

the difficulties, and the conflicts of the christian life, they can with confidence say, *En Dieu est ma fiance*. They find their Lord's prediction verified, in one way or another, "In the world ye shall have tribulation," (John.) They are, in many cases, as it is scripturally expressed, "tossed with tempest," on the uncertain, turbulent, and changeable ocean of life.

But the question is, in these circumstances, what do they actually find the Gospel Hope to be to them? What is the essential end it answers to them? Does it still the storm as with a word? Does it rebuke the winds and the waves, and, as by miracle or magic, produce instantaneously a great calm, as Christ did?—No! in ordinary cases it does not; in some very extraordinary one, perhaps, it may have done so. In florid, high wrought descriptions from the pulpit, by young and inexperienced orators, it is sometimes represented as always doing so; but this certainly is not the ordinary experience even of apostles! "Troubled on every side," "persecuted, cast down, as sorrowful, as poor, as having nothing," (Cor.) is more frequently the language of their experience. But the ordinary operation of the christian's hope, is exactly that to the renewed mind, which the anchor is to the vessel, it is a stay and rest to it—it keeps the storm as it were at bay—it keeps the mind from being driven to temptation, despondency, and destruction; there is a humble, cheerful, consoling and supporting sense of security, amidst all these, in the promises, and consolations, and provisions of the everlasting covenant, which is in all things firm and sure.

The Father of Spirits, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath, (interposed himself by an oath) "That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation who have fled for refuge, to lay hold upon the hope set before us; which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil." (PAUL.) And this imparts that peace which the world cannot give, "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, and which keepeth the heart and mind in the love and fear of God." It does not annihilate the cares, and conflicts, and troubles of life, nor keep off their influence altogether, but keeps the mind in a degree of security and serenity in the midst of all. And the true believer can say, *In te Domine speravi*.

Does not this just agree with your experience, Christians? Your hope is not the actual accomplishment of every thing to you; you are not in the harbour; you have not reached the eternal shore, and the golden tower and crystal streams. You have not yet actually entered into rest; you find yourselves still at sea, and sometimes tossed and agitated not a little; but your hope stays by you, as a fast and steady friend; you find that your strength is renewed, that difficulties animate, and toils invigorate; you mount up as with soaring wings, above all the floods of opposition; you find that you are enabled to run the ways of God's commandments, and are not weary, and hold on to the mark of your high calling, which is in Christ Jesus, with constancy and perseverance in those peaceful paths, and not faint; O, christian, whoever thou art, look forward to the glorious palace, the city of our God, and remember that

When life sinks apace, and death is in view,  
The word of his grace shall comfort us through.

And that ere long we shall join those who have gained the haven, and who sailed with the Saviour below; who will receive his own elect with a "well done good and faithful servants, enter ye into the joy of your Lord, and inherit the kingdom prepared for you, from the foundation of the world."

There with triumphal palms they stand,  
Before the throne on high,  
And serve the God they love,  
Amidst the glories of the sky.

CHRISTOPHER ATKINSON,  
Presbyterian Missionary.

St George, N. B. Nov. 1839.

## INTERESTING EXTRACTS.

### FRIENDSHIPS.

Earthly friendships are proverbially insecure and uncertain. Local separation, slight differences of opinion, some trivial misunderstanding, or causes of a similar kind, may sever the closest intimacies, and alienate bosom companions; and if human friendships survive these causes, death brings forgetfulness, and survivors soon learn to lose the remembrance of the past, and to find a substitute for their loss. Friendships, founded on Christian principles, are in all respects an improvement on those of a merely worldly character; but they likewise partake of the infirmity of the imperfect, although partially sanctified, persons who form them. Sad experience of this fact often presses on the spirit with a leaden weight, and causes it to sigh for something more perfect. Perhaps, in the providence of God, it is speci-

ally designed, to cure the folly of reposing on earthly things for happiness, and to teach us, by the loss of an earthly friend, to seek for a heavenly one. How refreshing to be assured, that, although forsaken by father and mother, our dearest and most attached relations, the Lord "will never, no never, forsake" those who confide in him.—There is a friend who sticketh closer than a brother! No outward change in our condition can diminish his affection. Whom he loveth, he loveth to the end. His heart is always alive to sympathy, his hand always ready to relieve, and turn to him when we may, his countenance is always brightened with the same benignant smile.

There is something, also, in the friendship formed for the Saviour by the disciple, which is purer and more lasting, than can be found in the dearest associations of life. Look at the Apostle John; he loved his Master, he was beloved by him beyond the rest of his immediate attendants; he leaned on his bosom at supper; he was known as "the disciple whom Jesus loved." He had seen the Lord crucified; he had outlived his contemporaries; he was left alone when the rest of his fellow apostles had, from time to time, been called away by death; and yet in his extreme old age his heart was attuned only to love for his Lord; he delighted to speak of him, and the holy friendship which inspired him when first called to the Apostleship, only grew stronger and warmer by the lapse of years. It is a sight of surpassing interest to behold an aged Christian, tottering along under an infirm body, whose early friendship for Jesus has been strengthening with his years. Other things have lost their interest for him, bereavements have broken up his most pleasant associations, he has outlived the world into which he was born, but one thing abides, it suffers no decay—it is his friendship for Christ. This cheers him; it opens up a source of pure delight, and he is encouraged at the close of his pilgrimage by the assurance, that his best friend never forgets, and will not forsake him—"now he is old and gray headed,"—*Presbyterian*.

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A COUNTRY PASTOR.

### THE ASSIZE BALL.

The residence of the strolling company, already adverted to, in our small town, was productive of many evil consequences. It led to the formation of a club for private theatricals; both sexes, I regret to state, became members; to which the ruin of not a few might be referred. I had hoped the confirmation, mentioned in a former paper, would have produced on the minds of many a lasting effect. On some, I have no doubt it did; but candour compels me to confess that I was heartily grieved to find that many, who had solemnly declared their purpose to lead a life of self-dedication to God, fell a prey to the wiles of the destroyer.

One young man in particular, Robert H. could trace to his attendance at the theatre, the commission of a crime which brought him to the bar of public justice. He was a journeyman carpenter, had always borne an excellent character, had been a steady attendant on public worship, and supported his aged mother, a poor lame widow, with whom he constantly resided. Led away by the persuasion of a fellow-workman, he went to the theatre, not without some scruples of conscience. But, once induced to stray, his conscience gradually subsided, and for ten nights he attended the play. He became acquainted with the actors from being employed to do something about the scenery; and this acquaintance induced him to accompany them to the inn after the performance. Drink was, of course, called for; cards and dice were introduced; and a taste for gambling was excited in H's mind. Each successive night did he accompany the strollers to the scene of their debauchery, and at length found himself a debtor, by gambling, to one of the party to the amount of several pounds. It was proposed that the sum should be doubled, or the debt cancelled, by the toss-up of a shilling. H. was unlucky; and he knew it to be impossible for him to pay the money. He had been drinking deep, though not so as to stupify him; and as he returned homewards to his mother, deeply distressed at his altered conduct, the thought struck him that his master had in the evening received a largeish sum of money; that this was probably deposited in a till in the counting house—though in this he was mistaken, and that nothing could be easier than to force the counting-house door, and break open the till. Having got over the wall, and provided himself with a hatchet, he found little difficulty in gaining admission, and had opened the till, when his master, alarmed at the noise, entered the counting house by an inner door. H. immediately struck at him with the hatchet; he fortunately, however, parried the blow: a scuffle ensued: two young men, who resided in the house, came down stairs, rushed into the room, and seized H. The constable was immediately sent for, who conducted him to the lock-up house. The

magistrate on the following day found no difficulty in at once committing him; and a sad and wretched woman was his poor mother, when she heard of her son's foul crime, and the cart passed by which conveyed him to prison. She never saw him more.

It was now towards the end of autumn; and a long and severe winter had to pass before the Lent assizes to which many looked forward with peculiar interest. No one could doubt of H's guilt. He did not deny the fact: he made a free statement to me in gaol as to the train of circumstances which led to its perpetration. The doubt, however, which rested on my mind was, whether he would be executed or transported for life. The offence was a most grievous one. Many burglaries had taken place. It was necessary that an example should be made; and little expectation was entertained that he could escape the gallows. That he was truly penitent, I had not the shadow of a doubt. He prayed earnestly to God for pardon. Even his own unhappy condition seemed to affect him less than the wretchedness of his poor mother, who now, for the first time, was made dependent upon parochial relief, and whose gray hairs he felt assured would be brought down with sorrow to the grave.

The morning of the trial arrived; and as I was walking towards the court-house I met an acquaintance, who offered me the hospitalities of his house, adding, "of course, you will stay to the ball? We expect a great deal of company," enumerating some of the highest families in the neighbourhood. I confess there was something quite repulsive to my feelings in the very supposition that I could attend a place of amusement at such a time. To balls, generally, I am no friend; to clerical attendance at them even when held for a charitable purpose, decidedly opposed; but there is something in the notion of an assize ball which appears to me utterly at variance with the feelings of humanity. For what purposes are the assizes held? In civil cases, indeed, to settle disputes; but in criminal, to pass sentence on those who have set defiance to laws, divine and human. What a degrading picture of fallen man does a calendar of crime present! what a wretched spectacle to behold a fellow-creature standing before a judge—the black catalogue of his offences proclaimed before a dense crowd! How painful to hear the sentence which is to banish from his country's shores the guilty malefactor, or perhaps to doom him to a speedy and ignominious death! Is this a season for mirth and revelry? Surely, if there be "a time to dance," that time cannot be on such a solemn occasion. Is there not something heartless, to say the least of it, in the gay and the thoughtless assembling together for such a purpose, when the walls of the neighbouring prison-house re-echo the groans of the condemned? I think I can never forget the wild hysterical scream of the mother of one of the criminals that day found guilty, when the judge put on the black cap, and proceeded to pass sentence of death. The wretched woman was carried insensible from the court. A tear was visible in the eye of the judge, who pronounced the awful doom in the most pathetic manner, and whose exhortation to the unhappy criminal, testified that legal pursuits had not solely engaged his attention, but that he made the word of God his study.

H's trial came on. He pleaded guilty, contrary to the advice of a lawyer; but he told me, he would not add falsehood to his crime. He was strongly recommended to mercy. Many persons, and I among others, spoke highly of his previous character. Sentence of death was however passed; and in such an impressive manner by the judge as to leave but little hope that his life would be spared. It was very late in the evening when the trial closed; and as I walked to the gaol to have some conversation with the condemned man, I saw the carriages of the neighbouring gentry driving into town, filled with elegantly dressed ladies for the ball. How sadly did the scene which I was called to witness contrast with this levity? I was ushered into the condemned cell, where sat the miserable H. By the dim light of a lantern I saw his pallid features. He confessed he had thought his sentence would have been transportation, and he shuddered at the prospect of an ignominious death. Two men condemned for murder were in the next cells, and were to pay the full penalty of the law in less than fifty hours. H's sentence was not, however, to be put into execution for a fortnight. I shall never forget the sinking I felt at my heart when, on leaving the dark room, I heard the massy iron door closed after me by the turnkey, and the bars and bolts fastened. It was a dark, sleety night, bitterly cold, about the beginning of March; and as I walked from the gaol with the chaplain, my ears were assailed with the music of the ball room. Nay, the prison was so near, the music might almost have been heard within its walls.

The ball went on gaily, Assumptious supper was provided. Card-tables were arranged for the older persons present. At one of these a dispute took