

“Yet I hear a voice (and is it not the voice of God?) saying, *Believe, and thou shalt be saved. He that believeth is passed from death unto life. God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*”

“O let no one deceive us by vain words, as if we had already obtained this faith! By its fruits we shall know. Do we already feel *peace with God, and joy in the Holy Ghost? Does his Spirit bear witness with our spirit that we are the children of God?* Alas! with mine he does not. Nor, I fear, with yours. O, thou Saviour of men, save us from trusting in any thing but thee! Draw us after thee! Let us be emptied of ourselves, and then fill us with all peace and joy in believing, and let nothing separate us from thy love, in time or in eternity!”

“What occurred on Wednesday the 24th, I think best to relate at large, after premising what may make it to be the better understood. Let him that cannot receive it, ask of the Father of Lights, that he would give more light to him and me.

“1. I believe, till I was about ten years old, I had not sinned away that ‘washing of the Holy Ghost’ which was given me in baptism, having been strictly educated, and carefully taught that I could only be saved ‘by universal obedience, by keeping all the commandments of God;’ in the meaning of which I was diligently instructed. And those instructions, so far as they respected outward duties and sins, I gladly received, and often thought of. But all that was said to me of inward obedience or holiness I neither understood nor remembered. So that I was, indeed, as ignorant of the true meaning of the law, as I was of the Gospel of Christ.

“2. The next six or seven years were spent at school; where, outward restraints being removed, I was much more negligent than before, even of outward duties, and almost continually guilty of outward sins, which I knew to be such, though they were not scandalous in the eye of the world. However, I still read the Scriptures, and said my prayers, morning and evening. And what I now hoped to be saved by, was, 1. Not being so bad as other people. 2. Having still a kindness for religion. And, 3. Reading the Bible, going to church, and saying my prayers.

“3. Being removed to the University, for five years, I still said my prayers, both in public and private, and read, with the Scriptures, several other books of religion, especially comments on the New Testament. Yet I had not all this while so much as a notion of inward holiness; nay, went on habitually and, for the most part, very contentedly, in some or other known sin; indeed, with some intermission and short struggles, especially before and after the holy communion, which I was obliged to receive thrice a year. I cannot well tell what I hoped to be saved by now, when I was continually sinning against that little light I had, unless by those transient fits of what many Divines taught me to call ‘repentance.’

“4. When I was about twenty-two, my father pressed me to enter into holy orders. At the same time the providence of God directing me to Kempis’s ‘Christian Pattern,’ I began to see, that true religion

was seated in the heart, and that God’s law extended to all our thoughts, as well as words and actions, I was, however, very angry at Kempis, for being too strict, though I read him only in Dean Stanhope’s translation. Yet I had frequently much sensible comfort in reading him, such as I was an utter stranger to before; and meeting likewise with a religious friend, which I never had till now, I began to alter the whole form of my conversation, and to set in earnest upon a new life. I set apart an hour or two a day for religious retirement. I communicated every week. I watched against all sin, whether in word or deed. I began to aim at, and pray for, inward holiness. So that now, ‘doing so much, and living so good a life,’ I doubted not but I was a good Christian.

“5. Removing soon after to another college, I executed a resolution, which I was before convinced, was of the utmost importance, shaking off at once all my trifling acquaintance. I began to see more and more the value of time. I applied myself closer to study. I watched more carefully against actual sins. I advised others to be religious, according to that scheme of religion by which I modelled my own life. But meeting now with Mr. Law’s ‘Christian Perfection,’ and ‘Serious Call,’ (although I was much offended at many parts of both, yet) they convinced me more than ever of the exceeding height, and breadth, and depth of the law of God. The light flowed in so mightily upon my soul, that every thing appeared in a new view. I cried to God for help, and resolved not to prolong the time of obeying him as I never had done before. And by my continued ‘endeavour to keep his whole law,’ inward and outward, ‘to the utmost of my power,’ I was persuaded that I should be accepted of him, and that I was even then in a state of salvation.

“6. In 1730 I began visiting the prisons, assisting the poor and sick in town, and doing what other good I could, by my presence or my little fortune, to the bodies and souls of all men. To this end I abridged myself of all superfluities, and many that are called necessaries of life. I soon became a by-word for so doing, and I rejoiced that ‘my name was cast out as evil.’ The next spring I began observing the Wednesday and Friday fasts, commonly observed in the ancient church; tasting no food till three in the afternoon. And now I knew not how to go any further. I diligently strove against all sin. I omitted no sort of self-denial which I thought lawful; I carefully used, both in public and in private, all the means of grace at all opportunities. I omitted no occasion for doing good: I for that reason suffered evil. And all this I knew to be nothing, unless as it was directed toward inward holiness. Accordingly this, the image of God, was what I aimed at in all, by doing his will, not my own. Yet when, after continuing some years in this course, I apprehended myself to be near death, I could not find that all this gave me any comfort, or any assurance of acceptance with God. At this I was then not a little surprised, not imagining I had been all this time building on the sand, nor considering that ‘other foundation can no man lay, than that which is laid by God, even Christ Jesus.’

“7. Soon after, a contemplative man convinced

me, still more than outward works are the conversations in holiness, or a union with his instructions, words of God,) he spoke so inwardly, that he did not speak of 2. That he recorded was wanting in the exercises, as the mind, and uniting truth, as much as clothing the nakedness was as real had before pursued

“8. In this works, and my calculated by the finding no comfort leaving England again active in of his free mercies show me a more not at first. I it seemed for preaching and righteousness,

“9. All the beating the air of Christ, which vation ‘to establish my own fire all my days I knew that I ed to it, that I ter the inner. Every day w I allow not; hate, that I d but how to For the good which I would I would do law in my mind, and s of sin.’

“10. In t was indeed. Before, I h willingly; I fell again. vines; so as in the for rors of the the Gospel. ture and gr years,) I l especially ble comfort anticipation the law, ne ed Christi