

never shall the hand, which clasps about the Saviour, though with ever so feeble and trembling an embrace, be shaken from its hold. In Him there is pardon for the guiltiest, strength for the weakest, grace for the vilest, a cure for the most diseased in soul, and comfort for the most afflicted in spirit. Oh! that God would constrain those wretched sinners among ourselves, who have never yet been shaken by his terrors, nor softened by his mercies, to take refuge in Christ, the true ark of our covenant! From being "a seed of evil-doers" "and children of wrath," they will then become "a holy seed" and "heirs of salvation." And, in that tremendous day, when the earth is dissolving in floods of fire, they shall be found above the reach of the "overflowing scourge," for the Lord their Redeemer will "set them up on high," and be their everlasting habitation.

From the Evangelical Magazine.

THE SHOWER.

It was a fine afternoon in September, when a physician of Edinburgh left home on foot, for the purpose of visiting a patient at some distance from town. He was one of those members of the medical profession (and blessed be God, they are increasing in number) who, having tasted and felt that the Lord is gracious, are anxious, as opportunity occurs, to benefit the souls as well as the bodies of their fellow-creatures. He had not quite reached the place of his destination, when he was overtaken by a shower of rain, so heavy and unexpected, that he sought shelter under the first roof that presented itself, which was that of a little cottage by the way side. In this abode of poverty the most perfect neatness prevailed, and the stranger received a cordial welcome. He sat down at the window to watch the termination of the shower, when one or two moans as of a person in pain, attracted his attention to a concealed bed, which had previously escaped his notice.—Humanity mingled with a still better feeling, induced him to approach it; and he beheld on it the emaciated body of a female, apparently about fifty years of age, who had been, as he was told upon inquiry, very long under the rod of affliction.

"You are ill," said he, "very ill, I perceive, in what I trust you know something of the conditions of that Gospel which can make even a sick bed comfortable?"

"Yes," she replied, "I am ill; but it is the hand of the Lord, and let him do what seemeth him good. I have been sixteen years in this situation, but I can still say of my dear Saviour, that he is all my salvation and all my desire."

"Thank God, then," said the physician, "and take courage. Be assured that your light affliction, which is but for a moment, shall, by the good and gracious work of the Holy Spirit, work out for you a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Sixteen years of confinement and suffering may indeed seem long to you now, but hereafter it will appear as nothing when absorbed in an eternity of bliss."

"Of that," replied the invalid, "I desire to feel assured; for, like the apostle, I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed."

"And I have no doubt," said the physician, "that every day brings you fresh proofs that your God and Redeemer is faithfulness itself; and that every want is supplied, whether temporal or spiritual."

"O yes!" she said, and her eyes glistened as she spoke; "my God has proved himself a present help in time of trouble. Kind friends have been raised up to provide me food and medicine, and what I value more than either, to speak to me about my soul. For two or three days, indeed, I have been almost alone, and I was beginning to long for some Christian conversation when you entered the house."

"In that too," observed her visitor, "mark the hand of your heavenly Father. You longed for the visit of a Christian friend, and you see how he has brought it about. Had not that shower fallen, you had it overtaken me a little earlier, or a little later than it did, I should not now have been conversing with you."

"I thank God for that shower," said the invalid, emphatically.

"And I too," rejoined the physician; "for I rejoice

to meet, even on a sick-bed, with a fellow-traveller on the way to Zion."

She pressed his hand. "A traveller to Zion," said she, after a moment's pause; "O that I could always keep in view that glorious termination of my journey." "The spirit," she added, after another short pause, "I hope and think is willing, but the flesh is weak."

"Cling the closer, my friend, on that account, to Him, who has himself experienced the weakness of humanity; and is thus enabled the more tenderly to sympathize with those who feel the pressure of its many infirmities. Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; and though now exalted above all principalities and powers, he retains our human nature in union with his own."

The conversation was now interrupted for a time by a paroxysm of her disorder. As it subsided, she remarked, "That pain is severe, but I bless God that he gives me patience and resignation to his will."

"Bless him, too, my friend, that you can say, as a good man once said in similar circumstances, 'I have pain, but it is not everlasting; I am tormented, but not in this flame.'"

The rain had been gradually diminishing, and the bright beams of the declining sun now shone across the little apartment. The stranger rose to depart.

"You will pray with me, I hope, sir, before you go."

"And for what blessings, my friend?"

"That my sins may be forgiven."

"And an entrance ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ?"

She clasped his hands in hers. The physician prayed; and He, who has said that wherever two or three are met together in His name, there he will be in the midst of them, was faithful to his promise; for the invalid was comforted and refreshed, and her visitor resumed his walk with an elevation of soul and of spirit, which constrained him to say, "Blessed are the people that know the joyful sound; yea, blessed are the people whose God is the Lord."

From the New-Hampshire Repository.

ON ANSWERS TO PRAYER.

In answer to the inquiry, "In what way is prayer answered?" it may be sufficient to say, that God bestows the very blessing asked, or something, which, in the view of the suppliant, is a full equivalent. The promise is—'He will fulfil the desires of them that fear him.' But every acceptable prayer is offered with an ultimate reference to the divine will. The heart of the petitioner resigns itself to God's good pleasure. The Bible does not require him to believe that a particular blessing will be bestowed at the time, and in the manner which his ignorance or his wants might dictate. He feels that God knows what is best; that if the favour which he desires at any time will conduce to his spiritual good, he will receive it—if not, that he will obtain some other blessing which will be a full equivalent for that withheld.

This view of the subject accords with Scripture and with facts. With Scripture, because, though some of its promises are unlimited, and seem to warrant the belief that the specific blessing sought for will be bestowed; yet they show with what restriction and what spirit every petition should be offered. It agrees with fact: for many a humble believer, conscious of breathing out sincere desires for specific blessings, has received an answer in a manner entirely unexpected, yet so as to make him feel that the blessings conferred are fully equivalent to those desired.

I have heard the voice of prayer rising from the closet of a broken-hearted penitent. It was interrupted often by groaning which could not be uttered. "O Lord, lift thou up on my soul the light of thy countenance. My soul is cast down within me; my heart faileth. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation." I heard that voice in the morning; it was reiterated at noon-day, and in the evening. Day after day I heard it, and every time more deep, more solemn, more fervent. From the same closet I heard another voice, even the voice of thanksgiving for the abundance of the mercy that could pour light and joy into a soul so unworthy, and so sinful.

I have seen a widowed mother weeping and kneel-

ing by the death-bed of her only son. I heard her plead that he might be spared, to be the support of her declining years, for the sake of Jesus, to whose cause she had dedicated him. But that petition was not answered. A few days afterwards, she closed his eyes in death; and then she kneeled down by his bed-side, and, in the unruffled accents of resignation, said, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."

This view of prayer guards against the extreme of presumption on the one hand, and of indifference on the other. We maintain that it is a general principle in God's moral kingdom, that the prayers of his people shall be answered; that every holy desire which they breathe forth, shall be the means of procuring some blessing. If the prayer be for the increase of holiness in their own hearts, holiness will be increased; if for a temporal blessing, or the conversion of an individual, that prayer will be answered by the bestowal of the favour sought, or by inducing a state of moral feeling which will find a full equivalent in the purer contemplation of the divine glory.

ANTIQUITY OF THE PROTESTANT RULE OF FAITH.

By Rev. T. H. Horne.

Let us advert to the *sacramental rites* of the Protestant Churches generally, and of our own Church in particular: they are two in number, viz. Baptism and the Supper of the Lord.

It was reserved for the dark ages, *more than twelve centuries after the time of Jesus Christ*, to enlarge the number of the Sacraments: nor, until the fifteenth century, did papal arrogance venture or presume to define them to be seven in number. Baptism instead of being metamorphosed into a charm, is with us administered simply, according to Christ's holy institution, with water, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. (Matt. xxviii 19.) And in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, the duly authorised ministers of the Church consecrated bread and wine, which the Lord hath commanded to be received: and they distributed both to all the communicants. Although, therefore, these two Sacraments, which were instituted by Christ himself, have subsisted only eighteen hundred years, and are different from those observed by the ancient Jews, yet a mutual relation exists between them. The *object* of both is the same. The ceremonies and mysteries of the Mosaic Dispensation respected the Messiah who *was to come*: those of the Gospel dispensation represent him as *having already come*. The former shadowed out of the truth which was *promised*: the latter shew the truth actually *fulfilled*. Under each dispensation we behold one God as its author; one only Mediator; one only means of redemption; one faith one sole object of worship; one and the same pure and moral code. Although, in the lapse of ages, merely external ceremonies have necessarily been changed, yet our faith remains the same: and though believers in former ages, and we who live under the Gospel Dispensation, have not come into existence at the same time, yet are we irradiated with the same light but in different degrees. The advantage however, is infinitely in our favour: for we possess that which is ardently *expected*; we have the *good things* that were promised and foretold, of which they had only the shadow. We have the body and substance of that, of which they had only the figure or type: but it has ever been the same Religion in principle, though now more spiritual and more clearly unfolded, than it was under the Patriarchal and Mosaic Dispensations. Nor has this pure and holy religion, which commenced with the infancy of the world, at