

Then he had a sort of waking vision, suggested by what he had seen in his pious friends at Bedford. "I saw as if they were on the sunny side of some high mountain; there refreshing themselves with the pleasant beams of the sun, while I was shivering and shivering in the cold, afflicted with frost, snow, and dark clouds. Methought also, betwixt me and them, I saw a wall that did compass about this mountain; now through this wall my soul did greatly desire to pass, concluding that if I could, I would even go in the very midst of them, and there also comfort myself with the heat of their sun. About this wall I thought myself to go again and again, still praying as I went, to see if I could find some gap or passage to enter therein. But none could I find for some time. At the last I saw, as it were, a narrow gap, like a little doorway in the wall, through which I attempted to pass. Now, the passage being very strait and narrow, I made many offers to get in, but all in vain, even until I was wellnigh quite beat out, by striving to get in. At last, with great striving, methought I at first did get in my head, and after that, by a sideling striving, my shoulders and my whole body. Then I was exceedingly glad; went and sat down in the midst of them, and was so comforted with the light and heat of their sun. Now, this mountain and wall were thus made out to me: The mountain signified the church of the living God; the sun that shone thereon, the comfortable shining of his merciful face on them that were therein: the wall, I thought, was the world, that did make separation between the Christians and the world; and the gap which was in the wall, I thought was Jesus Christ, who is the way to God the Father. But forasmuch as the passage was wonderful narrow, even so narrow that I could not, but with great difficulty, enter in thereat, it shewed me that none could enter into life but those that were in the downright earnest, and unless they left that wicked world behind them; for here was only room for body and soul, but not for body and soul and sin." The dream did him good, for, though it brought him no absolute assurance, it inspired his efforts after it.

There is scarcely a fear which can assail an inquiring spirit which did not at the same stage of his progress arrest the mind of Bunyan. At one time he was afflicted by an erroneous view of the doctrine of election. Looking at them from the outer and under side, those purposes of everlasting love which secure their safety who have already got within the precincts of salvation, appeared bristling and forbidding—a frowning *cheroux de frise*, rather than a fence of prosecution and preservation. And when somewhat relieved from this perplexity, he fell into another. He feared that the day of grace was gone; and so impressed on his mind was this mournful conviction, that he could do little else than upbraid his own infatuation for allowing the one propitious season to pass for ever away. But the words, "Compel them to come in, that my house may be filled;" and those others, "And yet there is room," brought him relief. Then, again, he saw that the call of Christ was needful to make a man a disciple; and he feared that he should never get that call. "But oh! how I now loved those words that spake of a Christian's calling! as when the Lord said to me, Follow me; and to another, Come after me: and oh! thought I, that he would say so to me too: how gladly would I run after him! How lovely now was every one in my eyes, that I thought to be converted, whether man or woman! They shone, they walked like a people that carried the broad seal of heaven upon them. Oh! I saw the lot was fallen to them in pleasant places, and they had a goodly heritage. But that which made me sick, was that of Christ,—'He went up into a mountain, and called to him whom he would, and they came unto him.' This Scripture made me faint and fear, yet it kindled fire in my soul. That which made me fear was this: lest Christ should have no liking to me, for he called to him whom he would. But oh! the glory that I saw in that condition did still so engage my heart, that I could seldom read of any that Christ did call but I presently wished, 'Would I had been in their clothes! would I had been borne Peter! would I had been borne John! or, would I had been by, and heard him when he called them, how would I have cried, O Lord, call me also. But oh! I feared he would not call me.'"

(To be continued.)

#### A VISION.—"BEAR YE ONE ANOTHER'S BURDENS."

Once upon a time, methought I set out upon a long journey, and the place through which I travelled appeared to be a dark valley, which was called the Valley of Tears. It had obtained this name, not only on account of the many sorrowful adventures which poor passengers commonly meet with in their journey through it; but also because most of these travellers entered into it weeping and crying, and left it in very great pain and anguish. This vast valley was full of people, of all ages, colors, sizes, and descriptions. But whether white or black, or tawny, all were travelling the same road; or, rather, they were taking different little paths, which led to the same common end.

Now, it was remarkable that, notwithstanding the different complexions, ages, and tempers, of this variety of people, yet all resembled each other in this one respect, that each had a burden on his back which he was destined to carry, through the toil and heat of the day, until he should arrive, by a longer or shorter course, at his journey's end. These burdens would in general have made the journey quite intolerable, had not the lord of the valley, out of his great compassion for the poor pilgrims, provided, among other things, the following means for their relief:—

In the full view, over the entrance of the valley, there was written, in letters of gold, the following words:—"Bear ye one another's burdens."

Now I saw, in my vision, that many travellers hurried on without stopping to read this inscription; and others, though they once read it, yet paid little or no attention to it. A third sort thought it very good advice for other people, but very seldom applied it to themselves. They earnestly desired to avail themselves of the assistance, which, by this injunction, others were bound to offer them, but seldom considered that the obligation was mutual, and that reciprocal wants, and reciprocal services, formed the living cord in the bond of charity. In short, I saw that too many of these people were of opinion that they had burdens enough of their own, and there was therefore no occasion to take upon them those of others: so each tried to make his own load as light, and his own journey as pleasant as he could, without ever casting a thought on a poor over-loaded neighbor. Here, however, I have to make a rather singular remark, by which I shall plainly show the folly of these selfish people. It was so ordered and contrived by the lord of the valley, that if any one stretched out his hand to help his neighbor's burden, in fact he never failed to find that he at that moment also lightened his own. Besides, the benefit of helping each other was as mutual as the obligation. If a man helped his neighbor, it commonly happened that some other neighbor came by-and-by, and helped him in his turn; for there was no such thing as what was called independence in the whole valley. Not one of all these travellers, however stout and strong, could move on comfortably without assistance; for so the lord of the valley whose laws were all of them kind and good, had expressly ordained.

*The Widow.*—A sorrowful widow, oppressed with the burden of grief for the loss of an affectionate husband, moved heavily on; and would have been bowed down by her heavy load, had not the surviving children with great alacrity, stepped forward and supported her. Their kindness, after a while, so much lightened the load, which threatened at first to be intolerable, that she even went on her way with cheerfulness; and more than repaid their help, by applying the strength she derived from it to their future assistance.

*The Husband.*—I next saw a poor old man, tottering under a burden so heavy, that I expected him every moment to sink under it. I peeped into his pack, and saw it was made up of many sad articles. There was poverty, oppression, debt, and (what made by far the heaviest part) undutiful children. I was wondering how it was he got on even so well as he did, till I spied his wife a kind meek Christian woman, who was doing her utmost to assist him. She quietly got behind, gently laid her shoulder to the burden, and carried a much larger portion of it than appeared to me when I was at a distance. It was not the smallest part of the benefit, she was anxious to conceal it. She had not only sustained by her strength, but cheered him by her counsels. She told him that "through much tribulation we must enter into rest;" that "he who overcometh shall inherit all things." In short, she supported his fainting spirit so that he was able to "run with patience the race which was set before him."

*The Kind Neighbor.*—An infirm, blind woman, was creeping forward with a very heavy burden, in which were packed sickness and want, with numberless other of those raw materials out of which human misery is worked up. She was so weak that she could not have gone on at all, had it not been for the kind assistance of another woman, almost as poor as herself, who, though she had no light burden of her own, cheerfully lent a helping hand to a fellow-traveller, who was still more heavily laden. This friend had little or nothing to give; but the very voice of kindness is soothing to the weary. And I remarked in many other cases, that it was not so much the degree afforded, as the manner of helping, that lightened the burdens. Some had a coarse, rough, clumsy way of assisting a neighbour, which though in fact it might be of real use, yet seemed, by galling the traveler, to add to the load it was intended to lighten; while I observed in others that so cheap a kindness as a mild word, or even an affectionate look, made a poor burdened wretch move on cheerily. The bare feeling that some human being cared for him, seemed to lighten the load. But to return to this kind neighbour. She had a little old book in her hand, the covers of which were worn out by much use. When she saw the blind woman ready to faint, she would read her a few words out of this book, such as the following: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." "Blessed are they that mourn for they shall be comforted." "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." These quickened the pace, and sustained the afflictions of this woman more effectually than if she had gold and silver bestowed on her.

*The Clergyman.*—A pious minister, sinking under the weight of a distressed parish, whose worldly wants he was totally unable to bear, was suddenly relieved by a charitable widow, who came up, and took all the sick and hungry on her shoulders, as her part of the load. The burden of the parish, thus divided, became tolerable. The minister being no longer bowed down by the temporal distress of his people, applied himself to his part of the weight; and it was pleasant to see how these two persons, neither of them very strong, or rich, or healthy, by thus kindly uniting together were enabled to bear the weight of a whole parish, though singly either of them must have sunk under the attempt. And I remember one great grief I felt during my journey was, that I did not see more of this union and concurring kindness, more acting in concert, by which all the burdens might have been so easily divided. It troubled me to observe that, of all the laws of the valley, there was not one more frequently broken than the law of kindness.