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CONCERNING THE GOSPEL AND THE HINDRANCES TO BELIEVE IT.

BY AN OLD AUTHOR.

1. THE word GOSPEL properly signifies good news, or glad tidings, and may be used to denote good news of any kind; but *the gospel*, eminently so called, is a message, sent or brought to us from heaven, of good things.* The substance of it is to declare to the fallen, condemned sinners of the human race, that Jesus is the Christ, † who came into the world to save the chief of sinners; ‡ that God hath given us eternal life, and that this life is in his Son; § that God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them. || All these things taken together in their blessed and extensive import as centring in one point, are the *gospel*. ¶ And these things are told us openly and freely, that we might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing we might have life through his name, or in what is declared concerning him as the Saviour. This gospel was preached to Adam in the first promise; to Abraham, in its being told him that in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed; to Israel typically, in that whole system of sacrifices; prophetically in the Psalms, and in all the Prophets; and it is now exhibited to us, historically and doctrinally, in the New Testament, in the relation it gives us of the birth, life, death, resurrection, and glorification of our Lord Jesus, and the account it gives us of the true and glorious design of all these things.** Were we to sum up the whole, we shall find it to be as to its general subject, a declaration of free and full salvation

* "The apostolic doctrine of Christ crucified is, in the most emphatical sense, to every one who understands it, good news or glad tidings."—BOOTH.

† John xx. 31.

‡ 1 Tim. i. 15.

§ "The matter to be believed unto salvation is this, that God the Father, moved by nothing but his free love to mankind lost, hath made a deed of gift and grant of his Son Jesus Christ to mankind, that whosoever of all mankind shall receive the gift shall not perish but have everlasting life."—EZEKIEL CULVERWELL.

|| 1 John v. 11. ¶ 2 Cor. v. 19.

** Acts x. 37—43; xiii. 27—30.

in Jesus Christ, addressed to lost, helpless, and condemned sinners.* The redemption obtained by Jesus Christ is presented to our view as *quite necessary* for our salvation, as *quite suitable* to our condition, as *quite free*, for our encouragement, and as *quite full* or complete for our supply. †

2. This representation is so great and glorious and contains such joyful particulars, that one would imagine it could not fail of affording at once the most enlivening light, the most satisfying hope, the most solid joy and spiritual strength and life to our souls. ‡ Such is certainly its nature, such is plainly its tendency, and such is its real influence and effect, wherever its meaning, its evidence, and its importance are understood and received. § This we are certain never will be, without the Divine teaching or influence of the Spirit of truth and grace. ||

However, hereby the most interesting message, and the most gladdening tidings, are brought us. This message, some neglect, others misunderstand; some despise,

* "Preach the gospel to every creature, that is, go tell every man without exception, whatsoever his sins be, whatsoever his rebellions be,—go and tell him these glad tidings, that if he will come in I will accept him, his sins shall be forgiven him and he shall be saved."—MARROW OF MODERN DIVINITY, Ch., 2.

† Matth. xix. 10; Rom. iii. 19—24.

‡ "No gospel hearer can say that there is no provision made for this case. For the gospel method of salvation resembles a well drawn picture, which seems to look every person in the room, on either hand of it, in the face. In like manner, gospel truth has something in it suitable to every one's case that reads or hears it, and that as particularly as if it spoke to every gospel hearer by name."—REV. W. ANTON'S SERMONS, P. 276.

§ Rom. v. 1, 2.

|| 1 Cor. xii. 3. Were I to allow myself to alter any expressions in the original, I should certainly have omitted the word "influence," which is here used in reference to the spirit. It is not Scriptural, and it is apt to leave upon the mind an impress on unfavourable to the doctrine of the personality and direct agency of the Holy Spirit. All the Scriptural terms have special reference to the indwelling and inworking of the Holy Spirit himself, not merely to the effects of something which is called his influence. See John xiv. 16, 17; Rom. viii. 9, 11; 2 Cor. vi. 19.

and others dispute it; while many understand it so defectively, that it conveys no more pleasure or satisfaction to their minds, than if they had never heard it, or did not at all understand it; so that many persons sit under the sound of it who are very little, if at all, enlivened, encouraged, or attracted thereby. This proceeds from some remaining difficulties or objections which still possess their minds and obstruct the joy, satisfaction, hope, and love, that would otherwise arise in their minds upon the belief of it.* For it is evident, that when this was preached of old, they who heard and understood it were glad and glorified the word of the Lord. †

3. Let us therefore search a little into this matter, and attend to the objections, and difficulties which rise in the mind, whereby it comes to pass that many receive no comfort and advantage to their souls by the declaration of it; so that it proves in reality no gospel to them. For we must necessarily take it for granted, that it is in himself a message of great joy, otherwise it would not have received the name it bears. †

It is evident, then, that to many these glad tidings do not convey any pleasure, because they do not appear suited to their wants and desire. It is to them a thing

* "Hence it comes to pass that, in many who are saved in the issue, there a long sorrowful trouble of mind that they live under, and all the world shall not persuade them what the true cause of it is. They are full of sorrow and complainings; no other language to be heard to God or man, but many sorrowful complaints; their corruptions are strong, their souls dead and dark, their consciences disquieted. And what is the true reason of all this? They are yet averse from giving glory to the sovereign grace of God in saving them by Christ. Many sorrowful hours many of the elect of God have gone through in the strength of this corruption, and they have never seen it till a long while after. It is a shame and reproach to professors, and a dishonour to our Lord Jesus Christ, that so many in whom the root of the matter is, have their hearts sinking within them when relief is so plainly provided for them. The true reason is because they are averse, and not willing, nor inclined to be indebted solely to grace, and to have all their supplies singly from it."—*Trav's Select Works*. P. 33.

† Acts ii. 46; viii. 8, 39; xiii. 48; xvi. 54. "It never thunders, never lightens,—there is no earth quake in the gospel; it is the *gospel of peace*."—*J. H. Evans*.

‡ "Yet come the enlargement when it will it must, I admit, come after all through the channel of a simple evidence given to the sayings of God, accounted as true and faithful sayings. And never does light and peace so fill my heart as when like a little child, I take up the lesson, that God hath laid on His own Son the iniquities of us all."—*Dr. Chalmers*. See *Life*, Vol. II P. 211.

quite foreign from their thoughts and wishes; and so they despise and neglect it.* One says in his heart, "if you could bring me tidings of some worldly honours to be freely conferred, or of some large sums of money to be freely given, this would rejoice my heart; or if you tell me where and how I might enjoy such and such sensual pleasures, this would be very acceptable." † The language spoken by the hearts of others is to this effect—"If you could assure me of any way that I could live and indulge my self in sin, with hopes of impunity, without fear of death or hell, this would be very good news to me." But it is evident, in both these cases, that the sentiments of the heart are directly contrary to the truth of God; for the former account the world their chief portion, and the latter esteem sin as their greatest good. They do not perceive, they do not really believe, the suitableness and importance of the salvation in Jesus Christ to their souls, and therefore it does not wear the aspect of good news in their view. †

To others the proclamation of salvation only in Christ is not good news, because they do not see it to be quite necessary for them. They do not think their case to be really so bad as a full and free salvation intimates. § They do not apprehend themselves quite lost, undone, and helpless, but think they can, they must, and ought to do something towards their own recovery to the favour of God. As the free Gospel opposes all such self-sufficient desires and endeavours, it is therefore rather disgusting and offensive. Such as these do not know either themselves, or the law, or the true God. ||

4. But, after all, there is another great reason why the glad tidings of the blessed Gospel do not convey any real satisfaction; and that is, because the proper *freeness* of Divine grace revealed

* "A whole hearted sinner will never know anything of a full Christ."—*J. H. Evans*.

† Job. xxi. 14, 15; Psal. iv. 6.

‡ John iv. 10; vi. 26, 46.

§ "What is the Saviour to any individual who does not know he is a sinner? He is invariably despised and rejected. Who values the physician? The sick Where is his presence prized? In the hospital."—*Howells*.

|| Matth. ix. 12, 13; Rom. x. 3.

is not discerned or credited.* The language of many persons is this—"I do not deny or question the perfection of Christ's work, and the freeness of his redemption—I have heard these things and am persuaded of them; and yet still I feel myself lost, and miserable, and helpless, and do not find that all this conveys any pleasure or satisfaction to my mind, for I have still many objections against myself, and many doubts and difficulties in my mind respecting my salvation." What these are or may be we shall soon attend to. But do you indeed believe the proper freedom of Divine grace?† How comes it to pass then, that you are not encouraged by and delighted with it, when it is certain it must be so in any similar case. If a person in great want be told of a free supply, or a person in debt, ready to be arrested, be told of a free, able, and willing surety, could this fail of giving him pleasure, hope, and satisfaction on his hearing and believing it? And if it did not, would not every bystander judge that there must be some mistake or doubt in his mind about it? There must, therefore, be some defect or mistake in our apprehension, if we have not some satisfying hope produced in our minds from the free gospel, of full salvation in Jesus Christ for a helpless undone sinner.‡

5. Let me then represent, as clearly as I can, what must be, or may be, the mistake or doubt in the minds of many.

* "For the most part, when we come to deal with God for forgiveness, we hang in every briar of disputing, quarrelsome unbelief. This or that circumstance, this or that unparalleled particular, bereaves us of our confidence. Want of due consideration of Him with whom we have to do, measuring him by that line of our own imaginations, bringing him down to our thoughts and ways, is the cause of all our disquietments."—*Owen on 130th Psalm.*

† "If the Lord tenders you the gift of righteousness through Jesus Christ, do not say you cannot receive it; do not say you are not meet for it. The question is, are you in need of it? Are you not guilty? Receive it as a grace. The true reason why so many neglect right dealing with God for justification, and slight God's dealing with them about receiving it, is because their hearts stand at a distance from, and they have a sort of quarrel with mere grace. As it is certain that nothing but grace can save the sinner, so it is as certain there is nothing more unpleasing to the sinner than grace."—*Trail, P. 29.*

‡ "The truth is, that we but little enter into the real meaning of the words which we so often utter, *free love, or free grace.* Did we see anything of the depth of that last expression, doubting would cease. What is *grace* but favour to the *unworthy*? and what is *free grace* but that favour conferred entirely from the bounty of the giver, without respect to any prerequisite in the receiver? And who can be more *unworthy* than one who, day after day, remains

"The gospel affords not relief to my mind," says one, "because my sin and guilt have been greater than many, than most, or than *any* others. Mine iniquities have increased over my head, and my transgressions mount up to the very heavens. Look where I will, I can find no relief. Whether I look backward, inward, forward, or upward, all is dark and dreadful. My case is so peculiar, my sins are so aggravated, that I cannot apprehend that Divine grace should reach directly to such an one as me." I answer, are *any* guilty sinners excluded out of the proclamation of grace?‡ If they were, the gospel would cease to be glad tidings, not only to *you*, but to *every one* else; for we have *all* sinned and come short of the glory of God; and if God should mark iniquities, none could stand. You think that the gospel may be joyful tidings to others, but not to you. But why so? You say, "Because they are not so bad as I am, and have been." This is the same as to say, that because others are in some respects better than you, therefore they have more reason, and better ground to hope in Christ than you have. But whoever thinks thus, it is evident, does not apprehend the grace of God in Christ to be properly and directly free, and he imagines that he must be somewhat better than he is, before he may hope in Christ. But we are directly told, that Christ came into the world to save the *chief* of sinners; and that this faithful saying is worthy of all accep-

unmoved by love? Who should be of that class if he be not, whose very prayers and duties are sin? Who but those who know themselves unworthy, as you know yourself to be, can need favour shown to the *unworthy*? You answer, "If I felt myself unworthy, and sorrowed on this account, I should then be privileged to rest on this grace; but it is my utter want of feeling which convinces me that I must not take comfort from this consideration." Is not, then, your want of feeling one of the very worst signs of your state? Would not that of itself prove you wholly unworthy? And if you cannot even bring a wish, you must, indeed, come to *free* grace, since you are so entirely devoid of anything which can recommend you.

Again, you answer, that you would desire to do so, but that you do not truly believe in this free grace, or you know that you should rejoice to accept it, and that you find you cannot believe in it, your faith is so weak. Let, then, your want of faith be added to the countless list, still, still the free grace remains the same; you cannot pray, or read, or hear, or feel, or believe, but whilst grace means favour to the *unworthy*, and *free* is stamped on that favour, you must not, ought not to despair."—*Strong Consolation; or Letters to a Friend.*

* "The genuine gospel is a complete warrant for the most ungodly person to believe in Jesus.—*Booth.*

tation, and consequently of yours, whoever you be, or whatsoever you have been. You are right if you think yourself the chief of sinners; but you wrong the grace and gospel of Christ, if you think or say, that you are not as welcome as any sinner upon the face of this earth to the redemption by Jesus Christ.* In truth, such despondent and apparently humble confessions, if examined to the bottom, will be found, when they obstruct our hope, to be no more than the conviction and the regret that we want materials for erecting an altar to our pride; that we are destitute of a justifying righteousness, which we are anxiously labouring after; they are but the painful lamentation arising out of the disappointed desire of attaining life, as it were by the works of the law; and they consist well, if we look into them seriously, with the notion, that there is a great deal of good in our hearts, in our motives, if not in our actions, though there be somewhat lacking, at the same time, to give us perfect confidence before God.†

6. Another may be saying in his thoughts, "But after all that the Gospel reveals, it is no comforting or satisfying news to me, because I remember Christ did not purchase this redemption for *all*

* "There is but very little said in God's book about the salvation of *little sinners*; because that would not answer the *design* (of the book) to bring glory to the name of the Son of God. When Christ was crucified, and hanged up between the earth and the heavens, there were two thieves crucified with him, and behold, he lays hold of one of them, and will have him away to glory with him. Was not this a strange act, and a display of unthought-of grace? Were there none but thieves there or were the rest of that company out of his reach? Could he not, think you, have stooped from the cross to the ground, and laid hold on some honest man if he would? Yes, doubtless. Oh, but then he would not have displayed his grace, nor so have displayed his designs, namely, to get to himself a praise and a name; but now he has done it to purpose. For who that shall read this story, but must confess, that the Son of God is full of grace: for a proof of the riches thereof he left behind him when upon the cross, he took the thief away with him to glory. Nor can this one act of his be buried: It will be talked of to the end of the world to his praise."—*Hun. on.*

† "The blood of Jesus Christ tells us sad humbling truths as regards ourselves, though it tells us joyful news as regards God's mercy and love. It tells us that we are all alike condemned as sinners before God, so that the poor degraded harlot is entitled to mercy as much as the most upright, decent, and moral. It tells us that the heart, the whole nature, the whole man,—body, soul, and spirit, reason, understanding, all—is, in every individual, so corrupt, so filthy, so fallen, that nothing but the precious blood of God's own Son can enable the very best to stand guiltless before him. Yes, and even that the very best stands in as much need of it as

mankind, neither has God purposed it for *all*; and therefore, though I know that those who shall be saved, are saved by grace quite free and sovereign, yet I can be no way comforted by this, because I have no marks or evidences in my favour, to prove that I am one of the number of the elected and redeemed. I can therefore, only entertain a general possibility that I may be saved as well as another; but this is far from being sufficient to afford peace to my soul and conscience."

I readily reply, it is a real and important truth, that election and redemption are thus particular and sovereign, not universal nor conditional. But remember, though, the redemption by Christ is not universal in its *intention*, yet it is so in its *proclamation*, which is to be universally believed for salvation: John iii. 14—19. Read over these verses and you may see that here are good news, here are glad tidings indeed, presented to gain the confidence of poor helpless sinners. This free grace requires no previous marks or evidences of our own particular election or redemption, in order to afford immediate relief to the mind in believing it to be thus open and free.* It is true, God by his word requires us to believe the doctrines of particular election and redemption, in order to give us a view of the sovereignty of his grace, and to prevent us from thinking it to be any way conditional, or suspended upon any actings of ours. But yet it does by no means require us to believe our own particular election or redemption, in order to our hope Godward. It presents the redemption of Jesus Christ directly before us, full and free: and whosoever this takes proper effect upon the mind, conscience, and conduct, this is the proper and sure evidence of our own elec-

tion. It brings all to one sad level of ruin, guilt, and sin. It proves the fairest the most lovely, to be as tainted and loathsome as the wretched harlot who is abandoned and scorned by all. Do you want deliverance? Do you wish to escape from judgment, you must find it where it is alike open to the vilest and most worthless,—in the blood of Jesus Christ. Your life is forfeited, your inheritance is death and judgment; nothing can avail for your redemption but seeing this guilt, this curse, this ruin, laid upon another."—*Amon.*

* "The doctrine of election is never introduced to narrow the door. The door of gospel grace stands open night and day, and the motto over it remains (though Satan has ever tried to erase it). 'Whosoever will let him enter.' Election never was intended to stand between the sinner and the sinner's Saviour."—*J. H. Evans.*

tion. For our election of God is known by the Gospel coming with power, 1 The. i. 4, 5. Say not then, Who shall send into heaven to see whether our names are in the book of life? But look into the Gospel, and see whether thy name as a sinner be not *there*, and whether the grace therein revealed is not free for thee and for any.*

7. Another's thought may be working this way:—"But, alas, after all you can say or I can find in the word about the freedom of Divine grace, it gives me no satisfaction; for I know that the work of the Holy Spirit is necessary to bring the soul and Christ together; and because I do not find his influence upon my heart, I am therefore greatly perplexed, and at as great a loss almost as if there was no such gospel preached to me."

I answer, it is very certain and undoubted that the Spirit's work is necessary, sovereign and effectual. But what then? Must we *feel* or be conscious of any work of the Spirit upon our hearts, before we believe the testimony of free

grace to the satisfaction of our consciences? If so, this would utterly overturn the open freedom of the grace of God; and the work of the Spirit would be so explained and conceived as to stand in opposition to the word of the Gospel. In my view, there is scarcely a clearer proof of the necessity of the Spirit's work to show us the true grace of God, than the continual propensity appearing in us thus to pervert it or mistake it, and to aim at placing even the consciousness of the Spirit's work between a free Christ and our souls. The Spirit's work is to show us the things of Christ, and to make us know the grace of God in the truth. Read the account given of His work and office in John xvi. 7—11, and 1 Cor. ii. 9—16, where it is most fully explained; and there you will see that this work does by no means stand in opposition to the freedom of Gospel grace; but on the contrary, it is a confirmation of it, for he sets his seal to it when he brings this free grace to our minds, and so gives us peace and satisfaction from it.†

8. The mind of another person may be perplexed in this way:—"I can receive no satisfaction to my soul from the gospel report, because the Scripture says, *unless a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God*. Now I know not whether I am regenerated or not; I cannot find to my satisfaction that I have any principle of grace in my heart; and therefore

* "The righteousness of Christ, therefore, consisting in the obedience and death demanded by the law under which all men are placed, is adapted for all men. It is also of in-to value, being the righteousness of the eternal Son of God, and therefore sufficient for all. On these two grounds, its adaptation to all, and its sufficiency for all, rests the offer made in the Gospel to all. With this, its design has nothing to do; who are to be saved by it we do not know. It is of such a nature and value, that whosoever accepts of it shall be saved. If one of the non-elect should believe, (though the hypothesis is on various accounts unreasonable) to him that righteousness should be imputed to his salvation. And if one of the elect should not believe, or, having believed, should apostatize, he would certainly perish. Those suppositions are made simply to show, that according to our doctrine, the reason why any man perishes, is not that there is no righteousness provided suitable and adequate to his case, or that it is not freely offered to all that hear the Gospel, but simply because he wilfully rejects the proffered salvation. Our doctrine therefore, provides for the universal offer of the Gospel, and for the righteous condemnation of unbelievers, as thoroughly as Dr Beman's. It opens the door for mercy, as far as legal obstacles are concerned, as fully as his; while it meets all the other revealed facts of the case. It is not a theory for one fact. It includes them all,—the fact that Christ died by covenant for his own people; that love for his own sheep led him to lay down his life; that his death renders their salvation absolutely certain; that it opens the way for the offer of salvation to all men, and shows the justice of the condemnation of unbelief. *No man perishes from the want of an atonement*, is the doctrine of the Synod of Dort, it is also our doctrine."—*Hodge*.

"Forasmuch as many, being called by the gospel, do not repent nor believe in Christ, but perish in their infidelity, this comes not to pass for want of or by any insufficiency of the sacrifice of Christ, offered upon the cross, but by their own default."—*Synod of Dort*. Ch. Art. 6.

* "How wickedly the preacher contradi-ct all these oracles of God who offers Christ and his salvation to man, provided they be sincere, or sensible sinners, or hunger and thirst after righteousness."—*John Brown of Huddington*.

† "For a day or two of this week my mind was a good deal impressed, in consequence of a small tract which Mr. Gentle gave me, called 'Brief Thoughts, It met one feeling or indeed hindrance, to the reception of the gospel, which I entertained. 'I feel I cannot believe--it seems an impossibility; how then can I receive the offers of the gospel, which I acknowledge to be perfectly free? The author insists that the mind is here taken up with examining its own feelings, not in looking to the object—that this is virtually denying the freeness of the gospel, as it makes our consciousness of possessing faith the condition on which we will accept the gospel offer, instead of at once laying hold of this. I must indeed acknowledge this to be true. I have been all along looking too much into the state of my own feelings, and examining whether I had faith, and lamenting the want of it, instead of contemplating the glorious object Himself, or of endeavouring to bring my own mind to bear upon the unconditional freeness of the gospel and its suitability to my needs. Instead of coming unto Christ, by fixing my eye upon him, that so I might be drawn to him. I have been engaging myself in ascertaining how to co-act."—*M^r Donald's Life*.

I can have no true pleasure or peace, unless I can, someway or other, be assured of this." In this manner many sculs bring in abundance of objections against themselves, and make the glad tidings of salvation in Christ of none effect to them, because they conceive that a *consciousness* of their own regeneration is previously necessary to peace and hope God-ward.*

But remember, such is the freeness of grace, that an assurance of our being regenerated is in no way previously necessary to our resting our souls upon free forgiveness proclaimed in the gospel. Suppose, then, you do not know your own regeneration, should this hinder you, should this discourage you from believing free forgiveness, and so enjoying a conscious interest therein by faith? Remember likewise, that so far as the thought of these defects *discourages* you, so far they intimate that you are seeking encouragement some way in and from yourselves. But, behold, *all* this which you imagine you must be conscious of, in order to beget and maintain hope towards God; all this, I say, is the *effect* of the faith of the gospel upon the mind; for we are regenerated by the word of truth, James i. 18. It is therefore a sight and sense of this free-grace truth which lies at the bottom of all the genuine change made in our thoughts, affections, and conduct.†

9. But some may farther say—"Faith is necessary to salvation: Now I cannot find any faith in me; I cannot exert the act of trusting aright. I am not able, I have not strength to believe." I reply, if

* "The least recommendation of sincerity, repentance, good purposes, or words, as the *ground of our warrant and welcome* to receive Jesus Christ as a Saviour, or a cause or condition of our title to salvation, or a ground of our full possession of it, tends to subvert the glorious gospel."—*John Brown of Haddington.*

† "Having put the work of the Spirit in the place of the work of Christ, the confidence I am commanded to hold fast never exists, and I doubt whether I am in the faith at all. All this results from substituting the work of the Spirit of God in me, for the work, victory, resurrection, and ascension of Christ actually accomplished: the *sure* (because finished) resting-place of faith, which never alters, never varies, and is always the same before God: If it be said, 'Yes, but I cannot see it as plain, because of the flesh and unbelief.'—this does not alter the truth: and to whatever extent this dimness proceeds, treat it as unbelief and sin,—not as the state of a christian, or as God hiding His face. The discovery of sin in you, hateful, and detestable as it is, is no ground for doubting because it was by reason of this, to atone for this, because you were this, that Christ died, and Christ is risen, and there is an end of that question."—*Inon.*

by this complaint you mean that you can not believe divine grace to be so free that you may directly rest your soul upon it; that you are not persuaded of the free ability of Christ to save to the uttermost; then I am called upon to offer evidence for it from the Divine word and to prove it from thence to your conviction, on purpose that you may be persuaded of it, and satisfied by it.*

But if you still say—"I have no doubt about that: only I can receive no comfort from it, for want of having, and discerning faith, and its exercises and actings in my soul;" then it is evident you are now conceiving faith and its actings in such a light as to be a sort of objection to the open direct freeness of divine grace; and so instead of believing it, you do in fact object to it. Whereas, if you did really in its proper view believe it, you would not make your want of anything in yourself (call it faith or by any other name) an objection, but would directly have hope and relief from what you believe concerning the grace of God in Christ; and being thus encouraged and relieved, you would then know experimentally, what it is to hope, trust, and love, which you strive at otherwise in vain.

* Thus wrote William Guthrie—"Some conceive faith to be a difficult mysterious thing, hardly attainable. To these I say do not mistake, faith is not so difficult as many apprehend it to be. We often drive such from their just rest and quiet, by making them apprehend faith to be some deep mysterious thing, and by exciting unnecessary doubts about it, whereby it is needlessly darkened."—*Trial of a Saving Interest.*

"But here, perhaps, some one may be ready to say, 'Faith is the gift of God, and I do not find he has given me that gift; I cannot believe, though I much desire it.' To such a one I would answer, Faith is undoubtedly the gift of God, but the power to believe and trust does not lie where such as you generally think it does, namely, in a *certain active energy in the mind; but it lies in the fullness and clearness of the evidence of the truth, and a capacity to receive it.*"

"These words of an old author may help perhaps to clear up the vague and mystical idea which many have of faith, as being some indescribable and mysterious act or process of mind through which they must be made to pass in order to be saved.

"It may be well to notice here the error of some, as to the *act* of faith, as if that were the justifying thing. It was one of the errors charged against Arminius by Gomarus, at one of their Conferences, that 'Faith itself or the act of believing was our righteousness by which we are justified before God.' And the Westminster Confession affirms that these are justified "not for any thing wrought in them or done by them, but for Christ's sake alone; not by imputing faith itself, the act of believing, or any other evangelical obedience to them as their righteousness, but by imputing the obedience and satisfaction of Christ to them."—Chap. xi.

THE OLD WAY AND THE NEW.

When God made man at first He entered into a covenant with him, the terms of which were that man was to obey, and be rewarded. The spirit of this covenant is, work and wages; do and live; give to God and get from God. Man fell through disobedience. He failed in his part of the agreement, and the covenant was thereby broken.

But the Gospel has introduced a new covenant, not now of works but of grace. The new covenant is quite the reverse of the old in all respects. It is not now, do and live; but live and do. It is turned right round: and that man may meet God face to face he must be turned right round also, ere he can chime in with God's way of life. Ye *must* be born again. Except ye be *converted*, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Our instinct is, do and live; do and get; obey the whole law, and get the whole reward. Our system of dealing with man—and we transfer it to our dealing with God—is, give, and get value for what you have given; do, and get the reward of what you have done. This is the old way, and it harmonizes well with the old covenant. And if man could have always kept all the law of God, he would still be entitled to all the reward of obedience. But this is impossible. So soon as we have broken the law of God, were it only once, we are put out of court. We have no longer so much as a standing ground on which to try obedience. We must find a new way, and this God hath found for us in the obedience of another, the God-man. Being God His obedience is infinitely worthy, being man His obedience is human in its form, and meets all our needs. Being God His death is of infinite value, and being man He was a fit substitute for man the guilty. God's new covenant is, believe in Him and live. The Gospel way is, get pardon, and righteousness, the purchase of the Saviour's obedience and death; get, as a gift of grace, redemption and all its associated blessings, here, and hereafter; and then, melted by this undeserved goodness, and constrained by this unspeakable love of God in the gift of His Son, you will learn to obey the commandments

of Him that loved you, died for you, and hath washed you from your sins in His own blood. Until we first get from God we can give Him nothing but sin, and deserve from Him nothing but condemnation. Obedience, rendered by a sinner, is sin. It cannot win the favour of God, but woos His curse. Till a rebel has laid down his arms, and been pardoned, all he does is rebellion. Obedience, since the fall, cannot take its place as an antecedent, it follows as a consequent: it does not stand first as a cause, it follows as an effect. The old way is, he who obeys is justified; the new way is, he who is justified obeys. It is not now, the obedient shall live, but the living shall obey. It is not now, do this thing and I will save you: but *because* I have redeemed you, *therefore* you shall keep my commandments. The law of God still stands; it must still be kept. Of old it was an answer to this question, what shall I do to be saved? now it is an answer to this other question, what shall I, a saved man, do? You are bought with a price, *therefore* glorify God. Being justified by faith we have peace with God.

The Gospel is a gift of grace; it is not of works, lest any man should boast. The old way had its reward at the end, the new way has its reward at the beginning. A man in debt struggles on, but interest accumulates, difficulties thicken, and, as a consequence, his spirit is broken, and he gets ever deeper into the mire. But pay his debts, start him afresh, and anew, and the old energy wakens up and is all the stronger for its crushing overthrow. This is the Gospel. A sinner who tries to keep the law is constantly struggling on under the burden of an ever accumulating debt, and therefore his obedience is fitful, and forced. But when the Gospel comes, and bids the man go free: when it says "Behold I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment," then the man rejoices in all the peace of believing; and so of new obedience; feeling that his feet are on a rock, his goings are established; and hence the new song of praise rises unbidden to his lips—"O let my soul live, and it shall praise Thee"—life precedes praise. Until a man gets a ground of trust, he cannot proceed in the path of obedience. We must be

delivered from our system of do, that we may get; and moulded into God's system of get, that we may do. God has made known to us a new covenant, our hearts must be made new that we may close with it. In the death of the God-man we must see the payment of our debts, and the bearing away of our curse. In the obedience of the God-man we must see our work done, and an everlasting righteousness for us brought in. Seeing this from the heart, and closing our empty soul upon it is faith; and when we have thus embraced God's grace revealed to us in the Gospel we come to understand how peace is got by believing. God answers our question of what shall I do, by a "believe;" only believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.

This is good news. Most people think the news too good to be true. They cannot see how all this can be possible. How can these things be? They judge of God by themselves. "Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself." They forget that God has said, "For My thoughts are not your thoughts; neither are your ways My ways, saith the Lord." The Gospel was at its first announcement, declared to be "good tidings of great joy." And it is so because it comes giving all. It gives all grace in time, all glory in eternity. It comes with mercy, pardon, righteousness, strength, grace, holiness. God gives all. He demands nothing, and takes nothing, but what He gives. And all this is done at the very beginning of the new life. The first step of the Gospel is, the passing of an act of amnesty for all the past. The ground of this act God finds in Himself, and not in us. It is because of what Christ has done that any man is justified, accepted, sanctified, saved. Hence we need no preparation on our part. Sin has already prepared us. Hence, we can neither bribe nor buy our way to God. And hence, also, when a man is bidden to this feast he should simply rise and run, because cleansing and clothing are provided for all the guests; and none are permitted to sit down at the King's table till they are washed in the blood, and clothed in the righteousness, of the King's Son. Purity of heart will not, with us, obtain pardon, for our hearts are deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: 'till pardon obtained will purify

the heart. We do not come with a pure heart to purchase pardon: but we come with our hearts as they are to obtain a pardon already purchased, by the purity and death of another, that thereby, purged from an evil conscience, we may serve God in holiness, and righteousness, before Him all the days of our life.

On one or other of these two ways we are all walking. Every man is either condemned in Adam or accepted in Christ. There is no neutral ground. He that believeth shall be saved; and he that believeth not shall be damned. In Christ there is no condemnation: out of Christ there is no salvation. Christ saves: He will not have your work and His commingled, as the ground of your acceptance with God, your title to heaven. Christ is either life or death eternal. Whoso buildeth on this Rock is safe from every flood: on whomsoever this Stone shall fall it shall grind him to powder, and He falls on all who are not built on Him. Each man must meet Christ either as Saviour or Judge: and if our Judge is not also our Saviour we can expect nothing at His hand but condemnation. Kiss the Son, therefore, lest He be angry and ye perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. The Lord shall judge His people. But it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

"OH, HOW HE LOVES."

. As I looked into a house one day, I happened to be humming over the first verse of that beautiful, well-known hymn—

—"Oh, how he loves."

"Oh, I know that," said a young mother; "I learned it at the Sabbath-school."

"Where was that?" I inquired.

"At St. M.," naming a village which I knew.

"Do you remember the second verse?"

"I'm not very sure, just now."

I sung softly—

"Blessed Jesus! would'st thou know Him,

Oh, how He loves!

Give thyself entirely to Him,

Oh, how He loves!"

Putting my hand upon her shoulder, and looking earnestly into her face, I asked,

"Have you given yourself to the Lord?"

"No; I am sorry to say I have not."

"What!" said I, "you, the mother of two children, and you have not given yourself to the Lord! (2 Cor. viii. 5; Isa. liv. 5; Gal. ii. 20, Cant. ii. 16.) How can you bring *them* up in the 'nurture and admonition of the Lord,' if you have not given yourself to Him? What an awful thing it must be for you at the last and great day, if your own children should rise up in judgment against you and say, 'Our own mother did not teach us the way of life!'"

The tears came trickling down her cheeks as I spoke; for the arrow of conviction had gone to her heart. I commended her to the love of Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for many, and whose blood cleanseth us from all sin, and left her in deep concern about her soul. After that I called occasionally, and also got a female friend, who knew the Lord, to visit her. She pointed her to the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world. Her husband noticed her anxiety of mind, and sent her to a relative's house in the country, thinking that a change might do her good. But this was fruitless, for

"None but Jesus can do helpless sinners good."

She continued struggling with her convictions of sin for six weeks, when one day, on meeting her female friend, she said to me—

"Have you seen I ——— lately?"

"Not for a day or two," I replied.

"You will find a change upon her now."

"I am glad to hear of it, if it be the great change of a new heart."

"Well, she told me that her misery under the sense of sin had become to her so unbearable, that last night she went on her knees before God to plead, and resolved not to rise till she found Christ; and she did find Him, or He rather found her. He revealed Himself unto her, as the chiefest among ten thousand, and altogether lovely."

I soon afterwards saw her, and found her rejoicing in the Lord. She told me, as above related, and used words so expressive of her faith in a realised Saviour,

that He seemed to have come to her in bodily presence.

This is above three years since; she has had many sore afflictions, but she cleaves unto the Lord, who has hitherto helped her, and continues to fight the good fight of faith.

There are one or two remarks I wish to make on the above before I have done; and—

First, I would ask every mother who reads this, Are *you* converted? Are you the Lord's? It is a very solemn thing to have your children growing up for time and for eternity. If *you* are unsaved, how can you show them the way to be saved? What will become of their precious souls if you, their mother, do not know Jesus? If you do not know, or care whether your own soul be saved, surely you would not wish to bring up a graceless family for earthly misery and eternal ruin! O mothers, as you would not have your children curse you in hell for ever, come to Jesus now, and then tell them of His dying love and free salvation, and rest not until they are all safe for eternity.

Second, I must confess that the above way of dealing with the woman's soul, though used by God's spirit to awaken her, by laying solemn responsibility upon her conscience, was not the proper, direct method of presenting the gospel of Christ as God has laid it down in the Scriptures. I thank God that I know that precious gospel a little better now, and that I recognise it as *pure grace giving Jesus to us*, and not the giving ourselves to Him, although that is certain to be done in the case of every converted soul. For one thing, the proper version of the hymn gives the pure gospel of Christ, and reads thus:—

" 'Tis eternal life to know Him,

Oh, how he loves!

Think, O think how much we owe Him;

Oh, how he loves!

With His precious blood He bought us;

In the wilderness He sought us,

To His fold he safely brought us;

Oh, how He loves!"

That is a very different gospel from the other, which, properly speaking, has more of *law* than *gospel* in it, and its only effect

on the woman's soul was that of *law*, for conviction and misery were the result. It is quite right to impress on every creature the obligation to be the Lord's, and to lay responsibility on every sinner's conscience in the sight of God; but when we wish to state the glorious gospel, and point lost sinners the way to be saved, we must speak of God making provision for meeting all our unfulfilled responsibilities by giving us His Son Jesus Christ. Blessed Lamb of God! "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we being dead to sins, should live to righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed."

May the love of God our Saviour constrain us more and more to love Him and serve Him with our wholeheart, and mind, and strength, and show the depth of our love by the breadth of our obedience!—*British Herald.*

THE ABIDING COMFORTER.

"And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever."—John xiv. 16.

When one beloved earthly friend is taken away, how the heart is drawn out towards those that remain! Jesus was now about to leave His sorrowing disciples. He directs them to one whose presence would fill up the vast blank His own absence was to make. His name was, *The Comforter*; His mission was, "to abide with them for ever." Accordingly, no soon^r had the gates of heaven closed on their ascended Lord, than, in fulfilment of His own gracious promise, the bereaved and orphaned Church was baptiz^d with Pentecostal fire. "When I depart, I will send Him unto you."

Reader! do you realize your privilege—living under the dispensation of the Spirit? Is it your daily prayer that He may come down in all the plenitude of His heavenly graces on your soul, even "as rain upon the mown grass and showers that water the earth?" You cannot live without Him; there can be not one heavenly aspiration, not one breathing of love, not one upward glance of faith, without His gracious influences. Apart from Him, there is no preciousness in the Word, no

blessing in ordinances, no permanent sanctifying results in affliction. As the angel directed Hagar to the hidden spring, this blessed agent, true to His name and office, directs His people to the waters of comfort, giving new glory to the promises, investing the Saviour's character and work with new loveliness and beauty.

How precious is the title which this "Word of Jesus" gives Him—*THE COMFORTER!* What a word for a sorrowing world! The Church militant has its tent pitched in a "valley of tears." The name of the divine visitant who comes to her and ministers to her wants, is—*Comforter.*—Wide is the family of the afflicted, but He has a healing balm for all—the weak, the tempted, the sick the sorrowing, the bereaved, the dying! How different from other "sons of consolation!" *Human friends*—a look may alienate; adversity may estrange; death must separate! The "Word of Jesus" speaks of One whose attribute and prerogative is to "abide with for ever;" superior to all vicissitudes—surviving death itself!

And surely if anything else can endear His mission of love to His Church, it is that he comes direct from God, as the fruit and gift of *Jesus' intercession*—"I will pray the Father," This holy dove of peace and comfort is let out by the hand of Jesus from the ark of covenant mercy within the veil! Nor is the gift more glorious than it is free. Does the word—the look, of a suffering child get the eye and the heart of an *earthly* father?—"If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit unto them that ask Him?" It is He who makes these "words of Jesus" winged words."—*Macduff.*

DEATH.

Death is a solemn thing! Death is a great King, a great Conqueror. It may be a pauper dying. But how death magnifies even a dying pauper!

"Stranger! however great,
With lowly reverence bow;
There's one in that poor shed,
One in that paltry bed
Greater than thou."

Perhaps you put off all thoughts of death?

Perhaps you think that such things as winding-sheets and coffins are only made for the old, the decrepid, and the infirm. The number of little graves in every churchyard tell the contrary. I once had a little friend, a bright, blooming girl of fourteen years of age. Often and often had I listened with delight to her musical performances, often had I listened with pleasure to her merry songs. One day while at school she was taken ill, and in a short time she died. The merry voice had sung its last song. The pliant fingers which had run so lightly over the keys of the piano, had played their last merry tune. That smiling, bright-eyed girl is now in her grave.

My dear friend, the fallen leaves around you may be the last you will ever see. The next summer leaves may bloom over your grave.

What are you living for? Pleasure! Alas! worldly pleasure is but the steamboat carrying your soul to unending misery! At high pressure you are rushing on to everlasting burnings. With all your pleasure are you really happy? Does not your soul tell you there is something wanting? Does not this gaudy colouring of pleasure conceal a mine of unhappiness in your heart? Does it not give you as little real comfort as the gay uniform of a soldier drawn over his mortal wound eases his pain? Does the scarlet coat and gold epaulette ease the smarting flesh? Does the gay speech and laugh ease the smarting soul?

Would you live for eternity?

Jesus, God's only Son, says, "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." O what rest does Jesus give! Pardon to the guilty; happiness to the miserable; peace to the troubled, aching mind. O accept His wonderful invitation. Say, "Lord Jesus, give me Thy Holy Spirit, to enable me to believe in Thee."—*The Evening Hour.*

THE LOVED ONE ABSENT.

BY THE LATE REV. J. SMITH, CHELTENHAM.

"Oh that I knew where I might find him!" (Job xxiii. 3).

The happiness of the believer consists very much in the presence of God, and a sense of his love. It is not place, or circumstances, or friends, but God himself as revealed in Jesus. Anywhere, in any condition, in company, or alone, we can be happy if we realize that God is present, and can enter into communion with him. It is very commonly the case, that at first,

believers are indulged with much of the sweet and sensible presence of God, so that they walk in the light of his countenance, and cast every care upon him. But often, for wise reasons, though to us unknown, he hides his face from us, and requires us to follow him in the dark, walking by faith, and not by sight. This was pretty much the case with Job, when he cried out so plaintively, "*Oh that I knew where I might find him!*"

In such seasons as this, there is often much darkness of soul, and the Lord Jesus is lost sight of. We feel that we are at a distance from the object of our love, trust, and confidence. Then, too, our sins are apt to stare us in the face, or lie like a burden on our consciences. From this arises a fear of wrath, and painful anticipations of the displeasure of God. Past mercies and comforts crowd around us, only as if to aggravate our woe; and the recollection of the privileges we once enjoyed, appear to torment us so much the more. Our duties now become irksome, our prayers seem to be shut out, and we think that the Lord has become inattentive to our cries. Like the prophet, we feel as if he had hedged up our way with hewn stone, or compassed us with thorns, so that we cannot escape from our gloom, or obtain a glimpse of our Father's love. To a quickened soul, one who has been living near to God, and walking closely with God, such a state is fearful. Only a true Christian knows what it is, and he finds it very difficult to represent it, or set it forth. To be without our God, is to be without the light of our eyes, the joy of our hearts, the life of our souls. No wonder then, if a Christian in such a state cries out in bitterness of spirit, "*Oh that I knew where I might find him!*"

The desire of the soul is at once strong and fixed. I want to find not merely my lost comfort, but the source of it; not a blessing in the general, but the presence of my Beloved. "*Oh that I could find him!*" To find him, I would go anywhere. To find him, I would suffer anything. To find him, I would do anything. Without his presence, I can never be happy; I can never be satisfied; I shall never find a home. Without his presence, I visit the sanctuary in vain; I read the word with-

out profit; I pray and praise, but find neither relief nor pleasure. "*Oh that I could find him!*" I would frankly confess my ingratitude and guilt; I would show him my trouble and distress; I would reason and plead with him. I would tell my sorrows, acknowledge my faults, and inquire the reason why he hides himself from me, I would beseech him to turn again and have compassion upon me, I would plead his name, his promise, and his love, that he might once more indulge me, and favour me with his presence.

Reader are you a stranger to such experience as this? Very few, if any, who are taught by the Spirit are. They know what the presence of God is. They know what the presence of God is. They know what the smile of God means. They know too what it is to be left alone, alone in the closet, alone in the sanctuary, and alone in the world. For without the Lord's presence, no one feels more lonely than a believer. Nothing satisfies him. Nothing makes him happy. He feels so far weaned from everything here, that without God the world is a blank, and society not much better than a desert. Real religion always centres in God, feasts on God, and is satisfied alone with God. The teaching of the Holy Spirit brings us away from all other sources of peace and satisfaction, to God alone; and in God, as made known—Jesus, we find all we want, all we wish, all we can enjoy. Oh, blessed thought, having been brought to set our hearts on God, to find our happiness in God, soon, very soon we shall enjoy his perfect, perpetual presence, nor ever more sigh, or cry, "*Oh that I knew where I might find him!*"

FAMILY GOVERNMENT—HINTS ONLY.

BY REV. JOHN TODD, D.D.

CHILDHOOD.

I am speaking of those whose children are young—with characters unformed, with faculties undeveloped. Don't drop the paper saying to yourself: "I can't get time to read or plan. He can't sympathize with me. I have burdens heavy enough daily, without being lectured."

Softly, softly. It may be possible that if I can't relieve you of any of your burdens, I can help you to bear them. These little ones—the flowers of the hearth, the sunbeams in your dwelling, are worth to you and to themselves all your anxieties, and cares, and toils, and they will, if rightly trained, repay a thousand fold all they cost you. Remember that you are to your child a friend, a ruler, and a teacher. To control him, readily and fully, you must at all times govern yourself. If the child that you are irritable, hasty, ill-tempered and passionate—and he will understand this very early; I shall not now explain the reason why it is so—but the fact is undeniable that he who would control others, must control himself. If, then, you act and decide, say yes or no, smile or frown, according as you happen to feel at the moment, you make that child feel that you are as liable to treat him with injustice as otherwise. He can't respect passion or temper. You lose in this respect and also in his love. And your observation will teach you that among all your acquaintances, you can't think of one instance where parents have good family government, who cannot govern themselves.

Insist on prompt, cheerful obedience, and that without giving the reasons.

It is a very common mistake to appeal to the reason of your child and show him how reasonable your command is. The fact is, the child has no reason to which you can appeal. His reason must grow out of the experience of life. It is undeveloped as yet, and God has placed him in subjection to you, because you have reason and he has not. The child loves to discuss the matter, and debate the why and the wherefore, and if permitted, will often overpower the reason of parents by the most puerile assertions. You may cultivate the reasoning faculties of your child as much as you please, but it is not the time to do it when you have laid a command upon him. Some try to gain obedience by appealing to the love, or the shame, or the good opinion of others, but never seem to think that their commands are all the reasons the child needs. God does so. He lays his commands upon us without assigning the reasons why we should obey them. What a volume on

the rights of property might be written under the command, "Thou shalt not steal."

In family government it is very important that *the father and mother sustain each other.*

The child will early learn which parent yields soonest to importunity, and he will therefore if refused by the sterner one, never rest till he has tried the weaker. I shall not say which of the parents is oftener the soonest to yield. But when the child makes a request which you see fit to deny him, and he says, "Well, I'll go and ask father—I know he will let me," that father is making a great mistake. The mother, shut up, worn and troubled, wearied and discouraged by the constant supervision of her children, needs all the aid and support which the authority of a father can give her. The child should never feel that there is an appeal from the decisions of one parent to the good nature of the other. Even if you don't feel that the decision has been the wisest possible, don't let the child know that you feel so. Take it for granted that the decision has been right. Draw together, and let the voice of one be the voice of both.

Strive to develop your child slowly.

It is an inherent part of the American character to do things quick. We can't wait for trees to grow naturally. We must stimulate them, and then boast how early we made them bear fruit—forgetting that they must decay as early. We can't build a house. We must "slip it up."—We can't build a bridge that will last ages; we must "throw over the stream," and in a few years see it perish. We don't want to have boys and girls. They must leap from infancy into manhood. We must stimulate the child, see how fast we can cram and excite the brain, and develop the man in him. Hence we must have premature and immature and obscure men—all from most promising and precocious children. Whereas, the perfection of education is slow development. When you see the fond parent trying to show you how "forward" his child is, how "quick" he is, how he excels in his class, and when you see him trying to "show off" his darling, I beg you to commiserate the

child, and write it down in your book that the child will never be much of a man.—That slow, heavy boy, whose skull seems to be so thick that you cannot get an idea into it, you may be sure will develop slowly and long, and will retain every idea that ever gets into his skull. He is the boy that you may expect to make a strong, manly character. Willows sprout early and grow fast. The oak puts out its leaf late, and grows slowly. The one is woven into baskets, the other is bolted into ships. Don't feel elated because your child is precocious, don't feel discouraged because he seems slow and hard to acquire. In the end the turtle almost invariably beats the fox in the race. We could give examples enough to prove this.

You will find that a great deal of character is imparted and received at the table. Parents, too, often forget this; and therefore, instead of swallowing your food in sullen silence, instead of brooding over your business, instead of severely talking about others, let the conversation at the table be genial, kind, social and cheering. Don't bring disagreeable things to the table in your conversation any more than you would in your dishes. For this reason, too, the more good company you have at your table, the better for your children. Every conversation with company at your table, is an educator of the family. Hence the intelligence and the refinement, and the appropriate behaviour of the family which is given to hospitality. Never feel that intelligent visitors can be anything but a blessing to you and yours. How few have fully gotten hold of the fact that company and conversation at the table are no small part of education.

One thing more. There is one thing that will aid you to govern yourself, to decide rightly, to be kind, and yet firm, to govern your children, and to meet the responsibilities of life beyond all that I have said, and that is daily, humble, earnest prayer. This is the mightiest aid you can seize. Without it you will fail, but with it you can hardly be disappointed in your hopes and anxieties.—*Congregationalist.*

THE NAME THAT IS ABOVE
EVERY NAME.

Have you experimentally found that there is virtue in the name of Jesus? Have you ever suffered from deep depression of spirit, when all around you was dark and lowering, and no single ray of hope from earthly objects came struggling through the gloom, when you have felt as if all had forsaken you, and "no man cared for your soul?" At such an hour have you ever experienced the matchless power and efficacy of that name of love? Oh! there is in those short syllables a sound more soothing than the fanning of a seraph's wing, more musical than the melody of an angel's harp. For that name alone is able to sustain the sinking spirit, to bind up the broken heart, and to bring peace and comfort to the despairing soul. Nay, more, that name can bring what no other name which the lips of man have ever uttered can aspire to bring—pardon and acceptance to the most hardened, most rebellious, most God-forgetting spirit amongst us all. He was "called Jesus, because he came to save his people from the guilt, the power, the consequences of their sin." Has, then, the name no charms for you? Have you heard it often, and does it convey no pleasurable feelings to your heart? We do not usually hear the name unmoved of one we love; the quickened ear catches the sound amidst a thousand voices; and of a thousand names hears that and that alone; the throbbing heart beats faster and higher when that name is mentioned, for it comes laden with the recollection of past joys, and hopes of future happiness. So it is to the true children of God with the name of Jesus their Saviour, Redeemer, Friend; it reminds them of all that God has done for their souls, of all the assurances of pardon and peace which that blessed name has sealed to them—of those short and transient moments of close and intimate communion with him who bears that name which they have already realized; of those ages, those eternal ages of happiness and joy, which they yet hope to spend in the Redeemer's presence, and amidst the endearments of the Redeemer's love. Blessed, thrice blessed are you, who can in that

holy name recognize One who has saved you from your sins, who is the best beloved of your soul now, and who, "when your heart and flesh fail you, shall be the strength of your heart and portion forever."—*Blunt.*

SPEAK GENTLY.

BY GEORGE WASHINGTON LANGFORD.

Speak gently! it is better far
To rule by love than fear;
Speak gently! let no harsh words mar
The good we might have here.

Speak gently! Love doth whisper low
The vows that true hearts bind;
And gently friendship's accents flow:
Affection's voice is kind.

Speak gently to the little child;
Its love be sure to gain;
Teach it in accents soft and mild—
It may not long remain.

Speak gently to the young, for they
Will have enough to bear—
Pass through this life as best they may,
'Tis full of anxious care.

Speak gently to the aged one;
Grieve not the care-worn heart;
The sands of life are nearly run;
Let such in peace depart.

Speak gently, kindly, to the poor;
Let no harsh tone be heard;
They have enough they must endure,
Without an unkind word.

Speak gently to the erring—know
How frail are all! how vain!
Perchance unkindness made them so;
Oh! win them back again.

Speak kindly! He who gave His life
To bend man's stubborn will,
When elements were fierce with strife,
Said to them, "Peace—be still."

Speak gently! 'tis a little thing
Dropp'd in the heart's deep well;
The good the joy, which it may bring,
Eternity-halls tall

SELF-COMMUNION.

By Rev. Octavius Winslow, D. D.

Concluded from page 34.

And, then, as to the *dealings of our heavenly Father*, how close should be our self-communion! God deals with us that we might deal with ourselves, and then with Him. An affliction often recalls our thoughts and sympathies and care from others, and concentrates them upon our more neglected self. "*They made me the keeper of the vineyard, but mine own vineyard have I not kept.*" Why has the Lord, perhaps, taken you apart from the activities of life, from the duties of your family, and from the religious engagements which have been so exciting and absorbing? Just that in this lone hour, in this quiet chamber, on this bed of sickness and reflection, you might be the better schooled in the much-neglected duty of self-communion. God would have you now ascertain the why and the wherefore of this present discipline: what backsliding this stroke is to correct; what sin this chastening is to chide; what declension this probing is to discover; what neglected duty this rebuke is to make known; what disobeyed command this rod is to reveal. Oh, how needed and wholesome and precious is self-communion now! Never, perhaps, before has your heart been laid open to such inspection, subjected to such scrutiny, submitted to such tests. Never have you been brought into such close contact with yourself; never has self-communion appeared to you so needed, so solemn, and so blessed as in this quiet chamber.—Ah, much-abused, much-neglected heart! how have I allowed thee to wander, to be enamoured, enchained; won, and possessed by others! How has thy spiritual verdure withered, how have thy fresh springs dried, thy beauty faded, and thy strength decayed! How cold, how inconstant, how

unfaithful, how unkind hast thou been to thy best, thy dearest, thy heavenly Friend! But for the restraints of His grace and the constraints of His love, and the checks of His gentle corrections, whither, oh, whither wouldst thou have gone? I thank thee, Lord for Thy discipline—for the shaded path, the severed tie, the lonely sorrow, the loving, lenient correction that recalls my heart to Thee!

Commune with your own heart to ascertain its state touching the existence and exercise of *the spirit of thanksgiving and praise*. There is scarcely any part of our religious experience that receives less attention and insight than this. And in consequence of its neglect, we lose much personal holiness and God much glory. *Praise* is as much an element of our Christianity, as distinctly a duty and a privilege, as prayer. And yet how little of it do we exhibit! We are so absorbed by the trials and discouragements of the Christian pilgrimage as to overlook its blessings and its helps. We dwell so much upon the sombre colouring of the daily picture of life as to be insensible to its brighter hues. But did we deal more with the good and less with the evil; did we weigh our mercies with our trials; were we to reflect that if one sorrow is sent, how much heavier a sorrow that one may have prevented,—if one trial comes, how much greater that trial might have been,—and that when the Lord sends us one discomfort, or permits one reverse, He sends us many comforts, and crowns our arms with many victories,—that there is not a dispensation of His providence, whatever its form and complexion, that is not a vehicle of mercy that does not breathe a beatitude,—that the blessing of God, the smile of Jesus, and the voice of the spirit's love, are in every event and incident and circumstance of our history,—then, what a more thankful, praiseful spirit should we cherish! how

should we examine our hearts to discover and expel thence the lurking spirit of murmur and rebellion and fretting against the Lord! how should we uplift every window, and remove every veil that would admit the beams of God's goodness entering and penetrating every recess, and lighting up the entire soul with the sun-shine of mercy, and making it vocal with the music of praise! I have exhorted you, beloved reader, to cultivate self-communion as to the matter of prayer; with equal point and earnestness do I exhort you to this holy duty as to the matter of *praise*. There exists a serious defect in the Christianity, a sad lack in the religious experience of many of the Lord's people touching this holy exercise. The Lord has declared, "*Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me.*"—And the holy apostle, speaking by the Spirit, exhorts, "*Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication, with THANKSGIVING, let your requests be made known unto God.*" And in another place we learn how comprehensive is this precept, "*Giving THANKS always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,*" (Eph. v. 20.) Thanks always for ALL things! Then I am to cultivate a feeling of *gratitude* and to breathe a spirit of *praise* for all that my God and Father pleases to send me. I am *always* to be in a thankful, praiseful spirit for all the dispensations of His providence and grace. What a holy state will my soul then be in! What happiness will it ensure to my heart, and what a revenue of glory will accrue to God! How will it lighten my burdens, soothe my cares, heal the chaffings of sorrow, and shed gleams of sunshine upon many a lonely, dreary stage of my journey. I am too little praiseful. I am looking only to the crossing of my will, to the disappointment of my hopes, to the foil of my plans, to what my Father sees fit to

restrain and withhold, and not to the mercies and blessings, bright as the stars which glow and chime above me, and numerous as the sands of the ocean upon which in pensive sadness I tread; therefore it is that while those stars chant His praise and those sands speak His goodness and power, I alone am silent! And yet, my Father, there is *nothing* in Thyself nor in Thy dealings which ought not to inspire my deepest gratitude and praise to Thee!

"I thank Thee, O my God, who made
The earth so bright;
So full of splendour and of joy,
Beauty and light;
- So many glorious things are here,
Noble and right!

"I thank Thee, too, that Thou hast made
Joy to abound;
So many gentle thoughts and deeds
Circling us round,
That in the darkest spot on earth
Some love is found.

"I thank Thee more that all our joy
Is touch'd with pain;
That shadows fall on brightest hours;
That thorns remain;
So that earth's bliss may be our guide,
And not our chain.

"For Thou who knowest, Lord, how soon
Our weak heart clings,
Hast given us joys, tender and true,
Yet all with wings,
So that we see, gleaming on high,
Diviner things!

"I thank Thee, Lord, that Thou hast kept
The best in store;
We have enough, yet not too much
To wish for more;
A yearning for a deeper peace,
Not known before.

"I thank Thee, Lord, that here our souls,
Though amply blest,
Can never find, although they seek,
A perfect rest;
Nor ever shall, until they lean
On Jesus' breast!"*

If, my beloved reader, there is one caution which I would urge with deeper emphasis of meaning and solemnity of spirit than another, it is this—be not satisfied without the clearest evidence of the personal possession of HEART-RELIGION.—In nothing does there exist a greater tendency, a more easy road to fatal self-destruction than in this. The substitutes for heart-religion are so many and subtle, that without the closest scrutiny and the most rigid analysis of religious feeling and action, we may be betrayed, unsuspectingly to ourselves, into the gravest error. You may be *religious*—*very* religious—*conscientiously* religious, and yet be destitute of vital RELIGION. Denominational partisanship is not—*religion*. Religious activity is not—*religion*. You may be the warm promoter and patron of that which is Christian and philanthropic and useful in its nature,—the school, the asylum, the bazaar, the society,—and yet not possess RELIGION! You may aid in the building of churches, in the appointment of ministers, in the securing of endowments, in the sanitary, moral, and intellectual well-being of a community, and still be destitute of VITAL RELIGION. You may submit to the rite of baptism, may go to the Lord's table, may take upon you in any form the vows of God, and yet remain without a changed heart and a renewed mind. All this which I have been describing is but religious *still* life—the mere galvanism, the simulation, the counterfeit of vital godliness—a wretched copy of the original! Examine yourself by these tests: Do I know that my sins are pardoned through Christ? Have I peace with God in Jesus? Am I living in the enjoyment of the Spirit of adoption? Have I in my soul the happiness, the joy, the consolation, the hope which heart-religion imparts?—Or—solemn thought!—am I endeavouring to quiet my conscience, to stifle self-

reflection, to divert my thoughts from my unsatisfactory, unhappy condition and state of mind by religious substitutes and subtleties with which the present age so profusely abounds, and which, with those who are ensnared by them, pass for real spiritual life? Oh, commune faithfully with your own heart touching this matter!

A few *directions* as to the manner of engaging in this solemn duty of self-communion:—

A spiritual work, we must, in its engagement, *seek earnestly the aid of the Holy Spirit*. He alone can enable us to unlock the wards, to unravel the mystery, and to penetrate into the veiled depths of our own heart. We need the knowledge, the grace, the love of the Spirit in a task so purely spiritual as this. Let us, then, betake ourselves to the Holy Ghost, invoke His power, supplicate His grace, and seek His renewed anointing. Our hearts His perpetual home, enshrined there in the new creation He has formed for Himself, He is better acquainted with them than we are ourselves, and is prepared to aid us faithfully and successfully to discharge this difficult and humbling task of self-communion. “*Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and know all things.*”—This divine anointing will essentially assist you in an experimental knowledge of *yourself*.

Blend communion with Christ with self-communion. Let converse with your own heart be in unison with converse with the heart of God. Endeavour to realise that in this sacred engagement God is with you, His thoughts towards you thoughts of peace, and the feelings of His heart the warm pulsations of His love. Associate all views of yourself with this view of God: that whatever discoveries you arrive at of waywardness and folly, idolatry and sin,—however dark and humiliating the inward picture,—not a frown of displeasure shall glance

from His eye, nor a word of reproach breathe from His lips. Oh, do you think that he will join in your self-accusation? that because you loathe, and abhor, and condemn yourself, He will likewise loathe, abhor, and condemn you? Never. Listen to His words:—“*Thus saith the high and lofty, One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.*” Bending low at His feet, in penitential acknowledgement of sin, in the holy act of self-communion and prayer, no atmosphere shall encircle and embrace you but the atmosphere of Divine forgiving love.

I venture to suggest another and the most important direction in this work of self-communion,—*Commune with your own heart, looking fully to the cross of Christ.* Without this, self-examination may induce the spirit of bondage. It should never be entered upon but upon the principles, and the spirit of the gospel. It is only as we deal closely with the *Atonement*, we can deal closely with *sin*. It is only as we deal faithfully with the blood, that we can deal faithfully with our own hearts. Overwhelming were the revelations of a rigid self-scrutiny but for the hold faith maintains on the sacrifice of Christ—the close, realising apprehension it has of the cross of Jesus. You must commune with Christ's heart and your own heart at the same moment! Looking at Jesus in the face, you will be enabled to look your sins in the face; and as your love to Him deepens, so will deepen your sin and self-abhorrence. As has been beautifully remarked, “for one look at yourself, take ten looks at Christ;” no dark discovery will then sink you to despair. Ah, how little we deal with the heart of our Lord! We find finite depths

of iniquity in our own, but we forget the infinite depths of grace that are in His.—Ours is cold and fickle in its love and constancy—His is overflowing with a love as changeless and immutable as His being. Oh, then, take every discovery you make in this humbling task of self-scrutiny to Christ. Remember that if you are a believer in the Lord Jesus, every sin and infirmity and deficiency you discover, Christ has died for, He has shed His blood for, and has for ever put away; and that, repairing anew to His atonement and His grace, you shall have your iniquities subdued, and your conscience purified, and your soul reinstated in a sense of pardon and Divine acceptance. It is beneath the cross alone that sin shall be seen, hated, conquered, and forsaken. Sin, guilt, unbelief, impenitence, cannot live a moment under the sacred shadow of the cross of Christ. Drag your foe there, and it is slain. Go there, my soul, and weep, mourn, and love; and in communing with thine own heart, oh, forget not the yet deeper, closer communion with the heart of Jesus!

We will group together a few of the hallowed BLESSINGS that result from this habit of self-communion. In the first place, *it will help to keep you acquainted with the true state of your soul.* By this daily survey you will know how matters stand between God and your own conscience. Sin shall not seek supremacy, and you know it; the world will not obtain an ascendancy, and you not be conscious of it; the creature will not become idolatrous, and you not be suspicious of its encroachment; Christ will not grow less in your estimation and love, and you remain insensible to the change. Self-communion will keep you whole nights upon your watch tower, and the foe shall not surprise you. The duty, too, will increasingly deepen the conviction of your indi-

viduality. You will feel it to be a solemn privilege to commune with *your own* heart; and thus your own responsibility—a fact so lamentably overlooked—will appear in its proper and impressive light.—How few indulge in this searching inquiry into the state of their own hearts lest their self-esteem should be lowered! “Hence it is that we meet continually with persons possessed of great shrewdness and sagacity in all other matters who are most lamentably ignorant of themselves. Many have obtained an extraordinary knowledge of mankind in general, and can discover at once the weak points of every individual, but are pitifully blind to every one of their own infirmities: it is amusing to observe that of all persons within the circle of their acquaintanceship they are perhaps the only parties to whom their own failings are unknown.”* Prosecuting honestly and vigorously this self-research, you will have less time and still less inclination to examine and judge your fellows. Vain and officious attempts to penetrate and unvail the hearts of others will give place to the yet more neglected, important, and humbling work of examining, unvail- ing, and searching your own heart. Oh that all who profess the name of the Lord Jesus were more deeply concerned about the spiritual condition of themselves as in the sight of God! There would then be less censoriousness and uncharitableness, less judging the motives and condemning the actions of others, and more humility, kindness, and love in the Church of God.—Commune with your *own* heart, and leave to others the solemn responsibility and duty of communing with theirs. To their Master they stand or fall. Enter into your chamber, and in the solemn, the awful stillness of an hour spent alone with God, deal with your own heart and be

still. This work faithfully done, you will emerge thence too much filled with astonishment and condemnation at the discoveries you have made of your own self, to examine, judge, and condemn others! Self-communion, too, will greatly conduce to *growth in personal holiness*. The eye will be more concentrated upon the seat of evil, the sentinel of your heart will be more wakeful, and sin and temptation will have less power to surprise and overcome you. It will also promote true *humility*. Self-communion will lead to self-acquaintance, and this in its turn will dispel those vain delusions and conceits with which the flattery of others may have inflated us. Alas that there should be so much religious flattery and compliment—the most ensnaring and injurious of all species of adulation—among professors of religion! Here is the antidote—self-knowledge! This will turn the fine edge of the fatal weapon—self-communion!—The too fond and partial opinion of your graces, your spiritual attainments and your usefulness, expressed by others, will leave you unscathed if you are found in much communion with your own heart in your chamber. Few spiritual engagements, too, will more vigorously promote in your soul the yet higher and more solemn one of *prayer*.—To know in some degree ourselves,—the heart, whose infirmities others see not, nor even suspect, but which we know to be so vile,—is to impel us to prayer. Once more *how precious will Jesus grow* with growing self-communion! How will it endear his atonement, His grace, yea, Himself, to the heart! That engagement which deepens the conviction of our own sinfulness, helplessness, and need, which discovers to us taint and flaw and imperfection in the “hidden part,” the fountain all poisoned and impure, must deepen our sense of the infinite worth and preciousness of the Saviour. Whither can we look

with one gleam of hope but to His blood and righteousness? That sacrifice offered once for all, that divine atonement, that perfect work, that righteousness that raises us above all demerit into the sunshine of God's presence, the light of which reveals not a speck upon us, just meets our case, quells our fears, and assures us of divine acceptance. Surely, then, the closer the acquaintance we form with ourselves, whilst it throws us upon the Saviour, must render Him an object increasingly precious to our hearts. Dealing closely with our own selves in the time of God's dispensations will elucidate much that is obscure, explain much that is mysterious, and soothe much that is painful and sad. When the Psalmist was sorely tried in his soul, when his sore ran in the night and ceased not, when his soul refused to be comforted, and his spirit was overwhelmed, when he was so troubled that he could not speak, then came the remedy: "*I call to remembrance my song in the night: I commune with mine own heart: and my spirit made diligent search.*" And when from this process of self-communion,—searching into all the thousand memories of God's past loving-kindness and faithfulness laid up in the heart,—he arose, he arose a victor over all his dark forebodings, and gloomy fears, and depressing sorrows; his faith confirmed in the truth that the Lord never casts off His people, that His promise fails not for evermore, that He had not forgotten to be gracious, nor in anger had shut up His tender mercies. Is thy heart searching for one spring of comfort, for one ray of hope, for one throb of love in this the long, dreary night of thy sorrow? Search, O child of God! for thou shalt find some stored remembrance there of God's past faithfulness and love, and this shall be a token to thee that all that the Lord thy God *has been* to thee, He is *now*, and will be *for ever*. "*When my*

heart is overwhelmed, lead me to the Rock that is higher than I." "Be still!" Let communion with your own heart soothe it to perfect peace and repose, calm in the assurance that nothing shall separate it from God's love,—that the government of all worlds and all beings and all things is upon Christ's shoulders,—that your heavenly Father is causing all things in your individual history to work together for good,—and that you may wait with confidence, quietness, and cheerful composure the issue of the night of gloom and tears which now enshrouds your soul within its gloomy pavilion. "SEARCH ME, O GOD, AND KNOW MY HEART: TRY ME, AND KNOW MY THOUGHTS: AND SEE IF THERE BE ANY WICKED WAY IN ME, AND LEAD ME IN THE WAY EVERLASTING."

"And what am I? My soul awake,
And an impartial survey take;
Does no dark sign, no ground of fear,
In practice or in heart appear?

"What image does my spirit bear?
Is Jesus form'd and living there?
Say, do His lineaments divine
In thought, in word, and action shine?

"Searcher of hearts! oh, search me still;
The secrets of my soul reveal;
My fears remove, let me appear
To God and my own conscience clear!

"Scatter the clouds which o'er my head
Thick glooms of dubious terrors spread;
Lead me into celestial day,
And to myself myself display.

"May I at that blest world arrive
Where Christ through all my soul shall live,
And give full proof that he is there,
Without one gloomy doubt or fear!"

RELIGIOUS EMOTION.

BY REV. JOHN MILLER.

Every man knows from experience that his mind is affected by the communications that he receives. If tidings of a cheering kind are conveyed to him, they produce joy; if news of an afflictive character is communicated, it produces sorrow; if ideas of danger are made known, he is filled with alarm; if anything new or particularly striking is discovered, he feels a lively interest. Religion is no exception to this law of our nature; it produces emotions in the mind according to the nature

of its various doctrines, This fact is fully developed in the Bible, and in the world every day. The word "Gospel," meaning glad tidings, conveys the cheering effect it produces on the mind. In proof of this, numerous quotations might be made from the Bible, and reference might be made to the experience of every truly converted soul.

In the same way, when men are enlightened by Divine influence to discover their deeply affecting state as sinners before God, lying under his fearful curse and liable to be consigned to the place of endless and inconceivable woe, we know that the emotion experienced is one of the acutest distress. Without a doubt, but for the relief afforded by the Gospel, insanity would be the result in many cases.

Again, the knowledge of the boundless perfections of the Divine nature, produces that reverence designated the fear of God; and the magnificence of the creation overawes the mind.

The emotions of the human mind agree with their causes, not only in their nature, but also in their degree. Emotions are produced by the events occurring from day to day. The death of a dear relative, the loss of property or the acquisition of wealth, will affect us; but these are trivial matters compared with the truths contained in the sacred volume. The character of our Maker, our responsibility, our mortality, a judgment day, the glorious scheme of salvation, heaven, hell, and endless futurity, are subjects of the sublimest nature—interesting in a degree not to be estimated—and therefore fitted to operate on our minds in the most powerful manner.

We have reason to lament, that, affecting as these topics are, they fail to produce, for the most part, the slightest effect on the minds of many. The reason is very obvious. Unconverted men are practical infidels; the great doctrines of Scripture are habitually excluded from their minds; the world engrosses their attention, and hence spiritual things fail to operate on their hearts. With Christians it is very different. All who experience Divine grace are made to feel powerfully the influences of the doctrines of revelation.

The effects of Divine truths on the mind, are greater on some occasions, than on others. In times of revival, when the Holy-

Spirit descends in copious effusions, the religious emotions of many are very powerful. When, by the loss of a dear relative, we are brought into close contact with eternal things, we feel strongly the influence of the doctrines of Scripture. Under special calamities, when we are led to deep and close reflection, godly feelings are likely to pre-ponderate in the mind; and particularly, at the time of conversion, the feelings of the mind under the influence of religion, are very powerful. One reason for the peculiar exercises of the mind at conversion is the novelty of the things of God and eternity. We say novelty, because the things of God are really new to the heaven-born soul. He read, he heard, he talked of them before; but he did it as the blind man talks of colors; he had no proper conception of them. Now, the rays of the Sun of righteousness have darted into his soul, and he sees the things of God and eternity in their true grandeur and importance. No wonder that the emotions of the newly converted are of a powerful character; the wonder is that they are not exercised in a more extraordinary manner. This novelty passes away, and often with it, the effect it produced; but Divine things do not become less grand and important. If Christians continue to give their thoughts as much to spiritual matters, as they did in the hour of their conversion, their godly and joyous emotions would be more abundant and uniform. When professors allow their minds to be absorbed with the world, and when the means of grace are partially neglected, it is to be expected that they will lose the enjoyment of religion.

A very improper use is sometimes made of religious feelings, and that is, *they are regarded as the rule of conduct*. When I first discovered this, it appeared very extraordinary. Being in New Brunswick, at a prayer-meeting, I asked an old deacon to pray, but he refused. He told me afterwards, that he did not feel right, and therefore would not pray; he regarded it as a mockery to pray, unless he felt as he ought. Another brother rarely conducted worship in his family for the same reason. I have not met with this sentiment in Nova Scotia; but have known a number of persons who habitually absent themselves

from the Lord's supper, because they do not think themselves worthy. This, I apprehend, means that their feelings are not what they would wish.

In all our churches, there are many persons whose religion is of an impulsive character. If anything occurs to excite them, they have a great deal of religion; but if they are not excited, their religion is at a low ebb. There is something very erroneous in making our feelings a rule of conduct. For a person to refuse religious exercises because he does not enjoy religion, is precisely like an individual standing out of doors in a very cold day, and complaining that he is very cold. Another person urges him to come within doors, and to place himself near the fire; but he refuses, and gives as his reason that he is exceedingly cold. How absurd such conduct appears! Would not a mere child see the absurdity of such conduct, and be ready to argue. If you are very cold, that is the very reason why you should go within doors, and place yourself near the fire. In the same way, if professors do not enjoy religion, instead of neglecting prayer and other means of grace, they should pray twice in that state for every once when they sensibly experience Divine influence.

Mr. Fuller, in treating of backsliding, says, "When people put out fire, they deal largely in the opposite element—water. In the same way, when Christians backslide, they should deal largely in the opposite element; that is, they should abound in prayer, in the reading of the Scriptures, and other religious exercises." In this way, a state of apathy and coldness in the Divine life would be overcome.

In this mere impulsive religion, there is something. It is acting like the lower animals which are guided by instinct; there is no reason or principle of action with them. Men with all their reason, and with the Bible in their hands, act in a similar way; when, in religious matters, instead of being guided by their reason in connection with the revelation of God, they look to their feelings, and act just as they happen to be moved.

Men, in serving their Creator, should be guided by the principles of revelation; their guiding star should be the Bible. With that in their hands, their enquiry

should be, not, How do I feel? but What saith the Lord? The Scripture teach, in the clearest and most copious manner, that it is the duty of men to love and serve God with all the heart, soul, strength, and mind, at all times and under all circumstances. There is no situation in life, no contingencies in our present state of being, which give the slightest abatement of this demand. It is the requirement of justice made upon us as the creatures of God indebted to him for life and every blessing we enjoy. The obligation to love and serve God, is greatly increased in the case of the Christian, by his redemption from sin and hell, and his prospects of eternal glory through Jesus Christ. The path of duty is pointed out as with a sunbeam; and the considerations, by which duty is enforced, are the strongest that could be presented to the human mind. Every argument, which can be drawn from our present condition and our future destiny is pressed on our attention by the sacred penmen, to induce us to tread the path of duty.

The fact that God loved us in our lost and ruined condition, that he redeemed us from hell that he has conferred on us all the blessings of his grace, and animated us with the hope of eternal life, must be regarded and always felt by the Christian to be the most potent kind of argument. Wherever religion is enjoyed, men will readily say, "the love of Christ constraineth us;" and again, "we love him, because he first loved us." Besides salvation, the thought of death, judgment, heaven, hell, and the solemn truth that as we sow now, so shall we reap in eternity, are considerations all calculated to operate powerfully on the mind. The Christian, in treading the path of duty, should be actuated by these great and weighty principles. They should tell on his mind, as a rational being, with irresistible power. With these great truths full in his view, let every man tremble at the thought of treading the broad and downward way.

We say, then, away with the idea that our feelings are to be our guide in the path of duty. Let us act the part of rational beings; and let us live under the influence of the high and holy principles of revelation. Let the Bible be our rule, and according to its dictates let us be guided at all times.

FAITH, HOPE, AND CHARITY.

BY MRS. SEWELL.

A gallant ship went out to sea
From Scotland's rocky shore,
And with her sail'd one hundred men
To dig for golden ore.

The anchor rose, the sails were set,
And steady blew the breeze;
And merrily the vessel went
Across the tossing seas.

From morn till night her course she kept,
The land was still in view,
And passengers upon the deck
Oft sigh'd a long adieu.

The second day was at an end,
And night came slowly down;
But still upon the distant coast
They saw a lighted town.

Then darkness settled on the ship,
And o'er the ocean crept,
And, ere the middle of the night,
All, but the seamen, slept.

Oh! many went to sleep that night,
On whom no morn shall rise;
And many closed their eyelids then,
To waken in the skies.

And many hearts beat true and warm,
For those they ne'er would save;
And many hopes were buried then,
Beneath the green sea wave.

A heavy fog came stealing down,
And e'er the waters spread,
So thick, the steersman scarce could see
A dozen yards ahead.

There was a moment, and no more,
No warning cross'd the sea,—
An Indiaman with crowded sails,
Bore down upon their lee.

No time to tack, to give her room,
No time to wake the men;
The mighty vessel ran them down,
Then bore away again.

The eddy waves closed o'er the wreck,
Then roll'd on as before;
And that ship's company went down,
To sail the sea no more.

A fisherman upon the beach,
At early break of day,
Observed an object on the tide,
That roll'd within the bay.

'Twas not the seaweed's heavy mass
Which clogg'd the billow's swell;
'Twas not the wood of rifted wreck,
That floated on so well.

The fisherman strode boldly in,
And, ere it reach'd the strand,
He seized upon a floating form,
And bore it to the land.

It was a child—a little girl—
Of some ten years or more,
That here the cold, remorseless wave
Was casting on the shore.

And pitiful the look he bent
On that young form so fair;
And tenderly he wiped the face,
And wrung the heavy hair.

"I'll take her home to Margaret,
And see what she can do;
If life is in the body yet,
She's sure to bring it to."

Within his dwelling on the beach
He laid the body down;
And every means the good wife used,
That she had heard, or known.

The youthful limbs were barely hid
By clothing for the night;
And heavy lay the closed lids
On eyes that once were bright.

The soft round cheek was cold and blue,
That erst was like the rose
That opens in the early dew,
When morning zephyr blows.

The sweet young mouth was tightly closed,
As if 'twere closed in pain;
Oh! will the warm blood ever tinge
Those livid lips again?

But Margaret's patience wearied not,
She feels the warmth return,
The little heart begins to move,
The breath she can discern.

And do we say—"Thy cares forego,
And let the floweret die,
The tender bud, though blighted now,
Will blossom in the sky.

"The storms of life may beat it down,
And sin may yet prevail;
Or poverty, with cruel hand,
May crush that flower so frail.

"Oh, let it die!" but so said not
The heart of Margaret;
Her cheerful hope, like jewel bright
In simple faith was set.

Life was to her a sacred gift,
A high and priceless thing,
To which the blessed Son of God,
Did free salvation bring.

That grace came not to her in vain;
She heard the heavenly voice,
That often now within her soul,
Said, "Margaret, rejoice!"

The living stream that heal'd her heart,
Descending from above,
Left not a barren soil behind,
But rich in fruits of love.

The weeping stranger told her tale
To no unfeeling ear;
Her little brothers all were drown'd,
And both her parents dear.

And she had no relations left,
Now they were in the sea;
They all had left their pleasant homes
Upon the banks of Dee.

"Fear not, my lamb," said Margaret,
"I will your mother be,
And you shall be as merry here
As on the banks of Dee.

"Here's Marianne, and Isabel,
And John, and little Jane;
And you shall be their sister dear,
And think 'tis home again."

The little orphan raised her lips
To kiss good Margaret's cheek;
But grief lay heavy on her heart,
And words she could not speak.

But ere a many weeks had flown,
Her sorrow died away,
And little Jessie sang as blythe
As merry birds in May.

Down to the fisher's lowly cot
The busy neighbours came—
"If you take in that friendless child,
I think you'll be to blame.

"I'd send it to the Union-house,
And there I'd let her be."
Said Margaret, "The Lord has sent
That little one to me.

"I should not, of myself, have thought
A thing like this to do;
But if God laid it out for me,
Why, he will bring me through."

"You know," another kindly said,
"You have already four;
And though you're decent, honest folks,
Still you are reckon'd poor."

"And we are poor, and very poor,
I know," said Margaret;
"But God can show my husband where
To cast his fishing-net.

"For He, who made the fish, you know,
Can guide them as they swim;
The widow, and the orphan child
Hold promises from Him."

"Well, you must please yourself, of course;
But, in my humble thought,
You're taking on yourselves more care
Than working-people ought."

"It may be so—I know," she said,
"But still I am content;
I have a feeling in my mind
That we shall not repent.

"If your sweet darling, little Bell,
Should ever have the lot
To be shipwreck'd and cast away,
And no friend near the spot,

"Would you not bless with all your heart
The man who took her in,
And made a father's home for her
In this sad world of sin?"

"Well, neighbour, that is very true,
It makes my feelings stir,
To think that such a cruel fate
Could ever come to her.

"No doubt the gentlefolks would help
If you would state the case;
She is an interesting child,
And has a pretty face."

A cloud pass'd over Margaret's brow,
But still her voice was kind—
"I'd rather not ask charity,
It always hurts my mind

"And 'twill be time to think of that,
If we should get too poor;
I think that He will bring her bread,
Who brought her to our door."

And so the neighbours went away,
And many shook their head;
They said she was a feeling soul,
But woefully misled.

And Margaret—she sat down to read
The book that gave her light,
And, as she read, she strongly felt
That she was doing right.

In fact, it seem'd as clear to her
As noonday in the sun,
That they would ne'er repent the thing,
Which they in faith had done.

The fishing-boat went out to sea,
The fishing-boat came back,
And whichever way it went,
The fish were in its track.

When raging tempests roused the sea,
And sailors found their graves,
Unharm'd the little fishing-boat
Lay rocking in the waves.

For He who walk'd upon the sea,
And chose His dearest friends
From poor and lowly fishermen,
The fishing-boat defends;

No harm can ever touch the thing
Committed to His care,
Nor can a million voices drown
The voice of earnest prayer.

And He repaid the simple trust
Of faithful Margaret,
And daily taught her husband where
To cast the fishing-net.

The fishing-boat went out to sea,
The fishing-boat came back,
And whichever way it went,
The fish were in its track.

And when with heavy-laden nets
It reached the yellow sand,
An active little party hail'd
The fishing-boat to land.

To fill a basket or a pan
The busy children strive,
Then through the streets and in the squares
They cry them "all alive."

And so the years flew quickly by
Till Jessie was sixteen;
A sweeter little maiden then
You hardly could have seen.

Both Marianne and Isabel
Were married *well* and gone;
And Jessie now, with little Jane,
Did all the work alone.

"'Tis early yet," said Margaret,
"Come, set your basket down;"
For Jessie then had boil'd some shrimps
To carry to the town.

"'Tis on my mind, dear child," she said,
"I can't the reason give;
But something often says to me,
I have not long to live.

"Nay, Jessie, do not turn so paic,
You'll always have a friend;
I think that people need not want
Who straight on God depend.

"And I believe they need not beg,
If only they would try;
I'd rather want a thing myself,
Than ask for charity.

"I would not have my children beg
For all that I could see;
We've always held our heads above
That sort of poverty.

"And mind me now, it is six years,
If not a little more,
Since you were brought a senseless corpse
Unto this very door.

"And we have never known the day
When we have wanted bread;
Nor decent clothes to cover us,
Nor shelter for our head.

"And you are almost all grown up,
And with an honest name; $\frac{1}{2}$
Oh, Jessie! I should die at once
If you should come to shame.

"I'm frightened now, to see the girls
That walk about the street;
Oh! God forbid a child of mine
Should look like those I meet.

"I often quake for you, my dear,
The others all are plain;
But you have got that pretty face,
That makes men look again.

"And some who're reckon'd gentlemen
I know will notice you,
And many pretty things they'll say,
They never mean for true.

"I'd rather you should meet a bear
That's just robb'd of her young,
Than you should meet a gentleman
Who has a flattering tongue.

"Be sure they never mean you good,
'Tis only sport, or worse;
And, as you'd save yourself, don't touch
A penny from their purse."

A glow of modesty and and pride
Rush'd into Jessie's cheek,
And feeling quiver'd on her lip
As she began to speak.

"Dear mother! you may trust me well,
Such thing shall never be;
No saucy gentleman I know
Shall ever speak to me.

"What business have they to insult
A girl because she's poor?
No! mother, I will never bring
Dishonour to your door.

"Beside, I've found out *this* myself,
And I believe 'tis true—
That if *you* mind what you're about,
They'll mind their business too."

"And, Jessie—John has whisper'd me
That you must be his wife,
And he's a gentleman in heart,
And loves you like his life.

"Of course 'twill be a long while first,
You both are very young;
But if you love each other well,
The time will not seem long."

"Ah, mother! John is just like you,
He is so true and good,
And steady, like his father too,
I think 'tis in the blood."

Then Margaret kiss'd the pretty face,
That looked in hers, and smiled,
"Ah, little puss! I see one day
You'll be my very child.

"But Jessie dear, still have a care,
For woman's heart is weak."
And tears rose up in Margaret's eyes,
And trickled down her cheek.

A few short months—and suddenly
There came the hand of death,—
"God bless you all, and keep you his,"
Was Margaret's last breath.

Then did her happy ransom'd soul
Arise on joyful wing,
To dwell before her Saviour's throne,
Where blessed angels sing.

No stately hearse with nodding plumes,
Nor mutes for mourning paid,
Were seen around the humble grave,
Where Margaret was laid.

A dozen hardy fishermen,
With weatherbeaten face,
Bore that dear body tenderly
To its last resting place.

And many join'd the weeping train
That stood around it there,
And many were the stifled sobs
That shook the quiet air;

For she was gone, whose life had been
A constant flow of love,
And they would see her face no more
Until they met above.

Then Jessie kept the good man's house,
And shared his heavy grief,
Till time and resignation brought
To both of them relief.

And when two years had pass'd away
In honour of the dead,
Her lover thought the time was come,
When they might safely wed.

He was his father's partner now,
They had a busy trade;
And many times he counted up
The earnings he had made.

The old man gave the bride away,
And gave the wedding treat,
And, kissing Jessie, said, "She'll be
Another Margaret."

"Ay, that she will," said John; "she'll be
My mother to the life,
And folks will say my pretty bride
Is like my father's wife."

Now, parents dear, who read this tale,
Work on with love and prayer;
And children's children yet may live
To bless your faithful care.

And shut not up your charity,
Let pity have its way;
'Tis God you lend your service to,
And He will richly pay.

The fishing-boat shall go to sea,
The fishing-boat come back;
And Providence shall guide the boat,
And fish be in its track.

Sabbath School Lessons.

January 31st, 1864.

DEBORAH AND BARAK.

Read Judges iv. 1-17.

Connection.—In taking possession of Canaan, instead of acting as directed, Deut. vii. 2, the Israelites had associated with many of the heathen, Judges i. 21-33. In consequence of their disobedience, they had already relapsed into idolatry twice, suffered punishment, and been delivered when repentant. This third successful struggle of the northern tribes took place about B.C. 1296, or 130 years after Joshua's death.

I. *The Standard Raised, ver. 1-13.*—Jabin, a Canaanitish prince, possessed of the territory north of Israel, had cruelly oppressed Israel—Sisera was his captain. Hazor was ten or fifteen miles north of the Sea of Galilee. Deborah, a prophetess, had, at God's command, directed Barak to raise ten thousand men from the tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali, and promised that with them He would set Israel free.

Kedesh, a city twenty miles north of the Sea of Galilee—there Barak mustered his men, and with Deborah (whose presence, probably, as God's own messenger, he rightly valued) marched southward about forty miles to Tabor, a hill lying at the south-west of the Sea of Galilee, and the source of the small river Kishon.

Heber, the Kenite. Though invited, the children of Hodab never mingled with Israel. Their former kindness to Israel and Moses was never forgotten, 1 Sam. xv. 6; but here this family of Heber sided with Israel's enemies, and acted as spies to Sisera. *Chariots of iron* were most formidable to Israel, ill armed as they appear to have been, chap. v. 8. Sisera mustered at the river *Kishon*, which runs at the west of Mount Tabor.

II. *Sisera Defeated, ver. 14-17.*—Sisera found Barak encamped on the heights of Tabor, where chariots and horsemen could not reach him.

Up; is not the Lord gone out before thee? Barak seems implicitly to have obeyed the Divine messages brought by Deborah. The time and circumstances seemed all unpropitious, but God was with him.

So he went down to the plain—most unwisely, men would say—the iron chariots had all the advantage of ground; but he gained a complete victory.

APPLICATION.

1. *Learn from Israel's sin and repentance*—That sin is bitter at last: sweet in the mouth, bitter in the belly: at last it stingeth like an adder. That God is most willing to pardon. How often He heard Israel's cry, ver. 3; Psal. lxxviii. 38.

2. *How much good one right-hearted person can do*; with faith in God, courage to dare, and wisdom to direct how to do what is right! Like Deborah. She stirred up Barak, and he stirred up the tribes, and won the day. So when God has a great work to be done, He raises a leader. See the history of the Judges—Luther—Knox. Many a family, workshop, village, and city have been blessed by such a *ONE*, if God was with him.

3. *How much good a right-hearted woman can do!* Deborah was the mover in all this—she was nearer God than Barak. She kept her place as a woman—did not go to the fight, but cheered and advised the warriors. So, without doing anything unseemly, women may be nearer God than most men, and cheering and directing others may do much good. Priscilla teaching Apollos—Timothy's mother—Naaman's little maid. Rom. xvi. 12.

4. *God's presence secures success.* See that you make no mistake—that you are really seeking what is right. Then settle it in your mind, you *cannot* fail of success at last. *Up*—exert yourself, God is your leader, see ver. 14; Jonathab, 1 Sam. xiv. 12; David, 2 Sam. v. 24.—*Edinburgh Series of Lessons.*

February 7th, 1864.

LAZARUS LIVES AGAIN.

JOHN XI. 20-46.

I. *Martha meets Christ, ver. 20-27.*—Ver. 20. Martha, ever ready to act, as soon as she hears that Christ is on his way to Bethany, sets out to meet him. Mary, more retired, sits at home indulging her sorrow. Ver. 21, 22. Martha mingles and tempers her regret at the past, with hope for the future. *I am the resurrection and the life.* It was as easy for him to restore life at that moment as at the last day. *Shall never die*, ver. 26. Evidently Christ speaks of the life of the soul. Martha's confession, ver. 27, is the clearest and most decided we find at that time among the disciples. Her creed, ver. 24, regarding a future state, is most interesting.

II. *Mary meets Christ, ver. 28-35.*—Ver. 28. *She called Mary her sister secretly*—She wanted none to be present whilst Christ talked with them concerning their beloved brother—soothing their sorrow. Perhaps she remembered that among those

visitors were some who might put Christ's life again in danger. *The Master is come*—What a glimpse this gives of the homage and honour they were accustomed to pay to Jesus. The Jews followed her, sincere in their sympathy; they were provided as witnesses to the wondrous miracle. *She fell at his feet*, overpowered by her feelings. *Lord, if thou hadst been here*—The minds of the sisters seem to have been much exercised with this reflection after their brother's death. *Jesus saw her weeping—and the Jews. He wept*, in true human sympathy with them—his eye affected his feelings—in bitterness over sin which brought such woe into the world. *Come and see*—They could point to the woe—he only could remove it.

III. *Lazarus raised*.—Ver. 36. *Behold how He loved!*—How beautifully the close, ardent love of Christ for an individual is shown here. He loved the whole world, yet only here and over his own Jerusalem, is it said, "He wept."

Ver. 37. *Opened the eyes of the blind*—referring to the last miracle at Jerusalem, chap. ix. Was it over this unbelief that Jesus groaned again? Ver. 38. *A cave*; these excavations were the common burial-places of the Jews. That *the sister of him that was dead* should interpose seems noted as remarkable. Verses 41 and 42 show how constantly, wisely, and kindly Christ sought the spiritual good of men. How sublime the scene! Perhaps beneath the shady trees of some garden, by the open cave, amidst the intense silence and breathless eagerness of those who stood around, the weeping Mary near His feet, His face wet with tears, that weary, persecuted wonder-worker raised His eye and His voice to heaven. The tones of that voice awoke the dead. *Many* bowed before the evident presence of God. *Some* went and told his bitter enemies.

APPLICATION.

I. *Have you Martha's faith?*

1. That Christ was "the Son of God." This Paul believed—the Philippian jailer. Happy in this faith, Simeon died—Stephen met martyrdom.

2. In the world to come, "He shall rise again." This wiped her tears away, and animated her for duty. So David and his infant son. Do you live like one who believes in that world?—you will rise again.

II. *Have you Mary's devotion?*

1. To her brother—How she loved him! doubtless she showed her love while he lived. It is bitter, indeed, to have to weep for your own unkindness over a dear one's grave. Have you a brother or sister—be kind?

2. To her Lord—*She rose quickly—She fell at His feet*. How she loved Him!

loved to be near Him—humbly could have kissed the feet she once anointed.

III. *See the tenderness of Christ.*

He seeks the house of mourning—He could not bear the slightest imputation of unkindness, ver. 23 and 33. He wept; He groaned. He enters into all your feelings of joy and sorrow. He was happy at the marriage-feast and He wept at the grave. He feels for each one. Though a world's salvation lay on Him He weeps over his friend. He is not changed. Heb. iv. 15. Are you His friend?

IV. *See the majestic power of Christ.*

Others might weep; He could save. All creation obeys that voice—stormy winds, raging seas, devils, and the dead.

1. He gives life now to body and soul. He has given life to your body. Is your soul alive? Nicodemus, John iii.

2. He will give life again to the dead. His voice will call to judgment. You must obey it then—O, do so now!

V. *Seek Christ's presence*—Not His bodily presence, but that of His spirit. It was a mistake, "Lord, if thou hadst been here," &c. Christ was there, yet Lazarus died. If you obey and follow not Christ's spirit, His bodily presence would not bless you. Judas had much of that.

SUBORDINATE LESSONS.

1. Christ afflicts not His people willingly. He suffers in their sufferings.

2. There is no comforter like Christ—none so able, none so willing.

3. There is no intercessor like Christ, ver. 42. He is always heard. Ask Him to pray for you.

4. What effect has this miracle on you? Will you now believe, or still side with Christ's enemies, verses 45, 46.—*Edinburgh Series of Lessons.*

THOUGHT, OUR DIGNITY.

Man is a reed, and the weakest reed in nature; but then he is a thinking reed. There is no occasion that the whole universe should arm itself for his destruction. A vapour, a drop of water is sufficient to kill him. And yet should the universes crush him, man would still be more noble than that by which he fell; because he would know his fate, while the universes would be insensible of its victory. Thus all our dignity consists in thought. It is hence we are to raise ourselves, and not by the aid of space and duration. Let us study the art of thinking well: this is the foundation of ethics.—*Pascal*