

## WORDS OF THE WISE.

RALPH ERSKINE,

ON THE "APPLE TREE AMONG THE TREES OF THE WOOD."

The Lord Jesus Christ is the true apple-tree, and His Father is the gardener; and he is now come to shake the tree, to let down the apples about your hands that you may gather, or to bend the branches down to you, that you may pluck what apples you need.

What apples, say you? Why, we shall tell you of eight sorts of apples. Well here is,

The apple of imputed righteousness for you that are guilty sinners. Your own righteousness is a rotten apple, good for nothing but to be cast away with all your other idols, to the moles and to the bats; but the righteousness of Christ is a sweet apple, a fresh apple, a ripe apple, ready for eating: and if you taste of this apple you shall live a life of justification. By eating the forbidden fruit you were condemned; but by tasting of this apple you shall be justified: "By one man's offence, judgment came upon all men to condemnation: but by the righteousness of one, the free gift comes upon all men unto justification of life: for, as by one man's disobedience, many were made sinners; so by the obedience of one, shall many be made righteous," Rom. v. 18, 19.

Here is the apple of implanted grace you may pluck from off this tree of life. Do you want even the grace of faith and ability to pluck? It grows upon this tree; Christ is the author of faith, and the finisher of it. Do you want the grace of repentance? It grows also upon this tree, Acts v. 31. "Him hath God exalted, to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sin." Do you want love? It grows upon this tree; his love is the seed of love; "We love him, because he first loved us:" his doing, dying, rising, reigning love is the seed that being sown in your heart, will make heart-love to him grow there.—Whatever grace you need you may get it upon this tree of life; for, "Out of his fulness we all receive, and grace for grace;" or, as it may read, 'Love for love.'

Here is the apple of peace. Is not peace with God and peace of conscience a sweet apple? And does it not grow here? "In the world ye shall have tribulation, but in me ye shall have peace:—He made peace by the blood of his cross." O! who would not be in hands with this refreshing apple, that will cheer the heart against all the disquiet in the world! This peace in Christ is like a dry house within, in a rainy day without doors. It is like a quiet harbour in stormy weather; or a safe haven in a terrible tempest.

Here is the apple of joy, joy in the Holy Ghost; and this also grows upon the apple-tree: "Whom having not seen ye love, in whom tho' now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unpeakable, and full of glory," 1 Pet. i. 8. A taste of this apple makes all carnal joy tasteless to you; for, it is unspeakable joy, full joy, glorious joy, and unspeakably full of glory; the very dawning of the day of glory.

Here is the apple of contentment that grows upon this tree of life; contentment with every lot, every cross; "Godliness with contentment is great gain." When a man tastes of this apple, it makes him say with Paul, "I am sorrowful, yet always rejoice: I have learned in whatever state I am, therewith to be content." This sweet apple sweetens every lot, be it never so bitter.

Here is the apple of communion with God, and access to him, that grows upon this tree; for, "Thro' him we have access by one Spirit to the Father:" putting the soul in case to say, "Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." This makes the soul to invite others sometimes to come and share, saying, "O taste and see that the Lord is good; for, that which