

loving souls together. That might take place, and has, when the heart has reluc- tated and refused to yield up the wealth of affection and pure and holy feeling which slumbered in its depths. Two have stood side by side at the altar of God—the one pure and good, sweet with the fragrance of a saintly life, the other coarse and carnal in his habits and tastes. And so, while they stood together hand in hand, united by a physical bond, they were separated far apart in mind, by reason of their mutual distaste and repellency. These two may dwell together under the same roof, and meet each other on the outer plain of material interests, but they will walk together strangers to each other in the deeper realm of thought and feeling and affection—not coming nearer but diverging more and more as years roll on. Here there is a great gulf, which neither the one nor the other can cross. Here they are separated far as the heavens are separated from the earth, and distant as the east is from the west. But conceive that in some favoured hour a change comes over the spirit of this brutish man—that a new, holy love springs up in his mind—the love of God, and holiness so that all old things pass away; and what a change takes place between these two kindred spirits so long estranged from each other! how sweet their intercourse, how deep their joy, and how close the union that binds their loving souls! Now he enters into a realm of love and tenderness, and taste and feeling of which he had previously no conception. And so with every brutish man, every sinful soul, in reference to God. While sin remains in its strength unconfessed and unforgiven, there can be no intercourse with the holy God, and his kingdom of grace, of light and love, though nearer to us than the air we breathe, will be a land of darkness, a *terra incognita*, a land unknown. But let the sweet, loving light of

heaven enter into his mind, let the sinner turn in reverence and in love to his God, and the King of glory will enter in with peace and pardon and all the blessings of his grace; and he will know that the kingdom is within him, and that whereas he was once far off, he is now brought nigh by the blood of Christ: In this respect the kingdom of heaven is nigh unto us, even at the doors. But this the penitent thief did not understand. He had some glimmering of celestial light by which he could see heavenly things, but as it were through a glass darkly. His views were not sound; his conceptions of the character and dignity of Christ were high, but not sufficiently high. Still, he who does not break the bruised reed did not turn away from his cry. He saw much that was wrong in his mind, but he saw a faith that could trust him in the darkness, a love that could bear witness for him when there was not a solitary voice raised in his behalf. And so he overlooked his errors, forgave his iniquity, and granted him his prayer abundantly, exceeding abundantly, far above what he had asked or thought. To day, not at some distant period—to-day, thou shalt be with me in Paradise,—to-day, before that sun sets beneath the western hills, before this angry crowd separate to their homes, thou wilt be with me, happy in my love, rejoicing in the fragrant bowers of the heavenly land.

III. HIS TESTIMONY.—We read that one of the malefactors railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us; but the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost thou not fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? and we, indeed, justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds, but this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. Here is a becoming testimony to the grace and the majesty of