

But you may say, we talk of peace, and yet call you enemies;—of pardon, and yet call you sinners. It is true, we remind you of your inherited corruption; of your natural weakness; of your unrighteousness; of your perverted and wandering affections; of your souls, diseased, and unproductive of good fruits. We remind you, too, of your many adversaries,—the adversaries of your peace and opposers of your best interests;—the world with its fascinations, the flesh with its passions, and the devil with his subtleties.

But is this to frighten you only, and alarm you? to cast you down into the depths of despair and hopelessness, and into a careless apathy about exerting yourselves against your foes? No: but to assure you, upon the authority of the Book of Truth, that “a fountain has been opened for sin and for uncleanness,”* to wash it all away; that unrighteous as man is, there is one, who “is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth;”† weak as man is, One, whose ‡ grace can make your weakness, strength; a § Physician, who can heal all your sickness; a || Shepherd, who will “gather the fainting lambs of his flock with his arm, and carry them in his bosom,”¶ and bring all his sheep, wherever scattered, into * “one,” and that the true, “fold;” and a “Sun of Righteousness,”† whose beams brought into your bosoms by His Holy Spirit and Comforter, can make the most barren heart amongst us bloom like a garden with the fruits of eternal life:—to assure you, further, that there is one “waiting”‡ to be on your side, through whom you must have the victory, and be “more than conquerors,”§ over all your adversaries!

Why, when we behold the wasting form, the fading cheek, and the sinking eye of some dear relation or friend, himself, perhaps, not conscious of these symptoms, or, at least, not conscious of all they betoken,—why do we communicate to such an one our fears, that

* Zech. xiii., 1. † Rom. x., 4.

† 2 Cor. xii., 9. Hebr. xi., 34. § Matt. ix., 12.

|| Hebr. xiii., 20. ¶ Isaiah xl., 11.

* John x., 16. † Malachi iv., 2. † Isaiah xxx., 18.

§ Rom. viii., 37.