

other way in which it may please God to visit us.' 'Then,' said he, 'you are as deep in guilt as he is, and perhaps you are the worst of the two, for had you disapproved of his conduct, he would not, probably, have persevered in opposing your wishes, and rendering you unhappy and miserable.' They went away dejected and sorrowful.—We were wonderfully supported in those struggles, for however willing the spirit may be, the flesh is weak, and we must have sunk under the weight of these efforts, had not the Lord held us up, proving the truth of His own promise, that His grace was sufficient for us.

(To be continued.)

SPLINTERS IN THE WOUND.

Why is your wound never healed?—There must be some cause, and the cause is in you, not in God; you are to blame, it is not your God that is to blame.

Perhaps you are *giving way now and then to temper*. We have known anxious souls, who were to be found attending eagerly on ordinances, week-day and Sabbath, and yet were never nearer the point of rest, and it turned out that all the while, either at home or at their work, they were giving way to irritation, and ill humour, and sullen moods, and sometimes it was envy they indulged, and sometimes evil speaking. They *grieved the Spirit*, who at other times was shewing them the Lord Jesus.

Perhaps you are very anxious about finding Christ and grace in him, but whilst you are *indulging yourself* in something of the flesh, living for your own comfort, and not putting yourself to any inconvenience for the souls of others. Ah! this selfishness is a splinter in the wound. You *grieve the Spirit*, who shews Christ to the soul, by wishing peace just in order to spend it on yourself, and be more at ease. Go out of self, go and put to your hand, for your neighbour's comfort, for He will not give you the heavenly gift in circumstances that would foster selfishness.

Perhaps you have been long anxious, and more deeply awakened than most, and yet are not at rest even now, because you are a person of a narrow soul, stingy in your habits, miserly in your givings, keeping a fast grip of the world. You are

grieving the Spirit. How can you look upon our God who is altogether liberal, and open, and frank, and generous in his givings? The brightness of His grace and ample bounty dazzles you; you cannot believe that he is so free in his giving. *Just because you could never imagine yourself capable of getting delight in such giving.*

There were men of old who said, "I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of my heart, to add drunkenness to thirst." (Deut. xxix, 19). They sought peace, but would retain those favourite sins. Against such the Lord said that his "jealousy would smite," and he would not spare them. (Matt. vi. 30).

Or, perhaps the splinter in the wound is something in *your business*. You carry on an unlawful trade, you indulge in sharp practice; you *do as others do, though the thing is not fair and upright*. By such things you *grieve the Spirit*, who shews Christ to souls that they may cease forever from all sin. Would the merchant in Birmingham who, a few years ago, manufactured idols, and sent them out to the heathen, be likely to find the Holy Spirit leading him to peace in Jesus? Will you, dealer seller of strong drink? Will that slave to opium? Do you not see that were the Spirit to lead those men to peace, it would be sealing them in their vice and corruption?

Once more, in some cases the splinter in the wound is the anxious soul's wrong use of Election. The anxious put this precious truth in a wrong place, and say, "O if I could find out whether or not God intended to save me from all eternity?" Now, you *grieve the Spirit* by such a state of mind; for he wishes you to know and believe, first of all, that Christ Jesus "once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, to bring us unto God." He wishes you to find out and be satisfied with His blessed plan of saving sinners. He wishes you, first of all, to be entirely pleased with His beloved Son; for then He is pleased with you, and you may know that He has chosen you.

Unhappy soul! Have you been one of those who have often felt very keenly, and have often wished to have Christ? What if you are one who has tried to look at the Brazen Serpent with the splinter in your wound!—Rev. A. A. Bonar.