

ties;" the prince of life overcome of death; the well-beloved of the Father crying out, in the awful loneliness of a soul separated for a time from a sense 'of the Divine presence. "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?"

Hast thou seen this? And does not sin, only to be atoned for by so great a sacrifice, appear exceeding sinful? It does; it ought; for it was only as the price of His agony, and bloody sweat, and sufferings, and death, that Jesus acquired the power of forgiving sins; of saying to any one of us, as we cry to Him for mercy, "Son, daughter, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee." "The Son of Man hath power on earth." The cross had not, when the words were uttered, been endured; but the covenant was "ordered in all things and sure," and He that came to do his Father's will would fulfil it in due season. Upon the credit of the Saviour's death, sinners had been forgiven from the very first; and believing souls, trusting in a Saviour yet to be revealed, and "waiting for the consolation of Israel," were accepted of God, and entered at death into the Paradise above.

In virtue of the propitiation he was about to offer, Christ, while He walked with men on earth, forgave them; ay, when He was dying for them on the cross, pronounced their pardon: proving that even then, in His apparently weakest moments, He had "all power given unto Him in heaven and on earth." And the same "power" belongs to Him now; now that the sacrifice has been offered, the sin expiated, and the curse exhausted. Much more may we say now that the "power" is His; seated as He is at the right hand of the Father, "far above all thrones and dominions, and principalities and powers." "If, when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life." "Wherefore He is able to save them to the uttermost that

come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them." Then come this day, and put His power to the proof. "Oh, taste and see that the Lord is gracious." Though your sins be as the scarlet, or the crimson; though they be "more in number than the hairs of your head;" though they have "taken such hold of you that you are not able to leave them," you have only now, and as you are to throw yourself at the feet of Jesus, to receive pardon mine iniquity, for it is "now," and you will find that He has "power to forgive sins"—the greatest, the blackest—to make them as though they never had been—"casting them behind thee," and "burying them in the deep sea."

That pardon of iniquity, with power of mind, came from the address of the man to the paralytic: "Son, be of good cheer."

Yes; his first words to that diseased, helpless, suffering man, as He conveyed to him the assurance of pardon, were these: "Take courage; be of good cheer." And had He sent home the palsied man unhealed, the miracle unwrought, and yet with these words ringing in his ears, the hapless sufferer might have gone away rejoicing; and friends and neighbours, pointing to him, might have said "Blessed is the man whose transgression is forgiven and whose sin is covered."

We learn from this that religion is meant to give us happiness, to fill us with all peace and joy; and, lifting off the burden of secret apprehension, is intended to make us light in heart and easy in conscience. Oh, think not, as so many do, that the moment a man yields himself to Christ he bids farewell to cheerfulness, and begins a life of sadness and gloom. This is the world's perversion of a religious life, a conception of piety as false as it is common.

A Christian life is, and ought to be, a happy life; the happiest life. Christ's presence in the heart does not damp our