

He strongly advised me to give up the study of the Talmud, and devote myself to the study of German and secular literature. After a hard struggle of mind, I resolved to follow his advice, and accordingly went to —. Here there was not only a change in the character of my studies, but an entire change in my habits and mode of life. At first my conscience was much disturbed and I was often very unhappy; but after a time these feelings wore off. \* \* \*

In process of time the Lord hid his afflictive hand upon me. The death of my beloved mother, whose tenderness to me I remember to this day with the deepest gratitude and affection, was a heavy stroke to me, and plunged me into the utmost grief. I was then visited with sickness, and my conscience became much disturbed. What I then endured can only be expressed in the language of the sixth Psalm. I solemnly vowed to become very religious. I resolved to fast one day in every week, to repeat many prayers, and show kindness and charity to the poor. But this could not pacify my guilty conscience, as the study of German literature had weakened my confidence in religious observances, had driven me from my own religion, and given me nothing in its place. One day I was in acute distress of mind, feeling as David expresses it, that I had sunk "in deep mire, where there is no standing;" that all my own efforts to free myself were of no avail, my struggles only made me sink deeper and deeper. For the first time in my life I prayed extempore. I cried out, "O God! I have no one to help me, and I dare not approach thee, for I am guilty; help, O help me, for the sake of my father Abraham, who was willing to offer up his son Isaac, have mercy upon me, and impute his righteousness unto me." But there was no answer from God, no peace to my wounded spirit. I felt as if God had forsaken me; as if the Lord had cast me off for ever, and would be favourable no more. \* \* \*

One morning I went to purchase an article in a shop, little knowing that God had stored up for me the "pearl of great price," which he was about to give me "without money and without price." The article I purchased was wrapped up in a leaf of the Bible, which contained a portion of the sermon on the mount. The shopkeeper was probably an infidel, who thought the Bible merely waste paper; but God over-ruled the evil for good. As I was walking home, my eyes glanced on the words, "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted." This arrested my attention, and I read the whole passage with deep interest.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit: for their's is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek: for they shall in-

herit the earth. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God. Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. v. 3—10.)

I was much struck with the sentiments contained in this passage, and felt very desirous to see the book of which it was a portion; I had no idea what book it was, never having seen a New Testament. A few days after, God directed my footsteps to the house of an acquaintance, on whose table lay a copy of the New Testament. Impelled by curiosity, I took it up, and in turning over the leaves, beheld the very passage that had interested me so much. I immediately borrowed it, and began to read with great avidity. At first I felt quite bewildered, and was so shocked by the constant recurrence of the name of Jesus, that I repeatedly cast the book away. At length I determined to read it through. \* \* \*

The interview between Jesus and Nicodemus, narrated in the third chapter of John, riveted my attention. I was as much astonished as Nicodemus himself at the saying of Jesus, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God," ver. 3. If he had told me to fast, to give alms, to go morning and evening to the synagogue, to repeat the prayers twice or three times a day, and that then I should see the kingdom of God, I could have understood it: but when told of a new birth, I was ready to exclaim with Nicodemus, "How can these things be?" Christ's explanation of the reason of his sacrifice, by a reference to the serpent lifted up in the wilderness, struck me very forcibly: "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." (ver. 14, 15.) I had many times read the account of the brazen serpent, but had never understood its spiritual import before; nor perceived that it was the forgiving love of God that healed the poor Israelite, when his veins were filled with the poison of the serpent, and his soul defiled with the poison of sin. When utterly unable to help himself, the free mercy of God provided a remedy; and the poor sinner, whose body was in danger of death, and whose soul was in danger of everlasting punishment for his rebellion against God, had only to look at this serpent lifted up, and he was immediately healed. Christ here declared that what the brazen serpent was to the wounded Israelite, He is to the perishing sinner, who feels that he is guilty before God.

This doctrine was so new and strange to

me, that, instead of at once perceiving it was just such a remedy as I needed, and entreating God to show me if all this were indeed true, I became more agitated and distressed: and feared if I continued to read this book, I should be led away from the religion of my fathers. I therefore resolved to lay the New Testament aside, and devote myself to the study of Moses and the prophets and the Psalms. I felt that I had never hitherto studied the Bible with a desire to know what God therein taught me as an individual; to learn that he would have me think, and feel, and do. I therefore began to study it with views and feelings very different from any I had experienced before.

I was much struck with the circumstantial manner in which God has seen fit to detail what he said to the serpent, to the woman, and to the man. When I considered how completely every word pronounced against the man and woman has been fulfilled, I thought it certain that every word spoken to the serpent must have as full an accomplishment; and that, as sure as the word of the living God is true, so surely shall the "seed of the woman," shall some descendant of the woman, "bruise the head" of Satan; that is, shall undo the evil which he has wrought in the creation of God.

The question that then naturally occurred was: What must this seed of the woman do, in order to restore man to the state of happiness which he lost by the fall? And the obvious answer was: He must bring back the alienated heart of man again to rest its affections on God the supreme good: he must so exhibit the love of God to man, as to draw forth man's love in return. And the love he must now reveal, is love of a higher kind than that of mere complacency in a holy being, such as we may suppose God to have felt towards unfallen man; it must be a love that can, with consistency to the perfect holiness of God, be extended towards guilty and rebellious creatures. But here a difficulty arose: if this seed of the woman be merely one of the fallen race to whom this new revelation of love is to be made, if he is one of the alienated and rebellious sinners, how is the first to be raised out of this state; where, and how, is he to acquire a knowledge of this forgiving love of God? Must he not be an intermediate person? an umpire, who can lay his hands upon both? (Job ix. 33.)

It was impossible to conceal from myself that I was involuntarily portraying the character which Jesus of Nazareth assumed to himself. In spite of my struggles against them, these convictions irresistibly forced themselves upon me; man is a fallen creature; his heart is by nature alienated from God; he cannot recover himself from this state of alienation; the promised seed of the woman must be a mediator between God and man; he must partake of the na-