

me, still more than I was convinced before, that outward works are nothing, being alone; and in several conversations instructed me how to pursue inward holiness, or a union of the soul with God. But even of his instructions, (though I then received them as the words of God,) I cannot but now observe, 1. That he spoke so incautiously against trusting in outward works, that he discouraged me from doing them at all. 2. That he recommended (as it were, to supply what was wanting in them) mental prayer, and the like exercises, as the most effectual means of purifying the soul, and uniting it with God. Now these were, in truth, as much my own works as visiting the sick or clothing the naked; and the union with God thus pursued was as really my own righteousness, as any I had before pursued under another name.

"8. In this refined way of trusting to my own works, and my own righteousness, (so zealously inculcated by the mystic writers,) I dragged on heavily, finding no comfort or help therein, till the time of my leaving England. On shipboard, however, I was again active in outward works; where it pleased God, of his free mercy, to give me twenty-six of the Moravian Brethren for companions, who endeavoured to show me a more excellent way. But I understood it not at first. I was too learned and too wise. So that it seemed foolishness unto me. And I continued preaching and following after and trusting in that righteousness, whereby no flesh can be justified.

"9. All the time I was at Savannah I was thus beating the air. Being ignorant of the righteousness of Christ, which by a living faith in him bringeth salvation 'to every one that believeth,' I sought to establish my own righteousness, and so laboured in the fire all my days. I was now properly under the law; I knew that the law of God was spiritual; I consented to it, that it was good. Yea, I delighted in it, after the inner man. Yet was I carnal, sold under sin. Every day was I constrained to cry out, 'What I do, I allow not; for what I would, I do not; but what I hate, that I do. To will is indeed present with me; but how to perform that which is good, I find not. For the good which I would, I do not, but the evil which I would not, that I do. I find a law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me; even the law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and still bringing me into captivity to the law of sin.'

"10. In this vile, abject state of bondage in sin, I was indeed fighting continually, but not conquering. Before, I had willingly served sin; now, it was unwillingly; but still I served it. I fell and rose, and fell again. Sometimes I was overcome, and in heaviness; sometimes I overcame, and was in joy. For as in the former state, I had some foretaste of the terrors of the law, so had I in this, of the comforts of the Gospel. During this whole struggle between nature and grace, (which had now continued above ten years,) I had many remarkable returns to prayers; especially when I was in trouble. I had many sensible comforts, which are indeed no other than short anticipations of the life of faith. But I was still under the law, not under grace: the state most who are called Christians are content to live and die in. For I

was only striving with, not freed from, sin; neither had I the witness of the Spirit with my spirit; and indeed could not; for I sought it not by faith, but (as it were) by the works of the law.

"11. In my return to England, January, 1738, being in imminent danger of death, and very uneasy on that account, I was strongly convinced that the cause of that uneasiness was unbelief, and that the gaining a true, living faith, was the one thing needful for me. But still I fixed not this faith on its right object: I meant only faith in God, not faith in or through Christ. Again, I knew not that I was wholly void of this faith; but only thought I had not enough of it. So that when Peter Böhler, whom God prepared for me as soon as I came to London, affirmed of true faith in Christ, (which is but one,) that it had those two fruits inseparably attending it, 'dominion over sin, and constant peace from a sense of forgiveness,' I was quite amazed, and looked upon it as a new Gospel. If this was so, it was clear I had not faith. But I was not willing to be convinced of this. Therefore I disputed with all my might, and laboured to prove, that faith might be, where these were not; especially where the sense of forgiveness was not: for all the scriptures relating to this, I had been long since taught to construe away, and to call all Presbyterians who spoke otherwise. Besides, I well saw, no one could (in the nature of things) have such a sense of forgiveness, and not feel it. But I felt it not. If then there was no faith without this, all my pretensions to faith dropped at once.

"12. When I met Peter Böhler again, he consented to put the dispute upon the issue which I desired, viz., Scripture and experience. I first consulted the Scripture. But when I set aside the glosses of men, and simply considered the words of God, comparing them together, endeavouring to illustrate the obscure by the plainer passages, I found they all made against me, and was forced to retreat to my last hold, 'That experience would never agree with the literal interpretation of those scriptures. Nor could I, therefore, allow it to be true, till I found some living witnesses of it.' He replied, 'He could show me such at any time; if I desired it, the next day.' And accordingly, the next day, he came with three others, all of whom testified of their own personal experience, that a true living faith in Christ is inseparable from a sense of pardon for all past, and freedom from all present, sins. They added with one mouth, that this faith was the gift, the free gift of God, and that He would surely bestow it upon every soul who earnestly and perseveringly sought it. I was now thoroughly convinced; and, by the grace of God, I resolved to seek it unto the end: 1. By absolutely renouncing all dependence, in whole or in part, upon my own works or righteousness, on which I had really grounded my hope of salvation, though I knew it not, from my youth up. 2. By adding to the constant use of all the other means of grace, continual prayer for this very thing,—justifying, saving faith; a full reliance on the blood of Christ shed for me; a trust in him as my Christ, as my sole justification, sanctification, and redemption.

"13. I continued thus to seek it, (though with strange indifference, dulness, and coldness, and un-