

THE GOSPEL MAGAZINE.

"COMFORT YE, COMFORT YE, MY PEOPLE, SAITH YOUR GOD."

"ENDEAVOURING TO KEEP THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT IN THE BOND OF PEACE."

"JESUS CHRIST, THE SAME YESTERDAY, TO-DAY, AND FOR EVER. WHOM TO KNOW
IS LIFE ETERNAL."

VOL. VIII.]

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[No 91.

WEAK IN MYSELF, BUT STRONG IN THE LORD.

"*And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee : for my strength is made perfect in weakness.*" 2 COR. XII. 9.

BELOVED,—a deep-felt sense of weakness never was, nor can it be, congenial to the natural man—no, nor to the spiritual man, as far as his fleshly or first-Adam state is concerned. It is too humbling—too mortifying—makes him too great a pauper upon Divine bounty and Jehovah's discriminating mercy. But as he stands in Christ a new man—a redeemed man—an everlasting and unalterably blessed man, that entire weakness which brings him day by day to lean upon Jesus, from a deep sense of his own absolute helplessness, is most blessed in its operations, and equally blessed in its consequences. The apostle never would have known one tittle of the mercy that the Lord was about to reveal to him, but for that thorn in the flesh which compelled him again and again to betake himself to the mercy-seat, there to breathe out his sorrows, pour forth his fears, and earnestly beg and entreat the Lord to come forth in his divine succour and all-precious deliverance. And how manifest was the Lord's mercy in that, that he not only took advantage of the opportunity which this thorn in the flesh afforded him, but in the Divine assurance that he himself had appointed the thorn, and regulated all the circumstances in connexion

with it, on purpose that his power might be displayed, and the secret love of his heart made known, by the blessed results which should flow therefrom.

What Paul's thorn in the flesh was is matter of little or no moment. Doubtless it was Divine wisdom that prevented the record, so that none of Paul's poor troubled brethren should, in after ages, reason with themselves, "Yes, truly the Lord helped, and strengthened, and ultimately delivered Paul, but it was under such and such a trial. It was the *Lord's* trial brought to bear upon the *Lord's* servant. But it was altogether unlike *mine*, therefore *I* cannot calculate upon, nor indulge in the hope of, the same grace."

Now this objection never can be raised, because the Holy Ghost hath manifestly kept us in the dark as to what the identical trial was. Suffice it, that it was to Paul what he intends every trial with which he visits his children should be, "a thorn in the flesh,"—pricking, wounding, most mortifying, something to cause discomfort, vexation, and annoyance. And this thorn must be thrust into the tenderest, the most sensitive part. The trial must be that which we should have most dreaded, and last have chosen. It is called the "messenger of Satan," not to imply that Satan had the dominion of Paul, or the absolute control of the trial, but rather that Jehovah employed him as the bearer (and doubtless a most willing one he was—for

" He worries when he can't destroy,
With a malicious jo "

of the trial,—not to gratify him, but to exhibit, as in the case of Job, the majesty of his arm, and the unchangeable character of his love, as sustaining—yea, and comforting his children, when apparently given over to the power of Satan, and deprived of all those earthly dependencies and delights upon which they were wont to lean, or in which they had been accustomed to solace themselves.

But do mark, beloved, the working or operation of the trial, and oh, how blessed it is when such is the case with others of the same family and similarly exercised. It did not stir up his rebellion, nor draw forth those evils which were pent up in Paul's heart, and must, but for Divine keeping, have burst forth in rage, as in Jonah's case, when he exclaimed, "I do well to be angry—yea, even unto death" [oh, the forbearance of our God!]; but the same Lord who sent the trial, sent with it grace for the trial. He mingled with the bitter ingredients of the cup some honey-drops; and these drank off, instantly is experienced a soothing and sustaining power, the which causes him to turn his heart and his eye to the Lord, with a "Lord, help me; Lord, sustain me; Lord, comfort me; Lord, come forth for my deliverance: help, Lord; defend, Lord; deliver, Lord! Remember thy poor child; let him not sink—put him not to shame or confusion; but make thy mighty power known in the displays of thy fatherly love and mercy." "I besought the Lord thrice," says he, "that it might depart from me." "I besought him." It was not the "prayer of complaint," nor the prayer of duty, or habit, or for example's sake; but it was a holy wrestling; it was the cry for help of a man that was in difficulty and

danger. It was the Peter's prayer, "Lord, save, or I perish;" it was the Jacob's cry, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me;" it was the Moses' remembrancer, "What wilt thou do unto thy great name?" Good old-fashioned prayers these, beloved. There is nothing half-hearted about them; but the beseechings in downright earnestness; the prayers that none but the Holy Ghost can enkindle, and the prayers that the Holy Ghost would not for his name's sake—his covenant oath's sake—refuse to hearken unto. Beloved, did you ever present these and similar prayers at the throne? Are they sent in, and are you yet waiting for an answer? Still wait. An answer you shall surely have. It is impossible for you to be refused. You have had your hearing. You have sent in the very petitions the Lord enkindled in your breast, and an answer—containing all, yea, and more than all—you could think of or desire, *you must have.*

"My soul, ask what thou wilt
Thou canst not be denied."

Were it possible for a soul thus pleading to be denied, Jehovah-Jesus would break his word, and there would be a disruption between the persons of the Holy Trinity; for the Father and the Son would be rejecting the pleadings of the Holy Ghost, for it is alone by the Holy Ghost that all Divine prayer is offered. The carnal man cannot pray, nor can the spiritual man, as a mere man, pray. Every thought, and every desire, and every breathing, God-ward and Zion-ward, is wholly and solely of the Holy Ghost; and being so, an answer of peace is the sure and certain consequence.

And now, beloved, take notice of the answer. "My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness." The Lord does not take away the trial—he removes not the burden—but he does more—he answers Paul's prayer in a much more gracious way. "My grace is sufficient for thee." "I will continue the trial; the thorn shall remain; but underneath shall be the everlasting arms. I will not try thee above measure, nor forget what thou art nor what thy weakness is. All this I will carefully remember; but with the trial, Paul, I will give thee such strength, such comfort, such divine consolation; I will pour into thy aching heart such sweet cordials, into thy bosom shall flow such a soothing oil, that thou shalt enjoy the trial, and bless the hand that laid it on. I will maintain such peace in thy breast, and so entertain thee at grace's banquet in the midst of thy wilderness passage, that oftentimes thou shalt really say, "Whether in the body I cannot tell, or whether out of the body I cannot tell. God knoweth."

Well then, dear reader, may Paul say—and well may you and ourselves, under all the trials which our loving Father wisely lays upon us, exclaim, "Most gladly therefore will we rather glory in our infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon us."

Ireland, June 22, 1848.

THE EDITOR,

DR. HAWKER'S WORKS.

To the Editor of the Gospel Magazine.

DEAR EDITOR,

The Number of the "Christian Witness" for May, 1847, has just been handed to me by a friend, with the view of letting me see one sentence written by a reviewer, in relation to Dr Hawker's Poor Man's Commentary. It occurs at the head of the first column of page 235. I will not extract it, for I would not have you defile your pages with it. But I would say that in this thing, the "Christian Witness," so called, is a false witness. Many a poor man—I mean poor in spirit, as the Doctor meant it—knows from heartfelt experience, and from the unction to his heart, that has attended the perusal of the Commentary, that the good old man wrote it under the special influence of the Holy Spirit. I, for myself, to speak egotistically, can so testify. Many a time its perusal has been attended with a refreshing from the presence of the Lord. While other works, such as the so-called "Christian Witness," leave only a gap behind, I never take up the writings of Dr. Hawker without sensibly feeling that my heart is brought into communion with God, and being hence convinced that they are excellently calculated for the spiritually minded, and to strengthen this noble quality of the new-born children of God. "To be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." I understand that the Editor of the "Christian Witness" has lately become the Editor of a paper, called the "British Banner." I have seen some Numbers of it, and it appears to me to be well calculated to be useful at the present time in the political world. I would therefore advise him to let the Church of Christ alone, and confine himself to that, for which he is evidently better qualified. He has a good claim to be called a *Political Witness*, but very little indeed to be called a *Christian Witness*. He has not yet seen himself in the glass of God's holy law. Carnal nature predominates, and has the mastery. May the Lord the Spirit become his Teacher, and then we shall soon see an elevation in his theology.

St. John's, New Brunswick, April 2, 1848.

P.

[Our own sentiments as to the intrinsic worth of the late Dr. Hawker's writings being quite in unison with those of our correspondent, we take this opportunity of renewing the expression of our most fervent hope, that the scheme of our esteemed correspondent "Gershon," may be carried out. It is those only who move in a sphere where there is an almost total absence of such works, that can know their real value, and estimate the efforts of those who would extend their circulation. It would give us real pleasure to think that an additional thousand copies of the Doctor's Portions were in the hands of the public; and a little exertion on the part of our readers will secure this. The value of such works in Ireland and on the Continent would be incalculable.—We are rejoiced to hear, that another work of Dr. Hawker's is in course of preparation for the press.—ED.]

VISITS TO THE BRETHREN.

(Concluded from page 256.)

"I will mention the loving-kindnesses of the Lord," said Isaiah. And is it not a precious employment, dear reader? When the Lord the Spirit, as the gracious Remembrancer, leads back the mind over the journey of life, and shows with what skill, and yet with how great tenderness, He has conducted you through all its intricacies; how grateful the contemplation! The visit to former well-known spots—especially those of childhood and youth—will sometimes bring vividly to the mind numberless exercises, when the far-spread wilderness was just opening before one, and ten thousand misgivings pressed upon the spirit in anticipation of the journey, without as yet the conscious recognition of a Friend and Counsellor. But now to tread those former spots, and with those reminiscences to compare the line of love and mercy long pursued by that self-same blessed ONE, whom though in former days was heard of, yet not personally known; who now stood graciously revealed as the life and light—the present and eternal portion of the soul. How refreshing such review! For

*"His love in times past forbids us to think
He'll leave us at last in trouble to sink :
Each sweet Ebenezer we have in review,
Confirms His good pleasure to help us quite through."*

Monday, March 27.—Left "home" this morning, and returned to L.—. Met many dear Christian friends, and recounted the gracious mercies of our God. Passing an old book-stall, one stopped to tell me how the Lord once met with him. In great heaviness of heart, he opened a copy of Krummacher's Elijah, there exhibited for sale. The sentence that first struck his eye was touchingly sweet; he bought the book—read on—was abundantly refreshed; and by that simple circumstance the heart was so opened, and the love of the brethren so drawn forth, that a series of most instructive and soul-comforting tracts were the result. "Who hath despised the day of small things?" Suppose that only *one soul* were to be cheered thereby, yet how great that work, and how acceptable to Him who hath declared that not a cup of cold water given in the name of a disciple shall lose its reward. Alas! how prone are we to lose sight—nay, to be comparatively indifferent to the minutiae of Jehovah's Providence! Would that He would indulge us, his children, with a keener viewing—a more lively sensibility—of the methods of his grace and mercy!

March 29.—Awoke with a sweet subject for the evening at Kensington. Found at breakfast that friend Hewlett had just preached from the same text in the same place. The mind was, in consequence, diverted. Felt quite at a loss for a subject. Went out—called on a dear deeply-tried lady, who, telling of the agonizing affliction of one of our former correspondents, and others painfully troubled, the Lord led the mind to

Jer. xxxi. 20. Strictly speaking, this passage may read, "Is not Ephraim my dear Son? is he not a pleasant child," &c. The Lord seems to put the question just as some tender-hearted father would who, upon being informed of the prodigal acts of his child, sums up all, not by a denial of that prodigality, but by an acknowledgment of the relationship, as if he would say, "'Tis true—'tis all true what you say of him. But is he not my child—my dear son—still? I hate his *actions*, but I love (and cannot but love) *him*. I have spoken against him—I have chastised him; yet he is my child—my dear child—still. My heart yearns over him; yea, 'my very bowels are troubled for him.' Say no more. Tell me not further of his doings; for my mind is made up concerning him." "I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord." Ah! this is what breaks the heart—

"Makes sovereign mercy dear to me,
And Jesus all in all."

And did you ever consider, dear reader, a very blessed responding to this confession of relationship, as exhibited in the prodigal son? There is one little yet all-important word in his history, that contains volumes of instruction and comfort. Now turn to the 15th of Luke, and there you see that as soon as the poor prodigal "comes to himself," he says, "I will arise and go to my Father [mark the claim of relationship] and will say unto him, Father [Father again—very sweet; what so touching—what so calculated to touch the tender chord, to set all the bowels of love, pity, and compassion, in motion?] Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called *thy son* [see the kindred-claim again. Now mark] make me as one [not make me one, but *as* one—put me in the degraded position of one] of thy hired servants." No, notwithstanding all his degradation and demerit, he would not—he could not—forget that he was a son, though a rebellious—an ungrateful—son, still. Poor backsliding reader (if we are addressing such) go, try the experiment. If thou hast any—the least—recollection whatever of the Lord's sweet overtures of love—assurances of mercy—tokens of Divine relationship, in times that are gone by—go, plead them before the throne; and though with a trembling step and faltering tongue, cry, "Father—father; look upon thy son—thy ill-and-hell-deserving son." Remember that the Lord himself told this story of the prodigal, just to set forth the love of his heart, and to give a lively example of the welcome with which every poor sin-stricken soul would be received.

But, dear reader, do mark another sweet feature in this precious history of the prodigal. He returns to his Father; or rather he sets out on his return. But "when he is yet a great way off," the Father sees him—runs forward, falls on his neck, and kisses him. The son begins his tale of woe, sets about making his confession, but is stopped—lovingly interrupted—by the heart-yearning, love-overwhelming tenderness and sympathy of his Father. Not a word will the Father hear about his *son* being dealt with as a *servant*. Oh no, no. But the best robe shall be brought forth, and the ring, and the shoes; the fatted calf shall be killed: and in the midst of their merriment the Father shall be heard to exclaim, "This *my son* was dead and is alive again; he was lost, and is found."

Reader, when conscience-smitten and humbled in the dust under the deep-felt sense of renewed rebellions and departures—when afresh drawn to the throne, and you have gone resolving to make a free and unreserved acknowledgment of your many and aggravated sins ; say, has not the Lord always stopped you in the same, and ere you were aware, given you most blessedly to realize the fulfilment of the promise (Isa. lxv. 24), “Before they call I will answer, and while they are yet speaking, I will hear,” by giving you a fresh faith’s view of Christ in the efficacy of his blood and completeness of righteousness ? Blood has been dropped upon the conscience, and with the sense of it has come such sweetness—such a soothing tenderness—such precious bedewings of love, and grace, and compassion, that your whole soul has been overwhelmed, and you have dropped at Immanuel’s feet in wonder, love, and adoration,

“Weeping to the praise of the mercy you’ve found.”

Ah ! this is grace—rich grace—indeed ! and it is blessed—yea, most blessed—to stand and talk about it to poor fellow-sinners, when the truthfulness of it, and the power of it, and the preciousness of it, is realized in the heart. “This will make the lame man to leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb to sing.” This will despatch all nervousness—dissipate all fear—and make a man bold as a lion in his Master’s service and his Master’s name !

Friday, 31st.—Went into Yorkshire. Met some of the Lord’s family, previously unknown, at Huddersfield. The story of grace had a newness in it, and it was sweet and refreshing to hear from fresh lips, of the Lord’s wonderful doings. In the selfishness and contractedness of our hearts, we are sometimes ready to imagine we have the Lord all to ourselves, and that he is lavishing all his grace, and his goodness, and his mercy, upon us, individually and personally, but contact with the family proves how little we know either of the wisdom, or the power, or the love, of our wonderful Lord ! Others—yea, thousands upon thousands, and these thousands multiplied by other thousands, live upon the same bounty, and have just the same grace, and the same goodness to speak of and to admire !

Saturday, April 1.—Rode over this morning to see dear P——. We lament—God is our witness—anything like differences or divisions among the real children. We met as brethren ; and, and if we may test communion *by time*, the rector of Elmley and his former friend and correspondent had communion, for the apportioned half-hour had almost imperceptibly multiplied seven times, and the evening found us not at Harewood, but at Manchester ! Here again we were favoured with the mutual greetings, and the refreshing converse by the way, of several of the Lord’s children—all speaking the same language, and admirers and partakers of the same precious grace. Oh, how we long to meet them where there shall be neither sin to annoy, nor separation to anticipate !

Sunday, 2nd.—Took early train to Astley. Found dear H—— in his element, in the best conducted school we ever saw, with upwards of

400 children,—clean, neat, orderly. We cannot contemplate Astley with its former dilapidated church, and some ten or fifteen attendants, and contrast it with what it now is, without exclaiming, "What hath God wrought?" Read prayers in the morning, after the sermon about 125 received the Lord's Supper. The church was full, or very nearly so, and a most interesting spectacle it was. In the afternoon the church was again crowded to excess. Every corner and crevice was filled. Our brother H—— had scarcely left himself standing room either in pulpit or desk. His next enlargement (being about the fourth or fifth), we presume must be to unroof, and build upwards, a second or a third tier of galleries. Preached from Peter xxxiv. 5, "They looked unto him, and were lightened, and their faces were not ashamed." We shall not readily forget the services of that day, nor can we cease to admire the very gracious way in which the Lord frequently brings the minds of his children in contact with circumstances and events, that make manifest at a glance his wonder-working hand, and almighty and equally-gracious power. The former and only time on which we had been in that church was when "the burden of the word of the Lord" was lying heavily upon the heart; repeated indications of the Lord's pleasure had been given; but so great was the death upon the promise, that it seemed impossible that the path could ever open or a way be made. Brother H—— on that occasion spoke strongly in the affirmative. And now—some three or four years afterwards—when called to bear witness to the Lord's faithfulness and mercy, the hymn which (without our knowledge) had been selected, and which, upon entering the pulpit, the greater part of nine hundred or a thousand voices were singing with sweetest melody, struck into the very soul, and melted one down at His feet, who is indeed the chiefest among ten thousand, the altogether lovely, when thus his love-acts are, by the Spirit, brought in sweet review before the mind.

"How sweet the name of Jesus sounds!"

Oh, how precious was the power with which the annexed verse was applied, when standing with deep consciousness, a poor sinner, about to speak to a large company of fellow-sinners:—

"Dear name! the Rock on which I build,
My shield and hiding place;
My never-failing treasury."

[Ah! is it not so? When, where, how, was it ever known to fail? Thousands upon thousands coming every day and every moment of the day, and yet still supplied; yea, still as full—as inexhaustible as ever! Six thousand years have now well nigh rolled over, and during their revoltings, there has been a never-ceasing draught upon this treasury of grace, but not the tiniest shadow of a diminution has it experienced!] "My never-failing treasury fill'd
With boundless stores of grace."

Equally precious were the closing verses of this sweet song. The remembrance, by means of them, brought to the mind a season of great mental anguish. Passing through the streets of London some years ago, a poor blind man was one evening singing them with much ap-

parent feeling. They *then* afforded relief to a surcharged heart, and they *now* came with much refreshing, in contemplation of the faithfulness of Jehovah, as displayed in the train of events from that period to the then present moment. Those verses run as follows:—

“ Weak is the effort of my heart,
And cold my warmest thought;
But when I see thee as thou art,
I'll praise thee as I ought.

“ Till then I would thy love proclaim
With every fleeting breath;
And may the music of thy name,
Refresh my soul in death.”

Lord, grant it to us and to our dear readers. Amen and amen.

Monday, 3rd.—On to Northwich and Winsford. Preached in the evening at the latter place, from 2 Cor. xii. 7th to 9th verse. Surely the Lord was in this place. If liberty be a test of life, life was there! There was an evident hungering and thirsting after the bread and water of life. Many had walked six and eight miles to hear the word. God grant that they may not have been sent empty away. It was a season of memorial to the preacher; may it have proved so to the hearers. Our dear friend and brother, the minister of that place, was indeed passing through a trial, and stood in absolute need of the fulfilment of the promise contained in the text, “ My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness.” A beloved wife was in the last stages of consumption, and the moanings of a dear dying babe were to be heard throughout the house. Reader, do you know what it is to be driven almost to distraction under these or the like troubles, and yet for the Lord, in the most timely way, to come, and by the secret communication of strength, or the sweet application of such a promise as that in our text, take the weight of the trial from off the shoulders, and give you so to realize Himself and his strength as not only to make you contented with the trial, but give the readiest preference to it, as contrasted with a state of carnal ease or worldly-mindedness? Oh, how peculiar is the Christian’s path—how opportune and how certain the Lord’s mercies—and how blessed and soul-satisfying those secrets, into which he is admitted when passing through the waters of tribulation.

Tuesday, 4th.—To Leeds and Harewood. Spent half-an-hour with Mr. H. Found his mind stayed upon God under his present trial. May the Lord’s delivering hand be seen, bringing the counsel of every Ahithophel to nought!

Wednesday, 5th.—To Hull. Met here another veteran, friend L.—. Thence to friend S—— and D——’s at Leicester, and home through London.

* * * * *

And now, dear Father of mercies and God of all consolation, whilst we beg thee to throw a mantle of love over all our manifold weaknesses and short-comings, how shall we thank thee for the mercies vouchsafed during this journey, and for the many privileges we have enjoyed in meeting with thy saints? We desire to bless and magnify thee for

the same. What has been *ours*, forgive ; what has been *thine*, own. Let a yet greater development of love flow through the hearts of thy children. Knit them together as one in Christ and with Christ. Give them to behold their security and their blessedness even now, and cheer them whilst passing through this great and terrible wilderness, by the sweet prospect of ere long arriving at that blissful inheritance which thou hast in reserve for them, when, delivered from the burden of the flesh, thy one Church shall crown thee Lord of all. Amen and amen.

Ireland, June, 1848.

THE EDITOR.

To the Editor of the Gospel Magazine.

MY DEAR SIR,

If the annexed is worthy of being inserted in the "Gospel Magazine," you are welcome to it.

Yours faithfully,

Cambridge, June 1848.

SAMUEL SILVER.

WHAT IS TRUTH ?

"LET God be true and every man a liar," for the vile person will speak villany, and his heart will work iniquity to practise hypocrisy, and to utter errors against the Lord : wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

Vile persons are to be known by their villainous speeches and lying words, which is uttering error against the Lord.

If free-will-to-do-good preachers have a will of their own to choose Christ, then let them describe the Christ they have chosen ; and if that Christ which they say they have chosen, be not proved to be a Sovereign, and the Lord our righteousness, it can be nothing else than an idol of their own imagination.

If those who preach free-agency-to-do-good have a power of themselves to come to Christ, then let them point out one person that ever came to this free-agency-power of fallen man without being drawn by Jehovah himself.

If the salvation that is preached in the present day be not wholly of free-grace, then let those who preach the contrary point out one person that was ever saved any other way ; and if salvation be conditional as they preach it ; then let such preachers declare to their people what the condition is, and where it is to be found ; for if human thoughts, human words, or human deeds, have ever saved one soul, either in whole or in part ; then it is of him that willeth and of him that runneth, and not of God that sheweth mercy ; and all who preach in this way, if they would be faithful, are bound to set before their hearers who this willer and runner is that gets the prize.

If the imputed righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ be not the

only justifying righteousness of the whole Church of God, then let all who preach a righteousness of their own procuring, point out to their hearers one person that ever got to heaven without it. And if the works to be done by man, which they set forth to support this supposed righteousness of their own, be sufficient, or must be added to ensure the efficacy of this imputed righteousness to themselves, then let them declare, from their own experience, how it was they obtained their own righteousness, as it were, by the works of the law, without stumbling at that stumbling-stone.

If redemption by Christ, which is declared in holy Scripture to be redemption from death, hell, and the grave, be universal, then let those who preach its universality, prove that the gate which leads to destruction has admitted none: and if Christ has laid down his life for any more than sheep, then let them show plainly and distinctly the redemption of the goats.

If falling from grace be true, then let all who preach it show when the righteous were forsaken, and where the righteous were cut off.

If all these doctrines be not the doctrines of devils, lying words, the practice of hypocrisy and errors against the Lord, then let the preachers of such doctrines prove the Bible to be a lie, and the word of God as nothing worth.

Now all those preachers dissenting from the truth as it is in Jesus, who have crept into the ministry of the church in the present day, are, to use the words of Scripture, "wolves in sheep's clothing, and by their fruits ye shall know them." Those of them who minister in the Church of England, when they subscribed the Thirty-nine Articles, to enable them to do so, declared that they were moved by the Holy Ghost to preach the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth as it is in Jesus; but how do those Thirty-nine Articles agree with their free-will-to-do-good preaching? Only compare them.

Art. 9th. "Original sin standeth not in the following of Adam, but is the fault and corruption of the nature of every man that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam, whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil," &c.

This Article the free-will-to-do-good preacher subscribes, and how does it agree with fallen man's inborn holiness?

Art. 10th. "The condition of man after the fall of Adam is such that he cannot turn and prepare himself, by his own natural strength and good works to faith, and calling upon God," &c.

This Article the free-will-to-do-good preacher subscribes; and how does it agree with his preaching a human power-to-do-good, as if a man of his own accord could choose or refuse, could come to Christ, or s'ay away.

Art. 11th. "We are accounted righteous before God, only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by faith, and not for our own works and deservings; wherefore that we are justified by faith only, is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort."

This Article the free-will-to-do-good preacher subscribes; and how does it agree with that supposed righteousness of a man's own which

he falsely declares is necessary to make the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ efficacious?

Art. 17th. "Predestination to life is the everlasting purpose of God, whereby, before the foundations of the world were laid, he hath constantly decreed, by his counsel secret to us, to deliver from curse and damnation those whom he hath chosen in Christ out of mankind, and to bring them, by Christ, to everlasting salvation as vessels made to honour," &c.

This Article the free-will-to-do-good preacher subscribes; and, if this decree brings man, by Christ, to everlasting salvation as vessels made to honour, then where is the free-will doctrine of falling from grace—of being children of God to-day and children of the devil to-morrow—of many being in hell for whom Christ died?

All free-will-to-do-good preachers and hearers are deceiving themselves; they are blinded by the god of this world, and therefore they hide the justice, the holiness, and the truth of Him who declares Himself to be of one mind, so that none can turn him, by representing the great "I AM" as like to changeable man, who chooses to love a person to-day, and chooses to hate that same person to-morrow; but what declares Jehovah himself in his own words? "I loved Jacob, and I hated Esau; I am the Lord; I change not, therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed."

Ye living members of the church in Christ, take heed what you hear. Let no one persuade you to believe anything that cannot be found in God's own truth, but search the Scriptures for yourselves in the love of truth, remembering that they are able to make you wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. Rest assured that all free-willers-to-do-good among fallen man, whether preachers or hearers, cannot be the children of God; for it is only the children of the promise that are accounted as the seed, and the salvation of these children of promise is of faith, that it might be by grace to the end, that the promise might be sure to them all.

All who die in their errors must be damned, if God be true; and all who err from the truth must be converted from the error of their way before their souls can be saved from death, or the multitude of their sins be covered.

Stand fast, therefore, in the Lord, ye children of the one living, true, faithful, and unchanging God, seeing that ye know these things, lest being led away by the error of the wicked, ye fall from your own stedfastness, but grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. And to Him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

FAMILY PORTRAITS : BEING SKETCHES OF THE HOUSE-HOLD OF FAITH.

NO. I.—THE DUMB CHILD.

"Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another; and the Lord hearkened, and heard it: and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name."—*MAL. iii. 16.*

READER, our sketches shall be confined to the household of faith ; they shall be "*living*" (the word is used in a twofold sense) children. May the Lord indulge us in our interviews, and cause us to realize at least somewhat of those precious sensations, to which our Lord's disciples referred, when they said (*Luke xxiv. 32*), "Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures ?"

Our first introduction shall be to one of what I term the Lord's *dumb* children—not deaf and dumb, remember—anything but this. On the contrary, she will listen with much attention, and, like a poor thirsty soul, drink in with eagerness every truth you advance, but with these mental inquiries commonly proposed to herself, "Is it *MINE*? May *I* take it ?" 'Tis a glorious fact, but ah ! would it not be presumption in *me* to attempt to lay hold of it ? Oh, would that I could. Would that I dare say, "*Jesus is mine, and I am his.*" Now perhaps the poor thing we are going to visit will *not say a word*, and yet this will be the very language of her heart. The deepest waters, you know, are often the most silent ; and there are many of the Lord's family who find it utterly impossible to give *utterance* to what they *feel*. They have a depth of sorrow and exercise which they could not tell to the dearest friend upon earth, and thus they pass week after week, and month after month, in pensive sadness, wondering within themselves who they are—what they are—and whether any can have similar exercises. Now, we will enter this little shop, the occupant of which, I am informed, has passed whole nights of deepest anguish. Sleep has fled from her. Three doctors have attended her, but found, to their astonishment, in her's a case defying the skill of any earthly physician, and quite beyond the reach of human antidotes.

"Well, *Mary*, how d'ye do this morning ? I have brought a friend to see you—one that knows something of the things you and I have sometimes talked about."

"So, *Mary*, I understand you are not satisfied with *the world*. Is it true ? It has charms for *most* people—how is it that it has none for *you* ? This was not always the case, was it ? I suppose you used to be tolerably well pleased with it. If you had any fault to find, it was, I presume, because you could not have enough of it. You used to like this pleasure, to enjoy that society, and never were you so much at home as in this and that scene of gaiety, upon which you now reflect with anguish, and turn away with disgust. How is this, *Mary* ? There is a great change somewhere ; and since the world is the same, and

people are the same, the change must be in *you*. And do you think the *world* would have disgusted you with itself? This would be an absolute contradiction? Nor would Satan, for his great object is to keep his subjects satisfied in and with the world. Hence he is continually inventing fresh sources of amusement, and trying to vary the world's enchantments, lest they should pall upon the taste. And that you never effected the change yourself, you may be quite certain, because you were too deeply engrossed with the vain pomps and pleasures of the world, and because your heart was naturally too callous and insensible to produce such a state of feeling. Well, then, if neither the world, nor the devil, nor yourself, could work this mighty change of mind, who could, think you, but the Lord himself? And mark his promise, *Mary*—and the Lord hath bound himself by covenant and oath to the fulfilment of every word he hath spoken—‘ Being confident (saith the Apostle, speaking under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, Phil. i. 6), ‘that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.’ But, *Mary*, if the Lord has really done nothing for you, how do you account for your feeling such a love to, and interest in, certain people that you were glad formerly, not merely to avoid, but whom you utterly despised—aye, hated, and would have gladly called all sorts of ill names; wished they were banished from the earth; and thought (as the Jews of old thought) that such persons ought not to be permitted to live? Now, you revere them; a kind of halo surrounds them; you would gladly drop at their feet, and feel happy in doing the most menial offices for them. You would feel most indignant if any one presumed to speak against them; and the importunate cry of your inmost soul is,

‘With them number'd may I be,
Now and through eternity.’

Can you deny this, *Mary*? You cannot. How is it that you feel any kind of love to, or interest in us, this morning—one of whom you have never seen before? It is *love*—that precious love which the Holy Ghost hath implanted, and which runs like a sweet vein through the hearts of all the Lord's living family; and mark it is the sure evidence of your interest in that precious declaration (1 John iii. 14). We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren.’ By nature there is not only an entire absence of love to the Lord's children, as such, but there is the most determinate enmity, which will more or less exhibit itself in all sorts of unkind and rebellious acts. The poet, contemplating his change of state, though not as yet brought to that blessed point of establishment which he longed after, says :

‘ Could I joy his saints to meet,
Choose the ways I once abhorr'd;
Find at times the promise sweet,
If I did not love the Lord?’

But all this will not suffice you, *Mary*. You are afraid to take comfort, and yet intensely long after it. You long to be relieved of your burden, and yet you would sooner that it should become a thousand times heavier (were it possible for you to bear it) than that you should

obtain deliverance upon false principles. You are a wonder unto many, but most of all a wonder to yourself. How you have been supported and upheld through what you have been called to pass, is to you a perfect mystery. In point of feeling, you have been ‘in deaths oft.’ [“*Yes, that I have Sir, and have had to stand, and hold this counter, lest I should drop under the weight of my feelings.*”] Well, and yet the Lord hath supported you, and that without his sensible manifestation; and this (to me at least) is a greater proof of his Divine power, than when the soul is blessed with comfort and enjoyment. Now, what is it you want, *Mary*? Why, I will tell you. A VISIT FROM JESUS. Tell me, do you think anything would give you such delight this morning as for Jesus to draw nigh, just as he did to Mary, whilst waiting at the sepulchre, saying, ‘*Mary—Mary?*’ Oh what a fulness there is in his language when He speaks. Such a dignity—such a blessed power—attends even a single word. ‘*Mary, look unto me; in me is thy help; fear not, I have redeemed thee—thou art mine. I am thy salvation.*’ Oh woman, great is thy faith, be it unto thee, even as thou wilt.’ Well, though He tarry, wait for him. He will come. You shall not be disappointed. There is a precious promise for you (John xvi. 22), ‘*And ye now therefore have sorrow, but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.*’ ‘*I will see you again.*’ He has seen you once, *Mary*, by his law—with charges of sin—in seeming anger and apparent condemnation; but ere long He will see you again, looking all love—all tenderness, forgiveness, compassion. ‘*For unto you that look for his coming, shall he appear the second time, without sin (either upon himself as the sin-bearer, or in his law as a condemnatory sentence upon the sinner) unto salvation*’ (Heb. xix. 28). Peace be with you, dear Mary. Farewell.”

“Well, my friend, what think you of Mary? Is it not evident that she has *life*, and that in lively operation—bursting forth in holy longings—earnest importunings—and heartfelt desires, after a revelation of Jesus? To me her very countenance bespeaks it. There is an earnestness and an interest about it, which tell me it is the very index of the heart.”

“Oh yes, I quite agree with you? And did you observe how long she struggled with her feelings, until at length, when Jesus, in his love and grace—in the freeness and fulness of his salvation—were spoken of, she could hold no longer: Tear after tear trickled down, when, bursting into a flood, she covered her face, dropped her head, and seemed in the ‘sweet anguish’ of prayerful importunity.”

And assuredly Jesus will hear. Precious mercy brings all such to so blessed a position, and precious pardon shall in due time be revealed. *Mary* very much reminds me of one who, though a stranger, used to excite a lively interest in her case. It is some ten or twelve years ago, I used to remark her profound attention under the preached word. In the singing, during the prayer, under the sermon, her whole soul seemed so engaged; so totally indifferent was she to everything around—to all but the one object and subject, that I used to feel the fullest confidence she was a child of God. And how glad I was, a few days since, to see the same face, lighted up with the same interest,

listening to the same precious gospel truth. It is so blessed thus to see a practical demonstration of the truth, "The righteous shall hold on his [Christ's] way, and he that hath clean hands shall [oh, how blessed the *shall*s and *wills* of Jehovah] wax stronger and stronger."

Ireland, May, 1848.

THE EDITOR.

LINES ON THE PEACEFUL DISMISSAL OF MRS. REBEKAH ROGERS,

Late of Sutton, and formerly of Farningham, Kent, who departed this life on Thursday, April 13, 1848.

REBEKAH is no more,
With her 'tis well indeed ;
Her sorrows now are o'er,
And from their source she's freed :
Sin nevermore shall give her pain
Of body, or of soul again.

Deliver'd from all woe
By God's Almighty pow'r,
She has not now a foe,
Nor fears a tempting hour :
Sav'd ! Fully sav'd from ev'ry ill !
All heav'n she doth with praises fill.

And who can tell ? Oh who
Of all our mortal race
What she is sav'd unto
Through rich abounding grace ?
To God—to heav'n—to bliss unknown—
To Christ the Lamb upon his throne.

While here she lov'd to gaze
By faith on Jesu's face,
And join his saints to praise
The riches of his grace :
But now she sees him with her eyes,
And joins the anthem of the skies.

Thrice happy, happy soul,
Her powers are all complete.
Now she has reach'd the goal,
That song, how loud and sweet,
Which issues from immortal lungs,
And joins with all immortal tongues.

By God the Spirit taught,
Her empty pitcher to
Zion's full wells she brought,
And living water drew ;
And now she's filled to the brim,
And doth in love's full ocean swim.

F. J. H.

A SERMON PREACHED AT HAREWOOD CHURCH, BY
THE REV. R. HALE, DECEMBER 5, 1847.

"That ye put off concerning the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt, according to the deceitful lusts"—EPH. iv. 22.

It can hardly be supposed that Paul addressed these words to carnal men, who were merely in their nature-state, and whom, in this Epistle, he describes as "dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph. ii. 1), for such have neither the will nor the power to put off the old man.

By referring to the first chapter of this Epistle, it will be found that it is addressed to the saints in the city of Ephesus, and all who bear this character may take the apostle's exhortation as addressed to them at this day, to put off the old man. Now, the saints are no other than those sons of Adam, whom God the Father, with a fore-view of his fall, sanctified or separated from the rest, and gave to Christ as a spiritual offspring to be preserved in him, and saved by him, and as they inherit from Adam a corrupt sinful nature, which unfit them either for the service of God, or for the enjoyment of him hereafter, God, in his own good time, by means of the gospel preached to them, implants a new principle in them, which the apostle John speaks of as the seed of God (1 John iii. 9).

This operation of God, effected by the Holy Ghost, our Lord spoke of as a new birth, saying, "Except a man be born of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John iii. 5).

The Apostle Peter speaks of them as being "born again, not of corruptible seed" (1 Peter i. 23); and it was by the gospel preached by this apostle, on the day of Pentecost, that about three thousand of these sons of Adam were born again. The incorruptible seed of God was implanted in them, and from that time they were sanctified, or separated from others, manifested by their walk and conversation. They became *saints*;—*the account is remarkable* (Acts ii. 44).

And no sooner do the men of the world, who are in their nature-state, perceive that these favoured sons of Adam no longer follow their ways, or associate with them as aforetime, than they hate and persecute them, and usually apply the word saint to them in ridicule, and as a term of reproach; and our Lord forewarned his saints, when in the world, of what they might expect. "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you" (John xv. 18).

There have always been these two distinct families in the world, whom God has himself described in Genesis iii. 15, as "the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent," saying that the one should hate the other. By the seed of the woman is meant those sons of Adam whom the Father gave to Christ as a spiritual seed or offspring; and by the seed of the serpent is meant those of Adam's sons whom God leaves under the power and dominion of Satan, who, in the form of a serpent, caused Adam to sin.

This enmity showed itself in Adam's first-born son, Cain, towards his brother Abel. Cain, it is said, was of the wicked one—that is, of Satan's family, and hated his brother Abel, called righteous Abel, because righteous in Christ, and he finally slew him (1 John iii. 12).

And so things have been from that time to this. We read that Ishmael, born after the flesh, persecuted his brother Isaac, who was born after the Spirit.

Thus the carnal Jews, who were of Satan's family, persecuted Christ and his disciples, and knowing their pedigree, he told them to their faces to what family they belonged : “ Ye are of your father the devil ” (John viii. 44).

We know, then, who they were to whom Paul addressed the words of my text, and their character ; they were saints, and it is an exhortation to them to put off the old man ; and had it been given to men in their nature-state, dead in their sins, it would have been a mere waste of time, for such can neither do it nor wish to do it.

No doubt when Paul here speaks of the *old man*, he means that corrupt nature which all Adam's sons inherit from him, and the saints in common with the rest, for the fountain-head having become impure, all the streams must be so.

God has himself given, in Gen. vi. 5, in few words, an awful picture of this corrupt nature—the old man. He says, “ Every imagination of the thoughts of man's heart is only evil continually ” (Gen. vi. 5).

Those who talk of man being a free agent, and as having a free-will to cease from doing evil, and to walk in a way pleasing to God, had better consider what God has here said of man's heart, for if the imagination of the thoughts of it is only evil continually, evil he will do continually.

The prophet Jeremiah supports me in this opinion, for he says, “ Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots ? Then may ye also do good that are accustomed to do evil ” (Jer. xiii. 23).

Various are the names by which that corruption of nature, which all Adam's sons inherit from him, is described in Scripture.

The apostle Paul speaks of it as sin *dwelling* in him. And, let it be remembered, he so speaks of it, though he was a regenerated man, in whom the seed of God had been implanted.

The account which the apostle gives of his own experience (in Rom. vii.) well suits that of all the Lord's people. “ The good that I would, I do not : but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man : but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members ” (Rom. vii. 19—23).

In unregenerate men, the old man reigns and rules, and is as a strong armed man in possession of his house ; but when regenerated, or born again of the Spirit, the seed of God being then implanted in them, the battle begins, such as that described by Paul, and will never be concluded till the body is laid in the grave.

This corruption of nature is sometimes spoken of as *flesh*, and in which nothing good is to be found, as Paul says, "I know that in me, that is, in my flesh dwelleth no good thing."

And he speaks of it in my text as the old man, which is *corrupt*. He speaks of it as a *man*, because it is natural to all men that come into the world, and rules and governs them, unless they are born again of the Spirit; and he speaks of it as the *old man*, because it is nearly as old as the first man, for though God formed Adam in his own image and likeness, sin soon entered into him.

It is well observed by a learned commentator on this subject, that this old man is in every heart, not like a visitor now and then, but an *inhabitant*. He dwells there, and only becomes a troublesome inmate to those that are born again, for the rest of the world live on the best terms with him. They are quite civil to him—do what he bids—give way to his wishes—and seek to pamper his appetites.

Some who have written upon this subject, would have you believe that when men are born again of the Spirit, then the flesh—the old man—becomes gradually subdued, and at last so crippled, that he can no longer oppose the new principle of grace implanted in them by the Spirit, and that a sinless state of perfection may be attained to in this world.

I am persuaded there is no foundation for this opinion to be found in the word of God. Paul reminds the saints in Galatia that they could not do what, as unconverted persons, they wished to do, because of the lusts of the flesh which opposed the actings of grace. "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would" (Gal. v. 17).

It is true that when Paul was in a conflict with some besetting sin, which he called a thorn in the flesh, and which he prayed might be removed, Christ said to him, "My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me" (2 Cor. xii. 9). And no doubt by this grace of Christ, the old man is often kept down when struggling to be uppermost; but this has not been always so with the Lord's regenerated people, for we know that when remiss in prayer or weak in faith, the old man has gained for a time the upper hand, and did so when he led Job to curse the day he was born (Job iii. 1); and David to commit the double sin of adultery and murder (2 Sam. xii. 15); and Peter to deny his Master (John xiii. 38). The old man is full of sinful lusts and very deceitful. He is a cunning old man, which appears by the various schemes which he has devised for bringing the Christian into bondage, for he will sometimes persuade him that covetousness is nothing more than praiseworthy economy; but Paul detected this imposition, and warned the saints at Corinth of it, saying, "No covetous man who is an idolator hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God" (Eph. v. 5).

He will sometimes persuade the Christian, that the vain, foolish, unprofitable conversation and amusements of the world are innocent

recreations, of which he may partake in moderation. He will sometimes persuade him, in spite of what Christ himself said, when speaking of true believers in him, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world," that he may discreetly mix with the men of the world, and yet sustain no loss of spiritual enjoyment—no diminution of devotional fervour.

He is a mischievous old man, and does all the evil he can, but there are some things which he cannot do: he cannot separate the Christian from the love of God (Rom. viii. 39); nor make void the decrees and promises of God towards his people; nor deprive them of heaven, which is their inheritance; nor finally deceive them on the essential doctrines of the gospel; but he often does separate them from communion with God and with one another, though brethren of one family, causing dissensions and disputes; and he did so between Paul and Barnabas, on a subject in itself trifling; and it is written in Acts xv. 39, that the contention was so sharp between them that they departed asunder.

The corrupt nature which we all inherit from Adam—the old man—is incorrigible, never changed for the better (Rom. iii. 10—18).

It is true there may be in the Lord's regenerated people a growth in grace, and in the knowledge of their Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, but the old man can never become better or less depraved than he always has been. Progressive development is the leading feature of the new man spoken of by Paul in Eph. iv. 24.

Read 10th Article of Church on Free-will.

Now, if this Article of our Church be according to Scripture, which I believe it is—if men, in their nature-state, till regenerated by the grace and Spirit of God, are so corrupt, weak, and sinful, that they cannot do that which is spiritually good, or in a way pleasing to God. If this be so, to call upon them, as some ministers think it their duty to do, to put forth their natural strength, as they call it—to exert their free-will, which God has declared to be evil continually, appears to me to me to be a mere waste of words. Our Lord's words settles this point. "Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit" (Matt. vii. 16—18).

Let ministers, if they will, exhort unregenerate men to do what they *can* do—to perform those moral duties which God has enjoined upon his creatures, and to abstain from those things which he has forbidden; but not to perform such spiritual acts as to believe in Christ for life eternal, to repent evangelically, and to rejoice in the doctrines of the gospel, for God has hid them from mere natural men, however wise or prudent they may be in worldly things.

If the fallen sons of Adam, while in their nature state, *can*, as some say, by an exertion of their free-will, do what is spiritually good and pleasing to God, there are many things which it might be supposed would have produced this effect in them, but they have been tried and failed; and I can refer you to some portions of Scripture, which tend to support this opinion.

Turn to the 32nd of Deuteronomy, and you will find that when God prospered Jeshurun, "He waxed fat, and kicked" (Deut. xxxii. 15).

Read the Book of Judges, and you will find that when God had relieved the Jews from many troubles, they fell into idolatry.

Turn to 2 Chron. xxvi., and you will find that when Uzziah was strong, and God helped him against his enemies, his heart was lifted up to his destruction (2 Chron. xxvi. 16).

Turn to the 73rd Psalm, and you will find that David speaks of some of whom he was envious, because of their prosperity. By-the-bye, the old man here showed himself in David, though a regenerated man, and a man after God's own heart, for he envied the prosperity of others.

He says, in this Psalm, that he was envious when he saw the prosperity of the wicked, because they were not in trouble as other men, but had more than their hearts could wish.

Now, what effect had this prosperity upon them? Did it turn their will to God? Nay, David goes on to say, "*Therefore* pride compassed them about as a chain; they are corrupt, and speak wickedly" (Ps. lxxiii.).

The prophet Isaiah speaks much to the same effect, "Let favour be shown to the wicked, yet he will not learn righteousness" (Isa. xxvi. 10).

Afflictions have failed to influence man's will to do what is pleasing to God. When the Jews were loaded with judgments, the prophet Amos tells us that, "They turned not to him that smote them" (Amos iv. 10).

And the prophet Isaiah tells us that, "The more they were stricken the more they revolted" (Isa. i. 5)

Look at them now, for they are still the same, though, as Paul says, "Wrath is come upon them to the uttermost" (1 Thess. i. 16).

The word of God and his ordinances have been tried, and have failed, and of this the Jews were an example, for, as Paul says, "to them were committed the oracles of God" (Rom. iii. 2).

And it is written, "No nation had God so nigh to them as they" (Deut. iv. 7). "Yet they remained a stubborn, stiff-necked people, and when the Lord sent his prophets to them, it is written they slighted his messengers, and sent them away empty." "Some they beat, some they stoned, and some they slew with the sword." And when at last God sent his Son among them, they said, "This is the Heir; come, let us kill him" (Matt. xxi. 38).

Miracles, with judgments, have been tried, to influence the will of man to do what is pleasing to God, and have failed; they but hardened the heart of Pharaoh, and they had no good effect on those who witnessed God's dealings with Korah and his company, when they went down alive into the pit; for their rebellion against the Lord's servant, Moses, it is written, "The whole congregation murmured against Moses" (Numb. xvi. 41).

Now, if all these things have been tried in vain to influence the will of man to do what is pleasing to God, the only reason which can be given why some have both the will and the power to do what is pleasing

to him is, that, as the apostle says, "It is God that worketh in them both to will and to do of his good pleasure" (Phil. ii. 13).

These are his chosen people, as Paul describes them. "God hath chosen us in Christ, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy" (Eph. i. 4).

Accordingly, God, in his own good time, implants in them his seed, a new divine principle, which counteracts the motions of the old man in them, and from that time the warfare between the two begins; but as for the rest, who are not his chosen ones, whom Paul describes as "vessels of wrath fitted for destruction," God leaves them as he finds them, under the rule and dominion of their corrupt nature—the old man, who fits them for destruction. And now let me endeavour to explain the apostle's meaning when he exhorts the saints to *put off* the old man.

I believe it is their privilege, through grace, so to put off the old man, as to turn him, as it were, out of doors, that he might no more be troublesome in their tabernacle of clay.

"That ye put off concerning the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt, according to the deceitful lusts." The saints, while in their nature-state, or till regenerated by the grace and Spirit of God, in no wise differ from others, in whom the old man reigns and rules; and their habits, or way of conducting themselves, here expressed by *their conversation*, is the same as others. Such had been the case with the saints at Corinth, and some of them, it seems, had been as bad as bad could be, for the apostle, in his first epistle to them, after enumerating a variety of profligate characters, says, "And such were some of you" (1 Cor. vi. 11). And by alluding to the former conversation of these saints at Ephesus, they had perhaps been as bad.

"That ye put off concerning the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt, according to the deceitful lusts." The apostle's meaning, I venture to think, cannot be that they should remove their corrupt nature—the old man—or destroy him, or change his nature, for he remains alive, and is the same old man he ever was, even in regenerate persons.*

By putting him off, then, must be a putting him off from his *seat*—a pulling him down from his government—showing no regard to his rule and dominion—to his laws and lusts—making no provision for his support: and this is called a putting him off concerning his *former conversation*.

The change lies not in the old man, who never can be altered, but in the conversation. He is not in the same power, but he retains the same sinful nature. He is put off, but not put out;† and though he does not reign, he often rages‡ to get the upper-hand. There is often a sharp struggle between the old man and the new principle of grace in the Lord's saints, and I believe it is according to their experience when those conflicts are going on, that they are not without their

* Precisely so—not *changed*, but *subdued*.

† Reader, this distinction is important.

‡ Mark this; *rages*, but does not *reign*.—ED.

doubts and fears, lest God should not have begun the good work of grace in them, or implanted his seed in them, or that, though begun, it *will not be carried on*.

David was a regenerate man when he wrote his 51st Psalm, yet hear what a prayer he offers up in it : " Make me to hear joy and gladness, that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice. Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God ; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence ; and take not thy holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation ; and uphold me with thy free Spirit" (Psalm li. 8—12).

It was for the comfort of the saints of Phillipi, that Paul, under the teaching of God's Spirit, wrote to tell them that he had himself no doubts upon this subject—that he was confident the work which God had begun in them he would carry on, " Being confident," says he, " of this one thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will carry it on until the day of Christ" (Phil. i. 6) ; and it is no less for the comfort of the saints, what is written in the 37th Psalm, " The Lord forsaketh not his saints : they are preserved for ever" (Psalm xxxvii. 28).

Moreover, God has made a sweet promise to his saints, by Jeremiah, saying, " I will not turn away from them to do them good, but I will put my fear in their hearts that they shall not depart from me" (Jer. xxxii. 40).

The day of Jesus Christ, of which the apostle speaks, is the day of death, when the souls of the saints are delivered from the body, and Christ takes them to himself, to be with him for ever, when this work of grace will be finished.

Christ made short work of it with the thief upon the cross, for he was just terminating a life of crime there, when he said to him, " This day thou shalt be with me in Paradise" (Luke xxiii. 43).

Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory, with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and for ever. Amen.

FRAGMENTS BY A REDEEMED ATHEIST.

" *Be careful for Nothing.*"—Phil. iv. 6.

How incredulous is an untried believer respecting the agency of the Lord Jesus Christ in providing for the temporal wants of His people. Say to him " Your heavenly Father knoweth that you have need of all these things," and he replies, " Would you have me stand idle ?" Is it not written, " By the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread ?" (Gen. iii. 19). In

vain do we retort is it not also written, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." The last ten verses of the 6th chapter of Matthew's gospel which, to a soul that has dwelt by the brook Cherith, are worth many millions sterling, appear, to the inexperienced, so incredible, that the Lord aptly exclaims of them, "O ye of little faith." Now what is to be done with the weak brethren? Truly we must leave them to the Lord. He alone can strengthen their faith, and give them eyes to see that they are as much objects of His care as Elijah was (1 Kings, xvii. 4). Shall we ask in what way strength and sight are likely to be wrought in them? Probably by bringing them into positions of temporal need, similar to that in which Elijah was placed by Divine sovereignty. The case of Elijah is not recorded to gratify curiosity, but as an ensample of the Lord's dealings with His covenant people. Do we ask why the Lord carries his prophet into a lone place, cuts off ordinary supplies, and feeds him by means called supernatural? Is it to display power? Is it not also to exhibit love, and to familiarize the mind to the marvellous facts that, in deed and in truth, God is what He declares He is, namely, the Father of his chosen ones? The propensity to trust to natural agents for supplies is so inherent in the natural man, that He scorns the idea of supernatural aid, and will argue that, because God, for the most part, uses natural means, therefore He has bound himself never to employ any other. Supernatural aid does not necessarily imply that a miracle must be wrought on the materials around us. It is enough that in the timely disposing of these materials for our aid, we shall be made to see the hand, feel the hand, and own the hand of God. The process through which we are conducted by our heavenly Father resembles that we employ when we wish to tame a wild animal. When first caught, the animal is full of fears; it shys when we approach to feed it. When we would pat its head it runs away, and regards us as an enemy, though our designs towards it are benevolent. Little by little it is brought to eat out of our hand, to lie down at our feet, to follow us in our walks, and to watch our eye and attend to our voice on all occasions.

There is nothing supernatural in finding three halfpence on the ground at the moment we want that sum to pay toll at a turnpike gate. To the natural mind this appears but a lucky accident. But if God the Spirit shall inspire the finder with a conviction that God is privy to the money being there, the man regards the affair as supernatural, and speaks of it as such. It is then according to the measure of faith given by the Lord the Spirit, that we see or do not see the Lord Jesus Christ's finger in temporal concerns. Romulus and Remus were suckled by a wolf, yet history has not ascribed their preservation to the Lord's providence; and we may rest assured that had not his eyes been divinely opened, Elijah would not have discerned the hand of the Ruler of heaven in the daily supplies furnished by the ravens and the brook. It was necessary for the Lord to open the eyes of the young man before he could see the mountain full of chariots and horses round about Elisha (2 Kings vi. 11), and the same Lord the Spirit must show to each of His children that His providential care is not a specious

fable, but a gracious and glorious reality. Till He stoops to work this conviction in their souls, they maintain a silly supercilious scepticism.

As the Lord Jesus Christ is the Author and Finisher of our faith (Heb. xii. 12), so all faith comes from Him, and He determines the persons, occasions, things, and events, concerning which the faith He gives shall be exercised. Until He wills no saint can appropriate any of the promises of God, whether as relates to the wants of the soul or of the outer man. As we can do all things by Christ when He strengthens us (Phil. iv. 13), so without Him we can do nothing (John xv. 5); no, not even believe that the morrow's bread and water are sure. The utmost that an elder believer can do towards strengthening his younger brother, is to testify that he has found the Lord faithful to his written word, and that he is convinced from experience that the Lord intentionally brings those whom He loves into straits, that He may show them his fidelity.

But cries somebody, It is an idle life to live as Elijah lived. Idle or not idle, it is such a life as no man can live until God empowers him. It is, however, a life of industrious prayer. Of all the works that can be performed, the hardest is to live by faith (Hab. ii. 4). It is so hard that a man finds it impossible by any power of his own, and the sense of impossibility drives him to the Lord for help. When divine providence has shut every door, and succour is to be had nowhere else, he wrestles with the Most High for aid, and at such a season finds he is neither idle nor engaged in child's play, but working out his salvation, and a knowledge of his Saviour, with fear and trembling (Phil. ii. 12). When the Israelites desired to go into the desert to sacrifice to the Lord their God, "Ye are idle, ye are idle" (Exodus v. 15) was the taunt of Pharaoh. Such too is the language of an unbeliever when he hears of men plying the throne of grace about temporal concerns, and thus testifying that they live, not by bread alone, but by every word that cometh out of the mouth of God (Deut. viii. 3). Such a life may seem idle, because it is unattended with noise and bustle, yet it is full of the sharp exercises to which the Lord calls the souls of his chosen; and as it is a trial which they cannot by any effort escape when He brings it on, so neither can they volunteer into it, or understand it beforehand. In the upshot it adorns temporal mercies with a halo of Divine favour (Gen. xxxii. 10)—exhibits them as free gifts from the hand that was nailed on Calvary (John xxi. 6), and thereby causes us to grow more assured of the love of Him who stooped from glory into the pit of hell, to rescue us from damnation, and bring us into his Father's house of many mansions.

A man who has not quaffed the brook Cherith is restless about his temporal affairs, for he believes he has power to be the disposer of events. He thinks by some stroke of his own he shall get more than God intends to give, and dreads lest he should not obtain the portion Christ has allotted. In reflecting on what has already fallen to his share, chance or fortune, skill or industry, stand prominently forward to his view; while the overruling sovereignty of the Lord Christ, as the author and giver of all, is thrown far into the background. Whereas the believer who has watched ravens, and drank a few draughts of the brook Cherith,

is at rest about his temporal fortunes, for God has shown him that they are already fixed by a Father's wisdom, and daily administered by a Father's loving hand.

"Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." —1 Peter, i. 2.

It sometimes happens that the misplacement of a word obscures the meaning of a sentence, and this seems to be the case in the verse above quoted. The word "obedience" appears to have slipped into a wrong place, and if we transplant it and put it immediately after the word "elect," we shall obtain a clearer perception of the intent of the passage. Thus : elect, unto obedience, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father : through sanctification of the Spirit, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. The thing unto which the people of God are chosen is "obedience." They are to be an obedient people. This is their destiny. While all the rest of mankind remain children of disobedience, those whom God the Father hath chosen are to be made an obedient people, conformed to the image of Jesus Christ. The great work which God carries on in the Church below is, the reduction of the elect from a state of rebellion, to a state of filial obedience. The text before us points out the Agents whose exclusive and peculiar glory it is to be engaged in the grand work—the subjugation of millions of rebel creatures to the yoke of Christ. The Agent to whom the first part of the work is assigned is God the Father. In the exercise of that amazing foreknowledge, which is one of the attributes of Deity, He sees the end from the beginning, regards as done that which is only designed ; and as men and women emerge upon the surface of time He proclaims them the objects of his foreknowledge and choice from everlasting ; He chose the people in Christ before the world was, and in due time He causes each individual to be brought to know experimentally his calling by grace, and his election to obedience. The people are therefore said to be brought to a knowledge of their election—or their election is manifested to themselves and others—in accordance with the antecedent design of God, who knew them as objects He proposed to create long before He called them into being. According to the foreknowledge of God the Father, they are found numbered amongst his chosen ones, while they walk through the wilderness of this world.

The agent to whom the second part of the work is assigned is the Lord the Spirit, or God the Spirit. In the exercise of his sovereign and Almighty power He practically separates from the world the chosen person, already separated in the design or contemplation of God the Father. He inspires the chosen soul with an abhorrence of sin and Satan, and gives it a thorough relish for the paths of holiness and peace. He makes it a partaker of the Divine nature, and the soul thus born of God prostrates itself before God the Father, and borrowing the language of its inimitable forerunner Jesus, never ceases to cry, " Not

my will, but thine be done!" Thus through the sanctification, or sanctifying influence, of God the Spirit, the elect, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, are subdued, and yield that obedience whereunto they are chosen. In all this the elect are but passives; they did not choose the Father, nor did they evince obedience by seeking for God the Spirit. They are not the agents at any stage of the wondrous work of grace. They are but clay in the hands of the marvellous potter, and when they exhibit obedience, it is the fruit of His working, and not of theirs.

The Agent to whom reference is thirdly made in the verse is Jesus Christ, or God the Son. God the Son is not named last because his part in the important work is inferior or subordinate to the parts of the Father and the Spirit. Our poor capacities cannot dwell upon three persons at once, and the necessities of language oblige us to mention them in succession; and so we often find our minds contemplating one of the Persons in the blessed Godhead, to the temporary exclusion of the others. If Jesus is mentioned last, or is ever made apparently to occupy a lower place than the Father and the Spirit, it is but a piece of his loving condescension to encourage us to approach Him, as not seeming to be (though in reality He is) equal in majesty and power with God the Father and God the Spirit. He veils his glory and grandeur, that poor sinful worms may venture to draw near. He stooped to earth for our rescue, and He consents to stand last in the sentence, that He may gain easier access to our timid hearts by placing Himself nearer to our own level. Who can fathom his wondrous condescension? Who can obtain a glimpse of that lowliness of mind that endured without a murmur, nay, with joy (Heb. xii. 2) the brunt of Almighty vengeance, for guilt of which He was innocent? When God the Son was thus suffering (and who but God could thus suffer?) He was performing his part, or contributing his quota (if we may so speak) to the work of subduing those whom the Father had chosen unto obedience. The people were disobedient by nature, creatures guilty in the sight of divine justice; and this guilt and disobedience lay in the way of their being taken into the bosom of a just and sinless God. God the Son went to work to remove these impediments. In the first place He assumed their nature, and in his human body, thus united with his Divine nature, He took upon himself their guilt, and was damned in their stead. He went to hell as their substitute. He suffered eternal anguish. Anguish equivalent to the sufferings of those, the smoke of whose torment ascendeth up for ever and ever, was concentrated upon his own soul. The guilt being thus got rid of by a full satisfaction of the justice of God, there is a clear field for grace to work in. The next step is to instruct the guilty souls that God has ceased to regard their guilt, having found a ransom for them. It is the application of the blood of Christ to the conscience that removes the sense of guilt, and causes the sinner to know that God is perfectly reconciled, and that his intentions are those of inexplicable and unutterable love. When that soul-cleansing, heart-soothing transaction takes place, which is called "the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ" upon the conscience, the sinner rises from the depths of perdition into the presence of God, filled with hosannas. It is not to be supposed, nor will any

spiritual person imagine, that the blood of the Lord is in substance sprinkled. It is understood that the expression is figurative, of a spiritual and invisible application, by the Lord the Spirit, of the blessing which God the Son purchased for the elect, by volunteering to stand as their Substitute at the bar of Divine Justice. It is when the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ, by the power of the Lord the Spirit, is felt in the soul, that the obedience whereunto God the Father chose his people is wrought in their hearts, and manifested in their lives and conduct. While the work is carrying on, it seems to be the policy of the Divine Agents to leave the sinner to his own devices, from time to time, even for years, that he may acquire a pungent and humbling sense of his natural rebellion and depravity, and learn to ascribe, without hesitation or reserve, the whole accomplishment of his redemption from hell, and progress through grace to glory, to the sovereign choice of God the Father, the invincible ministry of God the Spirit, and the almighty blood of God the Son, to whom be everlasting glory.

ON THE CHURCH.*

FEAR not for the Church, that through all ages came,
Though rock'd in the tempest, and cradled in flame,
Persecuted, forsaken, malign'd, and distress'd,
Yet thousands she's blessing, and millions has blest.

Her pillar is *truth*, and her hope is in heaven ;
Her chart is the Bible, to all freely given !
Her watchword is *prayer*, and her standard is *love*,
And her banner is borne by spirits above.

Thus her adamant walls shall for ever remain,
For God on her altar has planted His name ;
The cement is the *Spirit*, and Christ is the *stone*—
And the Triune Jehovah, her Ruler *alone*.

And the Lord her protection for ever shall be,
And thousands before her shall perish or flee,
For her covenant God has look'd down from his throne,
And his beams of salvation upon her hath shone.

Co. Waterford.

W. S.

* “The visible Church of God is a congregation of faithful men, in which the pure word of God is preached, and the sacraments be duly ministered, according to Christ's ordinance, in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same.”—Article xix.

PRISONERS OF HOPE.

MY DEAR BROTHER IN AN EVERLASTING, EVER-LOVING, AND ADORABLE LORD,

The Lord loves you, and as a consequence of that love, did everlastingly redeem you, or He never would, as the fruit and effect thereof, have kindled a holy jealousy in your heart respecting his truth—a warm love to his dear family seen and unseen—and an ardent longing after a sweeter and more openly manifest token of his precious love to *your* soul. “I have redeemed *thee*—*thou* art mine.” Never did He work that *desire* in a soul, without a divine and very gracious intention of manifesting himself to that soul, sooner or later—in his own time and in his own way—as his Rock—his Shelter—his Hiding-place, his full salvation, and eternal All!

My brother, to me the subject is ever a satisfactory one, to contemplate the doubting, fearing, tempest-tossed ones among the Lord’s household, as *the Lord’s prisoners*, sweetly spoken of as “*prisoners of hope*”—aye, and of a good hope too; now, as much as when liberated, in the Lord’s hands—his property—the objects of his special care; appointed sin his own time, at the very identical moment, to beset free; and to be brought forth out of the prison-house of their own doubts, fears, and dismal apprehensions, saying, “The Lord is my light and my salvation, of whom shall I be afraid?” But you doubt, my brother, whether He is *your* light and *your* salvation. Have you any other? No. You are bound, in justice to your own soul’s experience, and in honour of what the Lord hath already done for you, to say, “He is all *your desire*”—if you cannot yet say, “He is all my salvation.” But He is all *your* salvation. You are looking to Him—pleading with Him. You know you have nothing in yourself—not a good thought to conjure up—a good word to plead—nor a single act of any worth to offer. What a mercy! Then you are an *empty* soul, just suitable to a *full* Christ; a poor *beggar* waiting a mighty *Benefactor*; a guilty culprit waiting the full pardon of his King. Give the eternal Spirit honour, my brother, for what He hath done; dare not say, he hath done nothing for you, whilst you have abundant evidence that He hath charged home sin upon your conscience—brought you in guilty—discovered to you that you are as empty, as blind, as loathsome, as sin and Satan can make you; all this is his work, bless Him; and now you are waiting for one mercy more, even the full proclamation of eternal mercy—“Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation.” “I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee.” That is a wonderful account when Joshua stood before the Lord in filthy garments, and the Lord so graciously ordered him to be clothed in change of raiment. Read it, my brother, and the good Lord, if it be his pleasure, bless the reading of it to *your* soul as He did to *mine*. But He is *your light and salvation*;

for you acknowledge that in yourself you are all darkness, confusion, and dismay ; and you are looking to Him, the light of life, to break in upon your once benighted soul, to scatter the darkness, and to feel experimentally that in your soul "the true light now shineth." It *does* shine, or you never would have discovered your darkness ; and you never can return into an Egyptian darkness. You are in the road to the kingdom, and shall as surely reach the goal as that Jehovah himself reigneth.

Your fears of bringing discredit upon the cause of God, prove your holy jealousy for, and love to, that cause ; your debts furnish you with a perpetual errand to the throne ; the weight of your little family, and the cares of life, render you daily sensible how dependent you are upon Jehovah-Jesus ; and his gracious interpositions—his preservation—his supplies from day to day—are all so many proofs of his watchful care over you ; for which you see cause, when He breaks in upon you, to bless Him, and to say, "He hath delivered—He doth deliver—and in whom my hope is he will yet deliver." You live, too, for your family ; they, under the Lord's wise dealings, may already begin to perceive your soul-travail, and time may prove that the Lord the Spirit hath already begun to work upon their young hearts in a way of sympathy—concern—and secret desire that the Lord may deliver *you*. Oh, how early was this the case in *my* experience ; unknown to them, I took up my parents' burdens at four and five years old, and was as earnest on *their* behalf as I am now on *my own*. In this sense, therefore, "no man liveth unto himself."

The account of your dear mother interested me much. She so much reminds me of my own dear mother. Dear women, they are now with Him, beholding Him as He is ! Blessed be God, we are on the road, and shall get "home" some day.

How are the dear aged couple you spoke of ? I often think of them and of you. It encourages me much to hear of the Magazine being of the Lord, among you. May His smile be still upon it !

Remember me to the Lord's people about you. I value an interest in the petitions of the Lord's redeemed ones. What a mercy there is such a passage, "I am poor and needy, yet the Lord thinketh upon me." Farewell. Yours, affectionately in Him.

May 26, 1843.

SWEET AFFLICTIONS.

To the Editor of the Gospel Magazine.

MY DEAR BROTHER IN THE RISEN ONE.

You will hear from your dear E. that our heavenly Father hath again been proving His love to me by affliction ; and it is indeed blessed to know that in very faithfulness He doth afflict. And most gently has He dealt with me in it, for as "a father pitith his children, so the Lord pitith them that fear Him." "He remembereth that we are dust."

At first I felt a little rebellious, for I had been praying to the Lord to remove a pain I had been suffering from in my loins. I had not been long off my knees, when I fell and bruised my chest and mouth, and shook my whole frame so severely, that for a long time I seemed between life and death, and no one near me. When I had recovered a little, and could think, the old man rose ; but, blessed be God, He was near to quell the rising murmur, and to whisper, "It is well." And so abundantly has He ministered to me in my affliction, out of the treasures of his love, that I can truly say, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted," for through it I have been brought into sweeter acquaintance with some of those unsearchable riches which are treasured up in Christ Jesus for us, and the life of his dear saints here has increased and abounded towards me in it. Behold, how good and how joyful a thing it is to dwell together in unity ; it is like the precious ointment upon the head of Aaron that ran down to the skirts of his garment ; it is like the dew of Hermon which fell upon the hill of Sion ; there the Lord commanded his blessing, life for evermore.

The Lord bless you, my dear friend, and stablish your heart by his grace, and cause you to abound in every good work and word. The following lines were written in the midst of my affliction. If you think they will tend to comfort the hearts of any of the household, and will take the trouble to insert them in the "Gospel Magazine," you are at liberty to do so.

LINES WRITTEN ON A BED OF AFFLICTION.

" My meditation of Him shall be sweet."

To Jesus my strength in weakness I cling,
Of Jesus, my Shepherd, I ever would sing ;
My path 's full of dangers, but while He is near,
Though the enemy rages, I have not a fear.

He tells me He loves me, and bids me rely
With confidence on Him for every supply ;
For all that He has is freely my own—
His heart and his person, his glory and throne.

What pains does He take to free me from fear,
How oft does He say to me, " Be of good cheer,
Thy sins are all cancell'd on Calvary's tree,
From sin, and from death, and from law thou art free.

" Thou art one with thy Brother, who met all thy doom,
 Who died, and was buried, and lay in the tomb,
 But since I am risen what hast thou to fear ;
 Thou art with me in heaven, I am with thee down here.

" I never will leave thee one moment alone ;
 Far sooner again would I leave my bright throne,
 Than give up one lamb which my Father hath given,
 Whose names are enroll'd in the archives of heav'n.

" The storm may howl round thee, and toss thy frail bark,
 But thy Pilot ne'er slumbers, thou'rt safe in the Ark ;
 My hand I can lay on the ocean at will,
 And bid its proud waves in a moment be still.

" Thy day may be dark, and the conflict within
 May often be sore, through thy frailty and sin,
 But I'll lighten thy darkness ; in me thou hast peace,
 And soon from all sorrow I'll give thee release.

" Thy troublesome self by my grace I'll subdue,
 And daily thy inner man's strength I'll renew ;
 And through the dark valley I'll be thy sure guide,
 By day and by night watching still at thy side.

" Then dry up thy tears and rest in my love,
 Not a hair of thy head shall the enemy move,
 But what's for thy good is this I intend
 In every affliction and trial I send.

" I love thee too well to allow thee to give
 Thy affections to earth, or for others to live ;
 Thy voice I wish often to hear and to see,
 Thy heart's first desire breathing out after me.

" Thou art fair in my sight as the lily, and pure,
 And long as my throne shall thy beauty endure ;
 And soon I'll transplant thee to mansions above,
 There for ever to dwell in the sweets of my love."

In amazement I listen to language so dear,
 'Tis my Shepherd, my Saviour, I feel He is near,
 But in vain does He charge me my tears to dry,
 Still, still I am weeping with wonder and joy.

Altrincham, Jan. 1848.

A. B.

A BANKRUPT SINNER.

“And every one that was in distress, and every one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented, gathered themselves unto him, and he became a Captain over them”—1 Sam. xxii. 2.

THE above is a striking description of the persons that gathered themselves unto David, in whose characters we may see a beautiful representation of the persons who are gathered by the eternal Spirit, under the banner of Christ, the Captain of our salvation. “Every one that was in distress.” Ah, says a poor child of God under his first awakenings, I am in distress, what shall I do? When the thunder of a broken law is rolling over his head, when the terrors of God awaken his conscience, when the law is brought home to his soul, as it was to the apostle Paul, sin revives, and he dies; yes, he dies to all hope of ever attaining life by the law; he has been striving with all his might to attain life by the law, or by his imaginary good works. Preachers told him if he did this, that, and the other, that God would receive him, bless him, and save him, but he now finds all these refuges of lies swept away, and his best righteousness but filthy rags; he now finds himself feeble and sore broken; all his fancied goodness has vanished like the morning cloud, and all his nice works by which he hoped to gain the portals of heaven are only fit for the dunghill; he now sees the impossibility of fulfilling the law, and that his best works would damn him; he finds himself a mass of corruption from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot, and that there is no soundness in him; he feels sin to be a plague and a burden to him, and that if God were to reward him according to his deservings, hell would be his portion. When, I say, the poor sinner is brought to this pass, may he not well say, “Lord, I am in distress; undertake for me,” or, “Lord, I know not what to do, but my eyes are up unto thee?”

The second sort of persons who gathered themselves unto David were such as were in debt. And is not the poor child of God in debt? Yes, that he is. He owes ten thousand talents, and has not a single mite to pay with. In fact, he is completely bankrupt, having neither dish nor spoon to set to stake. In other words, his transgressions are more in number than the hairs of his head. He feels sin working in his members in every possible shape and form, and bringing him into captivity to the law of sin which is in his members, so that when he would do good evil is present with him, and the good he would he does not, and the evil he would not do that he does. He feels sin to be a burden to him, and were it possible he would live without it, but finds himself so weak and helpless that he cannot help himself out of this deplorable state. But hark! poor sinner, when thy beloved Captain finds thou hast nothing to pay, he will frankly forgive all thy debts, and speak peace to thy troubled conscience, by some such passage as

this, "Come unto me, all ye that are weary and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

The third sort of characters that gathered themselves to David were the discontented. The poor child of God is not only discontented with an evil heart of unbelief which is ever ready to depart from the living God, but also with his own coldness and indifference in the best of things; his want of love and affection to his dear Captain, who has done so much for him as to redeem his soul from the grave; he mourns at times over his shortcomings, his sins and transgressions, and wonders that God does not cut him down as a cumberer of the ground. He is not only discontented with the fashionable divinity of the present day, but is called by professors a speckled bird, a discontented person, because he cannot swallow down the hotch-potch, muddy divinity of the present day. He wants to hear a full, free, and finished salvation preaching, but unless he lives in a highly favoured place, where God has one of his sent servants, he may almost wear his shoe soles in finding. There is plenty of what is called preaching, but of what sort is it? He wants to hear Christ held up as the only ground of a poor sinner's acceptance with God; he wants a salvation preaching fast at both ends. The golden chain of salvation commencing with God's predestination, and ending with the glorification of every elect vessel of mercy is a chain that can never be broken by all the arts and contrivances of free-willers, aided by the malice and hatred of devils; "Upon this Rock will I build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." "I know my sheep," says Christ, "and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish (mark that, never perish) neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." Well, says the Arminian, but it does not say, they may not slip through his fingers. True it is possible for a people to slip through an earthly monarch's fingers, but Christ has made surer work of it than that. The Captain of our salvation says further, "I will that those whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory." The prophet Isaiah says, he "shall see of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied." How would it be possible for Christ to be satisfied if but one of his dear sheep were to perish; He paid too dear a price for his church and people ever to suffer one of his little ones to perish. I speak it with reverence, the love of Christ is such that, were it possible for one of his people to drop into hell, he would fetch him back. Then cheer up, poor soul; though in distress, in debt, and discontented, yet the Captain of thy salvation ever lives to intercede for thee at his Father's right hand; thou shalt have all thy distresses removed, all thy debts discharged, and all thy discontent done away, in the precious blood of thy dear Jesus.

Denholme.

T. B.

TRUTH.

THE mighty change which regeneration produces in the souls of believers, is very gradually realized by the subjects of it: they cannot at once comprehend that " **HOLINESS TO THE LORD** " is inscribed upon every bridle which restrains the impetuosity of nature (Hos. xiv. 20). But the promise is sure, " When He the Spirit of truth is come, He will guide you into all truth." This Almighty Teacher, whose gentleness accomplishes great things, will bring every soul whom He instructs, to know that all those powers of nature which were once so highly esteemed, are sold under sin, and can by no means redeem themselves from iniquity, for that every natural effort serves only to plunge them deeper in the mire. Even truth itself, that most precious gem in nature's crown, " is fallen in the streets," and equity cannot enter by its instrumentality; for whoever attempts to erect the throne of justice upon the basis of natural truth, will be compelled to acknowledge, " Yea, truth faileth :" its native-power is lost, and it retaineth no strength nor ability for ruling. Yet though deprived of its original dignity, natural truth is still a valuable and indispensable servant in the household of faith, one that can on no occasion be dismissed with safety ; but it is not the Christian's master, for wherever it takes the precedence, it is closely connected with self-justification ; it shuts out mercy, but does not exclude malice. " Master (said the scribes and Pharisees) this woman was taken in adultery " (or adulterizing)—the Lord lends a deaf ear to their accusations, not because they were false, but because He would proceed with his own work as " a Restorer of paths to dwell in ;" He reveals to these informers so much of essential truth as compels each of them to hide his head ; He then brings in his own glorious justification on behalf of the condemned culprit, " And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee :" after which the Lord of Glory lifts up the head of natural truth to restore it to its proper office and situation as a servant of the Church, " Go, and sin no more." " Master (said one) speak to my brother that he divide the inheritance with me :" the Lord seemingly disregards the claim of natural relationship, in order to direct the minds of his hearers to the contemplation of that eternal truth which was " set up from everlasting, from the beginning or ever the earth was ;" yet He who condescended to become a " meat-offering," as well as a " burnt-offering," is not unmindful of the temporal need of his people, He therefore shows that the well-being of society is preserved, not by each one insisting upon his own right, but by a preponderating regard to the momentous truth that " a man's life consisted not in the abundance of the things which he possessesthe " (Luke xii. 13—15).

Natural truth was (so to speak) deified by Saul of Tarsus, his outward demeanour was irreproachable; as touching the righteousness which is in the law, he was blameless : but while he was thus labouring to form a vessel unto honour, behold it was marred in the hand of the potter, his comeliness was turned into corruption, and his character

which he had so strenuously laboured to bring to perfection, proved to be that of “a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious.” Peter, on the other hand, was induced, on a special occasion, to treat with disregard, and even with contempt, this valuable and faithful attendant. And what was the Lord’s treatment of Peter? Did he ever reproach or taunt him with it? Did he ever place the servant before the son, and make Peter’s denial of more importance than Peter himself? No; the *sin* of Peter’s denial was for ever buried; forgiveness was therefore stamped upon all that subsequently transpired between Peter and his Lord; but the fact of the denial was appointed as a faithful and useful servant to attend this heir of glory, throughout the remainder of his earthly career.

Natural and spiritual truth are beautifully contrasted in many historical parts of the Old Testament. Abraham thought it expedient to dispense with truth on more than one occasion, but his wisdom proved to be foolishness, and while natural truth bore testimony to his error, eternal truth shone with resplendent and unchanging lustre over all, proving that the God who keepeth covenant for ever, would not allow any earthly power, whether in Egypt or in Gerar, to injure the man whom He had chosen to be his friend, nor would he suffer his faithfulness to fail, in that He promised Abraham, “I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly, and thou shalt be a father of many nations.” Creature truth has no part in the everlasting covenant, therefore Jacob’s lie could not turn aside his father’s blessing, and even after his duplicity was detected, far from making any attempt to reverse it, the trembling, aged patriarch, contrary to his natural feelings of partiality towards the first-born, pronounced an unhesitating confirmation of the same. “I have blessed him, yea, and he shall be blessed. Behold (said he to Esau) I have made him thy lord, and all his brethren have I given to him for servants; and with corn and wine have I sustained him.” Jacob’s lie had no more part in obtaining the blessing than Jacob’s truth: Rebecca might have known this, “for the children being not yet born, neither having done good or evil, that the purpose of God, according to election, might stand, not of works, but of Him that calleth, it was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger; as it is written, Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated.” Yet the hated one is permitted to remain at home, enjoying the comforts of domestic life, while the beloved Jacob becomes a wandering pilgrim, exposed to hardships and trials, being successively reminded by the artifices of his uncle, and the deceitfulness of his sons, of the part which he himself had acted towards a revered and infirm parent. David sinned against truth very grievously, and the effects of his error attended him throughout the remainder of his life. “My sin (said he) is ever before me;” it was manifest in the irregularities of his family, in the perpetual turmoils in which he was engaged, and in the many perplexing and harassing circumstances through which he was called to pass; yet David could say, in the confidence of faith, “Although my house be not so with God, yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure.”

In the third chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, the subject is argued in demonstration of the Spirit and of power. The apostle there

asserts that the word of man, even of all men put together, can never prevail against the truth of God, "Yea, let God be true, but every man a liar." And he goes on to argue that if his "lie" (or sin) be charged upon him; when it is manifest that God hath freely justified, acquitted and judged him righteous, he may boldly challenge his accusers to show the ground on which they judge him as a sinner, seeing the Lord hath put away both the sin and the love and desire for it. At the same time he affirms that if any through perverse ignorance choose to say, "Let us do evil, that good may come," or if they report this slander of the Lord's family, their damnation is just. He then goes on to show that in every instance where nature takes the lead of grace, sin has the dominion, and that under these circumstances there is no difference between the believer and the unbeliever, "they are all under sin," and are (for the time) fellow-travellers in the broad road described from verse 10 to 18.

There are certain properties or faculties pertaining to human nature, which though inefficient of themselves, are, when subservient to Christ, made instrumental in showing forth his praise. Concerning these faculties when left to themselves, the apostle declares, "There shall no flesh be justified in his sight:" but when the elder submits to the younger, when nature bows down before the throne of grace, and Christ in all things has the pre-eminence, the question and answer may fearlessly be presented, "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law;" for the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us who, by the Spirit's indwelling, are made free from those workings of sin and death which the flesh produces, and which the law itself cannot remove. The freedom of the believer is in the Spirit only, for in the flesh he is still subject to the law of sin, and every time the flesh puts forth its power to eat, or derive strength from, or even to touch the glorious Tree of the knowledge of good and evil, that moment death steals over the soul, the wilderness is substituted for Eden, and the garden of the Lord becomes a desert. The smallest touch (self-impelled) be it ever so gentle and considerate, is an offence and an insult to that almighty Lord, "who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will," and whose truth endureth throughout all generations. "Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die." "They shall not touch any holy thing, lest they die." David was far more concerned about the truth of God, than about his own truth; his watchfulness did not consist in keeping his own feet. "Mine eyes (said he) are ever toward the Lord, for He shall pluck my feet out of the net." Hannah, too, had learned this lesson in the school of adversity. "He will keep the feet of his saints, and the wicked shall be silent in darkness; for by strength shall no man prevail." The Lord puts honour upon natural truth, whenever it yields the supremacy to him; witness the Ninevites at the preaching of Jonah—the mariners in the ship with him—the submission of Ahab—and many others, whether in a state of nature or of grace: but when it seeks to recommend itself to the heart-searching Jehovah, as did the Pharisee, who so punctually performed all his duties, it is rejected with disdain.

All the powers of nature which were exemplified in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ while on earth are capable, in the hands of the Spirit, of showing forth his praise ; this is their reasonable service, for then, and then only are they instruments of righteousness ; and like Onesimus the servant of Philemon, they which in time past were unprofitable, become profitable to Christ and his church, inasmuch as by their instrumentality the work of grace is carried on, and the purposes of God are accomplished in the world. And although like the scaffolding and the various implements made use of in the erection of a building, their services are no longer required when once the work is completed, yet while it is in process, they may not lightly be dispensed with. Woe to the individual who shall presume to discard or misuse the servants of the living God, whether they be ploughmen or vine dressers, hewers of wood, or drawers of water. Yet let it never be forgotten that “the servant is not greater than his Lord ;” “ Shall the axe boast itself against him that heweth therewith ? or shall the saw magnify itself against him that shaketh it ? as if the rod should shake itself against them that lift it up, or as if the staff should lift up itself, as if it were no wood ” (Is. x. 15).

Brighton.

E. S.

THE BELIEVER'S PERFECTION, AND THE METHOD OF ITS ATTAINMENT.

“Walk before Me, and be thou perfect.”—Gen. xvii. 1.

In speaking of the perfection of the believer, we must be careful to distinguish between that absolute, inalienable, and unchangeable perfection which he has, by virtue of his standing in Christ, and that perfection which the Scriptures constantly set before us as a matter of attainment; the former admits of no degrees. The moment a man is born again—the moment Christ is formed in the soul—that moment he is fully and for ever invested with this perfection, and nothing can add to it, detract from it, or in any way impair it. The latter, on the contrary (which is the one referred to in the passage before us), is altogether of a progressive character, and signifies in few words, a maturity of Christian growth or stature; as we gather from Heb. v. 14, where St. Paul speaks of some that were “of full age,” which is in the margin and Greek “perfect;” and again, in Eph. iv. 13, “Till we all come into the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God to a perfect man, to the fulness of the measure of the stature of Christ.” This truth, however, which is so clearly demonstrable by the word of God, must not be confounded with that pernicious error so much afloat, called “progressive sanctification.” This is altogether chimerical. Sanctification cannot progress, for it is a part of that absolute and unalterable perfection alluded to above, which we have in Christ Jesus, and in which, it has been shown, there are no degrees. But at the same time, it is most evident, from many passages of Scripture, that there is a perfection; or maturity to be obtained by Christians,

in which there are in it many degrees. Hence, St. John writes to "little children," "young men," and "fathers;" St. Paul speaks of "babes," and "strong men;" and St. Peter exhorts believers to "grow in grace." This perfection, then, is progressive. It is that, in which we ought to be continually advancing; not contenting ourselves, as many do, with a place on the lowest form in the school of Christ, learning only the alphabet of divine things, but pressing forward after greater attainments, and a more enlarged knowledge of God.

"Leaving the first principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection." The ways and means thereto are,

1st, A diligent, prayerful study of the word of God. "As new born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." Believers in all ages have found the word of God most needful for their growth and prosperity. Job says, "I have esteemed the words of His mouth more than my necessary food." Jeremiah says, "Thy words were found, and I did eat them, and Thy word was unto me, the joy and rejoicing of my heart;" and David says, "The law of Thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver." Daniel found the word of God most strengthening—"When He had spoken unto me, I was strengthened;" and God asks, "Do not My words do good to them that walk uprightly?" And in 1 Tim. iii. 16, 17, we find that the perfection of the people of God was one especial end for which the Scriptures were written, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect."

Another means provided in the abounding grace of God for growth, is the faithful preaching of the everlasting gospel, as we gather from Eph. iv. 11, 12, "And He gave some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints," &c. Prayer and communion with God are doubtless most conducive to spiritual growth, "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength," or "change their strength," as it is in the margin—that is, "they shall go from strength to strength." Another means is communion of saints; this is strikingly set forth to us in Eph. iv. 16, "From whom the whole body fitly framed together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body to the edifying of itself in love."

Lastly, Affliction is a great means in the hand of God for promoting the growth of His children. It is wonderful to observe what rapid strides Christians often make in the furnace; there is something so mellowing, so ripening in this process, that those who before seemed to be but weak and helpless babes, making little or no progress, come forth so matured in every grace of the Spirit, that they are as strong men, rejoicing to run the race set before them. Such are the means which God, in infinite love, has appointed for the growth of His people, that they may be established, strengthened, settled; the means are his, the work is also His, to Him therefore be all the glory. "The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me."

of sin, and can furnish you with the true idea to enable us to "grasp" his "true scope." And this class of men and women would have been compelled to do so.

THOUGHTS ON THE ORIGIN OF SIN.

IN A LETTER TO A FRIEND.

MY DEAR FRIEND AND BROTHER IN CHRIST JESUS,

You some time since requested me to put upon paper my thoughts respecting the origin of sin. Want of time must plead my excuse for not having attended to, and complied with, your request long since.

It is truly grievous to think that a breach is often made between God's children, on this subject, which the most highly taught among them can understand but imperfectly in this life. I sincerely pray that the Lord may make use of my mind and pen to the removal of the difficulty which some seem to labour under with regard to this subject. I shall not attempt to prove that God *decreed* the fall of men and angels, because to *suppose the contrary*, is to suppose that the Almighty works without a plan, and consequently to rob him of that beauty, harmony, and consistency which attend on all his works, and which will be fully developed when the children of God shall all come into actual possession of their inheritance. I shall therefore take this ground that, *when* God decreed to create intelligent beings, angels and men, *then* he decreed that they should fall into sin, on the one hand to make known to his creatures the riches of his glory, by the salvation of his elect; and on the other hand to show his wrath, and make his power known, by the destruction of the vessels of wrath afore prepared to that end. See Romans ix. throughout; and thus, the perfection of his justice is made manifest, and the depths of his mercy and love are displayed. But the question so frequently asked is this, Is God the Author of sin? To this I would reply that, if to say "God eternally decreed that his creatures should disobey that part of his will which he has made known," implies that God is the Author of sin, the unerring word of God decides in the affirmative, for in Acts ii. 23, it is stated that Christ was "delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God." Now unless it can be proved that this determinate counsel of God was taken upon some unforeseen emergency, it plainly involves, not only Adam's sin, but also that of the "angels who kept not their first estate;" for our blessed Redeemer was "delivered" to death "for our offences," but had Adam never sinned, there would not have been any offence committed (as he was the federal head and representative of the human race)—Rom. v. 12 to the end; and had Adam never been tempted, he never would have transgressed; and if Satan could be supposed to have remained holy as he was created, there would have been no one to tempt our first parents to sin; it is therefore clear that the "determinate counsel," by which Christ was delivered to death, comprehends both the sin of angels, and our first parents, as well as every intermediate transgression, by means of which this delivery was accomplished. But I hope to satisfy you that it cannot be said with any degree of truth that God is the author of sin (considered as sin).

In order to make the subject as plain as possible, I would say a few words concerning, first, the fall of angels; secondly, the fall of Adam; and, thirdly, the actual transgressions of men in consequence of the corruption and depravity of our fallen nature.

With regard to the transgression of the angelic race, Lucifer and his confederates, much obscurity frequently prevails, from not attending to the accounts given in Scripture respecting them; but we must endeavour to discover the time when, and the state in which, they were created. Now it is evident that they did not exist before the first day, for that was the beginning of time, and had they existed before time, they would be possessed of that attribute which belongs to our Triune Jehovah alone—viz., eternity of existence. Again, it is plain from Job xxxviii. 6, 7, that they were created prior to the fourth day, and therefore I think we may safely conclude with Augustine, Usher, and Ursinus, that they were created on the first day, and mentioned by Moses under the general term “heavens.” With regard to their nature, they are spiritual beings (Heb. i. 14; 1 Kings xxii. 21), and of a finite or limited nature, as Luke i. and Acts x. 12 and Daniel x. show; they were all created good and holy, equally possessing strength, wisdom, freedom of will, holiness and righteousness, whereby they might be conformed to, and like Jehovah: for proof of this, see Gen. i. 31; Psalm ciii. 20; Matt. xviii. 10, and xxii. 30; Luke ix. 26; Isaiah vi. 2; John viii. 44; Jude 6.

And now, my dear brother, we come to a most interesting part of our subject, namely, to inquire how it is, since all were created alike holy, that some continue holy, “always beholding the face of our Father which is in heaven;” while others have lost their holiness, and are reserved “in everlasting darkness unto the great day of judgment?”

I think it highly unscriptural to say that God withdrew his power from them, and thus they fell into transgression; for to me it seems clear that the standing of some, is owing to their election in Christ as their head of government (1 Tim. v. 21), and the fall and disobedience of the rest, is owing to their having been left to the mutability of their own will. To explain this more clearly, I would observe that Satan, “the prince of the power of the air, the god of this world,” might have had some superiority or pre-eminence over the rest (and this is agreeable to Scripture and to reason, for with him fell a “legion;” and he must have been highly thought of by them, or they would not have joined in his apostacy) but being created under a law, namely, to worship “the word of God” made flesh (Heb. i. 6), the image of which was before his eyes, he being of a higher order in the scale of created beings than the manhood which Christ was to assume, refused to submit to what he considered a degradation, and being followed in his rebellion by other angels, they were banished from glory on account of their disobedience. Do you ask what moved him to this? I reply, the pride of his nature. Was this pride a good or bad quality? I answer, good, if used properly, as in the holy angels, who take a pride in doing Jehovah’s will; bad, when exercised in an improper manner. Thus the *commandment* perverted the pride of the angels, which, operating upon the mutability of their

will, caused them to make that choice which has been the active cause of their misery ; or more plainly thus : the display of Jehovah's love towards sinners of the human race (although not yet created) and the command given to worship the Lord Jesus as God-man Mediator, which by the Holy Ghost was made effectual to the confirmation of one part of the angelic order, was, merely from the want of the same direct agency, the means of operating upon the minds and faculties of the others, so as to lead them to rebel.

You must clearly perceive it was not the withdrawal of any power previously possessed, or the infusion of any evil principle, sin not being an *effect* but a *defect* ; neither is God chargeable with injustice for upholding one part of this race of beings and not the rest, for there is no law beyond the absolute will of Jehovah, but it is for his good " pleasure they are and were created," neither was he bound to preserve his creatures in the state in which they were placed, but he created them with the highest intellectual capacities, and they fell by the voluntary abuse of these faculties.

We come, in the next place, to consider the fall of Adam ; and this is a subject which has been so often spoken of, it seems almost needless to enter upon it, yet a few observations must be made. First, as to his creation ; and, secondly, as to his fall. Man, it is said by the sacred historian, was created "in the image of God." If this be understood to refer to his body, we must suppose it alludes to that image of the manhood set up in the Divine mind, in which the eternal "word" was "made flesh and dwelt among us;" but if it refers to his soul, we must understand by it that perfection of nature which appeared in the faculties thereof. For he had, in his understanding, all true wisdom, and heavenly knowledge of God's holy will and works ; in his memory, a holy retention of all things made known to him ; in his will, a cheerfulness and readiness to obey God's commands ; in his affections, moderation and sanctity, and in his conscience, perfect integrity. If you contrast man in his present state, with man in the state which I have attempted to describe, the effects of the fall may be very plainly perceived in every faculty of the soul.

Being created thus perfect, he was capable, as far as regarded the perfection of his nature, of yielding implicit obedience to his Creator's will, and accordingly Jehovah graciously entered into covenant with his creature, binding himself to give him eternal life as a reward of obedience ; the terms and conditions of this covenant were signified to him by two trees—the tree of knowledge of good and evil, was to him a test of obedience and warning of his mutability, and a seal of God's righteous displeasure against him should he venture to disobey. (I do not conceive that this tree had the power of giving knowledge of any sort, but if he tasted of it he would, by painful experience, know what evil was, whereas, before, he knew nothing but good.) The tree of life was a sacramental, or outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace. Compare Gen. ii. 9 with Rev. ii. 7. It was no more able to give life than was the eating of the Passover by the carnal Jews, or the Lord's Supper by professing Christians ; yet when Adam had by sin lost his title to the thing signified, he was forbidden the use of the sign. The account of the fall of Adam from

his creation state, is given by Moses in Genesis iii. Let us, therefore, endeavour to discover what share in this transaction may be fairly attributed to God. In order to the fulfilment of his own most gracious designs, he suffered Satan to assail him (for Jehovah did not instil into him any evil, or take from him any ability to good, James i. 13, and 1 John ii. 16), and left him to the exercise of those faculties which he had given him in perfection, and did not hinder the fall by a further supply of strength, and yet this was not by a bare permission, as I have already intimated, but according to his own infinitely wise decree ; so ordering the fall of man, to be the means of setting forth the glory of his mercy in them that are saved, and of his justice in them that perish. Satan then with delight assailed our first parents, who fell by his craft into unbelief, pride, and open rebellion. I think I need not dwell on this part of the subject, but if it should not be sufficiently clear, I hope you will oblige me by sending some more questions. I will proceed to inquire what hand the Lord has in the daily sins and transgressions of the human race.

The consequence of the fall, as you are well aware, is a want of conformity to God's holy law in the souls of all the posterity of Adam ; this is commonly called original or indwelling sin, and I hope you will bear in mind that this needs no supernatural agency to set it in motion, for a darkened understanding, governing a perverted will and corrupted affections, must naturally and necessarily produce sinful actions. With regard to the ungodly I find many places in Scripture where God is said to cause them to commit sin, as Exodus vii. 3, 2 Samuel xvi. 10, 2 Chron. x. 15, 1 Kings ii. 23, and iv. 28. Now, as sin is an *action*, *simply the doing of a thing*, or as there is some good, *in the action*, or *intended* by it, towards his people, or as it is sent for the punishment of a previous sin, or for a trial of faith to the people of God, Jehovah is undoubtedly the Author of it. Acts xvii. 28, Gen. i. 20, 2 Sam. xxiv. 1, with 1 Chron. xxi. 1. For instance, when Shimei cursed David, *he* did so from malice and with the intent to drive him to despair, but God directed him to do it for the trial of his servant's patience.

So again in the crucifixion of our adorable Redeemer ; he was delivered to death *by the Jews* from malicious envy and ignorance, and because they would not have him to reign over them ; by Judas, from covetousness and a desire to obtain money ; by Pilate, from ambition and fear, and that he might please the people and keep well with Cæsar ; but God delivered him out of love, and Christ gave himself up from the same cause, and that the counsel of God might stand, and the pleasure of the Lord in the redemption and glorification of the church, might prosper. In these, and all other sinful transactions, the *sin* is not *in the action*, but *in the moving cause, from which it proceeds, and the end to which it is done*, and thus, though God works by, and through, the sinful passions of the ungodly, he is not, nor can he be, chargeable as the "author of sin," as we should clearly perceive, had we understandings sufficiently enlightened to comprehend these things fully.

If the sins of the unregenerate cannot be charged on God, neither can the sins of "his sanctified ones." If you or I should be over-

taken with a fault ; if we yield to pride, deceitfulness, or worldly mindedness, shall we accuse our heavenly Father of leading us into the indulgence of them ? Certainly not ; but, whilst humbled in the dust at the sense of our continued rebellion and ingratitude, we may bless his holy name that he has not left us to live in our sin, nor ceased to support us even in our wanderings.

After all, we need not be surprised that we know so little of these things, but that we know so much as we do ; and may what we do know lead us to look forward to that happy period when we shall "know even as we are known."

I remain, dear Brother, yours in Christ,

CLERUS.

ALFRED HEWLETT.

(From the "Gospel Magazine," A.D. 1833 or 1834.)

To the Editor of the Gospel Magazine.

DEAR EDITOR,

May I beg the favour of your inserting this original letter in your Magazine. You will soon discover that it bears the true image and superscription of that beloved minister of our Lord Jesus Christ whose name is attached to it. Oh that the Lord of the harvest would send forth in our day many such faithful labourers into his vineyard, who would feed us with knowledge and understanding.

Yours in the Lord,

Plymouth, June 17, 1848.

E. SOPER.

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,

I am informed that our blessed Lord hath been pleased to visit you, by afflicting your body with very great weakness, the effects and consequences of which must be left wholly with him. From the real respect I have for you, I cannot but feel for, and sympathize with you. It is faith in the Son of God, which alone is exercised on him, and his plenteous redemption, can bear you up, and carry you safely through the whole process of his divine dispensation ; and there is in Christ all that which is all-sufficient to support us in life, to carry us through trials, pains, sickness, and weakness, to comfort us in the hour of death, and to fill us with hopes full of immortality. Oh that the Lord Jesus may sanctify and bless the present visitation to you, that, as the outward man decayeth, the inward man may be renewed day by day. My dear friend, at such a season you will be naturally led to repose on yourself, to look to your sins, to look within yourself for some ground of hope to fix your faith upon, to look on your beloved partner and dear children, and to have and entertain distressing cares and fears, and overlook Christ, who is a present help in time of trouble. As to

your reposing on yourself, no good will arise to you therefrom. You are a poor, guilty, sinful, helpless person, in and of yourself, therefore you need an Almighty Saviour, who is able in himself, and by himself alone, to save you with an everlasting salvation. As it respects your sins, Peter tells us "Christ himself hath borne our sins in his own body on the tree." And John tells us, "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin." And Zechariah tells us, that Christ's blood is a fountain "opened for sin and uncleanness." It is of the utmost importance to know Christ in his great work of salvation, and to trust by simple faith on him alone for the forgiveness of our sins, and the acceptance of our persons. All flesh was corrupted by the fall of the first man, Christ as the Lamb of God, the Serpent Bruiser, the Almighty Saviour, was immediately revealed and made known. And from that time to the present moment he is set forth in the everlasting gospel as the Friend and Saviour of all who put their trust in him. He says, "Look unto me, and be ye saved," or, "Ye shall be saved." To save his people from their sins, he, according to his covenant engagements with his Father before all time, became true and very man in the fulness of time, by taking our nature into union with his divine Person, and thus he became God and man in the person of one Christ; by which means he became capable of obeying and suffering in the law, place, room, and stead of his people, "the just for the unjust." He, as the Saviour, had all the sins of all his people laid by his Father on him, and he bore them in his own body on the tree. He was made sin for us, and died under the imputation of all the guilt and filth contained in the sinfulness of the nature, hearts, thoughts, and lives of his people, and he died for our sins, and suffered in his holy soul and immaculate body all the punishment due to sin. Jesus Christ did taste of that death, which sinners for themselves must otherwise have undergone, for he died as our Surety, and in our stead. Hence sin, our sins, being imputed to him, he was sore amazed, his soul was very heavy, sorrowful even unto death, was filled with astonishment at the overwhelmings of divine wrath which came in upon him, was in an agony, and sweat great drops of blood, yea, when the whole fulness of the curse and wrath due to sin came in upon his righteous soul, he cried out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" By our Lord's obedience and soul travail he finished salvation's work, abolished sin, brought in an everlasting righteousness, made peace, vanquished Satan, conquered death, and opened a way for us into the holiest of all by his blood. And this Jesus and his great salvation is set before you to look at, to trust in now and evermore, for justification and pardon. Do not therefore look at yourself, at your sins and miseries, but obey the Lord's command to look to him. Are you looking into yourself for some ground of hope to fix your faith upon? This is altogether wrong. Christ in his own person, righteousness, blood, and sacrifice, is the foundation God has laid for your faith and hope to fix on, and there is everything in Christ to engage and encourage your faith and hope in him. Christ's heart is all love, his bowels are bowels of mercy. He is for sinners just such as you and I are. His blood is effectual, everlastingly effectual to cleanse from all sin, to take out every spot and stain, to purify and make us in the sight of God our

heavenly Father as pure and spotless as though we had never been defiled. His righteousness adorns us, and in it we are made the righteousness of God. If you have any other foundation to fix your faith and hope upon, know that it is wholly wrong—it is Christ himself must be the foundation of our hope of glory.

Mr. Laurence Saunders, one of our English martyrs, wrote thus to his wife a little before his burning. After desiring her to send him a shirt in which he was to suffer, he breaks out into this sweet prayer : “ Oh, my heavenly Father, look upon me in the face of thy Christ, or else I shall not be able to abide thy countenance. Such is my filthiness. He will do so ; and therefore I will not be afraid what sin, hell, death, and damnation, can do against me.”

I will transcribe some most excellent sentences, from Mr. Romaine, hoping the Lord will bless them to you :—“ The ground of my hope is not what I am in myself, but what I am in Christ Jesus. Oh, remember, Sirs, living and dying for time and eternity ; nothing can do you good but Jesus. The Lord laid upon Christ our iniquities. Christ had no stain of sin ; and yet when he stood up under the iniquities of his people, he was exceedingly oppressed ; for his sweat was as, or like great drops of blood. There never was anything in nature like that. All the malice of Pilate and Herod, the Pharisees, with all the fury of the mob and tumult of the rioters united, fetched from him no complaint. Though in straits, surrounded with enemies, and forsaken by his friends, no tears fell from his eye. This was only the outside of his sufferings. What he endured from the hidings of God’s countenance, and under the pressure of our load, is well expressed by the Greek Church, ‘ By all thy known and unknown sufferings, good Lord, deliver us.’ Christ is our text, Christ is our subject, Christ is the object of our faith and hope, and Christ will soon be the object of our sense to all eternity. This beggars all the joys of earth.

“ All the blessings of time and eternity are made over to us in the covenant of grace, and bestowed upon us as a free act of mercy. What a Jesus do we serve ! If ever we get his peace into our hearts, we really get heaven upon earth. Not only then have we a stream of joy, but a stream from an ocean from which saints above derive all their joys. All the blessings of time and eternity are made over to us in Christ Jesus, and are given to us as legacies, free gifts. There is no one who buys legacies : it is a matter of grace. It is not a good conscience if you do not see all your sins done away by the sacrifice of Christ.

“ Christ stood the great sacrifice for sin. The debt was demanded of him, and he made himself accountable, and paid it. His resurrection was a public declaration of this, and those who will not have this, Jesus as all in all, are under the wrath of God, and die in their sins ; and those that have come and fled to him are saved for ever. And when you hear the gospel preached, the design is, that you should come in, and take the benefit of it : for blessed are all they that put their trust in Him.

“ Here is our consolation, Sirs ; all the hosts of hell cannot stop a poor sinner from being pulled out of the jaws of death. Christ Jesus

is now upon his throne, all mighty to save. Christ made his soul an offering for sin. There is no offering can take away sin but the blood of the Lamb ; and if people felt and believed this, they could not rest till they knew that Jesus Christ was crucified for them. You have lived to no purpose if you have not felt sin, and confessed it over the head of Christ, the antitypical scape-goat. Christ came to destroy the works of the devil, sin, and death. The executioner he disarmed, so that the believer may reckon death among his goods and chattels.

"The last enemy, death, you and I may soon have to deal with, and there is no looking at it without horror but in Jesus ; for those you read of in the Revelation, they overcame by the blood of the Lamb. The debt is paid, and if you will come to-day and claim it, you may have your discharge ; and trusting in Christ, you may go as safely through the valley of the shadow of death, as you may out of this church when the service is over.

"There is not an aching heart, or any trouble any of you have, but if you are leaning upon Christ, he will turn it into a blessing.

"It is the hardest thing in the world to believe that coming to Christ, and resting upon his atonement, I stand before God as sinless as though I had never sinned.

"There is nothing worth living for another day, but to feel more our need of this precious Saviour, and to grow into more fellowship with him, and to have all our faculties exercised on him.

"When Christ trod the wine-press of his Father's wrath, blood came at every pore. It trickled down from his temples, and came out at his hands and feet. God so loved the world, and what man can tell what is contained in that ? So it is this love that he commends to us ; and he says, "I will set my love in its full splendour, in its meridian glory, in the person of Christ Jesus ;" and he said over and over that this love passeth knowledge, and exceedeth all understanding. And it is because you do not rest on Christ's sacrifice, that your life hangs in doubt about you, and that you are in bondage to every fear ; and depend on it you will feel no safety, nor find true peace to your soul until you are enabled to cast all your burdens upon Him."

To Him I commend you, who is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among the saints in light ; to whom be glory for ever and ever.

S. EYLES PIERCE.

Review.

The Dying Pillow made easy for a Death-Bed. A Posthumous Work of ROBERT HAWKER, D.D., Vicar of Charles, Plymouth. Now first Published. With a commendatory Preface, by the Rev. R. Shute, M.A., Rector of the united Parishes of St. Augustine and St. Faith, London. 18mo., pp. 148. London : H. G. Collins, 32, Paternoster Row.

THE above work was written during the last years of this most eminent servant of Christ. It bears most decided marks of its being a genuine production, and that the Author's strength of mind was unabated. David was called the sweet psalmist of Israel, and we think it may likewise be said of Dr. Hawker, that he was the sweet exalter of Christ, to the Church of the living God. The different chapters of this book were written at intervals, with the intention of being inserted in the pages of this Magazine, but they were reserved by the late Editor for separate publication, which has been delayed till the present time. We have not had time as yet to do more than dip into its pages, but the glance has been quite sufficient to show us that it will most amply repay the reader who loves gospel truth.

We shall return to its consideration in a future Number, but for the present can only gratify the reader by a short extract.

The Clergyman who has Edited this work has lately become well known as an unflinching advocate of that glorious gospel, for the faithful preaching of which he has endured much reproach; but may the covenant God of Israel strengthen him with all power and might. Generally speaking, indeed, it is a vain toil to look for sound gospel in our cathedral establishments, but we hear that Mr. Shute is enabled unflinchingly to preach Christ's gospel within the walls of St. Paul's Cathedral.

"The faith of God's elect differs, both in cause and effect, from all the learning in the world. It is not natural, but spiritual; not learned by human teaching, but divine; not merited, but given. It is one, the simplest in its effects, and yet the greatest in its cause, of all principles whatever. As to its cause—the same power which was necessary to raise Christ from the dead is as necessary to raise the sinner 'dead in trespasses and sins.' And as to its effects—when the object of divine love is quickened into new and spiritual life, it is as natural for him to live upon God, and to God, and with God by faith, as it is for the new-born child in nature to breathe and move, and do the actions of life. Reader, hath such an act of saving grace passed upon your soul? then will you yourself know that you are one of God's witnesses; 'for the Spirit witnesseth to your spirit that you are a child of God.'"