

if it be already kindled?" The cross brought in what man will never accept: he will not have the reproach of it; and they despised and rejected Him even BEFORE the cross; the fire was "already kindled." But that thing which tests the heart of man and exposes it, sets free the heart of God. When He was baptized with that baptism it opened the flood-gates of God's love.—J. N. D.

“ Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet will I rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.’ We would naturally have looked for faith's recompense, but instead we find apparent refusal and continued disappointment.— But this is the very soil of faith, this is the very time for the song of triumph and the shout of victory. Like the rose of the Alps which blossoms amidst the icy glaciers of the mountain top, or the strange sweet blossom of the Saharas, which only opens its petals when the hurricane sweeps the fiery plain, or the song of the nightingale which is only heard in the midnight; so faith reaches its highest development amidst the darkness and tempest, and when all around seems even to forbid its brightest expectation. It is nothing to believe when we see the fulfilment of our promise, the time for faith to live is when sight and sense afford no comfort and we rest our confidence on the naked word of promise.”

The moment Christ's voice has reached me, it is enough; this gives a peace and quietness in one's path that nothing else can. He gives strength and confidence, nothing else is needed.

It is pleasant to see the faces of God's people beaming with the secret refreshments of the Spirit, or reflecting the glories which shine from their exalted Head.— But this sacred rejoicing is no more like levity, than the clear diffused light of morning is like the flash of shaken tinsel. Cheerfulness is the genial warmth of the Sun of Righteousness; levity the crackling of thorns under a pot. One is the voice of rejoicing which becometh the tabernacles of the righteous, the other the laughter of fools, fit only for the tents of wickedness. Cheerfulness can mingle with solemnity, just as the clear heavens may be solemn with night, yet cheerful with stars.

“ A sight of Jesus in His power and glory scatters all our forces, and peoples the most barren waste with forms of life and loveliness, making the desert to blossom as the rose. This is the remedy for discouragement, this is the support of faith, this lifts up the hands that hang down, and confirms the feeble knees, and enables us, like Him to endure the cross, despising the shame, 'looking off unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith.' 'For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things that are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things that are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.'”

It is Christ not self, however advanced, that forms our meetness for heaven.

“He that winneth souls is wise.”