church, in painful uncertainty as to what his duty in regard to the prophetic portion of Scripture really is. The things there, "hard to be understood," have been so twisted and perplexed by each enthusiast in pursuit of his own favorite theory of interpretation, as seemingly to have left the whole question of what is fulfilled and what is not, more doubtful and unsettled than ever, and hence with many, a not unnatural doubt has arisen as to whether it might not be better to leave the whole subject alone. But against the propriety of such a decision the natural thought will arise, if no practical benefit was intended for the church from the study, why does what is confessedly prophetical occupy so large a portion of that sacred volume which all are enjoined to "search" (John 5:39), and how comes it that there should be a distinct blessing to him who readeth and understandeth the prophecy of this Book? Why should the example of such an one as Daniel be recorded with approval (Daniel 9:2-3), who set himself by prayer and supplication to understand by books the number of the years? Or that such advantage should be indicated to those of God’s people who give heed to the sure word of prophecy, as of a light shining in a dark place (2 Peter 1:19)? And farther, are we not presented with a tangible proof of such advantage having actually been secured to those, who in faith of prophecies recorded, were waiting for and expecting such events as marked the first coming of the Messiah, and the destruction thereafter of Jerusalem when they should see it "compassed by armies," as they did at the approach of Titus, so escaping in Pella the calamities of that terrible overthrow? Had each recorded prophecy been unquestionably already fulfilled in the church’s past history, there might perhaps have been some excuse for those who stand back from the study. But when confessedly this is not the case, as shown amidst other things by the very discrepancies which exist among interpreters themselves, we cannot escape from a commanded duty unless prepared to forfeit the blessing with which the study of prophecy is distinctly connected.

Again, if that study is to have reference (as some would have it) only to the past, how is it that Scripture itself says concerning it, "ye do well that ye take heed in your hearts as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn and the day-star arise"? Surely it cannot be said that this has reference to the past, for even our own senses will lead us, when journeying home in a dark night, to observe the lights before us more anxiously than those we have passed. "Ye do well that ye take heed," is the simple and sufficient reply to those who counsel us, because of the perplexity in which men have involved the subject, to leave it henceforth alone, whilst at the same time the failures of the past ought no less to make us cautious as to how, in future, we allow ourselves to take so many unproved assertions for granted. In prophecies already fulfilled (such as those relating to our Lord’s first advent—the crucifixion, etc.), there is one striking characteristic to which we would do well to attend, as about it there can be no difference of opinion. It is this, that in

whatever way men might previously have been regarding the prediction, and however their fancy might have wandered as to what it might mean, when the fulfillment took place it was distinctly found that Scripture had been speaking literally, as shown by a literal accomplishment. Alas! for the expositors of our day if their declarations are to be tried by that rule. Who among us would, for a moment, place the satisfactory simplicity of past fulfillments on a level with those which we are called to consider as over and gone already, by the easy and fanciful system in fashion now?

It is a dangerous thing to underrate the extent of Satan's agency in the world, raising as he has ever done from the day of his first perversion and misinterpretation of God's words in the garden of Eden, mists of delusion and error to distort or conceal what God intended His people should be aware of for their warning as well as for their comfort. He knows well in our day that his time is fast shortening, and he knows too of the increasing power he is to be permitted to exercise in the time of the end (Revelation 12:12; and Revelation 13:2). So whilst the "sure word of prophecy," if given heed to, would have been and still be "a light" shining in the dark passages through which the course of events is leading, his efforts have been constantly and successfully directed to darken and perplex the future, by hiding the simplicity of the truth under fanciful coverings, and so leading even God's people to be looking in wrong directions, that, if possible, they may be deceived or overthrown, even as His ancient people themselves were, when the issue itself is really at hand. The idea of a personal literal Antichrist is what he seems especially to have sought to render ridiculous, or rather, to banish altogether, in these days which to all appearance so closely precede his being revealed: and yet if such an embodiment of evil (as it is desired to show) is really to be, to what ought the attention of the church be directed more seriously than to this? The fanciful and metaphorical interpreters already referred to, have worked hard to make the pope or the papacy (it is difficult sometimes to know which) answer the description given in Scripture of the man of sin when he is seen. Some plausibility has been given to their attempts by the occurrence of certain points of resemblance, for all forms of error and evil will be found summed up in the embodiment which is to be at the end, "when the transgressors are come to the full" (Daniel 8:23). But the great and distinguishing marks themselves are not, and will not be seen till he who is to carry them all is revealed.

One of these has been specially defined by inspiration, "he is Antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son" (1 John 2:22), which it is vain to say that either the pope or the papacy have ever done. On the contrary it is sufficiently evident to any one who is not determined to deny it at all hazards, that their whole strength to deceive and rule as they have done, has rested on the (wicked and unfounded) assumption that the pope is the vicar of God upon earth. His bulls have accordingly been issued in the name of the Holy Trinity, which so far from denying, he claims to represent.

If he is worshipped, as asserted, it is simply and undeniably by those who believe him to be what he pretends he is, the authorized representative of the God Whom both they and their pope himself profess to worship. Is this not manifest when, at his death, like the meanest of his followers, he has to be prayed out of purgatory to fit him to appear in the presence of Him Whose representative he was held to have been on earth, where nevertheless he had personally been contracting sin like others? So far from denying either the Father or the Son, each pope in succession has professed to derive expressly from Them the usurped authority so fearlessly and fearfully exercised.

Again, if the pope or the papacy be the beast, as maintained by that class of expositors, according to Revelation 13:8, all must be worshipping him whose names are not written from the foundation of the world in the book of the Lamb slain. In other words, Antichristianism in that case, would simply be limited to those who adhere to the pope, with the unavoidable conclusion that such professed atheists as Hume, Gibbon, and Thomas Paine, who showed as little faith in his as in any other name, were written in the book of that adorable Redeemer Whom nevertheless they blasphemed!

Moreover, if the pope is the beast, as it is pretended he is, and all the world wondering after him, his followers to accord with Scripture (Revelation 13:3-4) must be, without mistake worshipping the dragon (who is elsewhere declared to be the devil—Revelation 20:2) as giving to him the power he possesses. But surely, however misled we may think them to be, none among us will venture to affirm that either as a community or individually, papists do this, which would evidently imply a state of hopeless reprobation.*

*(1 Corinthians 10:1-33, showing that where idols are worshipped devils are, is not overlooked. All we mean to assert is, that fearful as the delusions of the papacy as a system are, papists individually cannot be said to worship the devil, as men in the end will avowedly do under Antichrist, to whom they see him giving his power and authority— Revelation 13:4). To escape from such a conclusion, all that can be said must resolve itself into this, that the precise language of Scripture referred to does not mean what it says, for there is not even a place for repentance left to them inasmuch as it is written, "If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation; and he shall be tormented" for ever and ever (Revelation 14:9-10).

It must not, however, be imagined that there is with all this, the slightest intention here of insinuating anything in favour of the pope and his false and impious pretensions. From the days of the apostles there have been "many antichrists" in the world, as we learn from one of the very passages which tells us (1 John 2:18) that "The Antichrist shall come." And among these the pope and the papacy must take their place, not only as forbidding men, in opposition to God’s command, to "search the Scriptures," which testify of Christ (John 5:39), but as having introduced doctrines and commandments which are contrary to His honor and subversive of His alone mediation as well as sufficiency for the sin of the whole world. To lift a man in one way or other into the place and honor which Christ alone should possess, is the grand aim of antichristianism in all its different states and degrees. A family likeness is therefore to be traced through them all, to be more strongly marked, perhaps, in the last days, which are so strikingly referred to in 2 Timothy 3:1-13, when evil men and seducers are to wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived, and when as we learn elsewhere (Daniel 8:23-25), transgressors having come to the full, "a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up. And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power;* and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and practice, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people. And through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand; and he shall magnify himself in his heart, and by peace (prosperity) shall destroy many: he shall also stand up against the Prince of princes."

*(It is hoped as we proceed to be able to show that the king here spoken of is identical with the beast who acts "not in his own power" but by that of the devil, whom all the world worships, as giving "power to the beast" (Revelation 17:13), that identity being proved by there being one act, one era, and one destruction common to these among the other names which are given to the Antichrist as characteristic of him.) The personality of the Antichrist here contended for is no speculative theory to be adopted or rejected as suits our own fancy and about which each may form his own opinion. A very slight examination, particularly of the original, will show that so strongly is that personality declared, as to leave it as little optional with us to overlook it, as it is to deny that of the devil who will give him his great power and authority. It was evidently the belief of the early church, whilst the passages in Scripture which speak of him, if honestly taken, distinctly show that none else than a person can be meant.

He is called (and if any will examine the original, they will see how markedly it is there expressed), "that man of sin, . . . the son of perdition" who "sitteth in the temple of God"* (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4), the wicked or lawless one (verse 8), "the Antichrist" (above the many who will have preceded him) (1 John 2:18; 1 John 2:22), "a king" and "the king" (Daniel 8:23; Daniel 11:36), who does "according to his will," "the idol shepherd" who tears the flesh (Zechariah 11:17), he who is to open "his mouth in blasphemy against God" (Revelation 13:6), and who is to be "cast alive into the lake of fire" (Revelation 19:20).

*("The temple of God" is an expression applied in Scripture to three things, and three only. (1) to the actual temple at Jerusalem, as in 2 Chronicles 35:20. (2) to the bodies of individual saints, as in 1 Corinthians 6:19. (3) to the Church of God, as in 1 Corinthians 3:17. Now it is manifestly impossible that Antichrist could "sit" in any but the first of these three, and the coinciding mark given by Daniel of the "glorious holy mountain" [Mount Zion being alone called so], where he is to plant himself, confirms it to be a fact which can have no accomplishment at Rome [as alleged], inasmuch as neither the temple nor mountain are or ever have been there, any more than they can be elsewhere than at Jerusalem— the holy city. Is it not strange to see Protestants so bent on their fancy of the pope being Antichrist, as not to perceive they give up the whole question by calling St Peter’s at Rome "the temple of God"? For if the pope is the Antichrist, how can they call his temple at Rome or anywhere else "the temple of God," when the exception, as we have seen, is only as to Jerusalem, where alone, of necessity, the usurpation in any circumstances could be, "in the holy place,"— "My holy hill of Zion")?

Under other names which as remarked already will be found applicable to him only, his personality is as distinctly intimated on every occasion, and yet to suit preconceived notions and prejudices, terms nowhere else so interpreted are distorted to mean a "succession of men," or as others would have it, a "succession of principles," which are gradually to be consumed out of it as the world becomes converted. Why in the same way might not the third Person of the ever blessed Trinity be held to mean merely a succession of influences or governing principles? How is it that Christians will not open their eyes to the danger of sanctioning what would make plain words of Scripture mean anything or nothing, and so give the enemy ground for questioning even the Personality of the Lord Who bought them, or else the alternative of hearing themselves taunted with inconsistency? In addition to this greater danger to our holy religion itself, there is another springing from such loose interpretation of Scripture which is, that by suffering ourselves to be led into the hope of amelioration which is gradually to usher in the day of the Lord, we may mistake

the "deceivableness of unrighteousness" (2 Thessalonians 2:10) with which we are warned Antichrist will introduce himself, for the beginning of that reign of righteousness which will be established only when Christ "with the spirit of His mouth and . . . with the brightness of His coming" shall have destroyed and consumed him (2 Thessalonians 2:8).

It will be found in that day to have been no light matter to have been trifling with Scripture language, our tendency being to call evil good and good evil; while all Satan's art will be turned to conceal the real tendency as well as nature of his working from us. "That old serpent, which is the devil" (Revelation 20:2), will at the end as at the beginning, still prove himself more subtle than any beast of the field. His "working" will be in no shape to alarm the fears or shock men with its impropriety. On the contrary, it will be suited to the spirit and requirements of the age, with a flexibility and power of insertion best resembled to the form which he assumed when tempting Eve in the garden. The gradual character of his approaches should rouse us to think, for "many antichrists" have been preparing the way for him ever since the apostle declared in his day that "the spirit of Antichrist" was already in the world (1 John 4:3). The full development will surely follow when the apostasy and man of sin come to be. Meanwhile each successive step downwards seems in itself so trifling as scarcely to deserve our notice, which is in fact the danger. "Behold, I have told you before" (Matthew 24:25) is the caution given immediately after our Lord Himself had been warning of the especial deceivableness of the times which shall immediately precede His coming, when will be seen how vain and unwarranted was the fond conceit with which men had been pleasing themselves of any peaceful termination of present evil, which on the contrary, if we will but listen to Scripture, must "wax worse and worse" (2 Timothy 3:13) until the consummation takes place under the Antichrist, emphatically called as presiding over it, "that man of sin," in a trouble "such as was not from the beginning (foundation) of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be" (Matthew 24:21).

Regarding that last tribulation, it seems God's merciful design to have His church and people specially warned, so that it should not overtake them unawares any more than the day of the Lord which it is to precede, though both shall come as a snare upon all them that dwell on the face of the earth. Only admit the possibility of a future personal Antichrist (which, surely, it is not unreasonable to ask, after the Scripture terms that have been cited), and our Bibles will be found replete with allusions to such a being in this dispensation, with marks to distinguish him when he does come, from all that will have preceded him. Is it objected that so evident a sign as he would be before the coming of Christ, would interfere with the injunction to "Watch, for ye know not the day nor the hour when your Lord cometh;" and to that extent to put off the expectant and pilgrim character which befits those servants who profess to be waiting for their Lord? Hear the answer which such a passage as 2 Thessalonians 2:1-17 supplies. In it we have the church warned not to be shaken "as that the day of Christ is at hand," whilst the very same apostle who gives the warning, had just been telling them to "watch and be sober" (1 Thessalonians 5:6), for the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night, — nay, what is more, a distinct intimation is given that that day should not come until the man of sin—this "son of perdition"— should be revealed. The only seeming confusion arises from our overlooking the broad distinction drawn in the same epistle, between the children of darkness and the children of light (1 Thessalonians 5:4-5) —the one to be overtaken as by a thief in the night, the other to "know perfectly" the times and the seasons, inasmuch as "I told you these things" (2 Thessalonians 2:5).

Indeed, signs of the most definite character have been constantly vouchsafed to God’s people in all ages, as now, to designate the advent of events previously foretold by His prophets. Yet these, though sufficiently distinct for their warning, are invariably seen to have been overlooked by all others. Noah’s preaching, whilst the ark was preparing, did not alarm the scoffers of his day, or make them know "till the flood came and took them all away." And so with the scoffers in our own (2 Peter 3:3), will the coming of the Son of man be, although preceded by so signal an event as the revelation of the man of sin: a sign, nevertheless, to the children of light, for which already they would do well to be watching. To be "seeking" a sign is a widely different thing from looking out for one already announced for warning. The sin and perverseness of seeking a sign is pointed out to us in such passages as Matthew 12:39 and Mark 8:11-12. To that evil and adulterous generation—children of darkness, and not of light, according to the distinction drawn in the epistle to the Thessalonians already referred to—no sign shall be given. And why? Because of their willful rejection of the signs God Himself had been pleased to vouchsafe. And mark the consequence when the false christs and false prophets appear, as appear they will (Mark 13:22), with signs and wonders to seduce if possible, the very elect though waiting for them. Not only shall no sign be given to the despisers of Scripture warning, but God shall send them strong delusion to believe "the lie," that they all may be damned who believed not "the truth" (2 Thessalonians 2:11-12). How fearful the thought even of such a delusion! More fatal still than that in the days of Noah; for it is the delusion of him whose coming is to be after the working of Satan, and their end, like his, to be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever (Revelation 19:20; Revelation 20:10).

If there be any truth in these remarks, enough, surely, has already been said to vindicate, in some degree to Christians at least, the uses as well as duty of prophetic study, whatever ridicule may be attaching to it. A study in which it will scarcely be possible to engage without, ere long, being forced to see that a personal "coming of the Lord" is to be undoubtedly expected, if words are to have any meaning at all, as well as a time of unequalled tribulation immediately to precede it (Matthew 24:29). And equally impossible will it be found to separate that tribulation from a personal Antichrist and the leading part he has in it, as the express agent for the putting forth of Satan’s energy to accomplish what God will then permit him to do. The apostle speaks, as has already been adverted to, of antichrists in his day, but the maturity of antichristian evil (every departure from the truth in Jesus being held as antichristian) is distinctly postponed till "that man of sin be revealed" —the lawless one who, after a permitted triumph, is to be destroyed by the "brightness of His coming."

It has been already noticed incidentally, that the notion of a personal literal Antichrist with a short-lived supremacy, was held by the early Christians, without, it is believed, any recorded exception. They were living too close to the times in which a strictly literal fulfillment had been seen of all the prophecies connected with our Lord’s first coming in the flesh, to doubt that "the man of sin" in his times, would prove to be also literally a man, or the 1260 days of his usurpation literal days. It was reserved for a later generation, who had fallen under the cruelties of papal oppression, to fancy it to be the unequalled trouble and predicted apostasy of the last times, and even to alter the literal meaning of words to make it so.

It was about the year 1240, that Eberhard began to think the pope to be the "little horn," and that Luther and his companions in tribulation should have gone in with such imagination, seems far

less wonderful than that so many in these days should still be arguing that he is the dreaded "man of sin," when the oppression and troubles Luther saw have long since ceased. The cessation alone ought to have proved to any not willfully blind, that the pope cannot be that man of sin under whom the tribulation is to be; for it is to be terminated, not as some would have it by the gradual decline of either the pope or the papacy, but by the coming of the Lord Himself to destroy the wicked one.

"Immediately (the word in the original is emphatic) after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth (land) mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" (Matthew 24:29-30).

Those who adhere to the prevailing mode of figurative interpretation, regard all this as metaphorical language, maintaining that the sun and moon here mentioned, are political emblems. Thus they dispose of these solemn predictions of our Lord Himself, even when forced to admit that the same expressions in Scripture, when employed to describe past events, as at the crucifixion, did express what actually occurred and took place then and there. If the sun was darkened and the veil rent (Luke 23:45), surely it is worse than presumptuous to affirm that the same words applied to the future may have a totally different meaning.

"Yet once more (again),* I shake not the earth only, but also heaven," are the words of inspiration (Hebrews 12:26), and by the terms applicable alone to the same mighty occurrence foretold by our Lord Himself in the passage just transcribed from Matthew, which again can of necessity be none other than that "coming" by which He destroys Antichrist— that "man of sin," whom He will encounter, not in decrepitude like the pope, but whilst he is still aided by the devil "with all power, and signs, and lying wonders," and then fully manifested to be the lawless one opposing and exalting himself above all (2 Thessalonians 2:4).

*(This "once again" is alluded to in Isaiah 2:1-22, "when He ariseth to shake terribly the earth" (Isaiah 2:21) which is distinctly to be, as the context will show in "the day of the LORD" (Isaiah 2:12) when every one that is lifted up (like Antichrist exalting himself) "shall be brought low").

If Christ then destroys the "man of sin" at His coming, the destruction must take place "immediately" after the tribulation described to be "such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be" (Matthew 24:21). This being so, the time spoken of must be identical with that of Daniel 12:1 and the events there recorded, inasmuch as there cannot be two distinct periods of unequalled tribulation; and this again identifies the king there described as exalting himself above every god and coming to his end and none to help him (Daniel 11:45), with "that man of sin" (2 Thessalonians 2:1-17) "the son of perdition" who is destroyed by "the brightness of His coming." But who can pretend that there is any resemblance between such a desolation with such a destruction, and a pope powerless to do even what his predecessors did; nay, requiring the support of foreign troops to retain him on his feeble throne? Does it not appear something like mockery to say of such an one that the devil is giving him his power and great authority? Are men worshipping him and saying, "Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?" (Revelation 13:4). Where are the ten kings who "receive power as kings one hour" with him, and who are said to have one mind, and agree to give him their power till the purposes of

God are fulfilled (Revelation 17:12-13; Revelation 17:17)?

They who call the pope the Antichrist admit he is also the beast, and yet can talk to us of the gradual diminution or drying up of his power, in face of what is written in Revelation 17:1-18, where, with the kings of the earth, he is seen in the plenitude of his power (and from what follows aided to the last by the devil), gathered to make war against Him that sat on the horse and against His army. Is it possible to think that the downfall there recorded is a gradual one? Every word in Revelation 19:20 indicates the reverse. It is sudden as it is overwhelming, for then is seen the strength of Christ, the "seed of the woman," put forth against him who is the seed of the serpent; the "head" bruised then as the "heel" has already been.

It is the strength of heaven against the strength of hell, and the catastrophe is complete. "The beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the remnant were slain with the sword of Him that sat upon the horse" (Revelation 19:20-21).

Such is the end, not of the pope or the papacy, but of an apostasy more terrible than all that has yet darkened this sin-worn earth. It is the recorded downfall of Gentile power then in unholy combination with Jewish, which alike cast off Christ as the rightful Lord, will have chosen a king of their own to the rejection of Him Who is the King of kings and the Lord of lords. And it is thus that his Name is seen written on His vesture and on His thigh (Revelation 19:16), as followed by the armies of heaven, He comes to claim His kingdom from the usurper.

How strange to see Christians willing, by figurative perversions like these, to set aside the glorious open triumph which will then be seen, and in which they themselves are to share, for an inconsistent attempt to make the pope in the decrepitude of these last times, personate him who aided by the devil and supported to the end, as we have seen, by the kings of the earth and their armies, encounters the armies of heaven and falls by the power of a Mighty One.

People tell us that although it may be different with him at this epoch from what it once was, the pope is reviving or will yet revive, and his efforts to recover his lost authority be yet successful. But this is indulging a mere fancy, for which there is not only no warrant in Scripture, but the reverse. The Antichrist, when he is seen, comes "in like a flood" (Isaiah 59:19) and prospers (Daniel 8:12) without intermission, and this continuance is also characteristic of the adherence given by the kings of the earth and their armies, till they share his destruction.

There are other arguments, besides these which have been already produced, to show that the Antichrist when he does appear, will prove to be neither a succession of men nor a succession of principles, but what Scripture language, in its ordinary acceptation which we have no right to reject, tells us throughout he will be—an individual man. It is somewhat unfortunate that the definite article, which appears in the original, has been omitted in our translation of 1 John 2:18. It ought to run, Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that the Antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists already in the world, whereby we know that it is the last time. The many antichrists are thus forerunners of the Antichrist himself, and must of necessity therefore exhibit in some degree his characteristics; not the least remarkable of which (as attempted to be shown) are his personality, and also his rising out of an apostasy. In fact, many

individuals have actually, from time to time, presented themselves to the notice of the world answering in various particulars the description we have of him in Daniel 11:36-40 and Revelation 13:5-8.

One of the most remarkable of these, to begin with, was Antiochus Epiphanes about 160 years before Christ, whose history is given by Josephus and also in the first chapter of the uninspired book of Maccabees, which although apocryphal, is of good repute as a history, and as such, respected by the Jews themselves.

Antiochus was the savage persecutor of the Jews in their latter times, as the Antichrist himself will be of both Jews and Christians, when, at the end, transgressors shall have come to the full. He followed or rather rose out of an apostasy then, as the Antichrist will be revealed out of the still more fearful "falling away" of which Paul speaks in 2 Thessalonians. A few extracts from the chapter of Maccabees referred to will show this, and help to give us some idea from what he did, of what the Antichrist himself will do in his times.

"In those days went there out of Israel wicked men who persuaded many, saying, Let us go and make a covenant with the heathen that are round about us: for since we departed from them we have had much sorrow. So this device pleased them well. Then certain of the people were so forward herein that they went to the king who gave them license to do after the manner of the heathen. Whereupon they built a place of exercise at Jerusalem according to the custom of the heathen; and made themselves uncircumcised and forsook the holy covenant, and joined themselves to the heathen."

Such is the account of that early apostasy, which may foreshadow more closely than many may be prepared to think, the "falling away" spoken of in Thessalonians. Following upon it, the enemy of the truth in that day appears as we go on to see, "after that Antiochus had smitten Egypt," (mark how Antichrist in his day will do the same, Daniel 11:42-45), "he returned again and went up against Israel and Jerusalem with a great multitude, and took away the golden altar and the candlestick of light and all the vessels thereof, and the table of the shewbread and the pouring vessels and the vials and the censers of gold and the veils and the crowns and the golden ornaments that were before the temple, all of which he pulled off, and when he had taken all away he went into his own land, having made a great massacre and spoken very proudly."

Moreover, we are told, "King Antiochus wrote to his whole kingdom that all should be one people and every one should leave his laws; so all the heathen agreed according to the commandment of the king; yea, many of the Israelites consented to his religion and sacrificed unto idols and profaned the Sabbath." Thereafter we find him doing what the Antichrist will yet do still more markedly in his day (Revelation 13:15-18), condemning all to be put to death who refused to "profane the Sabbath and pollute the sanctuary and the holy people, and to set up altars and groves of idols and sacrifice swine’s flesh."

Then comes the identical expression quoted by our Lord from Daniel 168 years after Antiochus, showing his allusion was to something still future: "In the month Casleu he set up the abomination of desolation on the altar, and builded idol altars throughout the cities of Judah. And when they had rent in pieces the books of the law which they found, they burnt them with fire. Howbeit many in Israel were fully resolved not to eat any unclean thing, and there was great wrath upon Israel."

Here we have one of the many antichrists whose doings wonderfully foreshadow what we read of the yet more terrible actings of him, to whom the devil will give his power and great authority; and who opens "his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His Name, and His tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven;" and to whom it is given "to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power . . . over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations," and whom all shall worship that dwell upon the earth whose names are not written from the foundation of the world in the book of the Lamb slain (Revelation 13:6-8).

Another individual Antichrist out of the many, was the apostate emperor Julian who tried to overthrow the church and bring back paganism. He too, like Antiochus, followed upon an apostasy (the Arian) which denied that Christ was God. (The Antichrist when he comes will do still more than this, for he will deny "the Father and the Son, exalting himself above all that is called God or is worshipped"). So grievous were his times, as history informs us, that the few devout and holy men who in them were testifying to the truth amidst abounding impiety, thought that Antichrist himself had come when Julian, his shadow, arose.

Another apostasy, which began by placing the traditions of man on a footing with the written word of God, introducing the worship of saints and images and assigning to the Virgin Mary an intercessory power, which holds back from the laity the Bible in which such things are forbidden, teaching, too, contrary to its requirements, a belief in purgatory, transubstantiation, justification by works, and such like doctrines of devils, has also been seen, with a person arising out of it too who claimed for himself and his successors, in the usurped place the popes have so long held, such power and authority as to entitle them to a place among the many antichrists that are in "the world." The next great heresy which arose, the Nestorian, denied Christ's incarnation, and spreading widely in the lands round Palestine, succeeded in destroying the churches which had so long flourished there. It was out of that remarkable "falling away" that another personal Antichrist arose, Mohammed, who, denying the Son altogether, proclaimed that there was but one God and that he was his prophet. It is well known how successful he has been with many of the Jews themselves in the East. In France, before the revolution, another well-known "falling away" occurred, following upon the doctrines taught by Voltaire, etc., when a national decree was passed that death was a perpetual sleep. The scenes which followed show us what man will dare to do if left to himself, and also called forth another individual who came in like a flood and prospered. In many particulars Napoleon Bonaparte, like his predecessors, showed the features of the Antichrist, flattering at first the system he found prevailing, whilst using it all the while to establish himself in power. In France accordingly he was a Roman Catholic, and in Egypt a worshipper of Mohammed, till finding himself, as by and bye Antichrist will do, fairly established, he dropped the deception under which he had entered, proclaiming himself the monarch and only source of authority. "La France! c'est moi," was the laconic way in which he announced it.

What the successor to his name and authority now appearing may be raised up to accomplish is yet to be seen, but already the tendency is clearly towards a still more extensive development of the clay-iron principle of government which is to prevail in both feet of the Image, before the ten toes of it are developed.

These instances should cause us to ponder well, when we read of a still future and more fearful "falling away" which, to distinguish it from others, in the original styled emphatically "the apostasy"

(2 Thessalonians 2:3), with the revealing after or out of it of that man of sin, the son of perdition, who will oppose and exalt himself above all that is called God or that is worshipped: so that he, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.

Why should we, in the face of such express language and with examples before us of bygone antichrists, still refuse to believe that the Antichrist who shall come (1 John 2:18) will be a person also? The Saviour Whom he will try to counterfeit as well as supplant, appeared in a literal as well as a mystical body. And Antichrist will not want his either. All who practice, encourage, or support corruptions, are properly of Antichrist's mystical body, exhibiting his spirit which is already working in the children of disobedience; and when the number, perhaps a determined one, is filled up, they will be manifested as displaying the genuine fruits of complete apostasy from the truth which is in Jesus; when transgressors are come to the full under a personal Antichrist, even as Christ's Church, which is His mystical body (Colossians 1:24), will appear under Him when the fullness of time has come and its numbers complete. So that as the perfection of truth is manifested in Him and His body the Church, the perfection of error will be seen in the other also—the one the Church of the Living God, the other the synagogue of Satan.

If Antichrist is to be then a person, surely it becomes us to inquire what manner of man he will be, especially when told that his coming is with all signs and lying wonders, and also with such deceivableness of unrighteousness, as if possible to deceive the very elect. Are there no tokens already of some such gathering apostasy and deceivableness, along with an increasing conviction among those who think at all, that the signs of the last days are fast gathering around us? Is there not a visible attempt by the men who fancy themselves more advanced and free than their neighbors from what is called bigotry, to make expediency instead of Bible truth the rule of state measures and enactments of law? —to shape their course as if true "catholicity" consisted in letting each man think for himself, and numbers, not Scripture, decide the course to be taken, so leaving us to believe that the many will be right and the few wrong? Nay, is it not beginning to be even openly avowed that religion has nothing to do with the guidance of a nation, and that the less we say on so sacred a subject the better, seeing it is merely a matter for each man's conscience? Do we not notice already the fruits of such views in the attempt to have education apart from religion altogether lest someone's prejudices should be hurt or interfered with? To let the greatest questions be decided by expediency, or (what is nearly the same thing) the wisdom of the majorities, with a sneer at every attempt to appeal to Scripture for guidance? To frame laws by which the Roman Catholic may legislate and hold office in our Protestant community, and the Jew, too, sit in our parliaments, care having been taken that his conscientious belief of our Saviour being an impostor should meet with nothing to offend it on entering there? Is it not plain to the humblest capacity, that there is on all hands a growing inclination with a cunning sort of decency however in the way of doing it, to supersede religion altogether as far as it is external and objective, and to confine it to inward feeling, which again it is thought hypocritical or sanctimonious to allude to in the affairs of life?

All this is grief enough surely to the Christian, but what an addition is made to it when the express language of Scripture is so questioned and criticized as at present, not by its foes alone but by professed friends, and when metaphorical interpretations are given by them of its plainest warnings against all such increasing evil! Give way, as we have been and are doing, to such a system, and what is there to prevent men coming ere long to think that Scripture may have a

hundred different meanings, all equally good, and its teaching mean anything or nothing, as people choose to make it?

Alas for us if that "sure word of prophecy" is obscured, as is the tendency in these days of intellect and energy, whilst the heart of man, amidst all refinement, remains, as it was, "deceitful above all things and desperately wicked." Let us remember that there is to be a "deceivableness of unrighteousness" in the times of the end, under which Satan will hide his poison and his purposes. Do you think he will be so unskillful in his craft as to ask any one openly and plainly to join him in his crusade against truth? No! he can bait his snare with what has all the appearance of good, if we look at it simply with our own eyes which are evil.

He is even now promising to the nations a coming millennium of civil and religious liberty, when every one is to be sitting under his own vine and fig tree. He is promising equality. He is promising trade and wealth, remission of taxes, and reform of all kinds, and every one happy at last in his own creed, whatever it may be, and in his own way of deciding what is best for himself. Meanwhile he is tempting men to rail against their rulers and superiors as hindrances to this development, whilst he turns their heads with talk of philosophy, and science, and knowledge, and enlargement of mind. The times gone by are only to be scoffed at, and the ways and wisdom of their ancestors a fair subject of merriment. He bids men "mount aloft," and shows them how they may be "as gods, knowing good and evil" (Genesis 3:5). By and bye too he will provide for them a king whose coming will be after his own working, "with all power, and signs, and lying wonders." He will be "the prince of this world" of whom our Lord spoke as having "nothing in Me" (John 14:30), but one fitted to be a "king over all the children of pride" (Job 41:34), and whose eyelids will be "like the eyelids of the morning" (Job 41:18)—that true Morning which will rise upon his destruction (Isaiah 17:14). But who, in the fancy that has taken possession of so many that the great tribulation is "past already," and that amelioration is now the happy tendency of things, will believe or even listen for a passing moment to those who would spoil their dream by showing forth the plainest declarations in Scripture to the contrary? Such men are esteemed to be beside themselves and deserving at best but of quiet compassion. Their words seem as idle tales and not worth listening to, whilst in their appeals to Scripture they are answered by metaphorical explanations of words which are nowhere else so construed.

Such is the reception they meet in general from within the Church, whilst, without, the confusion is becoming worse confounded. "God is not in all their thoughts," if in any. It seems small concern to the multitude that the world is in opposition to its Maker, His Son rejected and despised and His Holy Spirit grieved, with thousands hurrying on to destruction, and (if Scripture be true) the day of the Lord at hand. How little is there of the mind of Him Who, though He had no sin to weep for in Himself, yet made Himself a man of sorrows for others, and wept over the city that was about to crucify Him. But what has the world, with all the misery that is in it, to do with sorrow or looking for the things that are coming on the earth? They "lie upon beds of ivory, and stretch themselves upon their couches, and eat the lambs out of the flock, and the calves out of the midst of the stall." They "chant to the sound of the viol, and invent to themselves instruments of music, like David;" they "drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the chief ointments; but they are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph" (Amos 6:4-6). This is not for want of warning, but because it is either misread or despised altogether. The world is of a truth sitting in darkness, so gross, that although the light shineth in the darkness, the darkness comprehendeth it not.

Such is the description which inspiration gives, whatever the world may think of its justice in the abundant self-complacency with which every thing human and divine is now canvassed. And it would have been for the Church, compactly knit together, to have been continuing the protest against all such delusion and error, by reflecting, in the darkness around her, the light and spirit derived from her risen and exalted Head, Who Himself in the days of His flesh also bore witness to the same. But, alas! how is the very name being brought into disrepute and contempt among us, by the large and influential class who in the dread of what they call schism, are turning to the stocks and stones of Rome itself rather than let go their unscriptural conceit of what the Church's unity should be.

It is most true, for the sure word of prophecy declares it, that the Church is to be manifested as one, a visible unity, one fold and one shepherd. But surely they who are living in the certain hope of seeing that blessed consummation, need not be surprised at there being counterfeits in this as in meaner things, and still less be in any danger of being beguiled by the man-millinery (as it has been not inaptly called) of such a thing as Tractarianism, into thinking its childish imitation and mimicry of what is to be, any realization of it. In spite of all the overbearing clamor about apostolic succession, how is it possible for men, capable of reflecting at all, to believe priests and things to be what they visibly are not? Or, to make them think that rood screens and surplices are introducing, if not constituting, the unity which God's people are panting to see? Where are they to find in Scripture any value attached to such outside unity as this, when the Christian unity of the inner service—the only bond recognized there—is, as in this instance, broken by a Pharisaism which will have nothing to do with others who, although loving the Lord Jesus in sincerity and seen to be walking in His ways, may nevertheless be unable to yield implicit submission to what such masters in Israel pronounce to be "the church," any more than to what councils have decided in bygone times, when men were as fallible as they are now? Is it not manifest, to the overturning of all such pretensions, that amidst His own chosen priesthood even in His own Temple at Jerusalem where His presence had been seen in the cloud which filled it, a period arrived when its oblations and assemblies became an abomination in God's sight? "Your new moons and your appointed feasts My soul hateth; they are a trouble unto Me; I am weary to bear them. Who hath required this at your hand to tread My courts?" (Isaiah 1:14; Isaiah 1:12). And further, was it not when that Temple, which had itself been built by Divine command, was still standing in all its completeness of ornament and observance, that the prophet in vision saw the glory of the LORD depart from off the threshold of the house (Ezekiel 10:18), which house thereafter our Lord Himself declared to be "a den of thieves"? What becomes, after such a warning, of the superstitious veneration now reviving for stoles and consecrated chancels, and when to the last of His sojourn on earth, nothing was said of either priesthood or building but that both should be overthrown as they are this day?

Then again, when the promised descent of the Holy Ghost took place, did not the sound as it were of a mighty rushing wind sweep, as it might seem in scorn, past the antiquated walls where once the presence of Deity had visibly been seen, and within which the "vain oblation" was still offered up by priests as properly accounted as before, to rest in that "upper room, where abode" a humble band "with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and His brethren" (Acts 1:14)? Would that the Spirit which thereafter animated these holy men were seen as visibly resting on the multitude of priests who claim succession from them! Of this we may be assured, that where it is wanting in the individual no mere imposition of hands will

avail, even if the form could be proved to have been complied with more satisfactorily than it has yet been, or can be.

O! when will men learn that it is the want of the "Spirit of Christ" among His professed followers which constitutes the schism from Him and from each other so deeply to be deplored by us all, and how vain is the attempt to find, as Rome thinks she has done, a substitute for it in the unity of a complacent ritual, however perfect in its way?

02A.2. The Time of His Appearing

Chapter 2 The Time of His Appearing

Reference has been made to the declaration in 2 Thessalonians 2:1-17 that the day of Christ should not come until "the apostasy" as well as "the man of sin" had been seen. Also to Matthew 24:1-51, where the great tribulation, "such as was not from the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be," is also to precede the same glorious event. It is evident from these passages that the man of sin who is to exalt "himself above all that is called God or that is worshipped," must be the principal person in the tribulation which "immediately" (mark the importance of the expression, Matthew 24:29), precedes the "coming" by which he is destroyed. His times also have been identified already with those of the tribulation spoken of in Daniel 12:1, inasmuch as there cannot be two unequalled tribulations any more than two second comings. It is equally evident that after the advent of Messiah in humiliation, only one abomination of desolation is spoken of, as shown by the use of the definite article (Matthew 24:15). The reference there made by our Lord is to Daniel 9:27 in connection with what had before been mentioned in chapter 8, and afterwards referred to in Daniel 12:11.

These passages, as will be noticed, are all distinctly connected with the king, the Antichrist, who obviously is the principal character in them, for he is seen exalted above all that is named. Still more to show that the abomination is of necessity yet future, let it be borne in mind that there has been neither city nor sanctuary to pollute since Jerusalem was destroyed by Titus in the year A.D.70. And that it could not have happened before is manifest, for Revelation, which agrees with Daniel in the description of the times of the beast and in which there is distinct reference to the abomination as well as the tribulation, was not written for twenty years after the destruction of Jerusalem had occurred.

Again, as fixing the chronology of these events to a period yet future, the destroying king of fierce countenance (Daniel 8:23) is said to come "in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full," (can any one pretend to say in our downward career we have yet seen the full account of transgressors?) and to "stand up against the Prince of princes" to "be broken without hand," which again can mean nothing but the second coming of Christ, the "Stone . . . cut out without hands" (Daniel 2:34). Another remarkable sign fixing all these events, so connected with each other, to the very last days, is given by our Lord Himself in Matthew 24:14, "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come."

It will be noticed on reference to the chapter that this is seen before the tribulation of which we have been speaking, and consequently also before the man of sin who appears in it. If so, he must be, as we have all along been contending, future, for no one will say that the gospel has been ever so preached until now, if it can even yet be said. Still it is evident that sign is drawing near enough to make all of us think how close at hand its full accomplishment may be, when the apostasy, the man of sin, the great tribulation, and the Son of man in the clouds of heaven will all, as it appears,

follow in rapid succession.

Again, we are told (Daniel 7:24) that "the ten horns out of this kingdom (the fourth or Roman empire) are ten kings that shall arise: and another shall rise after them," etc. The ten kingdoms must therefore have appeared before Antichrist, inasmuch as he rises after them. This accords with what is said in Revelation 17:12, where the ten horns are again spoken of as "ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast," who, as we have seen, rises after them.

Now let us mark what is said of these kings (Revelation 17:13), "these have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast," for (Revelation 17:17), "God hath put in their hearts to fulfil His will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled." Is it possible for anyone to say that ten such kingdoms are in existence now in the Roman earth, each giving their kingdom to the beast? If not, these kingdoms must of necessity be future, for begin when they may, they "agree," and give their kingdom unto the beast until the words of God shall be fulfilled. And what are these "words of God"? "I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him that sat on the horse, and against His army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet . . . These both were cast alive into a lake of fire" (Revelation 19:19-20).

Thus they are agreed until the purposes are fulfilled in the destruction of the beast, and his remnant being slain. It will not do, after such plain Scriptures, to say that some hundreds of years ago, ten kingdoms (which is doubted) gave their power to the pope, so trying to prove him to be the beast. Whatever they were then, it is not pretended by any that they are giving their power to him now, which is fatal to the theory of either the ten kingdoms or the beast having yet been seen at all.

Once more: the fourth or Roman empire is divided into ten horns or kingdoms (Daniel 7:23-24), corresponding in all respects to the ten toes of Daniel’s image, being its division at the time when the stone falls upon the feet—that is at the very end—and when "in the days of these kings" (Daniel 2:44), God sets up the kingdom which shall never be destroyed. In other words, the ten kings, receiving power at one hour with the beast, give him their power to the end of this dispensation when they share his destruction. The new dispensation is the setting up of the "kingdom, which shall never be destroyed." Now surely this proves that these kingdoms and the beast, to whom they are said to give their power, exist at the very end of this present dispensation, and not in times long past, as so many seem determined to have it. But if we look further into what is said of this remarkable division of the Roman earth into ten kingdoms, it will appear still more manifest that that division cannot yet have taken place, and if so, the Antichrist who, as we have seen, rises after them, is of necessity future also. The limits of what is called the Roman earth are sufficiently known to all, and no division of it which does not include the whole can be said to have fulfilled its division into the ten toes or kingdoms spoken of at the end. But whilst admitting that the legs of iron mean the east and west divisions of that empire, no scruple is shown in leaving out the former altogether (embracing as it does the portion most important in Bible history, namely the Holy Land, Syria, Egypt, Turkey and Greece), and placing the ten toes upon one foot of the image in Daniel 2:1-49. In fact, it was found impossible to take the Eastern empire into account at all, and so it was abandoned.

Thereafter the whole effort seems to have been directed to discover them in the Western, at the rise of the papacy, and the result is the submission to us of various different lists of ten kingdoms certainly, which if they ever existed at all, have long since confessedly disappeared. Whilst the pope, who, if he really had been the beast, ought to have disappeared with them (Revelation 19:19-21), is still strong enough to make the effort he is doing in our day to recover the power he has lost.

It would be a useless task to follow the extravagancies in regard to these pretended ten kingdoms and the part they are alleged to have acted in fulfilling the predictions of Scripture. The pages of Gibbon and others have been ransacked, and singular confirmations are alleged to have been discovered there, whilst between metaphorical and literal interpretation of Scripture language itself, as alternately it suited the purpose to have it so, the whole has been wrought into a tissue of extravagance sufficient to involve the work of prophetic inquiry, if not the study of the Bible itself, in ridicule and confusion.

If the fourth kingdom (the last) stretches, as it must, to the end of this dispensation, where should we expect to find the ten toes—in its condition at the end—but at the extremity of its existence? Originally the kingly power (however abused by him afterwards) was conferred on Nebuchadnezzar the declared head of the image, "thou art this head of gold," "the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom," —and is seen descending through gradually baser metals, till mingled with the people's. This will be the remarkable feature in the ten kingdoms when they are seen, mingled "with the seed of men" —the kingly power mixed with the people's—the governing with the governed - and all who are not willfully blind to it, may see the whole tendency already going in that direction. The supposed era of the rise of the papacy (for it is far from being settled even among those who date their predictions from it), is somewhere between the years 560 and 600, when in the pretended ten kingdoms the people's power was as little recognized as can well be imagined. How different now, when although the kingly power is needed to keep all together, the people are pronounced to be the source of all power, and when even in our loyal land the will of the governed is becoming more and more compulsory on the governor. The clay-iron principle is daily coming out in more recognized strength. And it is the distinguishing feature of the ten toes when developed, as they will speedily be, out of elements already displaying themselves in the feet from which these kingdoms arise.

What has caused much perplexity regarding their formation or rather the period at which it occurs, is not noticing that the times of the Gentiles which began on the rejection of Christ by "His own," intervene manifestly as an interruption or break in the prophetic history of "his people" the Jews, as given by Daniel among others. The nationality of the Jews (whilst individually they remain a standing proof of the literal fulfillment of Scripture denunciation) ceased for the time with the destruction under Titus, which consummated by building Aelia (Hadrian Capitolina) on its site to suppress the very name of Jerusalem. Indeed virtually the loss of their nationality may be dated from the fatal hour when they crucified their King after having disowned Him as the King of the Jews (John 19:15). Along with it must have ceased also for the time, the history of the Jewish people as a nation, inasmuch as they were no longer one.

Jerusalem has since been "trodden down of the Gentiles," and will continue to be so, by distinct announcement, "until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled" (Luke 21:24). Who can affect

indifference as to the sign of their drawing to a close, which our Lord Himself has supplied in Matthew 24:1-51, where it is written, "this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." From Scripture we shall see, as we proceed, that the return of the Jews to their own land which must precede "the end" as a matter of necessity, will be in unbelief, even as at the time they left it. Still it will be a return in such circumstances as to place them in it once more as a nation. The prophetic history broken off at their dispersion, will then be resumed preparatory to the mighty events to be enacted there, and the manifestation of "the abomination that maketh desolate," "the king of the fierce countenance," "the little horn," "Assyrian," "the Antichrist" who is to be broken without hands there on the mountains of Israel (Ezekiel 39:4; Isaiah 14:25; Daniel 2:45).

If it was given to Daniel, who was eminently a Jew, to know what should befall his people in the latter days (10:14), surely it is to be expected that we should find the Jews nationally among the ten toes or kingdoms from such mention being made by him of these toes, and this is in accordance with their return in unbelief while the times of the Gentiles are still unfulfilled.

Yet everything indicates a short duration for these kingdoms when seen, else they would not be in harmony with the other proportions of the image which he describes. For the toes of it, of iron and miry clay" (implying certainly less duration than the nobler proportions of it which by general consent have passed their day), could not surely exceed in point of duration all the rest put together, as they would do if they dated from the rise of the papacy the more so as by the conditions of the prophecy they would require to be existing still, and until "the Stone" falls upon them. To make this more plain, it may just be noticed here that the Babylonish empire lasted 78 years, dating from the taking of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, the Persian 200 years, the Grecian 300 years, in all about 578 years. These were succeeded by the Roman empire which was established under Augustus. Unless we are prepared to admit a break in the prophetic history, we must be prepared not only to show that the Roman earth, in its integrity, was then divided into ten kingdoms which are still existing, but still further to explain how such lengthened duration could consist with the harmony in the portions of the image which have been seen.

Again with regard to the time of these remarkable kingdoms, coexistent as they are to be with the Antichrist inasmuch as we have already seen they receive power at one hour with the beast, and agree to give him their kingdom until the purposes of God are fulfilled (Revelation 17:12; Revelation 17:17), we must remember, that Daniel in speaking of him under the name of the king of the fierce countenance (Daniel 8:23) distinctly places his appearing at the time of the end. This is confirmed by three different expressions all marking the same fact in the same chapter. In the preceding one, Antichrist is seen rising out of the ten kingdoms into which the Roman empire will then have been divided, whilst here, it is out of the four into which Greece was parted under Alexander’s generals. But in this, as in all else, there is no discrepancy when it is examined, for the Roman empire received its most valuable additions from the territories which it wrested from the successors of Alexander. All therefore would be accomplished should Antichrist rise out of the Grecian portion of the Roman earth, "in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full" (Daniel 8:23). This time cannot have been seen yet, unless we are prepared to say that transgressors have come to the full in contradiction to the apostle Paul’s warning to Timothy concerning these same perilous times in the last days, which shows us that instead of amelioration, "evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived"

(2 Timothy 3:13), till, under Antichrist, with the measure filled up in his times, the Lord Himself comes to destroy the wicked one, and supplant him with a reign of righteousness. The break in the prophetic history which is contended for may be seen perhaps still more distinctly if we examine the well-known prophecy of the 70 weeks of Daniel (Daniel 9:24-27), and the events declared to happen in them. Is it not evident, to begin with, that the prophecy must reach to the end of this dispensation from the mention of the terminating in the everlasting righteousness which is to be seen only when the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, Whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him" (Daniel 7:27)?

Doubtless in the loose interpretation of such passages, it has been assumed that all this may be said to have happened when our Lord came, and by suffering on the cross, established His right to the dominion He had so purchased. His right, thank God, is clear and will one day be vindicated in the destruction of all that interferes with it (Ezekiel 21:27). But whilst this evil generation lasts, is not the people of the saints of the Most High a persecuted people? And their Lord still "despised and rejected"? The everlasting righteousness and anointing of the Most Holy which concludes the 70 weeks (Daniel 9:24) are yet therefore to be seen in times as unlike the present as prevailing evil is to prevailing righteousness.

It is true the price was paid on the cross, but "the redemption of the purchased possession (inheritance)" (Ephesians 1:14) is still future, and until it is completed, the prophecy we are considering cannot be said to have been accomplished in all its parts. Yet as so large a portion has, without contradiction, been already fulfilled, how is it possible, without admitting the break spoken of, that the 70 weeks with the cutting off of Messiah occurring at the close of the 69th (Daniel 9:25-26), could reach the times of everlasting righteousness which are to be only when "the kingdom" is set up which shall never be moved (Daniel 2:44)? In fact, no other solution can be given of the difficulty than that which will be found to be in harmony with all else, namely, that Daniel, giving as he did, the future history of his people to the end and the promises which are yet to be made good to them, spoke of them as he was moved by the Holy Ghost only as a nation, which they ceased to be when their Messiah was "cut off" at the end of the 69th week, and when they themselves were scattered (as predicted elsewhere) and the gospel sent to the Gentiles. As their "times" draw to a close, Scripture indicates a return of the Jews again as a nation, although in unbelief (Ezekiel 22:19-22), when the last week, shown to be a week of years from the portion of the prophecy already fulfilled, will remain naturally still to be accomplished before the happy days of universal righteousness and the anointing the Most Holy are seen, which, as we are told, "seal up the vision and prophecy" (Daniel 9:24). And here it may just be noticed, that the word "week" is in the original simply a hebdomad or seventh, and would have been better so rendered in our translation, for a week with us implies a week of days only. In this instance, by the measure observed in the other parts of the prophecy already fulfilled (Messiah having been cut off at the end of the 69th hebdomad of years), it must mean a seventh of years also, or seven years. Jacob served Laban for Rachel seven years, and was said to have "fulfilled her week" or hebdomad (Genesis 29:28).

It is of this week accordingly that express mention is made immediately after (Daniel 9:27), the "he" there spoken of being manifestly the destroying prince that shall come, the Antichrist, with his abomination to the end, and with whom Daniel’s people will enter into a covenant, choosing, in the

strong delusion sent them, the false prince for the True.

What strange and deep meaning is there in that declaration of our Lord when so viewed, "I am come in My Father's Name, and ye receive Me not: if (or when) another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive" (John 5:43). And this Antichrist will do, for he will exalt "himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped" (2 Thessalonians 2:4). His coming is declared to be with all "deceivableness of unrighteousness." He adapts himself, just as Napoleon Bonaparte did, to the prevailing system of the godless times he appears in, and especially to the prejudices of the Jewish people, who (probably by his help) in their own land once more as a nation with their great wealth, will rise into importance there. In this "deceivableness" also it is that the covenant is made with them for the whole remaining week, which Satan, who works through him (2 Thessalonians 2:9), knows perfectly will exhaust the term remaining of his power to deceive until the thousand years which follow should be fulfilled (Revelation 20:3). At first all seems to prosper. All the world is seen (Revelation 13:3) to wonder after the beast, and not only to wonder but to worship him and the devil too, who gives "him his power ... and great authority." How fearful to think even of such an apostasy as this. Well may it be called "THE apostasy," connected as it is with this prince that shall then have come and shown himself to be that "man of sin . . . the son of perdition," for in the midst of the week (although his covenant, such as it was, had been made for the whole), he throws off the mask and shows himself "that he is God" (2 Thessalonians 2:4), with a false prophet too working miracles before him in the power of Satan himself -the mock trinity of hell then shown in opposition to the Trinity of heaven, in league too with all whose names are not written in the Lamb's book of life! The last half of the seven years, when the covenant has been broken, are the times of the unequalled tribulation so often referred to already, and of which so much is said in Scripture. God has mercifully shortened those days, and told his people in every different mode of expressing it what the limit is; "the midst of the week," or hebdomad of seven years, that is, three years and a half, the "l260 days," the "42 months," the "time, times, and half a time," all expressing exactly that same duration, and all, if taken with the context, pointing distinctly to the same dreadful period.

During it God raises up two witnesses, doubtless individual men, from what is said of them, whom he miraculously protects during the time of "their testimony" (Revelation 11:3-7), inasmuch as He has never left Himself without a witness on the earth (Acts 14:17), nor does so, until His longsuffering being exhausted and His Spirit no longer striving, the earth and its Antichrist king whom it had chosen to its confusion, are left to the terrors which fall upon its inhabitants, as Christ descends with power and great glory to vindicate the insulted Majesty of His Father, and to show in His times "Who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords" (1 Timothy 6:15).

We must never overlook the prominent part assigned in Holy Scripture to Israel. The whole history and prophecies there revolve round it as a center. Israel alone was God's chosen people and recognized as such by Him. "You only have I known of all the families (nations) of the earth;" and it is added, "therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities" (Amos 3:2). Accordingly the mention of every other nation is always in subordination to Israel and their connection with it for the time. They are seen to be advanced to punish Israel when Israel had sinned, and turned back again when repentance had brought back to it God's favour. And even in the New Testament, when the "middle wall of partition" between Jew and Gentile had been broken down, the earthly distinction of

the Jew and the favour yet to be shown to Jerusalem, are distinctly remembered and confirmed. God has not cast off His people whom He foreknew (Romans 11:2), nor will it be found that He has forgotten the promises He has made concerning them. "Behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy" (Isaiah 65:18), and connected as Jerusalem now is with the Gentiles by their adoption, it will yet be literally "the joy of the whole earth." To separate, therefore, the Jews from our thoughts of the blessedness which is yet to be in this, at present, blighted earth, is to overlook the promises as well as prophecies which connect them still, distinctly as a nation, with the better day that is coming. For yet "out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And He shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people; and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more" (Isaiah 2:3-4). A difficulty has occurred here to some out of what they consider the small and insufficient mention which, according to this view of prophecy, is made of Christ's church on earth during "the times of the Gentiles" now running their course. They ask, "How can we think that startling events, like the rise of the papacy, should have occurred during the long 1800 years which have passed, without special notice of them for the church's guidance?" In reply to this, let us bear in mind the fuller dispensation as well as presence of the Holy Ghost the Comforter under which the Gentile church had been placed from the outset. And let us not, at the same time overlook the perfectly accurate and sufficient description which was given in addition to this, of the trials and treatment to which believers in it would be exposed, whilst "the times of the Gentiles" were being fulfilled. The disciples, until the Holy Ghost descended, had thought that Christ "at that time" would have restored the kingdom to Israel (Luke 24:20-21), even although our Lord Himself had warned them in Matthew 24:1-51 of what was to intervene, telling them that "all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places." And as to His people themselves, about to be gathered out of all nations, They shall "deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for My Name's sake. And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another, and many false prophets (the pope among them) shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of (the) many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure unto the end the same shall be saved" (Matthew 24:6-13).

It was inspiration alone which could, in the disciples" days, have drawn out with such fullness and accuracy the description of the "times of the Gentiles," keeping pace as they have been doing with the no less wondrous description of Israel and its dispersion until their close - still dwelling alone, and not mingled among the nations (Numbers 23:9) amongst whom their wanderings are. Deaf to their own prophets and not seeing the light around them, blindness in part having happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles shall have come in (Romans 11:25). The warning to and hope of the Gentiles was distinctly held out to them from the beginning, whilst as their times draw to a close, the prophetic history of Israel, with which their own fullness is shown to them by the apostle to be bound up inseparably (Romans 11:11-12), again comes in as a guide, if they will take heed to it, to all God's people, Jews as well as Gentiles, through the dark passage which still remains to be trodden before there shall come out of Zion the Deliverer Who shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob (Romans 11:26), at the close of the last of the 70 weeks.

These promises are indeed sure, but so let it be remembered, is every word of Scripture regarding the abomination of desolation and the time of trouble yet to be seen in Judea (Matthew 24:15-16) before that blessedness come. It is with the people of whom Daniel was speaking, as we have seen, that Antichrist will "confirm the covenant . . . for one week," although the whole ten kings of the Roman earth join together in giving "their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled." The scene will be once more in Judea, for he, Antichrist, plants the tabernacle of his palaces there "between the seas (the Dead Sea and the Mediterranean Sea - Daniel 11:45), in the glorious holy mountain" (a name given alone to Mount Zion, in Jerusalem), and there it is that he comes "to his end and none shall help him," for he is broken in "My land" and trodden down upon "My mountains" (Isaiah 14:25). Well then may we look to Jerusalem as the days of its being trodden down are so surely drawing to a close, for there again a people terrible from their beginning hitherto" (Isaiah 18:2) shall be gathered, that what remains of the prophecies concerning them may be fulfilled.

God has said that He will gather the house of Israel into their land again, not as we have been taking it for granted, in favour, but in anger. "As they gather silver, and brass, and iron, and lead, and tin, into the midst of the furnace ... so will I gather you in Mine anger and in My fury, and I will leave you there, and melt you. Yea, I will gather you ... in the fire of My wrath, and ye shall be melted in the midst thereof" (Ezekiel 22:20-21).

If such is to be the course of events, how striking is it to see already amongst other signs of the times, the Eastern shores of the Mediterranean daily attracting greater notice and becoming of greater interest to the world. Greece, too, as well as Egypt (both spoken of in the times of the end), have reappeared only of late years, and the other two required with Turkey to complete the five toes of the Eastern foot, will not be wanting when the time comes - nay, may even already be guessed at. The transit through Egypt to our Indian possessions has for some years been drawing all eyes in that direction, and steam, with the introduction of railways there, will soon make its neighborhood yet more familiar and important. The jealousy with which the European powers are watching each other in that quarter, is revealed by the powerful fleets, in seeming idleness and maintained at prodigious cost to watch over the different supposed interests there, which must be correspondingly great. Turkey, too, extended for its own strength, is confessedly maintained in its integrity through the jealousy felt by the great powers of each other - a jealousy showing itself on all occasions, as in the recent and still unsettled question regarding the holy places, of which the Eastern and Western churches are alike claiming the right of custody.

However it may be arranged for the time, as probably it will, it has shown in addition to all else, that the feeling regarding Palestine, which has been dormant since the days of the crusades, is alive and stirring once more. The feeble sway of the Turk could not stand even now but for the interested protection given by others who are opposed to one of themselves occupying such a position of advantage over the rest. Such being the anomalous position of Palestine itself, who can help noticing the rising importance of its ancient possessors, the Jews, and how they have come to be spoken of as the bankers of Europe from their enormous command of capital?

What is to prevent such a people, by general consent, being called upon on any emergency to occupy that land as a mode of removing the difficulty at present existing? The more so, as neither by their religion, which unlike others tries to make no proselytes, nor by their arms, for they have

none, are they in a condition to disturb the balance of power there as any other movement would.

Things far more wonderful have happened, but be this as it may, the increasing consequence of the Jew and his land are among the undeniable realities of these days of energy, when money and mercantile interest are shown to be the great springs of action, both being especially the weapon of the Jew.

If religion cannot quite unite the families of the earth, the thought with its rulers now evidently is that mercantile interest may, and the Jew and Gentile may blend with Turk and Hindu with no mention of religious differences at all. This is also the system Antichrist will encourage and under which the "vile person" (Daniel 11:21) will be called "liberal," a word of the day used more and more to mean the same laxity of principle as characterizes Antichristianism and will still more characterize Antichrist in whom the vile man is to be personified. He it is who is destroyed by the King Who shall reign in righteousness" (Isaiah 32:1). After which, as may be noticed (verse 5), "the vile person shall be no more called liberal, nor the churl said to be bountiful." And if we look at the Jews themselves with their deathless yearning still for the land of their fathers and belief of future rest and greatness there after all their wanderings, how visibly do they seem to feel that a change in their condition is at hand? With the restoration to their own land is inseparably associated the rebuilding of their temple and renewal of sacrifices there. For this express purpose, a subscription has been already begun among many of the wealthiest of them, particularly in America, to erect a building like the "holy and beautiful house" of their fathers. Who can doubt their ability to raise any sum that might be required for such purpose, when they see their time come for executing it? The ancient temple, as all know, was on Mount Moriah, where the Jews have still a weekly lamentation with prayer in the words of their own prophet, whose warnings of old were disregarded, that its walls may again be built. "Be not wrath very sore, 0 LORD, neither remember iniquity for ever: behold, see, we beseech thee, we are all Thy people. The holy cities are a wilderness, Zion is a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation. Our holy and our beautiful house, where our fathers praised Thee, is burned up with fire: and all our pleasant things are laid waste. Wilt Thou refrain Thyself for these things, O LORD? Wilt Thou hold Thy peace, and afflict us very sore?" (Isaiah 64:9-12). But it is not on Mount Moriah, for the mosque of Omar there on the site of the ancient building, forbids the profanation of "the unbeliever," and the spot likely is understood to be on Mount Zion, with which, let it be remembered, all their future glory is connected. And how strange does such a locality appear as we read that "the tabernacles of his palace" are to be planted also there (Daniel 11:45), "in the glorious holy mountain," a name applied to none other than to itself. It is there "on My holy hill of Zion" that God will place His King (Psalms 2:6), and it is on it too that first the tabernacles of Antichrist will be seen. The false deliverer will doubtless appeal to Scripture in support of his claim to be received, for it is "out of Sion" the Deliverer comes (Romans 11:26). If then the Jewish temple be erected on Mount Zion by Israel still in unbelief, where else would Antichrist seek to restore for them their sacrifices and thereafter to show "himself that he is God," but in the place of which these things are spoken, and where the Jews themselves expect the Lord of the whole earth will one day reign?

Surely an allusion, without fancy, to this placing of the false where the true is yet to be, may be traced in Ezekiel 43:5; Ezekiel 43:7-8, where, in speaking of the return of God’s glory to the wondrous temple he had been describing so minutely, and which is yet to be seen in better days than these, he says, "The glory of the LORD filled the house ... And He said unto me, Son of man,

the place of My throne, and the place of the soles of My feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever, and My holy Name, shall the house of Israel no more defile, neither they, nor their kings, by their whoredom, nor by the carcasses of their kings in their high places. In their setting of their threshold by My thresholds, and their post by My posts, and the wall between Me and them, they have even defiled My holy Name by their abominations that they have committed; wherefore I have consumed them in Mine anger." The "abomination of desolation," let us remember, will before that latter glory come, have been seen "standing where it ought not" (Mark 13:14) In the holy place," and Antichrist too, consumed by "the brightness of His coming." The Jews are looking to the restoration of their daily sacrifice in the temple that is to be, but confess they know not how the sacred fire is to be again lighted on the altar. This will afford their Antichrist another occasion to lay claim to their belief, for among the great wonders done in his presence (the devil giving him his power), "he maketh fire to come down from heaven . . . in the sight of (all) men, and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do" (Revelation 13:13-14). The priests of Baal in the days of Elijah failed in their attempt to prove by fire that he was a god, but in the latter day, when the transgressors are come to the full" and such practisings perfected, the false prophet, who will then be ministering in the permitted working of Satan himself, is not so restrained.

Yet with the fire so kindled for the sacrifice, it is only at first and until established in power that Antichrist goes in with the desire of the Jews to see all restored in their temple again, for we read that "in the midst of the week," when he breaks the covenant he had beguiled them with, "he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease" (Daniel 9:27), his own overspreading abomination exalting itself above every thing, false or true. For it is then that he will be seen opposing and exalting himself above all that is called God (2 Thessalonians 2:4). Paul foretells that his coming will be "after the working of Satan" (2 Thessalonians 2:9) when he does come, which John also affirms (Revelation 13:2), and Isaiah, still more remote, is heard declaring in unison with what they, along with Daniel, had declared, that their "agreement with hell shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it. From the time that it goeth forth it shall take you (see warning also in Matthew 24:15; Matthew 24:23), for morning by morning shall it pass over, by day and by night: and it shall be a vexation only when he shall make you to understand the doctrine" (see margin, Isaiah 28:18-19).

It is to the same terrible individual that the allusion is also in Isaiah 33:1, "Woe to thee that spoilest, and thou wast not spoiled; and dealest treacherously, and they dealt not treacherously with thee! When thou shalt cease to spoil, thou shalt be spoiled." And further on, of the desolation that marks his progress, at verses 8-9, "the highways lie waste, the wayfaring man ceaseth: he hath broken the covenant, he hath despised the cities, he regardeth no man. The earth mourneth and languisheth." And to the same great crisis is the allusion in Psalms 55:20-21, "He hath put forth his hands against such as be at peace with him: he hath broken his covenant. The words of his mouth were smoother than butter, but war was in his heart: his words were softer than oil, yet were they drawn swords." How fearful will these times be, and who shall live when God doeth this!

Mercifully, as we have seen, the days are shortened, else no flesh should be saved. In them "men will seek for death, but shall not find it." They are the days of unequalled tribulation following upon "the falling away" and revelation of that man of sin, the son of perdition, who had been mistaken for "the Son of man," the "Heir of all things.

02A.3. His Characteristics and Duration

Chapter 3 His Characteristics and Duration The very name of Antichrist implies a denial of Christ having come in the flesh as well as an assumption of His place and dignity; and so exactly does this description apply, that to deny Christ in any measure or shape is held to indicate the working of that spirit of Antichrist which was already in the world in the apostle’s day (1 John 4:3). In one form or another, therefore, more or less prominently, this characteristic will be seen to mark the "many antichrists" that have appeared, whilst "the Antichrist" himself, following at the end, when transgressors have come to the full, and having necessarily (to begin with), like all that preceded him, denied the Spirit of Christ as utterly opposed to his, will reject the Son Himself and thereafter deny the Father also, exalting himself, without any concealment then, above all that is called God.

It is clear, from the terms employed that Paul as well as John speaks of one and the same opposition to the truth, for the former tells of the mystery of iniquity already working in his day (2 Thessalonians 2:7), and the latter, that it was already in the world (1 John 4:3), whilst both describe the evil as characterized by the same spirit of enmity. It is reserved however, as we have seen, for the last days to reveal Antichrist himself in all his malignity and impiety, for it is not until then that he is seen personally sitting as God "in the temple of God" (2 Thessalonians 2:4).

Another mention of him is in Daniel 11:1-45, giving a further detail of the recklessness with which he proceeds, and by which he is so strongly characterized. "The king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvelous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished: for that that is determined shall be done. Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers (does not this imply he will be an individual man?), nor the desire of women (that is Christ, of Whom all Jewish women desired to be the mother), nor regard any god; for he shall magnify himself above all." The times too which will introduce this great enemy are, as they advance, to exhibit more and more of the spirit which is to be fully developed in him. They are, as has been seen, spoken of as "the last times" in which the wicked shall do wickedly, and when "none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand" (Daniel 12:10). This is in harmony with what the apostle declares, "knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation" (world) (2 Peter 3:3-4). All this is descriptive of the spirit of Antichrist now rapidly maturing for his development. In 2 Timothy 3:2-5 we have, again, the same last days described when "men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers (we have seen how Antichrist breaks his covenant), false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good . . . having a form of godliness (Antichrist will have his forms to begin with also), but denying the power thereof." From all such things Timothy is commanded to turn away. And surely as the last days in which they are to be, draw on, it well becomes all who, like him, have learned and been assured, to turn more earnestly than ever to the Holy Scriptures they have known "from a child," and which are declared, in distinct reference to

these "perilous times," to be able to make wise unto salvation, not through such teaching as Antichrist's will be, but "through faith which is in Christ Jesus."

It is not without reason that such a caution is given, for few perhaps are aware how subtle and dangerous already is the attempt to criticize and impugn the great truth that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God" (2 Timothy 3:16), and to introduce other appliances. The deceivableness of unrighteousness, let us always remember, comes in, not by openly denying what it means to overthrow, but by introducing by little and little such specious corrections and improvements as, in the end, will answer the purpose which an open avowal at the outset would have prevented. The Antichrist does not at his first appearance shock the prejudices of those whose faith he at last overthrows. He comes in "by flatteries" (Daniel 11:21), such as are grateful to the natural man who finds that something may, with apparent plausibility, be said against that which has been the great barrier to the indulgence of his own passions and will. He finds in Scripture much that is "foolishness" to him (1 Corinthians 2:14), but which fear has kept him from openly questioning, as long as his belief in inspiration remains. Let however that once be shaken by the idea of errors and incorrect statements having crept in, or that words may be altered from their ordinary plain meaning, and very soon the wholesome reverence is gone.

Such at present (1853, Ed.) is the direct tendency of the German school above all the others, which are, however, beginning to follow in its wake, whilst surely warning might be taken from the deep rooted infidelity, which in consequence is more and more displaying there the danger of all such tampering with Holy Writ.

If France is distinguished by its licentious infidel writings, the slower thinking German is ponderously advancing by a still more dangerous road to the rejection in the end of all inspired truth together, whilst his metaphysical subtleties and criticisms are already perceptibly infecting the faith of his neighbors. Such popular writers as Goethe and Richter have done much in their day to prepare the public mind for this, and an echo of their style may be caught more and more distinctly from our own shores, where men like Carlyle and Kingsley have caught it up. "Great swelling words of vanity" draw men out of their depth to indulge, at the risk of themselves and others, in mental exercises there all leading to deeper unbelief, and "the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables" (2 Timothy 4:3-4). And such really is the case already with these teachers; some of whom are turning deliberately into fables much of the historic portion of Scripture. One of the most distinguished of them, Ewald, a German critic who himself wrote a "history of the people of Israel," speaks of the authors of the prophecy of Moses and Balaam as "prophetic relators of what had already happened, and of their predictions being a peculiar style of authorship"! He also maintains that so far from Moses having written the book of Deuteronomy, it was not written for 800 years after his death, and that whoever compiled it then, had felt himself at such a distance from the events he professed to relate, as "to have allowed his fancy the freest play with them in his way of treating history." He tries also to show that "the Patriarchs were polytheistic in their religion," into which "Mosaicism" introduced a "certain monotheistic character," which is shown by the oath between Jacob and Laban calling on the God of Abraham and the God of Nahor, as two different Gods recognized by them also by there being altars to the God of Bethel, and the God of Abraham!

Yet this is the man whom another, still better known, and who is domesticated among us in high places with great influence derived from his distinguished personal character and accomplishments as a scholar, welcomes into the field of Bible criticism with the strongest expressions of joy. And for an explanation of this, let any one examine what the Chevalier Bunsen himself says in his well-known work on Egyptian history, and he will be at no loss to discover the origin of this liking. Mr. Bunsen will there be seen to speak of the chronology and history of the Old Testament just as lightly as M. Ewald does, and in a very different manner from Paul, who quotes it in his epistles to the Romans, Galatians and Hebrews, as literally and strictly true, just as the martyred Stephen had done before, who, we are told, spoke "being full of the Holy Ghost." But these names, alas! are not solitary instances of such infection having already extended among us. It has gone much further than people are willing to believe, and men of high standing in literature and power of writing, have not only themselves become tainted with this sort of skepticism, but are laboring to spread it in what they declare to be their zeal for the truth.

Listen to what their organ, the Westminster Review, of July 1852 says, "The theory of the origin of Christianity from agencies exclusively divine and of the infallible character of the canonical books, can no more be restored now than Roman history can be put back to what it was before Niebuhr's time" (page 175). And further on, "This in spite of every resistance from the rigor of the old theology, is an inevitable consequence of the modern historical criticism. But its large and genial apprehensions will open for us new admirations, it will do away with an unnatural dualism, and reinstate the great families of man in unity" (page 204). This is pure antichristianism which, by removing "the offence of the cross" as producing what it calls "dualism," or as our Lord Himself had previously declared it to be, "division" (Luke 12:51-53), would try to introduce a system of godless brotherhood such as Antichrist himself will ere long be seen presiding over, and all the world wondering after, and worshipping him. It is in this direction that one of the dangers of these "perilous times" lies, for if Scripture is to be so dealt with, what has man left to meet the "strong delusion" in which Antichrist will come with his lie? It is for him to launch without helm or compass into a troubled sea where currents more dangerous than the winds and the waves are running and drifting insensibly all that is floating on them towards a fatal shore. Of the doctrines springing up under such a system we have already seen some specimens, whilst an occasional glimpse is afforded us of results still more matured, and which may well make us tremble and cling closer than before to Bible truth. Within a very short period it has been openly broached in Germany in so many words, that from the confusion prevailing in religious belief as well as in all social arrangements so markedly seen in our days, it has become evident that the power which has governed mankind hitherto is become unfit for the task, and that man himself, therefore, no longer in his infancy, must rouse up to undertake it!

Such as these are the advances being made by antichristianism even in the midst of us. The barriers in the way are the Scriptures in their integrity, "given by inspiration of God," and "which are able to make . . . wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." And along with them, the promised teaching of the Holy Ghost "the Comforter . . . Whom the Father will send in My Name, He shall teach you all things" (John 14:26). When these are disowned and cast off, as we see they are already beginning to be by so many, what is to hinder men coming to worship the devil in the end (Revelation 13:4), as well as the Antichrist "whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness

in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a (the) lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (2 Thessalonians 2:9-12).

It may seem hard to connect in any way, even the remotest, with such dangerous writers a very different class of men who have been assigning to Scripture words a metaphorical interpretation, chiefly to carry out prophetic theories of their own. Yet the plain truth is that the tendency of all such liberties is to encourage the profane hands which, with widely different feelings and intentions, are touching the Scriptures of truth. If Christians among themselves are seen by the unbelieving multitude without, claiming a latitude of meaning which would make inspiration say anything, what right have they to complain if they themselves are charged with inconsistency in their way of reading it? "That the Scripture might be fulfilled," is an expression of frequent occurrence in it, and always to point out that, however men might previously have been viewing it, the fulfillment of a prophecy when so announced proved it to have been a literal one.

What is contended for, therefore, on this point is, that by such warning in the past, Christians are bound to receive what is written in a literal sense, except where symbols, as in the Revelation, are avowedly the medium of instruction, or in cases where the language is shown to be figurative from the circumstance that otherwise an absurdity or physical impossibility would arise. This was the rule of the "judicious" Hooker, and in fact what we ourselves observe in regard to every book we read, and in every conversation we hold; also, for instance, in the case of the woman in Revelation 12:1-17, seen "clothed with the sun and with the moon under foot," where plainly a symbolic meaning attaches to her as much as to the seven candlesticks which symbolize churches. Our own language abounds in metaphor, and we can scarcely utter a sentence which does not contain one. Yet we are living in a practical age where literal meaning is indispensable, and where in fact no one feels at a loss as to what is really meant. Why should we treat Scripture language differently? Or say that "that man of sin" means a succession of men, and "that wicked" or lawless one "whom the Lord shall destroy with the brightness of His coming," a succession of evil principles to be absorbed by the advance of the Spirit of Truth? The mischief to all from such lax interpretations is incalculable, and is leading many in despair to ask like Pilate "What is truth?" without waiting for an answer to their question.

It has been tried throughout to point attention to what is said of a personal Antichrist who is yet to be seen, and who in the latter days (which must be near) will realize and embody the spirit of the many antichrists that are in the world. His characteristics, of which we are now particularly speaking, must necessarily be in unison with his times from the welcome they give him, and therefore what Scripture says of them is full of warning as to what manner of man he will himself be when he is seen.

Jude, in his epistle, gives us, along with the other inspired writers already referred to, a striking outline of these last days, and in perfect accordance with all other Scripture tells what Enoch, from remotest times, had prophesied of their termination by the Lord Himself coming "with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him" (Jude 1:14-15). In reading this short epistle, how

wonderful does it appear that with such details of times so concluded as to make them to be as they are emphatically called (Jude 1:18) "the last," any one should still be found looking for a general amelioration as Scripture truth is disseminated.

Yet thousands of such there are who will see nothing even of such a "coming of the Lord" as is here spoken of, but who persist in making it an entirely spiritual one or gradual working of His power on the hearts of men to convince them finally of their ungodly deeds. Whilst entertaining such ideas, they will not see anything of "the apostasy" yet to be (in general they believe it to have been already seen in the papacy), or of the man of sin who is to be over it and thought now to be the succession of popes about to terminate, when no bar will remain to the realization of their expectations of such a spread of gospel light and truth as will turn the earth and its inhabitants into all they are most unlike to at present. Is there no danger when even Christian men are found thinking so, and stopping their ears against such plain Scriptures as would warn them how they try to find good where God tells them they will find only evil? If Jude, among others, speaks of "the last time" and refers to a distinct coming of the Lord to terminate them with "judgment executed upon all" (Jude 1:18; Jude 1:15), how vain the thought of seeing any distinguishing mark in the people that will be living in them, but that which he applies so terribly - murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouths speaking great swelling words, having men’s persons (not Christ’s) in admiration because of advantage (Jude 1:16). Is it not possible to rouse Christians to consider all this, when they see the most infidel and godless all rejoicing with them in the prospect of increasing emancipation, and of the "good times" that are coming as ancient prejudices disperse before the dawn of reason; when Scripture accuracy and inspiration is impugned and found to be a hindrance to the progress of the day; when commercial interest, not religious principles which are more and more pushed into a corner, is looked on as the bond which is yet to unite in brotherhood, and when in a word man is to do everything and be everything, and God a mere idea in all this scheme of coming happiness? Is there nothing in Scripture warning that instead of it, there is yet to be "great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be" (Matthew 24:21), a trouble which is to yield to no scheme of amelioration which man can devise, or be averted by such a course as he is pursuing? To speak of such things may seem ungracious, but so has the truth of God ever seemed when opposing the willfulness of man whose first temptation by Satan (Genesis 3:5) was to be independent of his Maker, as he will with his Antichrist succeed in tempting him to hazard being again. In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt not surely die, was the lie of the devil which prevailed with our first parents to eat, that "your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." The same lure is being displayed to their descendants under circumstances and with a result which will show that, in himself, man is hopelessly evil (Jeremiah 17:9; Jeremiah 17:18), and that the finished work and perfect righteousness of Christ alone can restore the beauty and order that has been marred.

Under all conditions, whether in Patriarchal, Mosaic, or Christian dispensations, man will in the end have been shown a failure, the more unmistakable if in the face of all the lessons and experience of the past, the last days are to exceed (as they will do if Scripture be true—and it is) in daring wickedness all that preceded them. But when "the transgressors are come to the full" (Daniel 8:23), and man in the trouble that is coming has been shown how vain his thoughts of amendment and amelioration have been, the Lord Himself "will finish the work, and cut it short in

righteousness; because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth" (Romans 9:28). With regard to the duration of the reign of the Antichrist, we have seen that in his connection with Jewish history, a hebdomad or seven years is wanting to complete the seventy weeks of Daniel's prophecy, and that during all that "week" he acts a prominent part. There is no Scripture to lead us to think he is seen for any considerable period before it, and certainly he is not seen after it, for the anointing of the Most Holy and the bringing in everlasting righteousness (Daniel 9:24) closes all, as "the transgression" itself is finished by the destruction of that wicked or lawless one at Christ's coming (2 Thessalonians 2:8).

There is much mischief in trying to be wise above what is written, for Scripture is not given to gratify an idle curiosity, but for our instruction and correction in righteousness, "that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Timothy 3:16-17). This surely implies that he is also to be thoroughly furnished against all evil ones, which again, we believe to be the reason why so much is said by both prophet and apostle of the character of the unrighteousness in the last times, as well as of the Antichrist himself under whom the consummation of it is to be. For then, through what is permitted to Satan, it will be "with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness" (2 Thessalonians 2:9-10), to deceive, were it possible, "the very elect," unless thoroughly furnished by warning against it. To show that the notion of a personal Antichrist, with a limited duration, is at least not a novel idea, it will serve to look here a little into what "the fathers" thought and wrote on the subject. In doing so, however, let it not be imagined that there is any intention of conceding to them and their opinions the place of authority which a large party in this country are trying to obtain for them now. The attempt being made is, in fact, a revival of what was witnessed in the reign of James and more openly in that of his son, when the first fervors of Luther's reformation were subsiding, and when Andrews and Laud sought, by magnifying them as links in the apostolic succession, to exalt thereby ecclesiastical power in opposition to the Puritans. But the deference thus shown to an imaginary perfection and unity in the early ages gave a great advantage to Rome, and then as now, many were the secessions to it from among the high church party.

It seems to be overlooked that the testimony of these same fathers extends over twelve centuries, including among them the darkest ages of popery, and that, from the very outset, there is not only the greatest discrepancy of opinion on nearly every important point, but also the most flagrant error. In fact, the "catena" is one of false instead of consistent Scripture doctrine, and what is remarkable the nearer the apostolic times, the more grievous appears to have been the perversion. With the exception of the existence of God in a Trinity of Persons, and the belief that the Roman empire would end in ten kingdoms and Antichrist to be destroyed by the Lord's coming, there is scarcely a truth which is not overlaid or distorted. The danger has ever been from within the professing church rather than from without, and of this the apostle, accordingly, is seen warning God's people in his day of what they were to expect when he himself was withdrawn from them. "Know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away (many) disciples after them" (Acts 20:29-30). To quote here from the fathers therefore is for the alone purpose of showing that the truth of a personal Antichrist at least was, amidst all their differences, nearly unanimously maintained by them all. They further considered that he would come out of the Roman empire, when towards the close, it should have become divided into ten kingdoms, three of

which are to be subdued by him, and all to continue supporting him to the last.

Hippolytus, one of them (died c236) expressly says (in "de Antichristo") that "the ten states, meaning the ten toes of Daniel's image, which will at length appear will be democracies," which is in accordance seemingly with the increasingly "clay-iron" character of the present day. (For an account of the testimony of Hippolytus, see Mr. B W Newton s "Babylon and Egypt, Appendix A"—Ed).

Another of them, Irenaeus (c130-c202), considers that "when they are reigning, and beginning to settle and aggrandize themselves, suddenly one will come and claim the kingdom and terrify them as foretold." In the same treatise the same old writer says, "the adversary will sit in a temple built at Jerusalem, endeavoring to show himself to be Christ." And again, "It will be he who will resuscitate the kingdom of the Jews." The Jews themselves, it is sufficiently known, are prepared to receive one who will do so, having rejected our Lord and theirs, Whose life as well as death had disappointed those among them who at that time "trusted it had been He Which should have redeemed Israel" (Luke 24:21). The veil being upon their eyes, they are to this day expecting a deliverer of their own race* according to promise, whilst nevertheless rejecting still the idea of His being also the Son of God, as they say "Israel's God is One God." The mystery of Christ in the flesh, despised then, is now altogether "hid from their eyes," which they are opening wider and wider as the time draws near, to descry him who, coming in his own name, will be received by them (John 5:43).

*(It is strange how general the belief was in ancient days, that in some way or other he is to be especially connected with the tribe of Dan. This may have proceeded from such as the following considerations: The sceptre was not to depart from Judah (Genesis 49:10), and yet we read "Dan shall judge his people;" with what sort of judgment may be inferred at least from the description given to him, as "a serpent by the way . . . that biteth the horse heels, so that his rider shall fall backward;" and that too followed by an aspiration of the patriarch as if he foresaw trouble coming, "I have waited for Thy salvation, O LORD" (Genesis 49:16-18). The same with Moses: (Deuteronomy 33:22) "Dan is a lion's whelp: he shall leap from Bashan" (a word used in Scripture to denote pride and opposition). "Strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round" (Psalms 22:12). "Hear this word, ye kine of Bashan" (Amos 4:1-13:]). In Jeremiah 4:1-31, where "the destroyer of the Gentiles is on his way" (Jeremiah 4:7) with his chariots as a whirlwind, and horses swifter than eagles (Jeremiah 4:13), to give out their voice against the cities of Judah (Jeremiah 4:16) because she hath been rebellious against Me (Jeremiah 4:17), it is a voice from Dan that declareth it (Jeremiah 4:15). In Jeremiah 8:16, "the snorting of his horses was heard from Dan," with the whole land trembling with the sound of his strong ones. Whilst in Revelation 7:1-17, where the tribes of Israel are sealed before the judgments are let loose on Antichrist and his followers, that of Dan is omitted, and the name of a half tribe substituted for it. In Amos 8:14 too, a curse is recorded against them that say "thy God, O Dan, liveth", and like them who receive the mark of the beast, "they shall fall, and never rise up again").

Irenaeus says ("Against Heresies, Book 5.30") that "the reign of Antichrist will be for three years and a half (the last half of the hebdomad), when he shall be destroyed by the Lord from heaven, and the kingdom of the Just One be established."

Many extracts of a like nature might be given, but it seems unnecessary here to extend quotations or name the names of the many others who express themselves similarly, with some important differences of opinion. (For a fuller account of the testimony of the fathers to a personal Antichrist, see Mr. B W Newton's "Prospects of the Ten Kingdoms, 2nd Edition, Appendix A"— Ed.).

What has been quoted is chiefly to show that the idea of a personal Antichrist with a short supremacy at the close of this dispensation is no novelty, and that on the contrary it was in fact the universal early belief, men then taking Scripture words to mean what they really said. With some shades of difference, then, the general belief in early days was that Antichrist, as has been shown, would suddenly show himself at the very end of the Roman empire, which once was dominant, but now, in our days, is in a manner dormant. That he will knit it into one again by his skill and enterprise, engrafting Judaism upon the worship he sets up;—that he will then acquire the title of King of the Roman Empire, from the ten kings giving him their kingdom (Revelation 17:17)—that kingdom, be it recollected, being the last of four monarchies shown in the image of Daniel when "the Stone" falls, and he along with all its parts passes away as rapidly as he arose.

Thus Nebuchadnezzar, as the head or first king, received a pure monarchy from God (Daniel 2:37-38). Antichrist arising out from among the toes and also manifestly the last king, receives his power which is clay-iron or democratic ("mingled with the seed of men") apparently from the people or the kings over them, but in reality from the devil, as the "sure Word of prophecy" distinctly tells and makes us see (Revelation 13:4). Such is the contrast and such the end and destruction of the image by a still purer monarchy "which shall never be destroyed." Christ, the God-man, receiving it into His hands from "the God of heaven," even as Nebuchadnezzar, a fallen man, had been entrusted with it at first, had corrupted it, and like his successors, been deprived of it.

People in our days persist in saying that the destructive action of "the Stone" (Daniel 2:44-45) is the spread of the gospel, Christ's spiritual reign constituting the millennium. But this, surely, a very slight consideration might show them to be impossible, for it would imply that Gentile power (the ten kingdoms) will be coexisting with the kingdom of Christ, which, on the contrary, it will be seen breaks in pieces and consumes all these kingdoms (Daniel 2:44). It is vain to say this prophecy was accomplished at the first advent, because the ten toes were not then in existence for the stone to fall upon. And no more could it be so when the gospel was preached by the apostles, else the Roman empire would then have been divided into ten kingdoms, which historically was not the case.

Another strange attempt, chiefly since Luther's days, has been to convert the 1260 days into 1260 years, to measure out the supposed duration of the papacy which he fancied to be the man of sin as already alluded to. (For a fuller treatment of the year-day theory, see Mr. B W Newton's "The Antichrist Future and the 1260 Days of Antichrist's Reign" — Ed.).

Having assumed this measure of time to be satisfactorily proved, it is now deliberately argued that the pope must be the Antichrist inasmuch as no reign but his could at all be said to embrace so long a period, and this, without exaggeration or unfairness in the way of stating it, is a specimen of the reasoning to which so many are seen surrendering their own better judgment. What is known by the name of the year-day theory (a sort of contradiction in terms to begin with), is based chiefly on a perversion of two passages in Scripture—Numbers 14:34 and Ezekiel 4:6—"I have appointed

(given) thee each day for a year." Had this meant, as alleged, that henceforth in all prophecy a day was to be taken for a year, what becomes of that most interesting one among all others uttered by our Lord Himself, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up," it being immediately added "but He spake of the temple of His body" (John 2:19; John 2:21), which surely no man will say was not raised on the third day, when "they came early in the week and found the stone rolled away," and the "two men in shining garments" declaring He was risen as He said? But the attempt itself, such as it is, is in fact a wholesome lesson to us all of what men will attempt to carry out a fancy or preconceived notion, and what barriers they will scale in order to arrive at their object. If fairly taken, the passages on which they found their theory of the "year-day system," prove just the reverse, and that a year means literally a year, as a day means literally a day. For in the first place, Ezekiel did not lie forty years on his side but forty days to typify years, the terms relatively remaining precisely the same as they had been before, although the one was said with perfect propriety to be "given" for the other. And in the case of the spies, forty literal days of search, to mark God’s displeasure at His gracious care having been slighted and the report of the land disbelieved.

If a soldier in our days, for seven days’ desertion of his duty, was sentenced to seven years of punishment declared by his judges to be in proportion to mark his offence, "the day for a year" would never be dreamt of as abolishing the distinction between the terms in time coming, or that the next orders issued for any particular service for seven "days" would require to be carried out for seven "years."

Yet to fancy the one is as absurd and unfounded as to fancy the other, particularly when we find in prophetic Scripture afterwards, as well as previously, that a "day" did actually mean a literal day of the ordinary duration, as in the specific instance to which we have referred. All this falls naturally to be noticed here, for these 1260 days have much to do with the duration of Antichrist’s reign now under consideration, whilst the notion of 1260 years would militate against every position we have tried to establish, and, what is far more to the point, every text we have quoted in support of it. The year-day system, false in its origin, has led into endless confusion, and will do so as long as people will suffer themselves to be misled by it.

There are two passages in the Revelation where the 1260 days are mentioned in connection with what is to be in the days of the Antichrist, as indeed seems to be admitted by the year-day expositors themselves, who, however, of course, have taken them to be within the years of the papacy as answering to the Antichrist with them. If we have at all succeeded in showing that so much of what we consider future, must really be so, the events in the passages above referred to are future also, and occupy the last half of the hebdomad already so often referred to.

Revelation 11:3 tells us of the two witnesses prophesying 1260 days, at the termination of which they are slain by the Antichrist, and what follows "cometh quickly" (Revelation 11:14), namely, as will be noticed, "the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ," which they do only on the destruction of the Antichrist himself, which, therefore, then "cometh quickly also." The year-day system places the witnesses in the days of Luther’s reformation, with a method of explaining who they were and how their ascent could then be said to have taken place, which sets all meaning of words at open defiance. But without going further into their strange treatment of that particular prophecy, surely "the kingdoms of this world" (Revelation

11:15), even after the lapse of the three hundred years which have passed since Luther's day, cannot without absolute profanity, be said yet to have become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ, as they will one day be. And if not, can it be pretended that the "cometh quickly" referred to meant anything at all, if that glorious event be future still?

Again, as to the other passage (Revelation 12:6) in which the 1260 days are mentioned, they are manifestly there identified with the "time, and times, and half a time" subsequently named (verse 14) from "the woman" being fed or nourished in them both, and their expressing the same period of three years and a half. That "time" in Scripture language, when so put, does mean a year, is shown by what is said of Nebuchadnezzar having been driven from among men till seven times (Daniel 4:25) had passed over him, and Josephus with others declaring he was in the wilderness seven years. To be consistent, the year-day expositors (who do not dispute this) should hold to their theory of a day meaning a year likewise, which in the case of Nebuchadnezzar would however involve the necessity and absurdity of his being in the wilderness still, instead of having been restored to his kingdom "at the end of the days," as we are told expressly he was (Daniel 4:34).

It would be wandering from our subject, which is the duration of the Antichrist, to enlarge upon the witnesses or the woman seen to be fed in the wilderness during the 1260 days, or the time, times, and a half. There is, however, another expression made use of in connection with them, making a period which, in its connection with Antichrist is also important to us. We allude to the forty and two months (Revelation 11:2) of the treading down of the Holy City, seen in close connection with the 1260 days of the witnesses, both expressing, as cannot but be observed, three years and a half, the precise period of the oppression of Antichrist in the last half of the hebdomad. The Antichrist as we have seen must be the last Gentile king as the Gentile kingdoms (the kings of the earth, Revelation 19:19), which give him their power, perish with him in his destruction. Jerusalem is "trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled" (Luke 21:24).

If, as we have tried to show, the Jews are to return to their own land in unbelief, when this gospel has been first preached in all the world for a witness, it is evident that notwithstanding their mistaking a false restoration and a false deliverance for the True, the times of the Gentiles which they may think to be over and fulfilled on finding themselves in their own land once more, will nevertheless be unfulfilled still, for the Jews themselves receive, in contempt of Messiah, this last Gentile king as their king, and enter into a covenant with him (Daniel 9:27) for the remaining hebdomad, or as it is translated, week. In the midst of it that covenant is broken, and in the concluding three years and a half (answering to the 42 months we are considering) a tribulation unequalled since the world began arises, during which, to the destroying of all false imaginations, the Jews, who will be deceived by "him who shall come in his own name," again see the "Holy City" more cruelly than ever "trodden down" (see Revelation 11:2), to prove that the king they had chosen to their own confusion, was under all disguises a Gentile king though the last of them, and that the "times of the Gentiles," during which Jerusalem was to be trodden down, had been manifestly therefore unfulfilled still.

Without much digression, it is worthy of notice how Saul, the king their fathers chose to the rejection of God as declared by Himself (1 Samuel 8:7), typified Antichrist, the king in the latter day whom they again choose to the rejection of Messiah, the Sent of God. The warning directed to be

given to the Israelites, of "the manner of the king that shall reign over them," is more like a description of what is to be than of what has been, for wicked as Saul proved to be, we hear nothing of his doing to Israel then what they were warned "their king" should do. Nothing is told us of their crying "in that day because of your king which ye shall have chosen you; and the LORD will not hear you in that day" (1 Samuel 8:18). Can this then be still to be fulfilled in the king whom they are to choose, and their trouble in that day to be because the Lord will refuse to hear? "I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh . . . as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind . . . Then shall they call upon Me, but I will not answer; they shall seek Me early, but they shall not find Me . . .Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices" (Proverbs 1:26-31).

If the concluding treading down of the Holy City for the forty-two months be as we have made it, the duration of Antichrist is here again limited to the hebdomad, for the Jewish prophecies, which speak of him appearing in it, resume only when the Jews are again seen once more as a nation in their own land, when he makes his covenant with them, and he is evidently destroyed at the termination of it.

Allusion has already been made to this covenant or league with many of Daniel’s people (Daniel 9:27). It is with "many," as should be observed, and not with all, for all who worship the beast or receive his mark are without exception spoken of as destroyed without hope (Revelation 14:9-10; Revelation 19:20). This, however, is not the case with all the Jews (see Mr. B W Newton’s "Five Letters"— No 3, or Time of the End Series, No 18—On the Jewish Remnant—Ed.), for much mention is made constantly (as in Isaiah 4:1-6) of there being left in Jerusalem, after that destruction, a remnant which "shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem; when the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem . . . by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning" (Isaiah 4:3-4).

These are they who although they had not bowed the knee to Baal nor worshipped him, were nevertheless, like their fathers, strangers to Christ and so left in the tribulation, out of which His Own will have been caught up to meet Him in the air (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17). (This seems to give credibility to a pre-tribulation rapture but readers will note that on page 87, Mr. Bonar states that the rising of the believers will not take place till the mystery has been finished in the revelation and destruction of the Antichrist. It appears therefore that Mr. Bonar is not referring to the tribulation but the wrath that shall fall upon Antichrist and his followers— Ed.). This is the remnant who give glory to the God of heaven, owning at last after ages of unbelief, and wearied with him who had come in his own name, "Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord." Israel, as a nation, shall not see Him till then (Matthew 23:39), as He descends to destroy the wicked one with "the brightness of His coming;" but in that blessed but terrible hour she shall be, as a nation, born in a day.

Well might their prophet exclaim in contemplating such an event, which it will be seen he distinctly connects with Christ’s appearing, "A voice . . . from the city, a voice from the temple, a voice of the LORD that rendereth recompense to His enemies. Before she travailed, she brought forth: before her pain came, she was delivered of a man child. Who hath heard such a thing? Who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? Or shall a nation be born at once?

For as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children. Shall I bring to the birth, and not cause to bring forth? saith the LORD . . . Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her" (Isaiah 66:6-10). And well may the whole earth then rejoice with her, "for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the Word of the LORD from Jerusalem . . . Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more" (Isaiah 2:3-4). It is the beginning of that millennial reign of righteousness in which Jerusalem shall be the joy of the whole earth and in which Antichrist shall have passed away, and the place that knew him once shall then know him no more for ever.

It may help to illustrate still more than has yet been done the characteristics of Antichrist, to contrast them with what is said of Christ:

CHRIST: Comes from above (John 3:31) ANTICHRIST: Comes from below (Revelation 11:7) CHRIST: Comes in His Father's Name (John 5:43) ANTICHRIST: Comes in his own name (John 5:43) CHRIST: Humbled Himself, and became obedient (Php 2:8) ANTICHRIST: Exalts himself above all (2 Thessalonians 2:4) CHRIST: Was despised and rejected, and we esteemed Him not (Isaiah 53:3) ANTICHRIST: All the world wonder after the Beast, saying, Who is like unto him? (Revelation 13:3-4) CHRIST: Comes to do His Father's will (John 6:38) ANTICHRIST: Does according to his own will (Daniel 11:36) CHRIST: Glorifies God on earth (John 17:4) ANTICHRIST: Blasphemes the Name of God (Revelation 13:6) CHRIST: The Good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep (John 10:14-15) ANTICHRIST: The evil shepherd or idol shepherd who shall tear the flesh (Zechariah 11:16-17)

CHRIST: God highly exalts Him and gives Him a Name above every name, that at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow (Php 2:9-10) ANTICHRIST: Exalteth himself above the heights of the clouds, yet is brought down to hell (Isaiah 14:14-15) CHRIST: Shall be seen coming in the clouds with power and great glory (Matthew 24:30)

ANTICHRIST: They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee . . . saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake the kingdoms? Isaiah 14:16) CHRIST: Shall reign for ever and ever (Revelation 11:15) ANTICHRIST: They take away his dominion, to consume and destroy it unto the end (Daniel 7:26) CHRIST: The Heir of all things (Hebrews 1:2) ANTICHRIST: The son of perdition (2 Thessalonians 2:3)

(For a further treatment of this theme, see Mr. G H Fromow's "Christ and Antichrist Contrasted"—Ed.).

Such is Christ, and such, when he comes, will be the Antichrist also. Already the Spirit of the one is as markedly in the world as is the Spirit of the other. Let no professing Christian forget this, and that unless the Spirit of Christ be in him, he is none of His. To them who are alive and remain, the wide difference will be still more distinctly marked and apparent ere long. But the darker the night the nearer will be the promised deliverance, when they who are Christ's shall rejoice with all creation in "the manifestation of the sons of God" (Romans 8:19), and they who are of their father the devil (John 8:44), share in the destruction of the Antichrist whom he shall send, and whose spirit they are showing even now in contrast to that of Christ, Who is still the despised and rejected. In 2 Thessalonians 2:1-17, which speaks so much of Antichrist, a passage occurs which has occasioned some perplexity as to its meaning. It is in 2 Thessalonians 2:6-8, "And now ye

know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work; only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed," etc. A hindrance is here hinted at, though obscurely, to the man of sin being revealed, which therefore by the rule of Scripture noticeable throughout, can be in itself of little practical importance to us, for had it been so, we should have been left in no doubt as to what the hindrance itself was.

It has been already remarked that Scripture predictions regarding the future are not for the indulgence of our curiosity, but for our correction and instruction in righteousness, and it is well we should not overlook this when meeting a passage like the present. The prominent and therefore practical aim of the chapter is, the warning it gives of a coming Antichrist who is to be destroyed thereafter by the coming of the Lord Himself—two great events, in which the church of Christ continues deeply interested, and which "will surely come" whatever hindrances there may still be in the way. It should seem that the inspired writer in directing attention to these events themselves was, in the parenthesis now noticed, again cautioning the Thessalonians, as he had previously been doing, against the expectation of all that he was telling them coming to pass immediately. The times of the Gentiles were then only beginning, and the fourth empire which stretched to the time of Antichrist, was to be disposed of with remarkable division into ten kingdoms as we have shown at the extremity, and these were then, as now, still to be seen. Not one jot or tittle shall fail of all God has said, and if events He had pointed out as to happen previous to the occurrence of others, had not occurred, it was to be expected that His people would be reminded of them, until their fulfillment having taken every hindrance "out of the way," nothing should be remaining to prevent the immediate accomplishment of the greater events themselves, which in fact had throughout been the real objects of expectation.

It is generally supposed that the hindrance referred to must be sought in the condition of the Roman empire which still of necessity exists, for in prophetic Scripture it will be seen that the fourth beast or kingdom (Daniel 7:23) "diverse from all kingdoms" stretches on to the time of the everlasting kingdom (verse 27) which follows it. Its condition at present would seem a dormant one in which God’s people might be forgetting what was said of it and its resuscitation at the time of the end in the shape of ten kingdoms, out of which should arise that "wicked" whom they were warned to expect before "the day of the Lord."

Hence we are inclined to think the caution given implied that the succession of events which God Himself had described, was itself the let or hindrance to the immediate revelation of the man of sin, rising as he does "in the latter times of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full." (See Mr. B W Newton’s "Literal Translation of 2 Thessalonians 2:1-17?"—Ed.). He Who at the outset placed these events in the succession in which they are, as a let or hindrance to the coming of the Lord Himself, will continue them for His truth’s sake until they be taken out of the way by their perfect accomplishment, and then shall that wicked be revealed who is to be destroyed by the brightness of His coming. In speaking of the characteristics of the Antichrist, that of a king has been adverted to and something therefore may be found to be said as to where he is to be seen reigning when he does come. By the kings of the Roman earth giving him their kingdoms (Revelation 17:17)) he of necessity becomes king of the Roman earth, and Rome having once been its capital it is assumed that on that revival it will be so again. But even if Scripture had been silent on the subject, this would not have followed as a necessary consequence, inasmuch as

Rome has not always been its capital even since John’s day. It was transferred to it, as all know, from Byzantium, and wherever the seat of the Roman empire may be held to be at present, it surely is not at Rome. Whence then the necessity for thinking that when restored in its decem-regal condition, Rome is to be the seat of its last king?

It cannot be argued from consistency with the past, and if Scripture be our guide the thought of its being so in the future meets with the reverse of encouragement, for, to begin with, Antichrist is seen to plant the tabernacles of his palace, not there, but (Daniel 11:45) "between the seas in the glorious holy mountain." This, as has been already said, can mean no spot on earth but one, and that spot Mount Zion in Jerusalem. When he does so, it is in the presumptuous attempt to show himself where the True Deliverer is to be seen, in a usurped place of king of both Jew and Gentile, and it is in his effort to establish himself as such that his destruction is to be "upon the mountains of Israel" (Ezekiel 39:4).

Yet neither is Jerusalem any more than Rome, as will be seen, his capital notwithstanding his attempt to make it so, even as others have tried to fix him at Rome in their determination at all hazards to make the pope who is seated there pass for him. The seven-hilled city helped their purpose although the woman that sat upon its literal hills was admitted to be symbolical. The city "which reigneth over the kings of the earth" (Revelation 17:18) is even to this hour, from the use made of the present tense, triumphantly pointed to as implying Rome alone could be meant, inasmuch as it alone was reigning in John’s day. But if that city was reigning then, what is its condition now, and what has become of the ten kings and kingdoms over whom it has reigned and ought to be reigning? For once begun, no break in its rule is seen or even hinted at in Scripture, whilst ordinary candor might admit that if the present tense infers the necessary existence in John’s day of the things he speaks of, all other events in Revelation must be judged by a similar rule.

John "saw" and spoke in vision of things which were not as though they were, in the inspired certainty of their future accomplishment. It was thus that he "saw" the devil chained with a great chain, and also "saw" the new heavens and the new earth for the first "were passed away." Yet these mighty events in which we have so profound an interest, are confessedly still future, whilst in the face of this we are called to admit, from the tense employed, that the "city which reigneth" means of necessity Rome as ruling in John’s day. But further, is there no inconsistency in referring all that is said of Babylon to literal Rome as the seat of the pope, who on such like authority is pronounced to be the Antichrist? At the present moment the "city which reigneth" (as we are taught to believe) "over the kings of the earth," is like its master indebted to the kings of the earth for very existence, and in a condition of helpless humiliation seen in no other capital in Europe. Where do we find in Scripture any indication of such a state for Antichrist and his city when once they are seen? So far from such vicissitude or decay, "he comes in like a flood" and "prospers," and it is in their utmost prosperity and presumption, that both his city and himself are destroyed with a destruction which will make the ears of every one who hears of it to tingle.

It has been noticed that having "planted the tabernacles of his palace there," Antichrist will in the end, upon the destruction of Babylon, his own capital, attempt to make Jerusalem (where his abomination will have been seen "standing" where it ought not - Mark 13:14), its substitute, but though "he shall go forth" on hearing the tidings "with great fury to destroy, and utterly make away"

(Daniel 11:44), no power will ever prevail to convert Jerusalem, which as respects both the past and the future "is the city of the Great King" (Matthew 5:35), into Babylon, however forsaken for her sins Jerusalem for a season may have been. Their fates indeed from the beginning are always shown in remarkable contrast as their antagonism is express also, and for the future too while Jerusalem is to be "the joy of the whole earth," "the city of the Great King." Babylon, the mother of harlots, falls suddenly "in one hour" and is seen "no more at all" (Revelation 18:19; Revelation 18:21).

Even now the thought in every Christian mind with regard to literal Jerusalem and Babylon is one of striking contrast, and most will admit with regard to the former at least, that this arises from its predicted future as well as its recorded past. If Scripture language were regarded as it ought to be, the latter city will be found in no less a degree connected with both, the future contrast there being as strongly maintained as the past.

Babylon is the city of Antichrist, and his "coming is after the working of Satan." Jerusalem is the city of the Holy One Whose throne is to be on the "hill of Zion" (Psalms 2:6) and "Who cometh in the Name of the Lord."

Isaiah 14:1-32, speaking of this king of Babylon, declares him to have arrogated, before his destruction, all the privileges and rights of Christ. "I will ascend into heaven" (verse 13), which Christ only has done. "I will exalt my throne above the stars of God,"—the throne of Christ alone being "above all principalities and powers." "I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north," —that being the palace "of the Great King" declared to be at Jerusalem (Matthew 5:35). "I will ascend above the heights of the clouds" is the vaunt (Isaiah 14:14) of this king of Babylon, whilst, with his golden city also named there (Isaiah 14:4), the destruction is "thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit" (Isaiah 14:15).

Even the fact of this attempt to make his rival’s city his capital, whilst claiming himself the deliverer who is to come to Zion (Isaiah 59:20), ought of itself to create a doubt as to the judgment of those who would persuade us that Rome now is "Babylon," especially when we never have the name itself even once alluded to in prophetic Scripture at all, unless we submit, without scruple, to take the name of one place to mean another.

Now surely before consenting to do anything so unusual, it would be wise to attend more than has obviously been done to what is said of Babylon, the ancient enemy, before at once so decidedly transferring all the prophecies which yet attach to the name, to the modern substitute which men have found for it. For instance, in Isaiah 13:1-22; Isaiah 14:1-32, as well as Jeremiah 50:1-46; Jeremiah 51:1-64, the most lengthened and distinct intimation is given that the Babylon there spoken of is "Babylon in the land of Chaldea," and what is more that the land connected with it is the Chaldea of the Euphrates. No one surely can contest this, for the mention throughout is not only explicit, but repeated over and over again as if to fix our attention to it. The Babylon there with the mention of "her foundation, walls, streets," etc., and all other names indicating a real city, is beyond question a Chaldean Babylon. Yet it is overlooked that events are there declared in connection with its fall, which are also, beyond a question, future. In the chapters of Isaiah "the whole earth is at rest" on the fall of Babylon "since thou art laid down (low) no feller is come up against us" (Isaiah 14:8). Of Babylon itself the destruction is like that of "Sodom and Gomorrah" (surely its character is sufficiently known), whilst, moreover, it is distinctly spoken of as occurring

"in the wrath of the LORD of hosts, and in the day of His fierce anger" (Isaiah 13:13), when the heavens are shaken and the earth removed out of her place, which another Scripture (Hebrews 12:26-28) tells they are to be, "once more," at the setting up of the "kingdom which shall never be moved." In the chapters of Jeremiah, which are in striking harmony with all that is said by Isaiah, the era of Babylon there described is no less distinctly laid down, for mention is made, and twice repeated, of things occurring "in those days, and in that time," (namely at the destruction of that "Babylon in the land of Chaldea"), which other Scriptures tell us are only to be at the setting up of the kingdom of our Lord, and in perfect harmony with what is also declared in Isaiah. Can any affirm that the children of Israel are yet seeking the LORD their God with their faces to Zion, and joined in a perpetual covenant that shall not be forgotten (Jeremiah 50:4-5), after having been devoured by all that found them (Jeremiah 50:7)? Or that the time has yet come when Israel's iniquity has been sought and not found and the remnant pardoned (Jeremiah 50:20)? Yet these things are to be "in those days, and in that time," when Babylon in the land of Chaldea is "destroyed utterly." The persecutions of the papacy are considered to have been such that Rome alone, as its seat, could be said in any way to realize the declaration in Revelation 18:24, that "in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth," which literal Babylon, of which this is spoken by name, could not have shed from the period at which it ceased to be a city.

Yet in the chapters of Jeremiah to which we have been referring and which speak of a Babylon, not in Italy but in the land of Chaldea, there is a still more distinct declaration regarding its destruction—"as Babylon hath caused the slain of Israel to fall, so at Babylon shall fall the slain of all the earth" (Jeremiah 51:49), and that too, it will be observed, is when "the heaven and the earth . . . shall sing for Babylon: for the spoilers (of it) are come" (see Jeremiah 51:48). In accordance with all this, and as to mark still more that the Babylon at the end is Chaldean, Isaiah 47:1-15 is also to be regarded, pointing on as it does to the time when "the LORD of hosts . . . the Holy One of Israel" is to be her "Redeemer" (Isaiah 47:4). Babylon is there addressed, "O daughter of the Chaldeans" (Isaiah 47:1), and further on (Isaiah 47:5) "Sit thou silent, and get thee into darkness, O daughter of the Chaldeans: for thou shalt no more be called, The lady of kingdoms." Cannot this be said to apply to ancient Babylon, with such concomitant events, any more than to its fanciful substitute, modern Rome?

When, too, instead of the gradual destruction which began slowly to waste ancient Babylon away hundreds of years after Darius the Median had taken the kingdom (Daniel 5:31), the lady of the kingdoms is visited "in a moment in one day," "loss of children, and widowhood . . . in their perfection for the multitude of thy sorceries, and for the great abundance of thine enchantments" (Isaiah 47:9). To identify this Babylon with the Babylon of the book of the Revelation, it will be seen that the descriptions given of a place bearing the same name perfectly correspond also.

Jeremiah says of the Babylon he refers to, "Babylon hath been a golden cup in the LORD'S hand, that made all the earth drunken: the nations have drunken of her wine; therefore the nations are mad. Babylon is suddenly fallen" etc. (Jeremiah 51:7-8). This Babylon, be it remembered, is the one so distinctly declared to be "in the land of Chaldea."

John says of her, I saw the woman (afterwards declared to be the great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth) "arrayed in purple and scarlet color (God's liven' in contrast is white and

clean being the righteousness of the saints), and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls (all things of this earth), having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness and I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus" (Revelation 17:4-6). And further on it is said, "I sit a queen, and am no widow (in contrast to Jerusalem in the absence of her Lord), and shall see no sorrow. Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire; for strong is the Lord God, Who judgeth her. And the kings of the earth . . . shall bewail her" (Revelation 18:7-9. How closely does this agree with what Isaiah 47:1-15 says of the daughter of the Chaldeans! But men tell us that John meant all that he said to apply to Rome, whilst Scripture calls it Babylon, without any indication of there being two cities with that name common to both, and whilst one Babylon with which the other is identified, is distinctly and repeatedly declared to be, as we have seen, "in the land of Chaldea."

It is no answer to make to this that that Babylon is at present in ruins by a gradual decay which in no way whatever fulfilled the predicted nature of Babylon's catastrophe. If Babylon be in ruins, so comparatively is the holy city itself where however such building up is yet to be seen to fulfill all that has been spoken of her latter glory. And if it is to be so with Jerusalem, why not also with Babylon in the land of Chaldea? Who can shut his eyes to the fact, so strongly indicated in all these chapters now referred to, that Babylon herself is the city that "reigneth over the kings of the earth," when as at one day she will be the city of the beast to whom the kings of the earth will give their kingdom (Revelation 17:13)? The Beast, or Antichrist, is spoken of in reference to this expressly as "the Assyrian" (Isaiah 14:25), and also by his proper name called "the king of Babylon" (a word signifying in itself confusion) in one of the most startling descriptions of his destruction given in Scripture (Ezekiel 21:21).

"The working of Satan," the "signs and lying wonders," the witchcraft and "sorceries" of the last days (2 Thessalonians 2:9; Revelation 18:23) are all seen on this occasion in operation as he is advancing from the gathering of Armageddon with the kings of the earth, to make his attempt to possess himself of Jerusalem as the substitute for Babylon,* and appointing "captains for the slaughter."

*(Scripture seems to show that Antichrist's purpose is vengeance and destruction, and his motive is hatred of Israel, more than a desire for a substitute capital for his dominion—Ed.)

It will be borne in mind that in contempt of Him Who had come in His Father's Name, Israel at the end will have chosen him who had come in his own name, many having entered into covenant with him, and here accordingly we see this "king of Babylon" addressed in mockery by the title so sacrilegiously given and assumed—"And thou, profane wicked prince of Israel, whose day is come, when iniquity shall have an end, thus saith the Lord GOD, Remove the diadem (in the original it is, the mitre), and take off the crown: this shall not be the same: exalt him that is low (Christ the despised and rejected), and abase him that is high. I will overturn, overturn, overturn, it: and it shall be no more, until He come Whose right it is; and I will give it Him" (Ezekiel 21:25-27).

This, be it remembered, is said of the "king of Babylon," the last king, as we have seen, of the Roman earth and of Daniel's image, abusing the kingly power (then mingled with the seed of men—Daniel 2:43) even more outrageously than the first king of Babylon had done. Nay, such has been the antichristianism of this Babylon throughout, that even before a king was given to it at all,

we read of its seeking to be independen

02A.4. His Destruction and Its Consequences

Chapter 4 His Destruction and Its Consequences In saying so much of Antichrist, it was impossible not to anticipate to a certain extent, what ought in proper order to have fallen under this division of the subject. It was necessary to allude to some of its circumstances in establishing his personality, the time of his appearing, and his duration. But having proceeded so far, it may be objected that in speaking of the Antichrist hitherto, we have been assuming without proof, that many different names in different parts of Scripture are all used to indicate this one and the same individual. It is admitted that similarity of destruction is not in itself sufficient to establish identity, and therefore this seems to be the place to show how the different names claimed for him in the Old Testament, as well as in the New, do, in fact, apply to him and to no one else.

First then as connecting the Old with the New Testament in what is said of the Antichrist, let us take the "little horn"* of the first to compare with the "man of sin," "the son of perdition" of the second. The one name occurs in Daniel 7:1-28, the other in 2 Thessalonians 2:1-17, and we have been taking them till now as applying to one and the same individual. That this is a necessity will be seen without difficulty if the chronology is attended to.

*(That "a horn" in the days of Babylon was used as the emblem of kingly rank, may be witnessed in the Nineveh sculptures recently deposited in the British Museum, where "horns" on their head-dress or caps are seen distinctly denoting the monarch from his attendants. This looks like a silent testimony introduced among us at the right time to the especial propriety with which "the little horn" is taken in Scripture to denote the rising power of this "king of Babylon," who, we have seen, is like the sculptures themselves, so associated with Assyria, as to be called "the Assyrian").

Daniel’s vision of the four beasts is explained: "these great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth. But the saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever" (Daniel 7:17-18). This is the general outline given of the world’s history. But in the explanation which follows we see the first three rapidly passed over, whilst the description lingers upon the fourth and last to call our special attention to it. "Then I would know the truth of the fourth beast, which was diverse from all the others, exceeding dreadful, whose teeth were of iron, and his nails of brass; which devoured, brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with his feet; and of the ten horns that were in his head, and of the other which came up, and before whom three fell; even of that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that spake very great things, whose look was more stout than his fellows" (Daniel 7:19-20).

It is contended that the power so described must be in full dominion at the end, for the prophet proceeds thus, "I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; until the Ancient of Days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the Most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom" (Daniel 7:21-22), which again, further on, is declared to be the "everlasting kingdom" (Daniel 7:27). It is also explained of him (Daniel 7:25) that "he shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws; and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times

and the dividing of time" (the three and a half years, the 1260 days, the 42 months already so frequently alluded to).

Now if we compare all this with what is said in 2 Thessalonians of the "man of sin," it cannot but be admitted that this little horn and he must be identical, for not only do their characters and actings agree perfectly, but both are seen "exalted" at the close, without mention of their being rivals to each other, and continuing till the saints possess the kingdom, which from other Scriptures cannot be until the Lord terminates the oppression by the brightness of His coming to destroy that wicked or lawless one; which, being in both instances in the singular case (2 Thessalonians 2:8 and Daniel 7:26) also forbids the thought of their being two such enemies, both exalting themselves above all, and both in existence when the time comes for the saints to possess the kingdom under the whole heaven at Christ's appearing, and not till then (see John 16:19-22).

Another name we have claimed for him is "the Assyrian," which occurs, among other places, in three of the chapters of Isaiah, where he is seen with the same prominence involved in what is to be only at the coming of the Lord. In the first of these chapters (Isaiah 10:5), he is spoken of as "the rod of Mine anger," sent against "the people of My wrath . . . to tread them down like the mire in the streets. Howbeit he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so (that he is but an instrument); but it is in his heart to destroy and cut off nations not a few." It is then added, "When the Lord hath performed His whole work upon Mount Zion and on Jerusalem, I will punish . . . the stout (proud) heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks. For he saith, By the strength of my hand I have done it" (Isaiah 10:12-13). The time at which this happens, as we have seen, is, when God has performed his "whole work," after which (Isaiah 10:20) in that day "the remnant of Israel, and such as are escaped of the house of Jacob, shall no more again stay upon him that smote them; but shall stay upon the Lord, the Holy One of Israel." The Assyrian having smitten them after the manner of Egypt, the Lord's indignation is seen to cease in their destruction,—the remnant returns, and the consumption overflows with righteousness. Who can doubt that this will only be in the days when Israel at last exclaims, "Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord," to destroy Antichrist, the little horn, the lawless one, the Assyrian? In Isaiah 14:25, mention is again made of the destruction of the Assyrian whose hand had been stretched out, not upon Israel alone, but upon "all nations," with mention at the same time of the downfall of Babylon, which is then to be swept with the besom of destruction, and with whose king each candid reader of the chapter will see "the Assyrian" identified. The chronology here again determines the place to be that of Antichrist's, for on the destruction of "the Assyrian," the yoke and the burden departs from off their shoulders, as he is broken "in My land," a consummation only to be at Christ's coming.

Once more, in Isaiah 30:31, the destruction of "the Assyrian" by that coming, is still more distinctly referred to, with allusion to the joy of "tabrets and harps" which follows it, after the Lord shall have caused "His glorious voice to be heard," and shown "the lighting down of His arm, with the indignation of His anger, and with the flame of a devouring fire, with scattering, and tempest, and hailstones" (Isaiah 30:30). Who can doubt that this is Antichrist, the wicked one, who is here called "the Assyrian," destroyed by the brightness of His coming?

It is equally evident that the Assyrian and the king of Babylon must be the same individual, the name being derived from the locality of Babylon in the land of Chaldea, embraced in Assyria. In

one of the chapters just referred to (Isaiah 14:1-32), they are distinctly identified, whilst to the king of Babylon there, the exact words and characteristics of Antichrist under all the names we have been considering, are given. "I will ascend into heaven. I will exalt my throne above the stars of God. I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north" etc. (Isaiah 14:13-14). And mark how the accompaniments again determine the chronology to be, like all the rest, at the coming of the Lord, for then only will it be said, "the whole earth is at rest, and is quiet: they brake forth into singing" (Isaiah 14:7); "The Lord hath broken the staff of the wicked, and the sceptre of the rulers. He who smote the people in wrath with a continual stroke, he that ruled the nations in anger, is persecuted, and none hindereth" (Isaiah 14:5-6). The whole passage is strikingly descriptive not only of Antichrist, as given under other names identifying this, from the peculiarity, with all the rest, but of his coming by the agency of "hell" (Isaiah 14:9), or as we read in Thessalonians, "after the working of Satan," and in Revelation 13:2, of the dragon, giving him "his power, and his seat, and great authority." Nor ought it to be overlooked, that when this "king of Babylon" (who can be from this description none other than the Antichrist), "falls" (Isaiah 14:4-12), how distinctly his city, which is described similarly to that in the Revelation, is seen to fall with him; its very name thereafter is cut off (Isaiah 14:22), whilst the designation of "the Assyrian" is there applied to its king as if to mark the locality in which that Babylon is to be at its destruction. In Ezekiel 31:1-18, we find the Assyrian spoken of with remarkable distinctness, both in regard to his exaltation and his overthrow, the description being addressed to the king of Egypt—a name constantly employed in Scripture, as must have been observed, to express the help derived from the world, in opposition to the help which cometh from God alone. The Assyrian's connection with such must therefore be intimate, and accordingly at the conclusion of the warning given to all against attempted independence, as well as against seeking such godless appliances, the Assyrian, with "Pharaoh and all his multitude" are classed as one, as both the help and the helper are seen overthrown together. "To whom art thou thus like in glory . . . among the trees of Eden? Yet shalt thou be brought down with the trees of Eden into the nether parts of the earth; thou shalt lie in the midst of the uncircumcised with them that be slain by the sword. This is Pharaoh and all his multitude, saith the Lord God" (Ezekiel 31:18). In Hosea 5:1-15, Ephraim is seen to have been among the seekers of this help, "When Ephraim saw his sickness, and Judah saw his wound, then went Ephraim to the Assyrian, and sent to king Jereb (translated in the margin, the king that should plead); yet could he not heal . . . your wound" (Hosea 5:13).

Again, in Hosea 11:1-4, Israel and Ephraim, called as they had been out of Egypt and drawn with the cords of a man and with bands of love, yet "knew not that I had healed them." And mark what this their stubbornness will at last lead to. "He (Israel) shall not return into the land of Egypt (where the former oppression had been), but the Assyrian shall be his king, because they refused to return" (Hosea 11:5). Yet though God will give them such a king in His anger, hear the yearnings of His compassion and His mercy in the end, "I will not execute the fierceness of Mine anger . . . for I am God and not man" (Hosea 11:9). The Assyrian, their last oppressor, does not finally destroy them. "They shall tremble as a bird out of Egypt, and as a dove out of the land of Assyria: and I will place them in their houses, saith the Lord" (Hosea 11:11). In Micah 5:1-15, Christ, Who comes out of Bethlehem Ephratah, is distinctly seen to be the Deliverer from "the Assyrian" to mark that his destruction is identical with that of the man of sin, the son of perdition, and that they are therefore one and the same. "And this man (the Ruler of Israel Whose goings forth have been from everlasting) shall be the peace, when the Assyrian . . . shall tread in our palaces" (plant the

tabernacles of his palace . . . in the glorious Holy Mountain—Daniel 11:45). How accurate the agreement and how perfect the identification of the Assyrian with the king in Daniel also, "who does according to his will," as well as with Antichrist, the man of sin, who is destroyed by Christ's coming.

Another name given to him is the beast. This is in the Revelation and occurs there three times. In the first of these (Revelation 13:1-2), his rising is described with seven heads and ten horns, which must be those spoken of by Daniel (Daniel 7:24), as signifying the ten kingdoms of the Roman earth which were to be at the end. The "blasphemy" written upon his head and the devil giving him his power, can surely be supposed to apply to none other than to him who under the title of the man of sin, the son of perdition, comes also distinctly in the time of the end "after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders" (2 Thessalonians 2:1-17). The next mention of the beast (Revelation 17:1-18) shows him in connection with Babylon and the ten kings also, making war with the Lamb, and the Lamb overcoming him (v. 14), which is, as Antichrist is elsewhere described to be, destroyed with "the brightness of His coming." And as if to remove all doubt of that identity, the destruction itself is described in the third passage alluded to (Revelation 19:19), where the beast encounters the Rider on the white horse Whose Name is declared to be "The Word of God"—the chronology being again fixed by the millennial reign immediately succeeding. In 2 Thessalonians, Antichrist is called the "man of sin," as he is also in one of the passages already quoted (Isaiah 14:16), a "man." "Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake the kingdoms?" And he is also shown to be "a man" in Revelation 13:18, his number there (whatever it may be) "being the number of a man." This he must be to be the king of Babylon as we have seen he is, and his being so distinctly declared to be a man shows there is no absurdity in supposing he will be also a king according to the name so given him in Scripture. Besides these, there are various other names employed there also designating an individual, which on examining the context, will be seen to apply to none but him. They are apparently used to express one or other of the characteristics of "the lawless one," and do show him accordingly always in remarkable antagonism, as might be expected, to the characteristics of Him Whom he tries to supplant and overcome.

Thus in Zechariah 11:17, he is called the idol shepherd that leaveth the flock, in contrast to the Good Shepherd Who giveth His life for the sheep (John 10:11). The man of (or from) the earth (Psalms 10:18), in contrast to the Second Man Who is the Lord from heaven (1 Corinthians 15:47). The vile person (Daniel 11:21), to contrast with Him, Whom an unclean spirit even recognized as "the Holy One of God" (Mark 1:24). The oppressor (Isaiah 14:4), in contrast to the Deliverer Who shall come out of Zion (Romans 11:26). The little horn (Daniel 8:9), in contrast to Him of Whom it is said "In My Name shall his horn be exalted" (Psalms 89:24). The destroyer of the Gentiles (Jeremiah 4:7), in contrast to Him in Whom shall the Gentiles trust (Romans 15:12). Lucifer fallen from heaven (Isaiah 14:12), in contrast to Him Who is "the Bright and Morning Star" (Revelation 22:16). The terrible one (Isaiah 29:20), in contrast to the Lamb of God Which taketh away the sin of the world (John 1:29). The son of wickedness (Psalms 89:22), in contrast to the Son of God (Mark 1:1).

Surely no one on reflection can fail to be struck with the individuality indicated by each and all of these passages, which show the personality of Antichrist in as strong language as the personality of our blessed Lord Himself. The object however at present in making these references, is to

exhibit not his personality alone, but how the different names all point to and imply one great and the same individual. If successful in this, the destruction of the Antichrist, which is the point now immediately to be considered, will be easily shown as will be the harmony of all the passages which speak of it as falling upon him under these different names and designations. In the metaphorical system still followed by a large and influential class of interpreters, the thought of amelioration is constantly encouraged by what is made out of a gradual drying up of evil towards the end, by the advance and progress of Scripture truth which "Christ's coming" is declared to mean. The pope, at all hazards, is still held to be the "man of sin," and this has contributed greatly to the maintenance of this error, for his unsteady career and present decrepitude encourage the thought they cling to of a gradual disappearance, however he may, from time to time, still rise or sink. But surely no thinking inquirer can read the many passages which have been already referred to without seeing that increasing confusion and increasing evil with a sudden tremendous termination, in which an individual man, who had been exalted and was exalting himself in the midst of it, is signally and fearfully destroyed, is really what Scripture language indicates, if words are to mean any thing at all.

"The Antichrist" has all along, in what has been said, been regarded here as this individual, and is seen "before that great and terrible day of the Lord" distinctly denying (which no pope has ever done), the Father as well as the Son (1 John 2:22), or as elsewhere expressed, exalting "himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God" (2 Thessalonians 2:4). He it is "whom the Lord shall consume (destroy) . . . with the brightness of His coming" (2 Thessalonians 2:8), a coming which so far from being a gradual coming, is constantly and invariably spoken of as sudden, "as a thief in the night" (1 Thessalonians 5:2), as the lightning that "cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be" (Matthew 24:27). When the risen Saviour left this world, it was whilst He blessed them and as His disciples beheld that "He was taken up; and a cloud received Him out of their sight" (Acts 1:9). This surely was "sudden." And if so, His return will be in the same fashion, for the angels that stood by as His disciples were gazing after Him into heaven, declared "that this same Jesus . . . shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven."

Let us remember that Christ had then been visibly as well as tangibly with them after His resurrection for Thomas had been told to thrust his hand into His side, and it was therefore in His body, in which He bore "the print of the nails" that He ascended. It is "in like manner" that that same Jesus shall come again in the clouds, though now "with power and great glory" (Matthew 24:30). It does seem indeed strange presumption to declare that a coming, so spoken of, can mean nothing more than a spiritual and gradual one, and that the destruction of the man of sin by it is only a slow consumption of the papacy by the substitution of Scripture truth in its stead. When Christ comes, every eye shall see Him, and they that pierced Him shall mourn. But if by "the extension of truth" His coming is already taking place, alas! who are seeing Him? Surely it is high time for Christians to rouse up and investigate Scripture for themselves, and to cease from listening to those who would (perhaps unconsciously) turn its plainest warnings and declarations into anything or nothing.

If in the apostle's day it could be said that "the night is far spent, the day is at hand" (Romans 13:12), how near may, or rather must, that day be to us! And how ought men to be marking its

description by the sure word of prophecy in all its particulars, instead of giving ear to those who are flattering themselves and others with the vain thought of a peaceful surrender of his dominion by Satan who is now "the prince of it," and a gradual advance of better things.

Hear how differently both prophet and apostle speak of the termination, if their emphatic language is good to express any thing. "Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in My Holy Mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at hand! A day . . . of clouds and of thick darkness . . . a great people and a strong (the beast and the kings of the earth—Revelation 19:19); there hath not been ever the like, neither shall be . . . even to the years of many generations" (Joel 2:1-2).

It is gravely asserted that all this is past already, having had its accomplishment at the destruction of Jerusalem. If so, what cruel mockery must her children be thinking the words of the prophet to have been, for surely their floors are not filled with wheat nor their vats with wine (Joel 2:24) nor have they ceased yet to be a reproach among the heathen (Joel 2:19). Must not they to whom Joel prophesied be thinking such predicted blessedness can only mean something still to be, even should they be overlooking "the day of darkness" and terror which is to introduce it? Of "that great and terrible day" we have another prophet saying, "Woe unto you that desire the day of the Lord! To what end is it for you? The day of the Lord is darkness and not light . . . even very dark, and no brightness in it" (Amos 5:18-20).

Another, "Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate; and He shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it" (Isaiah 13:9).

Another, "The great day of the Lord is near . . . and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the day of the Lord; the mighty man shall cry there bitterly. That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness" (Zephaniah 1:14-15).

Again, in the New Testament in perfect harmony, as ever, with the Old, "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken; and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth (land) mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming with power and great glory" (Matthew 24:29-30). It is clearly at that "coming" that the man of sin, the son of perdition of whom we have been speaking is destroyed, for Christ comes but "once again" when He is to "reign for ever and ever."

"Shall He find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:8) will in that day be found to have been a question full of significant meaning, for Antichrist will then be exalted and all the earth wondering after him, nay, even worshipping the devil who had given him the power they see him exerting (Revelation 13:4). Is this the gradual amelioration, in the thought of which men are already beginning to enter into the delusion of mistaking evil for good, which will result in an "apostasy" from truth altogether?

We are apt to lose sight of what is said of the "deceivableness of unrighteousness" (2 Thessalonians 2:10) in which Antichrist comes, and of which already, if Scripture warning was regarded, we might be seeing the "workings," although never was outward decency drawing a thicker veil than now over the hidden things of dishonesty and darkness. Men would be shocked and society call out against it were the grossness of bygone times to revive in these days. The tide

of feeling is in another direction and perhaps towards greater refinement and elegance. But let us not blind ourselves to the declared results in which all this is to end. "When the Son of man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?" The parable of the tares and the wheat in Matthew 13:1-58 might surely forbid the thought of this gradual amelioration, for they flourish together till the end of the harvest which is explained to be "the end of the world" (age), when they are to be gathered out. And Isaiah confirms this by telling us (Isaiah 26:9) that it will be by God's judgments and not by man's efforts, that the world will even then be converted. For it is "when Thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness."

What the day of grace then had failed, through man's perverseness, to accomplish, the day of judgment will, that day meaning here the coming of the Lord to judge the world in righteousness. The distinctness of all Holy Scripture as to "that day" is as remarkable as the attempts being made to reduce the warning to nothing by spiritualizing (which is not spiritual! —Ed.) the plainest declarations of what will then be seen—As in the days of Noah, in spite of his preaching, men "knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be" (Matthew 24:39). And the same was it with our Lord's first coming, in the face of what prophets had spoken with perfect literality as the event itself proved, of the circumstances in which that "coming" was to take place. People perplex what is said by allowing themselves to be persuaded that the coming of the Lord to destroy Antichrist, is merely another expression for the final judgment, which all tell us they are assured of, whether prepared for it or not. But they will not see that events occur after the coming of our Lord which show that the end of all evil is not to be even at that time, and that therefore the final judgment which terminates all, must be future to it, for the devil himself, the great deceiver, is let loose a thousand years after Antichrist and his army has been consumed by His coming, when he gathers again a fearful confederacy before he himself, with Death and Hades (the last enemy), are cast into Gehenna (Revelation 20:1-15). The terrible day of Christ's coming to destroy Antichrist and terminate his day as well as his tribulation, will have therefore long preceded the final judgment, and it is for Antichrist and the tribulation, and the apostasy he triumphs in, that the church is so strongly warned in all Scripture to be prepared even now.

Surely if these things are so, it is for every Christian to be watching and looking well to Scripture, for Christ's day will be ushered in by a time of "great tribulation, such as was not from the beginning," and which His glorious appearing alone will terminate. It is especially needful too, to think well of the "deceivableness" spoken of, and to be on our guard against a more open "working of Satan" who in introducing his Antichrist will aid him with all "signs and lying wonders" to deceive, if it were possible, the very elect (Mark 13:22). This could only have been written for their warning, for "none of the wicked shall understand" (Daniel 12:10). And if so, how amazing the slowness exhibited by Christians in giving heed to a message so distinctly delivered.

It is "in the last end of the indignation . . . and when the transgressors are come to the full" (Daniel 8:19-23) that the spirit of Antichrist which is already in the world (1 John 4:3), is to be embodied in a man, like ourselves, and to him the devil will give "his power and great authority." He it is who will distinctly as a man, try to exalt himself, with that help, above all that is called God or is worshipped, denying the Father and the Son, even as the spirit that will be in him has been from the beginning a denial of the other Person in the Blessed Trinity. And under man, so manifested and emancipated from all control by the permitted energy of Satan, will be seen what a world is, in

which the God that made it, the Son that redeemed it, and the Spirit that sanctified it, are all at once and altogether disowned and insulted. Mercifully, God will shorten those days else, as He Himself has told us, no flesh should be saved (Matthew 24:22).

How distinctly may Habakkuk be seen on his watch-tower, looking out for the fulfillment of the vision he had seen, and which he knew at the appointed time was to speak in "the end" (Habakkuk 2:1-3). And who can miss seeing that the vision itself, which is given (Habakkuk 1:5-12) did distinctly intimate not only the tribulation "terrible and dreadful," but that one should be over it offending, and "imputing his power unto his god"—that god being, as we are told elsewhere, the devil (Revelation 13:4)? In the description given, Antichrist is seen in connection with the Chaldeans, in respect to his being "king of Babylon." Judgment and dignity proceeding of themselves (v. 7), marking the lawless one who does according to his will—"the east wind" (v. 9), an emblem of blight and desolation following his steps. Scoffing at all kings (v. 10), who are sunk in his being exalted above all. His mind changing, passing over and offending (v. 11) refer to his breaking (in the midst of the week) the covenant so often referred to already (Daniel 9:27)—see also Psalms 55:20-23 in contrast with Psalms 89:34. This is followed by the astonishment of the prophet that the Everlasting and Holy One should permit such terrible wickedness and misery.

How marvelously does Habakkuk afterward enlarge the description of him in chapter 2, and dwell in chapter 3 upon "the coming," by which Antichrist and his followers are to be destroyed, when as if to close all, and himself being in full preparedness for the confusion and terror seen to be coming, this man of God so "throughly furnished" could, in the failure of all things, rejoice still in the Lord and joy in the God of his salvation (Habakkuk 3:18). Nor is the support given to his faith less apparent, for he exclaims, "God is my strength, and He will make my feet like hinds' feet"—an animal, as we know, fitted to walk safely in dangerous high places where others would stumble and be destroyed.

Intimation of the same may be noticed in Malachi also, where the "coming of the Lord," as a refiner and purifier, is distinctly seen to "cut off the man that doeth this, the master and the scholar" (Malachi 2:12). "But who may abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when He appeareth?" (Malachi 3:2). Yet following immediately, as may be constantly observed in all Scripture when that trouble is past, is a comforting assurance, "then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old, and as in former years" (Malachi 3:4).

Joel, too, is full of striking allusions to the tribulation, which must be the same so often referred to for it ceases only "in the terrible day of the Lord," when the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood (Joel 2:31), and when immediately after, the deliverance of Mount Zion and Jerusalem is seen and the bringing again the captivity. "The Lord also shall roar out of Zion, and utter His voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the Lord will be the Hope of His people, and the strength of the children of Israel" (Joel 3:16). The desolators had been spoken of previously (Joel 1:6), which surely describes Antichrist with the kings confederated with him (here spoken of as "one nation") for God had put it "in their hearts . . . to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast," until His purposes are fulfilled (Revelation 17:17). "For a nation is come up upon My land, strong, and without number, whose teeth are the teeth of a lion, and he hath the cheek teeth of a great lion" (Joel 1:6). In Revelation 13:2, the description of him to whom the devil gives his power, is that he had "the mouth of a lion" and here is similarly described with similar

outrage, as in that chapter of Revelation above referred to.

"He hath laid my vine waste, and barked my fig tree: he hath made it clean bare, and cast it away; the branches thereof are made white" (Joel 1:7). And that all this does really, without fancy, apply to Antichrist is proved by the chronology so often already noticed, the destruction being again in "the day of the Lord." "Alas for the day! for the day of the Lord is at hand, and as a destruction (fire) from the Almighty shall it come. Is not the meat cut off before our eyes, yea, joy and gladness from the house of our God?" (Joel 1:15-16). In Hosea, too, the warnings of coming wrath are mixed with promises of mercy and conversion—when "He shall roar . . . the children shall tremble . . . they shall tremble as a bird out of Egypt, and as a dove out of the land of Assyria" (Hosea 11:10-11). How true will these words sound to Israel in that day, "I gave thee a king in Mine anger, and took him away in My wrath" (Hosea 13:11). "I will be as the dew unto Israel: he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon" (Hosea 14:5)!

Amos has also, like the rest, a sight of the trouble as well as of the future blessing when the trouble is over and gone. "The Lord God of hosts is He that toucheth the land, and it shall melt, and all that dwell therein shall mourn: and it shall rise up wholly like a flood; and shall be drowned, as the flood of Egypt" (Amos 9:5). "All the sinners of My people shall die by the sword, which say, The evil shall not overtake nor prevent us. In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen" (Amos 9:10-11). An objection is sometimes made that by dwelling so much on an Antichrist that is future, we may become less sensitive than we ought to be to the many antichrists that are already in the world. But such an objection will cease to be thought of when we come to see that what is to be fully developed then, is just what we are to strive and watch against now, that watching and striving being quickened the more when we see whither the present tendency of all things is conducting, instead of deceiving ourselves with false ideas of the world, with some removable evils, being in progress towards amendment. And although the thought that the pope is the man of sin has to be surrendered, why should this make us less alive to the real mischief of the papacy when we see, more than ever perhaps, how largely it is contributing by its "vain traditions and doctrines of devils," to hasten what we are now taught to believe will be an apostasy yet more dishonoring to God, and fearful in its consequences to man?

"The coming of the Lord" is what the apostles taught to be the hope of Christ's people, and this they would pray and long for more earnestly if they would only see how much Scripture says of the increasing antichristianism which is to prevail and prosper, until checked and destroyed by His appearing. Such would assuredly be the case if we were not fixing our eyes so resolutely on the papacy, and fancying that were it to fall, all would be well whilst error with which the papacy has nothing to do, and which, in fact, ignores the papacy like everything else, is all the while springing up and threatening the total rejection of the Bible itself as a rule of life, or even as a thing to be believed.

If evil is coming, it is scarcely less dangerous to be looking for it in a wrong direction than not to be looking for it at all. And if Scripture tells us where it is to be, it is purely presumptuous for any among us to be thinking we may do very well without the warning.

If we long, as we ought to do, for the destruction of all evil and the admission of the saints, whether alive or dead into an enjoyment with us of the blessedness which is to follow the sorrow and confusion of the present, how is it we do not pray with greater desire that "Thy kingdom come"? A

consummation however will not be till the tribulation is past, and Antichrist himself destroyed by Christ at His appearing and kingdom.

We are told Christians ought to feel satisfied if individually they are safe and taken to be with Christ. But this is losing sight of the collective and increased blessing which will be when "the dead in Christ" in their glorified bodies (now lying in dishonor), shall be raised and "caught up to meet Him" and each other, and when they who are alive and remain shall be changed to be their fitting companions. Paul thought to depart and be with Christ was far better, but his longing, as may be seen, was not to "be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality (the earthly house) might be swallowed up of life" (2 Corinthians 5:4); with this express condition however, if so be that when Christ appears, Who is our life, and in Whom it is now hid, we being already clothed in His righteousness, shall not be found naked, but ready to meet Him in the air, in our bodies, which are then to be raised in incorruption. The whole creation, laboring and groaning, is said to be waiting for this manifestation of the "sons of God," and yet, are they themselves alone of all creation to be insensible to the glory, and careless of the reunion, which is awaiting and only delayed till the mystery has been finished in the revelation and destruction of the Antichrist himself? He is yet, if Scripture words mean anything, to appear in an apostasy, more dangerous to the church in its deceivableness as well as oppression, than any trial that has yet been encountered. The nature and urgency of the crisis may be judged by the array brought forth to meet it. "I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns . . . And the armies which were in heaven followed Him . . . And He hath on His thigh a name written, King of kings, and Lord of lords" (Revelation 19:11-16). It is He Who encounters the beast and his armies and destroys them with the brightness of His coming. The head of wickedness (see Genesis 3:15) in the height of his rebellion is met and crushed by "the Seed of the woman," Who is also the Lord from heaven. Is it possible that the church can any longer remain in such indifference as to the promised deliverance, which extends not only to those of its members who are to be "alive and remain" at that day, but to the loved ones who are asleep and whom Christ will bring with Him? Of their yearnings we seem actually to catch an echo, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled" (Revelation 6:10-11). In the passages of Scripture which relate to the destruction of Antichrist, the various modes of expressing it are all in harmony with each other, and all agree in distinctly showing it to be accomplished by superhuman agency. The great fact itself is plainly proclaimed in the verses of 2 Thessalonians, so often referred to already—consumed by the spirit (breath) of His mouth and destroyed by the brightness of His coming—and all other mention will be found pointing to such a destruction as well as such a Destroyer. In Daniel he is "broken without hand" (Daniel 8:25). In another passage (Daniel 9:27), which is more intelligibly translated in the margin than in the text, the allusion is first to his setting up his abomination and then to his destruction. "In the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and upon the battlements (or pinnacle, for it is the same word as is used to designate the pinnacle of the temple) shall be the idols of the desolator, and he shall make desolate, even until the consummation and that determined shall be poured upon the desolator," meaning himself. In another (Daniel 11:45), "he shall plant the tabernacles of his

palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain (Zion); yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him." In Isaiah 10:1-34, also already referred to, Antichrist under his name of "the Assyrian" is seen with his apostate confederacy in his daring attempt to possess himself altogether of "Zion, the hill of Jerusalem" (Isaiah 10:32). He shall "remain at Nob that day"—it is his last—for "behold the Lord, the Lord of hosts, shall lop the bough with terror . . . and Lebanon shall fall by a Mighty One" (Isaiah 10:33-34). "The Assyrian" perishes "in My land, and upon My mountains" is trodden under foot (Isaiah 14:25), thus marking, with all other Scripture, that Antichrist falls in the land of Israel. In Isaiah it is further written (Isaiah 11:4), "with the breath of His lips shall He slay the wicked (one)," the instrument there being (as may be seen) Christ, the Branch out of the roots of Jesse, Who at that day stands up for "an ensign of the people" (Isaiah 11:10) and to "assemble the outcasts of Israel" (Isaiah 11:12), just as we see He does under another name* in Daniel 12:1, where at the same terrible emergence, Michael, the Great Prince standeth up "for the children of Thy people."

*(We wonder if Mr. Bonar is right in identifying the Son of God with the Archangel Michael. Mr. B. W. Newton helpfully comments "Michael the archangel is unquestionably an angel and not the Lord. It would not be said of the Lord Christ, as it is of Michael, that he durst not bring a railing accusation against Satan, but said, the Lord rebuke thee. Besides which, a comparison of Peter and Jude clearly shows that they are both speaking of the same circumstances; and Peter expressly ascribes to angels what Jude ascribes to Michael. Compare 2 Peter 2:10-12 with Jude 1:8-10, observing the identity of the expressions in the Greek". We would add that the description of Michael as "one of the chief princes" in Daniel 10:13 would not be befitting of the Lord—Ed.).

Psalms 76:1-12 is one of thanksgiving for that great deliverance so wondrously accomplished, with mention also of the locality in which it is wrought, for God is seen in it to have caused His "judgment to be heard from heaven," when He arose "to save all the meek of the earth" (Psalms 76:8-9). Jerusalem in that day will have become "a joy and her people a praise," and this psalm, among others, will then be sung there with a fullness of meaning, which faith in promises existing can alone now justify or appropriate when all remains so unlike to what it speaks of—"In Judah is God known: His Name is great in Israel. In Salem also is His tabernacle, and His dwelling place in Zion. There (that is, the places just named) brake He the arrows of the bow, the shield, and the sword, and the battle." It is added,—"Thou art more glorious ... than the mountains of prey," alluding to Christ—the Stone which had fallen on the image—having become then a "great mountain to fill the whole earth," displacing the robbers who had usurped His authority— "the stout hearted" will then have been "spoiled" (Psalms 76:1-5).

Another passage in Isaiah (Isaiah 30:33) also describes the destruction to be in Judea, for Tophet is in the valley of the son of Hinnom (Jeremiah 7:31) close to Jerusalem, the south wall crossing over Mount Zion with this valley at its foot, while the adjacent eastern wall runs across the brow of Mount Moriah above the valley of Jehoshaphat. This it is to which Joel alludes (Joel 3:12) for, though the gathering of the apostate nations under Antichrist is to be at Armageddon, the battle and destruction is to be in that "valley of decision" (v. 14) where God will "judge all the heathen round about." It is well known that in the wall over the valley where this is to be, the Turks point to a small projecting stone on which their Antichrist Mahomet, as it is believed by them, will sit when the world is to be assembled for judgment below. This is in accordance with all that the spirit of Antichrist has ever been attempting to do since the beginning as he will to the end, in placing the

false where the True is yet to be. But the crisis of all this is to be decided there under the very walls which are yet to be salvation and its gates praise (Isaiah 60:18) "for Tophet is ordained of old; yea, for the king it is prepared; he hath made it deep and large: the pile thereof is fire and much wood: the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it."

It is vain to say, as some do, that this was spoken of Sennacherib,* inasmuch as he did not perish there, although his army did. We know from good authority that he returned and dwelt at Nineveh, and was slain in the house of Nisroch his god (Isaiah 37:37-38).

*(Sennacherib, like Saul, was a remarkable type of Antichrist, as will be seen more distinctly if we examine the answer God gave to Hezekiah's prayer against him (Isaiah 37:21), for although that "king of Assyria" was overthrown in his attempt on Jerusalem, yet there will be noticed a distinct declaration of events connected with it, which did not at that time have any full accomplishment—What is said of the remnant (Isaiah 37:311) that escape of the house of Judah, taking root downward and bearing fruit upward, must allude to what is to be at the great deliverance yet future, when Jerusalem is to be "safely inhabited" after the last "Assyrian king," like the other has been overthrown, for God is pledged to "defend Jerusalem" against which "the Assyrian" will yet come (Isaiah 10:5-32), "for Mine Own sake" — Isaiah 37:35, "and for My servant David's sake"). Nor can it refer to Satan, as Lowth imagines, for when his time arrives he is to be cast into the lake of fire where "the Assyrian" and his prophet will already be. It is manifestly spoken of Antichrist destroyed, as will be seen (Isaiah 30:30) by the Lord's coming, and causing "His glorious voice to be heard," and showing "the lighting down of His arm."

Psalms 18:1-50 was spoken by the literal David, as is intimated, "in the day that the Lord delivered him from the hand . . . of Saul," who we have seen was a type of Antichrist. It will be a song of praise for a greater than David, when all Christ's enemies, including the anti-type himself, are under His feet, for it is evident the deliverance there spoken of, could not have applied in full to the literal David, except as a figure of Him Who was to come. "The bowing of the heavens," "the coming down," "the brightness that was before him" (Psalms 18:9-12) all indicate that it was the great enemy of Christ, described as "the violent man" (Psalms 18:48), who had been then destroyed by the "fire out of His mouth" (Psalms 18:8). "Therefore will I give thanks unto Thee, O Lord, among the heathen, and sing praises unto Thy Name" (Psalms 18:49).

How wondrous to see in all this, Christ the true David giving thanks, for Himself and the people with whom He identifies Himself, to his Father in Whose Name He had come. "It is God that girdeth Me with strength" (Psalms 18:32); "Thou hast enlarged My steps" (Psalms 18:36), "Thou hast also given Me" (Psalms 18:40), "Thou hast delivered Me" (Psalms 18:32 and Psalms 18:48), Thou hast avenged Me (Psalms 18:47), "Thou liftest Me up" (Psalms 18:48), etc. What an exhibition of the love which could have brought Him from the glory He had with the Father, and take our nature upon Him and exalt it again to be heir with Him Who is the Heir of all things! Surely, love like this might make us long to see the kingdom He has purchased, and in which we are to reign with Him for ever and ever. In Isaiah 14:1-32, much will be found which can alone apply to Antichrist, for it is on his destruction that the "earth is at rest" (Isaiah 14:7) under its rightful King, after the storm that will then have passed over it. "Is this the man that made the earth to tremble?" can be none other than Babylon's Antichrist king, distinctly a man, and so spoken of in subsequent verses, "all the kings of the nations, even all of them, lie in glory, every one (of them)

in his own house. But thou art cast out of thy grave like an abominable branch, and as the raiment of those that are slain, thrust through with a sword, that go down to the stones of the pit; as a carcass trodden under foot. Thou shalt not be joined with (to) them in burial, because thou hast destroyed thy land, and slain thy people" (Isaiah 14:18-20).

All this agrees with what is said in Revelation 19:20, "And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast . . . These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone."

How much is the terrible character of all this in unison with the daring wickedness that will have provoked it. The firmness of the impostor is supernaturally supported to the last. Upon his heart, seared as with a hot iron, no dew of repentance is seen to descend. In that terrible hour he justifies the selection Satan had made of him, as, in undismayed presumption he hurries both himself and "the kings of the earth and their armies" against "the city of the Great King," Who is Himself coming to meet him in the clouds of heaven and with all the accompaniments of Deity!

It was at the thought of that encounter that Habakkuk trembled, and of which Enoch, the seventh from Adam, heard the shoutings, exulting at the same time to proclaim the issue, "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him" (Jude 1:14-15).

If the reign of Antichrist, so fearfully terminated, will have been marked by such terror and tribulation as to have made men seek death without finding it (Revelation 9:6), what thought can imagine the joy and gladness of creation on that "morning without clouds" which follows when the storm will have passed away into the "clear shining after the rain"! What a scene will this freshened earth exhibit, reposing in the tranquillity of a reign of righteousness which comes at once upon the turmoil and anguish and blasphemy beneath which it had groaned under Satan and his antichrist king! "The whole earth is at rest, and is quiet: they break forth into singing. Yea, the fir trees rejoice at thee, and the cedars of Lebanon, saying, since thou (Antichrist) art laid down, no feller is come up against us" (Isaiah 14:7-8).

It is impossible for a believer in that coming blessedness not to feel refreshed and invigorated by the very thought, and to wish to linger and linger still amidst the green pastures and still waters of comfort which its promise supplies. They restore the soul and make it to feel, with the way-worn psalmist of old, that a table has been prepared in the presence of its enemies. "Thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever" (Psalms 23:5-6)! An objection has been taken by many in our day to the study of prophecy, as being of little practical benefit. That there should be any ground for such a charge can arise solely from its having been misconducted, for it seems impossible that any one on reflection should think that so much of Scripture could be occupied with anything that really was useless or unprofitable. In fact, however, the chief effort of writers on prophecy seems to have been now-a-days, to prove the truth of Scripture itself, not from its own, but from the pages of Gibbon, or Volney, or some such recorder of past events, which their system declares the prophecy to have previously indicated. In their fashion of accounting for it, nearly the whole of the Revelation has been accomplished. The pope, as the Antichrist, has nearly had his day and little remains in fact now to be arrived at but the probable year in which the dispensation

will close, and the millennium, for which the world is so ripe, be expected to begin, if indeed it has not done so already.

Now this is really idleness, if it be no worse, for besides this mistake as to the times of the end, prophecy was given neither to gratify curiosity, nor to prove the general truth of Scripture. It was the doctrine on which its claims to inspiration chiefly rested. Our Lord Himself declares it to be so, "My doctrine is not Mine, but His that sent Me. If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God" etc. (John 7:16-17).

If a writer like Mr. Elliott (author of "Horae Apocalypticae" - see "The Prophetic System of Mr. Elliott and Dr. Cumming considered" in "Aids to Prophetic Enquiry" by Mr. B. W. Newton—Ed.) labors to prove the truth of Scripture from the two witnesses having appeared in Luther's time in exact fulfillment of its prediction, is there no risk of the ridicule of the scoffer being excited by such a conclusion as few, even among his own followers, are at all satisfied with, or even inclined to believe? The attempt therefore is more likely to prejudice than to advance its object, and to such things, it is to be feared, may be attributed the strange indifference observable now among Christians themselves to prophecy, scarcely however to be wondered at, if men of such talent and research can draw nothing more practical, or even likely to be believed, out of it than this. The very erudition required to support such a system as his is against the probability of its being true, for what becomes of the poor man with his Bible for his companion, if such extended literary research is required to make him understand what it means, and how its prophecies have been accomplished as he is assured they have been? And even if true, what benefit is it to him, if he was previously satisfied that the Bible was indeed God's Word, without all this labour to prove it so from statements he has no means of verifying?

He sees a distinct mention of the last days, and from his Bible written in the plainest and most intelligible language, believes we are entering upon them; and he reads there of the sure word of prophecy being a lamp in a dark place, to which it is well to give heed. Surely it is not what took place in the days of Constantine that can satisfy such as him, for he is told to "press forward" and it is in that direction he naturally expects the lamp to cast its light.

If warned of "perilous times" to come, surely he will seek to know the dangers there are to be in them, and not rest satisfied with being told what the General Councils of the Romish Church either said or did, hundreds of years ago.

What is it practically to him that there should be some who think the rider on the white horse "who goeth forth conquering and to conquer" to have been a Cretan, because he had a bow and Cretans had bows, or that the symbolic horsemen in Revelation 9:1-21 were Turks, from the mention of their power being in their tails, and horse-tails were the standard of the Turcomans?

He is told in his Bible of "a deceivableness of unrighteousness" with a coming that is to be "after the working of Satan," and he thinks of the light in a dark place, to which he has been told he would do well to take heed. But how can he feel satisfied in listening to such "tales of the past" as he can in no way connect himself with, even if he could understand, or remember, or believe them to have been the fulfillment of what his Bible had been telling him?

Zechariah, 500 years before the event, had told his people, "Behold, thy King cometh unto thee: He is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass"

(Zechariah 9:9). Yet their fancy revolted at such a humiliating advent, however literal the event afterwards proved it to have been. And yet, in the face of the warning, every book is now searched, but the Bible itself, to furnish accomplishments, whilst the scoffers at the promise of His coming again "in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven" (Acts 1:11), are scarcely to be distinguished from those, who, professing to believe and make others understand, are yet themselves scandalized at the thought that any but a spiritual return can possibly be intended, or that the man of sin means anything but a succession of popes, of whom it is now hoped from their calculations, we have seen nearly the last.

02A.5. Conclusion

Conclusion

There would be no conclusion to draw from all this were it true, as is so frequently insinuated, that prophecy is of no private interpretation as far as our own individual interests are concerned. There may undoubtedly be a risk not alone of neglecting, but also on the other hand of giving it an undue prominence. Nevertheless between these extremes let us bear in mind, that as "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God" and declared to be "profitable," so it must be to our risk and damage if we overlook the proper place and importance of each and every portion of it. Our wish has been to vindicate the study of what many a Christian, from one motive or another, seems to shun, for in the persuasion of coming disorder and "perplexity," the lamp in the dark place spoken of is, by mention, the "sure word of prophecy," to which it is added "ye do well that ye take heed" (2 Peter 1:19).

Now if Scripture declares this, who is to forbid us saying that throughout a distinct warning is given—a telling before (Matthew 24:25) —of events yet to come in which individually we are all concerned? "I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say," and whether there is not reason for asking why Scripture language, after all past lessons, is not to be taken literally in every instance where the context does not manifestly and unmistakably show it to be metaphorical. The rule laid down is not one of difficult application if we attempt to apply it honestly, and not with a mere wish to cavil and find fault where it becomes all to be humble as well as vigilant.

It is a sign of the times that the study of prophecy is talked of, at least more than it was, and if so, how deeply important that the theories regarding its interpretation should be examined with greater caution now, from the manifest failures of the past and the want of any real practical good having come out of it after we had expressly been encouraged to expect a different result. Does not such a failure of itself suggest the thought that the prevailing system may have been a wrong one, and that greater regard to the plain literality of Scripture would lead, as in its other teaching, to the profit which of necessity, from Scripture declaration itself, must be there? Timothy when warned of the perilous times of the last days, nearer to us now than they were to him, was directed (2 Timothy 3:14-15) for protection against deceiving or being deceived to the Holy Scriptures which he had known from a child. But how marked a departure must there be from the simplicity of that admonition, when we can sit quietly, year after year, listening to expositors who tell us of the allowance to be made for eastern phraseology and illustrative symbols, until in their hands, the plainest words which no "child" could mistake or stumble at, have become mystified if not wholly altered in their meaning.

Hence the whole way by which they have come, is strewed with abandoned assertions as one portion of the theory was shown to be inconsistent with the other, and as each succeeding writer still detected a new date or accomplishment which was found to fit more exactly even than previous ones had done.

It may look like presumption to say all this, but the presumption disappears when all that is contended for in these imperfect remarks is simply that a greater regard, than all of us have been showing, is due to the inspired literality of that Scripture, which infidels and philosophers of the day are seeking to overthrow altogether. If prepared to say that Scripture truth alone must be our refuge in the days of evil and error which are darkening around us, surely it becomes us to be "very jealous" for its literality, and to count all other lights as false which come not from that place where alone the true light shineth, however men may sneer at our simplicity in thinking so.

There are, and will be increasingly, meteor lights sent forth by Satan to lead man astray till his feet stumble on the dark mountains, if he himself does not perish there. Let any one think to what the German mysticism, to which allusion has been already made in these pages, is leading, and of what the world without a Bible would be, before he yields a hair-breadth to the system which is turning much of the plainest language into metaphor. With our attention so plainly called to it, prophecy will be found no idle study to be dipped into or disregarded as suits our fancy, nor will it serve us to plead the confusion in which such widely different interpretations have involved it. This is only a good reason for more attention being given to the subject, and also for our asking why Scripture language should be differently construed from all other.

If it tells us of a revelation that is to be of "that man of sin ... the son of perdition" before the coming of our Lord Himself to destroy him, why should we be speaking of a succession of popes or principles any more than of a succession of Saviors and influences? Such discrepant interpretation is helping greatly the scoffers of these last days, who are already pointing to the inconsistencies of professed Bible Christians themselves, to show that their Book means anything or nothing, as they choose to make it, and is therefore unfit to guide man now that he is beginning to think for himself.

It is confessedly one of the characteristics of the last times that man’s restless energy is searching into everything human and divine. Knowledge of whatever kind it may be, is increased by the many that "run to and fro" (Daniel 12:4), an expression which in the Hebrew means properly to run through or examine (a writing). As to Daniel’s people, they make no attempt to understand his book, saying that he did not understand it himself and was even told that the words were "closed up and sealed" (Daniel 12:9). But they will not see, like many among ourselves, that this was only to be "till the time of the end," whilst we have what they had not, a book of Revelation shown to speak of the same events as Daniel had done, but which John, as distinctly, was commanded not to seal (Revelation 22:10) "for the time is at hand."

How strikingly ought this to warn us with all becoming reverence while searching the Scriptures, to give heed also to the sure word of prophecy in our eventful days as to a light shining in a dark place, and reflecting itself with increasing power from other Scripture which, we have seen, was to be sealed up and closed till now. But besides neglecting a duty, as we contend it is from Scripture declaration itself, how much are we also in the meanwhile losing of warning and comfort, if either we refuse altogether to look into the subject of prophecy, or cling still to the misleading system of interpretation unhappily prevailing, even although our judgment is unconvinced by it? There is no Scripture warrant for expecting a peaceful termination of present evil before the Lord comes, as literally and truly, as He was seen to go into heaven. His people in the world have yet to expect a darker day than has appeared, and already are its presages unmistakably gathering in masses

over them. The "light that shineth in a dark place" would increasingly vindicate to them, in such circumstances, the mercy that placed it there, were they not willfully perverting or obscuring it, as they are doing. It would be seen illumining the sable cloud of the future, making it to "turn out its silver lining on the night," with the light that is "behind it" reflected to God's people, who are on their way beneath it, until the darkness itself was dispelled by "the morning appearing." The light of prophecy is light from that heaven where there is no darkness at all, and is in contrast to another light spoken of by our Lord himself, if "the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!" (Matthew 6:23).

Let us be warned that this is it which the philosophers, falsely so called, of the day would beguile us into choosing, and of which it becomes us to beware, for it is from beneath (from him who is the prince of darkness as well as the prince of this world), which has accordingly ever chosen the darkness rather than the light, its deeds, like his, being evil. And to what is all this "word of prophecy" pointing? Surely not alone to the trouble which is yet to be, but far more extendedly to the gladness that is beyond it, but of which our notions are and continue so low and earthly from want of heed to the sure word of prophecy.

If Antichrist is spoken of and the outbreak of sin and terror which will attend him, how do all the prophets seem to rejoice to be done with such details, and to escape from them into the glad tidings they are also commissioned to tell of "the glory that should follow"! Yet they who are to share in it seem content that things should go on as now, provided only the day of their death take them out of the trouble into a state which, after all, is still one of waiting "for the manifestation of the sons of God" (Romans 8:19). The whole creation is represented as groaning' for this, nay, Christ Himself, although sat down on the right hand of God, as also "henceforth expecting till His enemies be made His footstool" (Hebrews 10:13). Yet Christians continue indifferent, or rather averse, to look beyond the present state of things, into what Scripture prophets tell them of the future with a distinct intimation that they would "do well to give heed." Nay, it almost seems as if they were deliberately overlooking the fact of this mortal which is to put on immortality being now in weakness, corruption, and dishonour (1 Corinthians 15:42-43; 1 Corinthians 15:53). How is it they will not understand their interest in what is to be?

It is written, "The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore" it is added, "comfort one another with these words" (1 Thessalonians 4:16-18). Are we doing so? Are we thinking of this change as well as of the reunion that is to be at that moment when this corruptible is to put on incorruption (surely this is not spoken of the day of our death) and this mortal, immortality? If so, how strange all this indifference to the "coming of the Lord," which is not only to destroy existing evil and accomplish this change in us, but to bring back to us "them also which sleep in Jesus," possessed like us then, and not till then, of glorified bodies in which we shall recognize and welcome each other as fitting companions to be for ever "with the Lord."

Him, eye to eye we then shall see, Like His, our faces shine;

O, what a glorious company When saints and angels join!

What a contrast does the language, used by both prophet and apostle in reference to such a time of blessing, present to the indifference with which men hear of it now. "Thy dead shall live, My dead body (not "together with" which is not in the original, for believers themselves are that body, His Own having seen no corruption, Acts 2:3) shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead! Come, My people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee; hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. For, behold, the LORD cometh out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain" (Isaiah 26:19-21).

It was to the expectation of such an "awakening," (then how distant!) that David is heard responding, "As for me, I will behold Thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness" (Psalms 17:15). And Job too, in times still more remote, "in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another: my reins within me (see margin) are consumed with earnest desire for that day" (Job 19:26-27). Is there no longing exhibited here for the day when they were to be so "satisfied"? Is death swallowed up in victory now, when its triumphs are intruded on us every hour by the mourners who go about the streets? And are we still indifferent to the time, when all this is to cease with us and with them whom we are committing to the dust? Or, as Christians, can we afford to treat, as a matter of indifference, that the inheritance which Christ purchased with His Blood is still under the dominion of another lord; and that, instead of an amelioration and turning to Him, there is to be "the apostasy" and Antichrist who is yet to exalt and oppose himself upon it above all that is called God or is worshipped?

What a narrowing of all the glorious expectations which His church has been encouraged in from the beginning, is it for us "upon whom the ends of the world are come," to be confining our hopes to a bare individual escape from present distress and weariness, with our bodies, which are Christ’s, left behind us in weakness and shame! How like a dishonored retreat from the battlefield were Antichrist and Satan to remain on it triumphant, and the earth upon which the Son of God had lived and suffered abandoned to the evil which had ruined it.

Surely this is not to be if Scripture’s plainest words mean anything at all. He, Who endured the cross, despising the shame, and is even now bringing many sons and daughters to glory, is under promise to "come again;" no longer as at the first, in suffering and humiliation, but in the clouds of heaven and His saints with Him. The places of the Redeemer’s sorrow are yet to be the places of the Redeemer’s triumph. His feet are yet to stand upon the Mount of Olives, the moon confounded and the sun ashamed, when He reigns in Jerusalem and in Mount Zion before His ancients gloriously (Isaiah 24:23).

How strange to think that they who are to share in that triumph should be cold and indifferent about it, and more taken up with the thought of escape from their individual "light affliction, which is but for a moment" (2 Corinthians 4:17), than with the hope of seeing realized the promise of "new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (2 Peter 3:13). When our Lord comes, His reign with His saints is to be a reign of righteousness in contrast to that of Antichrist, which had preceded and shall then have come to an end. And Satan, bound for a thousand years, will not be present to exert the power he now has to pervert and mislead. But the flesh which fell will still be

that of the inhabiters of the earth, and still exposed to sin again as if to show that in it "dwelleth no good thing" (Romans 7:18). This is an undeniable fact, whatever our fancy of the millennium may be, for sin and death are both spoken of as in operation during its period (Isaiah 65:20; Jeremiah 31:29-30); and an outbreak at the end, when Satan having been loosed out of his prison (Revelation 20:7-8) will gather a number "as the sand" ready to join him in one further effort for preeminence, even as the first Adam, whose flesh they inherit, sinned and fell amidst the happiness of Eden, and in face to face intercourse with his Maker. The former attempt had been led on by Antichrist, but in this Satan appears for himself and his final overthrow, for the Great White Throne is set and he, along with "the rest of the dead" whose names are not found in the Lamb's Book of Life, are judged, to be cast into the lake of fire, where Antichrist and his false prophet will already be, to be tormented for ever. "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death" (1 Corinthians 15:26), and his destruction is recorded as following immediately after that of Satan as if to mark the conclusion. And here Scripture alone should speak, for these are solemn futurities: Christ "must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet ... And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all" (1 Corinthians 15:25; 1 Corinthians 15:28). That which is perfect will then, at last, have come and that which is imperfect be done away (1 Corinthians 13:10).

Every spot even where sin had rested or could rest "shall be burned up" (2 Peter 3:10), and "behold, I make all things new" (Revelation 21:5). What the glories of eternity will be to all God's redeemed people we could not now conceive, for earthly things cannot measure heavenly. We read of one who was caught up into Paradise (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell), and "heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter" yet "of such an one will I glory" (2 Corinthians 12:3-5).

Another in speaking of them says, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hat prepared for them that love Him" (see Isaiah 64:4). And as if to seal all by a last promise, a third is made to declare, "He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be My son" (Revelation 21:7).

It will remain a mystery to us till we know as we are known, why a holy God could permit evil to enter where His will was supreme. But this we know, that He Who is "wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working" (Isaiah 28:29) doeth all things well. In His wondrous condescension to His people, He calls on them to prove Him, and how could this have been done, had nothing been permitted to ruffle or interrupt the tranquillity and order of His perfect dominion? A man's character (with deep reverence be it spoken) is proved by the difficulties and trials to which he is subjected, and so God may have been showing, where sin abounded, how His grace could much more abound. May not this earth prove to have been the theatre selected by His wisdom to show, not only to us, but to beings incomprehensible to us now, who themselves never knew either sin or disorder, the full character of God on which all happiness depends, by a display of it in permitted events involving even the death of His Son? Is it not confusion which makes us understand the blessings of order, sickness of health, sorrow of gladness, and turmoil of rest? And may not the passage of their Great Head in union with His people through all these, have been appointed, not only to "make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery," but "to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord"

(Ephesians 3:9-11).

Yet how would that purpose have fallen short of its full display of power as well as of goodness, were the earth itself which God had created in the beginning and which He had pronounced to be very good, been abandoned to Satan as a polluted thing, after all the display of the wisdom and grace which had been witnessed upon it! But this is not to be so. "God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved" (John 3:17). "The redemption of the purchased possession" will yet be fully manifested when, as we have seen, the last enemy upon it having been destroyed, the Son Himself becomes subject, that God may be all in all.

Then, and not till then, will be known what that redemption so spoken of implied, as well as the wondrous ransom that was paid for it. It will be declared to men and to angels when the new heavens and the new earth are seen restored without spot or blemish, to God’s sinless dominion, and what is more, along with them the "many sons and daughters" whom He, the Captain of their salvation Himself made perfect through suffering, had been bringing out of the world to share in glory with Him, Who in that day will be shown to be "the Heir of all things."

He Who was, for our sins and for our transgressions, reviled and spit upon and crucified between two thieves, will then be highly exalted. "He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied; by His knowledge shall My righteous Servant justify (have justified) many; for He shall bear (bore) their iniquities" (Isaiah 53:11). The mystery will at last have been ended for ever, and He Who took our nature upon Him "to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins and to bring in everlasting righteousness" (Daniel 9:24), will be shown to be the same that was in the beginning with God and by Whom all things were made, without Whom was not anything made that was made, Who was with God, and Who was God (John 1:1-3).

It needs that we understand something of the character of that tremendous wrath which descended on our great Sacrifice and which will yet devour every one who is not found washed in His Blood, before we are in any condition to judge aright of what is constituting the false glory of the natural man, and the real character of all that is within the gates of His city. Until brought to see this, we cannot have any true or proper desire "to go forth . . . without the camp, bearing His reproach;" and still less can we rejoice to have been, by free grace alone, thus called to come out and be separate from it. For where, alas, will he be found in that day who now lingers in these cities of the plain with the destruction that is impending over them, ashamed of the Saviour Who would have drawn him out of them, and up to Himself! Is it not written of such an one, "of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when He shall come in His Own glory, and in His Father’s, and of the holy angels" (Luke 9:26)? And if the sure word of prophecy tells us, amidst present distress and weariness, of such a glory as this is to be, it is, whatever men may call it, a light shining in a dark place to which we do well to take heed. For it is not impossible to do so, without feeling within us the stirring of a hope that is full of immortality. Whilst we look at those things that are not seen, do not our hearts burn within us by the way, and seem lifted above the "heaviness" of the present, rejoicing in the thought that "the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2 Corinthians 4:18)?

Time, as it is now with us, is a human word, and the change associated with it an entirely human idea; so wrought into us however, that we dread monotony and the possibility of weariness where

there is no change. But this is simply because time is connected in our minds here with invariable decay, and therefore with the thought that were there no change, our very hopes as well as occupations would slip from underneath us. But when the eternal things spoken of are seen and there shall "be time no longer" (Revelation 10:6), neither shall there be any more decay, marking time's progress as now, with its dark and sorrowful shadow. The former things will have passed away and we shall have a new measurement scarcely to be appreciated by us at present constituted, but how transporting then, when we ourselves are "changed," and like all things around us, made pure and holy, without decay and enduring as the ages of eternity. It is when personally sinless ourselves, and not till then, that we shall be able to recognize the blessedness of owning and bowing to one perfect and sovereign Will. Is not such a prospect fitted to animate Christ's people with new strength to press onwards, by showing them the real dignity of their present condition, set forth as they are, as a spectacle to men and to angels? For are they not chosen out of a world, which is pluming itself on its advancing liberty, its discoveries, its intellect, its science, its powers and its pleasures for ages to come, to be "God's witnesses" against all these, dedicated as they increasingly are, to the prince of this world, whose glory is and will be still more, in opposition to the Name of Jesus?

Like their Divine Master, they are despised and hated, not resisting evil nor trying to put right by force what they nevertheless protest to be wrong, and still contented in quiet submission to authorities and powers for the Lord's sake to suffer with Christ, knowing they shall also reign with Him (2 Timothy 2:12). Their light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working out for them a far more exceeding, even an eternal weight of glory; and the crown that is laid up for them will be found worthy of God, the Righteous Judge, Who is to place it on their heads at that day.

Such a view, too, of Christ and Antichrist as we have been considering, helps to make us understand the width and breadth of that great gulf which is fixed between the service of the one and the service of the other. There is no half-way—no compromise. Like that between the rich man and Lazarus, in one sense already "they which would pass from hence to you cannot, neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence" (Luke 16:26). Yet, in another sense, there is still an escape if men will hear Moses and the prophets—"the sure word of prophecy" —but if not, neither would they be persuaded though one rose from the dead. And such, with all the promises still attaching to them, would seem the present existing condition of God's ancient people, the Jews. The veil is upon their eyes, and they cannot see what their own prophets have declared unto them. Nevertheless, God's truth is pledged, and He will surely perform whatever He has promised them of earthly distinction and blessing. And yet, after all, they were but types of His true people, brought not alone out of Egypt, but out "of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues—a great multitude, which no man could number" (Revelation 7:9) bought with the precious Blood of His Son. The care which led and fed them in the wilderness is still shown to His own, whom He is bringing into a far nobler inheritance. The one might sing the song of Moses when delivered from Pharaoh, whilst the other will, ere long, join to it that of the Lamb, as they stand on a sea of glass, mingled with fire, having "gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name" (Revelation 15:2-3). The inheritance of the one is on earth. The inheritance of the other is in heavenly places with Christ Jesus. The Jerusalem that is below will be the joy of the whole earth, but it will be so in the light of the New Jerusalem from above, "which is free and the mother of us all" (Galatians 4:26), described as the

"city which hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God" (Hebrews 11:10). The glory of the one will lighten the other during the millennial reign, and its bright inhabitants be the realization of what Jacob only dreamed of, "angels of God ascending and descending" on the earth (Genesis 28:12). Who that has an ear to hear, can after this be insensible to the true dignity of the sons of God, nor feel more than urged to walk worthy of his high calling, when in the "sure word of prophecy" he gathers something of what that calling is, and to what it is conducting him?

How perfect, too, is the consistency of all Scripture, proving it in the face of all the scoffers and all the critics of these evil days, to be indeed given by "inspiration of God"! He it is Who hides these things from the wise and prudent and has revealed them unto babes. "Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in Thy sight" (Matthew 11:26).

Gird up then, Christian, the loins of your mind; be sober and hope to the end. Even now, amidst the gathering darkness without, the "sure word of prophecy" which is indeed the light from the windows of your home, shines brighter and brighter as you approach unto it; and soon, as you touch its threshold, will come forth that gladdening reception, "Well done, good and faithful servant . . . enter thou into the joy of thy Lord!" To close with a single inference from all that has been written in these imperfect pages. There are, and ever have been, but two principles in the world as will be seen plainly ere long—self and Christ. The one wholly evil and incapable of any amelioration or affinity with the other, as will be fully manifested in the approaching times of the Antichrist. It must, therefore, be utterly destroyed by that other, which is Christ; and when He comes to effect this, there will be peace in the world itself, and not until then.

Meanwhile, God’s discipline is now employed to convince us of this, and to show us what self is, as well as what Christ is. If the lesson is savingly learnt we cease to have any confidence in the one, and learn to lean simply and entirely on the other. Forthwith, the struggle within us is felt be ended, and we do enter into rest (Hebrews 4:3), expecting henceforth with Christ Himself till His foes and ours be made His footstool, when there will be outward tranquillity also.

Faith in this is "the victory that overcometh the world," even whilst we ourselves are still amidst its trials. No one ever thus knew himself and Christ without abhorring the one and cleaving to the other, for it is then he begins to learn that His yoke is indeed easy and His burden light (Matthew 11:30), even as that of the other was grievous to be borne. And if by the full display which is to be, of what "self" really is, and tends to, in the revelation when the transgressors are come to the full of Antichrist, as its development then in open opposition to Christ Himself, prophecy serves to show (as it has been our attempt to prove it really does show), the direct antagonism which, under all forms and disguises has been in action from the very beginning, is not its study cleared from the charge of being a vain intrusion into things not seen and with which properly the future alone should have been left to deal; whilst itself is vindicated to be light shining in a dark place to which we do well to take heed? But it will have been seen that it does far more even than this, for it declares the utter and terrible destruction of the one by the final and complete triumph of the other. Without the "sure word" how could such a termination have been assured to Christ’s people, left as they are in a world where the foundations "are out of course" (Psalms 82:5), and self ever seeking to be uppermost in themselves, as in all around them, to an extent which might have made the struggle absolutely wearisome, if not seemingly hopeless altogether?

It was inspiration alone which could have told, as it has done, how all this is to end, and that in language and minuteness of detail, well fitted to meet all present perplexity, as well as all alarm regarding the issue. Greater is He that is for us than all that can be against us, may henceforth be the exulting thought of all who are Christ’s, and who, as such, will share in that triumph which is approaching, as surely as is the Antichrist whom it is to destroy. And ought not this assurance, and the disclosures with which it is accompanied, to teach and enable us to receive at present every inward and outward trouble, every disappointment, pain, temptation, or desolation with actual cheerfulness and joy as an occasion for the overthrow of self, that we may enter more closely into fellowship with Him, Who was Himself "made perfect through suffering"?

True, the world is seen more distinctly to be sitting in darkness, but God has called us out of that darkness into His marvelous light, and we understand, therefore, how it is He bids His people to walk as children of the light and of the day, having no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness. What gladness to all such must be the thought that "the time is short"(1 Corinthians 7:29), till He Who cometh will come, and when all that opposes His kingdom within or without shall be gathered out of it for ever!

Let men forbid or scoff at the study of prophecy as they may, its real importance is becoming daily more plain and apparent, for already, thank God, are many increasingly led to understand why it is written, "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand" (Revelation 1:3).

03.00. Follow the Lamb

Follow the Lamb By

Horatius Bonar, D.D.

Horatius Bonar was born at Old Broughton, Edinburgh, Scotland, whose brother was Andrew Bonar. Following his education at the University of Edinburgh, he maintained an active and powerful ministry for more than half a century pastoring churches in that area until his death. Throughout his life Bonar avoided all sensationalism and was calm, patient, sincere, solemn and a steady writer. His tracts and books are well-received and well-read in all Christian circles. He wrote well over 600 hymns of which more than 100 are still in use.

Bonar has been described as "the prince of Scottish hymn-writers." The following lines taken from one of his hymns express Bonar’s view of the work of his glorious Saviour, Jesus Christ"

"Glory be to Him who loved us, washed us from each spot and stain. Glory be to Him who bought us, made us kings with Him to reign! Glory, glory, to the Lamb that once was slain!"

Follow the Lamb; or, Words of Counsel to New Converts

1861.

Messrs. James Nisbet & Co., London

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03.000. Introduction

Introduction

It is for you who are called by the name of Christ that these pages are written, that you may be reminded of what God expects of you, and of what your name commits you to.

It is a great thing to be a Christian. The very name is a noble one, beyond all the noble names of earth. The thing itself is inconceivably blessed and glorious. To say, 'I am a Christian,' is to say, 'I belong to God's nobility; I am of the peerage of heaven.'

Much, then, is expected of you. Do not disgrace the old family name. Do nothing unworthy of Him who represents you in heaven, and whom you represent on earth. He is faithful to you; be you so to Him. Let men know what a Lord and Master you serve. Be His witnesses; be His mirrors; be His living epistles. Let Him speak through you to the world. Let your life tell your fellow-men what He is, and what He is to you. Speak well of Him to men, as He speaks well of you to God. He has honoured you by giving you His name; He has blessed you by conferring on you sonship, and royalty, and an eternal heritage: see that you do justice to His love, and magnify His greatness.

Let your light shine. Do not obstruct it, or hide it, or mingle darkness with it. 'Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee' (Isaiah 60:1). It is the light of love that you have received; let it shine. It is the light of truth; let it shine. It is the light of holiness; let it shine. And if you ask, How am I to get the light, and to maintain it in fulness? I answer, 'Christ shall give you light' (Ephesians 5:14). There is light enough in Him who is the light of the world.

'The Lamb is the light thereof' (Revelation 21:23). There is no light for man but from the Lamb. It is the cross, the cross alone, that lights up a dark soul and keeps it shining, so that we walk in light as He is in the light; 'for God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all.' Be true to Him who loved you, and washed you from your sins in His own blood. He deserves it at your hands. It is the least that you can do for Him.

Follow Him. His first words to you were, 'Come to me.' You came and found rest. But He adds these two other messages, 'Abide in me,' and 'Follow me.' You take up your cross as He took up His; and you follow Him. You go forth without the camp, bearing His reproach (Luke 9:23; Hebrews 13:13). Through good report and through bad report you follow Him. He draws you, leads you, keeps you—and so you follow Him. Your whole life is to be one continuous following of the Lord. 'If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour' (John 12:26). 'My sheep hear my voice, and they 'follow me' (John 10:27). 'Followers of Him who is good' is Peter's description of a believing man (1 Peter 3:13); such is the proper rendering of the passage, and not 'of that which is good.' And the sure promise is, 'He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life' (John 8:12). In following Him, you will look onward; for He set His face stedfastly to go up to Jerusalem; and when Peter would have hindered His going to the cross, He answered, 'Get thee behind me, Satan' (Matthew 16:23). You will look upward too; for He 'lifted up His eyes to heaven'; and your

posture must be 'looking upwards,' with your affection set on things above

(Colossians 3:1). You must bear the contradiction of sinners as He did (Hebrews 12:3); you must count the reproach of Christ greater riches than all earthly treasures (Hebrews 11:26); you must keep before your eyes Him who was 'despised and rejected of men,' yet who was 'meek and lowly in heart,' whose 'heart was not haughty nor His eyes lofty, who did not exercise Himself in great matters or in things too high for Him, who behaved and quieted Himself as a child that is weaned of his mother, whose soul was as a weaned child' (Psalms 131:1-2). You began with turning your back upon the world, and 'looking to Jesus'; keep ever thus. Looking to Him brought rest to you at first, and healed your soul; so, looking to Him daily will maintain your rest and perfect your spiritual health. 'Looking to Jesus' will give you light in hours of darkness, will strengthen you in weakness, will comfort you in trouble, will cheer you in the day of weariness. Should your eye ever be withdrawn from the cross, you will be sure to go back, to grow cold, and to forget that you were purged from your old sins (2 Peter 1:9). That cross is life, health, holiness, consolation, strength, joy; let nothing come between it and you. In the light of that cross go upon your way stedfastly; for to him on whose path that cross is shining, there can be no abiding darkness. Clouds there may be and eclipses; but that light can never be quenched; that sun can never go down.

Remember what you are, and what God expects at your hand. Act out your own professions, your own faith, your own prayers.

God has had mercy on you; and in His great love He has laid His almighty hand on you that you might be saved. He has 'sent from above, and taken, and drawn you out of many waters' (Psalms 18:16); delivering you not only 'from the wrath to come' (1 Thessalonians 1:10), but from 'a present evil world' (Galatians 1:4). By His gracious power He has turned you from the error of your ways; and one of the many names by which you are henceforth to be known on earth is that of 'converts' or 'turned ones.' But your 'turning' or 'conversion' is only a beginning; no more. It is not the whole; it is but the first step. You are a 'disciple,' that is, one under teaching; but your teaching, your discipleship, has only commenced. Your life is a Book; it may be a volume of larger or smaller size; and conversion is but the title-page or the preface. The Book itself remains to be written; and your years and weeks and days are its chapters and leaves and lines. It is a Book written for eternity; see that it be written well. It is a Book for the inspection of enemies as well as friends; be careful of every word. It is a Book written under the eye of God; let it be done reverently; without levity, yet without constraint or terror. Let me give you a few counsels. You will soon feel your need of them, unless, perhaps, you are of those who are too wise to learn, and are 'vainly puffed up in their fleshly mind.'

Chapter 80

03.01. BE STRONG IN THE GRACE THAT IS IN CHRIST

CHAPTER 1 Be Strong In The Grace That Is In Christ Jesus

It was this grace or free love which first began with you, and with which you began. It was this which you at first 'apprehended,' or rather, which 'apprehended' you; and your special character is that of men who 'know the grace of God' (Colossians 1:6); who have 'tasted that the Lord is gracious' (1 Peter 2:3); men on whom God has had compassion (Romans 9:15); men to whom He has shown His forgiving love. Such is your name. This grace of God is your strength, as it is your joy; and it is only by abiding in it that you can really live the life of the redeemed. Be strong, then, in this grace; draw your joy out of it; and beware how you turn to anything else for refreshment, or comfort, or holiness. Though a believing man, you are still a sinner; a sinner to the last; and, as such, nothing can suit you but the free love of God. Be strong in it. Remember that you are saved by believing, not by doubting. Be not then a doubter, but a believer. Draw continually on Christ and His fulness for this grace. If at any time you are beguiled away from it, return to it without delay; and betake yourself to it again just as you did at the first. To recover lost peace, go back to where you got it at first; begin your spiritual life all over again: get at once to the resting-place. Where sin has abounded, let grace much more abound. Do not go back to your feelings, or experiences, or evidences, in order to extract from them a renewal of your lost peace. Go straight back to the free love of God. You found peace in it at first; you will find peace in it to the last. This was the beginning of your confidence; let it be both last and first. This abounding grace, rightly understood, will not make you sin; it will not relax morality or make inconsistency a trifle. It will magnify sin and enhance its evil in your eyes. Your footing or 'standing' in grace (Romans 5:2) will be the strongest, as well as most blessed, that you can ever occupy. If your feet be 'shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace' (Ephesians 6:15), you will be able to 'stand' and to 'withstand'; not otherwise. Remember how Paul and Barnabas urged this upon the Jews of Antioch, 'persuading them to continue in the grace of God' (Acts 13:43; Galatians 5:4; Titus 2:11; 1 Peter 5:12).

03.02. KEEP THE CONSCIENCE CLEAN

CHAPTER 2 Keep The Conscience Clean When you first saw the cross, and understood the meaning of the blood, you got your conscience 'purged from dead works' (Hebrews 9:14); and it was this cleansing of the conscience that gave you peace. It was not that you ceased to be a sinner, or lost the consciousness of being one, but you had found something which pacified your conscience in a righteous way, and made you feel towards the law and the Lawgiver just as if you had never been guilty.

It is by keeping constantly before your eyes this blood of propitiation that you will keep your conscience clean and your soul at peace. It is this blood alone that can wipe off the continual sins that are coming across your conscience, and which, if not wiped off immediately, will effectually stain it, and cloud your peace. You know how the steel of the finest sword may be rusted by a drop of water. Yet if the water is not allowed to remain, but is wiped away as soon as it falls, it harms not the steel, and no rust ensues. If, however, through neglect or otherwise, the water is allowed to remain, rust will follow, destroying both the edge and brightness of the weapon. So it is with sin. The moment it falls upon the conscience, the blood must be applied; else dimness and doubting will be the consequence. Remember it is the blood, the blood alone; that can remove these.

If, when you sin, you do not go at once to this and be washed and pardoned, but betake yourself to anything else first, you will only make bad worse. If you shrink from going directly to Christ and His blood; if you try to slip gradually near in some roundabout way, as if you hoped, by the time you reach the fountain, to get quit of part of the sin, so as not to be quite so bad as at the moment when you committed it, you will not cleanse the conscience, but leave the burden and the stain just where they were. If you say, 'But I am so ruffled with the sin, so cast down and ashamed at the thought of what I have done, that I dare not go at once to the blood; I must pray or read myself into a better frame, and then I will go and be washed'; you are denying God's method of purging the conscience; you are undervaluing the blood; you are reverting to your old ways of self-righteousness; and you are preventing the restoration of lost peace; for you are putting something between your conscience and the blood.

Keep, then, the conscience clean by continual application to the blood; and you will find that this, instead of encouraging you to sin, will make you more ashamed and afraid of it, than if you had got quit of it in some self-righteous way of your own. What more likely to make you fear and hate it than being compelled to go with it constantly to God, and deal with Him directly about its pardon?

Cultivate a tender conscience; but beware of a diseased and morbid one. The former takes an honest, straightforward view of truth or duty, and acts accordingly. The latter, overlooking what is broad and great, is always on the hunt for trifles, quibbling and questioning about things of no importance. Thus a stiff Christianity is produced, an artificial religion, very unlike the erect but easy walk of one who possesses the liberty of Christ. Be natural, be simple, be easy in word and manner, lest you seem as one acting a part. Cherish a free spirit, a large heart, and a clear conscience, like the apostle, who, though he pitied the 'weaker brethren' (1 Corinthians 8:9-13),

refused to allow his liberty in Christ to be narrowed by another man’s morbid conscience. Certainly beware of little sins; but be sure that they are sins. Omit no little duties; but see that they are duties. A tender and tranquil conscience does not make a man crotchety or troublesome, far less morose and supercilious; it makes him frank, cheerful, brotherly, and obliging, in the family, in the shop, in the congregation, in the market-place, whether he be poor or rich; so that others cannot help seeing how pleasantly he goes out and comes in, ’eating his meat with gladness and singleness of heart’ (Acts 2:46), and so ’adorning the doctrine of God his Saviour in all things’ (Titus 2:10).

03.03. HOLD FAST THAT WHICH YOU HAVE RECEIVED

CHAPTER 3 Hold Fast That Which You Have Received

Beware of changeableness; be not carried about with diverse and strange doctrines: it is a bad sign of a man when he is frequently shifting his ground and adopting new opinions. 'It is a good thing that the heart be established with grace' (Hebrews 13:9); and it is good to hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end (Hebrews 3:14). The 'righteousness of God' was that which you began with, and you found it an ample covering and a sufficient resting-place. God's reckoning your sin to Christ, and His righteousness to you was joy and peace, when you found the burden of your grief too great for you to bear. Never let go your hold of this truth. Continue to rejoice in this blessed exchange. Let the righteousness of the Righteous One be your daily covering. When a man gets wearied of what is old, and is always catching hold of what is new, it looks as if he had been beguiled from the simplicity that is in Christ, and had lost his relish for the things of Christ; nay, almost as if he had never been 'rooted and grounded in love.' Love of novelties has been the shipwreck of many a soul. 'Some new thing' is the craving not of the men of Athens only, but of many in the Church of God. They are restless; and are carried about with diverse and strange doctrines. Old truths get tame and stale (Ephesians 4:14; Hebrews 13:9; 1 John 4:1). Take care of 'itching ears' (2 Timothy 4:3), and of 'heaping to yourselves teachers' (2 Timothy 4:3).

Along with this we often see the love of controversy, which is almost equally pernicious, even when it takes the side of truth. The man who likes better to be fighting about his food than eating it, is likely to remain lean enough. Disputes, like offences, must sometimes come; but, like David's 'sharp razor' (Psalms 52:2), they 'work deceitfully,' and are difficult to handle safely. They often eat out love, even when they do not destroy faith. Yet cleave to the truth; nay, if error does assail you, 'contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints'; 'that which ye have already, hold fast, that no man take thy crown.' Satan, either as the prince of darkness or as an angel of light, resist, 'steadfast in the faith.' Don't dally with error, and don't tamper with truth. 'Buy the truth' (Proverbs 23:23) at any price; but 'sell it not' for all the gold and silver on earth. And while you are on your guard against errors and changes, beware of excitement. The 'mind that was in Christ' is calm, not restless and ruffled; the work of the Spirit is to calm, not to excite; and the tendency of the Gospel, as well as of all Bible truth, is to calm, not to agitate. Do not use strong language, and startling phrases, and wild-images, which are fitted to make others shudder. The Spirit of God is not in the fire, or the earthquake, or the hurricane; but in the still, small voice. Beware of sensationalism either in religious experience, or in the statement of facts, or in the exposition of truth. That which is merely emotional or sentimental, not only dies down, but often leaves insensibility, if not a seared conscience behind it. The Master was always calm: calmness is true strength, or at least it is the result of strength. As an overpowering gale keeps down the waters over which it is rushing, so true intensity of spiritual feeling does not show itself by loud vociferations, but by the depth and solemnity of the calm which it diffuses through the soul, and utters in brief-spoken words of tranquil simplicity.

Yet do not believe all that you hear from worldly men or half-hearted Christians about the 'excitement' attending revivals.

Conversion is not excitement; zeal is not excitement; love for souls is not excitement; trembling under the word is not excitement; and even if there be some excitement at 'revival meetings,' better that it should be so than that souls should perish. There is more excitement in the theatre and the ball-room, or the concert, or the political meeting, or the parliamentary election, or even what is called the 'quiet evening party.' Yet men do not complain of these, nor get angry at them. By all means be calm; but don't suppose that all excitement is sin or hypocrisy. Excitement is not good; but some things are worse than even this. A dull and sleepy Christianity is worse—much worse; a stiff and frozen formalism is worse—much worse; an easy-minded worldly religion is worse—much worse. It is a good thing to be 'zealously affected always' (Galatians 4:18); and to be 'fervent in spirit' (Romans 12:11). 'Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might' (Ecclesiastes 9:10). If it is worth doing at all, do it well; throw your soul into it, 'do it heartily' (Colossians 3:23).

03.04. DEAL HONESTLY WITH YOURSELVES

CHAPTER 4 Deal Honestly With Yourselves ’If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged’

(1 Corinthians 11:31); i.e. if we would but faithfully judge ourselves, we should be spared the infliction of divine chastisements. But we are not faithful to our own souls. We deal with a slack hand in things pertaining to our own sins, and let things go unreproved and uncondemned in ourselves which we are sharp enough to discover and rebuke in others. Deal honestly with every part of your daily life; in regard to duty, or trial, or sacrifice, or self•denial, or forbearance with others. Beware of one-sidedness or self•partiality—in truth, in experience, or in action. Remember that all things have two sides: a tender conscience and a well-balanced mind will deal with both. Deal honestly with conscience in all things, small and great, spiritual or temporal; deal honestly with the Church of God, and with the brethren; deal honestly with God—Father, Son, and Spirit.

Strange that in spiritual things we should try to cheat ourselves as well as others! Yet so it is. We are loath to take the worst view of our own case; to think evil of ourselves; to act the stern censor in regard to our own omissions and commissions. We have few excuses for others, many for ourselves; evils that seem monstrous in others are trifles in us. When looking at others, we use a microscope; at ourselves, we either shut our eyes or put on a veil. This dishonest dealing is very pernicious; this ’covering of sin’ is destructive both of peace and progress. And when we remember that all dishonest dealing with ourselves is in reality dishonest dealing with God, the evil is seen to be the more hateful and the more inexcusable (Hosea 11:12). Be honest and upright before God and man; with your own conscience; with the blood of sprinkling; and with that law which is ’holy, and just, and good.’ Don’t flatter your own heart, nor tell a lie to conscience, nor think to deceive God (Psalms 101:7; Jeremiah 9:6; Jeremiah 17:9; Galatians 6:3; James 1:22; 1 John 1:8).

03.05. KEEP COMPANY WITH GOD, AND WITH THE

CHAPTER 5 Keep Company With God, And With The People Of God

Intimacy with God is the very essence of religion, and the foundation of discipleship. It is in intercourse with Father, Son, and Spirit that the most real parts of our lives are lived; and all parts that are not lived in fellowship with Him, 'in whom we live, and move, and have our being,' are unreal, untrue, unsuccessful, and unsatisfying. The understanding of doctrine is one thing, and intimacy with God is another. They ought always to go together; but they are often seen asunder; and, when there is the former without the latter, there is a hard, proud, hollow religion. Get your teaching from God (Job 36:22; Jeremiah 23:30); take your doctrine from His lips; learn truth upon your knees. Beware of opinions and speculations: they become idols, and nourish pride of intellect; they furnish no food to the soul; they make you sapless and heartless; they are like winter frost-work on your windowpane, shutting out the warm sun.

Let God be your companion, your bosom-friend, your instructor, your counselor. Take Him into the closet with you, into the study, into the shop, into the market-place, into the railway carriage, into the boat. When you make a feast and call guests, invite Him as one of them. He is always willing to come; and there is no company like His. When you are in perplexity, and are taking advice from friends, let Him be one of your 'friends in counsel.' When you feel lonely, make Him the 'companion of your solitude.' And if you are known to be one given to the divine companionship, you will be saved from much idle and wasteful society and conversation. You will not feel at home with worldly men, nor they with you. You will not choose the half-and-half Christian, or the formalist, or the servant of two masters, for your friend; nor will any of these seek your fellowship. When thrown into worldly society, from your business or your relationships, as you may sometimes be, do not cease to be the Christian; nor try to make excuses for the worldliness of those with whom you are obliged to associate; for that is just making excuses for yourself in associating with them. Do not try to make yourself or them believe that they are religious when they are not; but show them whose disciples you are; not necessarily in words, but by a line of conduct more expressive and efficacious than words. Do not conform to the world in order to please men or to save yourself from their taunt or jest. Be not afraid to ask a blessing at meals, or to have family worship, or to enter into religious conversation, because a worldly man is present.

Keep constant company with the great God of heaven and earth; and let every other companionship be regulated by His. Go where you please, if you can take Him with you; go nowhere if He cannot be admitted, or if you are obliged for the time to conceal or disguise your divine discipleship. When Joseph went down to Egypt, he took the young child with him (Matthew 2:21); so, wherever you go, take the young child with you.

Beware of declension in prayer. Whenever you feel the closet becoming a dull place, you may be sure something is wrong. Backsliding has begun. Go straight to God that He may 'heal it' (Hosea 14:4). Do not trifle with it; nor resort to other expedients to relieve the dullness, such as shortening the time, or getting some lively religious books to take off the weariness; go at once to the Great

Quickener with the cry, 'Quicken us, and we will call on Thy name' (Psalms 80:18).

Beware of going through prayer in a careless or perfunctory way, like a hireling doing his work in order to get done with it. 'Pray in the Holy Ghost' (Jude 1:20). 'Pray without ceasing.' Pray with honest fervour and simple faith, as men who really want what they ask for, and expect to get it all. Few things tend more to deaden the soul, to harden the heart, to drive out spirituality, than cold, formal prayer. It will eat as doth a canker. Dread it and shun it. Do not mock God by asking what you don't want, or by pretending to desire what you don't care for. 'The end of all things is at hand; be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer' (1 Peter 4:7). Be much alone with God. Do not put Him off with a quarter of an hour morning and evening. Take time to get thoroughly acquainted. Converse over everything with Him. Unbosom yourself wholly—every thought, feeling, wish, plan, doubt—to Him. He wants converse with His creatures; shall His creatures not want converse with Him? He wants, not merely to be on 'good terms' with you, if one may use man's phrase, but to be intimate; shall you decline the intimacy, and be satisfied with mere acquaintance? What! intimate with the world, with friends, with neighbours, with politicians, with philosophers, with naturalists, or with poets; but not with God! That would look ill indeed. Folly, to prefer the clay to the potter, the marble to the sculptor, this little earth and its lesser creatures to the mighty Maker of the universe, the great 'All and in all!' Do not shrink from being alone. Much of a true man's true life must be so spent. David Brainerd thus writes:—'My state of solitude does not make the hours hang heavy upon my hands. Oh, what reason of thankfulness have I on account of this retirement! I find that I do not, and it seems I cannot, lead a Christian life when I am abroad, and cannot spend time in devotion, in conversation, and serious meditation, as I should do. These weeks that I am obliged now to be from home, in order to learn the Indian tongue, are mostly spent in perplexity and barrenness, without much relish of divine things; and I feel myself a stranger at the throne of grace for want of a more frequent and continued retirement.' Do not suppose that such retirement for divine converse will hinder work. It will greatly help it. Much private fellowship with God will give you sevenfold success. Pray much if you would work much; and if you want to work more, pray more. Luther used to say, when an unusual press of business came upon him, 'I must pray more to-day.' Be like him in the day of work or trial. Do not think that mere working will keep you right or set you right. The watch won't go till the spring is mended. Work will do nothing for you till you have gone to God for a working heart. Trying to work yourself into a better frame of feeling is not only hopeless, but injurious. You say, I want to feel more and to love more. It is well. But you can't work yourself into these. I do not say to any one who feels his coldness, 'Go and work.' Work, if done heartlessly, will only make you colder. You must go straight to Jesus with that cold heart, and warm it at His cross; then work will be at once a necessity, a delight, and a success.

03.06. STUDY THE BIBLE

CHAPTER 6

Study The Bible Do not skim it or read it, but study it, every word of it; study the whole Bible, Old Testament and New; not your favourite chapters merely, but the complete Word of God from beginning to end. Do not trouble yourself with commentators; they may be of use if kept in their place, but they are not your guides; your guide is 'the Interpreter,' the one among a thousand (Job 33:23), who will lead you into all truth, and keep you from all error. Not that you are to read no book but the Bible. All that is true and good is worth the reading, if you have time for it; and all, if properly used, will help you in your study of the Scriptures. A Christian does not shut his eyes to the natural scenes of beauty spread around him. He does not cease to admire the hills, or plains, or rivers, or forests of earth, because he has learned to love the God that made them; nor does he turn away from books of science or true poetry, because he has discovered one book truer, more precious, and more poetical than all the rest together. Besides, the soul can no more continue in one posture than the body. The eye must be relieved by variety of objects and the limbs by motion; so must the soul by change of subject and position. 'All truth is precious, though not all divine.' In so far, then, as time allows or opportunity presents, let us 'seek and search out by word concerning all things that are done under heaven.' But let the Bible be to us the book of books, the one book in all the world, whose every wisdom is truth, and whose every verse is wisdom. In studying it, be sure to take it for what it really is, the revelation of the thoughts of God given us in the words of God. Were it only the book of divine thoughts and human words, it would profit little, for we never could be sure whether the words really represented the thoughts; nay, we might be quite sure that man would fail in his words when attempting to embody divine thoughts; and that, therefore, if we have only man's words, that is, man's translation of the divine thoughts, we shall have one of the poorest and most incorrect of all books, just as we should have in the case of Homer or Plato done into English by a first year's schoolboy. But, knowing that we have divine thoughts embodied in divine words, through the inspiration of an unerring translator, we sit down to the study of the heavenly volume, assured that we shall find in all its teachings the perfection of wisdom, and in its language the most accurate expression of that wisdom that the finite speech of man can utter.

Every word of God is as perfect as it is pure (Psalms 19:7; Psalms 12:6). Let us read and re-read the Scriptures, meditating on them day and night. They never grow old, they never lose their sap, they never run dry. Though it is right and profitable, as I have said, to read other books, if they are true and good, yet beware of reading too many. Do not let man's book thrust God's book into a corner. Do not let commentaries smother the text; nor let the true and the good shut out the truer and the better.

Specially beware of light reading. Shun novels; they are the literary curse of the age; they are to the soul what ardent spirits are to the body. If you be a parent, keep novels out of the way of your children. But whether you be a parent or not, neither read them yourself, nor set an example of

novel-reading to others. Don’t let novels lie on your table, or be seen in your hand, even in a railway carriage. The ’light reading for the rail’ has done deep injury to many a young man and woman. The light literature of the day is working a world of harm; vitiating the taste of the young, enervating their minds, unfitting them for life’s plain work, eating out their love of the Bible, teaching them a false morality, and creating in the soul an unreal standard of truth, and beauty, and love. Don’t be too fond of the newspaper. Yet read it, that you may know both what man is doing and what God is doing; and extract out of all you read matter for thought and prayer. Avoid works which jest with what is right or wrong, lest you unconsciously adopt a false test of truth and duty, namely, ridicule, and so become afraid to do right for right’s sake alone; dreading the world’s sneer, and undervaluing a good conscience and the approving smile of God. Let your reading be always select; and whatever you read, begin with seeking God’s blessing on it. But see that your relish for the Bible be above every other enjoyment, and the moment you begin to feel greater relish for any other book, lay it down till you have sought deliverance from such a snare, and obtained from the Holy Spirit an intenser relish, a keener appetite for the Word of God (Jeremiah 15:16; Psalms 19:7-10).

03.07. TAKE HEED TO YOUR STEPS

CHAPTER 7 Take Heed To Your Steps

Beware, not merely of falling, but of stumbling. 'Walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise'; like men in an enemy's country, or like travellers climbing a hill, slippery with ice, and terrible with precipices, where every step may be a fall, and every fall a plunge into a chasm. Beware of little slips, slight inconsistencies, as they are called; they are the beginning of all backsliding, and they are in themselves evil, as well as hateful to God. Keep your garments undefiled (Revelation 3:4); beware of small spots as well as larger stains or rents; and the moment you discover any speck, however small, go wash in the fountain, that your 'garments may be always white,' and so pleasing in the eyes of Him, whose you are, and whom you serve. 'Crucify the flesh, with its affections and lusts' (Galatians 5:24). 'Mortify your members which are upon the earth' (Colossians 3:5).

Remember the Lord's words to His Church, 'Thou hast a few names, even in Sardis, which have not defiled their garments, and they shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy.' Stand aloof from the world's gaiety, and be jealous of what are called 'harmless amusements.' I do not condemn all amusements, but I ask that they should be useful and profitable, not merely harmless. Dancing and card-playing are the world's devices for killing time. They are bits of the world and the world's ways which will ensnare your feet and lead you away from the cross. Let them alone. Keep away from the ball-room, the opera, the oratorio, the theatre. Dress, finery, and display, are deadly snares. Put away levity and frivolity; all silly conversation, or gossip; remembering the apostle's words, 'Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting which are not convenient' (Ephesians 5:4); and, 'Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace to the hearers; and grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption' (Ephesians 4:29-30).

'Flee youthful lusts,' if you be young men or women; flee all lusts, whether you be young or old. Shun light company, and take no pleasure in the conversation of 'vain persons.' 'Abstain from all appearance of evil.' Be thou a Christian in little things as well as great. Dread little sins, little errors, little omissions of duty. Beware of false steps; and if betrayed into one, retrace it soon as discovered. If persevered in, the consequences may be months of sorrow. That cherished sin, 'twill cost thee dear.

Remember, as a French writer remarks, that, sooner or later, 'every crown of flowers becomes a crown of thorns.'

Redeem the time: much of your progress depends on this. Be men of 'method and punctuality'; waste no moments; have always something to do, and do it; use up the little spaces of life, the little intervals between engagements. I knew a friend who, one winter, read through some five or six octavo volumes, by making use of the brief interval between family worship and breakfast. Pack up your life well; your trunk will contain twice as much if well packed; attend, then, to the packing of each day and hour. You may save years by this. How many have 'slipped' and 'fallen' through

idleness! How many begin a score of things and end nothing, 'dawdle' away their morning or their evening hours, sleep longer than is needful, trifle through their duties, hurrying about from work to work, or from book to book, or from meeting to meeting, instead of being calm, methodical, energetic! Thus life is loitered away, and each sun sets upon twelve wasted hours, and an uneasy, dissatisfied conscience. Be punctual and regular in all duties and engagements. Keep no man waiting. Be honest as to time, both with yourselves and others, lest you get into a state of chronic flurry and excitement; so destructive of peace and progress; so grieving to the Spirit, whose very nature is calmness and rest.

These may seem small things, but they are the roots of great. Resist beginnings. 'Seize time by the forelock.' Live while you live. Watch your steps; count your minutes; live as men who are pressing on to a kingdom, and who fear, not only open apostasy, but the smallest measure of coming short, the slightest stain upon the garment of a saint, the faintest slur upon the name of a disciple (Hebrews 4:1; Jude 1:23).

Watch against special sins; or things that have 'the appearance of evil'; or things that lead into evil, and discredit 'that worthy name by which you are called' (1 Thessalonians 5:22; James 2:7). If you have a bad temper, watch against that. If you have a rude way of speech, a cold, distant, repulsive manner, or are ill to please, look well to these, and 'be courteous' (1 Peter 3:8). If you are covetous in disposition, or shabby in your dwellings, or niggardly in your givings, take care; 'the love of money is the root of all evil.' If you are slovenly in your dress, or untidy in your person, or unpolite in your demeanour, set yourself to rectify these blemishes. If you are lazy, luxurious, given to the good things of this life, or selfish, disobliging, unneighbourly, rude, blunt, unbrotherly, look to your Pattern, and see if these things were in Him. If you are fickle, and frivolous, and flippant, greedy of jokes, carried away with immoderate laughter, be upon your guard. If you are romantic and sentimental, take care lest the indulgence of such a temperament should land you in peevishness, self-pity, and a cowardly avoidance of the common duties of life. If you are censorious, captious, fault-finding, proud, domineering, supercilious, and sulky, get the unclean spirit cast out forthwith. If you be a gossip, or a gadabout, or a busy-body in other men's matters, take care, for at such crevices Satan creeps in. If you be secretive and cunning, with a certain littleness or slyness in your nature, which never lets you forget your own interests, beware! Christ was not such; Paul was not such. Be frank, open, manly. Remember the summing-up of David's picture of the blessed man, 'in whose spirit there is no guile' (Psalms 32:2). Be not 'Jacob,' a man of guile; but Israel, a noble prince—'an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile' (John 1:48).

Walk 'straight up,' along the path of life, like a forgiven man, with God at your side (Genesis 5:24, Genesis 6:9), and with the joy of the Lord for your strength (Nehemiah 8:9; Ecclesiastes 9:7); doing heartily your daily work, whether sacred or common, with an unshaded brow and an earnest but cheerful face. In short, watch against your old self at every point. Do not evade these remarks by saying that some of the things spoken of are trifles, and beneath notice. Nothing should be too small for a Christian to notice, either of right or wrong. Remember the Master's words about denying self—every part of self; be not a servant of self, or a worshipper of self, or a 'lover of self' (2 Timothy 3:1-2) in any form. Take up your cross, and follow your Lord (Matthew 16:24); as it is written, 'Even Christ pleased not Himself' (Romans 15:3).

03.08. PUT AWAY BOASTFULNESS AND LOVE OF PRAISE

CHAPTER 8 Put Away Boastfulness And Love Of Praise

God’s aim in all His doings of grace is to ’hide pride from man’; to hinder boasting; to keep the sinner humble. All that the old Christian can say is, ’By the grace of God I am what I am’; and the youngest has no other confidence or boast. All ’confidence in the flesh’ (Php 3:1, Php 3:3), all trust in self, all reliance on the creature, are set aside by that great work of the Divine Substitute, who did all for us, and left us nothing to do, out of which it would be possible to extract a boast (2 Corinthians 12:9; Galatians 6:14; Isaiah 41:16; Isaiah 45:25). The sinner’s first act of believing is his consenting to be treated as a sinner, and simply as such; indebted for nothing to himself, in any shape or in any sense, but wholly to God and to His free love, in Christ Jesus our Lord. This was the laying down of all pride and boastfulness. Then he knew the meaning of the words, ’Glory ye in His holy name’ (1 Chronicles 16:10); for the name in which he then began to glory was the name revealed in Exodus (Exodus 34:6); the name that assured him of the love of that God with whom he had to do.

Self was set aside, and Christ came in, to do and to be all that self had hitherto been supposed to be and to do. What things before were gain to us, these we then counted loss for Christ; and we ceased for ever to glory in the flesh, or to be debtors to anything but the blood and righteousness of the Son of God. We learned to say, ’God forbid that we should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ’ (Galatians 6:14).

We ceased to work for salvation, for we had got it without working; and we had got it, not in order that we might indulge in sin because grace abounded, but in order that, having our legal bonds all loosed and our prison opened, we might henceforth serve God with our whole heart and soul. We thus became debtors, ’not to the flesh, to live after the flesh’ (Romans 8:12);—for the flesh had done nothing for us, and we owed it nothing;—but debtors to God and to His love: not to self or the old man, for these had brought us only sin and evil; but to Jesus Christ and His precious blood: not to law, for it only condemned us, and held us in bondage; but to that ’free Spirit’ (Psalms 51:12), that ’good Spirit’ (Nehemiah 9:20), that ’Spirit of life which makes us free from the law of sin and death’ (Romans 8:2). Thus everything that could cause pride was swept away at the outset; and that not by law, but by the very necessity of the case, by the very nature of that salvation which was brought to us; not through anything which we either could or could not do, but through the love, and work, and blood of another. Let us fling away self-esteem and high-mindedness, for it is the very essence of unbelief, as the prophet told Israel, ’Hear ye, and give ear; be not proud, for the Lord hath spoken’ (Jeremiah 13:15). Be meek, be poor in spirit, be humble; be teachable, be gentle, and easy to be entreated; putting away all high thoughts and lofty imaginations, either about what we are or what we can do; content to take the obscurest corner and the lowest seat; and this, not to indulge in a false lowliness, or in ’the pride that apes humility,’ feeding our vanity with the thought that we are martyrs, and puffing up our fleshly mind with the idea of our wonderful condescension, or by brooding over our supposed wrongs and trials. Let us be truly humble, as

was the Son of God: content to live unknown, and to do our work unnoticed, as a work not for the eye of man, but of God.

Put away all envy, and jealousy of others, as well as all malice and evil-speaking (Ephesians 4:31). Love to hear of a brother's prosperity. Don't grudge him a few words of honest praise; nor try maliciously to turn the edge of it, by an envious 'but,' or a grave silence, or a wise shake of the head; unless you have very special reasons for disallowing the eulogy. Remember that Solomon's 'wicked man' is one that 'winketh with his eyes, and speaketh with his feet, and teacheth with his fingers' (Proverbs 6:13; Proverbs 10:10). Have a care of detraction and backbiting; speak of a person's faults only to himself and to God. Be not censorious or uncharitable, in thought or word. Inconsistent Christians are often more censorious than the world; for they need to apologize to themselves for their inconsistencies by detracting from the excellencies of those who are more consistent than themselves, and by trying to believe that good men are no better than others.

Some love to speak; and show their pride in this way, both in private and in public. If you are young, and newly led out of your former ignorance, beware of this snare. Remember Paul's advice—'Not a novice [that is, one newly converted], lest being lifted up with pride, he fall into condemnation and the snare of the devil' (1 Timothy 3:6). If you have gifts, use them quietly and modestly, not ostentatiously. Do not be forward to tell your experience, or give your opinion, or to take rank above your seniors. Do not think that all zeal or wisdom is confined to you and a few about you. Do not condemn others because they don't go quite along with you in all things; nor speak of them as cold, and dead, and unspiritual. Do not think that no one cares for souls but yourselves; that no one can state the gospel or pray like you; or that God is not likely to bless any one so much as you. Be lowly; and show this, not by always speaking evil of yourselves to others, or by using the conceited phrase 'in my humble opinion' (as some do in order to show their humility), but by not speaking of yourselves at all. Keep self in the background, and don't say or do anything that looks like baiting your hook for a little praise.

Some love to rule and manage. So did Diotrephes (3 John 1:9). They are not happy, unless they are at the head of everything—the originators of all plans, the presidents of societies, the speakers at meetings. Beware of this love of pre-eminence, as ruinous to your own soul and injurious to the Church of God. If God puts work into your hands, do it; and do it faithfully, through good report or bad report. Bear to be contradicted and spoken against. Do not fret when things go wrong with you or your schemes; nor get 'petted' like a spoilt child when you don't get your own way; nor fling up everything in disgust when you happen to be thwarted. Do not take yourself for Solomon, or suppose that wisdom will die with you (Job 12:2). If called to preside or manage, do it; and do it with energy and authority, as one who has a trust to fulfil. 'But mind not high things' (Romans 12:16); 'Seek not great things for thyself' (Jeremiah 45:5); 'He that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve' (Luke 22:26); 'All of you be subject one to another' (1 Peter 5:5); 'In honour preferring one another' (Romans 12:10).

Yet be discriminating. Do not call error truth for the sake of charity. Do not praise earnest men merely because they are earnest. To be earnest in truth is one thing; to be earnest in error is another. The first is blessed, not so much because of the earnestness, but because of the truth; the second is hateful to God, and ought to be shunned by you. Remember how the Lord Jesus from heaven spoke concerning error: 'which thing I hate' (Revelation 2:6-15; 1 Timothy 6:4-5).

True spiritual discernment is much lost sight of as a real Christian grace; discernment between the evil and the good, the false and the true. 'Beloved, believe not every spirit; but try the spirits whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world' (1 John 4:1). This 'discernment,' which belongs to every one who is taught of God, is the very opposite of that which is called in our day by the boastful name of 'liberality.' Spiritual discernment and 'liberal thought' have little in common with each other. 'Abhor that which is evil, cleave to that which is good' (Romans 12:9). The 'liberality which puts bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter' (Isaiah 5:20), is a very different thing from the 'charity which thinketh no evil' (1 Corinthians 13:5). Truth is a mighty thing in the eyes of God, whatever it may be in those of men. All error is, more or less, whether directly or indirectly, a misrepresentation of God's character, and a subversion of His revelation (Revelation 22:18-19).

03.09. WATCH AGAINST SATAN

CHAPTER 9 Watch Against Satan

He is above all others your enemy; he, the 'old serpent,' the 'dragon,' the 'liar and murderer' from the beginning. It is with him that you are to fight. 'For we wrestle not against flesh and blood [that is, earthly foes, men like ourselves], but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places' (Ephesians 6:12). The world tries to bewitch and beguile us; but it is the 'god of this world,' the 'prince of this world,' the 'prince of the power of the air,' that so especially lays snares for us, making use of the world's beauty, and pleasure, and vanity for leading us captive at his will. 'O how [as one has written] are thou entrenched, O Satan—how art thou entrenched in thy beautiful deceptions; thou hast played thy part well in these last days; thou art all but the Holy One, thou consummate deceiver!' It is this that gives to the ballroom, and the dance, and the theatre, and the voluptuous music their special power to harm; for these are Satan's baits and nets, by means of which he allures the unwary, and leads back the believer to unbelieving ground, disarming our watchfulness, dazzling our vision, reviving our worldliness, and perhaps, for a season, lulling us wholly asleep. We know that through his successful wiles, perilous times are to come, when many, while lovers of self, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasure, are still to have the 'form of godliness' (2 Timothy 3:1-4); and we know that the last days are to be like the days of Noah and Lot (Luke 17:26-32), days of revelling, and banqueting, and luxury. Let us be wary, lest, standing as we do on the edge of these days, we be drawn away into the sins of an age led captive by Satan at his will.

Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Fight the good fight of faith against him and his hosts. Watch unto prayer. 'Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour' (1 Peter 5:8). In these last days he will lay his snares more cunningly than ever, to deceive, if it were possible, the very elect. He is coming down, having great wrath, because he knoweth he hath but a short time (Revelation 12:12).

03.10. BEWARE OF ONE-SIDED TRUTH

CHAPTER 10 Beware Of One-Sided Truth

There are few things more dangerous or more likely to lead into open error. Take care, for instance, of misunderstanding what the Scripture says about the old man and the new man, the flesh and the spirit, and so making void your own personal responsibility for all you say and do, and also setting aside the necessity for the blood of Christ, as daily needed for our whole person, and the power of the Spirit, as needed constantly for our whole being, as long as we live. Our Lord and His apostles use many figures to show the greatness of the change produced by being begotten again. They speak of this change as being an actual indwelling of Christ Himself personally. 'Christ in you, the hope of glory' (Colossians 1:27); 'Christ liveth in me' (Galatians 2:20); that 'Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith' (Ephesians 3:17). But this living and indwelling of Christ does not make us the same as Christ, or Christ the same as we; nor does it make the blood and the Spirit less necessary. It does not make Christ responsible for our sins, nor does it make us sinless. It does not lead us to say: You need not care what you do, for Christ dwells in you, and all you do is His doing.

Again, on the other hand, Scripture speaks of our 'being in Christ' (2 Corinthians 5:17; 1 Corinthians 1:30). But our being in Christ does not mean that we (that is, our whole man, body, soul, and spirit) are actually put into Christ as water is put into a vessel. This would destroy the sense; and besides, it would either make us sinless, or it would make Christ the author of our sins, and the doer of all that we do. These figures do mean that there is such a wonderful nearness between Christ and us, such a living connection, that we receive His power and fulness; but they do not mean that we and Christ are no longer two persons, but one,—no longer two bodies, but one—no longer two souls, but one.

Again, in the Old Testament the Holy Spirit says, 'A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh' (Ezekiel 36:26). This does not mean that an actual stone, whether of granite or marble, is taken out of us, and an actual piece of flesh (created in heaven) is inserted instead. Nor does it mean that the whole of our old nature is at once taken out of us, leaving no part behind, and that a complete new nature is substituted, so that there shall be absolutely nothing in us but what is perfect and divine. If this be the meaning of the figure, then every conversion must be the passing into instantaneous perfection, no fragment of the old nature being left behind, and no feature of the new nature being left unperfected or undeveloped. Thus there could be no conflict, no difficulty, no declension, no possibility of backsliding. The change thus figured to us is certainly a very great one, but it cannot mean the changing of one person into another, nor the transformation of a man into an angel.

Again, our Lord says to Nicodemus, 'Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God' (John 3:3). Nicodemus took Him literally, and so destroyed the whole meaning of this divine symbol. Those in our day who maintain that actually and literally a new created thing is dropped

into us at conversion, which they call the new man, are saying exactly what Nicodemus said, 'Can a man enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born?' The new birth does not mean a new person. Christ did not mean that Nicodemus was no longer to be Nicodemus, or that Peter was no longer to be Peter, after conversion; but that such a spiritual work was to take place as to change their whole spiritual nature and character, while leaving them still Nicodemus and Peter, with all their original and proper personalities and humanities. Our Lord does not say, Except a part of a man is born again; but, Except a man is born again. The change may not be perfect at first, but it affects the whole man: so that he cannot say of himself, A part of me is born again, and a part of me is not born again; but, I am born again.

Connected with this there are the statements regarding the new creature: 'If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature' (or, 'there is a new creation'): 'old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new' (2 Corinthians 5:17). It is not that a new creature has been put into a man, like new wine into old vessels; but the whole man is the new creature, and is regarded as such by God from the day of his being born again. That the transformation is perfect and complete from the outset, the figure does not imply; that it will one day be all that is thus symbolized, it assures us beyond a doubt. So with regard to the flesh and the spirit, the old man and the new. The flesh is the man (call him Peter or Paul), with the remnants of his former self about him; the spirit is the same man (it may be Peter or Paul), with the new life unfolding itself within him. The figure names two men, the old and the new; but we are not, like Nicodemus, to take the words in a carnal or ultraliteral sense; for, after all, the man is but one all the while. For thus the apostle speaks: 'I am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I but Christ liveth in me' (Galatians 2:19-20). He does not say here, My old man is dead, but, I myself am dead; not, My old man is crucified, but, I myself am crucified; and this same person (I myself) who is dead and crucified still liveth. He does not say, one section of me is dead, and another is living; but, I myself am dead, and I myself am living: I, the same person, am both a dead and a living man. This is the real sense of the figure. This conflict, not between two persons, but between two parts (or conditions) of one person, is that which the apostle brings out in Romans 7:1-25 : 'I was alive...I died...I am carnal, sold under sin...That which I do I allow not...what I would, that do I not...what I hate, that do I...In me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing...to will is present with me; how to perform I find not...The good that I would I do not: the evil which I would not, that I do...It is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me...When I would do good, evil is present with me...I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see another law in my members...Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?' It is Paul himself, speaking for himself, speaking as one delighting in the law of God, that utters these strange things, these seeming contradictions. It is not a perfect part of Paul fighting against an imperfect part of Paul; but it is Paul himself fighting against Paul himself. The one Paul, the one person, has two conflicting elements within him, each striving for the mastery. 'The inward man,' says he, 'is renewed day by day' (2 Corinthians 4:16). This process of daily renewal is that which goes on within him. The light and the darkness struggle together, but the light conquers, and shines more and more unto the perfect day.

Beware specially of this one-sidedness in everything connected with Christ Himself. Faith connects us with the Person of Christ in all its parts and aspects. It connects us with the whole work of Christ from the cradle to the throne, from Bethlehem to the heaven of heavens. It connects

us with His birth, His life, His death, His burial, His resurrection, His ascension and glory. Out of all these it draws life and strength. Life in a crucified Christ, life in a risen Christ, life in a glorified Christ,—this is the heritage of faith. Out of death, the death of that cross where He was crucified through weakness, come life and power to us; and down from the throne on which He now sits, the possessor and dispenser of that Spirit of promise, these same blessings come. In the cross is power. In the resurrection is power. In the throne of that glory there is power. It is as the glorified Christ (John 7:39) that He has received for us the Spirit with all His gifts (Psalms 68:18; Ephesians 4:7-13). It is with the glorified Christ that we are linked by faith, for blessing, for power, for life, for consolation. 'Because I live, ye shall live also.'

03.11. DO SOMETHING FOR GOD

CHAPTER 11 Do Something For God

You were neither born nor re-born for yourselves alone. You may not be able to do much, but do something; work while it is day. You may not be able to give much, but give something; according to your ability, remembering that the Lord loveth a cheerful giver. Take heed, and beware of covetousness; for the love of money is the root of all evil. Whenever worldliness comes in, in any shape, whether it be love of money or love of pleasure, you cease to be faithful to Christ, and are trying to serve both God and mammon. Do something, then, for God, while time lasts. It may not be long; for the day goeth away, and the shadows of evening are stretched out. Do something every day. Work, and throw your heart into the work. Work joyfully and with a right good will, as men who love both their work and their master. Be not weary in well-doing. Work, and work in faith. Work in love, and patience, and hope. Don't shrink from hard labour or disagreeable duties, or a post trying to flesh and blood. 'Endure hardness, as a good soldier in Jesus Christ' (2 Timothy 2:3). Be steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord (1 Corinthians 15:58). Don't fold your hands, or lay aside your staff, or sheathe your sword. Don't give way to slothfulness and flesh-pleasing, saying to yourselves, 'I can get to heaven without working.' Your gifts may be small, your time not much, your opportunities few; but work, and do it quietly, without bustle, or self-importance, not as pleasing men, but God; not seeking the honour that cometh from men, but that which cometh from God. The day of honour is coming, and the Master's 'Well done' will make up for all hardship and labour here. When the Son of man shall come in His glory, with all His holy angels, and when He shall sit upon the throne of His glory, it will be blessed to be set upon His right hand, and acknowledged as those who have fed Him, and clothed and visited Him in prison; and it would be a bitter thing, indeed, to be 'saved so as by fire,' namely: barely saved, and no more; saved (if such a thing can be thought of) without doing anything for Him that saved us; having given Him no water when He was thirsty, no food when He was hungry, no clothes when He was naked, and when in prison having never once come nigh Him.

03.12. LIVE WAITING FOR YOUR LORD

CHAPTER 12 Live Waiting For Your Lord

He that loves Christ will long to see Him, and will not be content with the interviews which faith gives. The lover seeks the absent loved one, the wife the husband, the child the mother; so do you your Lord. It is not enough that you can communicate with Him daily by the epistles which faith brings and carries; you must see Him face to face, otherwise there is a blank in your life, a void in your existence, a cloud over your love, and a faltering in your song. The saved one desires to meet his Saviour, and feels that his joy must be imperfect till then. It is the mark of a disciple that he 'waits for the Son of God from heaven' (1 Thessalonians 1:10); that he loves, looks for, longs for the appearance of Christ. Let this mark be seen on you; and be like the Corinthian saints, of whom it was told by their apostle, 'Ye come behind in no gift, waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ' (1 Corinthians 1:7). 'Gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ' (1 Peter 1:13).

03.13. THE LORD OUR GOD

CHAPTER 13 The Lord Our God

'I am the Lord your God,' was God's greeting of love to Israel (Leviticus 11:44); it is no less now His salutation of grace to every one who has believed on the name of His Son, Christ Jesus. God becomes our God the moment that we receive His testimony of His beloved Son. This new relationship between God and us, in virtue of which He calls us His, and we call Him ours, is the simple result of a believed gospel.

If any one reading these lines is led to ask, How may I become a son? We answer in the words of truth, 'He that believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God.' Nothing less than believing can bring about this sonship; and nothing more is needed. The joy, and the peace, and the love, and the warmth, these are the effects of faith, but they are not faith; they are the fruits of a conscious sonship which has been formed by the belief of the divine testimony to Jesus as the Son of God and the Saviour of the lost. 'As many as received Him, to them gave He the right of being sons of God, even to them that believed on His name' (John 1:12). God's simple message of grace contains peace for the sinner; and the sinner extracts the peace therein contained, not by effort or feeling, but by the simple belief of the true sayings of God. Good news makes glad by being believed, and they refuse to yield up their precious treasure to anything but to simple faith. Believe the tidings of peace from God, and the peace is all your own.

It is not to him that worketh, or feeleth, or loveth, but to him that believeth that God says, 'I am the Lord your God.' And when God used the word believing, He just meant what He said, and intended nothing else than what man means by that word. Had He meant anything else, He would have told us, and not suffered us to be misled or deceived by our misunderstanding of a word of which the Bible is full. Had He meant working, or feeling, or loving, He would have said so, and not allowed us to suppose that believing was really all. What a book of deception and mystery the Bible would be, if 'believing' does not mean 'believing,' but something less or something more! To make it something less, would be to take from God's word as truly as if we had struck out a book from the Bible. To make it something more, would be to add to God's word, as truly and as sinfully as if we had forged another Gospel or another Epistle, or accepted the Apocrypha as part of the inspired record. We make God a liar when we refuse to take Him at His word, or give Him credit for speaking that simple truth, in believing which we are saved; but let us remember the other side of his statement, namely, our being found liars by reason of our adding to His word. 'Every word of God is pure' (Proverbs 30:5); can we make it purer, or more transparent, or more simple? We add to it, lest it should be too simple, too childlike, too blessed; we put something of our own into it to make it more substantial and complete; and that something (call it feeling, or realizing, or loving) destroys the divine simplicity and transparency of faith. Add thou not unto His words, lest He reprove thee, and thou be found a liar (Proverbs 30:6). Does casting dust upon the sunbeam improve its quality or make it more like the sun from which it came? Would pouring filth into a cup of pure spring water make it more lucid and refreshing? Whatever we add to believing, tends to

destroy its real nature and to mar its effects. If God had said that we are to be saved by believing that the deluge overflowed the earth, and that the sun once stood still in the heavens, we should have understood what He meant by the word. And is there any more difficulty in understanding Him when He says, 'He that believeth is justified from all things'? Does believing mean one thing in Genesis and another in Romans? Does it mean one thing to Abraham and another to us? Does it mean one thing today and another tomorrow? Or is not the formula of salvation, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved,' meant to be the simplest and most intelligible of all declarations ever made to man?

We believe the Holy Spirit's testimony, that Jesus died and rose again, 'the Just for the unjust.' That saves. We believe the divine promise annexed to this testimony, that life is the possession of every man who believeth this heavenly testimony; and this belief of the promise (which some call appropriation) assures us, on God's word, that life is ours personally. We do not get life by believing that life is ours; nor do we get Christ by believing that Christ is ours. This is as absurd as the idea of getting our debts paid by believing that they are paid. But we get life and Christ by believing God's glad tidings concerning Jesus and His finished work upon the cross. There is enough in Christ to pay every man's debt; but no man's debt is actually paid until he has taken God at His word, and believed the record which God has given of His Son.

It is the blood that pacifies my conscience. The sight of it is all I need to remove fear and impart confidence. It is not my 'seeing that I see it' that gives me boldness, but my direct and simple sight of it. My guilt passes away from me so soon as I believe; and I don't need to wait till I believe in my own act of believing before becoming conscious of this deliverance. The blood contains my pardon and my peace; and by looking at it I extract the pardon and the peace. I don't need to look at my looking; I need only to look at the blood. If I cannot extract from it pardon and peace, I never shall be able to extract them from my own act of seeing. I am to believe in Jesus; not in my own faith, nor in my own feelings. I am to look to the cross, not to my own convictions or repentance. The well of peace is not within me; and to let down my bucket into my own heart for the purpose of drawing up the water of peace, is mockery as well as foolishness. I do not fill the cup of peace out of anything that is in myself. Christ has filled that cup already,—long, long ago—and in love He presses it to my parched lips. Let me drink at once of it, for all the peace of God, the peace of heaven is there. When God said to Israel, 'I am the Lord your God,' He added this, 'Ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves; and ye shall be holy, for I am holy' (Leviticus 11:44); and He added this also, 'I am the Lord that bringeth you up out of the land of Egypt to be your God: ye shall therefore be holy, for I am holy' (Leviticus 11:45).

God calls us to be holy. He becomes our God to make us like Himself. 'He calls us to be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.' He expects that we should represent Him among our fellow-men by our resemblance to Himself. The carrying out of this holiness is His own work,—the operation of His Spirit. Whether our perfection in holiness is to be wrought gradually or instantaneously, is a question to be determined solely by His word, and not by any theories of our own. That God could make each soul perfect the moment he believes, we admit;—that He may have wise reasons for not doing this, wise reasons for gradual growth,—will not be denied. He has given us no instance in the Bible of any one made instantaneously sinless, either at his conversion or during his after life. All the men of faith and holiness, the men 'full of the Holy Ghost,' which He presents to us as our models, are imperfect

men to the end of their days, needing forgiveness and cleansing constantly. He glorifies Himself in our imperfect bodies; in an imperfect Church, on an imperfect earth. His object here is to glorify Himself in imperfection and growth, as He is hereafter to glorify Himself in perfection and completeness of every kind. Gradual growth is the law of all things here,—man, beasts, trees, and flowers,—so that unless we had some very notable example in Scripture of a sinless man, or of miraculous and instantaneous perfection by an act of faith, we are not disposed to accept the theory of instantaneous sinlessness, as that to which we are called in believing; even though that be veiled under the specious name of 'entire consecration,' or accompanied with the profession of personal unworthiness,—a 'personal unworthiness' which, however, does not seem to require any actual confession of sin.

Yet God calls us to be holy. He expects us to grow in unlikeness to this world, and in likeness to that world which is to come. He expects us to follow Him who did no sin, even though the attainment of perfection should not be in a day or a year, but the growth of a lifetime. It is for want of daily growth, not for want of complete and constant sinlessness, that God so often challenges His own.

Let us grow. Let us bring forth fruit. Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof. What is the use of taking so long to make us sinless?—some may say. I answer, Go and ask God. What was the use of taking six days to bring creation to perfection?

Why did He let sin enter our world when He could have kept it out? What was the use of not making the whole Church perfect at once? Why did He not make Abraham or David or Paul perfect at once? He could have done so. Why did He not?

Let us study soberly and truly the word of God in regard to the past history of His saints, lest it be said to some in our day who think themselves on a far 'higher platform' than others,—more perfect than Paul or John,—'Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? shall the thing formed say to Him that formed it, Why hast Thou made me thus?'

Let us grow. The impatience that demands instantaneous perfection is unbelief, refusing to recognise God's spiritual laws in the new creation. The gradual evolution of the heavenly life in a lifelong course of conflict and imperfection, is the way in which sin is unfolded, the human heart exposed to view, the power of the cross tested, the efficacy of the blood manifested, and the power as well as the love of Father, Son, and Spirit magnified. God's purpose is not simply to reveal Himself, but to reveal man,—not simply man dead in trespasses and sin, but man after he has been made alive unto righteousness, to exhibit, step by step, and day by day, that most solemn and humbling of all processes, namely, that by which 'the inward man is renewed day by day' (2 Corinthians 4:16): while the strength of the human will for evil is manifested, the awful tenacity of sin shown forth, and the absolute hopelessness of any sinner's salvation demonstrated, save by the omnipotence of God Himself.

Let us grow daily and hourly. Let us grow down; let us grow up. Let us strike our roots deeper; let us spread out our branches more widely. Let us not only 'blossom and bud,' but let us bring forth fruit, ripe and plentiful, on every bough. 'Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples' (John 15:8).

03.14. HINDRANCES TO AVOID

CHAPTER 14 Hindrances To Avoid Many things can hinder growth and fruit-bearing. Mark the following:

Unbelief

'So we see they could not enter in because of unbelief' (Hebrews 3:19). This poisons the tree at its very root. Christ can do no mighty works in us, or for us, because of unbelief (Matthew 13:58). 'Only believe' (Mark 5:36). 'Have faith in God' (Mark 11:22). 'He that believeth' (Mark 9:23). 'He that believeth on me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water' (John 7:38).

Want of love No love, no fruit; much love, much fruit (Hebrews 10:24). 'Labour of love' means the labour which love produces, to which love stimulates (1 Thessalonians 1:3). Love is by its very nature fruit-bearing. When 'love waxes cold' (Matthew 24:12), when we 'leave our first love' (Revelation 2:4), then everything that deserves the name of fruit dies away. If there be fruit at all, it is poor and unripe. Our zeal is the zeal of Jehu (2 Kings 10:16); our warmth is false fire; our energy is the vigour of the flesh; our work is the work of men urged on by a false stimulus; our words, however earnest, are the words of excited self. If any one ask, How am I to get love? I answer, Look to Jesus, deal with Him about it, learn anew to love by learning anew His love to you. I do not say, 'Work, and that will stimulate you to love.' No. It is not first work, and then love; but first love, and then work. Get more love by dealing more with Jesus personally, and then love will set you all on fire. You will work unbidden; you will work in the liberty of fellowship and in the joy of love (1 Thessalonians 3:12; Galatians 5:6; 2 Corinthians 5:14).

Selfishness (Mark 8:34)

Self in all its forms is a hindrance to our growth (Romans 14:7). Self•will, self-sufficiency, self-indulgence, self-importance, self-glory, self•seeking, self-brooding,—all these mar fruitfulness. Denying self is the beginning, the middle, and the end of our course here, as followers of Christ. Selfishness takes the form of covetousness, or love of money; of luxury, or love of meats and drinks, and the good things of this life; of religious dissipation, or love of excitement; of spiritual restlessness, or running from meeting to meeting, or book to book, or opinion to opinion, or minister to minister; of craving for religious stimulants and spices, with loathing of what is tame or common, however good and true. These are some of the forms of selfishness which destroy both growth and fruitfulness. How can a man grow when he is pampering self instead of crucifying the flesh; when he is indulging and fondling the old man instead of nailing him to the cross; when he is enjoying all softness and ease and worldly comfort, instead of enduring hardness, and taking up his cross and mortifying his members which are upon the earth (Romans 8:13; Galatians 5:24; Colossians 3:5)?

Covetousness

’The love of money is the root of all evil’ (1 Timothy 6:10). Few things are more hateful in a Christian man than this; few things more completely destroy his influence; and few things more sadly or more justly make him the scorn of the world than eagerness for money, or niggardliness in parting with it. The covetous man cannot grow. He must ever remain a stunted Christian. ’Filthy lucre’ is poison to the soul. If we do not ’make friends of the mammon of unrighteousness’ by laying out our substance for God, it will become the blight of spirituality, the destruction of our religious life (Proverbs 30:8; 1 Timothy 6:6-10). Be generous, be large-hearted, be open-handed, be loving, be free in giving, if you would grow.

Pride

Self-satisfaction in any shape, or self-admiration of any kind, in regard to person, or property, or accomplishments, or position; these are immensely hurtful to spiritual life. True godliness prospers only in the lowly heart; the heart which, in proportion as it becomes more and more satisfied with Christ, becomes more and more dissatisfied with itself. If the Master was meek and lowly, shall the disciple be anything else?

Easy-mindedness To take things easy is by some reckoned a great virtue; and not to get warm or excited or zealous, is regarded as proof of a noble and well•balanced mind. We might admit this to be the case, were it confined to worldly matters. To lose a fortune, and yet be calm, is well. To endure provocation and be unruffled is also well. But to take religion easy is not so to be commended. Easy-going religionists are strangers to the fervour of John or Paul. To be contented while uncertain of our salvation is something very awful. To be contented while making no progress, or perhaps going back, is nearly as awful. Easy-minded religion is just the same as lifeless coldness, though perhaps not so repulsive to others. The good-natured formality of thousands is just the hateful lukewarmness of Laodicea. But let these hints suffice. They will help a little, and guide a little, and teach a little, and warn a little. In reading them, let there be much self-questioning and self-applying. ’Is it I, Lord, is it I?’

03.15. BE OF GOOD CHEER

CHAPTER 15 Be Of Good Cheer A revival time is one of blessing, but it is one of peril. The running well and the going back, the flocking to the cross and the turning away from it, the warm confession and the subsequent silence,—these are things which have been witnessed in other times, and may be witnessed again. Hence our anxiety to give all the guidance and the counsel that we can. Let the young listen. Let them humble themselves to Christian counsel. Let them take heed and watch narrowly their own footsteps. But still we would not dishearten any. Be not discouraged, we say; but be of good cheer. Faint not, though you may often be weary. Though we bid you count the cost, yet we say to you, as God said to Israel, 'Behold, the Lord your God hath set the land before thee: go up and possess it, as the Lord God of thy fathers hath said unto thee; fear not, neither be discouraged' (Deuteronomy 1:21). We would not be of those to whom God spoke, and said, 'Why discourage ye the hearts of the people?' (Numbers 32:7). We remember it is said that 'the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way' (Numbers 21:4); and that this discouragement led to sin. We would not discourage the weakest; for we call to mind Him who 'breaks not the bruised reed, nor quenches the smoking flax' (Isaiah 42:3); who 'gathers the lambs with His arms, who carries them in His bosom, and who gently leads those that are with young' (Isaiah 40:11). We say to 'those who are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not' (Isaiah 35:4); and we would 'strengthen the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees' (Isaiah 35:3). You say the 'fearful' are among those who are cast into the lake of fire, and you fear you are one of them. Not so. The 'fearful' specified in the Book of Revelation (Revelation 21:8), are the cowards who have refused to confess to Christ, who have turned their back on Christ; and they are very different from the 'fearful' spoken of in Isaiah. Be of good courage. You have God upon your side. You have Christ to fight for you. You have the Holy Spirit to sustain and comfort you. You have more encouragements than discouragements. You have the example of millions that have gone before you. You have exceeding great and precious promises (2 Peter 1:4). You have many fellow-travellers and fellow-soldiers on the right hand and on the left. You have a bright kingdom in view which will compensate for all trial and conflict here. And then, the way is short. The toil will soon be over. The battle will not last for ever. Greater is He that is with you than all that can be against you. Be strong in the Lord. Be strong in His love and in His power. Take to you the whole armour of God (Ephesians 6:10-11). Do you say that you are in Christ, and that you are abiding in Him? Then you ought to walk as He walked. You are bound to follow His footsteps; and if you say that you are not bound to do so, you set aside the divine teaching of the apostle here given us. The man who says, 'I am Christ's,' is under obligations to imitate Him. Duty and love alike constrain him to do so; not duty without love, nor yet love without duty. Duty without love would mean reluctance and compulsion; love without duty would mean love fixed upon an unlawful object, whom it was not right to love. Duty and love going together mean that our love is fixed upon a worthy and lawful object; in loving whom we are feeling what is right, and in obeying whom we are doing what is right.

If I love that which it is not my duty to love, I sin. If I love that which it is my duty to love, I am doing the right thing,—the thing which God delights in. If I honour my parents, I do so for two reasons: (1) Because God has said, 'Honour thy father and thy mother'; (2) Because I love them. The two things, the duty and the love, are in perfect harmony with each other. It is a dutiful thing to love, and it is a loving thing to be dutiful. Suppose you have a mother in Scotland and a father in India. You love both of them as truly as a son can love. But the question may arise as to which of them you are to visit or to stay with. Are you to remain in Scotland or go to India? Love cannot determine this question, for you love both equally. How is it to be decided? By duty. You ask, Is it my duty to go to my father, or to remain with my mother? If you decided to leave your mother, from a sense of duty, would she doubt your love, and say, I want none of your professions of it? And when you went to India, and told your father that it was a sense of duty that brought you to him, would he scorn you, and say, I want none of your duty, give me your love? Duty is a right and proper motive. It is again and again referred to in Scripture, as the words 'ought,' 'are bound,' 'must,' 'debtor,' 'owe,' and the like abundantly show. 'He that saith he abideth in Him, ought himself so to walk even as He walked' (1 John 2:6).

We read such passages as the following:—'Ye also ought to wash one another's feet' (John 13:14); 'We have done that which was our duty to do' (Luke 17:10);—'We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak' (Romans 15:1);—'So ought men to love their wives' (Ephesians 5:28);—'We are bound to thank God' (2 Thessalonians 1:3);—'We are bound to give thanks' (2 Thessalonians 2:13);—'We ought to lay down our lives for the brethren' (1 John 3:16);— 'We ought to love one another' (1 John 4:11). These are a few out of many passages in which duty is spoken of in very plain terms. That duty and love should go together, is no proof that there is no such thing as duty, or that a Christian should rise above it into the region of 'pure love,' as Romish mystics have held. Duty means the thing that is due; are we not to do it because it is due, because it is the right and proper thing? Let us exercise our common sense, and understand the meaning of words, whether Greek or English, before soaring into transcendental regions, into which neither prophets nor apostles have gone before us.

There is a danger of running to excess in our day, of attempting the superfine in religion; of soaring too high, of getting away from both Scripture and common sense; of indulging in a sentimentalism, which looks very spiritual, but which, when analysed, is simply absurdity, or, at best, a one-sided exaggeration of some isolated truth. There is great danger, in a time of spiritual quickening, of being carried about with diverse and strange doctrines. Let us cleave to the word. Only thus can we find steadfastness and sobriety. Only by feeding on it, and being guided by it, can we maintain a manly and healthy religion,—free from error, yet devoid of effeminacy, following out the old paths of reformers, apostles, prophets, and patriarchs, unshaken by novelties, yet unfettered by bigotry or self-will.

'He that is dead,' says the apostle, 'is freed from sin' (Romans 6:7); or more exactly, 'He that has died is justified from sin.' Death was the penalty, and he who has paid the penalty is legally justified. There is no further claim against him. We pay the penalty when we take the death of the Substitute as ours, and God reckons the penalty paid when He obtains our consent to the exchange. It is the thought of having paid the penalty that pacifies the conscience; and it is the thought of God reckoning it paid that gives us peace with Him. When we come to understand the meaning and value of the work upon the cross; when we accept what God has declared

concerning all who believe His testimony to that work, the burden drops, and we enter into liberty. With that liberty comes holiness. We seek henceforth conformity to Him who has set us free, and who bids us follow Him in the path of conformity to the Father's will. With that liberty comes love,—love to Him who hath brought our souls out of prison by going into prison for us. With that love comes zeal,—the zeal of Him who followed after His lost ones till He had recovered them,—of Him it is said, 'The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.' With this love and zeal there comes self-denial, the self-denial of Him who 'pleased not Himself,' who lived on earth solely for others; though rich, for our sakes becoming poor. Of all this be it ever remembered, that the root is 'peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ'; and that this peace comes from the knowledge of the peace-making blood, the blood of the one divine peace offering, whom to know is peace! It is out of the sacrificial blood that we extract the peace which is the beginning of all service, all religion, all uprightness of walk. 'No condemnation' commences the life of freedom and self-denial and zeal. We cease to know the law as our enemy, and begin to know it as our friend; for that which is 'holy, and just, and good' must ever be our delight, our joy, our guide. 'I delight in the law of God after the inner man' (Romans 7:22) is one of our truest watchwords; for we were set free from the law just in order that we might delight in the law and in order that 'the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us' (Romans 8:4). With law satisfied,—nay, transformed into a friend, and speaking not condemnation, but pardon, not wrath, but love, we walk onwards and upwards, realizing in that blessed law what David did when he said, 'The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honey-comb. (Psalms 19:8-10).

04.00 God's Way of Holiness

God’s Way of Holiness by Horatius Bonar

Preface Chapter 1. The New Life Chapter 2. Christ For Us, The Spirit In Us Chapter 3. The Root And Soil Of Holiness Chapter 4. Strength Against Sin Chapter 5. The Cross And Its Power Chapter 6. The Saint And The Law Chapter 7. The Saint And The Seventh Chapter Of Romans Chapter 8. The True Creed And The True Life Chapter 9. Counsels And Warnings

04.000. Preface

Preface The way of peace and the way of holiness lie side by side, or rather, they are one. That which bestows the one imparts the other; and he who takes the one takes the other also. The Spirit of peace is the Spirit of holiness. The God of peace is the God of holiness.

If at any time these paths seem to go asunder, there must be something wrong--wrong in the teaching that makes them seem to part company, or wrong in the state of the man in whose life they have done so.

They start together, or at least so nearly together that no eye, save the divine, can mark a difference. Yet, properly speaking, the peace goes before the holiness, and is its parent. This is what divines call "priority in nature, though not in time," which means substantially this, that the difference in such almost identical beginnings is too small in point of time to be perceived by us, yet it is not on that account the less distinct and real. The two are not independent. There is fellowship between them, vital fellowship, each being the helpmeet of the other. The fellowship is not of mere coincidence, as in the case of strangers who happen to meet on the same path, nor of arbitrary appointment, as in the case of two parallel roads, but of mutual help and sympathy--like the fellowship of head and heart, or of two members of one body, the peace being indispensable to the production or causation of the holiness, and the holiness indispensable to the maintaining and deepening of the peace.

He who affirms that he has peace, while living in sin, is "a liar, and the truth is not in him." He who thinks that he has holiness, though he has no peace, ought to question whether he understands aright what the Bible means by either the one or the other; for, as the essence of holiness is the soul’s right state toward God, it does not seem possible that a man can be holy so long as there is no conscious reconciliation between God and him. A spurious holiness there may be, founded upon a spurious peace, or upon no peace at all; but true holiness must start from a true and authentic peace.

HORATIUS BONAR

KELSO. July 1864

04.01. Chapter 1 The New Life

God’s Way of Holiness

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Chapter 1

The New Life

It is to a new life that God is calling us; not to some new steps in life, some new habits or ways or motives or prospects, but to a new life. For the production of this new life the eternal Son of God took flesh, died, was buried, and rose again. It was not life producing life, a lower life rising into a higher, but life rooting itself in its opposite, life wrought out of death, by the death of "the Prince of life." Of the new creation, as of the old, He is the author. For the working out of this the Holy Spirit came down in power, entering men’s souls and dwelling there, that out of the old He might bring forth the new. That which God calls new must be so indeed. For the Bible means what it says, as being, of all books, not only the most true in thought, but the most accurate in speech. Great then and authentic must be that "new thing in the earth" which God "creates," to which He calls us, and which He brings about by such stupendous means and at such a cost. Most hateful also must that old life of ours be to Him, when, in order to abolish it, He delivers up His Son; and most dear must we be in His sight when, in order to rescue us from the old life, and make us partakers of the new, He brings forth all the divine resources of love and power and wisdom, to meet the exigencies of a case which would otherwise have been wholly desperate. The man from whom the old life has gone out, and into whom the new life has come, is still the same individual. The same being that was once "under law" is now "under grace." His features and limbs are still the same; his intellect, imagination, capacities, and responsibilities are still the same. But yet old things have passed away; all things have become new. The old man is slain; the new man lives. It is not merely the old life retouched and made more comely, defects struck out, roughnesses smoothed down, graces stuck on here and there.

It is not a broken column repaired, a soiled picture cleaned, a defaced inscription filled up, an unswept temple whitewashed. It is more than all this, else God would not call it a new creation, nor would the Lord have affirmed with such awful explicitness, as He does in His conference with Nicodemus, the divine law of exclusion from and entrance into the kingdom of God (John 3:3). Yet how few in our day believe that "that which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (John 3:6).

Hear how God speaks! He calls us "newborn babes" (1 Peter 2:2), "new creatures" (Galatians 6:15), a "new lump" (1 Corinthians 5:9), a "new man" (Ephesians 2:15), doers of a "anew commandment" (1 John 2:8), heirs of "a new name" and a new city (Revelation 2:17; Revelation 3:12), expectants of "new heavens and a new earth" (2 Peter 3:13). This new being, having begun in a new birth, unfolds itself in newness of spirit" (Romans 7:6), according to a "new covenant" (Hebrews 8:8), walks along a "new and living way" (Hebrews 10:20), and ends in the "new song

and the "new Jerusalem" (Revelation 5:9; Revelation 21:2).

It is no outer thing, made up of showy moralities and benevolences, or picturesque rites and graceful routine of devotion, or sentimentalisms bright or somber, or religious utterances on fit occasions, as to the grandeur of antiquity, or sacramental grace, or the greatness of creaturehood, or the nobleness of humanity, or the universal fatherhood of God. It is something deeper, and truer, and more genial, than that which is called deep, and true, and genial in modern religious philosophy. Its affinities are with the things above; its sympathies are divine; it sides with God in everything; it has nothing, beyond a few expressions, in common with the superficialities and falsehoods which, under the name of religion, are current among multitudes who call Christ "Lord" and "Master." A Christian is one who has been "crucified with Christ," who has died with Him, been buried with Him, risen with Him, ascended with Him, and is seated "in heavenly places" with Him (Romans 6:3-8; Galatians 2:20; Ephesians 2:5-6; Colossians 3:1-3). As such he reckons himself dead unto sin, but alive unto God (Romans 6:11). As such he does not yield his members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, but he yields himself unto God, as alive from the dead, and his members as instruments of righteousness unto God. As such he seeks "the things which are above," and sets his affection on things above, mortifying his members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence and covetousness, which is idolatry" (Colossians 3:1-5). This newness is comprehensive, both in its exclusion of the evil and its inclusion of the good. It is summed up by the apostle in two things: righteousness and holiness. "Put off," says he, "the old man, which is corrupt, according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind;.. .put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" (Ephesians 4:22-24), literally "righteousness and holiness of the truth," that is, resting on the truth. The new man then is meant to be righteous and holy, inwardly and outwardly, before God and man, as respects Law and gospel, and this through the truth. For as that which is false ("the lie" Ephesians 4:25) can only produce unrighteousness and unholiness, so the truth produces righteousness and holiness through the power of the Holy Ghost. Error injures, truth heals; error is the root of sin, truth is that of purity and perfection.

It is then to a new standing or state, a new moral character, a new life, a new joy, a new work, a new hope, that we are called. He who thinks that religion comprises anything less than this knows nothing yet as he ought to know. To that which man calls "piety," less may suffice; but to no religion which does not in some degree embrace these, can the divine recognition be accorded.

These are weighty words of the apostle, "We are His workmanship. "(1) Of Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things pertaining to us. Chosen, called, quickened, washed, sanctified, and justified by God Himself, we are in no sense our own deliverers. The quarry out of which the marble comes is His; the marble itself is His, the digging and hewing and polishing are His; He is the sculptor and we the statue.

"We are His workmanship," says the apostle. But this is not all. We are, he adds, "created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." The plan, the selection of the materials, the model, the workman, the workmanship, are all divine; and though It doth not yet appear what we shall be, we know that we shall be "like Him," His image reproduced in us, Himself represented by us, for we are "renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created us" (Colossians 3:10).

It is not, however, dead, cold marble that is to be wrought upon. That is simple work, requiring just a given amount of skill. But the remolding of the soul is unspeakably more difficult, and requires far more complex appliances. The influences at work In opposing--internal and external, spiritual, legal, physical--are many; and equally numerous must be the influences brought into play to meet all these, and carry out the design. The work is not mechanical, but moral and spiritual (physical in a sense, as dealing with the nature of things, but more truly, moral and spiritual).

Omnipotence is not mere unlimited physical power, operating, as upon inanimate matter, by mere intensity of volition; but power which, with unlimited resources at its command, exhibits its greatness by regulating its forthgoings according to moral circumstances, producing its greatest results by indirect moral influences, developing itself in conformity with law and sovereignty, and holy love on the one hand, and on the other with human guilt, and creature responsibility, and free volition. The complexities thus introduced are infinite, and the "variable quantities," if one may so speak, are so peculiar and so innumerable, that we can find no formula to help us in the solution of the problem; we get bewildered in speculating on the processes by which omnipotence deals with moral beings, either In their sinfulness or their holiness.

Here let us also notice the duality or twofoldness of divine truth, the overlooking of which has occasioned much fruitless controversy and originated many falsehoods. Truth is, indeed, not two-sided, but many-sided, like a well-cut crystal. In a more general sense, however, it is truly double; with a heavenly and an earthly, a divine and a human side or aspect. It is at the line where these two meet that the greatest nicety of adjustment is required, and hence it is here that divergent theologies have come specially into conflict. The heavenward and the earthward aspects of truth must be carefully distinguished--the one fitting into the other, the one the counterpart of the other. God is absolute Sovereign; this is the one side.

Man has volition of his own, and is not a machine or a stone; that is the other. God chooses and draws according to the good pleasure of His will; yet he hinders no man from coming or from willing. God is the giver of faith, yet "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God" (Romans 10:17). Hence the difficulty of believing is not from the absence of proper faculties, but from the derangement of these, and conversion is God’s restoration of these to their original nature. Faith is not a foreign gem imported into the soul, distinct from all our original powers; it is simply the man believing, in consequence of his soul being set right by the Holy Spirit, but he believes and disbelieves in the same way as before.

It is not the intellect, or the mind, or the affections, that believe; it is the man, the whole man, the same whole man that formerly disbelieved. Very absurd and unphilosophical (not to say unscriptural) have been the questions raised as to the seat of faith, whether it is in the intellect, or the will, or the heart. Faith is the man believing, just as love is the man loving. In Romans 10:9, the apostle is not contrasting the heart with the mind, but with the mouth; in other words, the inner with the outer man.

God worketh in us both to will and to do, yet He commands us to work out our salvation with fear and trembling. It is God that sanctifies us, yet it is through "the truth" that we are sanctified (John 17:17). It is God that purifies (Titus 2:14), yet it is by faith that our hearts are purified (Acts 15:9). It is God that fills us with joy and peace, and yet this is "in believing." This duality is the key to the solution of many a hard controversy. The movements of man’s intellect are not superseded by

God but assumed and regulated; the intellect itself is not overborne and forced, but set free to work its true work truly. (2) The "heavenly things" and "earthly things" are distinct, yet not separate; always to be viewed in connection with each other, yet not confused; for confusion here is mysticism, superstition, and false doctrine. "There are celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial; but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another" (1 Corinthians 15:40). In every Bible truth there are two elements, the divine and the human; but the divine element is one thing, the human another. The theology that embodies most truth is that which knows how to recognize both of these, without confusion, yet without isolation or antagonism, and which refuses to merge either the divine in the human or the human in the divine. (3)

Hence the necessity for confining ourselves to the Word, and the danger of introducing human metaphysics into questions connected with the spiritual change wrought on us. It is God that worketh; it is we who are wrought upon; and everything needful to be known in connection with this work is revealed in the divine record. We give this thought some prominence because of the tendency with many to magnify humanity, and to undervalue the greatness of that change which begins the Christian course and character. No elevation of natural taste, no infusion of religious or benevolent earnestness, no cultivation of the intellect, can fill up the description given us in the word of one "who fears God," and is "called according to His purpose," "begotten again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (1 Peter 1:3). And we urge this the more decidedly because, as is the beginning, so will be the middle and the end. A false idea or a diverging step at the outset may lead to a false religion throughout life, to an imperfect and superficial goodness, as one incorrect figure or sign in an equation falsifies both process and result. If the dislocated joint is not properly set, it will never work comfortably; and if the wound is merely skinned over, the disease may be taking its own way underneath, all the more fatally because it is supposed to have been removed.

How the Holy Spirit operates in producing the newness of which we have spoken, we know not; yet we know that He does not destroy or reverse man’s faculties; He renovates them all, so that they fulfill the true ends for which they were given. As He does not make the hand the foot, nor the eye the ear, so He does not make the heart the intellect, nor the will the judgment. Each faculty remains the same in end and use as before, only purified and set properly to work. Nor does the Holy Spirit supersede the use of our faculties by His indwelling. Rather does this indwelling make these more serviceable, more energetic, each one doing his proper work and fulfilling his proper office; while the whole man, body, soul and spirit, instead of being brought under mechanical constraint, is made more truly free, never more fully himself than when filled with the Holy Spirit. For the result of the indwelling Spirit is liberty; not bondage, or the production of an artificial character.

Thus, although no violence is done to our being in regeneration, omnipotence is at work at every point. Our new being is not the result of a mechanical process, yet it is the product of divine power. God claims it as a "creation," and as His own handiwork. "He that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God" (2 Corinthians 5:5), where the word implies the thorough elaboration of some difficult piece of work. "It is God which worketh in [us] both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Php 2:13), where the expressions indicate an operation which influences our willing" as well as our "doing," and this on account of His being "well pleased" with Christ (Matthew 3:17) and with His own eternal design. "God’s tillage" (or husbandry, 1 Corinthians 3:9) is His name for us when

speaking as a husbandman, "God’s building" (or fabric), His name when speaking as an architect. It is to the image of His Son that He has predestinated us to be conformed, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren (Romans 8:29), having "chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love" (Ephesians 1:4).

It is, then, to holiness that God is calling us (1 Thessalonians 4:7); that we should have our "fruit unto holiness" (Romans 6:22), that our hearts should be stablished "unblameable in holiness" (1 Thessalonians 3:13); that we should abound in "all holy conversation and godliness" (2 Peter 3:11); that we should be "a holy priesthood" (1 Peter 2:5); "holy in all manner of conversation" (1 Peter 1:15); "called with a holy calling" (2 Timothy 1:9); "holy and without blame before Him in love" (Ephesians 1:4), presenting not only our souls but our bodies as (not only a living but) a holy sacrifice to God (Romans 12:1); nay, remembering that these bodies are not only "a sacrifice," but a "temple of the Holy Ghost" (1 Corinthians 6:19).

Holiness is likeness to God, to Him who is the Holy One of Israel, to Him whom they laud in heaven, as "Holy, holy, holy" (Revelation 4:8). It is likeness to Christ, to "that Holy Thing" which was born of the virgin, to Him who was "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners" (Hebrews 7:26). It is not only disjunction from evil, and from an evil world; but it is separation unto God and Ills service. It is priestly separation, for priestly service. It is distinctiveness such as that which marked the tabernacle and all its vessels, separation from every common use: separation by blood, "the blood of the everlasting covenant," this blood (or that which it signifies, namely, death) being interposed between us and all common things, so that we are dead to sin, but alive unto God, alive to righteousness, having died and risen in Him whose blood has made us what we are, saints, holy ones. This holiness or consecration extends to every part of our persons, fills up our being, spreads over our life, influences everything we are, or do, or think, or speak, or plan, small or great, outward or inward, negative or positive, our loving, our hating, our sorrowing, our rejoicing, our recreations, our business, our friendships, our relationships, our silence, our speech, our reading, our writing, our going out and our coming in--our whole man in every movement of spirit, soul, and body. In the house, the sanctuary, the chamber, the market, the shop, the desk, the highway, it must be seen that ours is a consecrated life. In one aspect, sanctification is an act, a thing done at once, like justification. The moment the blood touches us--that is, as soon as we believe God’s testimony to the blood--we are "clean" (John 15:3), "sanctified," set apart for God. It is in this ceremonial or priestly sense that the word is used in the Epistle to the Hebrews; for as that to the Romans takes us into the forum and deals with our legal standing, so that to the Hebrews takes us into the temple, and deals with our priestly standing. As the vessels of the sanctuary were at once separated to God and His service, the moment the blood touched them, so are we. This did not imply that those vessels required no daily ablution afterwards, so neither does our consecration intimate that we need no daily sanctifying, no inward process for getting rid of sin. The initiatory consecration through the blood is one thing, and the continual sanctifying by the power of the Holy Ghost is another. The former is the first step, the introduction to the latter; nay, absolutely indispensable to any progress in the latter; yet it does not supersede it, but makes it rather a greater necessity. To this very end we are consecrated by the blood, that we may be purified inwardly by the Holy Ghost; and he who would make the completeness of the former act a substitute for the latter process, or a reason for neglecting it, has yet to learn what consecration means, what is the import of the blood which consecrates, and for what end we were chosen in

Christ and called by His grace (Ephesians 1:4). The thing which man calls sin may be easily obliterated or toned down into goodness. It deserved no expulsion from Paradise, no deluge, no Sodom-fire; it is a thing which the flames of Sinai greatly exaggerate, and of which Israel's history presents an exceptional picture. It is one of the mishaps of humanity, the enormity of which has been quite misreckoned by theologians, and the history of which, in Scripture, must be read with abatements and due allowances for oriental coloring! It is not a thing for the judge, but for the physician; not a thing for condemnation, but for pity. It deserves no hell, no divine wrath, no legal sentence; it needs no atonement, no blood, no cross, no substitution of life for life; mere incarnation as the expression of divine love to the unfortunate, and the intimation to the universe of God's all-comprehending fatherhood, and of Adamhood's union with God will be sufficient. But that which God calls sin is something infinitely terrible, far beyond our ideas of misfortune and disease, something to which even Sodom and Sinai gave but faint expression. It is something which the Law curses and the Judge condemns; something which needs a righteous pardon, a divine Savior, and an almighty Spirit; something which can destroy a soul and ruin a world, which can, from one single drop, overflow earth for six thousand years, and fill hell eternally. It is that of whose hatefulness the blood and smoke and fire of the altar speak, which is "exceeding sinful," whose wages is death, the first and second death, and of whose balefulness the everlasting darkness is the witness.

He who would know holiness must understand sin: and he who would see sin as God sees it, and think of it as God does, must look at the cross and grave of the Son of God, and must know the meaning of Gethsemane and Golgotha.

Am I bound to think of sin as God thinks? Most certainly. Have I no liberty of thinking otherwise? None You may do so, if you choose to venture, but the consequences are fearful, for error is sin. We are not bound to think as man thinks. In this respect we have entire liberty; not tradition, but free thought may be our formula here. But we are bound to think as God thinks, not in one thing but in everything. Woe be to him that presumes to differ from God, or reckons it a light matter to be of one mind with Him, or tries to prove that the Bible is inaccurate or unintelligible, or but half-inspired, in order to release himself from the responsibility of receiving the whole truth of God and afford him license to believe or disbelieve at pleasure, freed from the trammels of a fixed revelation. The tendency of the present day is to underestimate sin and to misunderstand its nature. From the cross of Christ men strike out the very elements which intimate the divine opinion of its evil. Sin is admitted to be an evil, greater or less according to circumstances; a hereditary poison, which time and earnestness will work out of the constitution; an unruly but inevitable appetite, which is to be corrected gradually by moral discipline and wholesome intellectual diet, rendered medicinal by a moderate infusion of the "religious element"; a sickening pain, sometimes in the conscience, sometimes in the heart, that is to be soothed by the dreamy mysticism, which, acting like spiritual chloroform, dulls the uneasiness without touching its seat; this is all!

Why a loving God should, for so slight and curable an evil, have given over our world for six thousand years to such sorrow, pain, tears, weariness, disease and death, as have overflowed it with so terrible a deluge, is a question which such a theory of evil leaves unanswered. Yet such are the representations of sin with which we find a large amount of the literature and the religion of our day penetrated. Humanity is struggling upward, nobly self-reliant! The race is elevating itself (for the Darwinian theory has found its way into religion); and Christianity is a useful help in this

process of self-regeneration! Thus does many a prophet speak peace where there is none, bent on "healing the hurt" by the denial of its deadliness. Of what avail this calling evil good and good evil, this putting darkness for light and light for darkness, this putting bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter, will be in the great day of reckoning, a coming hour will show.

"Awake to righteousness, and sin not," is God's message to us (1 Corinthians 15:34). "Be ye holy; for I am holy" (1 Peter 1:16). "Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God" (Romans 12:1). "Purge out.. .the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump" (1 Corinthians 5:7). "Let everyone that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity" (2 Timothy 2:19). "Denying ungodliness and worldly lusts,.. .live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world" (Titus 2:12). "Be diligent that ye may be found in Him in peace, without spot and blameless" (2 Peter 3:14). "Let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ" (Php 1:27). "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them" (Ephesians 5:11). "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh to fulfill the lusts thereof' (Romans 13:14). "I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul" (1 Peter 2:11). From sin, then, in every sense and aspect, God is calling us. As exceeding sinful, the abominable thing which He hates and will avenge, He warns us against it. He speaks to us as "shapen in iniquity and conceived in sin," carrying evil about with us, nay, filled with it and steeped in it; not merely as diseased and requiring medicine, or unfortunate and requiring pity, but as guilty, under law, under sentence, dead in trespasses and sins, with inevitable judgment before us. He neither palliates nor aggravates our case, but calmly tells us the worst; showing us what we are, before calling us to be what He has purposed to make us. From all unholiness, from all uncleanness, from all unrighteousness, from all corruption, from all crooked ways, from all disobedience, from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, He is calling us, in Christ Jesus His Son.

(1) Ephesians 2:10 "His poem," the production of His wisdom, love, and power, that which He and only He can make, Psalms 100:3. A house should be worthy of the builder, and a poem of him from whom it comes.

(2) The more thoroughly we can study the Word of God, the better: and all critical helps are to he welcomed. Genuine scholarship, consecrated to the elucidation of the Word, is an accomplishment of no common price. Everything that brings our souls into full contact with "the Word," in Its fullness and variety, so as to steep them in it is to be greatly prized, as fitted to make us holier, more fruitful, and more spiritual men.

(3) We hear much of the divine and the human element in Scripture; nor is the expression amiss; yet might we not rather say that the Bible is all human and yet all divine. It is perfect according to what God meant it to be, though we may note what we call "imperfections" in it. The mountains of earth, in their ruggedness, are perfect in their way, though they have not the artificial perfection of the statue or the temple. God has chosen that His book and His world should resemble each other in that kind of perfection--a perfection which man appreciates in the landscape, but depreciates in the Bible.

04.02. Chapter 2. Christ For Us, The Spirit In Us

God’s Way of Holiness

Chapter 2

We noticed, in our last chapter, the difference between the divine and the human sides of Bible truth; we would, in this, advert to another distinction, of no less importance, that between Christ’s work for us and the Holy Spirit’s work in us; between the legal or substitutionary and the moral or curative. This is not the distinction between a divine element and a human one, but between two elements which are both equally divine, yet each of them, in its own way, bearing very directly on the sinner. The two things are sometimes put in another form, Christ for us, and Christ in us. The meaning, however, is the same in both cases, for Christ in us (Colossians 1:27) is also the Holy Spirit in us, Christ having the Spirit without measure for Himself (John 3:34), and for us according to our need. An indwelling Christ and an indwelling Spirit are, though not the same thing, yet equivalent things. He who has the Son has the Spirit, nay, and the Father also (John 14:23).

Christ for us is our one resting-place. Not works, nor feelings, nor love, even though these may be the creation of the Spirit in us; not these in any sense; no, nor yet faith, whether as an act of our mind, or as the production of the Spirit, or as a substitute for righteousness; none of these can be our resting-place. This great truth is well brought out in a correspondence among Luther, Melancthon and Brentius in the year 1531, which we translate and abridge. Brentius had been much perplexed on the subject of faith. It puzzled him. Christ justifies; faith justifies; how is this? Is faith a merit? Is it a work? Has it some justifying virtue in itself? Does it justify because it is the gift of God and the work of the Holy Spirit? Perplexed with these questions, he wrote to Melancthon and Luther. The replies of both are extant, neither of them long, Luther’s very short.

They go straight to the point, and deserve to be quoted as clear statements of the truth, and as specimens of the way in which these men of might dealt with the burdened spirits of their time. "I see," writes Melancthon, "what is troubling you about faith. You stick to the fancy of Augustine, who, though right in rejecting the righteousness of human reason, imagines that we are justified by that fulfilling of the law which the Holy Spirit works in us. So you imagine that men are justified by faith, because it is by faith that we receive the Spirit, that thereafter we may be able to be just by that fulfillment of the law which the Spirit works. This imagination places justification in our fulfillment of the law, in our purity or perfection, although this renewal ought to follow faith. But do you turn your eyes from that renewal, and from the law altogether, to the promise and to Christ, and think that it is on Christ’s account that we become just, that is, accepted before God, and that it is thus we obtain peace of conscience, and not on account of that renewal. For even this renewing is insufficient (for justification). We are justified by faith alone, not because it is a root, as you write, but because it apprehends Christ, on account of whom we are accepted. This renewing, although it necessarily follows, yet does not pacify the conscience.

Therefore not even love, though it is the fulfilling of the law, justifies, but only faith; not because it is some excellence in us, but only because it takes hold of Christ. We are justified, not on account of love, not on account of the fulfilling of the law, not on account of our renewal, although these are the gifts of the Holy Spirit, but on account of Christ; and Him we take hold of by faith alone.

"Believe me, my Brentius, this controversy regarding the righteousness which is by faith is a mighty one, and little understood. You can only rightly comprehend it by turning your eyes entirely away from the law, and from Augustine's idea about our fulfilling the law, and by fixing them wholly upon the free promise, so as to see that it is on account of that promise and for Christ's sake, that we are justified, that is, accepted and obtain peace. This is the true doctrine, and that which glorifies Christ and wonderfully lifts up the conscience. I endeavored to explain this in my Apology, but on account of the misrepresentations of adversaries, could not speak out so freely as I do now with you, though saying the very same thing. When could the conscience have peace and assured hope, if we are not justified till our renewal is perfected? What is this but to be justified by the law, and not by the free promise? In that discussion I said that to ascribe our justification to love is to ascribe it to our own work, understanding by that, a work done in us by the Holy Ghost. For faith justifies, not because it is a new work of the Spirit in us, but because it apprehends Christ, on account of whom we are accepted, and not on account of the gifts of the Holy Spirit in us. Turn away from Augustine's idea, and you will easily see the reason for this; and I hope our Apology will somewhat help you, though I speak cautiously respecting matters so great, which are only to be to understood in the conflict of the conscience. By all means preach law and repentance to the people, but let not this true doctrine of the gospel be overlooked." In the same strain writes Luther: "I am accustomed, my Brentius, for the better understanding of this point, to conceive this idea, that there is no quality in my heart at all, call it either faith or charity; but instead of these I set Christ Himself, and I say this is my righteousness. He is my quality and my formal righteousness, as they call it, so as to free myself from looking unto law or works; nay, from looking at Christ Himself as a teacher or a giver. But I look at Him as gift and as doctrine to me, in Himself, so that in Him I have all things. He says, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life.' He says not, 'I give thee the way, and the truth, and the life,' as if He were working on me from without. All these things He must be in me, abiding, living, and speaking in me, not through me or to me, that we may be 'the righteousness of God in Him' (2 Corinthians 5:21); not in love, nor in the gifts and graces which follow." To these letters Brentius replies, unfolding his conflicts to his beloved Philip. "Is not faith itself a work? Does not the Lord say, "This is the work of God that ye believe'?.. Justification then cannot be either by works or by faith.. Is it so?.. .Therefore justification must be on account of Christ alone, and not the excellence of our works.. .But how can all this be?... From childhood I had not been able to clear my thoughts on these points. Your letter and that of Luther showed me the truth.. Justification comes to us neither on account of our love nor our faith, but solely on account of Christ: and yet it comes through (by means of) faith. Faith does not justify as a work of goodness, but simply as a receiver of promised mercy.. .We do not merit; we only obtain justification.

Faith is but the organ, the instrument, the medium; Christ alone is the satisfaction and the merit. Works are not satisfaction, nor merit, nor instrument; they are the utterance of a justification already received by faith." Thus does the disciple expound the master's letter, and then adds some thoughts of his own. He fears lest, as popery perverted love, so the Reformation might come

to pervert faith, putting it in the room of Christ, as a work or merit or quality, something in itself. Having finished the letter to his "most beloved Philip," and signed it, "thy Brentius," he starts another thought and adds a postscript which is well worth translating: "Just as I was finishing my letter, I remembered an argument of yours about works, to the effect that if we are justified by love, we can never have assurance because we can never love as we ought. In like manner I argue regarding faith as a work; if justification come to us through faith as a work, or merit, or excellence, we can never be assured about it, because we can never believe as we ought."

We have given some space to these extracts, because the importance of the truth which they contain can hardly be overrated. They not only exhibit the distinction between Christ's work and the Spirit's work, but they do so with special reference to that point at which they are so often made to run into each other, to the darkening of many minds and the confusion of all Reformation theology For how often did Luther reiterate that statement: "Faith justifies us, no, not even as a gift of the Holy Ghost, but solely on account of its reference to Christ...faith does not justify for its own sake, or because of any inherent virtue belonging to it." So long as this confusion exists, so long as men do not distinguish between Christ's work and the Spirit's work, so long as they lay any stress upon the quality or quantity of their act of faith, there can be not only no peace of conscience, but no progress in holiness, no bringing forth of good works. Of this confusion Arminianism, in its subtlest form, is the necessary offspring. For so long as men think to be justified by faith as a work, or as an act of their mind, or as a gift of the Spirit, they are seeking justification by something inherent, not by something imputed. To deny that it is inherent, because infused into them by the Spirit, is simply to cheat themselves with a play upon words, and to cheat themselves all the more effectually, because professing to honor the Spirit by ascribing to Him the infused quality or act, out of which they seek to extract their justification. In seeking justification or peace of conscience from something wrought in them by the Spirit, they are seeking these from that which is confessedly imperfect, and which God never gave for such a purpose; nay, they are rejecting the perfect righteousness of the Substitute, and so preventing the possibility of their doing any acceptable works at all. For if "the righteousness of the Law can only be fulfilled in us," as the fruit of our acceptance of the imputed righteousness of the Son of God, then there can be no righteous thing done by us till we have realized the position of men to whom the great truth of "Christ for us," "Jehovah our righteousness," has become the basis of all reconciliation with God. This form of error is the more subtle because its victims are not walking in sin, but doing all manner of outward service, and exhibiting outward goodness in many forms, regarding which we shall only say that they are not pleasant to God, and as "they are not done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done, we doubt not but they have the nature of sin" (Article 13 of the Church of England).

Some of the soundest Christian divines have left on record their complaint as to the mistakes in this matter of faith prevailing in their day, and as to the charge ofAntinomianism brought against those who, in stating justification, refuse to qualify the apostolic formula, "to him that worketh not, but believeth." Traill thus wrote, now nearly two centuries ago, "If we say that faith in Jesus Christ is neither work, nor condition, nor qualification in justification, and that in its very act it is a renouncing of all things but the gift of grace, the fire is kindled; so that it is come to this, that he that will not be Antichristian must be called an Antinomian.

How strongly does this same divine state the truth in another place. When addressing a perplexed inquirer he says, "If he say that he cannot believe on Jesus Christ.. you tell him that believing on Jesus Christ is no work, but a resting on Jesus Christ." How sharply does he rebuke those who would mix up the imputed and the infused: "They seem to be jealous lest God's grace and Christ's righteousness have too much room, and men's works too little in the business of justification." See the whole of Traill's letter on "Justification vindicated from the charge of Antinomianism." An old anonymous writer, a little later than Traill, uses this expression: 'The Scriptures consider faith not as a work of ours, but set in opposition to every work, whether of body or mind: 'To him that worketh not, but believeth'." That we believe through grace that faith is the gift of God does not prove faith to be a work of ours, any more than Christ's raising of Lazarus proved resurrection to be a work of the dead man. The divine infusion of life in the one case, and the divine impartation of faith in the other, so far from showing that there must be a work in either, indicates very plainly that there could not be any such thing. The work comes after the believing, and as the fruit of it. "Faith worketh by love," that is, the believing soul shows its faith by works of love.

Yes, faith worketh; so also does love, so also does hope. These all work, and we read of "the work of faith," that is, work to which faith prompts us; the "labour of love," that is, the toil to which love impels us; the "patience of hope," that is, the patience which hope enables us to exercise. But is faith a work because it worketh? Is love a toil because it toileth? Is hope patience because it makes us patient? Israel's looking to the brazen serpent was a ceasing from all remedies, and letting health pour itself into the body by the eye. Was the opening of the eye a work? The gospel does not command us to do anything in order to obtain life, but bids us live by that which another has done; and the knowledge of its life-giving truth is not labour but rest--rest of soul--rest which is the root of all true labour; for in receiving Christ we do not work in order to rest, but we rest in order to work. In believing, we cease to work for pardon, in order that we may work from it; and what incentive to work, as well as joy in working, can be greater than an ascertained and realized forgiveness? That there are works done before faith we know, but regarding them we know that they profit nothing, "for without faith it is impossible to please God." That there are works done after faith we also know, and they are well pleasing to God, for they are the works of believing men. But, as to any work intermediate between these two, Scripture is silent; and against transforming faith into a work the whole theology of the Reformation protested, as either a worthless verbal quibble, or as the subtlest dregs of popery.

Truly faith comes from God. The revelation which we believe, and the power of believing that revelation, are both divine. The Holy Spirit has written the Scriptures, and sent them to us to be believed for salvation; faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God. He quickens the dead soul that it may believe; and then after its believing He comes in and dwells. Hence we are said to receive the Spirit by "the hearing of faith" (Galatians 3:2). He opens our hand to receive the gift, and He places the gift in our hand when thus opened by Himself.

Never let us forget that while faith is the result of the Spirit's work in us, it is as truly the receiver of Him as the indwelling Spirit, and that in proportion to our faith will be the measure of the Spirit we shall possess. This is another of the many twofold truths or processes of Scripture: the Spirit works to enable us to believe, and we in believing receive Him and all His gifts, in greater or less abundance, according to our faith. This twofold, sometimes threefold, aspect of a truth ought not to perplex us; still less ought it to lead us to magnify one of these at the expense of the others, or to

attempt a reconciliation of the three by a denial of one, and an explaining away of texts that stand in our way. Let us admit the whole, and accept the passages as they stand. Sometimes, for example, our renewal is connected with the Spirit (Titus 3:5), sometimes with Christ's resurrection (1 Peter 1:3), sometimes with the word of truth (Ephesians 1:13), and sometimes with faith (John 1:12).

Sometimes it is spoken of as God's work (Psalms 51:10), sometimes as our own (Ezekiel 18:31; Ephesians 4:24), sometimes as the work of ministers (Philemon 1:10), sometimes as the effect of the gospel (1 Corinthians 4:15). So it is with conversion, with salvation, and with sanctification. These are all spoken of in connection with God, with Christ, with the Spirit, with the Word, with faith, with hope; and each of these aspects must be studied, not evaded.

John Calvin does not hesitate to speak of regeneration and repentance being the result of faith, (Inst. B. III., iii 1. See the whole third book). And Latimer writes, "We be born again. How? Not by a mortal seed, but by an immortal. What is this immortal seed? The Word of the living God. Thus cometh our new birth." In stating one side of the truth, these divines did not set aside the other. They taught renovation, through the truth and through faith, and they also taught renovation by the power of the Holy Ghost. They taught man's need of the Spirit in order to faith, and they also proclaimed the gift of the Spirit as the result of faith. But manifold as are these aspects, they all bear upon us personally, directly or indirectly affecting and carrying out our quickening, our healing, our joy, our comfort, and our holiness. There is no speculation in any of them, and it is truth, not opinion, that they present to us. Whatever amount of unreal religion may be in us, it is not because of any defect in the Word, any cloudiness in the gospel, any scantiness or straitness in the divine liberality, and lack in the fullness of Him in whom it hath pleased the Father that all fullness should dwell. He has made provision for our being made like Himself, and therefore He calls us to this likeness. The standard is high, but it does not admit of being lowered. The model is divine, but so is the strength given for conformity to it. Our responsibility to be holy is great, but not greater than the means provided for its full attainment. In Christ dwells all the fullness of Godhead bodily. He has the Holy Spirit for us, and this Spirit He gives freely and plenteously; for that which we receive is "grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ." The early saints were "filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost" (Acts 13:52), and we are to be "filled with the Spirit" (Ephesians 5:18), for it is the Holy Ghost Himself, not certain influences that are given unto us (Romans 5:5). He falls on us (Acts 8:16; Acts 11:15); He is shed forth on us (Acts 2:33); He is poured out on us (Ezekiel 39:29; Acts 10:45); we are baptized with the Holy Ghost (Acts 11:16).

He is the earnest of our inheritance (Ephesians 1:14); He seals us (Ephesians 1:13), imprinting on us the divine image and superscription; He teaches (1 Corinthians 2:13); He reveals (1 Corinthians 2:10); He reproves (John 16:8); He strengthens (Ephesians 3:16); He makes us fruitful (Galatians 5:22); He searches (1 Corinthians 2:10); He strives (Genesis 6:3); He sanctifles (1 Corinthians 6:11); He leads (Romans 8:14; Psalms 143:3); He instructs (Nehemiah 9:20); He speaks (1 Timothy 4:1; Revelation 2:7); He demonstrates (or proves) (1 Corinthians 2:4); He intercedes (Romans 8:26); He quickens (Romans 8:11); He gives utterance (Acts 2:4); He creates (Psalms 104:30); He comforts (John 14:26); He sheds abroad the love of God in our hearts (Romans 5:5); He renews (Titus 3:5).

He is the Spirit of holiness (Romans 1:4), the Spirit of wisdom and understanding (Isaiah 11:2; Ephesians 1:17), the Spirit of truth (John 14:17), the Spirit of knowledge (Isaiah 11:2), the Spirit of grace (Hebrews 10:29), the Spirit of glory (1 Peter 4:14), the Spirit of our God (1 Corinthians 6:11), the Spirit of the living God (2 Corinthians 3:3), the good Spirit (Nehemiah 9:20), the Spirit of Christ (1 Peter 1:11), the Spirit of adoption (Romans 8:15), the Spirit of life (Revelation 11:11), and the Spirit of His Son (Galatians 4:6).

Such is the Holy Spirit by whom we are sanctified (2 Thessalonians 2:13), "the eternal Spirit" by whom "Christ offered Himself without spot to God" (Hebrews 9:14). Such is the Holy Spirit by whom we are "sealed unto the day of redemption" (Ephesians 4:30), the Spirit who makes us His habitation (Ephesians 2:22), who dwelleth in us (2 Timothy 1:14), by whom we are kept looking to and looking for Christ and by whom we are made to "abound in hope" (Romans 15:13). On the right receiving and entertaining of this heavenly Guest, much of a holy life depends. Let us bid Him welcome--not vexing, nor resisting, nor grieving, nor quenching Him, but loving Him and delighting in His love ("the love of the Spirit," Romans 15:30), 50 that our life may be a living in the Spirit (Galatians 5:25), a walking in the Spirit (Galatians 5:16), a praying in the Spirit (Jude 1:20).

While distinguishing Christ’s work for us and the Spirit’s work in us, and so preserving our conscious pardon unbroken, yet let us not separate the two by any interval; but allowing both to do their work, let us "follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord" (Hebrews 12:14), keeping our hearts in "the fellowship of the Spirit" (Php 2:1), and delighting ourselves in "the communion of the Holy Ghost" (2 Corinthians 13:14). The double form of expression, bringing out the mutual or reciprocal indwelling of Christ and of the Spirit in us, is worthy of special note. Christ in us (Colossians 1:27) is the one side; we in Christ is the other (2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 2:20). The Holy Spirit in us (Romans 8:9) is the one aspect; we live in the Spirit (Galatians 5:25) is the other. Nay, further, this twofold expression is used of Godhead also, in these remarkable words: "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God" (1 John 4:15).

It would seem as if no figure, however strong and full, could adequately express the closeness of contact, the nearness of relationship, the entire oneness into which we are brought, in receiving the divine testimony to the person and work of the Son of God. Are we not then most strongly committed to a life of holiness, as well as furnished with all the supplies needful for caring it out? With such a fullness of strength and life at our disposal, what a responsibility is ours! "What manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness!" And if to all this we add the prospects presented to us, the hope of the advent and the kingdom and the glory, we shall feel ourselves compassed on every side with the motives, materials and appliances best fitted for making us what we are meant to be, "a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people" (1 Peter 2:9), (1) "zealous of good works" here (Titus 2:14), and possessors of "glory and honor, and immortality" hereafter (Romans 2:7).

(1) It is remarkable that these words were first used regarding Israel (Exodus 19:5-6; Deuteronomy 7:6). showing us that Old Testament saints did not stand On a lower level than New Testament ones. Most of the expressions used concerning the church’s privileges are Old Testament ones, borrowed from Israel’s privileges. To the latter belonged the heavenly kingdom (Matthew 5:3: Matthew 8:11), the sonship (Exodus 4:22-23), the adoption, and the glory, and the promises

(Romans 9:4).

04.03. Chapter 3. The Root And Soil Of Holiness

God’s Way of Holiness

Chapter 3 Every plant must have both soil and root. Without both of these there can be no life, no growth, no fruit.

Holiness must have these. The root is "peace with God"; the soil in which that root strikes itself, and out of which it draws the vital sap, is the free love of God, in Christ Jesus our Lord. "Rooted in love" is the apostle’s description of a holy man. Holiness is not austerity or gloom; these are as alien to it as levity and flippancy. Nor is it the offspring of terror, or suspense, or uncertainty, but peace, conscious peace, and this peace must be rooted in grace; it must be the consequence of our having ascertained, upon sure evidence, the forgiving love of God.

He who would lead us into holiness must "guide our feet into the way of peace" (Luke 1:79). He must show us how we, "being delivered out of the hand of our enemies," may serve God "without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him, all the days of our life" (Luke 1:74-75). He who would do this must also "give us the knowledge of salvation, by the remission of sins." He must tell us how, through "the tender mercy of our God ... the dayspring from on high hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death"(Luke 1:78-79). In carrying out the great work of making us holy, God speaks to us, as "the God of peace" (Romans 16:20), "the very God of peace" (1 Thessalonians 5:23) and as being Himself "our peace" (Ephesians 2:14). That which we receive from Him, as such, is not merely "peace with God" (Romans 5:1), but "the peace of God" (Php 4:7), the thing which the Lord calls "My peace," "My joy" (John 14:27; John 15:11). It is in connection with the exhortation, "Be perfect," that the apostle sets down the gracious assurance: "The God of love and peace shall be with you" (2 Corinthians 11:1). "These things I will that thou affirm constantly," says the apostle, speaking of "the grace of God that bringeth salvation," "the kindness and love of God our Savior," the mercy of God," "justification by His grace," in order that (such is the force of the Greek) "they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works" (Titus 3:8). In this "peace with God" there is, of course, contained salvation, forgiveness, deliverance from the wrath to come. But these, though precious, are not terminating points; not ends, but beginnings; not the top but the bottom of that ladder which rests its foot upon the new sepulchre wherein never man was laid, and its top against the gate of the holy city. He, therefore, who is contenting himself with these, has not yet learned the true purport of the gospel, nor the end which God, from eternity, had in view when preparing for us such a redemption as that which He has accomplished for the sons of men, through His only begotten Son, ’who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity."

Without these, holiness is impossible, so that we may say this at least, that it is through them that holiness is made practicable, for the legal condition of the sinner, as under wrath, stood as a barrier between him and the possibility of holiness. So long as he was under condemnation, the Law prohibited the approach of everything that would make him holy. The Law bars salvation, except on the fulfillment of its claims; so it bars holiness, until the great satisfaction to its claims

has been recognized by the individual, that is, until he has believed the divine testimony to the atonement of the cross, and so been personally set free from condemnation. The Law pronounces against the idea of holiness in an unforgiven man. It protests against it as an incongruity, and as an injury to righteousness. If, then, a pardoned man's remaining unholy seem strange, much more so a holy man's remaining unpardoned. The sinner's legal position must be set right before his moral position can be touched. Condition is one thing; character is another. The sinner's standing before God, either in favor or disfavor, either under grace or under wrath, must first be dealt with ere his inner renewal can be carried on. The judicial must precede the moral.

Hence it is of pardon that the gospel first speaks to us, for the question of pardon must first be settled before we proceed to others. The adjustment of the relationship between us and God is an indispensable preliminary, both on God's part and on ours. There must be friendship between us, ere He can bestow or we receive His indwelling Spirit; for on the one hand, the Spirit cannot make His dwelling in the unforgiven; and on the other, the unforgiven must be so occupied with the one question of forgiveness, that they are not at leisure to attend to anything till this has been finally settled in their favor. The man who knows that the wrath of God is still upon him, or, which is the same thing practically, is not sure whether it has been turned away or not, is really not in a condition to consider other questions, however important, if he has any true idea of the magnitude and terribleness of the anger of Him who is a consuming fire. The divine order then is first pardon, then holiness; first peace with God, and then conformity to the image of that God with whom we have been brought to be at peace. For as likeness to God is produced by beholding His glory (2 Corinthians 3:18), and as we cannot look upon Him till we know that He has ceased to condemn us, and as we cannot trust Him till we know that He is gracious; so we cannot be transformed into His image till we have received pardon at His hands. Reconciliation is indispensable to resemblance; personal friendship must begin a holy life.

If such be the case, pardon cannot come too soon, even were the guilt of an unpardoned state not reason enough for any amount of urgency in obtaining it without delay. Nor can we too strongly insist upon the divine order above referred to: first peace, then holiness--peace as the foundation of holiness, even in the case of the chief of sinners.

Some do not object to a reputable man obtaining immediate peace, but they object to a profligate getting it at once! So it has always been; the old taunt is still on the lip of the modem Pharisee: "He is gone to be a guest with a man that is a sinner," and the Simons of our day speak within themselves and say, "This man, if He were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth Him, for she is a sinner" (Luke 7:39). But what then of Manasseh, and Magdalene, and Saul, and the woman of Sychar, and the jailer, and the men of Jerusalem, whose hands were red with blood? Were they not trusted with a free and immediate peace? Did not the very essence and strength of the gospel's curative and purifying power lie in the freeness, the promptness, the certainty of the peace which it brought to these "chief of sinners?" "So you say you have found Christ, and have peace with God?" said one who claimed the name of "evangelical," to a poor profligate who, only a few weeks before, had been drawn to the cross. "I have indeed," said the poor man. "I have found Him, I have peace, and I know it." 'Know it!" said the divine, "and have you the presumption to tell me this?

I have been a respectable member of a church for thirty years, and have not got peace nor assurance yet, and you, who have been a profligate most of your life, say that you have peace with God!" "Yes, I have been as bad as a man can well be, but I have believed the gospel, and that gospel is good news for the like of me; and if I have no right to peace, I had better go back to my sins, for if I cannot get peace as I am, I shall never get it at all." "It's all a delusion," said the other. 'Do you think that God would give a sinner like you peace, and not give it to me who have been doing all I can to get it for so many years?" "You are such a respectable man," said the other, in unconscious irony, "that you can get on without peace and pardon, but a wretch like me cannot.

If my peace is a delusion, it cannot be a bad one, for it makes me leave off sin, and makes me pray and read my Bible. Since I got it, I have turned over a new leaf." "It won't last," said the other. "Well, but it is a good thing while it does last, and it is strange to see the like of you trying to take from me the only thing that ever did me good. It looks as if you would be glad to see me going back to my old sins. You never tried to bring me to Christ, and, now when I have come to Him, you are doing all you can to take me away. But I'll stick to Him in spite of you."

Some speak as if it were imperiling morality to let the sinner obtain immediate peace with God. If the peace be false, morality may be compromised by men pretending to the possession of a peace which is yet no peace. But, in that case, the evil complained of is the result of the hollowness, not the suddenness, of the peace, and can afford no ground for objecting to speedy peace, unless speedy peace is of necessity false, and unless the mere length of the process is security for the genuineness of the result. The existence of false peace is no argument against the true, and what we affirm is, that true peace can neither be too speedy nor too sure.

Others speak as if no sinner could be trusted with pardon till he has undergone a certain amount of preliminary mental suffering, more or less in duration and in intensity according to circumstances. It would be dangerous to the interests of morality to let him obtain an immediate pardon and, especially, to be sure of it, or to rejoice in it. If the man has been previously moral in life, they would not object to this; but they question the profligate's right to present peace, and protest against the propriety of it on grounds of subtle morality. They argue for delay, to give him time to improve before he ventures to speak of pardon. They insist upon a long season of preparatory conflict, years of sad suspense and uncertainty, in order to qualify the prodigal for his father's embrace, and to prevent the unseemly spectacle of a sinner this week rejoicing in the forgiveness of his sins, who last week was wallowing in the mire. This season of delay, during which they would prohibit the sinner from assuring himself of God's free love, they consider the proper safeguard of a free gospel, and the needful guarantee for the sinner's future humility and holiness. Is not, then, the position taken up by these men substantially that adopted by the scribes, when they murmured at the Lord's gracious familiarity with the unworthy, saying, "This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them"? And is it not in great measure coincident with the opinion of popish divines respecting the danger to morality from the doctrine of immediate justification through simple faith in the justifying work of Christ? When Bishop Gardiner, the popish persecutor, lay dying in 1555, Day, Bishop of Chichester, "began to comfort him," says Foxe, "with words of God's promise, and free justification by the blood of Christ." "What," said the dying Romanist, "Will you open that gap?" meaning that inlet of evil. "To me and others in my case you may speak of it, but once open this window to the people, then farewell all good." The apostles evidently had great confidence in the gospel. They gave it fair play, and spoke it out in all its absolute freeness, as

men who could trust it for its moral influence, as well as for its saving power, and who felt that the more speedily and certainly its good news were realized by the sinner, the more would that moral influence come into play. They did not hide it, nor trammel it, nor fence it round with conditions, as if doubtful of the policy of preaching it freely. "Be it known unto you,' they said, "men and brethren, that through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins, and by Him all that believe are justified" (Acts 13:38-39).

They had no misgivings as to its bearings on morality, nor were they afraid of men believing it too soon, or getting too immediate relief from it. The idea does not seem to have entered their mind, that men could betake themselves to Christ too soon, or too confidently, or without sufficient preparation. Their object in preaching it was, not to induce men to commence a course of preparation for receiving Christ, but to receive Him at once and on the spot; not to lead them through the long avenue of a gradually amended life to the cross of the Sin-bearer, but to bring them at once into contact with the cross, that sin in them might be slain, the old man crucified, and a life of true morality begun. As the strongest motive to a holy life, they preached the cross. They knew that,

"The cross once seen is death to every vice," and in the interests of holiness they stood and pleaded with men to take the proffered peace.

It is no disparagement to morality to say that good works are not the way to Christ. It is no slighting of the sacraments to say that they are not the sinner's resting-place, so neither is it any deprecation of devotion, or repentance, or prayer, to say that they are not qualifying processes which fit the sinner for approaching the Savior, either as making the sinner more acceptable or Christ more willing to receive. Still less is it derogating from the usefulness or the blessedness of these exercises, in their proper place and office, to say that they are often the refuges of self-righteousness, pretexts which the sinner makes use of to excuse his guilt in not at once taking salvation from the hands of Jesus. We do not undervalue love because we say a man is not justified by love, but by faith. We do not discourage prayer, because we preach that a man is not justified by prayer, but by faith. When we say that believing is not working, but a ceasing from work, we do not mean that the believing man is not to work, but that he is not to work for pardon, but to take it freely, and that he is to believe before he works, for works done before believing are not pleasing to God. Is it the case that the sinner cannot be trusted with the gospel? In one sense this is true. He cannot be trusted with anything. He abuses everything. He turns everything to bad account. He makes everything the minister of sin. But if he cannot be trusted with the gospel, can he be trusted with the Law'? If he cannot be trusted with grace, can he be trusted with righteousness? He cannot be trusted with an immediate pardon; can he be trusted with a tardy one? He cannot be trusted with faith; can he be trusted with doubt? He cannot be trusted with peace; can he be trusted with gloom and trouble? He cannot be trusted with assurance; can he be trusted with suspense, and will uncertainty do for him what certainty cannot? That which he can, after all, best be trusted with, is the gospel. He has abused it, he may abuse it, but he is less likely to abuse it than anything else. It appeals to deeper, stronger, and more numerous motives than all other things together. (1)

Hence the apostles trusted the gospel with the sinner, and the sinner with the gospel, so unreservedly, and (as many in our day would say) unguardedly. 'To him that worketh not, but

believeth, his faith is counted for righteousness," was a bold statement. It is that of one who had great confidence in the gospel which he preached, who had no misgivings as to its unholy tendencies, if men would but give it fair play. He Himself always preached it as one who believed it to be the power of God unto holiness, no less than unto salvation. That this is the understanding of the New Testament, the "mind of the Spirit," requires no proof. Few would in words deny it to be so; only they state the gospel so timorously, so warily, so guardedly, with so many conditions, terms, and reservations, that by the time they have finished their statement, they have left no good news in that which they set out with announcing as "the gospel of the grace of God." The more fully that the gospel is preached, in the grand old apostolic way, the more likely is it to accomplish the results which it did in the apostolic days. The gospel is the proclamation of free love; the revelation of the boundless charity of God. Nothing less than this will suit our world; nothing else is so likely to touch the heart, to go down to the lowest depths of depraved humanity, as the assurance that the sinner has been loved--loved by God, loved with a righteous love, loved with a free love that makes no bargain as to merit, or fitness, or goodness. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us!" (1 John 4:10). As the lord of the vineyard, after sending servant upon servant to the husbandman in vain, sent at last his "one son, his well-beloved" (Mark 12:6), so, Law having failed, God has dispatched to us the message of His love, as that which is by far the likeliest to secure His ends. With nothing less than this free love will He trust our fallen race.

He will not trust them with law, or judgment, or terror (though these are well in their place), but He will trust them with His love! Not with a stinted or conditional love, with half pardons, or an uncertain salvation, or a tardy peace, or a doubtful invitation, or an all but impracticable amnesty--not with these does He cheat the heavy laden; not with these will He mock the weary sons of men. He wants them to be holy, as well as safe, and He knows that there is nothing in heaven or earth so likely to produce holiness, under the teaching of the Spirit of holiness, as the knowledge of His own free love. It is not law, but "the love of Christ," that constraineth! "The strength of sin is the law" (1 Corinthians 15:56), so the strength of holiness is deliverance from the law (Romans 7:6). Yet are we not "without law" (1 Corinthians 9:21), neither yet "under the law" (Romans 6:14), but "under grace," that we should "serve in newness of Spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter."

Thus Calvin writes, "Consciences obey the law, not constrained by the necessity of law, but, being made free from the yoke of law, they voluntarily obey the will of God. They are in perpetual terror as long as they are under the dominion of the Law, and are never disposed to obey God with delighted eagerness unless they have first received this liberty" (Inst xix. 4). "Not to be under the law," says Luther "is to do good and abstain from evil, not through the compulsion of law, but by free love and with gladness." "If any man ask me," says Tyndale, "seeing faith justifies me, why I work, I answer, love compelleth me; for as long as my soul feeleth what love God hath showed me in Christ, I cannot but love God again, and His will and commandments, and of love work them; nor can they seem hard to me" (Pref. to Exodus). "When faith hath bathed a man’s heart in the blood of Christ, it is so mollified that it quickly dissolves into tears of godly sorrow; so that if Christ but turn and look upon him, oh, then with Peter he goes out and weeps bitterly. And this is true gospel mourning; this is right evangelical repenting" (Fisher’s Marrow of Modern Divinity). But so many (it is said) of those who were awakened under the preaching of this very free gospel have gone back, that suspicions arise as to whether it may not be the ultra-freeness of the gospel

preached that has produced the evil. It is suggested that, had the gospel been better guarded both before and behind, we should have seen fewer falls and less inconsistency. To this our answer is ready. Multitudes "went back" from our Lord, yet no one could blame His preaching. There were many grievous corruptions in the early church, yet we do not connect these with apostolic doctrine. Our Lord's parable of the sower implies that, however good the seed might be, and careful the sower; there would be stony-ground hearers and thorny-ground hearers going a certain length and then turning back, so that the backslidings complained of are such as the apostles experienced, such as our Lord led us to anticipate, under the preaching of His own full gospel.

Further than this, however, we add that, while the preaching of a guarded gospel may lead to no backslidings, it will accomplish no awakenings; so that the question will come to be this: is it not better to have some failings away when many are aroused, than to have no failing away, because none have been shaken? The question as to what kind of teaching results in fewest backslidings is, no doubt, an important one; but still it is subordinate to the main one: what preaching produces, upon the whole, the most conversions, and brings most glory to God? Apostasies will occur in the best of churches, bringing with them scandal to the name of Jesus, and suspicion of the gospel as the cause of all the evil. But is this a new thing in the earth? Is it not one of the things that strikingly identify us with Corinth, and Sardis, and Laodicea? A minister who has never had his heart wounded with apostasy, who knows nothing of the disappointment of cherished hopes, has too good reason to suspect that there is something sadly wrong, and that the reason of there being no backslidings in his flock, is because death is reigning. Where all is silence or sleep, where the preaching does not shake and penetrate, there will be fewer failings away; but the reason is, that there was nothing to fall away from. "Where are your converts now?" was the question put to a faithful minister who had had to mourn the fall of some who once .ran well." "Just where they were: the true still holding fast; the untrue showing themselves." It was meant as a taunt, but it was a taunt which might have been cast at apostles. It was a taunt which carried comfort with it, as reminding the faithful minister of apostolic disappointment, and so bringing him into fellowship with Paul himself, and as recalling the blessed fact that though some had fallen, more were standing. The whole Galatian church had lapsed into error and sin. How does the apostle cure the evil? By fencing or paring down the gospel, and making it less free? No, but by reiterating its freeness; nay, stating it more freely than ever. How free does he represent it in the Epistle! Hence Luther chose it for comment, as the one best suiting himself.

Some ask the question: "is it not a suspicious sign of your gospel, that any of the hearers of it should say, 'May we continue in sin, that grace may abound?"' On the contrary, it is a safe sign of it. Had it not been very like Paul's gospel, it would not have led to the same inquiry with which the apostle's preaching was met. The restricted, guarded, conditional gospel, which some give us, as the ultimatum of their good news, would have suggested no such thought as that which the sixth chapter of Romans was written to obviate. The argument of the apostle, in such a case, becomes un-meaning and superfluous, and hence that statement which prompts some caviler to ask the question: "Shall we sin, because we are not under the Law, but under grace?" (Romans 6:15) is not at all unlikely to be the authentic Pauline gospel, the genuine doctrine of apostolic antiquity.

(1) The teaching of some in the present day seems fitted, that of others intended, to hinder assurance. Assurance. say some, is impossible. Not impossible, say others, but very hard of attainment; not only very hard, but very long of being reached, requiring at least some thirty or

forty years of prayer and good works. Very dangerous, say others, introducing presumption. and sure to end in apostasy. I confess I do not see how my being thoroughly persuaded that a holy God loves me with a holy love, and has forgiven me all my sins, has a tendency to evil (even though I may have reached that conclusion quickly.) It seems, of all truths, one of the likeliest to make me holy, to kindle love, to stimulate to good works, and to abase all pride; whereas uncertainty in this matter enfeebles me, darkens me, bewilders me, incapacitates me for service or, at the best, sets me striving to work my way into the favor of God, under the influence of a subordinate and mercenary class of motives, which can do nothing but keep me dreading and doubting all the days of my life, leaving me, perhaps, at the close, in hopeless darkness.

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