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FRUSTRATING THE GRACE OF GOD.

BY REV. PATRICK GRAY, KINGSTON, C.W.

"I do not frustrate the grace of God."—Galatians ii. 21.

Without entering upon the consideration of many interesting matters suggested by the context and the circumstances in which these words were written by the apostle, let us think of the doctrine involved in his statement which is, *that the grace of God may be frustrated.*

We are accustomed to think of Divine Grace as being potent and irresistible; and so it is, almighty and undying as its Author. But that is to be understood of Grace as existing in Him, as an attribute of the Sovereign Lord, the free, unmerited love and favor of God, the source of all the benefits men receive from Him;—or of Grace as the express, saving work of the Holy Spirit on the human understanding and heart,—convincing the sinner of sin because he believes not on Christ, leading him then a penitent to Jesus, and purifying his defiled and corrupt nature by faith in the truth of the Son of God. This work of the Spirit may be resisted, always is at one time or other and frequently, by the sinfulness and ignorance of the subject on whom the gracious influence is exerted; but it is never frustrated, or rendered vain.—The sinner called by grace, who is in truth seeking God's mercy, and yielding to the Spirit's persuasion, may in his blindness and proneness to evil, fight against the leading of the Spirit, and thus retard his own enjoyment of peace with God;—but God has him in gracious hands—the God whom he fears and whose favor he desires, though thus he turns and strains "as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke"—and he is led; and when he withstands the

drawing, and the discipline and chastisement designed for his soul's good, he is driven from one position of resistance after another, and out of every lying refuge, till he reaches the shelter in Christ, and there adores the shepherd of Israel for what he hath done for his soul.

But by the expression "Grace of God," as intended by the apostle in this place, we are to understand the revelation and overtures of truth and mercy in the gospel, which, coming to us in our sinful, lost condition, proclaims God's love for our guilty race and salvation as His free gift to us in Christ Jesus, makes offer of Christ and all his benefits upon the condition of faith in Him, and asks from us the fruits of righteousness—the glorifying of God with our bodies and our spirits which are His—as the return He seeks, and as the result and evidence of our believing to the saving of the soul.

The Grace of God may be frustrated, received in vain, rendered useless in the special case for any salutary purpose.—Grace is thus frustrated by every hearer of the Gospel who does not gratefully receive the glad tidings and yield the heart to the Saviour. Hence we are warned of the danger of "neglecting the great salvation,"—besought to "take heed that we receive not the grace of God in vain,"—and exhorted to a "looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled."

The grace of God may be frustrated in various ways:—as

R—WHEN THE MESSAGE OF MERCY IS SECRETLY OR OPENLY REGARDED AS UNTRUE,—REJECTED AS A SILLY, OR CUNNINGLY DEvised FABLE.

The Bible is composed of many books, chiefly histories, all having a historical character, written at different periods by prophets and holy men, through whom God in time past spoke unto the fathers. Taken as a whole, and as a mere literary document, no ancient history is so authentic, and so convincingly truthful on the face of it as the Bible; none receives so much corroboration from the monuments of the past, from institutions and customs established among men, from admitted facts, and from the best and deepest feelings of human nature. And then, though there may be dark passages in it, and fragments bearing the impress of mistaken views, and of errors and follies and guilty passions,—for the Bible is a history, and records the actual transactions of God with an ignorant and depraved race, and therefore, does present in the occurrences it narrates, the frailties and falsities and wickednesses, as well as the virtues of the human-beings it informs us about,—yet its doctrines—the clearly divine in its statements and precepts—are so exalted above any standard attained or idealized among men, so amazingly unlike in conception and truth and purity to the sentiments most advanced and refined in the age when they were given to the world;—and these doctrines are so undeniably fitted to produce the most beneficial effects in the world, and have wrought such changes on men and nations, that they carry their own evidence with them—stamping them as indubitably “doctrines according to goodness,” distinguishable by us from pretended divine revelations and from compositions of mere human authorship, even from the writings of good and holy men;—so that the result of inquiry in every

intelligent, candid, truth-loving soul, is the overpowering conviction that in these holy oracles “the mouth of the Lord hath spoken,” and the Bible is the word.

Yet there have been sceptics and infidels, chiefly because there have been men loving the darkness rather than the light—men in their voluntary and involuntary aversion to holiness, endeavouring to extinguish all glorious human hope in an infatuated crusade against all that is good and bright and blissful for man. Reason, which they profess to magnify, the traditions and records of every historic people, the pleadings and assurances of the best and worthiest of regard among their contemporaries, can be set aside by quibbling, trifling, impotent objections: and the narrative of the Saviour’s life—a gospel to all men in the scenes it portrays—they can see defamed and defiled by the low scurrility of the most infamous of our kind.

By those who cast from them the holy oracles—the victims of a strong delusion, though they flatter themselves that they are superior in acumen and intelligence to their fellows—the grace of God is frustrated: they obstruct for themselves the only channel through which it flows, and turn its living stream into the sterile sands of their unbelief to disappear in that dreariest of deserts.

Learn, while you cultivate and improve every gift of intelligence and reason—while you endeavour to prove all things and hold fast that which is good, to watch and pray against causeless doubts and suspicions, to which we are all too prone. What a miserable sophism, what inane trivialities have sometimes been sufficient to start sceptical questionings, and to blunt for us the polished shafts taken from the quiver of truth, in the word that liveth and abideth forever.

III.—THE GRACE OF GOD MAY BE FRUSTRATED—WHEN IT IS NEGLECTED, AS IF SALVATION WERE AN UN-IMPORTANT MATTER.

Speculative infidelity, though often enough harshly charged upon any one who ventures to question a dogma in the received theology, upon any one even who leaves the old ruts in the beaten track of orthodoxy, is not, never was the chief, or very formidable antagonistic principle to any system of truth. When learned, argumentative infidelity and atheism prevailed so as to enlist the culture and intellect of the age upon the side of unbelief, as in the decline of the Greek and Roman peoples, it was in each case a system of falsehood and superstition they assailed and overthrew. Few errorists, if any, have chosen to cherish, and promulgate error, knowing it to be error; and many who have been subjected to no small amount of vituperation from *ex-officio* defenders of the faith in our own and other days, have not been less, but more devoted to God's truth, than their anything but Christlike tempered assailants.

Truth courts investigation; it can bear searching inquiry, and even hostile assaults, as gold can abrasion,—and at the end of the conflict appear more plainly and certainly truth than it did before. All that is true is proved, and made faithful to us by trial.

The crying sin of our age, as it has been the sin of every age, the sin of learned champions of religion, who compile "Aids, to faith," and prosecute heretics in the court of Arches,—laboriously mounting batteries of Quaker guns on Gibraltar,—as much as the sin of anybody else,—is the secret, often unsuspected infidelity of the heart,—that, the deadly fruit of which is cold indifference to the claims of God, the entreaties of Jesus, and the

monitions of the Spirit of Grace,—that which produces neglect of the great salvation, and consequent inevitable ruin.

It is an easy thing now-a-days to assume the name of Christian,—to build churches, and frequent them,—to minister from pulpits, and theological chairs, and pity the heathen, and papists, and abandoned creatures! But of all who group themselves within and around ecclesiastical organizations, how many believe in a real, living, holy God, with His eye upon them?—how many believe in sin, upon them, abhorrent to that great God?—how many believe in a veritable judgment-day, in eternal misery, and everlasting joy, and all preparing for the one state or other now?—how many believe in Jesus the Son of God, and Son of Man, as a Saviour from sin—and believing on Him, obey Him?

Look, reader, where I point now; in that direction lies the great sin and danger of every human being.

It is of the first importance that we hear what God the Lord has to say, that we may receive and understand every word he addresses to us, that we may know our malady and his remedy, our ruin, and what we must do to be saved.—Yet multitudes, called Christians, among the rest so many of ourselves, are living from day to day, eating, drinking, planning, prosecuting one scheme and work after another, without a serious thought about the end of these things, or about the other entirely neglected things, which are yet "the things that belong to their peace." "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" And thousands, who would be amazed and shocked when plainly told of it, are thus frustrating the grace of God.

III.—THE GRACE OF GOD MAY BE FRUSTRATED, BY PERVERTING IT.

We read (Jude iv.) of "certain men

crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ."

Some people contrive to ease off the pressure of such a text against themselves by the help of Calvinism,—God has, mysteriously, for his own glory, ordained certain men, &c. We need not be surprised at this; if men can abuse the grace of Christ, and cause it to minister to sin, and guilty ease in sinning, they will find no great difficulty in getting assistance of the same kind, now and then, from any system of theology.

"Ordnained to this condemnation;"—that is, laid out for it, fitted for it, and for nothing else;—as a ship constructed for navigation is good for that, and for no other purpose whatever. But why so ordained? How? They were "ungodly men, turning grace into lasciviousness," &c. But it is said these were ordained of old to this condemnation. Aye! Ever since God had a being, it was ordained that ungodliness, and its companion sins, should bear the penalty of condemnation. Now, much as we may dislike the character and doom of this description of ungodly men, we are grievously mistaken if we suppose that the class is a small one.

When any think, and many do, that God is good; that his mercy is great; that, though guilty and unfit for heaven now, all will come right yet;—while still the sinful course is pursued, and no effort made to reverse it; they are ungodly, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness—literally. They are thinking of God's grace,—its greatness,—its capabilities—their need of it, and its adaptation to them. And they are using their knowledge of all this to quiet them now, to put the evil day far off—to beget in them a flattering, false hope, so that they

may sin meanwhile with some tranquillity. They are denying the only God, and the Lord Jesus—as directly denying his truth which they know, as Satan did when he said, "Ye shall not surely die." And so, and thus, they are ordained to condemnation.

Have you, reader, never been aware of such reasonings in your mind? Have you never thought also of some great sinners of whom we have heard, such as Manasseh, the wicked king of Judah, and the thief upon the cross beside Jesus, and Col. Gardiner, and John Newton, who after a career of enormous wickedness have been converted, some at the last hour, and saved—drawing from these reflections the wretched inference that we too, may at last, by something like a miracle of grace, be snatched from the condemnation we did everything to secure and nothing to avert? That is turning the grace of God into lasciviousness, making that, which was designed to deliver us from sin, pander to our self-deception and recklessness in sinning.

God's mercy is great, reaching to heaven; to be offered to the worst of sinners; to be offered to the last. No needy, troubled soul should ever yield to despair. But neither king Manasseh, who wrought more wickedness than all before him, and at last, in the moment of extremity, sought and found mercy of the Lord, nor the dying malefactor whose earnest prayer was heard and answered by Christ, nor any other "brand plucked from the burning," deliberately formed the plan, and made it the settled purpose of his soul, to persist in the defiance of God to the last hour, with the intention of cheating Divine Justice then, by an act of penitence. If they had, we never should have heard of their redemption. Agreements with death, and covenants with hell, may be made, and shall certainly be broken; but they are

dissolved, not by penitence, but by the all-devouring fire.

Grace is given to save us from sin, and qualify us for heaven, while we are on earth. When we think of it as effecting a feat of spiritual legerdemain in the hour of death,—as transmitting a polluted soul to a holy rest, after some pangs of remorse have been felt, and prayers for mercy have been offered, only when living and sinning were no longer possible, we are supposing God can be hood-winked by a contemptible artifice; and by such thinking, we frustrate the grace of God. We cannot procure salvation for ourselves,—we are undone—“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour.”

We cannot purchase salvation, even when we would attempt to give for it honestly as a price, our best—all that we have; far less can it be gained by methods which are not one whit more enlightened, and not nearly so sincere,—which are not in any respect, whatever, more deserving, nor so deserving of regard from God or man, as the devotions of a benighted African, and his hopes in his Fetish.

We cannot claim anything from God. Our merciful Father, we may say, will care for us. But while we are sinners unreconciled—hoping for impunity in sin, and escaping from its consequences hereafter, we are of our father the Devil, and “It is of the Lord’s mercies that we are not consumed.” If we would not frustrate his grace, and perish, let us call upon the hope of Israel now, and say, “Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of thy name: and deliver us, and purge away our sins, for thy name’s sake.

IV.—THE GRACE OF GOD MAY BE FRUSTRATED BY DESPAIRING OF IT.

It comes to this at last with many de-

spisers, in the day of their calamity, of which they were warned. Grace is no longer within their reach,—they call, and are not answered, they offer many prayers, and are not regarded; and that, too, is their sin, as well as loss; that is the inevitable consequence of long-continued impenitency,—*the ordination of ungodliness*. But it is adding to guiltiness, it is making God a liar to despair of grace,—to say, “His mercy is gone for ever, and, “there is no hope.”

And sometimes when the soul is full of trouble and distraction, under deep conviction of sin; and sometimes when even the God-fearer feels cold, dead, deserted, no life within, no help, nor answering response to prayer from above; it seems as if God had forgotten to be gracious, and shut up his tender mercies in his wrath.

But to despair is our infirmity—as truly a sin as is presumption. For sinners, while yet ungodly, Christ died. He came to call, not the righteous, but sinners to repentance. He came into the world to save sinners. And penitent sinners—worn, heavy laden ones, he saves, however low they may have fallen. The Saviour’s invitation is, “Behold me, behold me! Look unto me, and be saved, all ye ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else.” “Whoso calleth upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” “Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.”

What have you done, readers, with the grace bestowed on you? Has it been received in vain? frustrated?

What are you doing now? listless? shiftless? leaving things to happen as they may? No change on you, while time and opportunities are passing, and life is speeding to its close and the final settlement?

What are your intentions? Of course, you wish to be right and safe at last; and probably you hope for a convenient season,

and trust that you shall have a peaceful latter end. Remember, the convenient season for a sinful creature to turn from sin to God, never came yet, and never will: for your soul's sake you had better consult God's convenience rather than yours;—he worketh in us both to will, and to do, of his good pleasure, and now is the accepted time, Behold, now is His day of salvation. Remember, the most despicable wretch that ever lived, whose character was most entirely destitute of one good quality, was after all the man who said, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his." And do not take rest, nor seek relief in a sentiment, which can enter, and cast a passing gleam upon a spirit more hopelessly lost to God, and good than any other.

Awake! Quit you like men! Christ alone, and Christ all-sufficient, and Christ "who loved me, and gave himself for me,"—you will come to, if ever brought to God.

Seek Christ now. Hear him. Obey him. And surely in him,—Jehovah-Jesus,—you will find righteousness and strength. He will give grace and glory.

RICHARD WEAVER AT THE SURREY THEATRE.

As a hearty and full presentation of Christ, expressed in a way the most graphic and striking, and so admirably suited to the quality of his audience, we have never heard anything better than the sermon preached by Richard Weaver at the Surrey Theatre, on Sunday the 18th. It is not too much to say that the whole congregation were stirred, and very many were powerfully wrought upon. And we doubt not that much lasting good was effected. Why should we doubt it? Here is a man rescued by the Saviour's power from the deepest degradation, made a new creature, blessed with the spirit of adoption, taught by that Spirit that he is an heir of God, and joint-heir with Jesus Christ; he triumphs in his deliverance,

and shouts aloud for joy. He devotes himself to the service of his divine Deliverer, and henceforth—

"Tis all his business here below.

To cry 'Behold the Lamb!'"

"Many of you," said he, "are saying, I wish I was as happy as Weaver. Well, you know who makes me happy. Oh, if you had seen me ten years ago—a man with bloodshot eyes and bloated face, a drunkard, and blasphemer, a man with brutish passions and bloody hands, a man too bad for earth, and almost too bad for hell, but not too bad for the arms of Christ.—Glory be to God! If anything was needed from us, what had I to bring?—nothing but dice, and boxing-gloves, and game-cocks, and fighting-dogs. But, according to his mercy, he saved me, for he bore my sins in his own body on the tree.—You who think Christ has done enough, hold up your hands." Many will remember the following passage: "Saving faith is obeying faith. If I was asked to dinner to-morrow, faith would go straight to the house; when the door was opened, faith would walk in and take his seat at the table; faith would partake of what was provided; would enjoy it and be satisfied. Faith does not come three parts of the way to Christ, but gets right to Calvary, and standing on the top of that blood-stained mount, cries, This blood was shed for me. This blood has paid my debt, has made me a child of God; and an heir of glory. We are not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ. Oh, sinners, if you perish, it won't be because God didn't love you, or because Christ didn't die for you, but because you didn't believe in Him. What a friend Christ is! You know that often if we say something which our companions don't like, they'll turn their backs upon us; but he has been my companion for ten years, and I've often said things he hasn't liked; but He says to-night, I'll never leave thee, Richard, I'll never forsake thee."

The surest evidence of Christian zeal is when it begins at home, in a narrow scrutiny, and "vehement revenge" against the sins of our own hearts.—*Bridges.*

ONENESS WITH JESUS.

Addresses by the Rev. J. Denham Smith,
in the Free Assembly Hall, Edinburgh.

Continued from page 87.

But the other side of this blessed identification is, that **WE BECOME ONE WITH JESUS.** And—

1. *We become one with Jesus* IN HIS LIFE. He leaves the bosom of the Father, takes our nature, lives among us as Son of Man, and dies for our sins. As captive to Divine justice we have seen Him laid in the grave; but, lo! on revisiting that grave I see one angel sitting at the head and another at the foot where the body of Jesus had lain, but I see no Jesus there; and as I stand amazed an angel voice announces the startling tidings, "He is not here. He is risen as He said." Divine love having put away sin and triumphed over death, Divine justice can hold Him no more. "He hath spoiled principalities and powers, making a show of them openly," and risen to the bosom of the Father triumphant.

Now, mark this: Death was due to sin; Jesus paid the debt. The debt is paid then for the sinner believing. "He was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification"—our life. He is our life. He is God's gift; and has a life in Himself which death cannot touch, and that eternal life is the gift of God, and as a gift we receive it. My life is in Christ, not in my preaching, praying or serving. As Samuel Rutherford has it—

"Oft in that sea-beat prison
I and my Lord held tryst;
But Anworth was not heaven,
And preaching was not Christ."

It is only when God hath quickened us together with Christ that we see and rejoice that we, the members, are as much beyond the curse of the law of sin and death as is our Head; for if He is alive, we are so too, for each can say, with Luther, "As Christ is before God, so am I."

2. *We become one with Jesus* IN HIS RIGHTHOUSNESS. We are made "*the righteousness of God in Him.*" He having settled the question of righteousness, is now crowned with glory and honour at the right hand of the Father—as the word says, "Of righteousness, because I go to the Father." Christ, therefore, being made

unto me righteousness, I go unto heaven in union with Him—on His title, which has been established, not only by His resurrection, but also by His ascension to the right hand of God. I am not going to *define* righteousness; but, generally speaking, human righteousness is the subjection, as before Adam's sin, of our entire nature to God. Divine righteousness is the subjection of God's entire nature to Himself. In saving sinners, all God's perfections must be satisfied; and they are so on the cross in Jesus, in whom He is well pleased. Thus when the Sou of His love took upon Him our sin, that satisfied His holiness; when He died, that satisfied His truth, which said, The guilty must die; when He received the sword of justice in Himself, justice was satisfied. And now, on believing, the sinner is put down before God in righteousness. Jesus is the righteousness of God, and we are "*the righteousness of God in Him.*" But further—

3. *We become one with Jesus* IN HIS ACCEPTANCE. He was accepted on the ground of His own work; having died, He was freed from the sin which He bore; and on the ground of righteousness, every claim having been satisfied, every debt paid, the Father raised Him from the grave to this earth, and thence to heaven at His own right hand; and, in that He has not only raised Him from the dead, but seated Him on his throne, we have a twofold proof that He has accepted for us Christ's work as the meritorious ground of our righteousness. And, now, if you wish to know how you may go into heaven, it is exactly on the same ground as Christ has gone into heaven. The ground of our acceptance is that of Christ's, for we are *accepted in the Beloved.* The Greek word might be translated, "*ingraced in the Beloved.*" Oh yes, "*ingraced*" we are indeed! We are put down in marvellous *grace!* for it takes us *out of ourselves,* and puts us *into* ONE who is in the bosom of the Father. It is on the ground of this very righteousness of God which Jesus is, and of His acceptance that I am accepted. "Accepted in the Beloved," I am *one with Him in divine acceptance!* And another thing arises naturally out of this—

4. *We are one with Jesus* IN HIS PLACE. We are quickened together with Him, raised

together, and seated together in heavenly places. In the Epistle to the Hebrews you have "the heavenly things themselves," of which you have only "the patterns" in the book of Leviticus. Aaron was "the pattern" of Christ, and so also "the blood of bulls and goats" was "the pattern" of the blood of Him who tabernacled among men. But in the Epistle to the Ephesians it is not "the patterns of things" that are spoken of, but in it we are seated among "the heavenly things themselves." We were dead; we are raised; we are seated—seated with Christ;—"in the light"—"made nigh." Thus when light broke in upon the soul of a dear Christian, the Countess of Powerscourt, she said, "I am not like one down here upon earth looking up to heaven, but rather like one seated with Jesus in heavenly places, looking down upon earth:" so sweetly did she realize her place before God as seated together with Jesus. O my friends, take the crape off your faith to-night, (if you could imagine crape on faith.) You would not dishonor royalty by going into her presence with a gloomy countenance; and oh, ye who are seated with Jesus—"members together of His body, of his flesh, and of His bones"—do not fear Him or distrust Him, but dwell with Him in fellowship and love.—And this leads me on to say—

5. *We are one with Jesus in His RANK.* He is the Son of God, and we are now the sons of God in Him. We are also joint-heirs with Him. If we are divinely quickened, we are born; and if born, we are born again, born *from above*; and if born from above, sons; and if sons, we are heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ. Beloved, is it not wonderful?—Heirs of God! joint-heirs with Christ?—Now are we sons, heirs, joint-heirs! This is the highest rank we can ever obtain. We may be higher in glory, in love, in knowledge. I know we shall have love unbounded, and growing through eternity. We shall have the experience and joy of His love growing for ever and ever. But even "now are we the sons of God;" and though retained here meanwhile, we have our title already, and are living in full view of the sublimity of our goal. We are going to where is our birthplace, for "heaven is our fatherland, heaven is our home."

6. *We are also one with Jesus in His GLORY.* We are identified with His glory. If members of His body, can there come any glory upon the Head that will not come upon the members? If glory be His, all His members will partake of that glory. If He sit on His throne, His members will sit with Him. If He judge the twelve tribes of Israel, they shall sit judging with him. If He hold His court in the new heavens or the new earth, if glory be there or here, they shall be with Him,—the Head and the members, the bride with the Bridegroom. No bill of divorce can there ever be between him and His church. "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am;" and mark this,—He says, "The glory which thou hast given me have I given them." They are to be *one with Him forever*, and *one* even as the Father and the Son are one.

ONE OR TWO PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

(1) The Lord Jesus *will take of his members.* That we are his members, is our confidence; for if my little finger only has been hurt, is not my head exercised about it? So is it with Jesus and us. Oh, beloved, remember that whether we live or die, whether in prosperity or adversity, whether we are young or old, we are members of a body which belongs to Him who is infinite in his wisdom, and unchanging in his care.

(2.) Let us see to it that *we live and act as members of the holy Jesus.* If my head would think it wrong to go into a ball-room, or any scene where "the flesh" holds its revels and the devil keeps holiday, do you think my hand would go? That is my rule—my standing is my standard!—Wherever Jesus, my Head, does not go, I do not go. It is not because I am a minister, a Christian office-bearer—that were very low ground indeed;—but I do not go because Jesus would not go. It is not because I am a professor, a member of a church, a deacon, an elder, a presbyter, or a bishop, but simply because I am a *Christ-ian*, and "I walk even as *Christ* also walked." Having Christ, I have put him on. As illustrating this, three country gentlemen in Ireland who have lately been converted, when the question came up whether now they should give a three days' regatta as before they had done, one of them said, "No; Jesus would not have

identified Himself with that which involves gambling and drunkenness, and therefore *I cannot.*" Don't you see how wonderfully that which affects the Head affects the members? and how the practical influence of this truth we have been considering extends to every thought, word, and action, and forms the motive power of holiness by the energy of the Holy Spirit dwelling in us!

8. *How blessed to be members of the body of Christ!* The time is rapidly approaching when the members of Christ's mystical body in Dublin, in London, in Aberdeen, in Geneva, in Paris, in Edinburgh, and all the world—when the precious members of that mystical body that now sleeps in the dust—when all the members whose names are written in His book will be all finally gathered to the Head, and when all shall be brought out complete into one body; and, oh, what a company will be seen on that auspicious morn!—Glory, glory, shall burst upon us in Immanuel's land!

And now, dear people, this is a truth for a believer to enjoy, and for a sinner to believe. Have I said enough on it to lead you to forget yourselves, and think of Jesus? *This is what I aim at.* I want you to see Jesus—to know His timeless and endless love, and how precious was God's thought in giving Him his members, and how great was the love of Jesus in dying for them. He died for them as *sinners*; and sinners, on believing, become conscious of being "members of His body." Beloved friend! do you believe in Jesus? Are you Christ's? Have you peace with God? Oh, may the Holy Spirit quicken you to consider, to know, and to believe!

Now I have done. Believe me the truth I have endeavoured to bring before you is precious. Any soul, saint or sinner, that sees and believes that truth, is a believer of the gospel of God—is a saved one; for unbelief never sees that truth, and the flesh never wants that truth. No, no. "This is eternal life, that we might know the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom He hath sent;" but "he that believeth not shall be damned." After such an exhibition of the love of God in redemption as we have now given you, ask yourselves solemnly, "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?"

NOVEL-READING.

BY MRS. H. C. CONANT.

"Aunt Deborah!" exclaimed young Amy Greene, in an eager and somewhat triumphant tone, "this writer in the Review seems to have quite a different opinion from you on the subject of novel-reading."

"Ah!" said Aunt Deborah, with a quiet, kindly smile, "what then does he think?"

"Why, that novel-reading tends directly to cultivate the imagination and the sensibility, the two qualities most lovely and most useful in a woman; and that it is the novel-reading women who are capable of doing most and sacrificing most for others, because they feel most."

Aunt Deborah stopped knitting, pushed back her spectacles, and said, very gravely: "How strange it was that Absalom did not wear a wig!"

"What an idea!" cried Amy, laughing: "I am sure he had hair enough of his own."

"That is the very reason," said Aunt Deborah. "It is because he had so much that he ought to have had more."

"What do you mean, aunt?" asked Amy, looking rather puzzled.

"Why, my dear, I always thought that our sex had by nature more imagination and feeling than most of them knew how to manage, and yet, according to this writer, our chief aim should be to increase the stock as much as possible. Now to me it appears that the weaker parts, the understanding and judgment, stand most in need of being strengthened."

"Then you won't allow any use in novels, Aunt Deborah?"

"Do you think apples a wholesome article of food, Amy?"

"To be sure."

"Then, of course, you will eat all the hard, unripe, and all the decayed and wormy apples you can find, as well as the good ones. You will neglect your regular meals, exercise, and every duty, for the sake of eating apples. You will even sit up half the night to do it, they are so very wholesome!"

Amy laughed and blushed, for the preceding midnight had found her absorbed in "the last new novel."

"The fact is, my dear, that young girls read novels just as children eat apples, not for the sake of any benefit it may be to them, but simply for the pleasure they take in doing it; and if they can get a strict and sober old body like me to admit any possible use in their favourite authors, why, then it is nothing but novels, morning, noon, and night. One would think they were resolved to offer up soul and body in search of the hidden virtue."

Amy made no reply, and after a little pause Aunt Deborah continued:—

"And not only so, but you make it the excuse for reading novels of bad, or, at best, of doubtful character, such as in your own heart you know are unfit for a pure eye and an unguarded mind. It is not for the use, it is for the entertainment, the excitement, that you read them, and it is not honest to pretend otherwise."

This was said with unusual sharpness of tone, for untruthfulness in any form was in Aunt Deborah's eye a cardinal sin; and she had moreover, paid the penalty of Amy's vigils by a nervous headache. She recovered herself in a moment, however, and proceeded in a milder voice:—

"Now, Amy, if you ask honestly after the uses of fictitious reading, is it not plain that two things are presupposed? First, that all works of immoral or even doubtful tendency are to be swept at once out of view. No matter what claims they may put forth as works of genius, as pictures of life, of human character, the more attractive they are, the worse they are for the young mind. Bulwer, Sue, and Sand cannot even be put on probation with us."

"And now for the second condition, Aunt Deborah."

"That the very few which stand the test in every respect, shall be read *healthfully*; that is, at proper times and seasons; in the daytime, and not when the body requires sleep; not to the neglect of your regular course of solid reading, or of daily practical duty; with moderation, not like a dream swallowed at a single draught."

"Oh, Aunt Deborah your second rule is harder than the first. What! read a novel by piecemeal, interspersed with history, moral essays, mending stockings, &c. It is out of the question for me to stop for any thing short of a matter of life and death, in the midst of a story. The only

way for me is to go through it with a rush and done with it."

"Now you touch the kernel of the question," replied Aunt Deborah. "By your own admission, this sort of reading comes into practical life as a disturbing influence. The mind loses for the time its self-control, the feelings are diverted from their proper objects, and of course duty is neglected.—Yet the claims upon you remain just the same. The household of which the eldest daughter is so important a member, cannot accommodate itself to your unseasonable enjoyment. Your mother has, I suppose, no extra supply of strength for the occasion; you can't magnetize your little brothers and sisters, that you may read undisturbed, and nobody suffer by it. Is it not true that the enjoyment is, on this account, almost without exception, an unquiet and feverish one, and followed by a feeling of self-reproach?"

Amy looked very thoughtful a few minutes, and then replied, with a sweet ingenuousness of manner: "I believe you are right, Aunt Deborah. I must own this has been my experience a great many times."

"And how much worse the case must be with hundreds and thousands who are not blessed with the countless influences which surround you. Novel-reading grows with them into an inveterate habit, no less strong, and no less fatal, than that of the drunkard and opium-eater. That disorder of mind which you experience from an occasional indulgence, becomes their habitual state, the only change being to a craving for more frequent and stronger potations. The moral sense is weakened not only by the false sentiments imbibed from vicious novels, but by the daily neglect of common practical duty for the sake of the indulgence. The reasoning powers suffer a paralysis for want of exercise.—They live, not in the real world, nor yet in a world of thought, but in a land of dreams—dreams born of unhealthy fancies and emotions. And suppose this habit carried, as it often is, into married life, its victim the wife, mother, guardian of the order and purity of a home."

"On the whole, then, you think much cultivation of the imagination and sensibility undesirable for a woman?"

"I think, my dear, that every faculty of

mind and heart which God has given us should be cultivated to the utmost; but not one or two at the expense of the rest. A woman all reason is only half fitted for life, for she cannot be even useful in the highest sense, unless she be *loveable* also. A woman all fancy and feeling will be sure to attract, to interest, to awaken sentiment, but her reign will be short, because her character offers no solid basis of trust and confidence. In the practical duties of life, in the exercise of the kindly offices and sweet affections of home, the heart and the judgment grow healthfully side by side; that is the best school of character.

"But the imagination, Aunt Deborah; you seem to forget that."

"Ah my dear, that is a whole chapter by itself. I must go now and visit poor neighbour Crofton. But let me say one thing to you, if you would have your heart right towards either God or your fellow-creatures, have as little to do with novels as possible. Great novel-readers are never great Bible-readers or great cottage-visitors. They are lovers of pleasure (such as is to be got from novel-reading) more than lovers of God, and they substitute a false and simpering sentimentalism, for a genuine and active benevolence. They show but little, either of piety towards God, or of kindness towards their neighbours.

BANGALORE.

The following interesting particulars were selected from the Journal of Mrs. Sewell.

A JOYFUL SURPRISE.

October, 14th.—"As I was hastening through house duties to get off to the Zenana school, in the Pettah, Krishparow, one of the school-masters, was announced. I expected some fresh little trouble had arisen, and trying to put on patience, I told him to sit down, and tell me what was his business. But his was no trouble, it was the most welcome and joyful news that he had made up his mind to become a Christian. His tale was simple, earnest, and touching, and I sat still and drank in his words. They were in substance as follows:—'When I came to you in March last I knew nothing of Christianity, but believed it to be bad. I thought it a terrible misfortune that I should have to take such a situation as that of teaching girls for Christians. It was most afflictive to me, but I was poor and could find no other employment. The first month I could not bear to hear the children

instructed in Christian truth. I tried to stop my ears. The Christian teachers being my superiors, I dared not utter my dislike, but it was intense. To be told that all were of one caste, and that we were all sinners, was most hateful. But as I taught the lessons I found much that was good. I inquired of Noah (a Catechist who teaches in that school) some things, and he explained them, and taught me other things. I was struck with his diligence and fidelity. He was always teaching the girls, or passing visitors, never idle! I observed him and the other Christians known to me, and began to study the religion. Noah often read the Bible with me, and I saw that it was true. I bought one for myself, and read it day and night as I could find time. My anxiety became great, for I saw that Hindooism was false, that I was a wretched sinner, born in sin, and altogether depraved. I could not sleep at night, my heart was full of these things and of anxiety. I went to chapel and heard sermons, and they helped me very much. I often talked to the Brahmin friend with whom I am living about Christianity, and we read some books together. Sometimes he agreed to what we read, and then he would argue against it, and taunt me with partiality to it. Sometimes he is very angry with me. But he is afraid of his people, and does not feel any fear of God, or care about his soul. I only want to be saved. I care for nothing if I can only have a part in 'this great salvation;' (alluding to a sermon he had heard the previous Sabbath from Heb. ii. 3, preached by one of the native students.) I now bless God that I came to your school. It is the greatest mercy that He has ever shown to me. I cannot thank you as I wish.' 'Do you think Jesus can save you?' I said. 'Yes, I believe he can.' 'Do you think he is willing to do so?' 'O, yes; He would save all the world if they would come to Him.' 'Will not your relations be angry?' 'Yes but if their anger is a thing to be afraid of, their little anger, how much more must I fear the anger of God?' 'Perhaps you will lose your wife?' 'Yes.' 'Can you bear to have all your relations against you, and all your caste people?' 'If the Holy Spirit is given me I can. I cannot of myself, but He can give me strength for anything.' 'Is it easy to put away sin? you know that the Bible requires it?' 'God can strengthen me to do it.' 'What parts of the Bible have you read?' 'The whole of Luke, Genesis, and Exodus, and portions of other books.' You remember Abraham's history?' 'Yes.' 'And that he was willing to sacrifice his son at the command of God?' 'Yes.' Much more was said, and I then asked Mr. Sewell to see him, and went to Pettah with a light and joyful heart. Had a

pleasant hour with the Zenana school. There were seventeen pupils to day. Mr. S. was satisfied with Krishnarow, and so also was Mr. Rice, who saw him afterwards. It was determined that he should be baptized the following Sabbath morning. He is a Brahmin about twenty-four years of age.

BAPTISM OF THE CONVERT.

“October 19th.—Sabbath. Krishnarow has been every day, and always in the same mind. His feeling is deep and earnest.—More than once when I have shown him a promise that I thought suitable for him, his emotion has been very strong. To-day he was baptized at the close of the service.—During the service he appeared retiring but not afraid, serious and affected but not timid. His jutta (a single lock of hair left on the crown while the rest of the head is shaved), and the Brahminical thread, both marks of caste, were removed beforehand. The ‘thread,’ is in my possession. He witnessed a good confession before many witnesses; to God be all the praise! A good number of heathen were present, several of whom had probably heard of what was to take place. One of the other schoolmasters, who seems interested in the Gospel, was there. The heathen present were earnestly attentive, quiet and serious. Two of the boarding-school girls, and an infant of one of the native teachers, were baptized at the same time. We hope a good work is begun in the hearts of several of the girls of the boarding-school. May it be perfected to the praise of God!

PERSECUTION FOR CHRIST'S SAKE.

“October 24th.—Krishnarow brought a letter to show me, which he had written to his elder brother at Adonce, upwards of 200 miles from Bangalore. In this he simply, but respectfully and touchingly, described the change which had taken place in his views and feelings, and set forth his reasons for publicly embracing the Christian faith. As he had no relations in Bangalore, his baptism passed off quietly, without an effort to prevent it. The next day, however, the social persecution which his friends and acquaintances among the heathen were able to exercise, commenced. He had to take up his abode with one of the Native Teachers, and the girls in the school taught by him were diminished to about half their usual number. Daily too, as he passes along the street, he is greeted with taunts and reproaches, all of which he has evidently counted upon beforehand, and now bears in a Christian spirit.

“November 18th.—This morning Josiah told me that the brother of the young girl to whom Krishnarow is married, and her aunt had arrived and were giving him trouble.—

They arrived on Sunday morning the 16th and went to the Chapel and sat quietly during the whole service, after which they sought to draw him away from the other Christians for conversation. To this he objected, and invited them to accompany him to Josiah's house. Reluctantly they consented, and there a long discussion between the two parties took place. The next day they went to him in the school where he teaches, and reproached him strongly for dishonouring his family and his caste.—This morning, as there was some reason to fear that violence was likely to be used, his place in the school was taken by another teacher, and he remained quietly at Josiah's house. I sent for him. He told me that among other things, they said to him, ‘We regard you as dead!’ He replied, ‘So do I myself dead to the world and sin.’ ‘What, then, about your wife?’ ‘How can you ask a dead man about his wife?’ ‘When a man dies the burden of his widow falls on the living.’—‘Very well, then as living I am prepared to receive her, if you will send her to me.’ ‘No, we will never do that until you return to your religion.’

“The girl to whom he was married, according to the Brahminical custom, several years ago, is now nearly of the proper age to join her husband, and hence the anxiety of these her relatives, on her account, leading them, as soon as they heard of his baptism, to undertake a twenty days' journey to Bangalore.

“His own brother did not come, most probably because his duties as a Government official would not allow him to leave.

“Krishnarow seems full of peace, and of a cheerful confidence that God will give him strength to be faithful, as he needs it.

“In the ‘Indian Watchman,’ received yesterday, there is an interesting narrative of the conversion of a Baraamin schoolmaster in the Orissa Mission, which resulted, after a season of persecution, in the conversion of his wife and four other members of his family, one of them, the brother of the schoolmaster, dying of the cholera the day after his baptism, in hope of eternal life through Christ. This was translated to Krishnarow, and evidently was opportune encouragement.”

LIFE BY DEATH.

An oak tree for two hundred years grows solitary. It is bitterly handled by frosts. It is wretched with by ambitious winds, determined to give it a downfall. It holds fast and grows—seemingly alone. What is the use of all this sturdiness, this strength, to itself? Why am I to stand here, of no use! My roots are anchored in rifts of

rocks. No herds can lie down under my shadow. I am far above singing birds, that seldom come to rest among my leaves. I am set as a mark for storms, that bend and tear me. My fruit is serviceable for no appetite. It had been better for me to have been a mushroom, gathered in the morning for some poor man's table, than to be a hundred-year oak—good for nothing. While it yet spake, the axe was hewing its base. It died in sadness, saying as it fell—"Many ages for nothing have I lived."

The axe completed its work. By-and-by the trunk and root form the knees of a stately ship, bearing the country's flag around the world; other parts form keel and rib of merchantmen; and having defied mountain storms, it now equally resists the thunder of the waves, and the murky threat of scowling hurricanes. Other parts are laid into floors, or wrought into wainscoting, or carved for frames of noble pictures, or fashioned into chairs that embosom the weakness of age. Thus the tree, in dying, came not to its end, but to its beginning, of life. It voyaged the world. It grew to posts of temples and dwellings. It held upon its surface the soft feet of children, and tottering frail patriarchs. It rocked in the cradle, and swayed the crippled lambs of age by the chimney-corner, and heard secure within the roar of those old unwearied tempests that once surged about its mountain life. Thus, after its growth, its long usefulness, its cruel prostration, it became universally useful, and did by its death what it could never do by its life.—For so long as it was a tree, and belonged to itself, it was solitary and (to appearance) useless. But when it gave up its own life, and became related to others, then its true life began!

"Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."—John xii. 24.

How solemn is that sentence of Christ! "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me." Not otherwise. Not while He lived, not while in full use of His faculties, and by direct power, but only pierced, broken, slain, buried.—Then his power grew in weakness, as in a soil and death restored to Him divine power."

This is a truth hidden from the wise and prudent. It is not a truth of nature, but of grace; and many wise men there be

who would turn from it. But God has instructed the poor and the heart-broken, so that at length they have learned that when they are weak, they are strong; that they only live when they die to self, and inherit all things when they cease to crave anything.—*Independent.*

DISTRIBUTION OF POWER IN THE KINGDOM OF GRACE.

The power of prevailing with God by prayer is the highest form of power of which man is susceptible.—And yet it is entrusted to each and every believer, however humble his position. It is not confined to organic action of the church, nor to its officers nor its men of influence. The obscurest child of God has as short a way, and as open a door to the throne of grace, as any other. No one has need to wait for church action, before his own heart may have liberty to act upon the heart of God in intercession. No one has need to give precedence to a more aged or humble person, before he can come into the audience of his God and King. Every believer be he ever so weak and powerless with men, may as a prince have power with God and prevail. And possibly he may do more for Christ and the salvation of men, than those who have tenfold of his outward advantages. God holds himself and all his forces ready to go forth at the call of the prayer of faith. And he says—"Concerning my sons, and concerning the work of my hands command ye me." Be it that you are only a private person, holding an obscure place among the children of Zion—your prayers no sooner escape your heart and lips, than they go forth, not in your name, but in that of the most public of all persons—the Head of the church, the all prevalent Intercessor. They no sooner escape from your heart, than they are caught up and adopted as his, and uttered by himself in his own name. The weakest Christian here has a vantage ground, from which he may put forth a power to move the world. He can go in an agony of desire, and pour out his heart to One who is able to do exceeding abundantly, above all we can ask or think. We have a great High Priest, who for us is past into the heavens, Jesus Christ the Righteous, in whose righteousness we may come boldly to the thrones of grace and obtain help in time of need.—*The Puritan Recorder.*

THE GOOD NEWS.

MARCH 1st, 1863.

ON THE CONNEXION BETWEEN THE PATRIARCHAL AND JEWISH DISPENSATIONS.

The ecclesiastical history of the world has been divided into five great dispensations: 1. *The dispensation of Innocence*, comprising that bright dawn of the world's history, in which man, crowned with moral dignity, bore the unsullied image of his great Creator, amid the bliss and harmony of Eden. 2. *The Adamic dispensation*, reaching from the fall to the flood, including those ages, stained with iniquity so great, as to call for the desolating waters of the deluge to wash it away. 3. *The Patriarchal dispensation*, from the flood to the bondage of the Israelites in Egypt. 4. *The Mosaic, Jewish, or Levitical dispensation*, from the call of Moses at the bush, up to the fulness of time—the appearance of the God-man, Galilean, who when he came, introduced the *Fifth, or Gospel dispensation*, outshining by far all the preceding, which were but stepping stones towards it. It would be easy to show, that each of these dispensations were but links of one unbroken chain, which has run, like a golden thread, through the ages. There is no gap between one dispensation and another. Each economy fits on to that before, and overlaps it. The succeeding was but a more glorious stage of redemption, than its predecessor. Take for instance the connexion between the *Patriarchal*, and *Jewish dispensations*. Both coming from the same source, it might be expected that they would possess many features in common, and being suited for different stages of advancement, it may also be imagined, that there will be some points of dissimilar-

ity existing between them. Both were restricted in their nature, the former to a family, the latter to a nation sprung from that family. Both were dispensations of faith and hope. Abraham looked through the dim future to the day of the Anointed One, and Moses pointed the tribes of Israel to a coming Prophet, who was to be a guide in all things. Both were dispensations of types, and symbols. The quivering ram that lay bleeding upon Mount Moriah in Isaac's stead, as well as the blood of innumerable bullocks, and goats, which stained the temple altar, were efficacious only, when viewed in relation to him who was to take away sin, by the sacrifice of himself. Both were shadowy and unstable, consequently both have passed away. In the one dispensation as in the other, the dumb eloquence of the spangled firmament, and of the flowery face of nature declared in unmistakable language, that the hand that made them was divine. The ordinary laws of mind and matter operated in the one economy, as in the other. Error combated with truth, folly with wisdom, and ignorance with knowledge. These two dispensations had, therefore, many things in common.

I.—WHEREIN THEY HAVE ANYTHING COMMON IN THE MATTER REVEALED.

All that was revealed to the patriarchs, was known to their descendants, the Jews. For whatever was made known in the former age was preserved to the latter, and, as a natural result, every coming dispensation had the advantage over the one which had disappeared. The enquiry at present then is, what was known to the patriarchs, or what was the amount of their knowledge?

1. *Concerning the character of God.*—That God exists, is the starting point of all religion: and this truth was revealed in patriarchal times, both directly and indirectly. "The heavens declared the glory

of God, and the firmament shewed forth his handiwork." The words of Jehovah could be read everywhere throughout his vast empire, and they were those which he spoke to Abraham, "I am the Almighty God." All his dealings with the fathers proved his existence, and the creation of the world with which they were familiar, besides the direct revelation just quoted, told of his Omnipotence. That he was a being who loveth righteousness, and hates iniquity, the expulsion of man from Eden, the flood, and the fiery bolts showered forth upon the cities of the plain, were ample proofs, independent of those which may be drawn from the many promises, and commands which were given in those early times. The translation of Enoch proved him to be the rewarder of those who diligently seek him. The history of Joseph—the successive steps which led to his elevation, from the Hebrew shepherd boy to the distributor of Egypt's bounty, proclaimed God's overruling providence.—In fine, so much may be gathered up from patriarchal history, as to lead to the inference that Jehovah was known to be a God of power, wisdom, justice, long suffering, kindness, and faithfulness to his promises, and that he superintended all the affairs of earth, for Abraham addressed him as "the Judge of all the earth."

2. *What was revealed concerning man, and his future prospects.* The conscience of man sometimes accusing, and sometimes excusing him, was busy then as now, and it whispered of a state of alienation from God. But in case that voice might have been disregarded, another and a more powerful voice was heard affirming, that the imagination of man's heart was only evil and that continually. That, the doctrine of a future state was known, is apparent from a variety of considerations.—Abel's death showed that righteousness was not to be rewarded here, else his was

a poor reward. The translation of Enoch to heaven set the matter at rest. And to this agree the words of the Apostle, "The patriarchs all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers, and pilgrims on the earth."

3. *What was revealed concerning the plan of mercy.* Patriarchal worship consisted chiefly in that which conscience and reason dictated. It was made up of tithes, vows, prayers, the keeping of the Sabbath, the rite of circumcision, the building of altars, and the offering of sacrifices. Cain and Abel brought their respective offerings to God. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob also sacrificed under the blue canopy of heaven, in the groves of Beersheba, and on the high places of Canaan. And their sacrifices pointed to that, which was to be offered in the end of the world, to take away sin. They had their hopes fixed upon, and their faith centred in a coming deliverer. To Abraham it was revealed, that in his seed, all the families of the earth should be blessed.

As already hinted at, the Jewish dispensation had all that belonged to the patriarchal, and therefore had a knowledge of the points, now enumerated. The Mosaic dispensation may be regarded as a fuller expansion of the patriarchal, rather than a break off from it; the one was founded upon the other. It was the gradual fulfilment of what had been gradually revealed. Clearer revelations were made concerning the Messiah. The time, place, and manner of his birth and life were distinctly stated. Brighter manifestations of the attributes, and perfections of God, and man's relation towards him, were made.—Three codes of laws, the civil, the ceremonial, and moral were given as a directory to the people. A counterpart to these three systems of laws, was to be found in

the patriarchal rule. Then no civil law had been given, but God the supreme head led Abraham and his descendants, not by a pillar of cloud, and of flame, but by a way which they knew not. The principles of the moral law, interwoven with man's very nature, must have been revealed to the minds of the patriarchs. Their holy lives go to prove their knowledge of the same law, which was afterwards proclaimed in audible language from the top of Sinai, from the midst of the fire and smoke, and which was inscribed by the finger of God, upon the two tablets of rock. The patriarchs also had, to some extent, a ceremonial law, binding upon them. It was their duty to offer sacrifices, and to circumcise their offspring.

The future reward of the righteous, and the punishment of the wicked, was more fully revealed in the latter dispensation, than in the former. And the resurrection of the body if understood at all, in Abrahamic times, was but faintly known, and it seems not clearly revealed, until the time of Christ.

II.—WHEREIN THEY HAVE ANYTHING COMMON IN THE MANNER IN WHICH THEY WERE REVEALED.

Both revelations were given in a miraculous manner. God, at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in times past unto the Fathers. To Abraham, his friend, he made known his will by visions of the night, by a heavenly voice, and by many distinct appearances. He talked with Abraham, as a man would do with his friend. To Moses also, the founder of the Jewish state, he revealed himself both in the midnight watches, and at the noontide hour, upon the mountain top. From Sinai he thundered forth his will, in the hearing of the whole congregation of Israel. Angels were employed in revealing both. And each was communicated in such a manner, as to excite

admiration and awe, in the minds of those who received it. It was apparent from the circumstances connected with their revelation, that he who framed all things at the first, who hath the elements of nature under his control, who holdeth the winds in his fists, and who maketh the clouds his chariot, and his pavilion at his pleasure, was the author of both, and that, unlike the gods of the heathens, he could not be lightly approached, but was worthy to be feared, and to be had in reverence of all round about him. Both dispensations, being introduced in idolatrous times, aimed at showing the foolishness of idolatry, and the unity of God. The doctrine of each economy were revealed to persons chosen by God's free grace, who were to be the publishers to others. And both were revealed step by step. Often a long protracted period elapsed between one communication from heaven and another, in theocratic, as well as in patriarchal times.

III.—WHETHER THE STEPS OF REVELATION WERE IN THEMSELVES ARBITRARY, OR WHETHER THE ORDER WAS SUCH AS IS REQUIRED BY HUMAN NATURE.

The fact as to whether there should have been any dispensation of mercy at all, or not, is as arbitrary. For, there was no obligation on the part of God to give dispensations of religion to man. All must be traced to his free will, and sovereign pleasure, assuming the fact, however, of a revelation, it cannot be said that the manner in which any particular dispensation has come to man, was arbitrary. Not only is there a connexion between its parts, but, the whole character of the channel through which it delivers its teachings to man is determined by a consideration of his nature in general, and the degree of enlightenment which he had at the time. That the truth was enshrined in symbols, appealing to the eye, was not an arbitrary

thing in Judaism. It was a necessity of the condition of the Jewish mind. The media of truth in the patriarchal, Jewish, and Christian dispensations could not have been interchanged. The details of the Jewish rites were fixed arbitrarily, *e.g.* the shape and size of the tabernacle, the number, and nature of the sacrifices, but this did not affect the great principle of its symbolism. Every individual revelation, inasmuch as it was out of the ordinary course of nature, may be said to have been arbitrary. But while every step may be viewed in this light, yet the order in which religious doctrines were given to the world cannot be regarded as arbitrary. They go to form parts of a whole,—parts of a mighty and wondrous plan. The first revelation given to man, was dim as the flickering taper at the midnight hour, but with the expanding page of inspiration, light pours in at every succeeding step, till at last it merges in the full blaze of gospel day. And these different stages were not arbitrary, for the erection of the Jewish state was only in fulfilment of prophecy—of the many promises given to the patriarchs, and was therefore fully expected.—In the revelation given to Moses at the bush, at the introduction of the Jewish economy, God himself connects the patriarchal, with that dispensation about to begin, by declaring that it was Abraham's God, who was mindful of his covenant of old.

Revelation was obtained gradually, from age to age, here a little, and there a little. And it was this characteristic which made it so suitable to the nature of man. All the occurrences of nature with which we are familiar, proceed gradually. Light does not burst upon the earth all at once. There is first the dawn, then the twilight, then the full radiance of the morning sun. We ourselves pass through the successive stages of infancy, childhood, and youth,

before arriving at the full meridian of life. Experience teaches every one to look for such a procedure. The human mind is not so constituted, as to be able to grasp all the parts of any system, either scientific or religious. Knowledge to be beneficial must be imparted by degrees. And he, who knows what is in man, has ever acted upon this principle—he has ever made the communications of his will suitable to the wants of the time. And in surveying this work of the Most High, the creature must acknowledge, that he hath done all things well.

X. Y. Z.

Pictures for the Children.

THE THREE YOUNG MEN IN THE FIRE.

DANIEL CHAPTER III.

Nebuchadnezzar in his pride sets up an idol of gold in the plain of Dura, and commands the subjects of his kingdom to bow down to it at the sound of music.—The harp, the psaltery, and the dulcimer are heard, and the noble and the ignoble of Babylon fall prostrate around the image. Three youths alone stand erect, smiling at the nation's folly, and sternly refuse to bend their knees to the towering idol.—The princes and Chaldean sages cannot bear their haughtiness. They go and tell the king that certain Jews are disregarding his commands. "Bring them hither before me," says the enraged Nebuchadnezzar, and forth they are brought into his presence, but still they refuse to serve his gods, or to worship his idol. He threatens them with the fire, and declares, that there is no God who can deliver out of his hands. As many a martyr has done since, the three young men stand before the angry king nothing daunted, and reply, "We are not careful to answer thee in this matter, if it be so, our God, whom we serve, is able to deliver us from the burn-

ing fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king, but if not, we cannot, and we will not serve your gods, nor worship your image." Bravely spoken! God never wants a seed to serve him, and he has it here. But the heathen king cannot brook the idea of having his law despised. In his fury, and with face glowing with rage, he orders the furnace to be heated seven times hotter than usual, and he calls to his sycophants about him to bind these Hebrews, who had insulted his dignity, and to cast them into the fire, and burn them out of his sight, that they may be an example to all those who may dare to thwart his orders. Fresh fuel is thrown into the blazing furnace. The three Jewish striplings are bound, hand and feet. Nebuchadnezzar sits chaffing with rage, as they are being carried to the fire, by the chief men of his army. With a forward rush, and with a shout, they throw them in. Moment of liberty to Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego! but of death to the servants of the king, for they fall back, broiled, and blackened corpses, scorched with the flames, which had set free the servants of the living God. The multitudes stare in inexpressible wonder! Dead men lie around the furnace, living men walk in it! Language cannot paint the expressions of surprise, and dread, that mark the countenance of the crowd. But behold the king. He had been waiting for a many-tongued shout, as soon as the impious ones had been consumed; but all astonished he rises up in haste, with eyes fastened intensely on the furnace, and with lips moving in a breathless whisper, he says to his counsellors, "Did not we cast *three* men, bound, into the midst of the fire?" "True, O king," they reply. "What meaneth this then," says the alarmed king, "Lo, I see *four* men, walking loose, and unburnt, and the fourth is like the Son of God." Nebuchad-

nezzar, scarcely believing his eyes, and trembling in every limb, draws near to the mouth of the furnace, and exclaims, "Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, ye servants of the Most High God come forth, and come hither." The three at once march out amongst his astonished princes, governors, and captains, not a hair of their head singed, nor yet the smell of fire upon their garments. The fourth—the mysterious one, went as he came, unseen. No one regards the golden image now; it towers high on the plain, but it stands unnoticed. The three men, from the fire, have riveted the attention of the gaping crowd, now gathering around, to get a sight of the inconsumable youths.—The Medes and the Persians boasted that their laws were unalterable, but here heaven has reversed its laws, and set them aside. The king has changed too, and no wonder. Hear him now, "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, who hath sent his angel, and delivered his servants, that trusted in him, and have changed the king's word, and yielded their bodies that they might not serve, nor worship any god, except their own God." . . . "There is none other God that can deliver after this sort."—Truth indeed! And let all who serve him take courage. Enoch walked with God, and he led him past the grave. Peter walked with the Son of God, upon the unstable waves. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego walked with him amidst the flames of the fire, and the fury of their foes. But that was not the only time, nor yet the first, that they had walked with him. They had been in his company before. For it is only those who walk with God in life, that he condescends to walk with in danger, and in death. And he walks with them through fire, and water to the wealthy place.

THE TELESCOPE:

OR, "HOW MAY I KNOW THAT I HAVE THE RIGHT FAITH?"

I received a package the other day of samples of telescopes, and other glasses.—Of course I examined them to see if they were the right things or articles. When it began to be dark, I unwrapped one of the telescopes to try it; after arranging the slides, I placed it to my eye, when to my astonishment, a star was quite visible. I took away the glass again, and I found there was no star to be seen with the natural eye; but through the glass it was seen plainly, and seemed to be near. Well, thought I, the telescope that gives such a sight of a star, where to the natural eye there is not one, must be the right sort of glass.

True faith is exactly like this telescope. The mind of fallen man is in darkness as to the things of God; and without faith, man gropes in darkness and knows not whither he goeth. Now the moment the Holy Ghost imparteth faith to the soul, Christ is seen as the star was seen in the sky. And oh! what a sight! when Christ is seen by faith. If that is the right glass which reveals the unseen star; that only is true faith which reveals the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. "The light shineth, and the darkness comprehendeth it not." The natural eye without the glass could not see the star. Man without faith cannot understand why the glory of God shines in the face of a risen man in heaven, the Lord Jesus Christ; without faith he cannot see this glorious Christ.—"What is faith?" said a doctor to his patient, who was an evangelist. "Well, doctor," said he, "when I came to you I put myself entirely in your hands; that is faith. When a lost sinner trusts himself entirely in the hands of Christ; that is faith."

Have you, my reader, seen Christ to be your Saviour; crucified for your sins; raised from the dead for your justification? Do you see Him to be all that you need, without a single make-weight? Oh! the wickedness of thinking of adding anything of our own, such vile worms, as a make-weight to the worth of Christ. God sees the sacrifice of Christ, the shedding of His

blood, that which puts sin and sins away for ever. Are you in this light of God? And can you say, the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth me from all sin? Then most assuredly you have true faith. For the natural man without the faith of Christ will never believe this.

Another thing as to the Telescope: it did not make the star; it had nothing to do surely at all in producing the star; it only enabled me to see the star, and know that it was there. This illustrates a most important fact as to salvation. Many, when seeking salvation, though they know it cannot be had by works, yet suppose that salvation is in some way suspended, or incomplete in itself, until they have believed rightly. And thus they make faith to have something to do with producing salvation, and thus they are led to look at faith, instead of the finished work of Christ. They say, "Oh, that I was sure I had the right faith, or believed enough, then I should be saved!" This is making faith a Saviour. Faith has no more to do with producing salvation, than my glass had to do with producing the star. That star was created and shone in the heavens ages before I was born. I speak now of all those who through grace shall be saved.—These were all certainly foreknown of God in eternity, before ever light twinkled from that distant star, "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began; but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ." Surely it is plain that our faith had nothing to do with producing the grace that was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began. And when Jesus was manifested, it was not our faith that induced Him to become the substitute and surety of all who should through grace be saved. No, not our faith; it was His love. It was God who laid on Him the iniquity of us all; and it was God who justified Him from the iniquity of us all, when he raised Him up from the dead. He sat down having purged our sins from the sight of God, long, long before we were born. Our faith had nothing to do with Christ thus purging our sins, or with God justifying us in Christ. This was absolutely finish-

ed long before we had actual existence.— God saw in the blood of Christ the perfect and eternal satisfaction for all our sins, and this one sacrifice put away all our sins from the sight of God. You will say then, “If Christ thus finished the work of salvation for all who through grace shall believe, what does take place when the sinner believes? Just what took place when I looked through my glass; I saw the star I had never seen before, and I knew it to be there. Just so when the Holy Ghost reveals the salvation already finished by Christ. I know now salvation; my salvation is there, though I never knew it before. Sin was purged from before God, when Christ died and arose from the dead; this saved me; it is now purged from my conscience by faith in that blood, when God calls me. God who justified me then in my representative, Christ, now gives me, by faith, the blessed knowledge of justification in my own soul. Faith does not produce this complete salvation, but sees it to be in Christ, and *knows* it is mine on the testimony of God. “Be it known unto you, that through this man (Christ crucified and risen) is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by Him ALL THAT BELIEVE ARE JUSTIFIED from all things from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses.” (Acts xiii. 38.) Do you believe what the word of God says here? I do not ask what sort of faith have you; there is only one true faith, all else is unbelief; but I ask, Do you know in power this forgiveness of sins through Christ Jesus? Do you thus see Jesus? If you do you have true faith as certainly as I had a good glass, when I saw the star. Oh! look nowhere but to Jesus. Is he seen? Do you believe the forgiveness through Him, not through the merit of your faith, but through Jesus? If you thus see Him, thus believe in Him, then you are justified. You say from your heart you believe in Jesus, then God says, you are justified. What do you make of that? Will not that give you peace? Cannot you now say, looking steadily through the glass of faith at Jesus, “Who was delivered for our offences” (hold steady and look at the cross), “and was raised again for our justification.”

Stretch out your slides, and gaze at His

glory. Oh! let faith take its utmost survey of the glory of the risen man, and as you look at Him, remember all you see is yours, as certainly as you see Him by faith—all, all is yours. The peace of Jesus is yours; yours for ever. Can there be condemnation laid on Him now? Never. And you are justified with Him; sanctified with Him; what shall I say? for ever blest with Him. Now do not let the glass shake with doubts and fears. Look again on His cross and resurrection. Cannot you now say, with holy confidence, “Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” If you do not thus see Jesus, and know that you are justified, and have peace with God, then, I beg, do not pretend to have the true faith. There are many in this day who do not know Jesus at all; who do not know that they are justified; who do not know anything, in fact, and yet say they have the only true faith.

If my reader is one of these, wilt thou tell me how it is, that all who did believe in the days of the Apostles knew they were justified, and had peace with God; whilst thou sayest thou art a believer, and yet thou neither knowest that thou art justified, nor that thou hast peace with God? May God reveal His Son to thee, so that being justified and having peace with God, thy whole being, body, soul, and spirit, may be cheerfully devoted to His service of love. C. S.

THE WINE CUP AND THE OCEAN.

The Germans have a proverb which runs thus, “More are drowned in the wine cup than in the ocean.” Although the saying is strikingly paradoxical, yet the contrast is so complete, between the literal wine cup which would scarcely drown a fly, and the vast ocean, the

“Symbol of a drear immensity,”

which in its billowy depths has swallowed many a gallant bark with all its living freight, that the proverb, so put, lays hold of the imagination and leaves the impress there which reason would endeavour to erase. We appreciate the subtle conception none the less that it would elude the grasp; nor would we willingly abate its force while we bear testimony to the wisdom which it breathes. It is not alone in the miserable creatures—outcasts as it were of society, whom no one cares for—that are left to die in solitude amid the cold

and ungenial influences of our northern winter that we realize its innate truth. Death's thousand doors are open, and at each portal stands the wine cup, luring the way-worn wanderer to his certain doom. In vain has the persuasive voice of friendship, or the sweet pathetic tones of love been raised to warn the unwary youth from that little cup which is yet more mighty to destroy than the majestic ocean which mars

"Alike the Armada's pride, or spoils of Trafalgar,"

In vain have the stern tones of remonstrance sounded in the ear as the deep reverberating echo of some fervent appeal from the world of spirits, the wayward will must have its way. There is a secret power, no human mind has yet fathomed, which seems to drug the unwary down as it were to the depths of wretchedness, in spite of conviction, in spite of common sense, for the best formed resolutions give no nerve to check its sway. Helpless, nerveless, and without an effort at resistance, they drop into the embraces of the destroyer, as the bird drops from the branch into the open jaws of the serpent, by whose fatal glance it has been mesmerised. There is a sparkling demon in the cup which God and nature alike disown, and which man alone hugs to his bosom until, like the victim of the fiery Moloch of old, he is consumed by its glow. Spurn then the luscious draught while morning's soft beams cheer the distant prospect, for if you come once within its potent spell your noontide sun may be shrouded in gloom—for verily the voice of wisdom has said:—"More are drowned in the wine cup than the ocean."

RELIGION A BUSINESS.

The other day we spoke in commendation of an active Christian brother, to one who was content to take things himself in an easy dog-trot way. 'Oh! yes,' was the answer, 'he makes a business of it.'

That was just it. Here was the secret of his Christian influence. Religion was with him a 'business.' He was not unmindful of certain 'promises to pay,' such as, 'Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.' Nor were his calculations based on any Pelagian 'tables of interest.'—He 'went into it' because he liked it, or in better words, he had a love for his calling. Thus he 'invested in stock' such as cannot depreciate, for he laid up 'treasure in heaven.'

But he made a business of it. Now it is to be remarked of such, that though often the humblest of men, there is a spice of shrewdness in their dealings. None are more watchful for opportunities, hence often creating surprise, because often 'catching men with guile.' "Why, it beats all, you can't escape

him!" says a poor sinner, whose heart has been softened by his personal appeals.

We happen to know a good old elder who has this trait of making a business of his religion. He bethought himself of an aged sinner. 'I'll go straight off and see him. It's high time he were come to Christ, for death will soon come to him.' So, with business promptness off he went and met the old man on the road. 'Ah! neighbor C——, I was going to your house to see you, to speak about your soul.' 'Why, Mr. V——, this is strange; you know I am not superstitious.—But I started for the village resolving to go by the way of the avenue; and despite myself, I came this way after all. Now, had I gone the way I intended, I should have been out of your reach.' And so this good old elder caught this hoary sinner, and so set about recruiting him for the kingdom.

'He made a business of religion.' How Christ-like! It is the true imitation of Jesus. 'Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?'

CHRIST AND HIS PEOPLE.

Till the church be fully gathered together, there is in some sort a want to the perfection of Christ. We must consider Christ two ways—*personally*, and *mystically*. Personally, or abstractively in himself, he is not only perfect but perfection itself. Mystically, or in relation to his body, the Church: "*Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.*" And Christ's will is, that where he is, his members may be there also. So that till the whole body be gathered to the Head, the Head is in some sort not perfect.

What a treasure of joy and comfort is here opened to us! Our Saviour so loves us, that he thinks not himself perfect without us.—Thou hast saints, the spirits of just, blessed, and obedient angels, thy own infinite self, to delight thee—what need hast thou of a worm? What am I, O Saviour, that thou shouldst not think thyself perfect without me? Well may this sweeten all our poverty, and the misery, disgrace, and ignominy, that the world casts upon us. A great gallant blusheth to see thee take acquaintance of him, looks upon thee betwixt scorn and anger, thinks himself disparaged by thy company: be content, the God of heaven and earth thinks himself not perfect without thee. Thou art unworthy of the favor of Jesus Christ, if thou canst not content thyself with it, without the favor of the world.

“HE WAS TOO LATE.”

The other day, just as a railroad train had started, a man was seen at the top of his speed to overtake the carriages, and he barely succeeded in laying hold of the handle to throw himself upon the steps, when his foot missed, and he was thrown by the very violence of his motion under the wheels of the carriages, and died instantly. He was too late, and the very effort to recover his last and lost opportunity destroyed him.

Again, the other day, just as a steamer was starting from the ferry, a man was seen to rush in reckless haste to the edge of the floating pier, and thence, with all the impetus of his motion, to leap for the deck of the steamer; but even while he was leaping, the distance had enlarged, and he sunk beneath the boiling billows. He was too late, and the very recklessness of despair hurried him to his ruin. So it is with multitudes who have put off a passage in the Ark of Salvation to the last opportunity; and the last may be too late.

Not long since, a grave, respectable man, perhaps sixty years of age, stood by the railway carriages just as they were starting, undecided whether to go or not. There were friends within the carriage urging him to step in, but he kept saying, “No, not this time,” and yet kept hold upon the very handle of the door, half inclined to go, and balancing between going and staying, when the motion of the carriages threw him from his balance, and before they could be stopped, he was crushed to death between them and the platform.—He was undecided up to the last moment, till it was too late, and his very indecision was the occasion of his decision. So it is in every case, with those who mean to go, but are never quite ready—not just this opportunity—till already it is the *last* opportunity, and the unhappy victim of indecision and procrastination knows it not.

Reader! Are you yet undecided in regard to the momentous concerns of the soul and eternity? Then are you leaving death itself to decide the matter for you; and if death decides for you, he decides against you. After every refusal to come to Christ, your likelihood of dying unprepared is greatly increased. Your habit of

deciding wrong is strengthened, your habit of indecision as to the right is strengthened also. The case is mightily against you, if you do not through grace break from this habit this very day. If you leave the decision to sickness to startle and impel you, the probability, nay, the almost certainty is, that you leave it to death. Take your health, and not your sickness—take your hour of life, and not of death—for going to Christ. Take to-day, for that is the direction of the Holy Ghost; and only when you obey God to the letter, are you sure of salvation.

A GOOD RECOMMENDATION.

‘Sir, please don’t you want a cabin boy?’

‘I do want a cabin boy my lad, but what’s that to you? A little boy like you ain’t fit for the berth.’

‘O, sir, I’m real strong. I can do a great deal of work if I ain’t so very old.’

‘But what are you here for? You don’t look like a city boy. Run away from home, hey?’

‘O, no indeed, sir; my father died and my mother is very poor, and I want to do something to keep her. She lets me come.’

‘Well, sonny, where are your letters of recommendation? Can’t take any boy without those.’

Here was a damper. Willie had never thought of its being necessary to have letters from his minister, or proper person, to prove to strangers that he was an honest boy. Now what should he do? He stood in deep thought, the captain watching the workings of his expressive face. At length he put his hand into his bosom and drew out his little Bible, and without one word put it into the captain’s hand. The captain opened to the title page and read:

‘William Graham, presented as a reward for regular and punctual attendance at Sabbath School, and for his blameless conduct there and elsewhere. From his Sunday School teacher.’

Capt. McLeod was not a pious man, but he could not consider the case before him with a heart unmoved. The little fearless child, standing humbly before him, referring him to the testimony of his Sunday School teacher as it was given in his little Bible, touched a tender spot in the breast of the noble seaman, and clapping Willie heartily on the back, he said, ‘You are the boy for me; you shall sail with me; you shall sail with me; and if you are as good a lad as I think you are, your pockets shan’t be empty when you go back to your mother.’

Sabbath School Lessons.

March 8th.

JESUS WALKS UPON THE WATER.

MATT. 14. 22-36.

I. THE MULTITUDE DISMISSED.

The vast concourse of people had to be sent away in an orderly manner. Many would have been unwilling to leave the personal presence of their Saviour. Leaving him would resemble being sent from heaven to earth. To such doubtless he would have given the answer which he gave his apostles, "I am with you alway even unto the end of the world," Matt. 28.

20.—Very many would have also wished to follow him for the sake of the loaves and fishes; Jno. vi. 26. *He went up into a mountain apart to pray.* With regard to prayer as well as to all things else, concerning our duty to God and man, Jesus has set before us an example.

II. JESUS WALKING ON THE WATER.

The sea was *tossed with waves*, viz. the sea of Galilee. Small inland seas surrounded by mountain gorges are subject to storms. The disciples experienced the more the fury of the tempest that they were rowing against the wind. Perhaps the moon was shining upon the water, revealing to the disciples Jesus walking towards their boat. Such a circumstance excited their alarm even more than the storm—"they cried out for fear." They thought he was a spirit—some supernatural being, perhaps coming to destroy them. But at the friendly tones of Jesus, their fears would have soon been dispelled. He, who had power to tread the angry waters, was their Master—their Friend; Jno. xv. 15.

III. PETER'S BOLD REQUEST.

Though grace makes a radical change upon men it still leaves them that peculiar cast of mind which distinguishes them from each other. We cannot fail to observe that each of the apostles had his peculiar character.—John the beloved apostle was mild and reflective.—Peter bold, forward, and impulsive.—*Lord if it be thou bid me come unto thee on the water.* He did not doubt that Jesus had power to enable him also to walk on the waves. On Jesus' command, he set out bold y at first, but began to sink. He looked too much at the boisterous waves, too much at himself, and too little at Jesus. *Lord save me*—Now he looks again in the right direction, and immediately that gracious hand was stretched forth to save. *The wind ceased*—miraculously, and we are informed by St John that immediately the ship was at the other side; Jno. vi. 21. *They came and worship-*

ped him—Upon such manifestations of his divine power, their faith was confirmed and increased.

Learn 1. *The necessity of private prayer.* The conduct of our Lord manifests this. We find frequent mention in the gospel, of his withdrawing from all his followers for the purpose of private prayer. It has been well said that prayer has the same relation to the spiritual life as breath has to the physical. And there are many things in the life of every Christian which he would wish to unbosom only to his God. From his heavenly Father he would seek sweet counsel and direction.— And it has ever been the case that the most fervent—the most powerful wrestlers with God in public have been most in the habit of private devotion.

2. *The divinity of Christ.* Of this, his walking upon the water afforded to those, who were in the ship, the most convincing proof, v. 33. The laws of nature were evidently under his control.

3. *That the assurance of Christ's presence brings sweet consolation to his disciples.*— The sight of one walking upon the stormy waters at first filled them with amazement and terror. But the cheering words of Jesus soon dispelled their fears. And though we can no longer see him with the bodily eye nor hear him with the bodily ear, let us, in all our troubles, and distresses, endeavour to realise his spiritual presence and to hear him say to us in his word, "Be of good cheer: it is I; be not afraid."

4. *That, upheld by Jesus, the believer is secure.* When Jesus caught him by the hand Peter had ought to fear: then the wind might rage and billows roar Peter was safe; Rom. viii. 35.

5. *That Christ at once responds to the believer's cry*—No sooner was the cry for help uttered than Jesus answered. He immediately stretched forth his hand. Are you like Peter in trouble or distress? O then cry to Jesus, "Lord save me" and he both can and will give you relief.

March 15th. 1863.

QUAILS SENT.—Numb. xi. 16-23, 31-35.

THE QUAILS PROMISED.

Gather unto me seventy men. Seventy, whom Moses knew would be elder, not in name only, but in reality. This was the first institution of the Sanhedrim, which in after age sat in Jerusalem, and was the highest court of judgment among the Jews. *It was well with us*—a lie most dishonouring to God.—*Even a whole month*—The Lord promises, or rather threatens, that they should be perfectly

gorged with the animal food, which they so much coveted. *To have wept before him*—how bitter must have been their longing. How blessed if sinners would thus long for Christ! *Shall the flocks and the herds be slain for them*—Some suppose that Moses asked these questions merely for information, but it seems more probable that like the apostles, Matt xv. 33, he doubted. The best of men are far from being perfect.

The Quails and Plague sent. A south wind blew from the Red Sea and brought the quails. They are a small sized species of partridge. They migrate in immense numbers between Asia and Africa, frequently resting in their flight on the islands of the Mediterranean. They are then easily caught and their flesh is esteemed a luxury. Their supply was evidently miraculous. *Gathered ten homers*—a quantity ten times greater than that of the manna required for the daily supply of one man. Immediately the plague broke out.—Some suppose that it it was the consequence of excessive indulgence in animal food, which in warm climates is very injurious; but it is more probable, that like the fire from heaven which had consumed them, ver. 1., the plague came directly from the Lord, independently of all natural causes.

Learn. 1. *That idleness is the parent of evil desires.* The children of Israel were engaged in no active employment, when they became the prey of lust and discontent. We should therefore always seek some active, useful employment whether of hand or of head.

2. *That the sensual are always unbelieving.* Israel lusted and forgot God: Psal. cvi. 13. Carnal desires, like a thick cloud, so obscured their spiritual vision that they could not see or know the Lord.

3. *That the love of the world will end in misery.* Neither the world, nor anything it contains, whether riches, fame, learning, or quails can satisfy the longings of an immortal soul. How unsatisfactory are all sinful enjoyments! The soul soon abhors that which once it loved. The drunkard will one day curse the wine-cup, the glutton his dainties, and the miser his gold.

4. *That worldly prosperity may be a curse.* It may bring barrenness to the soul. God sent the quails in His anger.

THE INVISIBLE WORLD—THE MINISTRY OF ANGELS.

BY OLD JACOB.

I love to indulge in speculations upon the things of another world, when I have any foundations on which to build them. I believe, that, when based upon the facts which nature

exhibits, or which the Scriptures reveal, they may exert a good influence over us; especially, by familiarizing our minds somewhat with that state on which we are soon to enter. One of these speculations I take the liberty of presenting to the reader, and hope that it may not be without some interest for him.

I used frequently when a boy to amuse myself by taking a certain species of worm from its abode without, placing it upon my shelf, furnishing it with food from day to day, and watching the changes through which it passed, till at length it came forth from its tomb of shell, and entered upon its new state of existence, a beautiful butterfly. I recollect on one occasion especially, when I assisted the struggling creature to free itself from what seemed to be its grave, and ministered to it a passage into the new world appointed for its reception. Away it flew like a winged spirit, as I aided it in breaking the fetters of its former state, and commenced feeding on the flowers of the field, roaming from one to another at its will.

I have often reflected upon this matter, and thus have I thought. Here is a worm, for which a *future* is appointed. It passes through, in order to reach that future, what to it perhaps is *death*. It seems to have a burial. It comes forth from the grave, furnished with new powers, into a world all prepared for, and adapted to its new capacities—a world in which it has a far wider range than in the state which it left, and in which new sources of pleasure are opened up to it. It could not have known any thing of all this. What it *would be*, it could not have told, but a *place would be prepared* for it. The beneficent Creator had made abundant provision for its future state. What may have been its sensation as it entered the new world made ready for it? Was there any recognition of its former self—any memories of the past?

Here, too, was I, whose position in the scale of being was such, that I could take cognizance of *both* the states of this poor worm—what was its *present*, and its future. My existence reached through both. I saw it die—I saw it rise again. What it passed through may have been as much *death* to it as death will be to me. Did I think of decay, of destruction, or death, when I saw it passing through its change from one world to another? No—I thought only of *change*. To me, there did not seem even a suspension of life, but simply a birth into a new state. It all seemed perfectly *natural*. Its death was but one of the laws of nature, whose operation was watched by me with a curious eye.

Nay more—I was a ministering spirit to this poor worm, though it may not have known me as such. To it I was, in a certain sense,

invisible, so far did my sphere transcend its own. But I helped it to live—I was—with it in the hour of its death—I helped it to rise from death—I stood ready to welcome it into its new world. I was in both its worlds.

Thus may it be with me. I am a worm—I, too, must die. It may seem terrible to me.—Yet why should it? I know that there are angels of God, who are ministering spirits—whose existence reaches through the world in which I am, and into that in which I am to go.—They may help me to live. They may minister unseen, in a thousand ways, to my wants here. They can see me when I enter the realms of death. Perhaps they will then regard me with some such feeling and interest, only far deeper and warmer, as I did the worm in its change. Perhaps they no more associate the ideas of decay or destruction with death than I did when I looked upon the worm.

Perhaps there may not seem to them even a suspension of life. Perhaps they regard death just as I do the operation of any natural law whose workings I can trace. Perhaps, too, they will aid me in my death-struggles. Perhaps they will help my spirit, as it seeks to free itself from all that is mortal, and will assist in ministering to me an entrance into my new state of existence. Perhaps they stand ready to welcome me therein. They are in it already. They perhaps wish me there also.

There may be more meaning in that passage of the apostle, about “ministering spirits,” than I have ever dreamed of. Viewed in this light, death seems more divested of its terrors, and more as it is represented in the Scriptures—as a sleep—a repose, over which beneficent spirits watch, waiting for, and assisting us to our waking.

LAURA BRIDGMAN.

The case of this remarkable person attracted the attention of the writer about the year 1840. From time to time since, notices of her, more or less extensive, have appeared. The fullest of any was in that charming book, “The Lost Senses.” Kitto—himself a remarkable character—dwells upon Laura’s history with intelligent and most tender sympathy. It is no wonder; for his own history, all things considered, is almost as wonderful and touching as hers.

LAURA BRIDGMAN was born at Hanover, N.H., in December, 1829. From her birth she had but one sense, that of touch. In such a condition, the development of her mind would seem to have been almost impossible. The result, however, proved otherwise. Early placed under the kind

care and the skillful instruction of Miss Sarah Wight and Dr. Howe, in the Perkins Institute and Massachusetts Asylum for the Blind, her progress was such as to give her a world-wide fame. Indeed, her case deserves to be studied closely, as in some respects, perhaps, furnishing the most remarkable psychological phenomenon the world has ever seen, and one well adapted to shed light on the mysterious unfolding of the Human Mind.

The case of James Mitchell of Scotland, as related by Dugald Stewart, in his “philosophy of the Human Mind,” was thought to be of sufficient importance to occupy fifty-six pages of that work: yet Laura Bridgman presents a stronger case. He, though deaf and partially blind, had for a short time enjoyed the sense of sight, and his senses of taste and smell were wonderfully acute; while her communication with the outer world was barred at every avenue but that of touch.

Mitchell’s case was brought forward to prove and illustrate the essential difference between Man and the lower animals in respect to mind; and for this purpose Laura’s case would be still more apposite. It may seem strange that men of learning and genius should seriously set themselves to degrade men to the level of the beasts: but so it is. Helvetius taught that the intellectual superiority of man, over the brutes, was accidental; the result merely of circumstances; the principal of which was, his superior physical organization. Said he: “If the wrist of man had been terminated by the hoof of the horse, the species would still have been roaming in the forest.”

It is true, the fine bodily organization of man befriends his spiritual element; and we cannot fail to see, in their wonderful correspondence, most striking proofs of beneficent wisdom. Yet, what candid and intelligent person ever really doubted that man and the lower animals occupy vastly different grades of being. Look at the case of Laura Bridgman. Behold her with *one* sense to reveal to her inward perception the existence of the outer world. She can feel; that is all. So can the ape; so can the elephant. But while those animals, with all the training that can be bestowed upon them, aided moreover by a wonderful organization, and with the other senses to boot, never learn the use of arbitrary signs

for the expression of ideas, or for purposes of reasoning; behold Laura, with irrepres- sible curiosity, seeking a knowledge of external objects, performing mental opera- tions, and actually framing words!

The story of Laura suggests many useful reflections. How pliant is the human constitution. How easily it adapts itself to the hardest conditions, and finds enjoyment in the most multiform circumstances. Poor Laura, "for whom the sun has no light, the air no sound, and the flowers no color nor perfume,"—who would seem by her hard lot to be shut up to hopeless misery,—is yet a contented and cheerful being; as happy as the most envied possessor of the gifts of nature and of fortune! How little, after all, does happiness depend upon external things! Let the story of Laura teach us all to be content with such things as we have.

One reflection more. Behold how mind can rise upward, against all that tends to repress it! If ever there was one who would seem by the condition of her existence doomed to hopeless imbecility, Laura Bridgman was that one. See her, with faculties unfolding and intellect developing, rising step by step from darkness to light, and eagerly seeking truth. Let no one despair whose senses are perfect. Aided by hearing and sight alone, how easy, comparatively, the progress to knowledge. Counsels of wisdom may address your ear. Your eye may glance over the "ample page, rich with the spoils of time." Arise—make the effort. *I cannot*—never accomplished anything great. *I will try*—has done wonders. That simple resolve carried Bacon, and Newton, and Franklin, forward in the career of invention and discovery. Let that resolve be yours.—"Though you may never achieve what they did, you may at least acquire energy, independence, balance of mind, and freedom from the thralldom of vulgar prejudice and mere traditional authority; which shall fit you for usefulness and enjoyment as individuals, members of society, and subjects of God's moral government.

How forcibly these motives address us, who live in the afternoon of this nineteenth century. The whole world is rocking and heaving. Hoary despotisms are breaking up. Walls of separation between nations are falling. Old things are passing away.

New things are emerging. Whether we will or not, each one must share, actively or passively, in the vast procession of events. Be it our ambition to *act* an intelligent part; to be, not the mere tools, but the instruments of Providence. How many there are, even in this time of boasted enlightenment, who, instead of being able to sound the mighty problem now, solving, can but look on their grand evolutions with stupid wonder! How many, not merely unable to explore, a little way, the labyrinth of the past, fail even to catch a glimpse of the startling significance of the pregnant *now*! How many—whose self-complacency would not be much flattered if the truth was told—cannot read, with even tolerable appreciation, the truth of that potent organ of modern society, the newspaper.—*N. Y. Observer.*

LABOUR AND WAIT.

The child who sows flower seeds in his garden at night, is apt to weep in the morning if the expected flowers do not appear. It is well if he do not impatiently destroy his first labour, by raking after the seeds, to see if they have sprouted. With a spirit very similar to this, do many Christians labour for God. With zeal they sow the seed; but when the fruit delays its coming, with childlike impatience they fret, and pronounce their labour lost.

This is not only childish conduct, it is worse; it betrays an undisciplined spirit, an unsanctified will, and an impatience unworthy of a disciple of Christ. It savours not a little of selfish vanity, which yearns to feed itself on the proofs of its power to accomplish moral results. It indicates that earthly aims are mixed with his religious labours; otherwise the mind would find its reward in the consciousness of duty done, of God's approval! It would not fret itself because the seed delayed to show its shoots above the soil.

The man of faith learns to *wait* as well as to labour. He comprehends that it is his mission to sow, to plant, and to water. He knows that the tardiness of the seed to throw out its shoots is not always a proof that its vitality is lost—that a moral harvest is often reaped a long time after it is sown, frequently after its sower has gone to his long home. Therefore, he *waits in hope.*

A boy once shot an arrow into the air. So lofty was its flight, he lost sight of it in the clouds, and failed to detect the place of its descent. Long time he searched in vain around the meadow, and at last went home mourning the loss of his arrow.— Years passed away. The boy became a man. After many wanderings, he revisited the haunts of his boyhood. Walking around the meadow, he gazed upon a venerable oak, whose wide spreading branches had frequently sheltered him, in his boyhood, from the rays of the sultry sun.— Full of old memories, he stood until his eye rested upon a feather which protruded from a hollow in the tree. He drew it forth, and with it the identical arrow which years before he mourned as lost.

And is it not thus with the efforts of God's children? They speak in the ears of sinners, they bestow a tract, they utter an exhortation, or, if in the ministry, preach a sermon. They strive to watch the flight of their shaft. Vain endeavour! They cannot track it as it enters the mysterious regions of the mind; and they too often foolishly deem it lost. But it is not so.— It has done its work; and either in the future years of time, or in eternity, that effort, like the long lost arrow, shall come back to the bosom of its owner, bringing with it a blessing, even the reward of a duty faithfully performed.

It is said of the Methodist, Dr Coke, that while journeying in America, he once attempted to ford a river. But his horse lost his foothold and was carried down the stream. The Doctor narrowly escaped drowning by clinging to a bough which overhung the river-side. A lady in the vicinity gave him entertainment in his distress; sent messengers after his horse; and did him much kindness. When he left her roof, he gave her a tract!

For five years the good Doctor toiled on in the cause of God in England and America. Whether his tract had been destroyed, or had pierced a human heart, he knew not—nay, he had forgotten his gift. But one day, on his way to a conference, a young man approached him and requested the favour of a brief conversation. "Do you remember, sir, being nearly drowned in——river some five years ago?"

"I remember it quite well!" replied the Doctor.

"Do you recollect the widow lady, at whose house you were entertained, after escaping from the river?"

"I do, and never shall I forget the kindness she showed me."

"And do you also remember giving her a tract, when you bade her farewell?"

"I do not; but it is very possible I did so."

"Yes, sir, you did leave a tract. That lady read it, and was converted. She loaned it to her neighbours, and many of them were converted too. Several of her children were also saved. A society was formed, which flourished to this day."

This statement moved the Doctor to tears. But the young man, after a brief pause, resumed saying:

"I have not quite told you all; I am her son. That tract led me to Christ. And now, sir, I am on my way to conference to seek admission as a travelling preacher."

Thus did the good Dr Coke find his arrow in an unexpected hour! And thus will our shafts come back to us all in due season. Courage, therefore, drooping friend! Weep not over any apparent want of success! But as you have learned to labour, so also must you learn to wait.— Only see to it that you toil on in faith, and wait in hope!

A MOTHER'S INFLUENCE.

My son, about eighteen, had left the family-circle one evening to attend a meeting in the public hall. When he reached there he found a man standing at the door, with a table before him, selling tickets. A ball is to be held here-to-night, said he, and here are tickets, so much for a gentleman and lady. Come young man are you going in?

'Yes, sir,' said he, 'I am going in, but not to attend a ball. I never go to balls. I am going to the third story to attend a prayer-meeting.'

In an instant the tickets were dropped; and the vendor, looking into the young man's face, said with tears in his eyes, 'A prayer-meeting! Yes that is where I ought to go.— Young man, come out on the sidewalk; I must say a few things to you.'

He seemed to be in agony while he told the young man that he once went to prayer-meetings; that he thought at one time his heart was changed; that his mother was left a widow when he was a child, and though she was poor, she sent him to school, praying that he

might become a minister of the gospel. His another died, and he forgot her counsels; and now, said he, 'I am on the road to hell.'— Young man, *Pray for me, Oh pray for me; let me have your prayers.* This of course was promised; and entering the room where a few Christians had assembled for prayer, the whole story was related, and each one in their turn prayed for that man who once had a praying mother. The sequel the day of judgment will reveal.

THE LESSON LITTLE DAVID TAUGHT HIS TEACHER.

A teacher looked into the street one Sunday morning, and seeing snow on the ground, and snow falling through the air, he concluded not to go to Sunday school. He, therefore replenished his grate, drew his old arm-chair close to the hearth-side, took up a book, seated himself before the blazing fire, and began reading in a very cozy, comfortable mood.— Scarcely had he fixed his attention on the book before a gentle rap at the door disturbed him. Supposing that a beggar was there he went out, but found to his great surprise that the intruder was a little boy named David, his favorite scholar, and a child of an uncommonly beautiful character. The little fellow was muffled up in an old great-coat and seemed bent on brawling the storm. Surprised at the child's appearance, the teacher exclaimed:

'What! David, is that you? Where are you going to such a morning as this?'

'To school, teacher,' replied David emphatically.

'To school, my boy? Nay, come in and sit down by the fire, and I will talk to you about Jesus Christ,' rejoined the teacher.

'I would rather go to school, if you please, teacher.'

'Well, but, my boy,' replied the teacher, feeling somewhat confounded, I am poorly, I cannot go this morning. I should take a fresh cold.'

'I am sorry for that, teacher, but perhaps there will be another teacher there, and I will tell him 'tis too cold for you. Good-by my teacher.'

With these decisive words the little dumpling of a boy turned away and plodded through the untrodden snow. The teacher resumed his place by the fire, but his charm was broken. The boy's fidelity and zeal had pierced his conscience. After a few uncomfortable moments he jumped up, put on his great-coat, buttoned it well under his chin,

and started in pursuit of David. He soon overtook the little toddler. Taking him up in his arms he carried him to school, where he found nearly all his scholars waiting for him.

Little David taught his teacher a lesson of zeal that morning which he never forgot. It has spurred him to school many a rude morning. Should it become a spur in the consciences of other teachers who are in the habit of accepting a little rough weather as a justification for neglecting their classes, the child, now in heaven, will still live in his influence on earth.

FORGOTTEN.

The following was cut from an Ohio paper seventeen years ago. It has been carefully preserved by one who, appreciating its value, desires to have it reappear in *The Independent* for the benefit of "generation after generation."

"Generation after generation," says an eloquent modern writer, "have felt as *we* feel, and their fellows were as active in life as ours are now. They passed away as a vapour, while nature wore the same aspect of beauty as when her Creator commanded her to be. And so likewise shall it be when we are gone. The heavens will be as bright over our grave as they are now around our path; the world will have the same attraction for offspring yet unborn that she had once for ourselves, and that she has now for our children. Yet a little while, and all this will have happened!— The throbbing heart will be stilled, and we shall be at rest. Our funeral will wind on its way, and the prayers will be said, and the grave-colds will be thrown in, and our friends will all return, and we shall be left behind to darkness and the worm. And it may be for some short time we shall be spoken of; but the things of life will creep in, and our names will soon be forgotten. Days will continue to move on, and laughter and song will be heard in the very chamber in which we died; and the eye that mourned for us will be dried and will glisten again with joy; and even our children will cease to think of us, and will not remember to lip our name. Then shall we have become, in the touching language of the Psalmist, 'forgotten and clean out of mind.'"