

without having consecrated to prayer a good proportion of his time, amid all his manifold labours, so it seems well worthy of being considered by us all before the Lord, whether we may not be greatly wanting alike to ourselves and to our ministry, in respect even of the mere time spent by us in this exercise. At the same time, it is very clear that the apostolic purpose could only have found its adequate realization, and can only find it among ourselves at this day, in the spirit of a Peniel-like earnestness, and faith, and humble and holy resoluteness—in the spirit of him who 'went up to the top of Carmel, and cast himself down upon the earth, and put his face between his knees, and said to his servant, Go up now, look toward the sea; and he went up, and looked up, and said, 'There is nothing; and he said, Go again seven times,'—in the spirit of prayers which, like Paul's 'conflicts' and 'agonizings,' taking hold of the Divine Word and power and grace, should reverently refuse to take a denial—in the spirit of prayers answering in some measure to the deep necessities of the ministry on the one hand, and the fulness of the promise of the Holy Ghost upon the other—answering in some measure to those blessed words of the Lord Jesus, 'Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go to him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves; for a friend of mine, in his journey, is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him? And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee. I say unto you, though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity, he will rise and give him as many as he needeth. * * * * If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him.' We will give ourselves continually to prayer.

SALVATION EASY AND DIFFICULT.

There are two classes of texts in Scripture apparently contradictory of each other. The one representing the ease, and the other the difficulty, of obtaining salvation. On the one hand we have presented to us the fullness of a Savior's love, the sufficiency of his atonement, the unqualified freeness of the Gospel offer, the readiness with which God pardons and accepts the sinner, without righteousness or merit of any kind; and, on the other, we are forewarned of terrible conflicts, of the straitness of the gate and the narrowness of the way by which heaven is to be entered, and of the difficulty with which even the righteous are saved. The solution of the seeming discrepancy is simply this: God, on the one hand, removes all difficulties in the way of a sinner's acceptance, and makes the terms of his reception the easiest possible; on the other, the native depravity of the human heart in a sense renews and multiplies the original difficulties. In this view the salvation of the sinner becomes a matter at once of the easiest and most difficult achievement. If the fullness of the Gospel provision be regarded, the sufficiency of Divine grace be relied on, then is salvation easy; but if the sinner retains an evil heart of unbelief, and clings to his beloved sins, obstructions of the most formidable kind spring up in his path. The gate of entrance is strait or contracted, just because it will admit no one who retains his sins. A camel can not go through the eye of a needle, and no more can a sinner pass this gate if he carries along with him the burden of his sins. Of this he must be divested, and this can not be done without sore conflicts and persevering struggles. God makes the way easy, sin makes it difficult. A man may be regenerate and not fully sanctified; and it is the effort to retain this sanctification that keeps the believer in a state of painful anxiety. Every step of his progress is resisted by the great adversary of souls, and what is still

more distressing, by the remaining depravity of his own heart. Sin tempts and entices him on all hands and at all times, and if he gives way for an instant to the influence, his progress is thus far arrested; nay, he retrogrades and his work is to be done over. At one time every thing appears propitious; his course is plainly marked out; his faith is unwavering; he leans upon Christ; heaven seems almost within his grasp; he walks without weariness; he runs without fainting; he mounts up with eagle's wings; then, again, clouds lower and obscure his prospect; his efforts are feeble; his determination weakened; he loses sight of his Almighty helper; his corruptions struggle for the ascendancy, and salvation seems next to impossible.—Now, indeed, the gate is strait, and the hill difficult seems insurmountable. 'The terms of the Gospel are still "take of the waters of life freely," the compassion of a promising God is still unchanged, the love of Christ is as inexhaustible as ever; but he fails to realize these blessed truths, and the unbelief of his heart unfits him for taking advantage of them, while at the same time it exposes him to the fiery darts of the enemy. Thus it is that there is not a single difficulty in his way except those of his own creation. Had his surrender to God been perfect; had he ever maintained a vigilant watch; had he clung to Christ with a tenacious grasp, as all his salvation and desires, he would have encountered no such grievous reverses.

Here, then, the Christian may learn some salutary lessons. He is straitened not in God, but in himself. As sin is the obstacle in his way of success, it can not be tampered with in its lightest form with impunity. One act of forgetfulness of God, one neglect of duty, one sinful indulgence in act or temper, may and will bring attendant difficulties which he will find it hard to overcome. If he wishes a comparatively easy course, he must hate sin unqualifiedly, under whatever aspect it is presented; he must crucify it in his heart and members. He must remember, too, and remember always, that his safety and comfort depend on his clinging closely to the side of Christ, so as always to realize his presence, and to be sure of his present help. His object must be definite and ever in sight, to lay hold of eternal life, and against every thing which tends to obscure and lessen the importance of this, he must vigilantly guard. In this way his striving will not be in vain. His Saviour will not withdraw from him while he confidently and affectionately trusts him, and no enemy shall defeat him while clothed with the armour of righteousness. The difficulties of salvation will be obviated, and he will go on his way rejoicing that a full salvation is prepared for him, and the most ample aids furnished for its final possession.—*Presbyterian.*

STRENGTH IN WEAKNESS.—God watched over his own work, and was pleased to listen it.—Zuinglius' defeat lay in his strength. Strong in body, strong in character, strong in talents, he was to see all these varieties of strength broken, that he might thereby become such an instrument as God loves to employ. He stood in need of a baptism, that of adversity, infirmity, feebleness, and pain. Such a baptism Luther had received at that period of agony when the cell and long passages of the convent of Erfurt resounded with his cries. Zuinglius was to receive it by being brought into contact with sickness and death.—The heroes of this world—the Charles twelfths and Napoleons, have a moment which is decisive of their career and their glory, and it is when they all at once become conscious of their strength. There is an analogous moment in the life of God's heroes, but it is in a contrary direction; it is when they recognize their impotence and nothingness; thenceforth they receive strength from on high. Such a work as that of which Zuinglius was to be the instrument, is never accomplished by man's natural strength; it would immediately wither away, like a tree transplanted after its full

growth and when in full leaf. A plant must be feeble in order to take root, and a grain of corn must die in the ground before it can yield a full return. God led Zuinglius, and with him the work of which he was the s'ay, to the gates of the grave. It was from among bones and darkness, and the dust of the dead, that God is pleased to take the instruments, by means of which he illumines, regenerates, and revives the earth.—*D'Aubigne.*

A CURTAIN RARROOR.—The Rev. Mr. T—of Virginia was in the B—Springs, and there was dancing in the ballroom every night. He was a faithful pastor; and one of his members, night after night conducted her little daughter to the room, and looked on with the greatest interest while she mingled in the dance; and when she came away, late at night, broken down from fatigue and excitement, that mother would compliment and praise her for her elegant performances.

One day the pastor sought an interview with the mother, and attempted to show her the fearful consequences that would probably result from her misguided course. She set up the usual defence, that dancing is an elegant accomplishment, etc. At last when every argument had failed to convince her of her folly and madness as a professed Christian mother, in pursuing a course which was so injurious to her child and so reproachful to religion, he said, "My dear friend, that child"—pointing to her little daughter standing by her side, and angry with the pastor because of his opposition to her mother's course—"that child had better have no mother, than to be cursed with one who, under the garb of religion, thus trains her up for the vanities of this world, and for the world of woe."—*Am. Mes.*

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