

conveyed; and all of them to the increase of his bliss.

When we further direct our attention to the treasury from which the tribute paid to the stream is originally derived, we find that the primary source of the whole is rain and snow that comes from heaven. If the shower were to be withheld, the stream would cease, and its channel soon be dry. Thus also it is with the spiritual peace of the saint. Additions are brought to it through many a varied channel; but all of them originate in the marvellous goodness of the Lord. His word, His ordinances, and the workings of His providence, contribute in their turn to the blessedness; in its commencement, and in all its increase, it is the free gift of His infinite love.

*The course of the river is very varied—* The course of the stream is never straight. It is continually turning, sometimes to the right hand, and sometimes to the left.— Its current also perpetually varies. At one place it foams and tosses over a barrier of rocks, at another it winds its sluggish way through the reedy pool. At one time it passes through the open plain, at another it is hemmed in by the mountain, or hidden by the forest. But whatever the direction in which it runs, whatever the scenes through which it passes, these outward circumstances do not affect its strength. It still flows on, and, in almost every case, as its course is lengthened, its channel is deepened, and its volume is enlarged. Thus, also, it is with the Christian's inward peace. Its course is never straight. It meets with many an interruption, and witnesses many a change; but whether the sunshine of onward prosperity beam on it, or the gloom of adversity envelope it, these outward circumstances have but little effect. It still flows on. The comforts and honors of time do not affect the joy within. Even spiritual privileges, valuable as they are, must not be relied on. As the river's strength does not depend on the scenery that surrounds it, but on the supplies of moisture that descend from above; so the Christian's peace does not proceed from the influence of external circumstances, but from the outpouring of the Spirit of grace.

We further remarked that the river, in

almost every case, increases in size as it proceeds on its course. A similar progress characterizes the comfort and hope of the Christian, when he keeps the commandments of his God. The river, issuing from its mountain source, rushes on in impetuous career, and its voice is heard afar; but when its augmented stream glides through the valley below, its current is smooth, and it utters no sound. When the shallow brook is diminished by the summer's drought, it murmurs in its stony bed; but when the melting snow has filled it from bank to bank, it sweeps swiftly yet silently along. In like manner, the joy of the young believer may be more demonstrative than that of the aged saint; but the feeling is not so deep. As the Christian advances in his path to heaven, his inward blessedness increases in strength and uniformity of progress, though its outward expression may be less.

*The effects produced by the river are profitable and pleasing.—*The herbage that clothes the watered meadow is fresh and green; trees that fringe the margin of the brook are rich in foliage and luxuriant in growth. Every one confesses the remarkable beauty of the Psalmist's similitude, when he compares the upright man to a "tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in her season; and his leaf also shall not wither." When water is supplied, more especially in the sunny climes of the south, herb and plant and fruit-bearing tree appear in their glossy vigour; but when moisture is denied, they wither and die. The animal creation, in like manner, rejoices in the presence of the stream. In it the bird and the beast allay their thirst; and man employs it, in many a varied appliance, for his comfort and health.—In all this we have an appropriate illustration of the beneficial effects that flow from peace in believing.—When there is joy within, devotion to God, gratitude to the Redeemer, and love to our fellow-men, every grace that can adorn the Christian character, will flourish and grow; and the larger the measure of our peace, the more beneficial will its influence be. Those around us will also partake of the benefit. When the Christian rejoices in the assurance of God's love, the desponding are encouraged by his example, the hopeful are strengthened in their