

An Affecting Narrative.

Perhaps there is no one Christian grace that we require to be reminded to practise more than confidence in God: that lively faith in God's mercy through Christ, which is equal to struggle with the greatest trials, and overcome the severest afflictions. The word of the Lord which spoke to the ears of Joshua should speak also to the hearts of all God's people: 'Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage, be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed, for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.' Unthankfulness is a leprosy that clings to the human heart. The sun may shine, and the moon may give her light; the seasons may bring their accustomed blessings, and seedtime and harvest may not fail. Our minds may be kept from overwhelming cares, our bodies from painful diseases, and our worldly possessions preserved from ruin. Peaceful Sabbaths may be ours, and the means of grace and the hope of eternal glory be enjoyed; and yet in the midst of these and other unnumbered mercies, we are apt still to sorrow, and repine, and complain, although God had forgotten to be gracious, as though his mercy was clean gone for ever. Seeing that these things are so, it may be well now and then to compare the light afflictions we complain of with the heavier trials of some of our fellow pilgrims. Listen, then, to the following affecting narrative.

A pious woman had a heavy cross in her husband, who was a drunkard. It might be that she had not acted with prudence in marrying him, or he might have been led into this sin by thoughtless and wicked companions; after his marriage, however, his excesses were a sad trouble to her, and occasioned her much sorrow. In one of his drunken fits he fell from the cart or wagon in which he was bringing home a load of iron, being by trade a smith. The wheels passed over him, and, in

that unprepared state, he was crushed to death.

Now, ask yourself, whatever may be the trouble that most perplexes, whether it is equal to that of having a husband crushed to death in a state of intoxication.

Time rolled away, and she again married; her second husband was a true Christian, so that she was spared her former anxieties. Though poor in the things of this world, they were both rich in faith and went on their way rejoicing. But a dark cloud was gathering, and about to burst over the head of the poor woman. Her husband left her one day, little thinking how he was approaching to an eternal world. He was standing on the edge of a very high cliff, when the ground gave way beneath his feet, he fell and was dashed to pieces. Here was a trouble; bowed down as the poor woman had been by the awful death of her first husband, this second stroke seemed more than enough to overwhelm her; heavy, indeed, was this afflictive dispensation.

Ask yourself, again, if you have a trouble equal to the loss of two husbands by sudden and awful deaths.

The poor widow would have sunk under this trial, but she looked to the Strong for strength, and to the Father of mercies for consolation. She was 'perplexed, but not in despair; cast down, but not destroyed.' He who is the Father of the fatherless, and the Husband of the widow, sustained her in this great calamity. She might have said, 'I am made to possess months of vanity, and wearisome days are appointed to me.' She might have complained in the bitterness of her spirit, but her language was rather 'The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.'

Her eldest son was then prospering at sea, and she looked to him as her earthly hope; but how mysterious are the ways of God! 'His ways are not as our ways, nor his thoughts as our