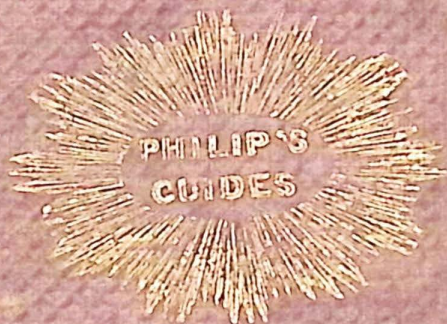




PHILIP'S
GUIDES

Handwritten text in a cursive script, possibly a signature or a short note. The ink is dark brown and the paper is aged and stained.



OR,

BY ROBERT PHILIP,

OF MABERLY CHAPEL.

...doubts better than *some men's certainties.*"

Lord Chancellor Hardwicke.

Wm. 1777

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THE GOD OF GLORY;

OR,

A GUIDE TO THE DOUBTING.

BY ROBERT PHILIP,

OF MABERLY CHAPEL.

"I think *Dirlton's doubts* better than *some men's certainties*."
Lord Chancellor Hardwicke.

NEW YORK:

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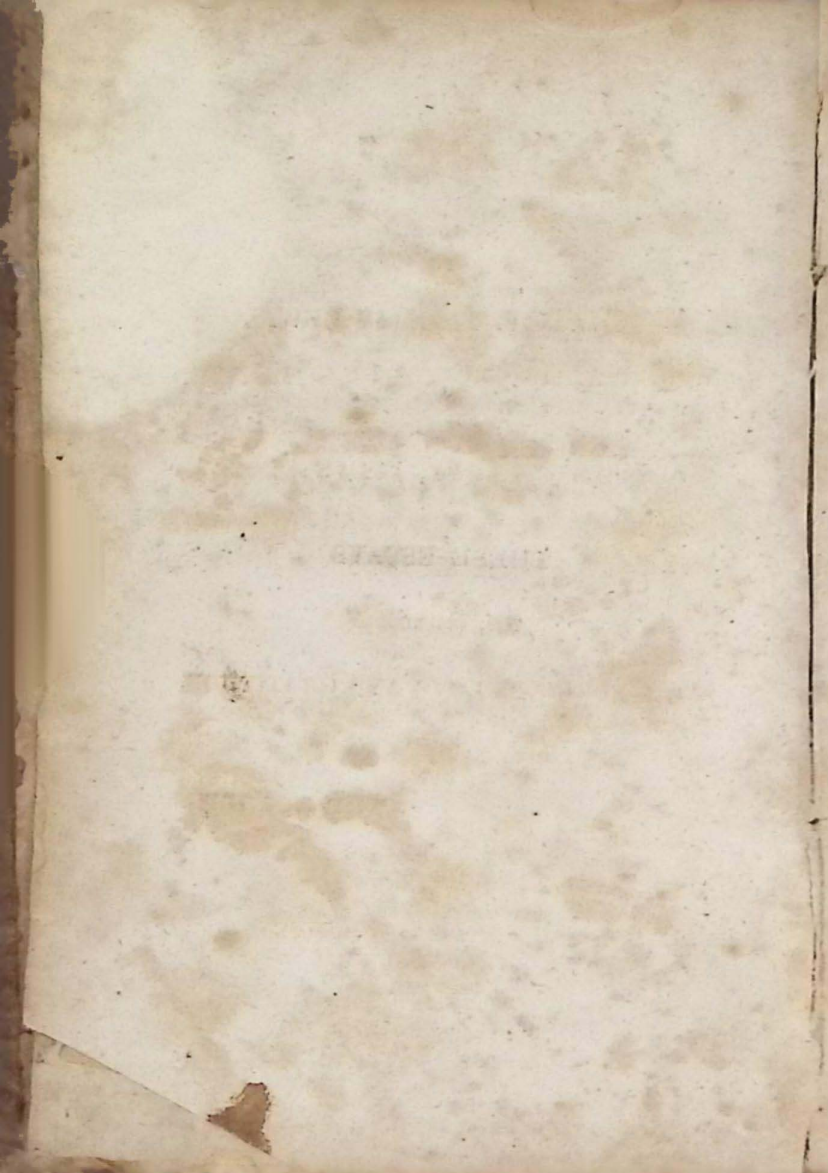
1835.

G. & C. Merriam, Print.
Springfield, Mass.

TO
THE REV. THOMAS LEWIS,
OF
UNION CHAPEL, ISLINGTON,
THESE ESSAYS
ARE INSCRIBED
AS A TOKEN OF LOVE AND GRATITUDE,
BY
THE AUTHOR.

Kingsland, 1833.





PREFACE.

THIS volume completes the Series of the Author's *Experimental Guides*. He had intended to add another, on Self-examination ; and he may do so at some future time : but, at present, when religion itself is in danger of being confounded with the politics of its *support*, he deems himself called on to exhibit its native "majesty" to the young. To the *Inquiring* and the *undecided* amongst them, he offers himself as a Guide. Under the titles of "*Manly Piety*," and "*Old Truths, in Oriental Forms*," he is far advanced with two volumes of a New Series of Guides, uniform with the present. He mentions this now, that the parents and friends who

have, themselves, profited by the Experimental Guides, and therefore called his attention to the claims of the young, may know that he has not been unmindful of their suggestions, nor ungrateful for their confidence. He owes much to them, and to a large circle of the religious public, for the reception they have given to his little works. His literary friends must not, therefore, wonder if he confine himself to this "line of things."

KINGSLAND,

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PHILIP'S GUIDES,

—In neat embossed cloth binding—already published—

CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE; or A GUIDE TO THE PERPLEXED.

"I *should* know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary."—*Isaiah*.

COMMUNION WITH GOD; or A GUIDE TO THE DEVOTIONAL.

"He that cometh to God *must believe* that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."—*Paul*.

ETERNITY REALIZED; or A GUIDE TO THE THOUGHTFUL.

"I have been dwelling on the sides of Eternity."—*Brainerd*.

MANLY PIETY, IN ITS PRINCIPLES.

"I write unto you—*young men*."—*John*.

MANLY PIETY, IN ITS SPIRIT.

"A man of *understanding* is of an excellent spirit."—*Solomon*.

PLEASING GOD; or A GUIDE TO THE CON- SCIENTIOUS.

"Let us inquire how far it has been our study to *please God*—it will do us no harm to examine ourselves on this point."—*Burder*

No. I.

ABRAHAM'S FAITH, AN IMITABLE EXAMPLE.

It is impossible not to admire the faith "of faithful Abraham." He well deserves to be called *the Father of the Faithful*. He was, indeed, "strong in faith, giving glory unto God."

Is the example of Abraham imitable, in this respect? Could we not *copy* it, as well as admire it? However this may be, one thing is certain—his example reproves our unbelief. But for his undoubting and undeviating faith, we should neither have so clearly seen the danger of unbelief, nor so deeply felt the desirableness of "like precious faith." His example has, therefore, been *instructive* to us. In its calm and holy light, we discern something of the beauty and

blessedness of reposing the soul on the promises of God. Accordingly, what should we not give, to be able, like him, "not to *stagger* at the promises?" We could almost submit to his pilgrimages, if we might be partakers of his faith.

His example has, then, been both instructive and influential to us. Is not this some sign that it may also be *imitated* by us? Why should it not? For if, by its own native beauty and force, it has won our admiration, without much study on our part; might not a closer study of it win our imitation too? The experiment is certainly worth trying. One thing is sure—we cannot displease God, by studying an example which He has made so prominent, and marked so distinctly with His approbation. Indeed, it is impossible to assign or conceive any sufficient reason for the great publicity He has given to the faith of faithful Abraham, if it be not held up to encourage imitation. It certainly answers a good purpose, merely as a protest against unbelief: but that cannot be its chief purpose, in a Bible abounding with

protests so much more solemn and pointed. Besides ; his *spirit*, in relation to the subject of faith, bears so much greater a resemblance to the mild cherubim of glory on the mercy-seat, than to the *armed* cherubim which guarded the tree of life, that, like the former, he seems to invite and invoke general imitation. For there is nothing in the aspect of Abraham's character, to intimidate or discourage. It is altogether and exquisitely in harmony with his place, as the father of the faithful ; and seems equally designed and adapted "*to raise up children unto Abraham.*"

It was of the "*stones*" of the wilderness John said, "God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham : " and, therefore, stony as our hearts are, (and, alas, at times, they seem harder than the nether mill-stone,) they are not beyond the power of God to soften or sanctify. And as they are thus *within* the reach of His power, we ought not to think them *without* the reach of His goodwill. Indeed, we have no more reason to reckon our salvation *improbable*, than to

reckon it impossible. God is just as likely to be perfectly willing to save us, as He is perfectly able. All our real knowledge of His *saving* power is derived from His Word; and as that Word says expressly, that He is "not willing that any should perish;" and as God confirms this by His solemn oath, that "He hath no pleasure in the death of a sinner," we have exactly the same divine warrant for believing His goodwill, as for believing His great power.

There is, indeed, a class of apostate adversaries described by Paul, whose repentance is declared to be "impossible," and whose doom is, "a certain fearful looking-for of judgment and fiery indignation:" but our guilt whatever be its aggravations, is not, and could not be, like their apostacy. They were wilful, spiteful, wanton, malignant, and reckless blasphemers of both the Saviour and the Sanctifier; and that too *after* they had received "the knowledge of the truth," and *after* they had been "made partakers of the Holy Ghost:" whereas, we never had such supernatural light or gifts to sin against.

Besides, Paul tells us plainly, *why* it was impossible to renew them again unto repentance: they followed up their apostacy, by crucifying to themselves the Son of God afresh, and by putting Him to open shame: most likely, by crucifying Him in *effigy* before the rabble of Jerusalem; and certainly, by publicly re-acting, in words, gestures, and spirit, all the shameful outrages and indignities of the actual crucifixion. Thus they trod under foot the Son of God; or showed to the mob, how they would have trampled on Him, had He been present.

It is needless to say, that we have done nothing of this kind. We can hardly bear to *hear* of such horrid conduct: a plain proof, that we are not identified in the guilt nor the doom of these desperate apostates. Indeed, we might just as well suspect that we are *devils*, and not men, as suspect ourselves of the apostacy described and denounced by Paul. We have no more sinned like them on earth, than we fell with Satan and his angels from heaven.

I both dislike and dread, as much as you

can, all attempts to soothe my fears by softening my guilt. We have, alas, almost trodden under foot some of the *laws* of the Son of God: but, not in order to hold up to public contempt, his cross or character. We have, alas, done despite to the Spirit of grace: but not from sheer malignity, nor by deliberate or spiteful blasphemy. We have, alas, counted the blood of the covenant almost an unnecessary thing: but never an "*unholy thing*." Oh, no, no! far as we have fallen, and deeply as we have sunk, in sin and insensibility, we never, wilfully, *cursed* the persons or the character of the Godhead. Nothing pains us more than the presence of a *thought*, which even borders on blasphemy. It is never welcomed nor invited. Indeed, Noah was not more glad when the dark and stormy waters of the deluge left his ark at rest, than we are when dark and daring thoughts cease to haunt our minds. When they depart, we could almost apply to ourselves, the language of the Evangelist, concerning the Saviour's temptation in the wilderness, "*then the devil leaveth him; and behold*

angels came and ministered unto him ;— we are so thankful when our temptation subsides. And even when it is at its height, there is always one thing which Satan cannot do, either by his strength or stratagem :—he is never able to *attach* or *reconcile* us to blasphemous and unholy thoughts ; but the more they haunt us, the more we hate them.

Thus, there is certainly no such apostacy in our case, as should discourage us from studying the faith of Abraham, or from trying to imitate it : one thing is sure—we have no inclination to imitate the unbelief of the apostate adversaries. We would try anything, rather than copy them. Besides, we really *wish* to be “the children of faithful Abraham.” Next to our desire to be “carried by angels into Abraham’s bosom” when we die, is our desire to have Abraham’s faith in our own bosom whilst we live. We feel as if we could open our hearts to welcome the gift of his faith, as willingly as he opened his arms to welcome Lazarus, when the angels brought him into heaven.

Well ; Abraham’s faith came to him, just in the same way that all faith comes, which is

the gift of God : it came " by *hearing* the Word of God." Did you never mark this interesting fact? God did not first bestow the gift of faith on Abraham, and *then* preach the gospel unto him : did not first implant the principle of faith in his heart, and *then* present the object of faith to his understanding. No ; he first preached the gospel to Abraham ; and by it both *created* and *won* his faith, both *gave* and *gained* his faith.

Consider the facts of the case. If Abraham was not altogether an *idolater*, while he dwelt in Mesopotamia, he was very little better. Certainly, he had nothing about him to recommend him to God, nor was he less a child of wrath than others, by nature. It was not *before*, but long after, His first appearance to him, that the Lord said of him, " I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, to do justice and judgment." This was the character Abraham acquired by believing ; not the character he had, when the word of God first came to him. Indeed, he had *no religious* character, nor any of the *forms* of true religion, when the God

of Glory appeared to him in Mesopotamia. He did not, however, allow his sense of guilt or unworthiness, to divert his attention from what was then showed and said to him, as a *sinner*. Both the voice and the vision reminded him, no doubt, of his former guilt and folly, and could not fail to humble him deeply before God: but he did not abandon himself to hopeless humility, nor to jealous fear. He did not start objections, where God had made none; but, evidently, judged thus,—that as God had condescended to bring the gospel before him, notwithstanding all his past guilt and present unworthiness, not to listen or not to believe, could only increase both. They had not prevented God from preaching the gospel unto Abraham, and, therefore, Abraham did not allow them to prevent him from believing it. It was with the full knowledge and in the face of all that he had been as a sinner, that God revealed to him the Saviour; and, therefore, in the face of it all he humbly and thankfully embraced the promise.

Now, was this conduct wise? Would it

not have been equally unwise and ungrateful, to have cherished suspicions or doubts, whilst God suggested no obstacles? Well, it is thus the gospel comes before us, unencumbered and unclouded with even one hint about hindrances or risks. It invites, yea invokes our personal confidence; and warns us only against rejecting or abusing its free grace. Its appeals proceed upon no fear of its being believed too readily, or too widely, or too fondly; but all on the fear of unbelief. The gospel singles out no class, nor any individual unto "the wrath of the Lamb," but for despising or distrusting "the blood of the Lamb." And the Saviour's final appeal to all such is—"Ye *will* not come unto me that ye might have life." To not one does He say or insinuate, "ye *could* not or *should* not, come unto me."

This is the glorious gospel of the blessed God! It does not, indeed, come before us so personally as it was preached to Abraham: but neither does it appeal to us accidentally, nor without a personal design. O, it is not by *accident*, that we were born under its golden and

glowing candlestick. It is not by accident, that we have seen the value of the great salvation, and felt our need of it. Had we been born in Mesopotamia, and there discovered our guilt and danger as sinners ; and had we, whilst alarmed by that discovery, been brought *here*, and brought under a faithful ministry of the gospel, we should not have thought that happy removal an accident, however we had been removed as to means. Had we come merely in the course of business, or in search of a livelihood, we should have acknowledged a special and gracious Providence in our coming, the moment we had learnt that the blood of Jesus Christ "*cleanseth from all sin.*" And, is it not a greater and a better providence, to have been born upon that spot of the footstool of the Throne of Grace, where the light of salvation shines brightest ? Judge righteous and sober judgment ! If it had been left to our choice, to select the place, where we could most readily and easily believe that God meant *well* towards our souls, should we not have fixed on the land where He has both cast and fixed our lot ? O ! His momen-

tary appearance to Abraham, in Mesopotamia, however glorious, was not a greater blessing, in reality, than free access to all the means of His grace is. Mistake me not here. I readily grant, that *such* an appearance of the God of Glory would be more striking. I see at a glance, that, if it did not startle us too much, we should lay greater stress on it as "a token for good:" but the real question is, *ought* we to judge thus?

I will endeavor to answer this question when I come to explain that vision. In the meantime, the direct *personality* of the preaching of the gospel to Abraham, is of more immediate importance to us. We are ready to say, "Abraham might well believe the promise *for* himself, seeing it was made *to* himself; but we hear only the general proclamation of the gospel. Thus, although we hear all, if not more than he did, about the Saviour, we do not hear it *as* he did, from a personal appeal." Now the very readiness with which we say this, should lead us to suspect the *rashness* of the objection. We really forget ourselves; and, without intending it,

become ungrateful when we reason thus. What! would we wish the gospel to be less open or less free to *others*, than it is? Do you not see, that to encourage *us*, by a more personal offer than the general proclamation of mercy, would be to *discourage* the whole world? It may be very natural, under all our fears and anxieties, to feel a strong craving for *peculiar* encouragement; but, only think! what would be the effect on others? All who cared anything about their souls, would require as much as we wish for; and, perhaps, some would insist on having both more and different encouragements. Thus there would be no end to the demands; and, of course, no *rule* in the procedure. Even what *we* feel tempted to wish for, for it is a temptation, would dethrone the Bible as the word of eternal life, however it might maintain its authority as the rule of a holy life. And, were each of the DOUBTING to insist on such a personal warrant, as would satisfy himself, the confusion would be unspeakable.

Besides, why should God be *dictated* to? It is dictation to ask for anything beyond the

universal and unqualified call of the gospel. Dissatisfaction with that, is more ungrateful and insolent than we intend or suspect, when we give way to it. Neither you nor I would dare to tell God in so many words, "that He ought to meet all our wishes, on the point of a personal warrant to hope, *before* we could feel bound or safe to believe the gospel." And yet what is our craving for *more* than His general and generous invitation, but a practical utterance of this proud sentiment? True; we do not intend to show pride or presumption towards God. It is really from a fear of presuming, that we are afraid to believe. But, let us remember! there are *two* kinds of presumption. It is as much high presumption to make our own *terms*, before believing, as it would be to make our own terms before obeying. He presumes, who would alter the *rule* of faith, as well as he who would alter the *object* of faith. Why do we not instinctively feel this? We are instinctively shocked, when we see the Socinian presumer, sweeping away all the mysteries of the gospel, before he will consent to believe its historical

facts; and also when we see the Antinomian presumer, turning the grace of God into licentiousness: but we ought also to be shocked at ourselves, when we presume to ask or wish for more encouragement, than a free invitation to the gospel feast.

Oh! were we really as *humble* as we imagine and intend, when we think of our own unworthiness, we should welcome, with adoring wonder and gratitude, the slightest *hint* about the possibility of our salvation, instead of doubting its free offer. Abraham evinced a deeper and meeker humility, when he “staggered not at the promise of God, through unbelief.”

But you are still reverting to the supposed advantage, which Abraham had from being *alone*, when God showed him “His salvation.” Do you, then, really think that this was an advantage? I readily grant, that, at first sight, it looks like one, even a great one. But, when I ask myself—“would the gospel have been at all less worthy of his personal confidence, if it had been proclaimed to him in the presence of all his kindred and country-

men?" I see, at a glance, that *their* presence would have been a help, instead of a hindrance, to believing: for, of course, the more the number is, to whom salvation is offered, the greater is the proof of its value and veracity. Indeed, the chief reason why Abraham so readily and cordially believed the gospel for himself, was, because the promise embraced his own family, and was eventually to bless "*all families of the earth.*" And, as the *prospect* of that was one of the grand magnets which won his faith; most certainly, the *presence* of any of these families would not have increased the difficulty of believing. Oh! we may well *rejoice*, that the gospel is not a *solitary* appeal, as it was in the time of Abraham. In the present state of the world, *that* would be far more difficult to believe, than the general proclamation is. Indeed, nothing could be a better proof of God's *sincerity* in inviting us to trust in Christ, than our being placed by his providence, where the trumpets of His salvation sound sweetest, oftenest, and farthest.

No. II.

THE GENERAL CHARACTER OF DOUBTING.

It is true, however strange, that the most serious and circumspect are often the most "slow of heart," to believe the promises for themselves, or to regard the gospel as "glad tidings" intended for them. They can include any one in the promise or the purpose of God, sooner than themselves. Both the way and the welcome of the very worst, to the cross and the mercy-seat, are quite plain to us, even when we can see no hope for ourselves. Indeed, in the case of others, who are really concerned about their own salvation, we wonder that they should have any fear; and feel sure, that their doubts are unfounded and unnecessary. We could even *prove* that there was enough in the free grace

of the gospel, to suit their case : yea, we could *defy* them to disprove their own warrant or welcome to hope in Christ.

Did it ever occur to you, that this is just the view they take of *our* case? Yes; they are equally sure that our doubts and fears are unnecessary; and that there is enough in the gospel to remove them all. Even the greatest Doubters judge thus of each other. When the prisoners in Doubting Castle are most numerous, every one of them thinks himself the *only* one who ought to be there. Each would engage to prove to all the rest, (if they would only listen to reason!) that they had no real occasion to remain another night in prison. Accordingly, we never saw any awakened sinner or weeping backslider, whose case we thought hopeless. We durst not *mend the pen* to any despairing penitent, who was "writing bitter things against himself." We should at once direct him to what God had *written* for the encouragement of "the weary and heavy laden."

Now, thus exactly, would such a man direct us: and not all the pain or pressure of

his own terrors could prevent him from *wondering*—were we to tell him, that we could take no comfort from the gospel to ourselves. He would hardly believe us, if we said so : or if he did, he would tell us plainly, that, were he in our place, he would not be afraid to hope. Now, what answer could we give to his appeal ? The only thing we could say is—“ Ah, you do not know our case : there are peculiarities about it peculiar to itself : we could believe in Christ for our own salvation, were we in *your* place ; but, as *our* case stands, we are afraid even to hope ; you do not know us, as we know ourselves !” This is all we could say to him. And, what is it all ? Just the repetition or echo of what he says of his *own* case. Thus it is, that *peculiarities* are pleaded on both sides, as the reason for not venturing to believe the promises of God ; and each side thinks the peculiarities of the other side, anything but reasons for not believing. In a word ; no Doubter doubts the welcome of other Doubters. What we fear, when we “ stand in doubt” of the final salvation of any man, is, not

whether he could find salvation, but whether he will ever *seek* it.

It is then *peculiarities*, in our own case, which discourage us. This does not look well! There is a fault or a fallacy here, however unintentional it may be. "What! could I get over all my fears, were I only free from the peculiarities which render (as I think) my case *singular*? Does that, in which I resemble other sinners, sit so light on my conscience, that I could hope and believe too, easily, if I had nothing else to answer for? I have, in common with others, a depraved nature, a wicked heart, a guilty and treacherous conscience, towards God:—and, is that in which I differ from others, *worse* than all this mass of evil in which I am like others? I surely must have too slight a sense of my *general* condition as a sinner, if my peculiarities as a sinner lie heaviest on my conscience; for, what is one bad feeling, however bad; or one great sin, however great, when compared with a fallen nature, and a life of alienation from God? I cannot, indeed, think too ill of the points in which I am

worse than others: but, if these points concentrate all my attention, and occasion all my fear, I certainly do not think ill enough of those points of resemblance to others, which make me a child of wrath in common with them: and which would leave me under the curse, even if there were no peculiarities in my case."

Besides; what are the peculiarities in our case, which intimidate and deter us from taking comfort from the promises of God? We both think and say, "that others cannot enter into the difficulties of our case; that there is something about it, known only to God and ourselves; and that, thus, it forms an *exception* to all other experience." This is the form of words in which we usually state the matter, when we speak of it. But, were any one to conclude from this confession, that we had been guilty of some sin which will not bear to be named; or which, if known, would shock mankind, and brand us with infamy,—we should, in that case, think ourselves very ill used. We should feel amazed, as well as hurt, if such an interpretation were put upon our words; and on no account, allow the

person to go away under a mistake of this kind. Well ; what explanation would we give, if we were told that our words implied something very bad? We could not, of course, retract nor qualify our confession ; for we really *mean* what we say, when we charge ourselves with peculiar guilt. We mean by that, however, neither peculiar vice nor villany ; but, chiefly, the treachery of our hearts in religion. What pains and alarms us so, is, the consciousness of having resisted certain strivings of the Holy Spirit ; of having trifled with our souls and salvation, in the face of great light ; of having misimproved great privileges, and stood out in defiance of solemn warnings. We have broken vows upon our conscience ; and a desolation in our spirit, which we brought on by remissness or folly. And all this seems to us, at times, so like the unpardonable sin against the Holy Ghost, or so like the state of a mind from which grace is withdrawn or withheld, that we cannot *get over* it.

This is our explanation of our own case ; and, on these grounds, we deem it *singular*, and sometimes reckon it desperate. It has

tempted us to give up prayer altogether for a time, and almost to forsake the public means of grace. It has even drawn us into horrid suspicions of God, and into *perilous* lowness of spirits.

We are, however, wrong, if we hold this case to be an *uncommon* one. It is not commonly acknowledged ; but it is any thing but unusual or unknown. Ask any Christian, even your Minister, whether he was never haunted and harassed by dark suspicions ? As SAUL was once "amongst the Prophets," so even the Prophets have been occasionally like Saul, when the *cloud* was upon his spirit, in spite of the harp of David. Thus, however distressing it may be, "no strange thing has befallen" us, when we have been compelled to say, "there is no hope." Besides ; be it remembered and well weighed by us,—we ourselves have occasionally *got over* all the peculiarities of our case, and even forgotten our fears for a time. We have had some sweet intervals of relief and rest from them ; during which we could whisper to our soul, "Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him for the

help of his countenance." We must not forget this pleasing fact ; for it is a fact. Were it not true, we could neither understand nor feel the *darkness* we now deplore. It is the memory, yea the experience, of some "marvellous light," which makes the darkness so distressing and intolerable to us. Utter strangers to grace, do not feel in this manner. There was a time, when we ourselves would have almost *laughed* at the fears which now make us weep. Thus there has some change for the better taken place in our hearts : and some part of it remains fixed there, notwithstanding all our sad relapses. We may, indeed, doubt whether it be a *saving* change ; but, so far as that is a stop to indifference, we certainly are not altogether strangers to it. We could not become indifferent about the salvation of our souls. However our concern for them may *end*, and whatever new aspect it may assume, it will cleave to us through life, like our shadow.

Nor is this all. This deep sense of the value of our souls arose, itself, out of, once, glorious views of the greatness of salvation.

There have been "moments rich in blessing," beneath the cross, when we neither did nor could doubt. Yes; the cloud has passed off from our spirit, before the brightness of redeeming mercy; and, without thinking at all less humbly of ourselves than we do now, we have occasionally seen, and clearly too, that the blood of Jesus Christ could cleanse *us* from all sin. And then—(O remember the open vision!)—then, the Bible seemed *all* promises, the Gospel *all* love, and the House of God the very gate of heaven. True; the cloud has returned again; but still, these cloudless

"Yesterdays, look backward with a *smile*!"

The renewal of these "days of old," would set all *right* again in our hearts and spirits. Could we only feel as we did then, we could believe as we ought now. For, mark; our hearts are not yet *dead* to these things. They beat, and even burn a little, at the bare mention of them. What would we not give, at this moment, to be again as in months past, when the candle of the Lord shone upon us?

“Return, O Holy Dove, return
Sweet messenger of rest ;
I hate the sins which made thee mourn,
And drove thee from my breast.”

Is there, then, in all this, no “good thing towards the Lord God of Israel?” Was it, could it be, all and only a *delusion*, when the Saviour was altogether lovely, and the Gospel unspeakably glorious, in our estimation? We may, indeed, have given ourselves credit for more faith and love then, than we really possessed; and thus have taken a more favorable view of our case, than the facts of it warranted: but we certainly did not *intend* to presume then, nor were we conscious of *flattering* ourselves. We really meant well, however unwisely we judged. We even hoped, fondly, that we should go on well in the divine life, and do valiantly in both the work and warfare of faith. In a word; we have not failed, because our *design* was at all hypocritical or unholy; for it was not so; but because we did not take sufficient pains to accomplish it.

We have, however, failed to become, or to

enjoy, what we expected to be and possess ; and, therefore, it is certain that we did *err* sadly, in the estimate we formed of our first symptoms and resolutions. We thought too favorably of our case then. There was rashness, as well as ignorance and weakness, in our fond conclusions. The result has proved this, to our shame and sorrow. But now,—is it not just possible, that we may err as far on the other side, in judging of our present case? We made out a former state of mind, to be *better* than it really was ; and, is there no danger of making out our present state of mind, to be *worse* than it really is? It is not “a reprobate mind;” for that is fearless or reckless. And as to the sin against the Holy Ghost, it is both certain that we have not committed it, and doubtful if we could commit it. It is, *malignant blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, as he dwelt in the Saviour* : a crime we were never even tempted, much less inclined, to commit. We do, therefore, run into the opposite extreme of rash judging, when we ascribe to the unpardon-

able sin, the darkness or the distress of our minds. All that we feel or fear can be but too easily accounted for, by *pardonable* sins. Besides, do you not see *Satan's* deep design in suggesting and keeping up the suspicion of "the great transgression," in our case? His object is, to divert our attention and fears from our real guilt, that we may waste our time and spirits in brooding over fancied symptoms of *imaginary* guilt. He knows well, if we do not, that our real sins are all pardonable; and, therefore, his object is to keep us from leaving them at the cross and the mercy-seat, by laying to our charge an ideal sin which cannot be left there. For, depend upon it, Satan would not trouble himself to lay snares for us, nor to cast fiery darts at us, if the guilt of *that* sin were upon our conscience. He would put some of his own *work* into our hands, and some of his own *designs* into our hearts, if he felt sure of us as his prey. But he does not: he is afraid of losing us; and, therefore, he harasses us, that we may not suspect him of

being thus afraid lest we escape : for, like the lion, his roar is loudest when his prey is most doubtful to himself.

Thus something may be gained by acquainting ourselves with the case of others, and by going fully into our own case. We shall not however, "be at peace" from our doubts or fears, until we "*acquaint ourselves with God.*" No acquaintance with the wiles of Satan, however profound ; or with the experience of Christians, however extensive, could extricate us from the fearful pit of despondency, or from the miry clay of perplexity and suspense. Yea, no *promise*, however sweet, or suited to our case, can give us real and lasting relief from "the spirit of bondage," until our acquaintance with God is very much increased. Even the return of all our first love, would be no security against future relapses of piety or spirits, whilst the whole and true character of God is not well known by us. Indeed, neither promises nor prospects have any power to cheer us, but just what they derive from His *character* ; and, therefore, if it appear to us at all dark, or doubtful, or

arbitrary, or harsh, or capricious, no wonder if we can take but little comfort from the promises, or that we should be afraid to appropriate them to ourselves. In a word; they can only *be* to us, what God *seems* to us. Now, if He, as the God of salvation, or as God in Christ, seem to us to have, like the pillar of cloud, a bright and a dark side, the promises are sure to wear to us the same aspect. We never can make more of them, than just what we think of Him.

Consider this weighty fact. The cause of all the difficulty we feel in trying to get and keep hold of the great and precious promises, lies much deeper than many suspect. Some good men think they have met our case, when they have quoted a promise which seems actually *made* for it. And we have been silenced for a time, when a wise man has defied us to draw up a *form* of invitation or encouragement in our own words, which would go beyond God's words in point or plainness. All this is very true, and highly pleasing; but, whilst we have any suspicion of God's "goodwill," His words, however ex-

plicit or kind, will be *interpreted* by that suspicion. I readily grant, that the promises are intended and calculated to remove our natural suspicions of the divine character, and even to endear it to our hearts; and they would endear it, did we apply them to the *whole* of the Divine character, or regard them as equally expressive of *all* the perfections of Jehovah. But, instead of this, what is the fact? Alas! that we connect them chiefly with those lovely perfections of God, which hardly need any explanation; and use them as a shield or a shade, to screen us from (what we call) His awful attributes. But, if by *awful*, we mean terrific or intimidating attributes, we are wrong; for there are no such attributes of God, as "God in Christ, reconciling the world to himself." God in Christ, is love, all love, nothing but love, towards any one and every one, who is willing to be indebted to Christ for a free and holy salvation. God in Christ is Light, and in Him is no darkness at all, when he places the glad tidings of the Gospel before us. He wishes, yea welcomes us, as well as com-

mands us, to believe them for our own comfort and salvation.

However well intended, therefore, it may be, to divide and sub-divide the character of God into lovely and awful, bright and dark parts, it betrays a want of acquaintance with God. All His character is lovely and bright, and nothing else, as the God of salvation: and all his character is terrific, and nothing else, if that salvation be despised or neglected. In praying for mercy we have nothing to fear; and we have nothing to hope for, if we do not pray. At the cross, we are as welcome to hope in all God's perfections, as the angels are to rejoice in them all in heaven; and away from the cross, we have no more warrant or ground to hope in any of them, than devils have in hell.

No. III.

THE REAL CHARACTER OF DOUBTING.

THE substance of all the great and precious promises, is, "The hope of Eternal Life." For as all the promises are yea and amen in Christ, so they all centre in a title to, and meetness for, Heaven.

Paul says of this hope, that it was promised by God, "*who cannot lie, before the world began.*" And it was not without design, nor with a discouraging design, that the apostle thus referred to the antiquity of the promise. We, indeed, are prone to suspect, when we hear of promises, purposes, or arrangements, which preceded the birth of time, and take their date "from everlasting," that we can have neither part nor lot in them;—a suspicion equally unwarranted and unwise. Their

eternity ought to prevent, not to create, this suspicion. It was evidently *intended* to prevent all such suspicions. For, as God had no occasion, for His own sake, to plan or promise "before the world began," He must have done so for our sake, or to encourage us. We, therefore, misunderstand and pervert the eternal origin of His gracious arrangements, whenever we look on them with a jealous eye. The revealed fact, that His "mercy is *from* everlasting," is, when duly weighed, as pleasing as the revealed fact, that it is "*to* everlasting." There is no more occasion for becoming afraid, when God speaks of its *past* eternity, than when He speaks of its *future* eternity; and just as little reason to wish that it had not been before time, as to wish that it would expire with time.

Consider this fact. We are pleased, to think that the mercy of the Lord endureth for ever. We readily allow that this is truly encouraging; because the immortality of our being could only be a blessing, by the eternity of mercy. We could not bear to look forward to everlasting ages, if they were not thus gilded

with everlasting glory. We are, therefore, thankful that futurity is not a blank, but a brilliant prospect, to them who love God. And we see clearly, that this prospect is both intended and adapted to win and confirm love to Him. Ought we not, then, to be equally pleased to look *back* on the reign of grace "from everlasting," as to look *forward* on the reign of glory, "to everlasting." Why wish the *past* eternity a blank, seeing we are so fond of the glories of the future? We are almost as capable of looking before time, as of looking beyond time: and if glory which shall endure for ever delight us, grace which dates from eternity ought not to intimidate us. It certainly was not intended to discourage us, nor is it calculated to do so.

You doubt this, perhaps. I too have doubted it often and deeply: but I now see that I utterly mistook the matter. For, if God had never, in all the past eternity of his being, planned nor purposed any grace on behalf of man, it would be far more difficult than it is now, to believe the promise of eternal glory. Had He never once thought of

our world, nor felt for us, "from everlasting," it would not be so easy as it now is, to calculate on His mercy "to everlasting." Whatever mystery may, therefore, hang over eternal plans or purposes of grace, they are certainly not so suspicious in their aspect, as a *blank* eternity would have been. The bare idea of that, is both unnatural and ominous; whereas, the occupancy of the past, with the gracious plans of the future, is, to say the least, both an interesting and cheering fact.

Besides; as it could not have been for His own security or satisfaction, that God formed and confirmed the covenant of grace with his Son, "before the foundation of the world," it must have been for *our* satisfaction. What else could it be for? They needed no interchange of bonds or pledges, in order to be faithful to each other, nor in order to be mutually gracious to mankind. They could have carried redemption into effect *without* a covenant, exactly as they have done *with* a covenant.

O, we ought to be very careful, how we speak and think about the eternal covenant

of the Trinity. There is such a covenant ; and it will remain for ever, " well ordered in all things, and sure : " but it was neither arranged to bring, nor ratified to bind, the triune Godhead to one purpose ; nor did it originate at all for their mutual satisfaction, or for their personal guidance. They required not from each other, on their own account, any pledge of fidelity or cordiality. No stipulations, nor even explanations, were necessary between the Father, Son, and Spirit, in order to their harmonious and unchangeable co-operation in the work of Redemption ; because they could have no suspicions of each other's will or power, and no difference of design or opinion. All those covenant-transactions took place for *our* satisfaction ; that we might have " strong consolation," in fleeing for refuge, to lay hold on the hope set before us in the Gospel ; and not, that the Godhead might have strong personal inducements to concur in the plan. For it was not the precious *blood* of the covenant, which won the Father's goodwill towards man ; nor the great *reward* of the covenant, which bought over the Son to

life for ourselves, is, the *truth* of the promise itself and the explicitness of the divine command and permission to believe it. Now it is "the promise of God, who cannot lie;" and as the belief of it is the command of God, who cannot *mock*, it is our personal *duty*, as well as privilege, to lay hold on the hope of salvation, by faith in Christ. In fact, we cannot neglect this duty, without treating God as a liar. Be not startled at this strong expression: there is more impeachment of God's veracity, in our doubts and fears, than we suspect or exactly intend. And, if we really do not at all intend to make God a liar, by indulging them in *spite* of His promise, it is high time for us to acquaint ourselves more intimately with His faithfulness and sincerity.

Now, however familiar we may be with the scriptural assurances, that "*God cannot lie*," that "*it is impossible for God to lie*," we certainly do not believe nor understand them well, if we doubt either our own warrant or welcome to believe the promise of eternal life, for ourselves. Our believing the truth of it in the case of *others*, does not meet its claims

upon us: for the promise is just as much addressed to *us*, as to any other persons whatever. "The promise is unto *you*, and to your children," said Peter, on the day of Pentecost, to the very murderers of the Lord of glory: and, as they were both permitted and commanded to embrace it, nothing, certainly, can exempt or exclude us from the obligation to do so. Whatever, therefore, may be our reason for not venturing to believe the promise for ourselves; and whatever we may intend by indulging fear and hesitation, the whole process of our unbelief is, virtually, an attempt to make God a liar. I know, and readily grant, that we do not intend to insult or malign God. "*I wot, that through ignorance, we have done it.*" But however ignorance may palliate this sin, ignorance cannot excuse it; because we have ample means of knowing it to be "exceeding sinful." For, what saith the Scriptures? Nothing less than this,—*he that believeth not God hath made him a liar.*" Why? "*Because he believeth not the record that God gave of His Son.*" What is it? "*THIS is the record—that*

God hath given unto us eternal life ; and this life is in His Son." Now, what can we say to this view of the matter ? In vain we fix upon the word "us," in the record, and say, that John is speaking of himself and his converts : for the text is not the record concerning *them* ; but "the record God gave of his SON." It is not, therefore, against the disbelief of *their* salvation, that John argues thus solemnly and awfully. So far, indeed, as God bore witness to the fact of their salvation, the disbelief of his testimony, even on that point, would be highly criminal. That, however, is not the *grand* point. The free gift of eternal life in his Son, is the grand point in the record ; and that is not believed as it is given, nor for the purpose it is given, whilst we believe it for others, and not for ourselves. We do right to put great faith in it, as it bears upon others ; but we do wrong to doubt its gracious bearings on ourselves : for, however many we may include in the word "us," we virtually impeach the veracity of God, if we *exclude* ourselves. He has not *said* that we are excluded, nor has he *done*

anything to us which indicates exclusion. His promise of eternal life through Christ, comes before us just as unfettered and full, as before any man or woman in the world. It could not be *made* more personal to us than it is, but by the insertion of our *names* in the record: and that would only create confusion. For, to say nothing of the unmanageable bulk of a record which should register all names, and, thus, could not be consulted in a lifetime; who could distinguish his *own* name from thousands exactly like it? How much more simple and satisfactory is the "*Faithful saying—that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners?*" That designates us better than our names; because it defines our character and condition. Instead, therefore, of putting, as we are prone to do, the question—does the "*us*" of the Divine Record include *us*; we ought to mark, with gratitude and wonder, that it does not *exclude* us: and instead of asking is the promise of eternal life intended for us, we ought to rejoice that there is nothing to the *contrary* said or insinuated in any part of the Bible. Now, this is really

the way and form in which the promise of salvation is brought before us, by the God of salvation, "who cannot lie." He does not *forbid* us to believe it in our own case. He does not say that we are *exceptions* from its universality. He does not even caution us against believing it too readily or too firmly. And God says *nothing* about risk or presumption, in our venturing to appropriate the promise. Consider this mass of fact! We are not debarred, nor forbidden, nor warned, nor cautioned against the application of the glad tidings to ourselves. There is nothing in all the letter or spirit of the Gospel, which says or indicates, that you or I have no right to take the comfort of its glad tidings. And, shall we say, what God does *not* say? Shall we set up our clamorous suspicions, against both his holy silence and his solemn command? Whoever would act this part toward any promise we had laid before them, we should feel that we were treated as liars. And, do we not treat God so, when we treat, as not *intended* for us, a promise which is as openly, and freely, and urgently, laid before us, as it

is before any one? The will of God is not more clearly set before the angels in heaven, than the *goodwill* of God is set before us on earth; nor have we any more reason to doubt if His promises are intended for us, than angels to doubt if his commands are intended for them. Gabriel would not be more inexcusable were he to dispute a divine command, than you are when you doubt a divine promise. God is as sincere in giving us Gospel, as in giving angels Law. When He brought His only begotten Son into the world, He said, "*Let all the angels of God worship him.*" They all did. But, what would you have thought, had any one of them doubted the application of the command to himself, and thus not ventured to honor the Son?—Remember!—"all men" are commanded to "honor the Son, even as they honor the Father:" and to "honor the Son," is, to "believe upon Him unto life everlasting," as well as to believe Him to be the Son of God. Accordingly, the command to believe in Him for salvation, is as universal and unqualified as the command to worship Him. Both are

equally duties, because they are equally commanded ; and equally privileges, because they are equally permitted.

Let us, however, not get confused on this subject, by having too many points before us. It will be most useful, at present, to keep to the single point,—that God cannot lie against the promise of eternal life ; and, therefore, we must be guilty of treating him as a liar, if we, for ourselves, do not embrace that promise. Now, believing it for others, is not doing *our* duty to it, nor to its Author, however *many* others we may include in the “us” of His record. We do not get nor keep clear of the guilt of impeaching the truth of God, by believing His record to be perfectly true, in the case of countless millions and myriads of mankind. This is, indeed, believing a great deal more than some do ; and it is quite enough to exempt us from being classed with wanton or wilful unbelievers. But still, it is nothing to the point. We are commanded to believe on Christ for our *own* salvation : and this point is neither touched nor attempted, however much we believe about the salvation of how-

ever many. It is right to believe much on this subject :—but this is not the *subject*, to which God demands and invites our personal faith. That, He demands for Christ ; and for Christ as a *Saviour* : and the claim is founded upon the fact, that Christ is able to save unto the uttermost all that come unto God by Him, because His blood cleanseth from all sin. Thus it is Christ, in His all-sufficiency to save *us*, as well as others, that is the grand *object* of faith : and, therefore, the more we believe His sufficiency to save others, the more criminal and inexcusable is the disbelief of it in our own case. For, the sober fact is, we have no reason for applying the truth of the Saviour's all-sufficiency to others, which is not equally valid and good for applying it to ourselves.

This assertion will, I am fully aware, seem any thing but sober fact. At first sight, it may not appear at all true. You could start and establish, as you think, strong arguments against its probability. Well ; still I repeat it : you cannot prove that any one has any warrant to believe God's record for himself, which you have not. Proving that thousands

are *better* than yourself, is, indeed, a weighty matter; but it is nothing to the point, so long as "the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin." Besides, what they are better than you, is not their warrant for believing the Gospel, nor the reason of their welcome to hope in Christ.

"What!" you say, "have not those who are very penitent, and those who are very pious, more warrant than I have? Are they not the very characters to whom the promises are made? How, then, could I, who am so unlike them, both in character and heart, be as much warranted to hope in Christ as they are?" All this is plausible; but it is not a fair way of putting their case, or your own. What you admire in them, is all the *effect* of believing the Gospel. They were neither pious nor penitent, *before* they began to apply to Christ. Ask any of them, whether they had anything to go on, at first, but God's free invitation? They are, indeed, now under the wing of special promises; but they set out for the cross, under the wing of the very *call* which the Gospel addresses to you. And,

even now, were it not for the *truth* of God's invitation to sinners, just as sinners, they would soon become as much afraid as you are.

Now you cannot say, that you are not invited; and, therefore, you ought not to suspect that you are unwarranted. If you will indulge this suspicion, upon your head will be the guilt of charging God with falsehood. And, what else—what less—is implied, if you think that His word is not to be depended on, in your case? I know well, that is not what you intend or mean, by not venturing to take God at His word: but I know also, that there is nothing else to be got until we take His word. And what else, or better, could we have? “*God cannot lie!*” If He could, nothing else He could do or give, to encourage hope, could be depended on. A God who could break His word, could break through any plan, purpose, or decree. If His *written* invitation and promise cannot be safely depended on, I would not depend on the truth of the Gospel, if ten thousand angels left their thrones to proclaim it from pole to pole, every Sabbath. For, could God lie, that might only

be a more splendid delusion. Some speak as if they would be satisfied and delighted with seeing the Lamb's Book of Life: and I do not pretend to be without curiosity: but, if his Book of Promise contain *deceptions*, that Book of Life may be equally fallacious. Some, again, would lay great stress on, yea, place entire confidence in, such a sensible work of the Holy Spirit upon them, as would prove that they were "born again." But if the *word* of the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures (and they are all His word) cannot be relied on, I do not see how his *work* would be any sure ground or guide of hope.

No. IV.

THE CHIEF CAUSE OF DOUBTING.

NEXT to the fool, who saith in his heart, "there is no God," we rank the wicked to whom God saith, "*Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself.*" And if the utter denial of a God be the height of folly, it must be the height of wickedness to deem God to be like the *wicked* in any thing, or in any sense. And yet, such is the effrontery or the infatuation of some men, that they do not hesitate to think and speak of God, as being like themselves in some things. They never, indeed, imagine that He is mortal, or weak, or ignorant, or unhappy : but they do imagine, and fondly too, that God thinks as lightly of sin as they do : and that He will treat sin as leniently as they

do. If they admit that He notices sin at all, it is only such a notice as smiles at sin as an error, or excuses it as a misfortune. Ordinary sins, they regard as quite beneath His notice; and even in the case of gross sins, they take for granted that God will make great allowances for human frailty, and greater still for the force of circumstances and temptation. Thus *they* settle the matter. They view sin in this light; and, therefore, they conclude that, of course, God views it much in the same light. The idea that He will punish it with everlasting destruction, or treat it with severity, *they* scorn as illiberal, if not fanatical.

With all this, neither our judgment, nor our conscience, has any allowed sympathy. This lowering of the Divine nature, to the level of human nature, shocks us. We wonder and weep at the infatuation of men who can thus, in the face of a world groaning under the curse, and in the face of a cross where Emmanuel groaned and died, think lightly of sin, or dream that God thinks lightly of it. This transferring of human

opinions and human feelings to the Eternal Mind, in spite of all warning, and in defiance of all conscience, seems, to us, even worse than Atheism. At least, we feel that the denial of God, can hardly be worse than this attempt to degrade Him.

Is it, however, the *wicked* alone, who judge of God by themselves? They alone ascribe to him slight views, and slumbering feelings of the evil of sin: we never imagine that God does not hate, or is not angry with it. But do we ascribe nothing to God but what is *godlike*? Do we transfer none of the prejudices or partialities of our own minds, to the Eternal Mind? We may not intend to do so, nor be conscious of doing so; and yet, there may be something of the process of assimilating God to *man*, going on in our habits of thinking and judging about His character and disposition.

In this startling form and connection, these questions may seem, at first, impertinent and unnecessary. They are, however, neither. For, do we never confess nor deplore, that we have occasionally some *low*

views of God ; some *harsh* or *gloomy* views of His character ; some *suspensions* of His goodwill, and even His equity ? Do we never make out a *character* for God, that is not "*altogether lovely* ?" Ah ! we have much to charge ourselves with, on the score both of limiting and lowering the Holy One of Israel. We are ashamed and shocked at certain thoughts and suspicions which have passed through our minds, at times. Now, whence came they ? Where did we gather them from ? We actually ascribe some of the worst of these blasphemous thoughts of God, to the suggestions of Satan. And we are *right* in doing so. They are too unwelcome and loathsome to us, to be *wholly* our own fault. We are too glad to get rid of them to be intentionally guilty of them. But, do you not see that—if we are in danger of ascribing to God passions or designs which *Satan* suggests—there must be some danger of ascribing to God some of our *own* imperfections. For, if we can, occasionally, so far forget ourselves, and our bibles too, as to admit an image of God into our minds,

from the hand of the chief enemy of God and man, it is but too likely that we, ourselves, may stamp something of our *own* image upon some part of the Divine character; and thus come to think that God is not altogether *unlike* us in some things. And, what else are our suspicions of His heart—of His hand—of His purposes—but *reflections* of our own image, falling on His revealed image, and disfiguring its glory by their own ominous glare? Where, also, but from our own changeableness and caprice, could we get those jealousies of His love and faithfulness which we are so prone to indulge? Oh! it is not the wicked alone who are chargeable with charging God foolishly. They alone have the hardihood to think Him *unholy*: but they are not the only class who judge of His heart by their *own* hearts, in some things.

It is, however, worthy of deep and daily remembrance that, in general, those who are never afraid of God, venture to take far greater *liberties* with His authority, than they take, who occasionally give way to distressing sus-

pitions of His goodwill. Minds which never betray nor admit any fears, seldom manifest any love or allegiance to God. They keep clear, indeed, of all harsh and dark views of the Divine character; but they keep equally clear of all transporting and transforming views of it. They are strangers to doubts; but they are also estranged from *awe*, and from all deep sense of *practical* obligation. It would, therefore, be a bad exchange to have our hearts divested of all fear, at the expense of having our consciences stript of all tenderness. Better suffer occasionally from a dark suspicion or foreboding, than settle down in that smiling apathy, which has no fear of displeasing God, nor any desire to please Him. We may often be both weak and wrong in giving way to some of our alarms; but the worst of them cannot be so criminal, as lethargy of heart or conscience. God can sympathise with mistakes and infirmities; but he denounces all who are "*at ease in Zion.*"

We ought not, however, to be prevented, even by this solemn fact, from ridding our-

selves, thoroughly, of all harsh and gloomy ideas of the character and will of God. There is no occasion for sheltering or admitting one of them, if we have no design of making a *bad* use of sweet and soothing views of God. For, why should we distress or discourage ourselves by suspicions, if we are willing and desirous to make a *good* use of hope and encouragement? Let us, by all means, take care to avoid the fatal extreme of taking up with such flimsy notions of God, as they indulge, who think Him too good to be displeased with them: but, on the other hand, let us take equal care not to suspect Him of being, at all, indifferent, or distant, or changeable, towards those who sincerely wish to please Him by faith and practice. We must, indeed, judge of God, in some measure, from ourselves; because it is only through the medium of *human* excellence, that we can judge at all of divine perfections: but, as we shrink with horror from attributing any of our own passions or errors to the Eternal Mind, let us also be afraid of ascribing to that mind any of our own weakness or caprice.

This is done, when we judge of the *Sovereignty* of the divine will and purposes, by the arbitrary selections and decisions of the human will. God, indeed, says, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy ; but the explanation of this solemn oracle, and settled maxim, is not to be found, and should not be sought for, in the modes of *our* will or mercy, nor in the *self-will* of any creature. We love and hate, choose and refuse, with a great deal of sovereignty indeed : for we should often be unable to assign any *reason* to ourselves or others, for some of our likes and dislikes. They were just our *humor* at the moment ; and even in the case of likes and dislikes, which we thought we had good reasons for at the moment, we have *changed* our mind afterward, and even repented of our rashness.

This is the *sovereignty* of the human will, in the exercise of its love and hatred. But there can be no such caprice or vacillation in the Sovereignty of God. Its image is neither in the *ill-will* of a stern man, nor in the *good-will* of a weak man. Heartless men are utterly unlike the LOVE of God ; and men

with nothing but *hearts*, equally unlike the wisdom of God. We ought, therefore, to take equal care not to judge of the divine will from our own temperament, nor from the spirit of rival systems. God is not at all "such an one" as the *gloomy* depict; nor "altogether such an one" as the *lively* imagine.

"How then," it will be asked, "should we judge of His sovereignty? His own will is His only law in showing mercy: the point is, therefore, too solemn to be overlooked or hushed up in silence." True, and there is no necessity for hiding or hushing on the subject. We have only to judge of God's will as we do of every man's will; that it will be like *Himself*. Every man wills according to his general character, or according to his prevailing disposition; and according to that, we judge of his will. Now what is the general character of the God with whom we have to do? It is—that he is love, that He delights in mercy, that He has no pleasure in the death of a sinner, that He hates putting away, that He is *unwilling* that any should perish. Well, His will is like *all* this. Could we, then, have any better pledge of its being "good-will towards

men?" Remember that this pledge of His good-will is ratified and consecrated both by His own oath, and by the blood of the Lamb. There is, therefore, nothing equivocal or changeable about it; and there will never be anything *added* to it. Upon this warrant we must venture to hope, or remain for ever *unwarranted*. A truce therefore, to all and any questions we could start, about ourselves or others: there is no one to *answer* them. Man cannot; God *will* not, answer them. However, therefore, we may twist or turn, back we must come to this revealed pledge of His good-will, or live and die utterly in the dark. There certainly is some darkness around the path of His sovereignty; but there is nothing *but* darkness around the path of human curiosity. Accordingly, whilst millions and myriads have done well, for time and eternity, by casting themselves on the revealed promises of God, no one ever grew wiser, or better, or happier, by attempting to pry into the *secret* purposes of God.

To this point the subject is usually brought, and at this point it is usually left; and we are left with it, to make what use we can of it.

It is, however, either carried too *far*, or not far *enough*, if we are left under the impression that the silence, or the secrets, or the sovereignty of Jehovah, resemble the reserve or the mystery of *strange* and *eccentric* men. God does not intend to embarrass, nor to puzzle, nor to surprise us, by either the majesty or the mystery of His procedure. He intends both to awe and humble us ; but, not to put us on the rack of suspense, nor into the stocks of perplexity. He not only does not say one thing, and mean another ; but means, by all that He says, to win confidence and inspire hope, as well as to produce humility. We must, therefore, take care not to interpret the darkness which He has left around His secret purposes, by the veil we sometimes throw around our *own* goodwill ; nor by the way in which some men who feel kindly, yet speak roughly, or look coldly, at first. There are men of great benevolence whose aspect and manner, both before and after doing a kindness, almost repel hope and repress gratitude. They are good men ; but *odd* men. They mean well ; but they leave it so doubtful how

they feel, and how they will act, that we are kept on thorns, until their conduct reveal their intentions. Now I will not say that we are inclined to think God "altogether such an one" as this; but I will say, that something very like the feeling produced by such men, is felt towards God, when the current views of His sovereignty are actually and vividly present to our minds. We feel as if there were some *hazard*, as well as much hope; some risk, as well as encouragement. "And, is there not some uncertainty hanging over the question of success," it will be said? Certainly not; if we are seeking a holy salvation through the blood of the Lamb: for the promise is not, we *may* find; but that we *shall* find it. It is, therefore, our duty to blend as much hope as humility, in all our prayers for mercy and grace. We can neither please nor honor God by cherishing suspicions of His goodwill. He might, indeed, justly shut out our prayer; justly spurn us from the mercy-seat; justly leave us to our deserved doom: and we ought never to forget this, nor to soften it down: but, as it is in the *face* of all this, that God

both invites and promises, urges and beseeches us, it must be most pleasing to Him to see us well pleased with His loving kindness. He is not—He is not, tantalizing us with peradventures, nor even dealing with us by strong probabilities, when He calls on us to flee from the wrath to come, and to commit our souls into the hands of Christ. God is incapable of any thing like this. His gospel is “not yea and nay,” whatever may be the preaching of man. “*God cannot lie* ;” and, therefore, humble prayer cannot fail of success. Why then, should His sincerity be met by surmises or sadness? Even His sovereignty has gained all its moral purposes in our case, if we stand self-condemned before Him, and are willing to be entire and eternal *debtors* to His goodwill.

The suspicions or feelings of suspense, against which these remarks are directed, are not thus assailed because they are painful, nor because they are perplexing ; but because the pain and perplexity occasioned by them waste much time and spirits, that might be far better employed. O ! they have much to answer for, who have left on the public mind such an idea of Divine

sovereignty, as makes us afraid to believe Divine sincerity and veracity; as makes us feel as if there were some risk even at the Cross; as tempts us, at times, to look upon the use of means as a *doubtful* experiment, however fairly tried. The tendency of such doctrine is to weaken the hands, and even to harden the heart: for when the understanding is so far perverted, or the conscience so terrified, that a man can suspect that he may be lost, however earnestly he *try* to be saved; what can prevent his heart from hardening, if this suspicion be allowed to settle? It is, however, a suspicion as *false* as it is painful. Whoever indulges it, is, in fact, making God out to be such an one as the wicked, who promise, but break their word.

If, indeed, God had not passed His word, for the welcome of all who wish to be saved from sin and hell; or, if we had nothing to guide our judgment but human conjectures, it might not be impious nor impertinent to doubt our own welcome; for we certainly deserve none. I frankly confess, not only that I durst not venture to calculate on a welcome, but

also that I should deem it my *duty* to doubt it, if God had not promised. Had he been silent, or had He said that certain classes of sinners could not be saved, however they might wish or seek to be so, I might not, even in that case, have included myself amongst them, so as to abandon myself to utter despair; but I would have awaited in utter *silence* the decisions of the judgment-seat. I mean—I should have deemed it wisest, safest, and most becoming, in my own case, to manifest nothing but a penitent sense of utter unworthiness; and to cherish nothing, but calm submission and holy desire. This is the only spirit which could become a sinner, who had no Divine warrant for either despair or hope. And, were that our case, God's awful silence ought to be met by utter and meek silence on our part. But God has neither been silent nor reserved. "The mighty God, the Lord, hath spoken," and spoken *out*, frequently and emphatically, on the subject of our warrant and welcome to hope in Christ, whatever be our guilt or unworthiness: and, therefore, not to hope, is to presume.

Well might Dr. Wardlaw say, "When God invites, and invites the chief of sinners, is it presumption to come at his bidding? Is not he rather the presumptuous sinner, who keeps back?—who, instead of honoring God by immediate and undoubting confidence in His word, shrinks, and hesitates, and fears;—or comes, if he comes at all, with an uncertainty and jealousy on his mind, such as could only be justified by the possibility (a possibility which it is blasphemy to imagine) of the Divine Being deceiving him? When His declarations are concerned, it is *doubt* that is presumption. Blessed be God, there is no presumption, in either coming to him now, or in expecting acceptance with him in the end, on the ground of the finished work of his Son. There is, there can be, no presumption, in placing unlimited reliance on that which the God of truth has made known as a foundation laid by himself, and therefore sure."

NO. V.

GOODNESS, THE GLORY OF GOD.

WHAT is usually understood by the expression "the Glory of God," and naturally supposed to be His glory, is, something rather awful than lovely; rather dazzling than endearing. So much is this the leading idea suggested to us, when we think of God as infinitely glorious, that we are glad to turn from His glory to His *grace*; and thus to relieve the eyes of our understanding from the insufferable splendor, as we relieve our bodily eyes by turning them from the glare of the sun, to the mild ether of the heavens, or to the milder verdure of the earth. Indeed, it is as natural to shrink from the glory of God, as to shut the eyes upon the brightness of the meridian sun. It may, at first, therefore, seem a paradox, or a principle too profound

to be useful, to say that the Glory of God is full of *encouragement* to the timid and the trembling. This, I am aware, will seem like saying, that the orb of the noontide sun is full of grateful and refreshing light to weak eyes.

It was not thus, however, that Moses viewed the Glory of God. He evidently expected to be comforted and soothed by the manifestation of it. Instead of shunning it, or shrinking from it, he sought to see it. "*I beseech thee, shew me thy glory.*"

Moses had seen, again and again, what we regard as the Glory of God. It was *after* all the visible glory of the Shekinah was familiar to Him, in the wilderness; and *after* all the legislative glory of the divine presence had covered and convulsed Sinai, that he prayed for the manifestation of the divine glory: a plain proof, that he did not regard the splendors of the burning bush, of the fiery pillar, or of "the mount that burned with fire," as the whole or the chief Glory of God. Indeed, he had seen enough of that kind of glory. He had said, amidst the manifesta-

tions of it, "I exceedingly fear and quake." It is, therefore, certain, that his prayer was not for brighter displays of visible splendor, nor for more majestic forms of moral legislation. Sinai itself had not shaken more, when the thunder and the trumpet pealed loudest and longest, than Moses did, when that radiance enshrined the person and pavilion of Jehovah.

What then did Moses mean by the Glory of God? Now, whatever he meant, God answered his prayer by making "all his goodness pass before" him. Goodness is, therefore the real and chief *Glory* of God. Accordingly, the vision of that paternal glory unfolded as fully as the vision of judicial glory. "*The Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth.*"

All this is so like the mild and lovely spirit of the first promise, and of the patriarchal covenants; and Moses was so *pleased* with this gracious manifestation of the divine character, (for the moment he saw it, "he made

haste" to acknowledge it) that it evidently met the chief desire of his heart. And, that such a view of God as had cheered and charmed the hearts of the patriarchs, should be the chief desire of a man who had just dwelt, "body, soul, and spirit," amidst all the terrors of law and justice, during forty days, is exactly what might be expected. He *needed* to hear "a small, still voice" of love, after listening so long to the startling and stunning thunders of a fiery law. It is, therefore, impossible to give any other consistent explanation of his prayer, or of God's answer, than that GOODNESS is the GLORY of God.

The visible glory, or radiance of the symbol of the divine presence, is proof of this fact. That Shekinah of glory, whether burning in the bush, or blazing in the pillar, or like a conflagration on the mount, *meant* goodness, as much as when it came, afterwards, to crown the mercy-seat, to hallow the temple, to transfigure the Saviour, and to consecrate the apostles at Pentecost. For, however the forms of that visible glory varied, it was, at all

times and in all places, "a token for good," and a type of the paternal goodness of God. This is certain: for it was glory that always enshrined the plan of SALVATION. It always led to and illuminated "sacrifice for sin." It was never "devouring fire," but in order to protect and perpetuate the covenant of grace. This it did on Sinai. The terrific forms of God's visible glory on the mount, arose entirely to prove the value and vastness of his moral glory, or goodness: but as it was not easy to see this clearly, whilst "clouds and darkness were round about Jehovah," Moses prayed for a clear sight of it; and God, to prove that "the law had not disannulled the promise," made all his goodness to pass before him.

Even the law itself proves that goodness is the glory of God. You do not understand the eternal law yet, if either its demands or its curse; its principles or its sanctions, make you afraid to hope in God. So far as you see no hope for yourself or others in the law itself, you understand it aright and appreciate it well. It cannot give life. "By the deeds

of the law there shall no flesh be justified," in the sight of God. All justification or righteousness says Paul, "is freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." This, however, is not all that the apostle says. He declares that the law, as well as the prophets, is a *witness* to the manifestation of "the righteousness of God *without* the law:" yes, a witness to the truth and freeness even of that righteousness of God, which is by the faith of Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all them that believe, Rom. iii. 21. Thus the law testifies to the grace of the gospel, as distinctly and fully as the prophets; lending all its thunders to proclaim, and all its lightnings to reveal, the way of justification by faith, just as all the prophets lend their harps to do so. Indeed, it is as much intended to send sinners to the cross for salvation, as to drive them away from itself. Hence, Paul says, the law is our "Schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we *might* be justified by faith." Hence also his triumphant answer to the question, "Is the law against the promises? *God forbid!*"

This is Paul's doctrine about the law. He saw it and showed it to be on the *side* of the Gospel. He himself drew from the law, *reasons* for believing the Gospel. Instead of plunging into despair because of its curse, or because of its utter inability to justify him, he made both its curse and its rule, reasons for faith: "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ,—even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law. I, through the law, am dead to the law, that I might live unto God." Now, if Paul was right, in making this use of the law in his own case, you must be *wrong*, whilst you allow the law to keep you from believing the Gospel. Consider! you are really setting it "*against the promises,*" whenever you deem it to be *against your pardon*. The law has, indeed, nothing to say in your favor, nor *for* your pardon; but neither has it any thing to say *against* the extension of pardon in your case. It condemns you; but it does not *forbid* your acquittal by Christ. It holds you fast under

as much glorified by the *shrieks* of the damned, as by the songs of the redeemed. I saw and felt that these shrieks would not impeach His *justice*; and, therefore, I took for granted that, in one sense, they would manifest His glory. For years, I never thought of asking myself, or them who said so, where and when God had said so? I had nothing to say against my *own* condemnation; and, therefore, did not suspect any fallacy or extravagance in the sentiment. And I feel still that *my* condemnation would be an act of deserved and perfect justice on the part of God; to which all the universe ought to say, Amen; and, at which, my own conscience could not *wonder*, however my soul might weep. Nothing so much convinced me of the truth of this, as the revealed fact, that the lost will receive their sentence in silence, and “*go away into everlasting punishment,*” without resistance or remonstrance. But it never occurred to me that this *silence* would be compelled by an overwhelming sense of the justice of their doom; and in no wise, influenced by any regard to the *glory* of their judge.

I speak thus freely and fully of myself, that you may see and feel that *slight* reasons could not have changed my views of the glory of God. I had facts before me, and feelings within me, which penetrated my soul with the conviction that, through eternity, I could never call in question, the justice of a condemning sentence. I feel all this still; and in an equal degree: but I now see, that God does not call nor regard acts of retributive justice, as His glory. Every act of justice will be glorious, and worthy of Himself, so far as their reasons and results are concerned; and none of them will or can be *unworthy* of Himself; but, still, they are not the acts which he reckons his glory or his pleasure. Accordingly, God says, (whatever men think) that judgment is His "strange work;" that He "hateth putting away;" and that He "hath no pleasure in the death of a sinner." That, therefore, cannot be His glory—which He *hates*: which He has *no* pleasure in; which is so foreign to His will, as to be "*strange work*" to Him, even when all the universe, and the very victims of the curse, must accede

to its justice. He will punish the impenitent, and not spare ; but punishment will never be *pleasant* to God. He will never say of retributive justice, what He says of pardoning mercy, that it is "*His delight.*" It is, therefore, an utter misapprehension of God, to imagine or suspect, that He wills or wishes to *glorify* Himself in our condemnation. The very opposite, is the revealed fact.

Do these unusual forms of this familiar truth surprise you : for, in other forms, it is familiar. Well ; search the Scriptures, and see if these things be so. Bring them to the law and to the testimony before you believe or doubt them. In the mean time, let me tell you beforehand what you will find there on this subject. Now you will find, not only that sin is a coming "short of His glory ;" but also, that he reckons himself glorified "in the highest" by the atonement of Christ for sin. Nor is this all : He reckons strong faith in Christ for salvation to be, in fact "*giving glory unto God.*" If, therefore, we would either glorify or please God, we must believe in Christ for the remission of our sins. It is

not, therefore, merely a permitted or allowed thing, to trust in the blood of Christ for pardon and acceptance: it is also a commanded duty, and the only way of glorifying God, as He wishes to be glorified. Accordingly, when he comes to judge the world, it is not in the punishment of the impenitent, He expects or will seek His glory: He will come "*to be glorified in His saints,*" and admired in them that love Him; and they all *began* to glorify God, by believing in Christ for salvation.

If you still have some doubt as to the universal truth of the fact, that goodness is the glory of God, you can hardly be unwilling now, to go farther into the subject: for, if it be true that God both can and will reckon himself more glorified in your salvation than in your condemnation, the *hopefulness* of your case is beyond all doubt. Well, He is intent on glorifying Himself. His own glory is the grand *end* of all that He does. Now, where has God said or insinuated that He wishes to glorify Himself, by your condemnation or mine? Nowhere! The only instances in which

He represents signal acts of judgments, as glorious to Him, are those which pave the way for more signal acts of mercy. Except when mercy is to "*rejoice over judgment,*" God never calls judgment His glory. This fact is equally amazing and pleasing. It is, however, as rational as it is true. For, even an earthly king does not sign *death-warrants* to promote his glory. He does sign them, and requires their execution: but, unless he be a tyrant, he takes no pleasure in doing so. In fact, he only does so, in order to maintain the real glory of his character and laws; both of which are glorified, just in proportion as punishment is unnecessary. And, if a good king would reckon it his chief glory, to have no death-warrants to sign, well may we believe that the God of Love does not seek his glory from "*second-death*" warrants.

It is, I am aware, somewhat hazardous to run parallels between human and divine government; or to argue from regal glory, to the divine glory. The chief hazard is not, however, on that side, where it seems to be at first sight. The real danger is, not of being

No. IV.

THE CHIEF CAUSE OF DOUBTING.

NEXT to the fool, who saith in his heart, "there is no God," we rank the wicked to whom God saith, "*Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself.*" And if the utter denial of a God be the height of folly, it must be the height of wickedness to deem God to be like the *wicked* in any thing, or in any sense. And yet, such is the effrontery or the infatuation of some men, that they do not hesitate to think and speak of God, as being like themselves in some things. They never, indeed, imagine that He is mortal, or weak, or ignorant, or unhappy : but they do imagine, and fondly too, that God thinks as lightly of sin as they do : and that He will treat sin as leniently as they

be—we ought to hope, we must hope, for salvation. The lost never will nor can glorify Him. For, what is it to glorify God? Now, to say the least, it is to adore and admire God: and that the lost never will do, whilst immortality endures. They will never think highly, nor speak honorably of God; but harden as they suffer, and blaspheme whilst they burn. They will never be able to think, perhaps not even to call, God *unjust*: but neither will they ever *approve* of His justice. Saints “glorify God in the fires” of affliction, because they know that these fires will be eventually quenched; and because they feel that, even now, the fiery trial is taking away the love and power of sin. Thus they can both submit meekly, and approve cordially: but, amidst the unquenchable fire, there will be none of this meek and quiet spirit; and, therefore, no glory rendered to God.

But let us come more closely to the point, on this subject. All that God has done for the salvation of sinners, is unequivocal proof that He thinks it no glory unto Himself, to punish the impenitent. He reckons it, indeed,

no *disgrace* to do so. He will neither be ashamed of it, nor shrink from it. Why should He? All the lost will be as *unfit* for heaven, as they are unworthy of it: and, as their neglect and guilt were their own voluntary acts, it will be perfectly and infinitely "a righteous thing" to inflict judgment. Not to do so, would be injustice to the universe. Still, it will be anything but *gratifying* to God, to do so. He will not triumph in the opportunity or in the act of vengeance. He never *sought* for either; and, therefore, neither will give Him any personal pleasure. His wish was, to be the Father of a holy and happy universe. In that—God sought his glory. And so intently was his heart set upon this, that even when our world came "*short of His glory,*" He so loved it as to provide a Saviour, by whom it might be brought up to be again His glory and delight. Thus, so far is God from reckoning it a glory or a pleasure to Him to punish, that, rather than punish man, He spared not His own Son, but gave Him up to be a curse for us. O, how can any one suspect "this God," of a wish or an in-

tention to glorify Himself, by judgment? Had that been His glory, or His wish, He would never have made the soul of Christ an offering for sin.

This, this! will be the *silencing* truth on the day of judgment. God will make it felt throughout all the general assembly of the lost, that their doom is no *pleasure* to Him. He will demonstrate to all the universe, that nothing was further or more foreign from His nature and will, than any wish to take vengeance. He will implant in every spirit, an imperishable conviction, that He was *forced* to punish. Yes! some may now suspect God of seeking occasions for anger, and of preferring judgment to mercy; and thus try to persuade themselves that they will not be altogether to blame, if they should perish: but this, of all fallacies and flatteries, will be found at last, to be the greatest and worst.

If these general views of the divine character and government, throw any light upon the real glory of God, more minute views will increase that light. Now it is the fact, that only in the exercise of goodness is there *room*

for the full exercise, or manifestation, of all the divine perfections. For although none of them are violated or tarnished, in the least, by judgment; still, they cannot all be displayed by judgment. *Justice, holiness, and wisdom*, are the only moral attributes of God, which can enter into final acts of punishment: whereas, into acts of pardon, exercised as they are on the ground of the atonement, *all* the perfections of God enter in full harmony and equal glory. But this will be best illustrated by the fact, that the Saviour is "*the brightness of His glory*."

No. VI.

JESUS, THE BRIGHTNESS OF THE FATHER'S GLORY.

It is worthy of our special and grateful notice, that, since our attention has been absorbed by the great and solemn question of our personal salvation, the great *mysteries* of religion present to us no "stumbling block," nor "rock of offence." Not, of course, that we understand either the Trinity or the Incarnation better : they are as much mysteries to us as ever ; but we are not so much inclined or tempted to indulge a speculative spirit, as formerly. We feel ourselves to be in another spirit and position towards these "deep things of God." We are not even tempted to find fault with their unfathomable depth. Satan does, indeed, at times, entangle our thoughts with momentary questionings of the *whole*

scheme of revelation ; but, now that he has succeeded in concentrating our doubts upon the one point of our own escape, he does not ply our plague so much with sceptical doubts. We do not, however, owe this exemption to his forbearance. No, indeed ! It is God who thus stays Satan's "*north wind, in the day of his east wind.*" This is a mercy. For were our minds as much torn by doctrinal, as by personal, doubts ; or as much distracted by mysteries, as by fears, we should sink entirely.

It deserves our notice also, that this freedom from doubt and dislike of the doctrine of the Trinity, the Incarnation, and the Atonement, does not arise from any indifference to these cardinal truths of the Gospel. Our chief attention is absorbed by our personal case as sinners ; but it is not alienated from these doctrines. We have not forgotten them, because we are no longer staggered or startled by them. We do not care little about them, now that we care so much about ourselves.

This is not an accident, nor altogether a matter of course. We are thus kept clear of

disbelieving truths, of first-rate and essential importance. We are thus cured of the impertinence of playing off the mysteries of the Divine essence, as excuses for neglecting the Divine authority. Nor is this all: God has thus created a favorable opportunity for us to look under the surface of those texts which, hitherto, we have read and heard only as *proofs* of the divinity of the Saviour. Many of them in proving that, prove much more; and present as much of the *paternal* character of God, as of the personal glory of the Lamb. Yea, they are as much intended to prove, that all the fulness of the Son's goodwill is in the heart of the Father, as that all the fulness of the Godhead dwelleth in the Son bodily. For the Saviour is as much "the express image" of the Father's *character*, as of the Father's person.

Did we know this grand scriptural truth well, we could not indulge nor invent those suspicions and jealousies of the heart or the hand of God, which we are so prone to give way to. And until we understand this grand truth, they cannot be effectually cured, nor

completely removed. It is, therefore, of immediate and immense importance, now that we have no disposition to cavil or speculate, to review the leading proofs of the Saviour's supreme godhead ; for some of them are quite as decisive proofs of the Father's goodwill, as they are of the Son's proper divinity : and, as they have freed our minds from all doubts on the subject of the Trinity, they may free us from other doubts, however little we may at present see in what *way* they can do so.

Be not surprised at this proposal, to review the Scriptural evidences of the divinity of the Saviour. True ; you have no doubt of its truth, nor have you forgotten its proofs. You have, however, forgotten, or never marked the fact, that the cordial belief of His full equality with the Father, is, itself, no small proof or part of *saving* faith. One thing is certain—there neither is nor can be any real faith, where His divinity is disbelieved. You may not attach much importance to your own belief of His godhead : but, remember, if you did not believe that, nothing else you could believe, however much or pleasing, would amount

to saving faith. That, therefore, is no insignificant step in the way of salvation, without which no other steps would be of any avail. But you are not yet prepared to take all the fair advantage of this fact, which it warrants: and, at present I do not urge it. I prefer to tell you, at this stage of our enquiry, that we have only believed *one-half* of what God has revealed concerning the divinity of Christ, when we believe the equality of the Son with the Father. That equality is *moral* as well as natural. They are one in character—one in will—one in disposition and design, as well as one in essence. It is just as true that all the warm sympathies of the Saviour's heart glow in the heart of God, as that all the perfections of God meet and shine in the person of the Saviour. He is all that God is, naturally; and God is all that Christ is, morally.

Now, meet the question—"What think ye of Christ?" What impression does His lovely character make and leave upon your mind? Remember, how His heart melted and yearned over the chief of sinners; how it sympathized with the timid and trembling;

how it welcomed the poor, however needy, and the low however guilty, and the lost however unworthy. It breathed and burned with pity to the perishing. You do remember all this. Well; what do you think of Christ, judging of Him from all this? You cannot *dislike* Him. You can hardly be *afraid* of Him. Were He now on earth, going "about doing good," on this grand scale, and in this gracious spirit, you feel as if you could venture to trust Him. Well, all that the Saviour *was*, on earth, God *is*, in heaven. What you think of the Son, you ought to think of the Father. Whatever hope you would place in a *visible* Saviour, you ought to place in the *invisible* God: for Jesus is the "express image of the invisible God." It is therefore, just as wrong to distrust the heart of the Father, as it would be to deny the divinity of the Son. It is as much your duty to believe that the Father is not less gracious than the Son, as to believe that the Son is not less glorious than the Father: for it is the revealed fact, that they "*are one*" in grace and glory.

Now, amongst all your doubts, you have no

doubt of the Saviour's divinity. You neither dare nor wish to question His equality with the Father. You both think and feel, that, to do so, would be to *dishonor* Emmanuel, and *discard* Revelation! WHY? You are surprised at this question; and ready to say, "He himself claimed equality with God; and Revelation substantiates His claims: so that I must give the *lie* direct to both, if I doubted them. To deny His godhead, would be to brand as impostors or fools, prophets, apostles, and martyrs; for they unite in declaring Him to be both God and man:—would be to brand as idolaters, all the angelic and glorified spirits in heaven; for they unite in worshipping Him equally with the Father:—yea, it would be to charge God Himself with fraud and falsehood; for "*Unto the Son, He saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.*"

You are right. O that you would make a right use of your own argument, in your own case! All heaven is both in *error* and in *rebellion*, if the Son be not equal with the Father. This may be a strong way of stating the fact; but, to this point the matter really

comes, whatever form may be given to the argument. Well; just observe now, how you proceed, when you are not *arguing*, but only reflecting, on this subject. You look at the perfections of God, one by one, and then look for the *same* perfections in the Saviour. God is Omniscient; and you see omniscience in the heart-searching eye of the Saviour. God is Omnipotent; and you see omnipotence in the hand, the word, and will of the Saviour. God is unchangeable; and you see unchangeableness in the character and spirit of the Saviour. God is "from everlasting to everlasting;" and you see proper eternity claimed by the Saviour himself, and ascribed to Him by prophets and apostles. Thus you miss no perfection of Godhead in Him; and find none of them in a dim or doubtful form. In them all, the Son is the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person.

Now, you feel it your duty to judge of the Saviour's claims, in this way. You even love to look, thus alternately, at God and the Lamb, as their equal glories evince one essence. Well; it is just as much your duty, to look

for the lovely and gentle spirit of the Saviour, in God ; as to look for the perfections of God, in the Saviour : for the Son came into the world, to “ declare the Father ;” to “ show the Father ;” to “ reveal the Father,” unto us : and that, *as a father*, as well as a God.

Hence the express assurance, “ He that hath seen Me, hath seen the Father.” The *character* of the Saviour, as displayed in His gracious words, works, spirit, and deportment, towards sinners, is, therefore, the visible illustration of the real character of the invisible God ; and thus the grand *mirror* which fully and clearly reflects it. Unless, therefore, that luminous and living mirror show forth the same dark and dread image of God, which your fears embody, you are not warranted to indulge these fears. Yea ; you are dishonoring God, if you imagine Him to be anything in will or wish, but what He appears “ *in the face of Jesus.*” That is the true mirror of both the heart and hand of God : and, therefore, if your ideas of God be drawn from any other source, they *cannot* be correct. Consider ! Were I to tell you, that I had drawn

all my opinions of the heart of God from the face of NATURE ; and that I had found nothing in that mirror which gave me any hope of salvation ; you would not wonder at my failure : you would blame my folly ; and tell me, that I had been looking in quite a wrong quarter for hope. And, well you might say so ! The light of Nature was never intended to show the way of Salvation. Every ray of Revelation supposes the darkness of nature on this subject ; and the whole light of the Bible is just the measure of that darkness.

Now, be not surprised, if I turn your argument against your own fears ; and say, that the *face of your conscience* reflects as imperfect an image of the God of salvation, as the face of nature. You have no more right nor occasion to judge from your own feelings and fears, how God will act towards you, than I have to judge from the aspects of nature how He will act towards me. You say that nature is not the mirror of His character ; and I say that your conscience is not so. I accept your protest : will you accept mine ? O, it is just because a guilty conscience, when awakened

and agitated, reflects an intimidating image of God, that the "face of Jesus" is made the mirror of His glory. God foreknew how we would judge, and conjecture, and doubt, when we saw ourselves in our real character; and, therefore, He manifested His own real character in the face of Jesus. We might, therefore, just as well listen to infidels, when they call us off from revelation unto nature, to judge of God; as listen to our own suspicions, when they call us off from the face of Jesus unto the face of our own unworthiness, to judge of Him. We have as little reason to say, that "there is no hope," as to say that "there is no God." We are as unable to *prove* that there is no hope, as is the atheist to prove that there is no God: for as the face of nature refutes the atheist's assertions, so the face of Jesus refutes our suspicions.

Now the fact is, (and you must bear to be told it in plain terms,) that, into this chief mirror you have not looked often, nor very attentively. You have looked far more at yourself, than at "*God in Christ*," since you began to look forward to judgment and

eternity. And I need hardly say, that *before* you began to care for your soul, you gave very little time or thought to the study of the Divine character, either as it is revealed in the Bible, or as it is explained in the character of the Saviour. No wonder, therefore, if your knowledge of God, as love, is not sufficient to balance your fears. It would be a wonder if it did; yea, a *pity* if it did: for, if we could balance our fears by the knowledge we can pick up without thought or prayer, we should neither prize nor improve the comfort it gave. It is, therefore, only what might be expected, when those are "troubled" whilst they think of God, who have not thought much about Him before they were awakened. Indeed, scanty and superficial knowledge of the covenant character of God, is more likely to aggravate weighty fears, than to alleviate them. Allow me, therefore, to press you on this point. Is it likely, from the degree of attention you have paid to the living illustration of the Divine character in the person and work of Christ, that you could be *less* afraid to hope

in God? Recollect; did you ever spend an hour *alone* in the calm contemplation of the glory of God, as it shines in the face of Jesus? Have you ever made this a subject of study, during a succession of days, at your leisure moments, since you began to feel your guilt and danger? You have thought much of the evil of sin, and of your own vileness and unworthiness: and certainly not too much. But, have you thought as much about God's condescension, and sympathy, and love towards sinners? In a word; have you looked as often on the *bright* side of his character, as on the dark side of your own character? If not—no wonder that you are a stranger to hope and peace: for, where could they come from, whilst you were giving more attention to the disease than to the remedy? True; you have thought of the Saviour at times: and He is the only Physician of souls, and His blood the only remedy for sin. But the question is, What have you thought? Now, if the "multitude of your thoughts within" you, have been revolving around the common "question, "*Did the Saviour die for me?*"

I tell you again, no wonder that the "comforts" of God do not "delight your soul." You took the high road to miss these comforts, when you began to pursue this question; and the farther you follow it, (in your state of mind,) the more you will "refuse to be comforted," and the farther you will recede from "the Fountain of living waters."

Let not this assertion surprise you. Remember; there is no one to *answer* the question; and, therefore, it must be worse than useless to ask it, whilst you distrust the heart of God. Indeed, there is no such question started in the Bible: and as the Spirit of truth would not inspire a totally different inquiry from that which He awoke on the day of Pentecost, there is reason to suspect that an unholy spirit, even Satan, is the real author of the current question, "*Did Christ die for me?*" The cry which the Holy Ghost puts into the heart first, is, "What shall I *do to be saved?*" not, "Was my salvation secure when Christ died?" Accordingly, your first inquiry, when you became afraid of perishing, was, How shall I escape the wrath

to come? O, that you had kept to this question. You gave way (though unwittingly) to another spirit than the Holy Spirit, when you changed the form of your solicitude.

Do not mistake me on this point. I do not wonder that you stumbled upon the current question: few have been able to keep altogether clear of it. Nay, more: there is a time in Christian experience, when it ought to be asked; and to be answered too in the triumphant language of the New Song, "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, be glory for ever." All who love the Saviour, and try to be like Him, should sing this song "in the house of their pilgrimage." No harps which have "Holiness to the Lord" written on them, ought to be hung on "the willows," or withheld from this anthem. It is not, however, necessary to *begin* at this point. The *key-note* of the New Song, must be taken from "the joyful sound" of the Gospel Invitation: and, that calls you to behold God in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself.

Now, you have no right to form any idea

of God, which is not borne out by the face of Jesus. No matter how plausible or impressive any suspicion of the goodwill of God may be, it is unwarranted and unfounded, unless it can be found in the character and spirit of the Saviour. But, what dark or distressing suspicion, can be drawn from His looks, or lips, or actions? True, He even *thanked* the Father on one occasion, that he had "hid" the mysteries of the Kingdom from the wise and the prudent, and revealed them in preference, to babes. And well may you repeat that thanksgiving as devoutly as the Saviour did. God hid these things from men, who would have hidden them from you, and from me, and from all the poor, and the perishing. Solomon says, "It is the glory of God to conceal a thing;" and the glory of concealing the Gospel from men like the Pharisees, who were only wise in their own conceit, and who reckoned it prudent to keep the world in ignorance, was emphatically *goodness*! The Gospel was hid from them, just that it might not be hidden from us.

What else can you fix on, in the manner,

the spirit, or the words of the Saviour, that suggests any intimidating idea of God? Let us meet this question fairly. I have said that the paternal glory of God is, just all the goodwill or love, which the Saviour revealed and exemplified on earth. The benevolence of the Father is not at all *less* than the benevolence of the Son: and, of course, it is not at all *more*. If, therefore, there be any thing in the character of the Son to discourage, there is nothing in the character of the Father to remove that discouragement: for, as "all the fulness of the Godhead," as to essence, dwelleth in the Son, so all its fulness, as to grace, dwelleth in Him. The Father feels no more than the Son felt for sinners, and will do no more for them than the Son promised: for "*it pleased the Father, that in Him all fulness should dwell.*" Thus we are shut up to the Saviour, for all hope and comfort; there being no fund of grace or mercy, beyond the fulness of his good will.

Let us, therefore, examine, calmly and closely, whether there be anything in all that the Saviour did or said, which ought to dis-

courage us. Now, there were classes of character, towards whom His words and looks wore an aspect as dark as did the fiery pillar to the hosts of Pharaoh at the Red Sea. But this was not His aspect nor His spirit towards the poor, the despised, or the vile; for He pitied them: nor even towards His actual murderers; for He prayed that they might be forgiven. Haughty hypocrites and reckless despisers, were the only men whom He despised: and them He treated with equal scorn and severity, whether they walked the Temple as Priests or Pharisees, or dwelt in "the cities where most of His mighty works were done." Can we wonder at this? There was not one man amongst them all, would have *thanked* the Saviour for mercy, or even *accepted* it from His hands. Had He said to any Pharisee of the Sanhedrim, or the nation, what He said to a guilty woman, "thy sins, which are many, are forgiven," the offered pardon would have been spurned with contempt, and the offer itself treated as blasphemy.

Now this was the real spirit of all the per-

sons and classes, towards whom the Saviour's spirit was stern and distant. Every man of them would have resented as insult to himself, or as blasphemy against God and Moses, any promise or proffer of salvation from the lips of Emmanuel. What else, therefore, could the Saviour do, but leave these despisers to perish? He did so: and there is nothing in this judicial severity, which at all detracts from His grace; or which proves any thing against the welcome of any one who is willing to be indebted to Christ for salvation. What all this proves is—that if any one join issue with these adversaries of the Son of God, in thus spurning and despising both truth and grace, a joint doom with them will be the consequence. But *our* spirit and desires are just the opposite of theirs. The mercy they would have refused and ridiculed from the Saviour, we would give worlds to obtain. Now this difference between us and them, although no price nor plea for mercy, in our case, is yet positive proof that we do not belong to the class whom Jesus despised; and that we do belong to the class whom He always pitied:

for he never withheld His pity from any who sought it, or were willing to accept it.

What, now, can you fix upon, in the words or spirit of the Saviour, which indicates aversion or indifference to your case? True; He said of his atonement, "*I lay down my life for the sheep;*" and, in the same breath, He said to some who heard this, "*ye are not of my sheep.*" This fact should not be overlooked, nor evaded, nor evaporated; but neither should it be mistaken. To whom did the Good Shepherd say, "*ye are not of my sheep?*" To men who had but a short time before "taken up stones to cast at Him;" and who, in a few moments after, "took up stones again to stone Him," John viii. 59: x. 31. Well might the Shepherd say to those, who thus thirsted for His blood, "*ye are not of my sheep.*" Nor was this all the enormity of their guilt: "*many of them*" had just said, *He hath a devil and is mad;* and all of them had charged Him with blasphemy.

These were the persons whom He separated as *goats* from the sheep: and these the circumstances of insult and provocation, under

which He spoke. This historical fact can, therefore, have no doctrinal reference, nor prospective application, to any class, who do not resemble these goats. Indeed I ought to call them lions or wolves: for they would have devoured both the Shepherd and all His sheep, if the residue of their wrath had not been restrained by God. Only to them, therefore, and to those who are of the same *spirit* with them, is there any warrant for applying, in connection with the atonement, the declaration, "ye are not of my sheep." This is an exclusion which the Saviour never mentioned nor hinted at, when speaking of the design and bearings of His death, upon the condition of mankind as sinners. Indeed always, except when denouncing those who denounced Him, He represents his death to be "for the life of the world;" and the design of His mission to be "that the world through him might be saved." Accordingly, when His apostles went far hence among the Gentiles, who had had no hand in calumniating the Saviour as an impostor, nor in crucifying Him as a blasphemer, His death was proclaimed as

"the propitiation for the sins of the whole world."

Such being the sober facts of the case, do you not see and feel that they misunderstand and misrepresent the spirit of the Gospel, who speak as if it wore the same aspect towards all ages and nations, that it wore towards the Jews, in the time of Christ's personal ministry? It is both a lie and a libel, to call the judicial exclusions of that time, a *specimen* of the glorious Gospel, applicable to our times. These limitations and exclusions are only applicable to those, (if there be such) who would treat the Saviour just as the malignant Pharisees did. Indeed, even I have not done full justice to the matchless free grace of the Gospel, although I have gone so far. The Saviour himself went much farther; and commanded His apostles to *begin* at Jerusalem, when He commissioned them to preach the Gospel to all nations: and even there—many of His calumniators and crucifiers found mercy, and were the *first* brands plucked from the burning.

Thus far, also, we find nothing in the lan-

guage or the spirit of the Saviour, to warrant any harsh or disheartening suspicion of His own or the Father's goodwill towards us. But He said, "*Many are called but few are chosen.*" True : did you ever read, with attention, the parable, at the close of which these words occur? Matt. xxii. 14. This declaration cannot refer to those who *came* to the marriage feast : for none of them were rejected but one ; and he only because he had rejected the wedding garment. So far, therefore, as the parable is concerned, the "many called" were evidently the "many" *first* invited ; all of whom "with one consent began to make excuse:" and the few "chosen," are evidently the guests gathered in haste from the highways ; and they were all accepted but *one* : and as a wedding garment had been provided for him, and offered to him, (for such was oriental hospitality at a great feast,) and refused by him, his expulsion is no wonder ; for his insult to the king must have been deliberate and wanton.

Besides, read the parable again, and you will see at a glance, that is *prophetic* of the

destruction of Jerusalem, if not also *historical* of God's former dealings with the Jews, Matt. xxii. 6, 7. Accordingly, the Pharisees saw clearly that Jesus excluded *them* from the "chosen:" "*for then went the Pharisees and took counsel, how they might entangle him in his talk,*" and thus betray him into the hands of the Roman Government, as a traitor or rival to Cæsar. Here, again, we meet the Saviour denouncing only those who denounced Him; and expelling from the Gospel feast, only those who despised and rejected the robe of His righteousness.

Thus we find nothing in the face of Jesus, to deter or intimidate any one from hoping in His mercy, who wishes to hope in it for saving and sanctifying purposes. Well now, bear in mind that the face of Jesus is the living transcript or reflection of the *heart* of God. I have said, that there is no *more* grace to be found in the Father, than just that fund of grace which is treasured up in the Son: and as there is no *less* in the Father than in the Son, we may well say there is *sufficient* for us. Any doubt of this, after

such proofs, must arise from some misapprehension of the facts, that the Son is the brightness of the Father's glory, and that goodness is the moral glory of God. But this must not be misunderstood—if plainness of speech can simplify it.

Now, from all that the Saviour himself said of himself, as the *representative* of God's character and disposition towards man; and from the whole tenor of Scripture on this subject, we are taught nothing less than this—that were the Eternal Father to bow the heavens, and to appear personally and openly on the earth, He would act the same part, and evince the same spirit, towards saints and sinners, which the Saviour did whilst he was in the world. In that case, God would condescend to pity the lowest and the vilest of mankind, who applied to him for mercy; and thus prove that He was no respecter of persons. He would take a special interest in the timid and trembling also, and say to them, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden: learn of me, and ye shall find rest unto your souls." He would

also show a tender and intense regard for the welfare of the young, and both take them in his arms and bless them. In a word, to every one who wept at his feet for mercy, He would say, "Son, Daughter, be of good cheer, thy sins which are many are forgiven."

Yes! all this the Father would do and say, were he to come down upon the earth, as the God of the everlasting covenant. Think, O think, therefore, what an effect it would produce on us, were God thus, visibly, going about doing good; and thus, audibly, speaking gracious words in our world. What a lasting impression it would leave in your heart and home, were He to enter your door saying, "Peace be with you;" and then to take your children in His arms, and bless them; and then to inquire kindly into all your trials and temptations, and counsel you; and then to draw you into free conversation about your soul and salvation, and explain to you the way of escape from the wrath to come; and then to leave with you a solemn and sweet assurance, that if you would believe all He said, you should not perish, but have eternal

life? You would be equally astonished and gratified by such unmerited condescension and sympathy. But it seems to you impossible, that the high and holy One, who inhabiteth eternity, could condescend thus to any person or family on earth. You almost wonder that I should dare to hint at such a thing. Well; I feel as much as you can, that I am on very holy and very delicate ground! And yet, both of us would equally expect the Saviour to do all this, were He on the earth again: at least, it would hardly surprise us, however much it might please us. "All this," we should say, "is just like Himself; exactly what He was when in the world before. Truly, Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever!" Well; the heart of the Father is nowise different from the heart of the Son. They are one and the same forever, in all this tenderness, as in everything else. And just because the Father would feel and act thus, were he on earth; and just because this is His character in heaven, the Saviour showed all this mercy, and breathed all this love. Accordingly, His own explanation of all that He

did or said is, "*he that hath seen Me hath seen the Father.*" O, we make only one-half of the intended use of the Saviour's personal history, when we conclude from its loveliness, that He is Love. This is, indeed, true and transporting; but it is only *half* of the truth and grace. His history is as much the living exhibition and exemplification of the Father's real character, as of His own. And then, it is so, by appointment and design. He was commissioned to endear himself, that He might endear the Father also. Yes; that the Lord might be known, and trusted, and loved, as "the Lord God merciful and gracious," He poured into the Saviour's heart all the fulness of the grace it enshrined; and into His lips, all the gracious words they uttered. Just that there might be no room for doubt or suspicion on our part, as to the good will of God, the Saviour said nothing to man, but what God had first said to Him. He was *told* and *sent*, to say all that he said, and to do all that He did. Accordingly, He confined himself to His commission, that He might stamp, and establish, and emblazon the *paternal* character of

God. Hence His solemn appeal to His fidelity in revealing the Father:—"I have given unto them the words Thou gavest Me." Hence also His frequent assurances, "*The words which ye hear are not mine, but the Father's who sent me.*" All this he summed up in the sublime declaration "he that hath seen Me hath seen the Father."

If you have not particularly observed these facts before, your knowledge of the Saviour assumes, from this moment, a *new* character: for, so far as it is scriptural, it is as much the knowledge of God as of the Lamb. Perhaps, like the disciples, you did not understand this, from the first. They were not aware of it, until He told them, that whilst seeing Him they had seen the Father. It is, however, evident that He *expected* them to draw this conclusion for themselves. Hence the surprise, if not something like disappointment, He expressed, when Philip said, "Show us the Father:" "Jesus saith unto him, have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me Philip? He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father: and, how sayest thou

then, show us the Father. From henceforth ye know Him, and have seen Him. Believest thou not, that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me. The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself, but the Father that dwelleth in me, He doeth the works !" *John* xiv. 7.

And, now that this fact is before you in its own native light and loveliness, what is your *duty*? Unquestionably, to trace the love, and the mercy, and the sympathy of Christ, throughout all His history; and to transfer the whole manifestation of moral glory from the Son to the Father, and from the Father to the Son, alternately and equally; for it is the equal glory of both, and goodness is the very essence, as well as the aspect of it all. And let this be done by yourselves and for yourselves. Be not satisfied with the imperfect hints thrown out in this essay. They will, I hope, help you: but any pleasing impression they may have made on your mind, will be increased and confirmed, by placing yourselves in all the chief scenes of the Mediatorial history. Indeed, I know not any course of devotional study, or of

Sabbath meditation, that would so amply repay you, as would a regular review of all that history, if read for the express purpose of *seeing* the Father manifested in and by the Son. For you would be in no danger of *forgetting* the Son, whilst thus remembering the Father. Every transition and transfer you made from the Mediatorial heart, to the Eternal mind, would send you back upon that warm heart, with higher wonder, and keener discernment, and livelier delight, and stronger confidence. The process would dignify the Saviour in your estimation, as much as it would endear God.

Let me win you to this study ! You confess and deplore your sad want of *love* to God. It is one of your chief discouragements, that even when you almost use *force* to produce a warm heart towards God, you feel cold and dead. Do, then, try this "more excellent way ;" and let the glory of God as it shines in all its brightness in the face of Jesus, make its own impression upon you. Love will not be forced : it must be won. This is equally true of hope and faith. Indeed, all grateful and

cordial feelings must be *drawn* forth by the sweet attraction of divine goodness.

I am unwilling to anticipate any of the enjoyment that awaits you, in going over the track I thus point to : but, just for the sake of illustration, I will give a few specimens of the process I commend.

Go into the house of Simon, the Pharisee ; and go to see the *Father* ! There, at the Saviour's feet, is a woman of sin and shame. The Pharisee is quite shocked at her character, and at the forbearance of Jesus towards such a sinner. But Jesus Himself frowns not upon her ; shrinks not from her touch ; but readily allows her to wash His feet with her tears, and to wipe them with her hair. See Him interpreting her tears, as prayers for mercy ; and, in the presence of all who wondered, and of all who witnessed, pronounce her pardon, with a look of welcome which sealed it. Son of man, what seest thou ? Thou hast "*seen the Father* !" Jesus showed this mercy, just that He might show us the Father's heart, by His own heart.

Go to the well of Samaria. Jesus rests Him-

self upon it ; for He was faint and weary. You remember the character of the woman, who is coming to draw water. Will He, can He, the Holy One of God, notice *her*, except to upbraid her? Yes ; He even forgot all His fatigue, that He might teach her the way of salvation. He told her that He would give her "living water," on asking for it. And He called this opportunity of shewing mercy, "*meat to eat*" when He was hungry. Son of man, what seest thou? Thou hast *seen the Father!* Jesus will not allow us to confine this goodwill to Himself. He explains the miracle of mercy thus ; "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work."

I repeat, that I am unwilling to forestal, in the least, the luxury of tracing this manifestation of the Father. But, now that I have begun, I cannot break off until I accompany you to CALVARY, to witness the "great sight" of the Father given there : for, both at and after the Saviour's crucifixion, as well as *before* it, He was manifesting the Father by His words and works.

Behold, then, that frantic and ferocious mob around the cross; alternately mocking and execrating the Saviour. The very sun seems shocked at, and the heavens frown, on them. But he frowns not on his murderers. He prays for them. His *first* prayer on the cross was—for them: “*Father forgive them; for they know not what they do.*” You are amazed, melted, rivetted by this great sight. Well; you have *seen the Father!* It was to shew Him, and to demonstrate that goodness was His glory, that the Saviour prayed thus. He knew, and wished us to know, that, even in the case of such sinners, the Father was as willing to forgive them, as the Son was to pray for their pardon. The prayer does not disprove this: for had it not been as agreeable to God to answer, as to the Saviour to ask, it would not have been presented. It was, however, the first prayer on Calvary; and, how fervent, I need not say; for the very sound of it breathes sincerity and intense solicitude. Thus the heart bleeding and breaking on the cross, was not warmer when its love was stronger than death, than the heart on the

Eternal Throne. This is—seeing the Father! And He is not changed since that time: but as Jesus is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever; so God is, without variableness, or the shadow of a turning, all that He was, when in the face of the darkest enormity which ever disgraced the world, He both heard and answered prayer for mercy.

Nothing can, of course, exceed this proof of goodness being *that* glory of God, which God most glories and delights in. It may, however, be well, as these were cases of ignorance as well as of enormity, to add the case of *Peter*. He had denied his Lord with oaths and curses; an outrage on all principle, pledge, feeling, and conscience, almost unutterable! Some try to soften the guilt of Peter. Let Peter's *bitter* tears, answer their gratuitous palliations of his shameful fall. I prefer his own opinion of it. Behold, then, Jesus sending a *special* message of His resurrection, to Peter. "Tell Peter!" Herein is love! Can you look on this, without melting amazement at the fulness and freeness of the Saviour's *restoring* grace? Remember; thou hast seen

the Father in this act of grace. The Saviour's heart was not more tender at that moment, than the Father's was. The message to Peter was as direct from the throne of God, as from the Arimathean garden.

With this clue, search the Scriptures, and acquaint yourself with God, if you would be at peace : for this is Eternal Life, to know the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom He sent to prove that goodness is His glory.

No. VII.

DIVINE COUNSELS TO THE DOUBTING.

THE late venerable Andrew Fuller, of Kettering, said to a friend of mine, "There was a period of my ministry, marked by the most pointed and systematic effort to *comfort* my serious people: but the more I tried to comfort them, the more they complained of doubts and darkness. Wherever I went amongst them, one lamentation met my ear; Ah, Sir, I can get no comfort!—I am unable to appropriate any of the great and precious promises to myself! I looked for light; and, behold, darkness!

"I knew not," said Mr. Fuller, "what to do, nor what to think: for, I had done my best to comfort the mourners in Zion. I was, therefore, at my 'wit's end.' At this time, it

pleased God to direct my attention to the claims of the perishing heathen in India. I felt that we had been living for ourselves, and not caring for their souls. I spoke as I felt. My serious people wondered and wept over their past inattention to this subject. They began to talk about a Baptist mission. The females, especially, began to collect money for the spread of the gospel. We met, and prayed for the heathen; met, and considered what could be done amongst ourselves for them; met, and did what we could. And, whilst all this was going on, the *lamentations* ceased. The sad became cheerful, and the desponding calm. No one complained of a want of comfort. And I, instead of having to study how to comfort my flock, was myself comforted by them. They were *drawn out of themselves*, Sir; that was the real secret of the whole matter. God blessed them, when they tried to be a *blessing*."

Whatever you may think of this fact, or of its application to your own case, it is not without parallels in the history of the Jewish and Christian Church. Isaiah records at

great length, a case of this kind. Isa. lviii. 10, "*If thou draw out thy soul unto the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then [shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darknees be as the noon-day; and the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drougt, and make fat thy bones; and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not.*" Read the whole chapter, and then consider the following hints.

The people, whose darkness and doubts God thus promised to relieve, had tried various experiments, for the express purpose of obtaining the light of God's countenance, and the joy of salvation: but all these experiments failed, although some of them seemed well calculated to secure the object.

For example; they not only did not forsake "*the ordinance of their God:*" they also took "*delight in approaching to God.*" verse 2. Thus, like David, they were "glad" when it was said to them from Sabbath to Sabbath, "*Let us go up to the House of the Lord.*" They did not come as reluctant victims to the

Altar, but as willing votaries. They did not, like Doeg, reckon themselves "detained before the Lord," nor, like Eutychus fall asleep, whilst attending public worship; but evidently loved the gates of Zion. And yet—although they thus waited on the Lord, the Lord did not, for a time "renew their strength," nor meet with them to bless them. Nay; he did not even interpret His delay, as a trial of their faith or patience; nor say to them, as He did to some, "Though the vision tarry, wait for it." Why did God thus depart from His ordinary rule of meeting with them, who wait for Him? The chief reason was,—that these persons were *selfish*: and He would only comfort them, in connection with curing them of this besetting sin. "For the iniquity of their covetousness," He had smote them with darkness and despondency. "*I hid Me, and was wroth,*" said God. They, however, did not, or would not understand Him, at first: but "went on frowardly in the way of (their) heart." And, wonder, O heavens! even this, God bore with; and, that He might overcome it, said, "I have seen his ways, and will heal

him: I will lead him also, and restore comforts to him and his mourners," *Isa.* lvii. 17, 18. God healed them, however, by showing them the *cause* as well as the cure of their wound. Isaiah was commanded to lift up his voice "like a trumpet," that they might be fully aware of the precise reason why God was contending against them. And the substance of that reason was,—their neglect of the poor, the oppressed and the perishing.

Another plan they had tried for relief was,—the regular habit of daily prayer and meditation. "*Yet they seek Me daily, and delight to know my ways,*" *verse 2.* Thus, they were more than regular worshippers in the sanctuary, and on the Sabbath: no day passed, without seeking the comfort they wished to find, or without searching the Scriptures. Their prayers and meditations seem to have been as constant, as the morning and evening sacrifice: nor were they either hypocritical or heartless; and yet, they were unsuccessful. Seeking was not followed by finding, nor reading and hearing by comfort. How true is the Psalmist's maxim, "*If I re-*

gard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." The iniquity of their heart was selfishness, or a degree of "covetousness," which led him to overlook the wants and woes of others : and this habit of living only for themselves, God would neither humour nor countenance. He "hid" Himself from them that they might learn this lesson ;—" *that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh,*" verse 7. They needed and longed for a sense of His mercy to themselves ; but God would not give it, apart from teaching them to be merciful to others. He had *two* great principles of His moral and mediatorial government to establish in the church : first, that "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy ;" and second, they shall have judgment without mercy who have showed no mercy ;" and He would not yield either of these cardinal points, to their prayers or their tears.

Now mark : the question had come to a crisis, and was fast coming to a final issue. Either they, or God, must yield on the point of selfishness. They were intent on comfort ; and He was intent on the welfare of the poor

and the perishing. To be cheered was their object: to make them benevolent and kind was His object. "*Deal thy bread to the hungry; bring the poor that are cast out to thy house; when thou seest the naked, cover him: then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thy health shall spring forth speedily; and thy righteousness shall go before thee, and the glory of the Lord shall be thy rereward. Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer; thou shalt cry, and He shall say, Here I am,*" verses 7, 8, 9.

We are not well instructed in the mysteries of the kingdom, if we see or suspect in all this, anything like legal or meritorious conditions of mercy and comfort. No man of common sense can imagine, that these comfortless people were inattentive and uncharitable to their poor neighbors, from any *fear* of self-righteousness, or of substituting works for grace. They did not live to themselves, lest they should be betrayed into the Pharisaic spirit of working *for* life. It was to save themselves from *trouble and expense*, not to escape legality, that they stood aloof from the claims of

suffering humanity, and neglected immortality. No wonder, therefore, that God stood out against both the urgency of their prayers, and the zeal of their worship. Indeed, He was consulting their *true* comfort in doing so : for, no comfort can last long in a selfish spirit. Besides ; had they gained their object, without a sacrifice of selfishness and sloth, what a light it would have placed religion in, before all the poor and the afflicted ? Well might they have said, had they seen men, without charity or sympathy, rejoicing in the salvation and presence of God,—can that religion be holy or true, which makes *such* men happy ?

Thus, you see, that the very *truth* of the doctrines of grace would be brought into doubt, if the comforts of grace could be established in unfeeling or unfriendly hearts. But God never perils the character of His salvation, nor perplexes the minds of the poor, by any such anomalies. He declares (whoever it may offend or affect) that “ if a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar.” In like manner, of all who have this world’s goods, and yet shut up their compassion from

the needy, He denies that the love of God dwells in them, 1 John iii. 17. This is not putting a *price* upon the water of life in the wells of salvation, nor on the "joy" of drawing and drinking it; but, simply, guarding it from abuse, and sustaining its character.

This way the real secret, and the practical reason, of His distance towards the comfortless, in the time of Isaiah. God told them, that for the iniquity of their covetousness, he had hid His face from them. They, however, would not believe Him. They would not allow, that their care of their own money, or their dislike of trouble, or their attending only to their own interests, amounted to covetousness. They did not trouble others; and, therefore, they did not choose to be troubled about others. They carried personal religion much farther than many; inasmuch as they were both devout and thoughtful; and this care for their own souls, they thought quite enough to secure their own comfort. When they found, however, that it did not; and that the darkness continued, notwithstanding all their visits to the closet and the sanctuary,

they tried *another* experiment. They "*fasted and afflicted their souls.*" Thus they had recourse to extraordinary means of grace : so intent were they upon enjoying a sense of the Divine presence, and possessing a good hope through grace.

In this step, they seem to have been influenced by a feeling, very natural to a soul alive to its own value and peril ; viz. a fear that its humility and penitence before God, had never been *deep* enough. They evidently suspected that, although they had prayed often and earnestly, they yet had not gone so thoroughly into all their own case, as true repentance required. Accordingly, they set apart a day or days, for the express purpose of going every length in confession and humiliation. And, that their mind and conscience might be in full exercise, and free from all carnal bias, they *fasted* as well as prayed. This looks well. It was also well meant. Indeed, as penitential humiliation, it was not treated by God as hypocritical or superstitious. As *feeling*—no fault is found with it. And yet, no good came from it. Their extraordi-

nary prayers were as unsuccessful, as their ordinary prayers. This both surprised and staggered them. "*Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and thou seest not? Wherefore have we afflicted our soul, and thou takest no knowledge?*" They were not prepared for this disappointment. They had evidently calculated, that they would obtain "the oil of joy for mourning, and the garments of praise for the spirit of heaviness? But, although they thus fondly looked for light—behold, darkness still!

No wonder: all this never once touched the grand point at issue between God and them. It was, in fact, an *evasion* of that cardinal point. He had not found fault with either their prayers or their penitence, so far as these regarded other points. It was not insincerity, nor formality, nor immorality, He was contending against; but against a selfish spirit, which *gave* nothing to the poor; against a slothful spirit, which *did* nothing for the distressed; against an unfeeling spirit, which *cared* nothing for the souls of others: and as all this was unlike His own paternal spirit;

and, as He *will* have his children resemble Him in mercifulness, He did not yield even to the agonizing cries of their fasting prayers; but stood out immoveably on the original point; "*Is not this the fast, that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? verse 7.*" In connection with thus *doing* good to others, God said, —"Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily."

Now has this connection ever been *dissolved* by God? It is an *old* connection: so old that it is proverbial in the Bible. There, light, and a liberal spirit towards the poor and the perishing, are connected like the Shekinah and the mercy-seat. Nor is this rule confined to the Old Testament. The New Testament also is full of the principle, and of the illustration of it too. The "*gladness of heart*" which prevailed amongst the first converts at Pentecost, was evidently both increased and confirmed by the liberal spirit which they manifested under the outpouring of the Holy Ghost.

They did not shut themselves up in solitude, nor sit down to brood over the workings of their own minds: but blended with a glad reception of the word, a free distribution of their property; and the consequence was that "*great grace was upon them all,*" Acts iv. 32, 33. They were not inattentive to doctrine, fellowship, sacraments or prayer: in all these "*they continued stedfastly,*" Acts ii. 42; but they combined with all these devotional habits, friendly intercourse, benevolence, and public spirit.

In like manner, the Apostles invariably called on all the churches, "to do good and communicate," because "with such sacrifices God is well pleased." And, when they did communicate to "the poor saints," the Apostles were not slow in assuring them, that God would not be unmindful of their spiritual comfort. "Do," says Paul, "whatsoever things are lovely, and whatsoever things are of good report," as well as the things which are "honest and pure," "*and the God of PEACE shall be with you,*" Philip. iv. 8, 9. All this implies, what all scripture and expe-

rience abundantly verify, that a selfish spirit is not a temple in which the Holy Ghost will dwell, as a Comforter; nor an earthen vessel which God will fill with the heavenly treasure of strong consolation, or steady peace. No wise or good man can wonder at this. It is just as unlikely that God would comfort a selfish or slothful spirit, as that He would lift up the light of His countenance upon an impenitent or unbelieving spirit. The one is as much opposed to both His nature and will as the other.

This will hardly be disputed, when selfishness takes the harsh form of *miserliness*; or sloth, the cold form of *pride*, towards the poor and the perishing. Even the world reckons him a *wretch*, who gives nothing, and feels for no one. Against such selfishness, therefore, we do not need much warning. It is too mean and monstrous, to be ensnaring to us. Is there, however, no danger of that kind of selfishness in religion, which concentrates all our time, and attention, and prayers, and solicitude, upon ourselves? Alas, it is both very natural and plausible, to reckon this

spirit equally prudent and necessary, and any thing but a wrong spirit. Nothing seems more reasonable, at first sight, than that we should confine our attention to ourselves, whilst we are confined to the rack of suspense, or to the stocks of despondency. It even seems cruelty or mockery, to propose to us any plan for the good of others, whilst we ourselves are walking in darkness. But, whatever this proposal may seem, it is really kind and wise. It is not like asking the captives in Babylon, to sing one of the songs of Zion, whilst their harps were on the willows, and their hands in chains; and, therefore, it ought not to be met by the mournful question, "*How shall we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land?*" We can sympathise, although we cannot sing; and "remember Jerusalem," as the captives did, although far from all its joys.

Is, then, "a good hope through grace" so dear to us, that there is nothing we would not try, in order to be enabled to obtain and maintain it? It can only be acquired by "looking unto Jesus," as the sole and all-suf-

ficient ground of hope ; as the end of the law for righteousness, and the alone sacrifice for sin. In vain we look to any other quarter for peace or hope : or try any other experiment for relief. All our *looking* must be to Him, if we would be saved. There must be no cavilling nor questioning, on this point. It is, however, a wise and necessary question, to ask ourselves,—*where* and *how* may we best behold the Lamb of God for ourselves? From what *points* should we look chiefly, in order to “see Jesus?” Now, it is certain, that we must look unto Him, through the appointed and appropriate mediums of faith,—the word, the ordinances, and the throne of grace. Apart from these, neither God nor the Lamb will look upon us in mercy, however we may look or long for mercy and comfort. For all these things, God *will be inquired of*, in order to do them. This too is a settled point. It does not, however, set aside all other, nor any other, rational means of profiting by the means of grace. Indeed, it both admits and demands the use of whatever is most conducive and favorable to reading

or hearing the word of God aright; to praying and meditating aright; and to believing aright. And nothing is more conducive to all this—than the spirit of sympathy and benevolence towards the poor and the perishing. He will search the Scriptures with most seriousness and success, who considers the case of a family without a Bible, and tries to furnish them with one. He will hear the Gospel with most relish and profit, who tries to bring some wanderer under its joyful sound. He will pray in his closet with most freedom and hope, who tries to pray by the bedside of an afflicted or dying neighbor. He will best understand the spirit in which God *offers*, and sinners should *receive* the bread and water of life, and the robe of righteousness, who tries what he can do to feed the hungry, and clothe the naked. These are not things which get between the eye and the Saviour, or divert attention from the cross: they all tend to make the “eye” single and clear-sighted, and thus to make “the whole body full of light.”

Those, indeed, who are ignorant, or but ill-informed, of the way of salvation, may err by

this process for a time ; but we cannot be misled by it. It cannot make us self-righteous, now that we are penetrated through all our soul with the persuasion, that salvation is not of works but of grace. Indeed, such efforts can only confirm this persuasion. Accordingly, we see all the disciples, who are the most *profitable* servants to man, the readiest and meekest to say unto God, after they have done all, "we are unprofitable servants." And their acknowledgment of this, is neither affectation nor a form of sound words : they both mean and feel what they say ; because they see, with other eyes than the idle, how much is left undone, and what imperfection marks all that is done. It is the man who does *least* good, that attaches most importance to his gifts. And, for an obvious reason : he measures them by his own love of money ; and judges of them at such a distance from all the scenes of want and woe, that he cannot see their utter disproportion to the imperative demand : whereas, "he that considereth the poor," and looketh unto the spiritual wants of his neighborhood, and weigheth the claims

of a perishing world, is so ashamed of the disproportion between all he can do, and all they require, that he is glad, after having done most, to hide himself in the cloud of the Saviour's meritorious incense.

But it is "a small thing," merely to prove, that doing good does not tend to self-righteousness, nor to self-complacency. It is one of the best ways of *getting* good from all the means of grace: because it produces a *healthy* state of mind and spirit. Nothing is more unfavorable (except indeed, indulged sin) to the *right* use of the gospel, than seclusion from the active duties of godliness. There must be both retirement and meditation, if we would become wise unto salvation: but, to do nothing but muse and ponder over abstract questions, or variable feelings, is to unman the mind, and enervate the body, until they prey on each other. We were not *made* for such work. Work!—it is mental drudgery, which weakens and wears out the best powers of the mind, by drawing away their vitality to feed morbid fears and moody fancies.

We do not like to be told this, when we are

absorbed in "great searchings of heart." We are even unwilling to believe that anything but pondering, can be of any use in our case. We think that *inward* difficulties, cannot be remedied by *outward* duties. Yea; we are inclined to suspect, that any active step in the public service of God, would rather aggravate than alleviate our fears. Thus we just argue against *doing* good by personal exertion, as nervous invalids do against taking air and exercise. They, judging from their sensitive feelings, are quite sure that a change of air or of scene, can do them no good. It would upset them entirely, they say; and they appeal, in proof of this, to the agitation which the bare idea of going from home throws them into. But, in their case, we know well, that this change of air and scene is the very thing they want, and the only thing that can remove mere nervous weakness. We ourselves have found benefit, when low and languid, by escaping for a time from the tear and wear of our ordinary pursuits. We require a little relaxation in the course of the year; and it is not lost time, nor misspent money, to take it.

We return to our place, with a new tone of body and spirits.

Well ; the varied air and scenery of nature are not more intended and adapted to renew bodily health, than are the varied spheres of benevolence to promote mental health. They cannot, of course, give pence to the conscience, nor hope to the soul, nor can they implant holiness or grace in the heart ; but they can put us in the best way and spirit for judging wisely, of the divine sources from which these spiritual blessings are obtained. The direct and natural influence of *seeing* want or woe ; of *sympathising* with them ; of trying to *alleviate* them, is, to soften the heart—to make the judgment sound—to induce reflection, and by it to awaken gratitude. On coming home from such a walk or visit of usefulness, we shall have something else and better to think about, than the fluctuations of our own personal misgivings of heart ; and shall sit down to our Bible, or kneel down in our closet, with thoughts and feelings which the gospel is adapted to meet and gratify, and which God can sympathise with, and the Holy Spirit work

by. Whereas, when we abandon ourselves to mere brooding or pondering, until we forget all cares but our own, and all sorrows but our own, we *unfit* ourselves for the comforts of God.

O, remember it: the gospel is the provision of mercy, to meet *great* questions, for eternity; to relieve *real* wants, for eternity; to clear up *solemn* difficulties, for eternity. It is "a covenant ordered in all things and sure, for actual, not for *imaginary*, wants or woes." It proclaims blood that cleanseth from "all sin;" and, therefore, the Holy Spirit is both grieved and vexed, when we fix upon some wayward or wicked *feeling*, and set it up as our exclusion from the atonement. But He is "the Spirit of truth," and will not countenance this trifling: for it is trifling, with both truth and grace, whatever we may intend, when we are afraid, because of certain bad feelings or vain thoughts, to trust in a Saviour whose blood can cleanse from "all manner of sin and blasphemy." I am not palliating bad feelings nor vain thoughts. God forbid! I do not think lightly of either the hardness or the

deadness of heart, we so often sink into. They may well humble us before God, and lay us very low in our own esteem. I will not, however, add to these bad feelings, the *worse* principle of distrusting the word of God and the blood of the Lamb. I will not set up a certain, but occasional, frame of mind, as being unpardonable, or as excluding from hope, whilst any and every actual sin may be forgiven. It is neither humble nor modest to do so. Indeed, we should hardly ever dream of such doubting, if we kept our minds in a healthy state, by trying to do some good to others. Taking an interest in the welfare of the Sunday School, simple as that sphere of usefulness is, would soon put an end to such sickly imaginings, and set conscience to deal with weightier matters than hair-splitting questions, or strange feelings. Yes; even a weekly sight of all that grace has to *do* and *bear* with children, before they can be taught the first principles of the oracles of God, would cure you of "limiting the Holy One of Israel." Not, of course, by lessening your sense of your own unworthiness, nor by giving

you a better opinion of yourself; but by enlarging your views of the fulness and freeness of the great salvation.

In a word; have something good to live for, *beyond yourself*, if you would live happy, or surmount your fears. You cannot ponder nor pray yourself *out* of all your difficulties, now that the World cries out for help; and Time, for enterprise; and Eternity, for action. The times of mere *musings*, like the ancient times of ignorance, "God winked at: but now He commands all men everywhere to repent" of *living unto themselves*; and to bring forth fruits meet for that repentance, by living to His glory. And every man and woman may now do something "for Christ's sake." Pence can do what pounds could not accomplish in the days of our forefathers; and the widow's mite, cast into the treasury of God, in her spirit, will become useful from its value, as well as pleasing from its principle.

No. VIII.

ON DOUBTS ABOUT PRAYER.

"What profit should we have, if we pray unto God?" Whilst this question is usually put in a bad spirit, and for a base purpose, by those who dislike prayer, it is not, in its abstract form, an improper question. It may be warrantably put by the most prayerful, when the object of it is, to ascertain whether we derive *all* the "profit," or exactly the *kind* of "profit," from prayer, which God has promised to "them that diligently seek Him."

Now, there are two things we can readily say, in answer to the general question. *First*, That the act and habit of prayer have a soothing and sanctifying influence upon our minds. And *Secondly*, That the hope of an eventual answer, even if very remote, amply repays us for all the time and thought we

devote to prayer. These results we hold to be profit enough, both to bind and encourage us to call upon God as long as we "live."

We can, also, say something of "times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord," which make us very happy whilst they last; and the influence of which is very holy, even after the sensible enjoyment is lost. It is not, therefore, improper, nor unwise, nor unnatural to ask,—Is this *all* the profit that can be attained? It is not being over curious, even to inquire,—What is the nature of the connection between prayer and the Divine *Presence*; between prayer and the Divine *Purposes*; between prayer and the general principles of the Divine *Government*? A thoughtful man can hardly avoid such questions. They force themselves upon him, in the *best*, as well as in the worst, states of his mind. Nor is the fact, that they do not occur to all, nor even to many, of the prayerful, any reason why *he* should evade them. That they do not perplex the ordinary followers of Christ, is a good reason why he should not attach undue importance to such questions,

nor be disconcerted if he find himself unable to answer them all to his own satisfaction; but no valid reason for hushing them up, or hurrying them over. Prayer effects *something* in the divine mind. If it had no influence upon God, it would have no place in His plans. But as it effects no *change* in His purposes—what is that influence?

It has been well said,—that prayer is as much a part of the divine purpose, as its answer is. This fact does not, however, clear up the difficulty to any great extent. Indeed, it gives new point to the question—Why is prayer thus combined with its answer, in the purposes of God?

Now it is easy to see that, on *our* account, it would be unwise to have them separated. The moral influence of prayer upon us, is itself almost as valuable, and altogether as necessary, as the blessings which form the answers to it. But the real question is—why is it necessary on *God's* account? That our minds ought to be brought to, and kept in, an *asking frame*, is self-evident. This arrangement carries its own reasons upon its

surface, to all who look at it with their own eyes. But, the DIVINE MIND! What is the influence of prayer on its *giving frame*?

Now, whatever it be, one thing is certain; God does not comfort nor sanctify the prayerless. Whatever else He do for them, apart from being asked,—*this* He does not. All the *unasked-for* mercy or grace, which He exercises towards sinners, has, for its first object, to render them suppliants. Whenever He is “found of them who sought Him not,” He is found as an accusing Judge, and not as a consoling Father, in the first instance. Even in the extraordinary case of Paul, until he began to pray, no assurance was given to him on the subject of his own pardon. He was called before; but “*the hope of his calling*” came after. These are facts—whatever be the philosophy of them.

Now the general reason is very obvious:—the final object of the divine purposes, being the restoration of the soul to the divine image, and thus to eternal communion with God, the first step towards that object cannot be otherwise than by prayer. Nothing else could be

the *beginning* of that "good work" of grace, which ends in glory. There is, therefore, just the same reason for connecting all the present manifestations of the divine favor and presence with prayer,—as for connecting all the future with praise. Finite spirits must forever require some *medium* of communion with the Infinite Spirit; and, on earth, prayer is just as suitable to that end, as praise is in heaven; and must have just the same kind of influence in procuring divine favor here, that praise has in prolonging it there.

Now, we never dream of asking, why the bliss of heaven depends upon *praise*. And yet, it is self-evident that it could not continue, if *gratitude* came to an end. Whatever, therefore, be the purposes of God in relation to eternity, their fulfilment cannot be independent of continued worship. It is the natural medium of their accomplishment; the only spirit and posture suited to them. Just so is prayer, in relation to the divine purposes, which belong to time. And, therefore, all questions as to how they would go on if prayer *stopped* on earth, are as un-

wise, as it would be to ask, what would be the effect if praise stopped in heaven? It is part of the divine plan—that neither shall stop.

In regard to the influence of prayer upon the eternal mind, it is more easy to form just conceptions of it, than to find judicious language to express them in. For, we have proof, yea, demonstration, that the mind of God can be influenced by *moral* reasons. The exercise of mercy in answer to prayer, is just as rational as the exercise of judgment against blasphemy. It is just as natural, under mediatorial government, that God should love prayer, as that he should hate sin under *any* modification of his moral government.

Now we are neither staggered nor confused, when *blasphemy* influences the mind of God to punish. This accords with all our ideas of propriety. And as a devotional spirit is as much in harmony with all His character, as a blaspheming spirit is hostile to it all, it is just as natural that He should be pleased with the former, as that He should be angry with the latter.

It is, however, the Atonement that furnishes

the grand illustration of the way in which moral reasons influence the mind and measures of God. Now the atonement produced no *change* of His feelings or purposes towards man. It legitimated, not originated, the exercise of His love and mercy. It is as much a proof of His natural benevolence, as of His moral justice. It did not render Him merciful; but it was the only honorable medium of showing mercy. Without that satisfaction, we have no reason to suppose that our salvation could be morally possible. The atonement had, therefore, a mighty influence on the eternal mind; inasmuch as it removed all moral and legal hindrances to the reign of grace. Now, as all real prayer is both founded on the Cross of Christ, and the fruit of that Cross, its influence on the mind of God is just the influence of the atonement itself; for it is *that* which prayer *sues out* and depends on. Thus, by appreciating, admiring, and loving, and pleading the sacrifice of Christ, our prayers fall in with the divine will, and glory, and purposes, just as that sacrifice did. Like it they effect no change on the eternal mind;

but they harmonize with the unchangeableness of its purposes :—a devotional spirit being the nearest approach to the spirit in which Christ glorified God "*in the highest.*"

Besides, all danger of praying in *opposition* to the divine purposes is provided against, both in the *rule* and in the *spring* of prayer. We qualify our petitions by an express submission to the will of God ;—which is the same thing as His purpose ; for His purposes are merely the *forms* of His will.

And, when prayer is for a holy salvation through the blood of the Lamb, it is the fruit of the Holy Spirit's work on the heart ; and, therefore, never can clash with the divine purposes ; "because the Spirit maketh intercession for the saints *according to the will of God.*" We are, therefore, going along the very line of all the purposes which can affect ourselves, whenever the Spirit helps our infirmities to plead or groan for the divine favor and image. Every holy and spiritual desire in our minds, is according to the purposes of the eternal mind. Nothing, therefore, is more unwise or unwarranted than to suspect that

there is, or can be, any purpose against the salvation of one, whom the Spirit has inclined and taught to cry mightily for salvation from sin and hell. "God is ONE;" and, therefore, the *desires* awakened by His Spirit must be the same as His own *designs*.

This is a Bethel-ladder on which we may ascend and descend without presumption or hazard. For as every good and perfect gift cometh down from the hand of an unchangeable father, so every honest desire for these gifts is from an unchangeable Spirit. For, where *else* could they come from? Neither human culture, nor human experience, has ever originated in the human mind the *love* of Holiness. The history both of the world and the church, equally confirms and illustrates this fact. A praying man could no more be formed by human means, than a praising angel; and, therefore, holy desires can no more clash with the divine purposes, than the Hallelujahs of angels can do so.

Let this general principle, then, be a settled point; and we shall soon see how *sensible* enjoyment may be found in prayer, and how

prayer may rise unto *communion* with God. Now we have the basis or principle of both, even *before* we retire to pour out our hearts unto God. We carry into our closet a portion of sensible enjoyment to *begin* prayer with ; although we have not always sense enough to be so aware of it, as to make the most of it. For, is it not *delightful* to be conscious that, at length, we do care for the things which belong to our eternal peace?—that we do long for the divine favor and image?—that we are willing and desirous to be saved in God's own way?—that we dare not neglect the great salvation as we once did ?

If, indeed, all or any of this pleasing consciousness were made a meritorious *plea* for mercy or grace, we might well tremble at it, instead of taking encouragement from it. But as it all unites to concentrate all our hopes upon the Cross, we may well and safely rejoice “that whereas we were blind, we now see.”

It is, therefore, by forgetting that we *carry* to the throne of grace some grounds and elements of sensible comfort, that we so often

leave it comfortless. We thus grieve the Spirit of God by ingratitude. For it is ungrateful not to remember and record, whenever we bow at the mercy-seat, the mercy we have already received. It is not *small*—if we cannot be happy without prayer. It is not *doubtful*—if we hate sin and mourn over the plagues of our hearts. It is not *unspecial*—if we are willing to be entire and eternal debtors to Christ for a holy salvation. We ought not, therefore, to wonder if we miss enjoyment, when we overlook what God has already done for our souls. Accordingly, Paul enjoins “*thanksgiving*” as well as supplication, on all who make their wants known unto God, and wish for the peace of God to keep their hearts and minds. We ought, therefore, to thank God most distinctly and cordially even for a “*smoking*” lamp, whenever we retire to plead for more of the fire or the oil of grace. We find this to be a useful maxim, in praying for temporal blessings. We feel the necessity, in regard to them, of manifesting gratitude for what we have, as well as solicitude for what we need.

Sensible enjoyment is thus sure to a certain extent. There are, indeed, times of alarm and "haste," when we are ready to conclude that our lamps never smoked, except by "strange fire," and never had any heavenly oil in them. But we have as often *changed* this momentary and melancholy opinion, as *formed* it. Things have come round again, and changed their aspect so, that we have forgotten the suspicion, and found ourselves saying with David, "*Return unto thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee.*" Accordingly, we see that we should have made sad havoc both of character and hope, had we *acted* long upon any of those startling fears of our own sincerity, which have so often agitated us.

Why not, then, take a full view of our real *position*, whenever we retire to pray for "more grace." The simple question, "have I received *any* grace?" we cannot—dare not—answer in the negative: and a *strong* affirmative answer is not necessary, in order to awaken gratitude. The consciousness of even *some* light—*some* love—*some* change for the

better ; gives some joy, whenever it is allowed to assume a definite form in our minds. And it is sensible pleasure—whatever else we may call it—to pray in hope, for *more* light, and love, and renovation.

But now comes the question—what ought we to consider as an ANSWER to such prayers ? And, certainly, they are often unanswered, if the popular meaning of the phrase “sensible enjoyment,” be a scriptural sentiment. Now, in general, *delightful* assurance of final safety, or of full acceptance, is meant by it. It never means, as it is commonly used—anything *penitential*—or *humbling*, or *prudential*. Even when it has a reference to *meltings* of heart, it is to those of love and gratitude ; never to those of shame or self-abasement before God. Something like *rapture*, is the feeling described by the phrase.

There is, however, “*the joy of Grief*.” This, in poetry, is often a maudlin sentimentalism ; unworthy of a wise man to indulge or sanction. It is, however, divine wisdom,—in sound theology and sober experience. It is as much a real cause for gratitude and joy, to be able to

mourn over sin, and to groan under the plagues of the heart, as to be able to

“ Read our title clear
To mansions in the skies.”

In both cases, it is the same lesson—*read under different lights*. We are not, therefore, judging very wisely, if we count it no sensible enjoyment to be humbled—sobered—self-emptied, and put upon vigilant guard. There is quite as much grace obtained in answer to prayer, when we are thus made alive to our own weakness, as when we are most elevated and delighted. Perhaps more: for there is no reason to suspect the sincerity of any feeling which renders us watchful and afraid of falling. In fact this spirit is *fellowship* with God, in his hatred of sin, and love of holiness.

This matter requires and deserves to be thoroughly investigated, both by the doubting and the hopeful. And, as it cannot be well examined for either class exclusively, I must request of each, that the following series of maxims on the subject, may be read with discrimination. They will sometimes ascribe

more hope to the doubting, and more doubt to the hopeful, than either may feel at present. They will, however, present, if I do not greatly mistake, a fair view of the whole subject, in a form which ought to be more familiar than it is. They are intended also to simplify, still farther, the principles of the second volume of the Guides, on "*Communion with God, or a Guide to the Devotional.*"

It is self-evident from the promises made to the prayerful, that they are both warranted and welcome to believe that they shall "*obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.*"—It is certain from the recorded experience of the prayerful, under both covenants,—that they *did* obtain mercy and find grace, at all times of *real* need. They not only found the full answer of all their prayers for salvation, when they died, (which would have been a glorious reward, even if no *foretaste* of it had been granted,) but they found, from time to time, all through life, some foretastes of that salvation. They very often brought the hope of pardon from the mercy-seat; and not unfrequently, a *sense* of pardon. It was

not an uncommon thing for them, to rise up singing, where they had knelt down weeping; and to carry from the closet, into which they had brought a spirit of trembling and bondage, a spirit of tranquillity and liberty. "*They looked unto God, and their faces were lightened.*" There are, therefore, "First Fruits" now, as well as the final harvest of salvation at death, to be obtained in answer to prayer. A life of prayer not only issues in a death of safety at last; but also secures some immediate and sensible tokens of that safety.

This was the case in "the days of old:" and we have every reason to believe, that many of the prayerful still find it equally "*good*" for them "to draw nigh unto God." Indeed, *immediate* grace and strength are as necessary as future glory; because, without them, we could not become "meet" for glory.

Besides; the intercession of Christ is a *present* intercession for the prayerful:—and the work of the Spirit is a *present* work in them: and the love of God is a *present* love to them: facts which more than imply, that

there must be not a few *present* answers to prayer. Indeed, it is altogether *unlikely* that God would "take pleasure in them that fear him, and in them that hope in his mercy,"—and yet never manifest any of that pleasure, whilst they are in this world :—altogether unlikely, that Jesus would ever live to intercede for us, and yet never obtain anything for us, until the final moment of obtaining all things, in the one gift of glory : altogether unlikely, that the Holy Spirit would so "carry on the good work" of sanctification in us, that we could be utterly or always unconscious of its progress.

Whatever presumption or extravagance, therefore, may have run through some men's notions of immediate and sensible answers to prayer—there is an equal want of common sense and common decency, in all denials and doubts of positive and present answers. The glorious array of gracious arrangements in heaven, for encouraging prayer, and for securing its success, forbid and denounce all unbelief on this subject. We might as well deny the *duty* of prayer—as doubt its ultimate or present success.

For, Prayer is positively and nobly answered, in our being kept prayerful, notwithstanding any lack of more sensible answers.

This is not a small matter ; although often overlooked, or underrated. A "spirit of supplication" is a spirit of "grace," however few sensible answers may follow its exercise. "*I will wait on the Lord who hideth his face,*" is a resolution quite as decisive of a gracious state, or of a new heart, as is the triumphant avowal, "*I love the Lord, because he hath heard my supplications :*" perhaps more decisive of a divine change. The man who cannot give up prayer, however he may miss comfort, is not "*a natural man.*" His continued desire for the things of the Spirit, is proof that he "*spiritually*" discerns their worth and glory—although not their *freeness* also.

This is not more than a fair estimate of a praying spirit. Accordingly, we should consider the manifestation of such a spirit in our *children*, or in any one we had prayed much for, as a positive answer to our prayers for them. How gratified and grateful we should feel, could we see our unconverted relatives,

just as much suppliants for mercy and grace, as we ourselves are! That, we should both hail and hold as a *sensible* "token for good," in their case. And is it *less* so in our *own* case? "*Judge righteous judgment.*"

However little, therefore, our prayers may have been answered, in the precise way we expected and wished, they certainly are not altogether unanswered, if we cannot and dare not give up the habit of waiting on God. God has not "*shut out*" the cry of the man, who cannot live without shutting himself into his closet to "*cry mightily unto God.*" To any *Ananias* who should doubt that man's conversion or sincerity, God would say, as in the case of Saul of Tarsus, "*Behold he prayeth.*"

Prayer is positively and sensibly answered, in our being kept faithful to the truth as it is in Jesus.

This is a far greater matter than we are ready to suppose. Indeed, we are tempted to underrate "*soundness in faith,*" in our own case, because a sound creed is so often retained by many who are immoral, and by more who are ungodly. But whilst this melancholy fact

should teach us prudence, it must not be allowed to hide the revealed fact,—that faith in the truth, and love to the truth of the Gospel, are "*fruits of the Spirit.*" We care about what we believe concerning the person and work of Christ. We cling to it—as the sheet anchor of our souls. We are persuaded that our own blood would not be too costly a seal to our faith in the blood of the Lamb, if the credit of the glorious gospel required it. We may feel unequal to make such a sacrifice at the shrine of christianity;—but we are quite sure that Christianity *deserves* it, and that we ought to make it if called on. And, is there no *sensible* answer of prayer in this love to the truth? Our love to it, may, indeed, have grown up to this point, by almost insensible degrees. We may not have marked its progress step by step; nor, at any step of it, been much struck by its growth; because we regard this attachment to the great doctrines of grace, rather as mere *duty*, than as the special grace of those doctrines: but it is as much a special *gift* as a positive duty.

Accordingly, were any of our heretical or legal friends (for whom we had prayed much and fervently,) brought to such an acknowledgment of the truth, and such a cordial love to the gospel, we should not hesitate to regard the change as a signal and gracious answer to our prayers, whether the change were sudden or gradual. And, is it not so—is it less so—in our own case?

We had once *sensible* aversions and objections to the gospel of the grace of God; but now they are conquered, or hated, or dreaded;—*sensibly* overcome, or *sensibly* opposed. And, is not this one sensible answer to our prayers for docility and faith?

Besides; without this *love* to the truth—there is no sensible comfort of hope or peace, that could be safely regarded as an answer to prayer. God sends forth "*his mercy and truth*" together; and where his truth is relished, his mercy has been exercised.

Prayer is positively and usefully answered, in our being kept in a right spirit and position towards the great salvation itself.

Our spirit, in regard to salvation, is not,

alas! always, nor ever altogether, what it ought to be. It is not, however, "*the spirit of the world.*" We do not dislike God's plan of saving. We are not indifferent to it. We could not deliberately prefer another plan, if there were a choice of plans. Accordingly, we dread and deprecate any feeling of doubt or hesitation, which at any time happens to cross our mind. We shrink with horror from the bare idea of standing in the spirit or position of the *world*, towards the cross. Now, in order to see how this desire to glory only in the cross, is an answer to prayer for a "*right spirit*"—we have only to suppose, for a moment, that this desire were *lost* from our bosom, like PILGRIM'S Roll; and that the sense of its value *remained* a living conviction in our minds:—should we not, in that case, hail the return of that desire (after fervent prayer for its return) as a sensible answer to our prayers? And, is the *maintenance* of the desire from year to year, not so,—or less so, than the restoration of it would be, were it suspended for a time?

Is it not, also, better for us, and more de-

monstrative of the *habitual* attention of divine wisdom to our prayers for a right spirit towards salvation,—to keep up a calm and settled *longing* for that salvation, than to produce occasional and transitory *triumph* in it? Much of both is, indeed, quite within the scriptural bounds of sober experience; but, still, a great lack of the latter, would not disprove the divine origin of the former. A settled, conscientious, and reverential regard for the great atonement, is a *decisive* answer to our prayers for “*like precious faith*” as the apostolic,—though not a full answer.

Prayer is positively, and ought to be held as sweetly, answered, in our being kept afraid of those tempers and habits which are incompatible with present or final success in prayer.

Joy, assurance, and serenity are at a higher premium in the market of experience, than self-abasement, or self-distrust, or self-control, or godly jealousy of sin and temptation. The former are not, however, more valuable, though more popular, than the latter. In fact, it is the degree in which the latter are

granted in answer to many of our prayers for the *former*, that makes room for sensible enjoyment, when it is vouchsafed to us. Prayer for more comfort, is often best answered, and always well, because *safely* answered, by the gift of more *humility* and *self-jealousy*. The desire for comfort, and the possession of such a spirit as would make a right *use* of it, are not always coincident with us. God, therefore, judges what is best for us; and answers our prayers accordingly. Whatever, therefore, be the *letter* of any of our prayers for spiritual blessings, they are substantially answered, when what we call a denial or a delay of the precise blessing, humbles us before God, or improves us before man, or sets us upon great searchings of heart, or renders us more watchful and self-denied. This is grace *sensibly* communicated; and the *kind* of grace we need oftenest, and most of, while we are in health and prosperity.

O! it is no doubtful, nor poor, nor cold answer to our prayers for comfort, when God makes us *feel through all our soul*, that our own hearts are not to be trusted; that our-

own strength is no match for certain temptations; that our own prudence could not guide us safely through the snares of the world, and the wiles of Satan. The followers of holiness will be thankful for such lessons, whatever mere comfort-hunters may think of them. The best comfort, and the best proof of answered prayer, whilst anything is *seriously wrong* in our character or spirit before God, is such an exercise of grace and providence towards us, as shall set *right* what is wrong. It is God's resolution, as well as promise, that "*Sin shall not have dominion over us;*" and, therefore, he answers our prayers agreeably to this fixed rule. "*Even so, Amen! Father.*"

Prayer is positively and favorably answered, in our being kept from tormenting fear and from actual despair of our final salvation.

The mere absence of terror and despair in the minds of the ignorant and unbelieving, is not a parallel case to this. They have not our solemn views of the majesty of God and law; nor our deep sense of the evil and demerit

of sin ; nor our settled convictions of personal guilt and unworthiness ; nor our deliberate estimate of heaven and hell. Had they *these* pressing on their understanding and conscience, without having also our knowledge of the *Gospel*, to balance that pressure, it is self-evident that agitating terror must be the effect.

Shall we then think nothing, or but little, of being kept from *horror and despair*, in the very face of all that we believe concerning *sin and hell* ? Our hope may neither be strong nor steady ; but, if we had *no* hope ! *absolutely* none ! *certainly* none ! we should soon become "*a terror*" to ourselves and to all around us. It is not wise, nor fair, nor grateful, to call a faint hope, no hope : or a partial peace, no peace : or occasional misgivings of heart, despondency : or low spirits, despair. For, even when we, in our "*haste*," do so, we have a lurking hope that our case is not exactly desperate. We do not *mean* all that we say, at such hasty moments. We expect to be contradicted, and encouraged too, by those we lay our case open to. We

could not think well of a minister, or a friend, who would try to confirm or justify our opinion of our own case, as being *really* hopeless.

Besides, these hasty moments are not frequent, after the Gospel is at all *understood*; except in the case of bodily or mental disease. The ordinary tone of our minds is rather calm than agitated. There is, indeed, much "hoping against hope;" but the hoping *goes on*, upon the whole: not so much, however, because of what we enjoy, as because of what we expect.

But, whichever way, there is, in general, far more *hope* than racking fear; and, in our case, it goes on with the progress of our *convictions* of the evil of sin, and with the growth of our *self-knowledge*: a thing that would be impossible, if God did not, in answer to our prayers, keep the *all-sufficiency* of the Saviour before our minds. Nothing but our knowledge of *Christ*, could balance our knowledge of *ourselves*.

Now, this *balancing knowledge* we certainly had not, until we began to pray in

good earnest ; nor this *self-knowledge* either. Prayer was the mother and the nurse of both. Accordingly, were we to *restrain* prayer, we could not restrain the hope or the composure even of our *sad* moments.

Prayer is sensibly answered in the maintenance of a conscious and conscientious regard to holiness and usefulness.

We never think meanly or lightly of holiness. We could not be happy without *trying* to follow it. It would not gratify us, to be freed from moral restraint. There are, alas ! both directions and degrees of the paths of holiness, which we are not yet very fond of, nor altogether reconciled to ; but we have no wish to retrace any of the steps we have taken in following it, nor to retract any of our vows of "*patient continuance in well doing.*" No conviction of our minds is more vivid, deep, or habitual, than that of the *necessity* and *beauty* of holiness.

Now, as we have often prayed thus :—
"*Write thy law upon my heart : Incline my heart to walk in thy statutes : Enable me to delight in the law of the Lord after the inner*

man;" is not our love to holiness, a sensible answer to these supplications? And then this love *lasts*! No prosperity has overthrown it. All adversity has increased it. It has fluctuated; but it has never expired, "*since we knew the grace of God in truth.*" And, at this moment, after all our *ups* and *downs*, both in life and godliness—there is nothing we more dread or deprecate, than coming under the dominion of any *new* sin, or returning to the bondage of any *old* sin. Our deliberate and fixed judgment is, "*better suffer than sin.*"

It is impossible to look at human nature, as it is when left to its own tendencies,—and doubt whether such holy tendencies, thus prolonged and progressing, be decisive answers to prayer. We *felt* them not—we *desired* them not—whilst we were strangers to prayer; and we know that, *without it*, they would soon pass away.

In this, and in many other things of the kind, it is more nice than wise to distinguish between the *moral* influence of the act and habit of prayer itself, and the *divine* influence

vouchsafed in answer to it. Where the former *ends*, and the latter *begins*, is rather a curious than a useful question. They most likely begin, go on, and end together ; for there is no contrariety between *moral* and *spiritual* influence. The spiritual only, is effectual ; but the moral is certainly no hindrance, however little help it may be to it.

Again ; a conscious desire to *do* some good, as well as to *be* good, ought to be traced up to *answered* prayer, even in this age when many, who *never pray*, are both zealous and benevolent. It was by men of prayer, that our great plans of usefulness were originated. It is by such men that their great operations are conducted. And it is in *answer* to the prayers of the church, that the world cannot resist the claims of our great Institutions. "The earth" has, of late, "helped the woman," upon a scale, both of men and money, not to be explained on any other principle. The popularity of our societies has, indeed, great influence in obtaining patronage and support for them. But, what first made them popular enough to win their present popularity ?

Our prayers, then, are not unanswered, nor equivocally answered, inasmuch as we have acquired, and are enabled to maintain, many of the *best* principles and feelings of doctrinal and practical godliness. Unless, therefore, we attach more importance to occasional *joyful emotions*, than to habitual veneration of the Glorious Gospel and the Eternal Law; than to settled and influential convictions of truth and duty—than to a conscientious regard to the divine will and glory, we can, we ought to, say much of the “*Profit*” to be derived from prayer.

When we consider the fearful peril of those who are “far off” from the cross, from the mercy-seat, and from the narrow way; and how many are afar off, we may well say “*Verily, God hath heard us!*” even if we are not yet so near to these sources of safety, as to find them sources of “STRONG CONSOLATION.”

Would I exchange places or prospects with the prayerless? If not, I have not prayed in vain.

Our prayers should have, for their chief

object, the continuance and increase of our holy principles and habits.

There is some *confusion* in our ideas and estimate of real happiness, or sensible enjoyment, in religion, if we are *uncomfortable* in our mind, although conscious that no error nor sin could make us happy. Conscience arrayed against vice, and the heart against *legality*, constitute a real Christian, or a true believer; and a believer *is* justified, *is* adopted, *is* accepted, and *has* Eternal life. God has expressly and repeatedly said so in his word; and, therefore, we ought to take his *word* for the fact; instead of praying that his Spirit would *exempt* us from *believing* it, by making us *feel* it. We cannot feel it whilst we do not believe it. The Holy Spirit is not likely to strengthen our hearts, by weakening or setting aside our *understanding*: He is as unlikely to render reason or revelation useless, as to *resign* his own place to either of them. He will keep his own place as *Head* of both; but he will not *displace* either of them, to humor sloth. Were this well understood, we should bend our prayers for comfort, upon the increase

of a *believing and obedient* frame of mind : for whilst this is devotionally cultivated, we are both free and welcome to believe all the promises for ourselves : and they are enough to cheer any heart, that can be satisfied with present grace and future glory.

Many, without knowing or intending it, are *praying down the use of truth and faith* ; and yet *complaining* that God does not answer them !

When the Holy Spirit answers prayer for comfort, most sensibly, it is not by presenting new truths to the mind ; but by inclining and enabling the mind to understand, and appreciate, and rest on, the truth as it is in Jesus.

This is not always obvious to ourselves, when we are *most happy* in prayer. Indeed, it is *well* that it is not. It would be a *pity* if it were ! We are better employed then, than in *analyzing* the elements or the order of our sweet emotions. *Truth* is, then, God, and God TRUTH !—they are so identified. We do not pause to mark any distinction. The Bible is *lost*, in the God of the Bible, when we realize Him as it has revealed Him.

THIS STRONG LIGHT is not, however, frequent nor lasting. It is, therefore, prudent to mark, during the intervals of it, that all that was new in its radiancy, arose, not from any new star of promise, nor from any new rainbow of mercy, nor from any new lamp of providence; but from our "eyes" being, like those of the prophet's servant, unusually opened, to see the glories and defence of the mount of God. The Spirit then wrought mightily by the word; for, then we had been deeply *pondering* and *praying over* some great truth of the word. We may have *forgotten* this now, and even at the time when the enjoyment began. This was, however, the fact, *before it began*. It must have been so: for, what *else* could we have thought of, or prayed over, at the throne of God, but some part of the word of God?

No. VIII.

DOUBTS FROM INDWELLING SIN.

DR. WARDLAW has well said, that "the inward conflict between opposing principles—those of the flesh and those of the Spirit,—of the old and new man,—constitutes the very *distinction* between the regenerate and the unregenerate. While a sinner continues unregenerate, he may occasionally experience the opposition and remonstrance of conscience: his judgment may, in some things, be fretfully at variance with the inclinations of his heart. But there is a material difference between the constrained approbation of the understanding, and the consent of the will, and complacency of the affections. The unregenerate man can have no love to God—no delight in his law—no desire after fellowship with him or con-

formity to him. These are the very principles of the *new* nature ; against which, to the very end, the *old* will strive,—“the flesh lusting against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh.” Freedom, therefore, from this conflict, is not to be a matter of expectation to any child of God, while “sojourning in the flesh.”

We must not, therefore, be surprised to find in ourselves, what all converts have found in themselves ; a law of the flesh, as well as a law of the Spirit : nor must we be afraid to call our loathing of sin and longing for holiness, “the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus.” They really are so, if we really deem holiness essential to our present happiness, as well as to our future safety.

Were we, then, called upon to draw up a list of the things which would make us really *happy*, what things would it chiefly include ? It would, of course, include some temporal blessings : such as, an ordinary share of health, a safe medium between poverty and riches, and a very select circle of judicious friends. Spiritual things would, however, form the chief and most numerous items of

such a list. And, how readily—even at a glance—we see and fix upon the real elements of true happiness! We feel at no loss to determine, at once, what would make *us* truly happy. We have no occasion to pause and ask, “*who will show us any good:*” we know, as it were instinctively, what is really good, however far off we may feel from the experience or the enjoyment of it. Whatever others may deem good or best, we are quite sure that the favor of God, and conformity to the image of God, form the chief good. There is neither falsehood nor faltering on our lips, when we declare, that nothing could make us so happy, as such a measure of grace and strength as would enable us to think, and feel, and act, at all times, in religion, exactly as we wish to do. We should be so delighted—could we always read and hear the good word of God, with lively relish; always pray in the sanctuary and the closet, with holy freedom; always communicate at the altar of God, with equal hope and humility; always realize a personal interest in the Saviour, and a personal witness of the Spirit, and a personal hold upon the paternal love of God.

This is no pretence. We cannot even conceive of anything more delightful than—a heart that would never wander nor grow cold; a spirit that would never become weary nor dull; a conscience that would never prevaricate nor warp; a memory that would never be treacherous nor weak; and a judgment that would never be rash nor partial. Even a good deal of this, would be very gratifying to us; and *all* this, we should reckon almost heaven upon earth. O yes! Whoever may see “no beauty” in such a state of mind and emotion toward God and the Lamb, holiness and eternity; we see nothing so beautiful out of heaven. Such a spirit, in our esteem, has a “form and comeliness,” surpassed only by the perfection of unfallen and glorified spirits.

But this is not the state of our minds. Alas, our spirit is almost the reverse of all this. True! And yet, the love and longing we feel for such a spirit in religion, is a good sign. We were not always so very *particular* about how we felt towards divine things. This is, to ourselves, a new habit of viewing their claims upon our hearts. There was a time

when we did not think that either the service or the salvation of God deserved or demanded so much esteem ; and when we should have been anything but *glad* to experience such an absorbing sense of their worth.

Well ; how came this change of opinion and feeling ? Who opened our eyes, to see such beauty in holiness of heart ? I speak now of our *sense* of its beauty, and desirableness, and necessity : and that is a *new* sense, both in kind and degree, when compared with our old sentiments on this subject. We neither think nor feel about holiness, as we once and long did. We could not think meanly now, nor feel indifferent, about pureness of heart, or tenderness of conscience, or devotion of spirit. We make, alas, little progress in acquiring them, and but little effort to cultivate them : but we do not despise them at all, nor reckon them fanciful or unnecessary. We may not see the possibility of ever *becoming* what we thus admire and desire : but neither do we see any possibility of being happy without holiness.

I would not lay any undue stress on this

state of mind: but I must say, that I have never seen nor heard of such a state of mind amongst hypocrites, formalists, or apostates. This deep and settled persuasion, that happiness and holiness are inseparable, is not a natural instinct nor an accidental conviction. It is like nothing that is common or peculiar to human nature, at any stage of life, whilst nothing but nature works within. Grace is not unknown, as doctrine; nor altogether unfelt, as *power*, where the mind sees, and the heart feels, and the conscience testifies, that freedom from indwelling sin would be indwelling happiness. There is, therefore, in this sacred persuasion, something of Paul's experience, when he said, "*I delight in the law of God, after the inward man;*" or, at least, when he says "*I consent unto the law, that it is good:*" for there is no such inward "delight" or "consent," in any utterly unrenewed mind. Neither the careless nor the worldly may call the law of God *bad*, or refuse to call it *good*. They may even compliment its fine morality, and express a wish that they were as good as the law requires them to be:

but, although they may go all this length, in speaking on the subject, as a question of opinion, they do not feel nor think, that their personal *happiness* would be increased by loving or by obeying the law of God. Indeed, they regard it as the *enemy* of their present enjoyment. They would be happier, according to their estimate of enjoyment, if the law would let them alone entirely, until the evening of life. For, whatever they may think of its use or excellence in connexion with dying happy, they have no idea of *living* happy, under its authority and influence. How could they? They see the law of God standing, like Balaam's angel with a drawn sword, between them and the objects in which they take pleasure, or from which they expect pleasure. Thus they do not "consent unto the law that it is good," when it forbids and denounces as *bad*, what they delight in.

This is human nature—where grace has never been truly sought nor submitted to. But our nature is not thus set against the divine law now. We do not hate it, because it waves its flaming sword between us and our

idols ; nor because it thunders against our besetting sin. We consent unto its goodness, whatever it may call bad, and however it may denounce what it forbids. Well ; this "consent" of the inward man, could only spring from the inward man having some "delight in the law of God." I mean, that if we had *no* delight in it, we could not thus consent unto its goodness, when it crossed our inclinations, and condemned our conduct. We have, therefore, just as much delight in it, (so far as delight includes the admiration and approbation of it) as we feel we should *be delighted* by conformity to its letter and spirit. And that, I repeat, would delight us. The Searcher of hearts knows that we see and feel—how our happiness wou'd be "joy unspeakable," if all our worship were spiritual, and all our desires holy, and all our affections lively, and all our will in full harmony with His will. Alas, we wish, indeed, to get at this without much *trouble* or *effort* : and so far we have deep cause for shame and sorrow : but still, whatever reluctance we may yet feel to the means of becoming thus holy, we have some real

relish for the holiness itself, and would be glad to bear its image and breathe its spirit.

What, then, ought we to think of this hearty "consent" to the goodness of the law; and of that "delight" which we wish to take in obeying it; and which we should feel, were we more spiritual and holy? I press this one question to a settlement, before touching the subject of indwelling sin. There is, alas, "another law" within us, and it even *warreth* against the law of our mind, and *lusteth* against the Spirit; and, therefore, it must not be overlooked, nor palliated, when we sit in judgment on our conversion. I am not, however, diverting your attention from this sad "law of sin," which you so much feel and deplore. Indeed, I could not, even if I were inclined to try; which I certainly am not. I know well, that you think much oftener about what is *bad* in your hearts, than about any "good thing toward the Lord God of Israel," which may be in them. You, like myself, see and feel so much that is bad within, that you can hardly admit or imagine that there is any good. And, certainly, in our "flesh

dwelleth no good thing:" even in our *mind* dwelleth many evil things. It is not, however, an evil thing—to be aware of this ; to be ashamed of it ; to be grieved on account of it. However painful it may be (and it is very painful and alarming,) to find in ourselves a tendency to evil, which has the force of a law ; still, it would be far more perilous to be insensible, or at ease, under this sinful tendency : for bad as it is, indifference is worse, and more ominous. All the people of God have felt "the law of sin," and even "groaned" under it ; and, therefore, not to fear it, is an unequivocal mark of unregeneracy.

Now, as indwelling sin does not disprove indwelling grace ; and, as the existence of both in the same person, is not incompatible, however inconsistent, I do and must press the question, what ought we to think of that *delight* we wish to take in the salvation and service of God ; and which, we know, they can give ? Is this from nature, or from grace ? Remember ; the natural mind is "enmity" against both God and the law of God. It is neither sub-

ject to them, not desirous to be subject to them. It is not only unwilling to have them in all its thoughts; but afraid of them, and averse to them, as enemies to happiness, and drawbacks on enjoyment. On this base ground, the natural man stands out against the claims of law and gospel. On this ground we ourselves stood out long and willfully. But we have been driven from it. We are ashamed of it. We have now no more doubt of the fitness of holiness to yield happiness, than of the fitness of heaven to yield it. No sophistry of others, and no selfishness of our own, could convince us now, that sin or the world could make us truly happy. We are, alas, quite capable of *trying* to find enjoyment in earthly things: but our deliberate and habitual persuasion is, that they cannot yield any lasting or unalloyed pleasure. We see and feel, that they do not suit the immortal soul; that they are unworthy of its powers and affections; and that the soul cannot find "rest" in them, however it may try.

This, then, is our final and confirmed judgment. Well; "this is the Lord's doing,"



whether it be "marvellous in our eyes," or not. Unaided reason, education, or experience, never taught this lesson, nor led to this solemn persuasion. Many, indeed, exclaim, during the course of a gay or worldly life, and especially at the close of it, "Vanity of vanities; all is vanity and vexation of spirit;" but only those who are taught of God, learn this from a just estimate of the value of the soul, the greatness of salvation, and the grandeur of eternity: and from *these* high and holy considerations, as well as from disappointments, and more than from disappointments, we have learned this lesson; and, therefore, we too have been "taught of God." This is not disproved, nor even rendered very doubtful, by the melancholy and humiliating fact, that we "find another law in our members, warring against the law in our mind." Paul found this law in himself, notwithstanding all his piety and inspiration; and it warred so fiercely against his better principles, as to make him a "wretched man;" and so successfully, at times, as to enthrall him. It did not, however, drive him to despair. He allowed his

deep consciousness of carnal and worldly tendencies, to humble him before God and man; for he confessed them to both; and publicly, as well as in secret, groaned under them: but, still, he did not allow them to disprove, to himself or others, the reality of his conversion. He never forgot nor winked at the law of sin which he found in himself: but neither did he forget or underrate that law of his mind which opposed it, and condemned it. He as much ascribed unto the Holy Spirit, his desire to do good, and his inward love to goodness, as he ascribed to himself all his evil tendencies. In a word, he put all that was good, and all that was bad, to its proper account: the former to the account of grace: the latter to that of nature.

He was right: for as there was a *drawn battle* going on in his mind daily, there were of course *two sides*; and the contest proved that grace was in the field, as well as nature. Indeed, the hotter the contest, and the harder the struggle, the more certain it was, that the Spirit had lifted up a standard against the flesh.

And now, what *use* ought we to make of Paul's example and experience? Some make a *wicked* use of them; employing them even to excuse actual sins. Paul does, indeed, say of himself, "*the evil I would not, that I do :*" but not even the effrontery of the infatuated men who apply this to palliate their own vices, would dare to insinuate that his wish to be sober, ended in drunkenness; or that his wish to be honest, ended in fraud; or that his wish to speak the truth, ended in falsehood; or that his wish to be chaste, ended in crime; or that his wish to be benevolent, ended in selfishness. Antinomianism itself, has not the hardihood to charge this on Paul, nor yet to suspect him of it. Whatever he may have felt of the *workings* of the flesh, he did not do "the works of the flesh," nor "live after the flesh."

In like manner when he says, "*what I hate, that do I,*" no one can point to anything *hateful*, which Paul indulged after his conversion. He no doubt both did and said things which he hated; for he hated all sin: but we might just as well say, that he committed all sins, as say that he lived in the in-

dulgence of any vice. He could not do the former; and all his history proves that he was neither sensual nor selfish. It is, therefore, only a mind radically, and almost recklessly, vicious, that could pervert the humble confessions of Paul, into excuses for vice.

It is not for this, nor for any, unholy purpose, that you wish to understand Paul's melancholy and remarkable confessions; and to know what use you may fairly make of the principle of them in your own case. You see more in them than you *like* to look at steadily: but you feel persuaded that Paul *meant* nothing bad. Rather than admit that he did, you would try to believe that he was not speaking of himself, but of an unconverted man. Well, if you want nothing from the distinction which Paul drew between himself, and sin that dwelt in him, but just what Paul wanted from it, I can soon put you in the track of arriving at both his meaning and his motives. You must not, however, be disappointed, if I quote no *authorities* for my explanations, but those which Paul himself furnishes. I have more reasons, than the

want of room, for confining myself to the apostle's own opinions on this subject. Much, indeed, might be quoted, from the time of Augustine to that of Luther, and from the Reformation down to this present moment: but none who know, well, how much, will wonder that I award to Paul the privilege which even Agrippa granted to him,—“*Paul, thou art permitted to speak for thyself.*”

I have said that Paul ascribes to *himself* all the blame of all his evil tendencies, and of all the sin and shortcomings which these evil propensities led to. This assertion I now repeat, in the very face of his repeated declaration, “If I do that I would not, *it is no more I that do it*, but sin that dwelleth in me.” This seems, indeed, to contradict, flatly, my statement: but it only *seems* to do so. Remember; this is not the only instance in which Paul distinguishes between himself, and what dwelt in him. When speaking of the life of faith which he lived, he says, “I live—*yet not I—but Christ* liveth in me.” Was, then, his life of faith not, lived by himself, or did he not reckon it his own personal

life, because Christ lived in him? Let Paul speak for himself. He says as expressly, "I now live the life," as he says, "Not I, but Christ liveth in me," Gal. ii. 20. Thus he as much claims for himself the act and habit of believing, as he disclaims being at all either the author or the finisher of his faith. And the *exercise* of faith, on the Son of God, was as much Paul's personal and proper act, as the *principle* of his faith was the gift of God, and the fruit of the Spirit: for it was not Christ *in* him, that believed *for* him; but that enabled him to believe for himself. Now, was it not just as possible for Paul to distinguish between himself, and sin that dwelt in him, without at all intending by that distinction to excuse or extenuate his faults and failings; as to distinguish between himself, and Christ living in him, without at all ceasing to regard faith or holiness as personal virtues? Here is the real *clue* to the whole labyrinth of this intricate subject. In the one case, Paul is *accounting* for his sins and shortcomings, (not excusing them) by tracing them to their true source, a sinful nature. In the other

case, he is also accounting for his being able, notwithstanding such a nature, to live a life of faith. The *cause*, both of his holiness and of his unholiness dwelt in him: the cause of the former by grace; the cause of the latter by nature: but the *effects* of both were equally Paul's own personal actions.

Let us go over this ground again; for there is an air of abstraction about the argument yet, which does not suit the conversational character, and especially not the experimental design of these Essays. Now the case is simply this: Paul ascribed both his faith and holiness to Christ, as their original and final cause: but not so, as to imply that he himself was not believing, or that he himself was not following holiness. He knew that he was doing both; and, accordingly, appropriated to himself all that God had promised to personal piety. *I have fought a good fight—I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness.* Thus, he did not throw off the personal obligation or advantage of being holy, because Christ dwelt in him. And, in like manner, he did not throw

off from himself the blame or shame of his unholiness, because sin dwelt in him. Accordingly, the indwelling of Christ made Paul *thankful*; and the indwelling of sin made Paul *wretched*. Thus, the effects of each cause, had their natural influence upon his conscience. He was delighted when he felt and acted agreeably to the will of the indwelling Saviour; and wretched whenever he acted or felt agreeably to the will of indwelling sin.

Having thus seen, that Paul never dreamt that grace set aside his personal connexion with his duties, it is easy to see that nature could not set aside his personal connexion with his sins or shortcomings. But now, *why* did he draw these distinctions between himself, and the principles which thus dwelt in him? What were his *motives*, if this was his meaning? Certainly not such motives as some impute to him. He did distinguish between "the old man;" and "the new man" of his character: but, not in order to *extinguish* his sense of guilt, when he yielded to, or was overcome by, "the old man." No, indeed!

Paul had another and a better way of relieving his conscience, when it accused him. He carried the whole burden of his sin and imperfection direct to the cross; and dropped none of it, by the way, upon either imaginary or metaphysical grounds. Both as a Christian and as a philosopher, Paul was above all such trickery and trifling. He was as incapable of throwing any of the blame of what was unholy about him, upon abstract or impersonal causes, as he was of resolving it into the influence of "the evil stars" of astrology, or "the evil eye" of witchcraft.

What, then, was his real *object* in distinguishing between himself, and sin that dwelt in him? What did he gain, or propose to gain, by drawing this line of separation? "Much every way." It was, indeed, a master-stroke of holy policy, to proclaim thus, before the church and the world, that sin was not *himself*. He thus committed himself, soul, body and spirit, (beyond all retraction or retreat) to war a good warfare against sin in all its forms. For, having once, publicly and solemnly, singled out "the old man," as his

worst enemy; and disclaimed him as his master; and denounced him to crucifixion, Paul had no alternative but to fight on to the end, or brand himself forever as a coward and a traitor. This was a fine pledged position to stand in before God and man! It made all Paul's relations to time, strengthen his relations to eternity. Earth, as well as heaven, expected him to resist sin manfully, from the moment he openly renounced it. Even Satan would have been *surprised*, after this, to have found Paul tampering with temptation; if not also afraid to tempt him: for even Satan *flee*s from resolute resistance.

Another great advantage gained by Paul, from making and keeping up the distinction between sin and himself, was, that he was thus led to lay his account with, and to stand prepared for, "the flesh lusting against the Spirit." Accordingly, whilst the plagues of his heart pained and humbled him, they never drove him either to despair of salvation, or to doubt his conversion; but the more "the law in his members warred against the law of his mind," the more he prized the law of his mind, and

the closer he clung to the Saviour who implanted it, that it might be upheld and strengthened. Thus he gathered from the very *weakness* of his grace, when it was weak, reasons for faith and prayer; and instead of allowing nature to disprove his grace, made the strength of nature his chief inducement for seeking more grace. And thus we ought to judge and act. It will never do to throw up hope, nor to throw down the armor of God, as unwarranted to *us*, because flesh and blood rebel against judgment and conscience; nor because we feel prone to depart from the living God; nor because the world has too much influence upon us; nor because Satan tempts us: these are the very reasons why we should take unto us the whole armor of God, to wear and wield it for our defence. It is all provided, just because there is all this outward and inward opposition to contend against. If, therefore, we are really inclined to contend and resist, the opposing force is anything but proof that we are strangers to grace.

Another advantage gained by Paul, from this distinction, was, that it enabled him to

ascertain exactly the real state of his personal piety. Having laid it down as a maxim, that he would identify *himself* with nothing that was evil, and own nothing but what was good, he saw, at a glance, how both his character and conscience stood before God. Thus he could tell, at any time, whether he was growing or declining in grace; and take his measures accordingly. And in this clear light, what a clear sight he would obtain of himself! Shall I say—how *little* he would often, yea always, appear in his own eyes, by thus acknowledging nothing to be *himself*, but just what was good? And if Paul was thus humbled, how the use of his maxim would humble us! True; but it would no more harm us than it did him. It kept him living an habitual life of faith on the Son of God: and the more we feel our own unworthiness, the more we ought to imitate Paul in this habitual believing. Nothing he saw in himself—nothing but what he saw in the *worthiness* of the Lamb slain, could have kept even Paul from sinking into despair: and that *worthiness* can counterbalance even all our unworthiness!

Thus, when the *spirit*, as well as the letter, of Paul's distinctions between himself and sin, is brought out, by his own explanations, and cleared up by his own habits, his declaration, "Not I, but sin," appears the very *crown* of his heavenly-mindedness. He so desired and expected to be entirely and eternally free from all sin, that he would own none of it, as either his element or his delight.

It is not my fault, if these remarks expose some writers to the charge of more *earthly-mindedness* than they acknowledged. Indeed, there is a deep taint of sheer and shameful *legality*, in some of the popular explanations of "the two natures," as they are called: for, if "the old man" be made a *scape-goat*, to bear away any of the iniquity of the *real* man; what is this, but, just so far, taking away "the new man" from the cross of Christ? Paul's distinctions between the old and new man, had none of this effect upon his conscience or conduct. Sin and imperfection left him a wretched man; and from that wretchedness, he neither found nor

sought any relief, but, "*through Jesus Christ our Lord,*" Rom. vii. 24, 25. All theories of indwelling sin are, therefore, the ripe fruits of that sin itself, if they tend either to lessen the evil of sin, so that it creates no wretchedness in the conscience; or so, that any part of sin is reckoned too impersonal to require the blood of atonement.

In like manner, the theory which represents the old nature as remaining the *same* to the last, affirms either a mere truism, or a direct falsehood. If by remaining the same to the last, be meant, that all the indwelling sin which *remains* to the last is sinful, this is a mere truism: but, if it be meant that our fallen and sinful nature undergoes no sanctifying change by the work of the Holy Spirit, this is a falsehood. For, the influences of the Spirit are a remedy; and this says that they *cure* nothing: they are purifying; and this says that they *cleanse* nothing: they are transforming; and this says that they *alter* nothing! The *form* of this reflection upon the work of the Sanctifier, is not mended by saying, that He perfects the new nature although

He does not improve the old nature: for, as it is the old, or human, nature which requires renewal or sanctification, how can He be a sanctifier, if He do not operate upon it? Besides; as the believer does become a *better man* by the work of the Spirit, these are distinctions really without a difference;—although, alas, not without a baneful influence upon half-hearted professors. They have heard good men confessing that their nature was as *bad* as ever; and avowing that they never expect it to become at all better; and as this admission just suits the taste of those who dislike self-denial, self-examination, and habitual watchfulness over the heart and habits, they seize on it, and apply it to themselves, in the face of the fact, that the men who foolishly made the admission, were *good* men, and striving to be better from day to day.

There is something controversial in the aspect of these remarks: not, however, in their spirit. I owe it to the truth as it is in Jesus, and to your spiritual health, to guard you against all “vain philosophy” on this subject. And all theology which would divert

us in the least from the Cross of Christ, when we are pained by the plagues of our own hearts, is both vain and vicious philosophy. And so also is that, which would teach us not to expect any improvement of our depraved nature, from the work of the Holy Spirit. The body of indwelling sin, like the body of our actual sins, is a burden that must be carried direct to the cross: and, to grow better in heart and life, is the only "growth in grace," which God has promised, or which the Spirit will promote. Those, therefore, only trifle with us, who would teach us to make *allowances* for the workings of our old nature. We ought, indeed, to lay our account with them, and even with a *war* of nature against grace: but the guilt of this *inward* rebellion, like that of *outward* rebellion, can only be removed by *pardon*. And, as God will "abundantly pardon," whenever we humbly confess, we can have no occasion for allowances or subterfuges. No! not even when we seem to ourselves growing *worse*, instead of better, in the *frame* of our mind. This does happen at times: and, when it does,

there is something tempting in the theory of shifting off from ourselves some of the blame, by setting up a perversion of the plea, "not I, but sin that dwelleth in me." This is, however, a temptation. In fact, we have neither need nor use for it; seeing the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin.

The plea of *infirmity* is, however, valid, in all cases of real bodily or mental weakness. O, yes; God interprets real weakness, as tenderly as the Saviour did in Gethsemane, when he said of the sleeping disciples, "*the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.*"

God also "knoweth our frame, and remembereth that we are but dust," when the frail body unhinges the willing mind. Then He sympathizes as readily and fully with us, as we do with a partner or child who is overcome by long watching at our sick bed. The heaviness of their eyes does not hide from us the willingness of their spirit. "I sleep, but my heart waketh," is a plea which the God of Glory will as readily admit from *his* suffering children, as we admit it from our watching partner or child.

I have now brought before you the great principles of the Gospel; and, if they do not meet your case at once, you must re-examine them, until you find relief from them. They are able, both to make you wise unto salvation, and to make you aware of your own interest in the salvation of God. Do not, therefore, seek for relief from any other quarter, nor by any other process. "*I will now doubt for you,*" said the venerable ROWLAND HILL, to a man who gave up doubting, without giving up his old sins.

THE END.

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THE END.

[Handwritten scribbles and signatures in ink, including the name "HILL" and other illegible marks.]