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AN ADDRESS TO THE DISCIPLES OF CHRIST.

BY REV. R. V. ROGERS, M.A., MINISTER OF ST. JAMES', KINGSTON, C.W.

"For even Christ pleased not himself."—ROM. xv. 3.

I. St. Paul exhorts the Christians at Rome to the pleasing of others, by the example of Christ's *self-denial*; but he limits this complaisance to that which is for his neighbor's "good," "for his edification," or building up, as a temple of God.

To gratify another, at *his expense*, is selfishness of the worst kind, and wholly opposed to Christ's life and doctrine.—At the risk of reproach, and ill-will and ill-usage,—regardless of personal consequences, and without respect of persons,—He "*reproved and rebuked.*" His Father's glory, His brethren's good, he lived for; and for these he endured all things, fulfilling the words of prophecy—"the reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me;" Ps. lxxix. 9.

This pleasing another, for his good and to his edification, it would seem, from the context, is *opposed* to our *self-pleasing*; else Christ's self-denial would not be quoted for our learning. It is "the strong" condescending to "the weak"—to the infirmities, the wants, even the defects of others, at the *cost of their own personal feelings and gratifications*; which St. Paul would teach:—"Let no man seek *his own*," i.e. *at the expense of another*; "but every man *another's* wealth."

These words evidently teach—

First, That the good of others is to be consulted before our own pleasure; and that—*second*, When any other's good and edification *compete* with our gratification, our self-pleasure must give place—we must deny ourselves, if of us, as of Christ, we would have written in the book of

God's remembrance,—*he pleased not himself.*

II. You will perceive that a vast field of Christian morals, by these words, is opened to our view. Here are duties implied for all sorts and conditions of men to practise, whilst aiming to secure the good of others. To a great extent these obligations constitute each man his brother's keeper, and therefore all the duties which flow from this brotherhood relationship are imposed on every man—*because* he is a man and a brother.

In one sense all men are brethren. In a far higher sense, all Christians are brethren—mutual dependants, as members of the same body; and, therefore, no one member can suffer *without every other* suffering with it,—*whether he will or no.*

This pleasing of another to his good is, then, a consulting of *each one his own* good, and thus the good of society and of the Church. "If one member suffer, all the members *must* suffer with it; and if one member be honoured, all the members" (as a necessary consequence) "will rejoice with it;" 1 Cor. xii. 26. But the divine mind says, "*the strong* are to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please themselves," in what would bear down and not support. The words are—"we that are strong *ought*" i.e. we *owe* it to them. We owe it to Christ, who has set us the example. We owe it to his church, "that there be no schism in the in the body;" and we must pay this deference of our will to their interests, if we would be *really*, what we are *nominally*, His disciples. "*For even Christ pleased*

not Himself." Their *infirmities* we are to bear—whatever may be called their infirmities, their *weaknesses*—whatever makes them less useful, less happy, less God's servants and soldiers; whatever makes them frail, whether of mind, or body, or spirit. The apostle *illustrates* his meaning; 1 Cor. viii. 10.

At Corinth, the meat which had been offered to their false gods was taken away and sold in the market. Some of the Corinthians, who knew that it could have received no contagion from "an idol which was *nothing*," from having been laid before it, bought this meat for their own use. Others, however, considered that, from its having been once offered in sacrifice, it had become in some sense *idolatrous*—not only would not themselves use it, but were offended that their fellow-Christians should do so.

Now mark St. Paul's *decision*.

He first declares the nothingness of an idol, and therefore what was offered in sacrifice to idols could not be in any way affected by it. Here he decides in favour of the strong, as to the *lawfulness* of their conduct. But was it *expedient*? All had not the same knowledge which they had, and therefore could not *see* as they did. These were *conscientious*, though they might be considered *scrupulous*; and probably their scrupulosity arose from their *ignorance*. They were brethren, too, equally beloved by Him who died for both parties. Then should "the strong" continue to do what was giving pain to these "weak" brethren? Should they mislead them, by example, to do what would wound their consciences, and perhaps tempt them to go back into idolatry? "Through thy knowledge shall thy weak brother perish, for whom Christ died?" ver. 11. Here was a question for their Christian principles to decide. Be assured,

St. Paul adds, "When ye sin so against the brethren, ye sin against Christ."—Christ as the Head of the body, in the person of his members;—"Therefore" follow my example—"if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no meat as long as the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend." "It is *good neither to eat flesh, nor drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak;*" Rom. xiv. 21.

Beloved, never did St. Paul follow Christ more closely than in this loving condescension to the *prejudices* of conscientious ignorance. Like his Master and only Teacher, "*he pleased not himself.*" And now disciples of the same Master are to do as he did—be *followers of Christ together with him*.

"We then that are *strong*"—in knowledge, virtue, or religion—we are to bear, assist these *weak ones* in carrying their burdens; just as some stalwart traveller manfully extends his hand to help a weak companion, or puts his shoulder to the wheel in a difficulty, or takes the burthen from the back of another weary and fainting, and for a while carries it himself.

This bearing each other's burden is what the Holy Spirit would teach us as a moral and religious duty, as *members one of another*; i.e. *beneficent sympathy, practical love*—a lesson the very opposite of that which says, "*Be ye warmed and be ye clothed;*" and yet gives not that which is necessary for the body (James ii. 16);—a lesson more like Him who *did* as well as taught a self-denying regard for the well-being of others—"for even Christ pleased not himself."

Not to please ourselves—not to pass by some poor weak brother, for whom Christ died as well as for us, labouring under his load, it may be of sin or some evil habit—knees trembling, heart fainting,

just falling—pass by him, priding ourselves on our strength, with so-called pity, better called *contempt* than love.

It may not be *convenient* to hold out the hand or say some kind word of loving rebuke or tender encouragement. It may give some trouble and annoyance—perhaps a little expense or danger—to do just as the good Samaritan would have done, in our case. It may seem very unreasonable to be disturbed in our ease; just as the man comfortable for the night felt when the laws of hospitality dragged him from his bed, when his friend at midnight would borrow three loaves of bread. But whatever may be the risk; however inconvenient; at whatever trouble;—we that are strong “*ought*” to bear the infirmities of the weak brother or sister. It is an opportunity for doing good which God has cast in our way, and for which we shall have to answer. “*I was naked and ye clothed me; forasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto Me.*” Suffering humanity demands this self-sacrifice! Christ’s example enforces the debt; and we must pay it. “We that are strong” *owe it to the weak*, “to bear their infirmities.” We must bear their burdens would we *fulfill the law of Christ!*

III. Then it is *self-denial in order to the glory of God* and the good of men, to which St. Paul exhorts us as disciples and imitators of the self-denying Jesus.—By way of example he offers *himself*: “*even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved;*” 1 Cor. x. 33.

The apostle *objects* to the bad example of some. “If any man see thee that hast knowledge sit at meat in the idol’s temple, shall not the conscience of him that is weak be emboldened to eat those things

which are offered to idols?” 1 Cor. viii 10. He adds the evil consequence to be:—“Through thy knowledge shall thy weak brother perish, for whom Christ died?” ver. 11. Observe, St. Paul does not say that this “*strong*” Corinthian *himself* received any injury from what he did. *He* knew that “an idol was nothing in the world,” and that therefore the idol-temple was nothing more than any other place; that the food which he ate there was in no degree affected by its having been offered to the idol. He was *strong in knowledge*. It was for *others* that his being there, and *seemingly* partaking of the idol-worship, was injurious. His example tempted others to do as he did; and many a weak brother was *emboldened* to do what *he believed* to be wrong—to eat those things which were offered to idols; believing at the same time that an idol was a being, and therefore that he was in some sort a partaker with that idol in what he ate.

True, all this was *mistake*. But the *weaker* brother believed it to be as he understood it, and acted accordingly, and was in danger of *injuring* his soul. The example of this “*strong*” man was *misleading* this weak brother to his injury—it might be to his ruin.

We see in this case the power of example. It is what we do, and not what we say, that tells on others.

Saying, without doing, is little better than *opinion*, albeit without power either for good or ill. But saying, and *doing* what we say, shows that we believe what we say; that is conviction to others, and comes home to them with just that force which personal character or station or learning can give. Then the example of one man over another is *power*, in proportion as that one man *excels* another in station, in society, or personal character, or anything else which usually gives influence.

In this consists the terrible responsibility of talents.

What we have of gifts and endowments, and what we are by means of them, and the good hand of God upon us, are trusts committed to our care for the good of others; and therefore *the not living to ourselves* is a duty which every man owes to society, flowing from that trust.

In connection with this it is to be remembered, that few if any are *without some circle* of influence more or less extended. No man's example, then, is without some power on others. Even the most limited has his next neighbour; others their own families, whilst others again *a whole community*. Then no man can excuse himself with this idea—"I have no influence, and therefore *what I do* is of no consequence to others."

Nothing is further from the truth than that a man can be *his own enemy only*; so long as example is power for good or ill. That man is a *friend* or *enemy* to society, in proportion as his example is good or bad.

Nor is example confined to those on whom it first acts. It descends to those that come after; and evil example is so subtle a fluid that it can, and often does, infect *unborn generations*.

Take an illustration. St. Paul laboured with his own hands to make himself "*an ensample*" to the Thessalonian Church of a noble independency; and how much of that of which he says of them, "*Ye were ensamples to all them that believe,*" flowed from Paul's pattern, we may imagine from considering the power of such a minister as "*an ensample* to the flock."

IV. Brethren, I would draw to a close. From what I have said it appears that *life is a fearful thing, full of tremendous responsibilities*, for which each living man will have to give an account to God; whilst

they that come after him will ennoble or brand him, in proportion as the power of his life has been an ensample *for good or ill*. I conclude that a good example of self-sacrificing for the good of others is to be set—*cost what it may*. The Holy Spirit commands it! The One Master and the faithful disciple exemplify it! "*For even Christ pleased not himself;*" "*Even as I please all men (for their profit) that they may be saved.*"

By way of application—

"I speak as unto wise men; judge ye what I say;" 1 Cor. x. 15. I speak to the Church—to its members, its communicants, such of you as think yourselves "*strong*" in all that makes true strength: not physical, but moral; not moral only, but spiritual also. Brethren, "*Whilst we have opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially to them who are of the household of faith.*"

Opportunity is doing the right thing at the right time and in the right place. Life is the day of opportunity. Each of us has *but one day*, and that is only lent; and the loan may be recalled long before the day of life, our threescore years and ten, is spent: and as a past hour cannot be recalled, so a lost opportunity cannot. How many have consumed their latter days in vain regrets over former days mis-spent or ill-spent! Remember, it is to the world and to the church that we professing Christians *owe a duty*, and that is to be paid as occasion offers, *denying ourselves for their good*.

Brethren, there is a practice which has become a custom, equally affecting albeit all—the professing Christian as well as those who make no profession of religion; a practice which, when it has become habit with any man, seizes alike the Christian and the Christless; respects neither persons nor character, but brings down to one common level prince and peasant, the

learned and the ignorant, yea, the sinner and the reputed saint!

It is a practice sly and artful, introducing itself with all the courtesies of life, at marriage feasts and funeral gatherings and baptismal rejoicings. It appeals for toleration to the best feelings of our nature, and is indulged in most by men of the highest natural endowments and social qualifications. It professes to have at heart man's good, and when reasoned against points in self-support to the people of place both in church and state. Eloquent, too, it can quote Scripture in its own defence; nay, when severely pressed by its opponents, it turns again and claims the Bible on its side from Genesis to Revelation! I admit that this custom is *time-honoured, very ancient, and vastly extended.*

With Scripture before me I dare not question its antiquity, for it is old as *Noah*. That it was widely pervading society in the days of *Moses*, I conclude from the *sin of Aaron's two sons*, who presumptuously offered strange fire under the influence of strong drink. The effects of this practice must have been understood in the palmiest days of Israel, for Solomon speaks of it (*Prov. xxi. ; xxiii. 21, 29, 30*), though in no very honourable terms; and more than once cautions against the natural consequences of indulgence. The prophets, too, those special instructors of the church and people of God, refer to it, but only to condemn it. In New Testament days, if we may judge from the advice of *St. Paul* to *Timothy*, the practice was to be the exception and not the rule of everyday life. It was to be the medicine and not the diet; for *occasional* necessities and not an *ordinary* indulgence.

But I am to-day not objecting to the lawfulness of the practice, but *pleading* with the disciples of Christ against its expediency. Granted, if you please, that it is lawful to use stimulating drink as diet.

Is it expedient? Granted that some can use it without injury to themselves. I am sure you will not close your eyes to what is passing every day, every where, and deny that *many cannot*. Then, is it kind, is it loving, is it following the example of Him who is your great example, as His disciples, to use that as a daily beverage which others drink to their injury, and finally to their ruin?

Do you say, "*I am strong?*" I might point you to *St. Paul's* caution to the *Corinthians*, who thought so too: "Let him that *thinketh* he standeth take heed lest he *fall*." I do not say that, likely, that last victim to the drinking customs of society was once strong as you now are; but I would respectfully draw your minds, as Christians, to the words of *St. Paul*: "We then that are strong *ought* to bear the infirmities of the weak." Do you say I need stimulation; my health demands it: *then alcohol* is medicine and not diet. Use it *medicinally*; take it as a wise physician would prescribe it, and when cured, cease from it as from any other medicine.

I would *press* the question, *How far* do you need it? Surely not more than meat and drink. Then what says the great apostle, "If, by my eating meat, I should cast a stumbling-block in the way of a weak brother, *I will eat no meat lest I occasion his fall*." Say, do you use it because *you like it?*—from self-indulgence? "Then, now walkest thou not charitably." The law of love would teach you very differently; and He who is love has left you a very different example than thus, by your example, to destroy him for whom Christ died. Listen once again to *St. Paul*, or rather to God, whose words Paul spoke. "*It is good*"—good for yourselves, because "godliness is profitable to all things;" good for your fellow-men—"it is good neither to eat flesh," &c., &c. God give us all grace, brethren, to adopt and practise

'the apostle's rule, "Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, *do all to the glory of God.*"

And yet, after all that has been said or could be said in favour of Christians denying themselves for the good of others, to practise it on principle we need strength from Him who has set us the example, "for even Christ pleased not himself." "He giveth more grace." Grace only can constrain us "to *walk as He walked.*" Let us realize the price paid for us. Let us estimate the value of a soul. Let us win souls to Christ, and do what in us lies to *prove the reality of our faith by the holiness of our practice.*

THE LAND OF LIGHT.

"The Lamb is the light thereof."—REV. XXI. 23.

That clime is not like this dull clime of ours;
 All, all is brightness there;
 A sweeter influence breathes around its flowers,
 And a far milder air.
 No calm below is like that calm above,
 No region here is like that realm of love;
 Earth's softest spring ne'er shed so soft a light,
 Earth's brightest summer never shone so bright.

That sky is not like this sad sky of ours,
 Tinged with earth's change and care:
 No shadow dims it, and no rain-cloud lowers,—
 No broken sunshine there!
 One everlasting stretch of azure pours
 Its stainless splendour o'er these sinless shores;
 For there Jehovah shines with Heavenly ray,
 There Jesus reigns, dispensing endless day.

These dwellers there are not like those of earth,
 No mortal stain they bear;
 And yet they seem of kindred blood and birth,—
 Whence and how came they there?
 Earth was their native soil; from sin and shame,
 Through tribulation they to glory came;
 Bond-slaves delivered from sin's crushing load,
 Brands plucked from burning by the hand of God.

These robes of theirs are not like those below;
 No angel's half so bright!
 Whence came that beauty, whence that living glow,
 Whence came that radiant white?
 Washed in the blood of the atoning Lamb,
 Fair as the light those robes of theirs became,
 And now, all tears wiped off from every eye,
 They wander where the freshest pastures lie,
 Through all the nightless day of that unfading sky.

SEEING JESUS.

"To see Christ," said the late Dr. Raffles, as he lay dying—"to see Christ, that is heaven!" "What," said his friend and former companion in labours (Angell James), "what would the gathering of a court be, without the King?" "O," said another of kindred spirit, "for the shadows to flee away, that I might look and be filled with his overcoming love!"

It is thus that the thoughts of dying saints fasten upon the vision of Jesus as the chief element in the joy of heaven; and the beholding of the King in his beauty becomes the longing hope of the heart that is beating out the last moments of life. "I do believe," said Rowland Hill, when dying, "that for the first ten thousand years after we enter the kingdom of glory. it will be all surprise." "But will this surprise never end?" "Never, while we behold the person of our Lord." And thus David Sandeman, when his hour was come, called to memory the verse he had often quoted, and commanded it to be sent to far distant friends as the expression of his heart's desire:

"I would be where Jesus waits me,
 I would be where Jesus is,
 All too long have we been parted,
 Let my spirit speed to his."

Can we be wrong in supposing that this blessed unity in the dying emotions of God's saints, and in the longings of their hearts after him whom their souls love, is an answer to the wonderful prayer of Christ, "Father, I will that those whom thou hast given me be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me." And how can his prayer, and the inexpressible longings of their hearts, ever be denied or disappointed? Reader, would it be heaven to you to see Christ?—*Presbyterian.*

Happiness is not the end of life; character is. This world is not a platform where you will hear Thalberg-piano-playing. It is a piano-manufactory, where are dust, and shavings, and boards, and saws, and files, and rasps, and sand-papers. The perfect instrument and the music will be hereafter.—*Beecher.*

THE DREAM :

OR, GOD'S VOICE TO THE LOVERS OF PLEASURE.

"God speaketh once, ye twice, yet man perceiveth it not; in a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed, then he openeth the ears of men and sealeth their instruction."—JOB xxxiii. 14-16.

"Because I have called and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel and would none of my reproof; I also will laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh."—PROV. i. 24-26.

In the year 1814, the late Mr. and Mrs. Foster (who were lost in the *Rothsay Castle* steamer, August, 1831), were acquainted with three sisters, residing in London, two of whom were very pious, retiring women, and the third was just as gay and volatile, in proportion. They were all elderly, which rendered the gaiety of the third the less becoming, and also inclined her, the more easily, to take offence at any remarks made upon it. She hated the piety of her sisters, and opposed it in many petty and spiteful instances, though they endeavoured sedulously to accommodate themselves to her, and to render the difference between them as little disagreeable as possible. One night, towards the close of the year 1814, she had been at the assembly very late, and the next morning, at breakfast, was so remarkably different from her usual manner, that her sisters feared that she was either very unwell, or had met with some misfortune which affected her deeply. Instead of her usual incessant chatter about every person she had met, and every thing she had seen, and all that had been said and done, she sat silent, sullen, and absorbed. The gloom upon her brow was a mixture of temper and distress; and seemed to indicate a fixed and dogged resolution, formed upon circumstances disagreeable to herself, as if she were resolved to pursue her own will, though it should lead her into most unnecessary trouble, rather than follow the course she knew to be right, but which would reduce her to submit her own will to the power and control of another. As she ate nothing, her sisters inquired "if she were ill?" "No." "What was the matter?" "Nothing." "They were afraid something had distressed her:" she in reply, "had no idea of people prying into matters that did not concern them." The whole of the morning was passed alone in her own room, and at dinner the same scene recurred as in the morning. She scarcely ate anything, and never spoke, but to answer unwillingly what she was asked; and with an appearance of depression, obstinacy, and melancholy, that spread its influence very painfully over the cheerfulness of her companions. Thus has the wind been heard to howl and moan, as

though it mourned its own office of desolation; and yet it never ceased to rage and blow, and howl the more, as the destruction it caused became the more frightful. She retired to rest late, and with the air of one who expects from sleep neither alleviation nor refreshment. The next morning, she again scarcely touched breakfast, and seemed in the same oppressed and uncomfortable state as on the preceding day. "Anna, you are not well; is it your head that pains you?" "I am well and nothing pains me." "Then you have something on your mind, and why will you not tell us? Do we not love you? have we not the same earthly interest with you? and can we seek any good but yours, in our anxious wish to share your sorrows?" "O! you have superstitious of your own, without mine being added. I shall not tell you what ails me, so you have no occasion to excite your curiosity. I dare say you would be delighted to know, for you would think it some spiritual triumph or other. But I laugh at those things. I am not quite old enough yet to be the victim of dreams and visions." "Anna, we don't believe in dreams and visions." She answered sharply, "No! nor do I mean you should!" The sisters looked at each other, and relapsed into silence.

This second day passed like the first; Anna was gloomy and moody, and her sisters, both from pity and anxiety, were unhappy for her sake. The third morning, she again entered on the day as one who loathes the light—who has no object in being; and to whom the lapse of time, and prospects of futurity, bring neither peace nor hope. As her sisters looked at her, one of them suddenly said, "Anna, what was your dream?" She started, and laughed wildly, "Ha! what was it, indeed? you would give the world to know, but I shall not tell you! I thought you did not believe in dreams!" "No more we do: in general, you know, they are assuredly the offspring of a disordered stomach, confused images or fancies, whilst reason is dormant; and the memory of them soon passes away, after we are fairly engaged in our daily avocations. But no doubt there are dreams, which are not sent in vain, any more than afflictions or any other warning. There is a verse in the Bible, which mentions God as speaking to man in a *dream*, 'in the visions of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men.'" She laughed again, and said, "you have verses in the Bible for every thing that suits you; but I do not choose to be warned in such a way. I have no doubt I shall get it out of my head in a day or two." "Anna, we do beseech you to tell us; if you really have had a dream from Heaven, you surely would not wish to forget it, and if not, we will

help you to laugh it off." She answered, half sulkily, "Well, I suppose if you must know it, you must. It was very extraordinary, no doubt. I should have thought it the effects of the ball, but that I never saw, any where, anything in the least resembling it; and you must not suppose that you understand what I am about to relate, for you never saw, and never can imagine, any thing like it—I thought that I was walking in the wide street of a city; many people were walking there besides myself; but there was something in their air that immediately struck me. They seemed thoughtful and cheerful, neither occupied with business nor with gaiety, but having about them such dignity of repose, such high and settled purpose, such peace, and such purity, as never was stamped upon mortal brow. The light of the city was also strange; it was not the sun, for there was nothing to dazzle; it was not the moon, for all was clear as day. It seemed an atmosphere of light, calm, lovely, and changeless. As I looked at the buildings, they seemed all palaces, but not like the palaces of earth. The pavement that I walked on, and the houses that I saw, were all alike of gold, bright and shining, and clear as glass. The large and glittering windows seemed like divided rainbows, and were made to give and transmit light—only the light of gladness. It was, indeed, a place to which Hope might lead—where Charity might dwell. I could not help crying out, as I walked alone, 'Surely these are the habitations of righteousness and truth: all was beauty, bright and perfect. I could not tell what was wanting to make me wish for eternity in such a scene, and yet its very purity oppressed me; I saw nothing congenial, though looks of kindness met me in every face of that happy throng. I felt nothing responsive; I returned in silence their friendly greetings, and walked on oppressed and sad. I saw that they all went one way, and I followed, wondering at the reason; and at length I saw them all cross over to a building, much finer and larger than the rest; I saw them ascend its massive steps, and enter beneath its ample porch. I felt no desire to go with them; but so far as the foot of the steps I approached from curiosity. I saw persons enter, who were dressed in every varied colour, and in all the costumes of all nations; but they disappeared within the porch, and then I saw them cross the hall. It was not marble—it was not gold; but light, pure light, consolidated into form. It was the moon, without her coldness; it was the sun, without his dazzling ray: and within was a staircase, mounting upwards, all of light; and I saw it touched by the feet and the white spotless garments of those who ascended. It was, in-

deed, passing fair, but it made me shudder, and turn away. As I turned, I saw one upon the lower step, looking at me with an interest so intense, and a manner so anxious, that I stopped to hear what he had to say. He asked me, in a voice like liquid music, 'Why do you turn away? Is there peace elsewhere? Is there pleasure in the works of darkness?' I stood in silence; he pressed me to enter, but I neither answered nor moved. Suddenly he disappeared, and another took his place, with the same look, and with the same manner. I wished to avoid him, but I seemed rivetted to the spot. 'Art thou come so far?' said he; 'wilt thou lose thy labour? Put off thine own garments, and take the white livery.' Here he continued to press me, till I got weary and angry, and said, 'I will not enter; I do not like your livery, and I am oppressed with your whiteness.' He sighed, and was gone. Many passed by me; looked at me with mingled pity and kindness, and pressed me to follow on with them, and offered me a hand up the steps which led to their mysterious change; but I rejected them all, and stood melancholy and disturbed. One young bright messenger, stationed on the steps, came up to me, and entreated me to enter, with a voice and manner I could not resist. 'Do not turn,' he said, 'where canst thou go? Do not linger, for why shouldst thou weary thyself for nought? enter here, and taste of happiness. Do not all go in? Are any rejected? Do not all tribes, and all colours, press into that shall? Are they not washed, and clothed, and comforted?' He gave me his hand and I entered the hall along with him. Here I was sprinkled with pure water, and a garment of pure white was put upon my shoulders; and, I know not how, but I mounted the bright stairs by the side of my happy guide. Oh what a sight burst upon me, when I had reached their summit! But mortal words cannot describe, nor mortal fancy in any way conceive. Where are the living sapphires—where are the glittering stars, that are like the bright audience in which I stood? Where are the forms of ether, or the looks of love, that breathed in the innumerable company that moved around me? I sunk down, overpowered and wretched. I crept into a corner, and tried to hide myself, for I saw that I had nothing in unison with the blessed residents of such a place. They were moving in a dance to the music, to the harmony of song that never fell upon mortal ear. My guide joined, in a rapture, and I was left alone. I saw the tall forms, all fair and brilliant, in their own ineffable felicity: their songs, and looks of gratitude, formed the countenances and differences of each. At length I saw one taller than the rest, and every way more fair-

more dazzling, more awful, surpassing far, what yet surpasses thought, and to him each eye was turned, and in his face each face was brightened. The song and the dance were in his honour; and all seemed to drink from him their life and joy. As I gazed, in speechless and trembling amazement, one, who saw me, left the company, and came to where I stood. 'Why,' he asked me, 'art thou so silent? Come quickly, and unite in the dance, and join in the song.' I felt sudden anger in my heart, and I answered with sharpness, 'I will not join in your song, for I do not know the tune; I will not join the dance, for I do not know the measure.' He sighed, and, with a look of most humiliating pity, resumed his place.

"About a minute after another came, and addressed me as the other had done. With the same temper and words I answered him. He looked as if he could have resigned his own dazzling glory to have given it to me. If heaven can know anguish he seemed to feel it: but he left me, and retired. What could it be that put such tempers into my heart? At length the Lord of that glorious company, of those glittering forms of life, and light, and beauty, of those songs of harmony, and those shouts of triumph and of joy, saw me, and came up to speak. My very pulse was thrilled with awe; I felt my blood curdle, and the flesh upon me tremble through its pores: and yet my heart grew harder, and my voice was bold. He spoke, and deep-toned music seemed to issue from his lips. 'Why sittest thou so still, and all around thee glad? Come, join the dance, for I have triumphed! Come, join the song, for now my people reign! Love, ineffable, unutterable, seemed to beam upon me, as though it could have melted a heart of stone. I felt it, but melted not. I gazed one instant, and said, 'I will not join the dance, for I do not know the measure; I will not join the song, for I do not know the tune.' Creation would have fled at the change of his countenance: his glance was lightning; and in a voice louder than ten thousand thunders, he said to me, 'Then what dost thou here? The floor beneath me opened, the earth quaked, and I sank into flames and torments; and with the fright I awoke.'

There was a momentary silence, for the sisters were shocked and distressed at the dream; and neither of them thought it the effects of a natural cause. "Anna, we cannot wish to help you to forget such a dream as this; we surely believe it is from God, and it may be greatly blessed to you if you will permit it to be so. Your description of the holy city may be an impression from much the same description in the Revelation. The city has no need of the sun nor the moon, for

the temple of God is there, and the Lamb is the light thereof. All who enter must put off their own garments, namely, their unrighteousness, and must be clothed in linen, clean and white, even the righteousness of the saints; 'and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord.' Those who walk in the heavenly temple are they who have come through great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb; and they cease not praising God day and night, and they sing a new song, even a song which none know but those who are redeemed. 'It is the song of Moses and the Lamb.' Wisdom waits daily at the steps, to call the sons of men into that temple, and the people of God try to persuade their fellows to tread in their steps, and the ministers are appointed to watch for souls in every way, and, by every means, to persuade men, and to try and save them. O! Anna, you, know something of the way: do lay down your own will, and hearken to this fearful warning. Join us, and learn the steps that lead to heaven, and how to sing the song of praise." Anna's brow darkened, and she answered, "I do not want you to preach to me; I shall do as I please." She continued in this melancholy state to the end of the week, and was found in her room a corpse! None knew the cause of her death; she died without disease, and without spiritual change.

VALUE OF TRACTS.

A Christian gentleman was travelling on a steambot. He took some tracts out and scattered them about for the passengers to read. Many were glad to get them, and read them carefully. But one gentleman was there who disliked religion and religious people very much. He took one of the tracts and doubled it up, and then deliberately took out his penknife and cut it all up into little pieces. He then held up his hand and scattered the pieces over the side of the boat, to show his contempt for religion. When he had done this he saw one of the pieces sticking to his coat. He picked it off, and looked at it a moment before throwing it away. On one side of that bit of paper was only one word. It was the word "God." He turned it over, and on the other side was the word "Eternity." He threw away the bit of paper. He got rid of that easily enough, but those two solemn words, "God" and "Eternity," he could not get rid of. He tried drinking—he tried gambling—to drive those words from his mind; but it was of no use. They haunted him wherever he went, and he never had any comfort till he became a Christian. That little piece of paper, with those two words upon it, was the means of his conversion.

PAUL'S LAST TESTIMONY.

BY THE LATE REV. J. SMITH, CHELTENHAM.

However rough the Christian's journey may be, it is but short. However heavy his burden, he has not far to carry it. However severe his trials, they will soon be over. The apostle Paul had as rough a journey, as heavy a burden, and as severe trials as most, but the Lord was with him in them all, and at length he bore this testimony, "*out of them all the Lord delivered me*" (2 Tim. iii. 11). Such will be our case soon; let us anticipate it, and now notice,

THE PAINFUL REVIEW.—He had been persecuted; violently persecuted, often persecuted; persecuted both by Jews and Gentiles; persecuted for Christ's sake. To serve Christ was his delight. To make known Christ was his great object. Wherever he went he preached a personal Christ; a Christ who was a Jew; a Jew, hated by his countrymen, and at length crucified. This Christ he preached as the only Saviour, and everywhere affirmed that there could be no salvation for any one but through him. This enraged the rabble, and greatly offended the polite. He was therefore persecuted, and considered unfit to live. He was persecuted for the truth's sake, for he everywhere proclaimed the unity and spirituality of the divine nature, in opposition to idolatry; and salvation by Christ alone, in opposition to the ceremonies, sacrifices, and services of priests and people. He refers also to afflictions. His persecutions were from men, but many of his afflictions came from God. He was afflicted in body, and suffered much; therefore he said, "We that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened." He was afflicted in mind—"without were fightings, and within were fears." He was tried by good men, and he was tried by bad ones. Everywhere, and from all quarters, afflictions, troubles, and trials flowed in upon him; and he was at times pressed out of measure, above strength, inasmuch that he despaired even of life. But now mark,

HIS HONOURABLE TESTIMONY.—"*Out of them all the Lord delivered me.*" The Lord supported him in them and his strength

was made perfect in his servant's weakness. He brought him through them. The fires were not extinguished, nor were the rivers drained, but step by step he was led on, until he could say, "We went through fire and through water, but thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place." They did him good, for they deepened his sanctification, led him to prayer, and exercised his trust and confidence in God. They made him more useful in his ministry, for they qualified him to speak a word in season to them that were weary. They tended to his honor, exercising his courage and valour as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. They found work for all his graces, and taught him the value of his spiritual armour. The Lord delivered him out of them all. The last trial came, and he endured it. The last cross was laid upon him, and he manfully carried it after Jesus. The last foe came up, and he conquered him in the strength of the Lord. The call of his Master was heard, and he said, "I am ready." He laid down his life for Christ on earth, and then went to reign with Christ in heaven. His deliverance was full, perfect, and eternal. Long since has he rested from his labours, long has he been reaping in glory what he sowed in grace, and gathering in heaven what he scattered on earth.

If we endure we shall also be delivered. The cross always comes before the crown; the wilderness before the promised land; and weariness before rest. We must suffer with Christ, if we would reign with him. The fierce and fiery persecutions endured by the apostles we may not be called upon to pass through; but some measure awaits most of the Lord's people. Our afflictions may not be as numerous or as heavy as his, but they will be heavy enough sometimes. We may not be pressed beyond strength, but, like our Master, we may just have strength enough, but none to spare. *If we suffer now, we shall also testify soon.* The bitter is before the sweet; the storms and frosts of winter before the flowers and fruits of summer. If we suffer for Christ, we suffer with Christ; for he never leaves his people to suffer alone. If we suffer, we shall be sustained and supported, and the time is not far distant when we shall be able to say of all our

griefs and woes, of all our trials and troubles, of all our persecutions and afflictions, "Out of them all the Lord delivered me." But such a time will never come in the experience of the unconverted sinner—for him there is no deliverer, for him there will be no deliverance; the sufferings of earth will only conduct him to the more terrible sufferings of hell, and the troubles of time will introduce the torments of eternity. O sinner, let your present troubles lead you to seek the Saviour! Let your sufferings now induce you to flee to Jesus, that you may not suffer for ever. The design of your present afflictions and troubles may be to lead you to reflection, to produce conviction, and to urge you to cry for mercy, while mercy may be found. There is a Deliverer now; he can deliver you: apply to him, and he will; neglect to do so, and you perish. "Consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver." These are his own words; are they not alarming? are they not awful?

WINNING SOULS TO CHRIST.

"He first findeth his own brother Simon,—and he brought him to Jesus."—JOHN I. 41, 42.

This is the object of the Christian ministry, of Sabbath-School instruction, of tract-distribution—in short, the object which every one who hears the gospel should place in the fore-front of life's aims and efforts, namely, to win Christ first, and then to win others to Christ. How beautiful the picture to which the words we have quoted refer! One brother brings another brother to the Saviour. Nor does it stop here. The one so brought brings with him, it may be, capacities and powers which it shall be difficult, if not impossible, to over-estimate. Who would have thought that Robert Morrison, a lad in the Sabbath-School of an obscure northern district of this kingdom, should have turned out one of the greatest of modern missionaries, and translated, as he did, the Book of God into Chinese, a language whose hieroglyphics had confounded the skill of the wise and learned for centuries. Nor need we mention a host of others who brought rare gifts along with them into the field, such as Doddridge, Whitfield, Wesley, and John Williams. So the benefit extends and

widens, till, like the circlet in the lake, it becomes a mighty circumference of blessing.

"Friends, parents, neighbours we must first embrace,
Our country next, and next the human race."

How was it with the woman of Samaria, for example? Having found the Saviour herself, she did all in her power to make him known as the Messiah, the Christ of God; and through her instrumentality a whole city of the Samaritans became filled with the power and influence of the gospel.

And who can describe the reward, or rightly estimate the privilege of leading lost sinners to the Saviour? The reward, we know, is of free grace and mercy alone; but do we not also know that the highest recompense of reward will be bestowed on successful labour for Christ? Did the thought ever strike you, reader, that your reward will be according to your works? For what saith the Word? "He that soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly, and he that soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully." Doubtless, therefore, the brightest of those crowns prepared for the coronation day of the saints shall be reserved for such as were the means of bringing most souls to Jesus. And if so, what an encouragement to Sabbath-School teachers, tract-distributors, missionaries, and preachers of the gospel, first (of course) to become possessed of salvation for their own souls, and then to become the means of gathering in the sheaves of a golden harvest into the garner of the great Husbandman! Or if first washed in the blood of Jesus themselves, how blessed to become the channel through which that stream of cleansing and of healing shall flow on to multitudes beyond!

Imagine, if you can, the scene of the great "Harvest-home," when such faithful labourers shall be conducted in triumph through the gates of the celestial city, and be welcomed thither by a goodly company of their spiritual children who had preceded them, and who shall be their joy and crown of rejoicing in the day of the Lord Jesus. Then shall be fulfilled that which was spoken by the prophet, "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever."—*Gospel Trumpet.* J. L.

“BITE BIGGER, BILLY.”

One day, a gentleman saw two boys going along one of the streets of a great city. They were barefooted. Their clothes were ragged and dirty, and tied together by pieces of string. One of the boys was perfectly happy over a half-withered bunch of flowers which he had just picked up in the street. “I say, Billy,” said he to his companion, “wasn’t somebody real good to drop these ’ere posies jest where I could find them—and they’re so pooty and nice? Look sharp, Billy, mebby you’ll find something bimeby.” Presently the gentleman heard his merry voice again, saying, “O jolly! Billy, if here aint most half a peach, and ’taint much dirty neither. ’Cause you hain’t found nothin’ you may bite first.” Billy was just going to take a very little taste of it, when his companion said, “*Bite bigger, Billy, mebby we’ll find another ’fore long.*” What a noble heart that poor boy had in spite of his rags and dirt! He was “doing good.” There was nobody for him to be kind to but his companion in poverty—the poor ragged boy at his side. But he was shewing him all the kindness in his power when he said, “*Bite bigger, Billy.*” There was nothing greedy, nothing selfish about the boy. His conduct shews us how even a poor ragged boy can do good by shewing kindness.

“*Bite bigger, Billy,—mebby we’ll find another ’fore long.*” Who can help admiring the noble heart of that poor boy? I would rather have that boy’s kind and generous spirit than have a monarch’s crown upon my head without it. “*Bite bigger, Billy;*” think of these words if you are ever tempted to be unkind or selfish to your companions.—*From the Safe Compass.*

CHANGE YOUR RELIGION.

It is supposed to be an impertinence (in these times) to imagine that men should listen with anything like candid attention to a doctrine at variance with that which they have heard from their youth. “Would you have me change my religion?” Yes, that I would, if your religion is false. If

your religion has not changed you, I would that you would change your religion; for a religion which does not renew a man’s character, and make him holy—which does not change his confidence and make him rest upon Christ—a religion which does not make altogether a new man of him, from top to bottom, is a religion of no value, and the sooner he gives it up the better.

Because my mother or my grandmother happened to be blind, why am I to be blind too, if there is sight to be had? Suppose they dragged a heavy chain behind them all their days, am I to drag the same, because, forsooth, I sprang from their loins? Hereditary godliness, if it be not personal godliness, is a most damnable heritage—get rid of it, I pray you.

Remember, to your own master you stand or fall on your own account. Each soul enters through the gate of life alone; and through the iron gate of death it departs alone. Every man should search in solitary earnestness, apart from all the rest of the world, to know what the truth is, and knowing it, it is his to come out alone on the Lord’s side.

Yes, we would have you give attention to the things of God, even though you should have been brought up in other customs, and should have honestly espoused another form of religion. Prove the spirits whether they be of God. If your soul has been deceived, there is yet time to be set right. God help you, that you may find out the truth.—*Spurgeon.*

When my blood flows like wine, when all is ease and prosperity, when the sky is blue, and birds sing, and flowers blossom, and my life is an anthem moving in time and tune, then this world’s joy and affection suffice. But when a change comes, when I am weary and disappointed, when the skies lower into the sombre night, when there is no song of bird, and the perfume of flowers is but their dying breath, when all is sunseting and autumn, then I yearn for Him who sits with the summer of love in His soul, and feel that all earthly affection is but a glow-worm light, compared to that which blazes with such effulgence in the heart of God.—*Beecher.*

MATERIALISM.

(Concluded from page 117.)

There is a class of passages, to which materialists appeal with confidence, in support of their views,—those I mean in which pious men are looking forward to death with dread, and praying to be delivered from it. And here I would remark that these men are considering death, as it appears to the eye of sense; as it puts an end to man's usefulness, and opportunities of praising God in a present world. They are depicting its evils, and praying to be delivered from them. And in such circumstances, it is not to be expected, that they will bring forward the alleviating circumstances in reference to death, considered as a most tremendous calamity. It is eminently worthy of our attention, that the Bible is written in the language of ordinary life. It does not affect logical precision. It does not reveal the whole truth at once. It confines the attention generally to one view of a subject at a time, and conscious of its own integrity, and power, and truth, does not feel it necessary to guard and limit every statement which it makes. It states one view of the truth at a time, and leaves it to the generalizing faculty of man, to collect and compare the whole, and reduce them to systematic order.

With these preliminary remarks, I shall now direct your attention to some of the passages in question. In the 6th Psalm, at the 4th verse, we find David praying—“Return, O Lord, deliver my soul. Oh save me for thy mercies' sake. For in death there is no remembrance of thee; in the grave who shall give thee thanks?”—Here attention is confined to death, as the suspension of man's existence, *as man*, but there is no denial of the separate existence of the soul of man. And all must admit, that in the grave the dust cannot

praise God. And though in another state of existence the spirit may praise God, its praises cannot be heard by the ears of living men. The expression in the 115th Psalm,—“the dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence”—is to be interpreted precisely in the same way. Dead men, *as men*, no longer praise God; but though they are silent, so far as the ears of men are concerned, this does not deny, that they may have another, and even a nobler mode of praising God, in the spiritual state of existence. The well known thanksgiving of Hezekiah recorded in the 38th chapter of Isaiah, is to be explained on the same principles; and not an expression in it, properly translated, is inconsistent with the doctrine of the separate existence of the Spirit, after the death of the body. In one passage, indeed, the separate existence of the spirit is plainly implied, though not directly expressed. In the 11th verse we have these words, “I said, I shall not see the Lord, even the Lord, in the land of the living.” Now, these words, I apprehend, clearly imply that, though he would not see the Lord in the land of the living, he would see him in the land of the departed.

I readily admit that the words in the 17th verse, as they stand in our version of the Bible—“But thou, in love to my soul, hast delivered it from the pit of destruction,”—seem to favour the materialistic view. But the Hebrew has only to be properly translated, to show that they give no countenance to that cold, gloomy, and revolting doctrine. The Hebrew word *nepesh*, here translated soul, very seldom, if ever, signifies what we understand by that word. It properly signifies—a breathing frame, or the body, which is kept in life by breathing. It is also employed to denote a dead body,—a thing that has once breathed. This is the word

which in Levit. xxi. 1, is translated the dead—"There shall none be defiled for the dead among his people." Generally it signifies a living body, in its most extensive sense. Thus in Genesis i. 24, it is coupled with the word signifying living, and translated creature—"And God said let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing." In regard to this word Parkhurst in his Hebrew Lexicon, says, "It hath been supposed to signify the spiritual part of man, or what we commonly call his soul. I must for myself confess, that I can find no passage where it hath undoubtedly this meaning."—In the passage under consideration, I would translate this word according to its ordinary signification, *body*, and render the whole clause thus: "But thou, in love, hast delivered my body from the pit of corruption." Thus this expression of thanksgiving refers simply to his present deliverance from death, without any reference at all to the future existence or non-existence of the spirit.

There is just one other passage belonging to this class, to which I shall shortly refer. You will find it in Psalm lxxxviii., beginning at the 10th verse: "Wilt thou show wonders to the dead? shall the dead arise and praise thee?" In this Psalm the writer enlarges upon his sorely distressed condition, and earnestly pleads against being *then* consigned to the land of forgetfulness. He is speaking here of man, as dead, with his body consigned to the grave, and the disadvantages of this condition, from which he is most earnestly praying to be delivered. This is the subject in hand. And it would have been to weaken his plea, had he spoken of the alleviations of death. And his soul was too much impressed with the evils of death, and the gloom of the grave, and too earnest in pleading deliverance from it, to be diverted to any other subject.

I am arguing here not with infidels but with men, who profess to love and reverence the Scriptures; not with men, who contend that when a man is dead he is done, and that death is tantamount to annihilation: I am not arguing with such, but with men who admit the resurrection of man from the grave, and who profess to attach great importance to that doctrine. But, on *their* principles of interpretation, this 10th verse overthrows that doctrine. "Shall the dead arise and praise thee?" If we were to take these words simply as they stand, without reference to the subject in hand, they would militate against the doctrine of the resurrection; for under the form of a question, they declare in the most emphatic terms, "that the dead shall not arise and praise God." But *do* these words, properly understood, militate against the comforting doctrine of the resurrection? No. This doctrine is too plainly and clearly revealed, in other portions of the Old Testament Scriptures, to be affected by any solitary text, which, though it may seem to militate against it, admits of an interpretation in perfect consistency with it. The Psalmist is here speaking of man as merely dead to this world, with his body dissolved, and reduced to dust; and of his inability, consequently, to know what God, in His providence, is doing in this world, or to rise up and praise him in the land of the living. And the inability of which he speaks, on the part of the dead, to rise up and praise God, refers merely to the impossibility of their rising up from the grave, to praise God, during the present dispensation, but without any reference to the general resurrection, which was a doctrine generally received among the Jews of that period.

The men with whom I am arguing are not likely to remain in their present half-way house; and if they carry out their principles, they will land them not only in

the rejection of the doctrine of the resurrection, but in blank, cheerless infidelity. The ancient Sadducees were much more consistent than the modern. They denied not only the existence of a soul, as distinct from the body, but the resurrection of the body also, and regarded death as the termination of man's existence, and tantamount consequently to his annihilation.

In reference to these passages from the Old Testament which we have been considering, I would only further remark, that, even if they were far darker, and more doubtful than they really are, they would not have affected my belief in the immortality of the soul; for this doctrine was not so clearly revealed, and so fully comprehended and firmly grasped, during the earlier dispensations. It was not till Christ came, and taught, that immortality was fully brought to light; and it was not till he rose again from the dead, that the doctrine was illustrated by the example, and thus fully confirmed and established. What madness and folly, then, for men to attempt to establish such a doctrine from the darker and less complete revelation of the Old Testament, when almost every page of the clearer and more complete revelation of the New Testament is radiant with the glorious doctrine of immortality.

But our modern unbelievers in the soul's immortality imagine, that they find their favourite doctrine of materialism taught in the New Testament. Let us look at the passages in which they believe this doctrine is taught.

That to which they appear to attach most importance, occurs in Peter's well-known discourse, recorded in the second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. With a view to establish Christ's resurrection, the apostle quotes a passage from the 16th Psalm, in which these words occur: "Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to

see corruption." From this he infers that David could not here refer to himself, inasmuch as he had died, and been buried, and seen corruption, and his sepulchre, with his dead body in it, continued among them at that day; but that he spake of the resurrection of Christ, whose soul was not left in hell, and whose flesh did not see corruption. And then he tells them, that, in conformity with this prophecy, God had raised up this Jesus, and that the Apostles were all witnesses of his resurrection. And then he tells them, that being by the right hand of God exalted, he had shed forth the gift of the Holy Spirit, whose effects they saw and heard. And, in farther illustration of his point, adds, "For David is not ascended into the heavens." This last statement is what the materialists seize upon as confirmatory of their theory. If David is not ascended up into heaven, they say, then there is no immortality of the soul; for the believers in the soul's immortality affirm, that the souls of departed saints ascend up to heaven. Surely materialists must be hard pressed, for an argument, when they bring forward this miserable abortion of one, in support of their unhallowed views. To this we reply, It is quite true David himself—the complete man David—had not ascended into heaven, for his body was still in the sepulchre at Jerusalem; but this did not prevent his soul from being there. This is all the reply that is needed, and it is unanswerable.

The next passage to which I shall allude, from which materialists attempt to draw an argument in support of their views, is contained in 1 Cor. xv. 18: "Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished." It requires some reflection to see how this can, by any possibility, be made to bear upon the subject. It is in this way, they contend, that, when man dies, he perishes for the time being; that

his thinking principle is nothing distinct from his animal nature, only a somewhat finer organization of the matter of which it is composed, when the man dies and his body is dissolved and reduced to its primitive atoms, the man perishes, and if there is no resurrection he perishes for ever. "The true meaning of the passage," to quote the words of another, "is apparent from the preceding verse: 'If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins.' If Christ be not raised, he is proved an impostor; your hope of salvation by him from sin and hell is fallacious; your sins still rest upon you; and all who have died, trusting in him, are suffering the perdition of their souls, under the endless penalty of God's laws."

A labored attempt is made to show from 1 Cor. xv. 44, 45, that the body and soul of man are the same thing. "There is a natural body and there is a spiritual body. And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit." With reference to this passage a certain writer says, "To show that there is a natural body, Paul says it is written, 'The first Adam was made a living soul.' The natural body and the living soul seem to be one and the same in the apostle's eyes. He says first, there is a natural body, and in order to prove his statement he quotes Scripture for that purpose, and tells us the natural body and the living soul are one and the same." This is a precious specimen of the logic of the men who imagine themselves able to overthrow one of the most precious truths of the Word of God. He represents Paul as quoting Scripture to prove that man has a natural body. Who ever doubted it? What an insult to Paul to represent him quoting Scripture to prove a thing which no sane man ever doubted. It may perhaps help the writer out of his confusion, and enable him to form a more correct

estimate of this passage, when he is informed that the passage quoted from Gen. ii. 7, "And man became a living soul," should have been rendered, and "Man became a living creature." The same word is translated creature in Genesis i. 20, 21, 24, and there was no good reason for altering the translation here. This verse, then, properly translated, gives no countenance to the idea that the body and what we call the soul, of man, are the same thing. It is a lamentable piece of ignorance and folly to represent Paul as quoting Scripture to prove that man has a natural body. We know we have a natural body, and Paul tells us here that we shall at the resurrection obtain a spiritual body. Of the nature and properties of the resurrection body of the saints we cannot form an adequate idea. Paul tells us here that it will be a spiritual body, from which we may infer that it will be something vastly more refined and ethereal than our present corporeal frames, and probably indestructible by the impact of matter. Elsewhere he tells us that it will be fashioned like unto the glorious body of Christ.

I apprehend that the object of Paul in quoting this passage from the second chapter of Genesis regarding the first Adam, is to draw a contrast between him and the second Adam—that is Christ; the one as the progenitor of our mortal bodies, and the other as the former of our spiritual bodies. This I think is clear from the 48th and 49th verses, where it is said, "As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly."

The superfluous blossoms on a fruit-tree are meant to symbolize the large way in which God loves to do pleasant things.—*Beecher.*

THE REALITY OF THE GOSPEL.

Think, my friend, of the first hour in eternity, the first five minutes. These will come. The history of Jesus of Nazareth is a real history. It is an awful thing to reject God's mercy. When my way was narrowed up and I had no escape, then Christ came down and made a way for me. Blessed escape; awful alternative if any reject it. "To-day if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts."

Why did you not die yesterday, why not last year? Because God is long-suffering, and He has spared you. Oh, how many are entangled with sin and with the world, how many infidels there are, how many profess Christ with their lips, whilst their hearts deny Him. Do not call Him your King, if you will not have Him as your Saviour. Don't mock Christ. How men are mocking him day by day; generations are passing on, hurrying on, one after another, children growing up, old people dying, yet men are unmoved, unconcerned.

You say, what can I do? Ah! it is a bad case; it is a fearful power which holds you. You are sick; the more need you have of a physician; you are evil; the more need you have of a Saviour. But I pray you be real, do not mock God. How much of infidelity there is in us; infidelity in conversation, in profession, in prayer. We all need to be delivered from our own evil hearts. The poor negro's prayer was good when he said, "Lord deliver me from all my enemies, and especially from that bad man, myself."

There are but two teachers in the world, the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Satan, and this last works in man. We ought to obey God rather than man: What will it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his soul? Our own heart tells lies, it whispers deceit and guile: Hav'nt you been often cheated by it? Are you prepared for eternity?—How old are you?—Are you not surprised that you have passed so many years in sin? Time was when you looked forward to forty or fifty years as very far off. Now, though it looked so far off, this time has been reached. And all these years God has been alighted, and his word disobeyed by you. May He give you to hear His word to-day,

speaking to you, even to you, "To-day, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts."

"Now is the accepted time."

"Now is the day of Salvation."—*B. Norik.*

THOU HAST THE WORDS OF ETERNAL LIFE.

JOHN vi. 68.

Oh, how bless'd the hour, Lord Jesus,
When we can to Thee draw near,
Promises so sweet and precious
From Thy gracious lips to hear!
Be with us this day to bless us,
That we may not hear in vain,
With the saving truths impress us,
Which the words of life contain.

See us, eager for salvation,
Sit, great Master, at Thy feet,
And with breathless expectation
Hang upon Thy accents sweet.
Teach us how to draw a blessing
From the everlasting fount,
And so short a life possessing,
How to turn it to account.

Teach us holy thoughts to cherish,
Teach us to be timely wise,
Show us, ere our bodies perish,
How we may in spirit rise;
In our thoughts, and words, and doings,
Seeking how to please Thee best,
To the home our way pursuing,
Where we hope at last to rest.

Open Thou our minds, and lead us
Safely on our heavenward way;
With the lamp of truth precede us,
That we may not go astray.
Make us gentle, meek, and humble,
And yet bold in doing right:
Scatter darkness, lest we stumble:
Men walk safely in the light.

In our hearts the love awaken
Which within Thine own doth glow,
That we may, with truth unshaken,
Cleave to Thee in weal and woe.
Let us shun no cross nor trial
Which has been imposed by Thee,
Exercising self-denial
For Thy sake most cheerfully.

Lord, endue Thy word from heaven
With such light, and love, and power,
That in us its silent leaven
May work on from hour to hour.
Give us grace to bear our witness
To the truths we have embraced;
And let others both their sweetness
And their quick'ning virtue taste.

—*British Herald.*

B. M.

THE CONSECRATION OF MUSIC TO THE SERVICE OF THE CHURCH OF GOD.

To both the sister arts of Poetry and Music the Church of God will ever acknowledge its profound indebtedness.—Sanctified by the grace of God, and consecrated to the high and noble purpose of expressing religious sentiment and pious feeling—the holy thoughts of the mind and the spiritual feelings of the heart—the saints in all ages, including Moses and David, Solomon and Job, have poured forth their noblest thoughts and loftiest aspirations through the medium of these divine gifts. The *Poetry* and the *Music* of the Bible were, in the absence of all other evidence, alone sufficient to stamp it as a Divine Book, to authenticate, beyond all doubt, its Divine inspiration. From whence but from God himself could those historians, poets, and musicians have derived their sacred annals, lighted their holy fires, and learned their entrancing melody? Truly their minds were instructed and their music was kindled and their harps were tuned from other than a human source, and by other than a human hand. And yet there are, styling themselves “Masters in Israel,” who would reduce this divine and sublime Book to the level of a human, nay, a false and spurious composition, and compel us to receive it, not as it is in truth, the Word of the Most High God, but as an invention of man, “*a cunningly-devised fable.*”

With regard to music, let the saints of God be jealous of its true glory, which is its high and holy consecration. “*Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord,*” you employ the gift in the noblest service, and consecrate it to the highest end on earth. “*PRaise is comely.*” And God has said, “*Whoso offereth PRAISE glorifieth me.*” A *praiseful* spirit is one of the most deeply sanctified emotions of the soul, one of the holiest engagements of the Christian. The service of heaven is the service of song; the chief employment of the glorified is—*praise*. It behoves

us, then, to give the holiest, the highest consecration possible to this noble art.

Carnal, worldly music breathing from the lips of a saint of God is as incongruous and inharmonious as the song of a bacchanalian breathing from the lips of a glorified spirit. Nothing but what is holy in its sentiment, spiritual in its tone, and edifying in its influence should be uttered by a Christian’s lips, should vibrate from a Christian’s harp. The magnificent composition of Handel’s *MESSIAH* supplies no exception to this rule. Admitting the Divine inspiration of the words, the transcendent genius of the composer, the sublime character of the oratorio, and the elevating influence of its skilful, and masterly execution, we must yet maintain that the music of the *MESSIAH*, as performed in modern times by the *unholy* and the *unsanctified*, should be as distasteful and painful to the Christian and spiritual mind, as it is, unquestionably, unacceptable and dishonouring to God. What spiritual mind can listen to the solemn words of Christ, expressive of His heart-sorrow, His soul-anguish, His bodily sufferings, sung by voices and breathing from instruments of music in a *Cathedral*, wont to wake the echoes and the plaudits of a *Theatre*, without indescribable torture of feeling and the most depressing sadness of spirit? Could we thus listen to a recital of the humiliating insults, the lingering tortures, and dying agonies of one of the nearest and the dearest to our hearts?

Beware, then, of the fascination of music! It may lead you from God, allure you from Christ, attract you to the world. It may become an easy, and a fatal snare to your soul. Seek the *deep sanctification* of the gift, and its holy and supreme consecration to God. As such, *sacred* music, breathing from a spiritual mind, a Christ-loving heart, may be a valuable aid to the soul,—soothing, sanctifying, elevating.—God can give you a night-song—a song in the dreariness of your sorrow, loneliness, and woe. A song of His love unchanging, of His faithfulness unailing, of His presence sweetening your sorrow, soothing your grief, cheering your solitude, making your submission happy and cheerful in the

darkest and most painful path along which your covenant God is leading you.

The chief employment of heaven is music. Oh, what melody floats through those bowers, rings through those mansions, reverberates through that dome, from the spirits of just men made perfect! They sing the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb. They sing of the everlasting love, of the atoning blood, of the sovereign grace that brought them there. Around the Lamb once "slain" they cluster, and upon His head, once filled with bruises, torn and bleeding with the thorn-crown, they bind the diadem of their praise.— And, oh, how worthy is He of their sweetest anthem, their loftiest song, their loudest hallelujahs! So resplendent will be the unveiling of His divine glory, His human beauty, so great will appear His love, so glorious His work, so rich His grace, and so precious Himself to the heart, that, from every creature which is in heaven will be heard the anthem, "*Blessing and honour and glory and power be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.*"

Then, O disciple and follower of Christ, separate yourself from all secular, carnal, worldly music, and learn on earth, in the house of your pilgrimage, in the strange land in which you dwell, and amid your trials, sorrows, and conflicts, the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb, which will employ your tongue throughout eternity. "*It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto thy name, O Most High: to shew forth thy loving-kindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night, upon an instrument of ten strings, and upon the psaltery; upon the harp with a solemn sound.*"—*Rev. Octavius Winslow, D.D.*

I have heard men teach that God has a right to glorify Himself, and to appropriate everything to His own delight—a doctrine which is shocking, and which represents Him as living in almighty selfishness. Can we believe that He sits, self-poised, in eternity, admiring His own perfections and singing His own joys, when, against this, with regard to man, the whole Bible fulminates!—*Beecher.*

HAVE FAITH IN TRUTH.

HAVE faith in truth;

And in the True One trust:

Though bright with fancy's brightest hues,
Abhor the lie thou must.

Make sure of truth,

And truth will make thee sure;

It will not shift, nor fade, nor die,
But like the heavens endure.

God's thoughts, not man's;

Be these thy heritage;

They, like himself, are ever young,
Untouched by time or age.

God's words, not man's,

Be these thy gems and gold;

Be these thy never-setting star,—
Still radiant as of old.

With God alone

Is truth, and joy, and light.

Walk thou with Him in peace and love,
Hold fast the good and right.

Hold fast the true!

For truth can never change;

It grows not old,—'tis ever one
However vast its range.

Great truths are great!

Not once, but evermore;

Theirs is an everlasting youth,
A spring-bloom never o'er.

The stars that shine

To night, in these calm skies,

Are the same stars that shone of old
In primal Paradise.

The sun that once

At a man's voice stood still,

Is the same sun that nightly sets
Behind you western hill.

Man and his earth

Are varying day by day;

Truth cannot change nor ever grow
Feeble and old and grey.

—*Bonar.*

"ARE NOT MY DAYS FEW?"

Job x. 20.

Not years, months, weeks—but days. Life is to be reckoned by *days*. Are not my days few? They are so in every respect—relatively—comparatively—absolutely. It will not be necessary to prove this. No one denies it. No one can deny it. Yet how much depends upon the proper use of a truth so obvious, and a reflection so simple! Are not my days few?

But how come they so? All men die, but not willingly. Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life: but he cannot continue it. He hates, he dreads death. It is the king of terrors. The thought of it embitters his comforts, and keeps him always subject to bondage. And could this have been the natural state of man as he came from the hands of his Maker? The Deist meets with this fact as well as we; and, as he cannot deny it, let him account for it under the empire and agency of a Being who is "omnipotent benevolence." Revelation gives us the only rational and convincing account—*"The body is dead because of sin."*—By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death hath passed upon all men, because all have sinned." It is not "a debt due to nature." It is the consequence of a judicial and penal infliction: "For all our days are passed away in thy wrath." We are not struck with this, because we are accustomed to the result; and it gradually takes place. But could we have seen the deluge destroying the whole world at once, we should not have questioned the provocation of God by some mighty cause. But where is the difference, as to punitive justice, whether all the criminals are executed together or led forth one by one? Are not my days few?

Do not, then, render them fewer. "What!" you are ready to exclaim, "are we in danger of turning self-murderers?" Yet how many are continually reported as having destroyed themselves! But violence is not the only mode of shortening life. One of our most eminent physicians has affirmed, that "the board destroys more than the sword." Another has said, "Though all men are mortal, not one in a thousand dies a purely natural death." Many enervate themselves by lying late in bed, and living, if it deserves the name of life, in lazy inactiveness, as injurious to health as to virtue. Envy is the rottenness of the bones; fretfulness and anxiety corrode; anger and malice consume. It is needless to mention intemperance and sensuality, the effects of which so often lie down with the sinner in an early grave. Godliness has the promise of

the life that, now is—by freeing us from the malignant passions, which are always injurious to ourselves, as well as to others, and by inducing the affectionate and benevolent ones, which are always beneficial—by the peace it sheds abroad in the bosom, and the hope and confidence it authorizes and inspires, as well as by surrounding us with the care of Providence: it is, as David calls it, "the health of the countenance;" and justifies the admonition of his son—"Fear the Lord, and depart from evil. It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones." Are not my days few?

Why, then, moderate your attachment to every thing that depends upon their brevity. Who would set their heart on that which is not? Who would load with treasure a vessel rotten or full of holes? All the admired distinctions and possessions of the world are very uncertain in themselves, and often leave us; but if they continue with us, we cannot continue with them. We brought nothing with us into the world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. Yet, stripped and naked as we shall go, go we must; and the time of our departure is at hand. Oh! what shall we think a few days hence of those pursuits which now so much engross us! "Tomorrow we die:" and what will it signify, whether we are carried to the grave from a cottage or a mansion, or leave behind us much or little? Endeavour to think always, as you will feel soon. "Brethren, the time is short: it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none; and they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; and they that use this world, as not abusing it; for the fashion of this world passeth away." Are not my days few?

Then let us well employ and improve them. This is what Moses prayed for: "So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom." And what is wisdom? This must be determined by circumstances. What is wise conduct in one man may be folly in another, because of their different relations and circumstances. But it is easy to determine what is wisdom in a man who numbers his days, and finds them to be few; and who has, during their continuance, an all-important interest to secure, and has no other opportunity. If he is guilty, it must be wise in him to seek forgiveness; if he is lost, it must be wise in him to seek salvation; and if he be unable to save himself, it must be wise in him to apply to another, who is appointed for the very purpose. And, in our case, such a one there is—his name is Jesus. He is mighty to save. He is willing to save. Instead of complaining

of your application, he only complains of your neglect—"Ye will not come to me that ye might have life." Many have tried his power and his love, and recommended him from their own happy experience. He is now on the throne of grace. But he will not be always there. He will soon ascend the tribunal of justice. Seek him while he may be found, and call upon him while he is near. Behold, *now* is the accepted time; behold, *now* is the day of salvation.

This part of our subject branches itself into another line of duty. As you are to *gain* good, so you are to *do* good—and this, too, is equally enforced by the fewness of your days. Life is yours; and it affords you one privilege above the saints in light. It is the opportunity of beneficence—of relieving the poor, of instructing the ignorant, of converting the sinner. But remember two things: *their* days are few, and therefore they will soon be gone beyond the possibility of receiving relief; and *your* days are few, and you will soon be placed beyond the possibility of affording it. Wing your zeal, therefore, with the thought—"The night cometh wherein no man can work."

There is a way of lengthening life. It is—not by duration, but by diligence. It is by "filling our days." It is by doing much business in a little time. Some live longer in a week than others do in a year.—*Rev. W. Jay.*

THE SOLDIER FORGIVEN.

"Ah! here he is again!" said the colonel, concerning a disorderly, drunken private. "What can we do to mend him? His pay has been stopped, he knows every inch of the black hole, and the poor fellow's shoulders will never forget their close acquaintance with the tails of the cat. What can we do to make him turn over a new leaf?" The question met with a speedy reply. A serjeant stepped forward and said, "Sir, there is one thing which has not been done to him."

"What is that?" said the officer.

"Sir, he has never been forgiven."

The colonel was taken by surprise. After remaining silent for a moment, he addressed the culprit.

"What have you to say about this sad affair?"

"I am very sorry I have been such a fool."

"I forgive you," said the officer.

The private burst into tears; a soft place in his hard heart had been touched, and from that day he became an altered man.

Similar is God's method of dealing with

guilty men. Forgiveness is the motto inscribed on the Divine plan for the restoration of our fallen world. The apostle John tells us of a rainbow, which spans the heavenly throne—the symbol which teaches that it is a throne of grace and not of judgment; and that rainbow is not more clearly seen by the inhabitants of the celestial world, than we can see "Forgiveness," written in letters of light upon every page of the gospel. The word of promise fell as sweetest music upon the ear of our sinful, sorrowing, first parents. Throughout the history of our world we may trace it. But the most wondrous of its doings are to be seen at Bethlehem, Gethsemane, and Calvary.

God infinitely hates sin, and at the same time infinitely pities the sinner. How king David hated the ingratitude, disloyalty, and treason of his son Absalom; and yet he so loved his child as to be constrained to say, "Spare the young man Absalom;" and when the sins of the misguided youth had laid him in a premature and dishonoured grave, the heart of the poor king was well nigh torn asunder, and he burst forth with the bitter cry, "Would God I had died for thee, my son! my son!" The father of the "prodigal" mourned over the bad-headedness, extravagance, recklessness, and profligacy of his child; yet he went forth "a long way to meet him, and fell upon his neck and kissed him." Those acts of human forgiveness remind us of the Divine forgiveness; but only as the stars remind us of the sun, or as the dewdrops remind us of the rivers of the earth, and the boundless depths of the sea. Dr. Doddridge paid many kind visits to a murderer in Northampton gaol.

"Is there a twig of mercy for such a wretch?" said the condemned criminal.

"Yes!" said the good divine. "Not only a twig but a tree."

Do not despair, conscience-stricken, guilty sinner! Do not despair! Look to Him to whom David looked, as he said, "There is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared." (Psalms cxxx. 4.)

Forgiveness! tis a joyful sound
To rebel sinners doomed to die;
Publish the bliss the world around;
Ye seraphs, shout it from the sky.

O'er sins unnumbered as the sand,
And like the mountains for their size,
The seas of sovereign grace expand,
The seas of sovereign grace arise.

For this stupendous love of Heaven,
What grateful honour shall we show?
Where much transgression is forgiven,
Let love with equal ardour glow.

—*Tract Magazine.*

GOD'S CALL TO REMOVAL.

1.

The wish so near my heart
 My God hath granted not :
 He bids me to depart
 From this beloved spot ;
 Yet since 'tis He I know
 Who bids me to be gone,
 I am content to go,
 And say, " Thy will be done."

2.

Methought: Here God hath blest
 My basket and my store,
 Here He will grant me rest,
 My weary wanderings o'er.
 In this familiar nook
 I shall, secure from harm,
 My little flock o'erlook,
 And cultivate my farm.

3.

Thy hand was here with me,
 My God, to prosper all,
 The first-fruits bringing Thee
 Both of my field and stall.
 With joy I rose by day,
 With joy at night lay down,
 Thou didst my work alway
 With blessings richly crown.

4.

My Lord and King, whose might
 And wisdom govern all,
 Who dost not out of sight
 Lose aught, however small,
 Since Thou hast call'd to me
 To go, as oft before,
 I know Thou hast for me
 Some better thing in store.

5.

I go, then, wheresoe'er
 Thy providence commands,
 Myself with earnest prayer
 Committing to Thy hands
 I know the time will come
 When I shall give Thee praise,
 For bringing me safe home
 By wise though wondrous ways.

6.

One thing I ask of Thee—
 That is my only cure—
 That Thou wilt be with me
 Both here and everywhere :
 Go with me where I go,
 Be ever at my side,
 My Friend in weal and woe,
 My Guardian and my Guide.

—B. Herald.

R. M.

ALWAYS BEGINNING.

Some are all their days laying the foundation, and are never able to build upon it to any comfort to themselves, or usefulness to others. And the reason is, because they will be mixing with the foundation stones that are fit only for the superstructure. They will be bringing their obedience, duties, mortification of sin, and the like, into the foundation. These are precious stones to build with, but unmeet to be first laid to bear upon them the whole weight of the building. The foundation is to be laid in mere grace, mercy, pardon in the blood of Christ; this the soul is to accept of and to rest in, in merely as it is, grace, without the consideration of anything in itself but that it is sinful and obnoxious to ruin. This it finds a difficulty in, and would gladly have something of its own to mix with it; it cannot tell how to fix these foundation stones without some cement of its own endeavours and duty; and because these things will not mix, they spend a fruitless labour about it all their days. But if the foundation be of grace, it is not at all of works; otherwise grace is no more grace. If anything of our own be mixed with grace in this matter, it utterly destroys the nature of grace, which if it be not alone, it is not at all.—*Owen.*

TIME AND ETERNITY.

In a few days and our work will be done, and when it is once done, it will be done to all eternity. A life once spent is irrevocable; it will remain to be contemplated through eternity. If it be marked with sins, the marks will be indelible. If it has been a useless life, it can never be improved. Such it will stand for ever and ever. The same may be said of each day. When it is once past, it is gone for ever. All the marks we put upon it, it will exhibit for ever. It will never become less true that such a day was spent in such a manner. Each day will not only be a witness of our conduct, but will affect our everlasting destiny. No day will lose its share of influence in determining where shall be our seat in heaven, or our place in hell. Let us then resolve to send the day into eternity in such a garb as we shall wish it to wear for ever. And at night let us reflect that one day more is irrevocably gone, indelibly marked.—*Dr. Judson.*

ON PEACE WITH GOD.

(Continued from page 123.)

9. If a person does not become conscious, in some degree, of peace, satisfaction, and support, purely from what he perceives and believes standing forth in the free declaration of grace, he does not understand nor does he credit the gospel, for therein is exhibited to us *freely* all our salvation.

Our faith can be proved only by this, that the truth itself, or which is the same, the blood and righteousness of Christ freely revealed, first pacifies the conscience before God, and then, working by love, has a purifying effect upon our souls. If this kind of peace does not enter the mind, through the revelation of grace, a person will still be seeking after spiritual comfort and support, separate from it, or opposite to it; so that his heart despises, or his thoughts evade, the true gospel, and he is accordingly in real danger, and under some awful delusion. When the gospel is not discerned by any person in its proper freeness and its primitive glory, the objection now under consideration will return and continue upon his mind, and his defective and mistaken view of the gospel will still leave him under the influence of the same spirit of self-dependence, as he will see no other way of obtaining or enjoying peace, but by a reflection upon something found in him, or experienced by him. Thus it appears, that the whole force of this objection proceeds at bottom from a disbelief of the proper immediate freeness of divine grace revealed in the gospel. For either a person *does* believe it, or he *does not*: If he *does*, he is in some manner pacified, comforted, and attracted thereby; if he *does not*, then he cannot see how he can have any proper peace to his mind, but by reflection upon himself; and accordingly seeks after or rests upon some false and dangerous prop. This he is to be warned against, by being reminded that he who believes not shall be damned.

While Jesus Christ is proclaimed as a foundation so sure, that whosoever believeth shall not make haste, as one in confusion; it is likewise to be added, that the hail shall sweep away the refuges of lies; and such a refuge everything is besides the Redeemer himself. Isa. xxviii. 16, 17.

10. All the scripture exhortations and promises to believing conspire to support this view of our subject, if they are rightly understood. These gracious exhortations and promises of the word may be briefly expressed thus, *believe, and live; look, and be saved; trust, and be safe; come, and find rest*. Now all these declarations have evidently a most encouraging and conscience-pacifying meaning in them; for they plainly contain, to an enlightened understanding, such a refreshing import, as carries the mind at once beyond its own exercises, to the glorious gracious object presented. A person apprehending the true meaning of such expressions, is not stopped in, or perplexed about the *acts* mentioned; but seeing that, by those calls and promises, salvation in Jesus Christ is freely presented, this sense of the Divine freeness plainly suggested, becomes the *life, the strength, and the hope* of the soul, in all its actings towards God in Christ.

I could dwell on this subject with abundance of pleasure, and illustrate it by various similitudes. But to be brief, let us take only one of these phrases into present consideration: *Come to me, says Christ, and I will give you rest*. Now, one that is entangled with some legal thought will immediately fix upon the act of coming: desiring to know *how* to perform this act aright, or to see whether he has performed it or no; thinking that he can have no peace nor rest, but from the consideration of the right performance thereof. Whereas one that is taught the proper freeness of Divine grace, as thus exhibited, will fix his eye directly upon the word *me*. "Does Jesus Christ say, *come to me and I will give you rest?* Surely this is enough to encourage and attract my soul; I need nothing more for my hope, than to be assured of such a *free welcome*." With this thought his conscience is pacified; and the motion of his soul towards Christ being, as I may say, excited by and filled with a sense of this Divine free love, he comes and finds rest. We may suppose one deep in debt and ready to be arrested, to be addressed thus: "Go to such an one; he is able and ready to pay your whole debt." Would not this testimony itself set his mind at rest directly? Yes, surely; and his act of going would not be at all

considered as previously necessary to the ease of his mind, but would be found to flow from it.

By these plain thoughts I would hope, through the blessing of the Spirit of grace, some may be led to see how much unbelief and legality must lie at the bottom of such a frame of spirit, as makes a person endeavour to perform a certain act, in order to obtain peace to his mind, or makes him examine whether he has performed it aright, in order to have peace from that consideration. For this is certainly a denial of the freeness of grace as revealed, and turns the gospel into a new law for peace and hope towards God: yea it seems evidently to proceed from some spirit of self-dependence, which will not permit a person to believe the immediate freeness of Divine grace, or to be satisfied by it, or to rest in it, for want of discerning some previous change in himself for the better.*

But some may here reply, with an anxious concern, "Are there not some who are true believers, who yet are not fully assured of the safety of their state in Christ?" I readily answer, Yes, there are; for the least degree of true faith is connected with salvation. Yet as none can come to a clear satisfaction about themselves but in this way of believing, therefore I cannot consistently and safely take any other method of promoting the comfort of such, but by presenting before them a free and complete Saviour, to be rested upon and rejoiced in: and if a person can-

* "You want a token? God has given an all-sufficient one to the poor sinner--*the blood of the Lord Jesus*. Look at that and you are safe; you need fear no judgment then; for the blood tells of judgment already passed upon, and borne by, another. Do you fear the wrath of God on account of sin? Behold the blood of Jesus tells us that wrath has been visited upon him to the uttermost, on account of the sin of others which he bore. Do you feel the uncleanness and pollution that sin deals you with, making you unfit for God's holy presence? The testimony of God is, that *the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth from all sin*. The word of God alone is that upon which the sinner has to rest: and that word points to the blood, and tells of the blood as the token of the entire cleansing, entire forgiveness, of the sinner who believes.

"But perhaps you may say, 'How am I to look upon the blood? How do I know I have any right to the precious blood of Jesus? I want to know that it is mine, that it has been shed for me.' Dear reader, if such are your thoughts, there is one simple answer to them all. Do not distress yourself as to whether or not you look upon the blood, or as to whether or not it has been shed for you, only believe that God looks upon it, that God is satisfied with it as a full answer for sin, that God esteems it precious: that it is the witness to him of judgment passed, of holiness, and righteousness, and justice satisfied."

not receive comfort through such a gospel declaration, it is both unsafe and in vain for him to seek it in any other way, in such circumstances. But if, through the operation of the blessed Spirit, by means of this gospel, his hope and comfort are promoted, the more he advances in hope and love this way, the more clearly he will be able to say with the apostle (2 Tim. i. 12), "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." While he perceives this all-sufficiency of Christ and free grace, the satisfaction of his soul is maintained by it, and he is more or less persuaded of the safety of what he has committed into Christ's hands. Here then lies the centre, the spring, the strength of all that hope which is necessary to support and comfort our hearts.

Should any ask again, "But is there no hope to be obtained farther than that which is exhibited in the gospel to all? Can there be no room for thankfulness for *distinguishing* grace?" I answer, that unless we have this *first* hope, this *beginning* of confidence for our main support and strength continually, it is quite impossible that any *distinguishing* experience should ever be produced and maintained; or that any true evidences should appear in us. For if this be not the life and strength of the soul, namely, A FREE REVEALED CHRIST, the person has reason to suspect all his duties, evidences, and experiences. But if a person be comforted and quickened, if he be encouraged to trust, and constrained to love Christ truly; he may well find reason to be abundantly thankful for *distinguishing* grace, crying out with holy admiration and gratitude, "how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself to us, and not unto the world!" (John xiv. 22.) Yea, while he is under this blessed influence of the gospel by the Spirit, he is taught to say with the apostle, "the life I live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." (Gal. ii. 20.) In this manner a believer makes use of his experiences to judge of his state; and such experiences as these, with their genuine fruits, are indeed the surest marks of our election. (1 Thess. i. 4, 5.)

But instead of all this, we are too generally taught, that our consciences cannot be pacified by the blood of Christ immediately, as flowing freely to sinners, nor be truly comforted thereby. But on the contrary almost the whole stress must be laid upon our discerning some previous gracious work, which must be made out to be saving by the exercise of self-examination. Accordingly this duty is most commonly explained, enforced, and performed with this view. As to that exhortation (2 Cor. xiii. 5), "Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith, prove your own selves; what! know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?"—nothing can be more evident to one who reads it with attention, and views it in its connection, than that the design of it is to intimate thus much, viz., that if anything appears in the temper or conduct of a professor which is disagreeable to the gospel, he ought to take occasion from thence to suspect whether he is in the faith. But this very text plainly suggests, by the surprise couched under these words, "What! know ye not your own selves?" that if our experiences are of the right stamp, they will evidence themselves.—It is by faith that Christ dwells in the heart; and faith or believing is of such a nature, that it does more or less evidence itself to our consciences; and to confirm this witness of our own spirits, we may be sure that the Divine Spirit will not fail in joining his testimony, as we proceed loving and obeying the gospel we believe. So that there is no occasion for a laborious search, followed by a train of reasoning, to obtain peace and comfort. We need not be so suspicious of the hope of the gospel, or of the faithfulness of the Spirit or Comforter. We may well leave this point to God, since He has proclaimed enough in the free gospel to afford us sufficient relief, and has promised that those who know, love, and obey him, shall not be forsaken by him. I remember the Psalmist once, in a disconsolate frame, was for calling to remembrance his song in the night, to obtain comfort. (Psalm lxxvii.) But he was unsuccessful in pursuing this method, and at length obtained comfort by remembering the years of the right hand of the most High; by which he meant, not his own

past experiences, but the wonders God had formerly wrought for his people by Moses and Aaron. If then we would follow his example, we are to call to mind the accepted time and the day of salvation, when Christ arose from the dead, as having obtained complete salvation for them that believe.

I know you will here be ready to say, "Are all our past experiences then to be forgotten, or not improved as evidences and encouragements?" I answer, Far be it; for though they are not to be used for pacifying our consciences, yet they are to be remembered as confirmations of *the faith* to our minds, since, if they are genuine, they are so many proofs of the truth and power of the gospel, and likewise to make it more fully appear that we are *in the faith*, as also to encourage a farther dependence upon the same free grace and love; which was the root of all those former gracious experiences; according to what the Psalmist says (Ps. lxxiii. 7), "Because thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice."

Notwithstanding this, I will venture to say that professors cannot well be too suspicious of themselves as to any experiences they have felt, or any duties they have performed. The Scriptures are full of exhortations to watchfulness, jealousy, caution, and self-examination, always taking it for granted that joy and peace come into the mind in believing and loving the testimony of God's grace in Christ.* Such suspicion cannot do us any real damage; for if, in the midst of all our jealousies, the *free-grace truth* in its glory and beauty appears to our view, that will prove an anchor to our hope, and an incentive to our love, even when we can find nothing about us but what would tend to discourage and sink us. And it will be found that the comfort flowing thus into our souls from the gospel by the Spirit, as a contrast to the effects of our own self-jealousy, will be much more safe, solid, satisfying, and truly sanctifying, than what we think to obtain in any other way. †

* "You are waiting for evidences. Do not put them in the wrong place. Faith comes before evidences."—*J. H. Evans.*

† An old minister speaking of some trials through which he had passed, tells us that he learned from them "to live off myself and sense, on the Lord Jesus alone; and not on Him *as felt*, but on *Himself*

Though these thoughts look as if they were intended to make believers always question their state, yet it will be found far otherwise; because they serve only to lead and keep them close to that foundation which alone is secure, and where they will find rest. But, however, in a case of so great importance, there is no room for flattery or compliment. Either you *do*, or do *not*, question your state: if you do, there is no other way that I know of to obtain satisfaction, but by believing on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ directly, as standing forth to view in the gospel; for it is in this way, and through this medium that God conveys to his people a sense of his favour. If you do *not* question your state, but are well assured concerning it, then this assurance, if solid, will bear the trial; neither need you be afraid to look into the worst of it. But if a suspicion arising in the mind upon this should shake your confidence, it then becomes evident, that so far it was not placed upon Christ, but upon some good opinion you had formed concerning yourselves.

I shall therefore conclude the whole with an indubitable maxim, which it becomes all Christians constantly to retain. It is this: on *uncertain* foundation is an *unsafe* foundation. However these Christians are of the number of the elect, redeemed and adopted; however they may, or ought to be esteemed such, by themselves or others, agreeable to their profession, practice, or experience; and however it be their duty to be thankful for any experiences or comforts which they have felt, all which is readily allowed; yet there is no *absolute* certainty to be gathered upon this plan, by reason of the deceitfulness of the heart. From whence it is plain, that God never intended his people should take their rest herein, but that they should, in the midst of all their hopes and fears about their personal interest, be led, driven, and kept to that hope and refuge that is in itself safe and sure. Nothing is more necessary than this, nor is there anything that we are naturally more averse to. Some make the world their portion, others make crim-

inal indulgences their delight, and many make their own righteousness, in some shape or other, their confidence; and shall I add, that some are for placing it upon their experiences, and upon what they call the work of the Spirit in their hearts, and upon anything, rather than on the freeness of gospel grace, which the work of the Spirit is designed to lead us to.

But if we are led and taught by the Holy Spirit to rest directly upon Christ *alone*, then we have the anchor of our souls both sure and steadfast; then the superstructure of gospel experience and obedience, built upon this foundation, will be good and solid, receiving all its solidity and firmness from its immediate connection with the foundation whereon it was built.* Neither can we attain to any steady hope concerning our own interest, but in working upon this plan, and resting upon this prop. If a person looks upon the hope held forth in the gospel, to be only an uncertain, conditional hope, apprehending he may not securely rest upon it, unless through the consciousness of something previously wrought in him, or done by him; he is of course induced to seek after or look to something in himself, for the reason or immediate ground of his confidence before God; and while this sentiment prevails in his heart, every duty he performs is legalised, and every experience he may have felt is perverted, by being placed exactly in the room of a revealed Christ. But if, on the contrary, the person sees that God's love in Christ, as revealed in the free gospel, points directly towards him for his only foundation, then the more he is apprehensive of his own guilt and danger, the more he is obliged to trust in Christ, and constrained to love him; and so the gospel hope becomes a spur to all cheerful obedience. The believer then does not take his comfort *from* his obedience; but taking it immediately from Christ, he enjoys comfort *in* the exercise of love and obedience. For every exercise of evangelical love, and every act of gospel obedience, has some comfort attending it;

given in his word and promise, and not on anything of Him to be given here, but what we are to receive in heaven. The conclusion was this, my grace is sufficient, when I am weak then am I strong; and here is rest and life."

* "I would have you close with Christ in the promise without making any question whether you are in Christ or no; for there is an assurance which ariseth from the exercise of faith by a direct act; and that is when a man by faith directly lays hold upon Christ and concludes assurance therefrom.—*Marrow of Modern Divinity*. Ch. 3. Sect. 13.

while every departure from Christ produces darkness and distress, unless the soul be deluded and deceived by some false comfort. Thus upon the whole, it appears, that if the Lord the Spirit gives us right views of the full free grace held forth in the gospel, we should be thereby kept at a distance from the *self-righteous* hope of the Pharisee, the *licentious* hope of the Antinomian, the *self-sufficient* hope of the free-willer, the *conditional* hope of the Neonomian,* the *presumptuous* hope of him who is confident of his own interest without sufficient evidence for it; and we shall be prevented from taking up with the *uncertain* hope of him who does, more or less, place his evidences or experiences in the room of Christ, for his immediate and chief reason of encouragement and confidence. Then we shall have joy and peace in believing, and abound in hope, yea, and in holiness too, through the power of the Holy Ghost.

Sabbath School Lessons.

March 27th, 1864.

GIDEON'S ARMY.—JUDGES VII.

Gideon had set forth with his followers to fulfil the commission which he had received; that commission was to deliver the Israelites from the oppressions of a people whose army was at least four times the strength of any army he could obtain. Events had shown, indeed, that numbers were nothing with Jehovah; so that Gideon, if only the assurance that God was with him became public, would go forward without hesitation. To this point his prayer had been directed, and the result had made the requisite assurance public. Thousands, therefore, joined Gideon's standard.

Ver. 1. *Well of Harod*—fountain, or well of trembling, so called, probably, from the fear which seized the Midianites, who were encamped in the valley near; or from the apprehensions which induced so many of Gideon's own army to retire when opportunity was given, ver. 3. The spot was among the hills of Gilboa, near the plain of Esdraelon.

Ver. 2. *Too many*—The followers of Gideon amounted to thirty-two thousand. The Midianites were a hundred and thirty-five thousand. Still it might seem that, if

Israel conquered, they had conquered by their own power.

Ver. 3. *From Mount Gilead*—The geography of this verse seems inconsistent with that of ver. 1. Gilboa, comprising the hill of Moreh, was west of the Jordan; Gilead was east. An ancient version reads the clause—*whoever is fearful and afraid, let him return, and let a selection be made from Mount Gilead*. The Abiezrites lived there, on whom Gideon could best depend. The proclamation adverted to in the verse was general on going to battle, Deut. xx. 8.

Ver. 5. *Lappeth—Boweth down*—the one drinking as if eager, and in haste; the other drinking as if they would take things easy.

Ver. 8. *Every man to his tent*—each to go where he pleased. Perhaps many waited within call, so as to share the victory, though they escaped the conflict.

Ver. 14. To account for this interpretation of the dream, it is requisite only to suppose, as we easily may, that the dream and the interpretation were both divinely suggested. This circumstance furnished the battle cry, ver. 18, 20.

Ver. 19. *Middle watch*—middle of the three divisions of four hours each, into which the Israelites apportioned the night, from six o'clock to six o'clock. Soon after ten o'clock. The Romans divided the night into four "watches" of three hours each.

Ver. 22. *Set every man's sword against his fellow*—the Midianites destroyed one another. In the sudden glare but imperfect light of three hundred lanterns held at a distance, they could not distinguish friend from foe; especially frightened as they were. The victory was gained without the Israelites striking a blow, ver. 21.

Ver. 25. *Brought the heads, &c.*—This was in conformity with a frequent practice in eastern warfare.

HINTS.—After Gideon had destroyed Baal's altar, he prepared for battle against the Midianites. He blew a trumpet; and many people came to help him. The enemies of Gideon and of God also gathered together, a very great army. Gideon asked a sign from God; that one night the dew should fall only on the wool he had laid on the floor; and again, that the wool should be quite dry; and God gave Gideon both these signs.

Gideon then found he had 32,000 men. But God told him there were too many; lest the people should boast, let all who were afraid go back home. See ver. 3. God said there were yet too many; 10,000. They were all led to the water to drink. Notice the two ways they would drink, ver. 5. Nearly all went on their knees to drink; and only 300

* Neonomian, that is the man who thinks that the gospel is just the law *loosened and accommodated* to the condition of sinners, so that by obeying this relaxed law they are to be saved!

took the water in their hands hastily. All except the 300 were sent back.

Observe—1. To undertake nothing in our own strength.

2. To draw back from nothing to which we are called by God.

3. To doubt of nothing wherein God promises His aid.

4. To take the glory of nothing which God may do by us.

April 3rd, 1864.

THE LOST SHEEP.

Read *Luke xv. 1-10.*

Connection.—Christ had left the Pharisee's house, chap. xiv., and many publicans and sinners who could not get near Christ while He was there now crowded to hear Him. Though the Pharisees openly showed their contempt of such, He welcomed them, and told these parables to assure these despised ones that to God they were exceeding precious. It was Sabbath, all would be disengaged from work.

I. Why Christ so spoke, ver. 1, 2.

Publicans and sinners. The publicans were the most degraded of the Jews; none but such would consent to act as tax-gatherers to the Romans. Attracted by Christ's kindness, they never showed such enmity to Him as the Pharisees did, chap. xiv. 1.—*Deal with them.* In Eastern countries this was and is the token of close friendship, Psalm xli. 9.

II. The lost sheep, ver. 2-7.

Christ answered the murmurers: He was always ready to shelter his disciples from rude assault.

The wilderness. As the pasture lands of Jordan were wide and wild, the flocks were exposed to many dangers, 1 Sam. xvii. 34. A sheep is a stupid and defenceless creature, unable to preserve itself without man's care, and when it wanders, it never can of itself return again to the fold. Every shepherd knows this, and readily leaves his whole flock to rescue a wandering one from certain death.—If he finds it, its recovery gives him more joy than the possession of all the rest.

So Christ said, there is more joy in heaven when one wandering sinner is brought back to his God, than over the hosts of heaven who have never sinned. Probably by *just persons who need no repentance*, Christ meant to point to the Pharisees, and such as they who thought they needed no repentance.

III. The lost piece of silver, ver. 8-10.

Women in the East frequently wear coins as ornaments strung round their turbans.—These coins were generally presents, and, of course, any of these being lost would be diligently sought. *Light a candle.* Many of the houses of the poor are without windows. *She calleth her friends.* In both cases the

tendency of joy to diffuse itself is brought out. *In the presence of the angels*—meaning among the angels.

APPLICATION.

1. *Despise no one.* Despise none for their poverty, their weakness, their ignorance, or even for their sin. The Pharisees did so; men often so do; Christians often do so.—God “despises not any,” Job xxxvi. 5.—Christ never did. “The woman who was a sinner.” The dying thief. He knows how precious the soul of the vilest is!

2. *Christ's love for the lost!* How wonderful! He is the good Shepherd, John 1. He left heaven, and all those who never sinned, to seek the poor wandering sinners of earth. As the mother cares most for the sick child; as David sorrowed most over Absalom; so God mourns over this lost world. Christ came to the lost, Luke xix. 10. He is the friend of sinners. If you are lost, He came to save you.

3. *Are you “a sinner that repenteth?”* Have you repented and left your sins? Has Christ found you, and brought you back to God? He has long sought you. He knows what a repenting sinner escapes, and what he gains. Your repentance—not your wealth, not a crown—would make heaven rejoice.

4. *How different earth and heaven!*—Men care not for your soul—care not whether you repent. Angels, Jesus, and God, watch for your soul, pity you, and wait anxiously for your repentance. Heaven would be happier this night if you were to repent! So they rejoiced over Paul. “Behold he prayeth,” 2 Chron. xxiv. 27. So God rejoiceth over Nineveh. Go to God this night as did the publican, Luke xviii. 13.

5. *Do you share in the angels' joy?* Are you glad when a bad boy or girl becomes good? Or are you like Cain, who did not care for his brother? If you are like the angels in this you will be good yourself; you will try to make others good, and you will at last go where the angels are, John i. 41; 2 Cor. v. 14; John xx. 21. But if not, then you will be the companion of Cain, the devil, and his angels, Isa. xiv. 9-10.

SUBORDINATE LESSONS.

1. The value of the soul—it is exceeding precious, though now dimmed and tarnished by sin, Lam. iv. 1.

2. How utterly we are lost! Like sheep, Psalm cxix. 176. Like lost silver, it lies where it falls.

3. Do you act as if you “needed no repentance?”—oh, your case is almost hopeless—you are so “dead in sin” as to be “past feeling.”—*Edinburgh S. S. Lessons.*