

Good News

FOR YOUNG AND OLD.

“Suffer Little Children to come unto me, and forbid them not : for of such is the kingdom of God.”—Luke xviii. 16.

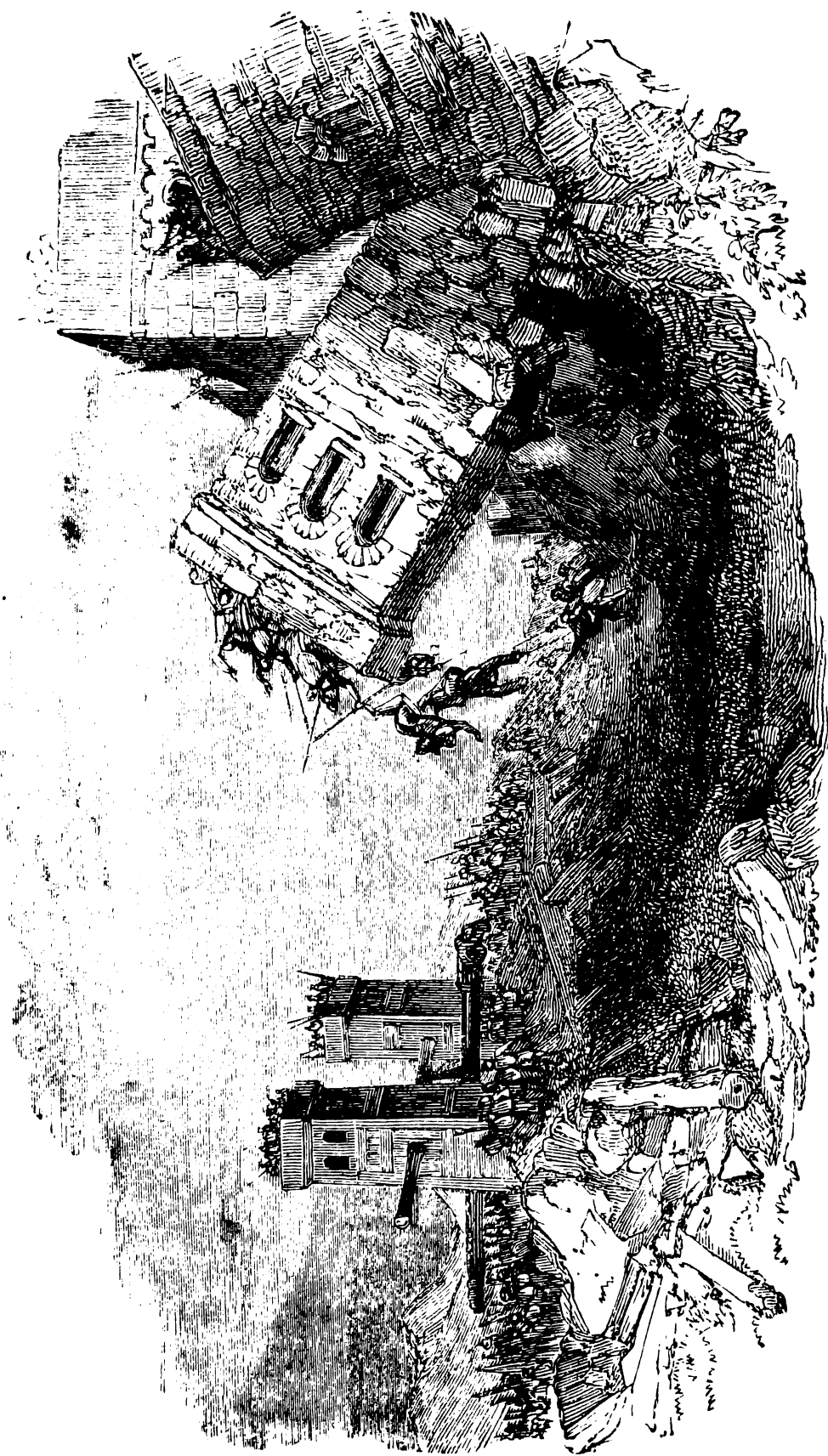
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JERUSALEM ENTRENCHED. Luke xix. 43.

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Good News for Young and Old,

WITH SOME PAGES FOR THE LITTLE ONES.



BEGINNINGS.

THE commencement of a new year reminds us of many things. And first of all it recalls the *past*, for few can meditate upon the beginning of another year without recalling those that have gone before, and are now gone for ever!

The PAST! with what mingled feelings the thoughtful must regard it! Its joys and sorrows—how much they were meant to teach us; its opportunities used or lost—how intimately they are connected with the believer's eternal future, the judgment seat of Christ, reward or loss. To some who saw last New Year's-day, the past includes not alone the varied experiences of the wilderness, but even the wilderness itself. Yes. They once "dwelt" in the "land of the shadow of death" (Isaiah ix. 2); but, called by grace, they arose, and, passing on through the valley, found the Lord their Shepherd faithful, and his grace sufficient for them (Psalm xxiii. 4). Onward and upward was their path. Many were their afflictions, but out of them all the Lord delivered them (Psalm xxxiv. 19). Many, too, were their joys, but none greater than those that sprang from the sweet consciousness of his presence, sympathy, and approval.

And now, the journey ended, the wilderness itself a thing of the past, the valley of the shadow of death behind them for ever, they have entered into their rest. The "clouds" can no more "return after the rain" (Eccles. xii. 2). The "pools" of the valley of Baca are needed no more (Psalm lxxxiv. 6). They are *with the Lord*, whose very presence is fulness of joy, and at whose right hand are pleasures for evermore. Who shall express the blessedness they now know in

"Those courts, secure from ill,
Where God himself vouchsafes to dwell,
And every bosom fill?"

Bereaved of their presence here, those they have left behind them cannot help but mourn when they miss the well-known voice, the welcome hand, the familiar, much-loved features; but it is only for the passing moment. They

"Cannot linger o'er the grave."

Faith lifts the bowed head, and bids the weeping eye look onward to that glorious hour (who shall tell *how near?*) when "the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise," and when "we which are alive and remain shall be caught up *together with them* in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air," and so shall both be "for ever with the Lord," and with them who have reached the journey's end a little while—and but "*a little while*"—before us. Happy thought!

for "yet a little while, and he that shall come will come and will not tarry."

The beginning of a new year, moreover, does not alone recall the past, but reminds us of the present. To the believer it speaks of further space for service in the wilderness—another opportunity for laying up "treasure where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through and steal." "There remaineth a rest to the people of God," but before we enter upon it we are called to labour. Some have entered into rest in the very act of labouring for their dear master. Others there are who appear to think, that having everlasting life through faith in Christ Jesus they have only now to labour for *themselves*. The intense selfishness of this thought is sad to contemplate. Let not us, dear young Christian reader, be of this number. But there are those again who, while supposing that they are labouring for the Lord, are but pleasing the flesh after all. This is a grievous delusion into which it is possible at any time to fall for lack of watchfulness. "The heart is deceitful above all things." Those who would truly labour for the Lord must labour in his way, his time, his place—not their own. We are not free to choose *how* we will serve the Lord. "Lord, what wilt THOU have me to do?" was the question of the astonished and converted Saul. The answer was: "Arise, and go into the city (Damascus) and it shall be told thee what thou must do." Thus the *plan* being pointed out to him he had to await the Lord's time and manner of service, both of which were after-

wards given him. Because a work is good in itself it by no means follows that you are to engage in it; still less because it is pleasing or agreeable to yourself. To preach the Gospel to the benighted Bithynians may have seemed a good work, yet when the servants of the Lord assayed to go thither, "the Spirit suffered them not" (Acts xvi. 7). To go to Cyprus (Acts xv. 39) was most probably agreeable to Barnabas because it was his native place. But from the moment that he chose that path we hear no more of him. Ominous silence! how much it conveys to the listening ear.

The beginning of another year reminds us, too, of all beginnings. We begin this month another volume of GOOD NEWS. Who shall say that either you or I will remain on earth to see the closing number issued? What if we were *sure* that we should not? Oh, with what deep earnestness and solemnity we should seek added grace to serve the Lord with reverence and godly fear, in holy energy, and with an intense and burning zeal which, like a coal of fire in the heart would burn the brighter as day by day rolled on! It is this which makes the coming of the Lord of such importance when received, not as a mere matter of knowledge, but of faith; not as mere doctrine which even an unconverted man might accept, but as a motive principle hidden in the heart, and stimulating its possessor to renewed diligence in the blessed hope of soon seeing face to face the dearest, the best, the most intimate FRIEND the soul has ever known or can know—so faithful, so true, so

patient, so full of grace, so omnipotent to help, so *ready* to prove it; who “sold all that he had and bought” us; “who gave *himself*” (could he do more?) and from the first hour that our souls have known his love has done nought but do us good—often, alas! in spite of our wilfulness; nay, not unfrequently making our very failures and naughtiness the *occasions* of unlooked-for loving kindness! Truly “his love is better than wine;” HIMSELF more precious to the believer’s soul than even the joys that spring out of his own ways of grace towards us!

What, then, dear young christian, if you were *sure* that ere this year, but just beginning, can close, you should see his face, behold his beaming smile of welcome, and hear that voice like the music of many waters saying, in inimitable grace, “Well done!” You are not sure of this; but you are assured by faith that “yet a little while and he that shall come will come and will not tarry.” *God says so!* A year, a whole year, might seem a *long* while; but faith says “a *little* while” and if active, makes the future *present*; and thus *to faith in exercise* the coming of the Lord is almost now. Seek then the power thus to *actualize* the coming of the Lord, and then, although we are now beginning another year, you will not be waiting for the end of ’66, but for God’s “Son from heaven” the Lord of Glory.

We are beginning the eighth volume of Good News, —eight is the resurrection number—may its pages prove instrumental in the Lord’s hands of bringing about a resurrection from death unto life of many a

one now "dead in trespasses and sins!" Last month saw the close of the seventh volume—seven is the complete number—and with it closed the completed labours of a dear servant of the Lord Jesus Christ, who now awaits that most happy hour symbolized in the number of this volume just begun: the Resurrection Morning!

Beginnings then teach many things. Nor can we meditate upon this beginning of months without recalling that "first month of the year" to Israel which witnessed their redemption out of Egypt. Thus we are brought at once to the subject of redemption. And what theme more sweet to those who know its blessedness can we meditate upon? "This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you" (Exod. xii. 2.) Thus spake the Lord to Israel *in Egypt*. Ah, dear reader, can you recall the hour when in the very midst of your bondage, and when it seemed truly at its worst, you first heard the blessed word of your salvation, and, as one redeemed by blood through faith, experimentally began the new life, a new creature in Christ Jesus, born from above? Are you conscious now that your heart is not so warm, your affections not so lively, your *sense* of the value of redemption not so strong as in that ever-to-be-remembered beginning of months to you?

Are you less lowly in your own eyes, less zealous in the service of your Lord, less desirous to see, if that were possible, all men brought to Jesus? Have you begun to build upon a little bit of knowledge, and to

value it for its own sake rather than what it should lead you to? Does the memory of the unspeakable joy of that glad hour, and the intensity of love you then felt [for the *person* of the Lord, at times almost rebuke you? Ah, you have not *fed* upon the Lamb! and have forgotten the word of exhortation which bids you “pass the time of your sojourning here in fear: for-as-much as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver, and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: who verily was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you” (1 Peter i. 17—20). For *you*! Oh what love! And should not the *remembrance* of it beget love? How well he knew our hearts who said, “Do this *in remembrance* of me.”

Redemption! what tongue shall tell its all-importance? what pen describe the cost at which its great and glorious Author accomplished it! But perhaps reader you are one of those who as yet know nothing experimentally of its value. You have often heard about it, you know its history, assent to its necessity, and so call yourself a Christian—yet are not Christ’s. Better far for you had you been born in some far-off heathen land, where the name and sufferings of God’s dear Son are utterly unknown. Do you inquire wherefore? I reply by quoting the words of one *you will never hear again* on earth. “Dear reader, do you take your stand with Abel at the altar, or with Cain

at the scene of murder and of blood? *There is but this alternative—it divides mankind so far as they have heard the Gospel*” (vol. vii. p. 387). You have heard the Gospel. You may deny that you have consciously rejected, but most certainly have willingly *neglected* its solemn but gracious invitation and command to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ—HIMSELF I mean, not merely his *history*. You do not *intentionally* “take your stand with Cain at the scene of murder and of blood;” but *being left where the preaching of the Gospel found you*, because you have at the least, *neglected* to pass over to the other side on its gracious invitation, you *have taken* your stand with the murderers. “It divides mankind so far as they have heard the Gospel. Oh, that this question may fasten on your conscience and be the turning-point in your eternal affairs!” Then this “beginning of months” will be “a time to be remembered” by you, and redemption the ground of eternal praises in your mouth, to him who “*so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son :*” praise

“To him who loved us, gave himself,
And died to do us good.”

May this be your happy experience, for his sake.
Amen. JOHN L. KRAUSHAAR.

THE WIDOW OF NAIN.

I LIKE true stories best. Shall I tell you one that I am never tired of hearing? It is about a poor widow whose son died, and about Jesus making him alive again. Any child that can read may find it in

the seventh chapter of the Gospel according to St. Luke. It begins at the twelfth verse.

The city where this poor woman lived was called Nain. Was it not sad that her only son should die? It made her feel more lonely than ever. She did not know, as she sat by his bedside when he was ill, and grieved to see him look so thin and pale, that the Lord Jesus was noticing her all the time, and that he meant to help her so wonderfully. Yet though Jesus cared about her sorrow so much, he did not come just then to make her son well. He knew it would be better not.

So the sick man died, and when it was the day for the funeral, the poor mother came crying along the road, with the people who were going to bury her dear dead son. No doubt she had prayed to God and told Him all her trouble. But she never thought she should get her son back again so soon. At least, the Bible does not say she did. She wanted comfort, and God sent it in quite a new way, so that everybody was taken by surprise. For just as they went *out* of the city, toward the burying-place, Jesus was coming *in*, with his disciples, and much people. They met very near the city gate.

When Jesus saw the poor mother crying, what do you think he said? "*Weep not.*" He felt for her. A number of her neighbours and friends also felt for her, but they could not do for her what Jesus did. Yet it was well they came with her that day; if they had staid at home, they would have missed seeing Jesus make that dead man alive again. They came

to see a scene of death and sadness ; but the presence of the Lord Jesus turned it into a scene of life and joy.

Jesus put forth his hand, and when he touched the bier, the men that carried it stood still. Then the Lord said : " Young man, I say unto thee, arise ! " That very moment the dead man was able to sit up and speak. How wonderful ! Think how glad his mother must have been. Would she not love Jesus very much, and often think how he had made her desolate home happy and bright again through his grace and goodness ? Would she not try to please him every day, to show that she was really thankful in heart ? And would not her son go and tell as many people as possible about that kind Saviour who had rescued him from death by his mighty power ?

The people were afraid when they saw the dead man rise up to life again. They did not understand who Jesus was, or they would not have been afraid, but they would have been glad indeed that he was come into the land to do them good.

Now, will you each look out three nice Bible texts that tell of his love, and three more that speak of his great power ? and, if you can save some more time from play for this pleasant work, you can begin to find texts that show how God answers prayer. It would be a pity to pass one single day without finding something you have not noticed before in God's holy word. There is no book like the precious Bible.



HIDDEN BY THE WINE-PRESS.

CHAPTER I.

FITTING BUT NOT FITTED.

“AND the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord.” Such are the opening words of the sixth chapter of Judges. To how many chapters of Israel’s history would they form the sad summary and comment (Psalms cvi. 34—45). But little more than forty years before this chapter commences, they had experienced a great deliverance, one of the “many”

which contrast so strongly with their grievous ways; but again had they fallen into the sin of idolatry to which, right onward to the Babylonish captivity, they were so prone. In consequence of this the Lord had given them over into the hand of Midian, a people who united with the Amalekites, and the children of the east came up "as grasshoppers for multitude," and entered into the land to destroy it; so that the Israelites, "greatly impoverished," were in danger of absolute famine, and so incapable of contending with their numberless adversaries, as to find no other way of escape than to retreat into dens and caves in the mountains and strongholds, giving up the land that once flowed with milk and honey to the ravages of the desolating foe. They cried unto the Lord, but, after reminding them of past mercies, the only answer he gave them, by the hand of "a man, a prophet," was, "Ye have not obeyed my voice." Oh, how bitter must have been their sense of desolation, when even HE their only hope thus responded to their cry! What a terrible commentary on the words, "Whatsoever a man soweth *that* shall he also reap." They had feared the gods of the Amorites in whose land they dwelt (verse 10), and denied HIM whose hand had *given* them the land, therefore were they and the land devoured by those whose gods they had acknowledged.

Dear Christian reader "be not conformed to this world" in any of your ways, lest in those very ways you reap at the world's hand the fruit of your doings.

But although the Lord's answer to their cry was so stern and assuredly most righteous, he had purposes

of grace towards them. And mark this: when he would *rebuke* them he sent "a man, a prophet;" but when he would save them *he came himself*, after the manner in which he was wont to appear to the patriarchs of old. "And there came an angel of the Lord and sat under an oak which was in Ophrah that pertained unto Joash the Abi-ezrite" (verse 11). At verses 14—16, we learn that this was the Lord himself. The oak is often mentioned in the Scriptures. In Palestine, where the heat in summer is often intense, the capacious shadow of this noble tree, affords a most grateful shelter to the wayfarer. On this account and because too of what some have called "the soft religious light," which ever dwells beneath its dense canopy of leafy far-spreading boughs, it was most commonly selected for those "altars on every high hill" which the worshippers of idols erected; and to this day it is connected with the superstitions of the mixed and half-heathenish people, who inhabit those regions. Nearly every hill-top has now its sacred oak, to which the inhabitants of the adjoining villages go up to pay their vows and worship.

Joash, the Abi-ezrite, was one of this class. He had a grove and an altar to Baal his false god; and it is not a little remarkable that the angel of the Lord should appear on the scene sitting under an oak belonging to such a man. What a tale it seems to tell! "Israel would worship an *idol* under every green tree;" but the *Lord* sits there beneath an oak unnoticed and unknown! How touchingly it seems to say "Israel is departed from *ME*."

Gideon, the son of Joash, threshed wheat by the wine-press to hide it from the Midianites. "And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him, and said unto him, the Lord is with thee, *thou mighty man of valour.*" Now if one were to tell you that Gideon was neither mighty nor valorous, but weak, timid, retiring, and disposed rather to hide himself from the Midianites, as well as his wheat, than to face them as a mighty and valorous man should have been ready to do, what *would* you think of such an apparently flat contradiction of these gracious words? Well, let us look a little at Gideon's character, as we have it brought out in the inspired narrative; and first, as to the situation and circumstances in which the angel found him. Threshing-floors in Palestine were and still are situated mostly in exposed and elevated places, where the wind can carry away the chaff when the process of winnowing is being gone through. (See "Fragments on Scripture Lands" page 20). A wine-press, on the contrary, was a covered place protected as much as possible from the action of the elements; generally hidden away in a valley or among the trees of a wood, and therefore the exact counterpart in many respects of a threshing-floor. Had Gideon been found defiantly carrying on his agricultural labours in the usual situation, there would have been nothing very remarkable, however gracious, in the words addressed to him. How Jephthah, Samson, David, or Jonathan, those men of bold and daring character, would have acted under similar circumstances it is not easy to say. Jephthah, though he "fled from the

face of his brethren," breathed defiance to the foe; Samson dwelt on the top of a rock, and woe to any, except his brethren (Judges xv. 8), who sought him for harm; David, when but a youth, slew a lion and a bear, and with a sling and a stone, confronted the giant adversary; Jonathan, with but an armour-bearer at his back, climbed the precipice, and without a thought of fear attacked the garrison of the Philistines; but "Gideon threshed wheat by the wine-press." "Well," you will say, "although it was quite right to seek to hide the wheat from the Midianites, the act does not look very valorous certainly; and as to 'might,' it seems a tacit admission that he had none to *protect*, or he would not have tried to *conceal*." Then again when told (verse 14) that he should save Israel from the Midianites, he exclaimed: "O my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? Behold my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house." Low thoughts of self became him well, and assuredly without them, none need expect to be used of the Lord; nevertheless the words are those of one who would rather that the post of difficulty and danger should be assigned to some other man. When commanded to throw down the altar of Baal that his father had, though he hesitates not to do the Lord's will, "he *feared* his father's household, the men of the city," and so "*could* not do it by day," but trembling, yet obedient, "did it by night." When the men of the city rose against him for this, he had not a word to say either for himself or for the Lord. Like a timid child he retires behind

the protecting arm of his idolatrous but apparently penitent father, who, of the two, certainly acts and speaks most like the mighty man of valour. All this and more which might be pointed out, even down to the middle of the succeeding chapter, appears to show that at this time, and up to this point in his history, Gideon was *naturally* anything but a mighty man or a man of valour; that he had little, if any, of that natural courage and prowess which other men of God have possessed in an eminent degree. And it is just this fact taken together with the GRACE which pronounced him, and eventually in its wondrous actings made him, in very deed "a mighty man of valour"—who till then, and of himself was just the opposite—it is this which makes Gideon's history so precious to those who have known their need of grace, and so likely, with the blessing of the Lord, to prove attractive to those who as yet know nothing about it. His history, too, lifts the veil and shows us both the secret of true courage and a frequent cause of failure. It is a tale of conflict and of victory—a Pilgrim's Progress written by a greater pen than Bunyan's. It shows how faith and fear, courage and timidity, hope and secret dread, conflict and tranquillity co-exist in one tried soul. And more than this, it shows what *patient grace* can do

"To make the coward brave;"

and holds up to our admiration the ways of him "who is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth."

Whether all this will appear in our subsequent meditations is another thing; but that the Spirit can show you all this and more if you prayerfully consider this precious chapter in Israel's history is certain.

J. L. K.



FRAGMENTS ON SCRIPTURE LANDS.

SOME acquaintance with the natural history and productions of Palestine and adjacent countries, their rivers, lakes, and scenery, their inhabitants and their manners, customs, costume, and character, is of much value to the bible-reader; helping to explain allusions which so frequently occur in the sacred page, and often throwing much light upon passages which, without some little knowledge of these matters, it is almost impossible to see the force and beauty of. Therefore, under the above heading it is proposed to give from time to time, as opportunity may occur, such little scraps of information, anecdotes illustrative of the climate and character of the people, descriptions of scenery, &c., as may assist the young readers of Good News in forming a more intimate acquaintance with the Lands of the Bible and those who live in them.

Separately considered, these "Fragments" will not be of much importance, but in the aggregate it is hoped they may be useful. But their chief value will depend upon the reader's referring to every quotation given, as the object is to lead to the Bible, and help those who love it to a better understanding of its contents.

THRESHING FLOORS.

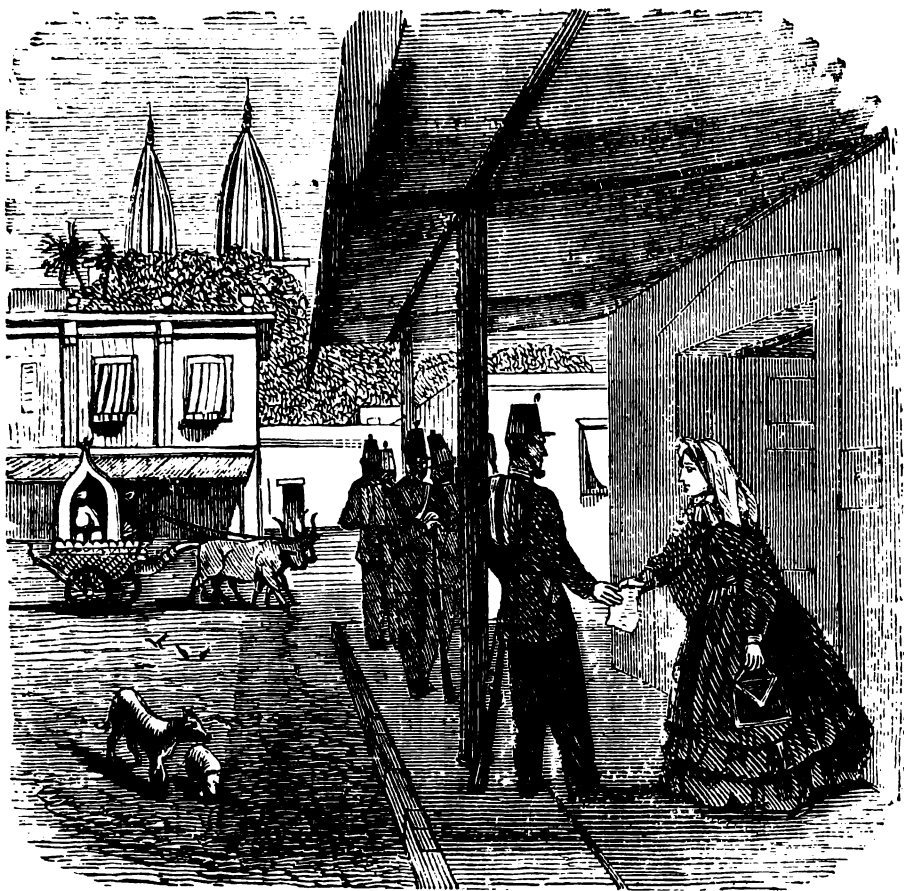
THE crown of a hill, or a rising ground open on all sides to the play of the winds, was, where practicable, generally selected for this purpose. The ground was beaten hard with mallets, and swept clear; then the corn in the straw was laid down, and oxen being turned loose upon it, were driven round and round, now this way, now that, to trample out the grain (Deut. xxv. 4). Sometimes a machine resembling a slab, with sharp stones fixed beneath, was used. In some cases smooth rollers were attached to the slab, in others a kind of circular saws, having teeth, were fixed on the rollers. This latter fact will, perhaps, help you to understand Isaiah xli. 15, 16. After all the grain was trampled out of the husk, and the straw, during the process, broken into chaff, the heap was winnowed by being cast into the air, when the wind carried the chaff away, and the grain, being heavier than the refuse, fell back again on to the floor. Where there was little or no wind, large *fans* were employed (Matt. iii. 12) to separate the chaff and refuse from the wheat. This was a most laborious process, *very distasteful to the husbandman*. The chaff which lay piled in heaps around the floor, and scattered, perhaps, all down the hill side, was afterwards set on fire, and the devouring flame consumed not only the great heaps, often higher than a man's head, but, creeping along the ground wherever the chaff had flown, turned all into ashes in a few moments (Isaiah xxx. 27; 2 Thess. i. 7, 8).

ANECDOTE.

Two Jewish Rabbins once met on the same spot, just outside the walls of Jerusalem. One wept aloud as he saw a fox run among the ruins; but the other laughed for joy. Each surprised at the emotions of the other, asked a reason. "I weep," said one, "as the prophet wept, 'Because of the mountain of Zion, which is desolate; the foxes walk upon it.'" "I laugh for the same reason," said the other. "For he, the Holy One, who has so fulfilled his just judgments will as faithfully perform his mercies also, 'as he promised to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed for ever.'"

To laugh for joy was hardly in keeping with the character of the subject, and the probability is that, seeing the other weep, this poor Jew sought by the contrast to make a parade of his faith, and display his knowledge of prophecy. A deeper acquaintance with the *cause* of the desolations of Zion would have made him to weep for *himself* as well as his people. "O, Jerusalem, Jerusalem! thou that killest the prophets and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For, I say unto you, ye shall not see me henceforth till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord. And Jesus went out and departed from the temple."

J. L. K.



“NO HEART-WORK.”

ROMANS x. 10.

A VISITOR was one morning going the round of a military hospital in India. One of the patients had shortly before been brought in with an injured or diseased leg; he was young and of a repulsive appearance, sullen and impudent in expression. On the visitor's coming up to his bed, he exclaimed that he wanted no preaching, for he was not going to die; and further, to deter any Christian effort, swore and spoke violently. God's messengers, however, dare not be easily affrighted from their allotted ministry; the value of each soul is too highly appreciated by them to admit of personal considerations hindering efforts after it. This one, therefore, sitting down by

the sufferer, talked to him of his secular concerns, his friends and circumstances, in order to pave the way for higher and holier themes by gaining his confidence. An hour or more had thus passed, during which the soldier had unbended and chatted away, when the visitor rose, saying other engagements were then pressing, but would he not allow her, after such a long talk according to his fancy, to say the few words she wished? With reluctance he consented, on which she said that she had no worthy words of her own, and, therefore, chose for the time to read some of God's words; but that, if he liked, he might choose which particular portion of them he would prefer hearing. After thinking a minute, he replied, “Some part of Proverbs, that has only moral sayings in it—no heart-work.” The visitor, as she turned the pages of her Bible, very fervently prayed to know what passage she should choose, and was guided to the first chapter, which she read through. Truly was this word then proved faithful: “The word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”

The look of contemptuous derision and indifference changed, after the tenth verse, to one of interest; after the twenty-second to one of awe and excitement; and before the close of the chapter the soldier was crying and trembling, exclaiming that he was one of the refusers and despisers at whom God would laugh, and that it was too late for him to be saved, he having mocked and spurned the truth too much and too long

for pardon ever to be given to him ! The Spirit led him to Jesus, and the scorner became a loving disciple, giving evidence of the sincerity of the professed change. The "book of morals" was evermore a specially dear portion of the bible to him, as that which had brought him to know the Lord and himself. The sinner turned at the reproof, and the reprover forgave him the debt.

MY HOME IS NOT HERE.

When I gaze on the light of yon beautiful sky,
And the curtains of azure unfolded on high,
Their glory and splendour recall to my thought
The blissful inheritance Jesus has bought ;
I fancy the portals of heaven appear,
And I feel at the moment,—My home is not here.

When I see all around me those flowers so bright
Which God has implanted to ravish my sight,
I hail them as pledges of heavenly love,
And I think of the brighter ones blooming above ;
Their fragrance reminds me of hopes that are dear,
And I love to remember,—My home is not here.

As I list to the song of the lark as she flies,
Still warbling her notes as she mounts to the skies,
I think of the time when my heaven-ward flight
Will like hers be directed to regions of light.
I shall sing, as I leave every trouble and fear,
My home is in heaven,—My home is not here !

Oh ! land of enjoyment ; oh ! home of my heart,
What blissful delights doth thine image impart !
In the midst of affliction, of trouble, and grief,
One thought of Christ's glory brings instant relief,
And quickly the darkening clouds disappear,
As the feeling steals o'er me,—My home is not here.



LIEUTENANT T—— AND THE HIDDEN BIBLE.

“The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul.”

IN the terrible times of the French revolution of 1793, there lived in the county of Suffolk, near the sea-coast, a wealthy farmer, originally of Danish descent. A numerous offspring graced his ample board, seven of whom were sons. Unlike too many agriculturists of more modern days, this worthy farmer, whom we will call Mr. T——, did not bring up his boys in idleness and imaginary gentility, neither did

he fall into the too common error of supposing that his own calling must of necessity become theirs also. Each was suitably educated for some useful employment or profession, in the choice of which, inclination and adaptability were, as far as possible, consulted. In the stormy times which succeeded the "Reign of Terror" in France, when devastating wars convulsed the whole continent of Europe, and shook even our island home, when volunteer bands, recruiting companies, and press-gangs, kept up a continual excitement throughout the country, numbers of young men forsook more peaceful employments to devote themselves to the vain pursuit of military or naval honours, while many more were forcibly carried on board ship by the press-gangs, and there compelled, willing or unwilling, to serve "before the mast." The threatened invasion of Napoleon Bonaparte kept the inhabitants of our seaport towns constantly on the alert, and none more so than the population of Yarmouth and its neighbourhood. It would have been strange, if under these circumstances every one of the seven sons of Mr. T—— had remained unaffected by the general excitement. Yarmouth Roads were crowded with ships of war; boats with their complement of "blue-jackets" and officers in uniform were continually passing to and fro, and such associations naturally exerted an influence on many. Among the rest the subject of this little narrative early evinced a decided partiality for a naval life; and while yet but a boy of twelve years of age was appointed midshipman on board His

Majesty's ship "Majestic." At this period Edward T—— knew nothing of the Lord Jesus Christ. He appears indeed, in common with all his family, to have been trained in habits of the strictest integrity and moral rectitude, but however valuable such principles may be in their proper place, they are but poor safeguards against temptations from within and without. Surrounded on board ship by those who despised religion, blasphemed the name of God habitually, and were prepared to ridicule even common morality, it would have been by no means strange had one so young speedily lost every vestige even of that which early training and home influence had given him. That he did not do so was assuredly owing to the watchfulness and overruling mercy of One who never slumbereth, and who, having purposes of grace towards him, kept him in the hollow of his hand, all through the dangers moral and physical by which he was everywhere surrounded. That he maintained his integrity, and that too in such a manner as to attract the notice and win the confidence of his superiors, his parents had what must have been to them most gratifying proof within little more than a year after his appointment. A small Dutch vessel having been captured by the "Majestic" off the coast of Holland was, as usual in such cases, to be sent to England. Under these circumstances it was customary to put a crew on board sufficient to work, and if necessary defend, the prize, and to select the most trustworthy from among the midshipmen to command.

Although Edward T—— was at this time little more than thirteen years of age, his captain chose him for this service, and with eight men under his command he set sail in the Dutch galliot for Yarmouth, where he appears to have arrived without any incident worthy of notice, except the fact, that boy as he was, he was counted worthy of this trust, and fitted to control a crew of eight rough sailors. Having successfully discharged this duty he shortly sailed again in the “Majestic,” from which vessel, after about three years, he passed into another man-of-war, called the “Zenobia.” Writing from on board this ship, when about seventeen years of age, to his parents, he speaks of himself as being “where nothing but vice and folly in every shape are to be seen;” as “surrounded by *vice of every kind*,” and “samples of human wretchedness and depravity!” What terrible circumstances for a youth at such an age to be in! Up to this time, and for some years afterwards, he still seems to have been ignorant of Christ, while his only load-star was *filial affection*. For this he was remarkable through all the change of scene, excitement of war, and influences of companionship. Love to his dear parents breathes through every letter he wrote home all through his many wanderings: “Thank God,” he exclaims in one such letter, “those sentiments of gratitude and esteem which were inculcated in my early years, and fostered by the tenderness of parents are still dear to me.” In this he is a bright example even to the *unconverted* readers of this little narrative; and a happy thing it

was for himself that through God's goodness to him those sentiments were maintained so warm and true, for without doubt they were instrumental, in the absence of higher principles, in saving him from many a sorrow, by exercising a control over his actions and supplying motives without which he might have been swallowed up in the vortex of evil which so incessantly surrounded him.

Time passed on, and Edward T—— had now become a lieutenant on board the "Volontaire." During a long and tedious cruise on the South American coast, he was engaged, on one occasion, in reading *Rollin's Ancient History*. His object, in all probability, was chiefly to pass away time, which hung heavy on his hands, by reading a useful and attractive work. Little did he know the momentous consequences which the perusal of that old book would lead to. On what apparent trifles are sometimes made to hinge results of incalculable importance! *Rollin's History* contains many references to scripture, but Lieutenant T—— had not so much as a bible in his possession! Wishing to pursue his study, he inquired for one, but for some time no such thing was to be had throughout the ship. What the size of the "Volontaire" may have been it is impossible now to say, but there were probably several hundred men on board, yet not a bible known to be among them! At length a brother officer recollected that an aged relative had given him one, which, out of respect for the donor, he had accepted, but had never since looked at. After some rummaging it was

at length discovered at the bottom of this officer's chest, and handed to Lieutenant T——. Sitting down to compare the references given in Rollin's work, merely as a matter of historical research, he was led on by Him who from his early boyhood till now had so graciously preserved him from the numberless dangers incidental to his profession and all its associations. It was not indeed as the scoffer or the infidel that he began to peruse the scriptures. He had no doubt been trained up to reverence the bible as God's word, but that strange reverence with which so many regard the book while they utterly disregard its exhortations, threats, promises, and pleadings, is not only inconsistent with itself, but often sadly deceives the soul; and but that the grace of God opened his eyes, it would perhaps only have had the effect of causing him to esteem himself better than those around him, who so completely despised it. But who shall estimate the value of the opportunity now given to this young officer as in the solitude of his own quarters he sat reading the written word! "For what shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Attracted, he knew not how or why, Lieutenant T—— read on. *Rollin's History* was forgotten; the bible, so long despised and left at the bottom of his brother officer's sea-chest, was studied now, no longer as a mere book of reference, but for its own sake. Whether any particular passage was used by the Spirit to arouse conviction we are not told, but ere

he laid it aside he had discovered the power of the word, and learned experimentally that “the law of the Lord is perfect, *converting the soul.*”

“The hour cometh, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live.” Edward T—— was one of these. The “voice of the Son of God” reached him there through the written word, on the wide ocean, alone in a crowd of sinners whose very trade was violence, far away from home and all its kindly influences, and without the intervention of one human agent. Brought to Jesus, washed in his precious blood, made a new creature, this affectionate son was now become a child of God indeed, and when, not very long afterwards, he was permitted to return home, and the long war came to an end, his sense of the great goodness of the Lord and the glorious grace displayed towards him was such that, in the face of many difficulties, he resolved henceforth to devote himself to the service of his blessed Master. Laying aside his sword and all the trappings, honours, and prospects of his profession, he gave himself to the ministry of the word, and for two-and-thirty years laboured in the gospel with an earnestness and diligence becoming one who under such peculiar circumstances had learned it as “the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.”

He is gone to his rest; the old “*Volontaire*” has long since passed from the face of the ocean; the empty honours won upon her decks, like the smoke of her guns, have fled away for ever; some

of those who walked her planks and climbed her shrouds, it may well be, lie buried in unfathomable depths, waiting for that awful moment when "The sea shall give up the dead that are in it;" but he who sought and found, and read the long-despised and hidden bible, lives an eternal monument of the saving grace of God, an example of the blessed truth that "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul."

J. L. K.

THE UNGRATEFUL GUEST.

A STORY FOR THE LITTLE ONES.

MANY long years ago there lived a king in that part of the world now called Turkey. The country over which he reigned was then called Macedonia, and the king's name was Philip. Now this king had an officer in his army who, like Naaman, the great general of the king of Syria, was a favourite with his master. King's favourites are not always *good* men, and this one was only a *great* man who had shown himself very brave and successful in battle. Which is best do you think, little reader—to be good or great? This officer was sent on one occasion by his master on a long voyage on board a ship. But the ship never reached its destination. Before they

had proceeded very far a great storm arose, and the ship was driven on the shore and dashed in pieces by the rocks. The great officer who had been in many a battle found the battle of the elements far more terrible to contend with than even the wicked violence of man; and, as the winds and the waves had no respect for his greatness, they handled him so roughly that he nearly lost his life, and was carried by a great wave far on to the beach, where, thrown like a weed upon the sand, he lay senseless, wounded, and naked, as if he were dead. Had he been left in that condition long, there is no doubt he would have died outright. But a gentleman, whose home was in that neighbourhood, and who was a very kind-hearted man, came down to the sea-shore after the storm to see whether there was anyone whom he could help, and having looked about among the broken pieces of wreck and the dead bodies strewed around, he discovered this officer, and finding he was still alive, he had him carried to his own house. There every care was taken of him; and as he had been seriously hurt by being dashed about among the rocks, it was nearly six weeks before he recovered his strength. But during all this time his kind host was unceasing in his attentions to him, cherishing and comforting him with the tenderness of a brother.

At length he was sufficiently restored to think of taking his departure. But he had lost everything he possessed in the wreck of the vessel, and was utterly penniless—how, then, was he to undertake a long journey homeward? Even here the kindness of his

host assisted him, for, not content with having done everything needful for him while under his roof, he now supplied him with a liberal sum of money to carry him comfortably back to his own home. The officer, you may suppose, warmly expressed his gratitude to his deliverer, and having informed him that he had great influence with king Philip, assured him he would not fail to use it to procure for his kind entertainer an adequate reward for his generosity to a shipwrecked and helpless stranger. During his stay in the house of his benevolent friend he had greatly admired the elegance of the dwelling and the beauty and richness of the estate by which it was surrounded. It was just such a place, the officer thought, as he should like to possess as a retreat to end his days in when active service was over. Situated near the sea-shore, the prospect of both sea and land was beautiful, and the more he thought about it as he journeyed back to Macedon, the more he desired its possession. To covet is as natural to our hearts as to breathe is to our lungs, and before this officer had reached the palace of Philip, this wicked passion had so completely taken possession of his soul that all his gratitude towards his kind preserver was quite forgotten. One thought occupied him, one desire filled his mind—and that was to get possession of the beautiful estate he had just left behind him. Had he checked the wicked thought at the very first, it might have been easily overcome, especially if he had meditated instead upon all the compassion and tenderness he had experienced at the hands of his friend. But

he did not do so. He encouraged the covetousness of his own heart until it swallowed up every better feeling, and completely silenced the voice of conscience.

On reaching home, he presented himself as soon as possible before king Philip, and related his adventures, describing the terrible storm and shipwreck, the dangers he had passed through, and the losses he had sustained; but he said not one word about the kind friend who had rescued him from death on the sea-shore. This he purposely and wickedly concealed, for he had an object in doing so. What do you think it was? After magnifying his losses, he told the king he had a favour to ask at his hands, which was that he would bestow upon him the house and lands near the spot where he had been wrecked, pretending that he wanted them as a memorial of his wonderful escape! Philip at once granted his petition, not considering that the property belonged to another, and was not his to give. In those days, when men worshipped idols of wood and stone, and knew nothing of God's word, the Bible, such acts of injustice were far too common. The wicked officer quickly returned to the house of the man who had saved him from death, and, armed with the king's authority, drove him from his home and property, and took possession of his estate!

“What an ungrateful and wicked man he must have been,” you will exclaim. He was indeed. It seems as if it were hardly possible for any one to be so bad, and yet, bad as it was, such

black ingratitude is not *worse* than that which every unbeliever—everyone who has not received Jesus Christ as his Saviour—is guilty of, whether young or old. It was shocking to treat a deliverer so ; to rob him of his property and turn him from his home ; but the world treated the Great Deliverer worse than even this, for the world *crucified* Christ, and those who have heard the gospel and have not believed in the Lord Jesus Christ unto everlasting life, have taken sides *with* the world against Jesus ! Who is on the Lord's side ? Those who love Jesus. Who is on the *world's* side ? Those who reject Jesus Christ by not believing in him after they have heard his word. Which side are you on, little reader ?

Well, but I must finish my story about the wicked officer. The gentleman who was turned out of his home was very angry with his ungrateful guest, and going straight to King Philip he told him all that he had done for the officer and how he had requited him. Astonished and indignant at such base ingratitude Philip ordered the culprit to be seized and brought before him. Upbraiding him with his wickedness he first commanded the restoration of the estates to their rightful owner, and then, to mark his sense of the character of the officer and to make it known to all around, he had branded on his forehead these shameful words, "THE UNGRATEFUL GUEST."

"This is the heir, come let us kill him," was the thought of the heart of the wicked in the days when the Son of God was on the earth. "He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world

knew him not." He went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; "he took little children up in his arms, laid his hands on them and blessed them." He did all that could be done to show what a loving heart he had, but instead of owning his love, the world hated him without a cause, and with wicked hands killed the prince of life, and sent him out of the world he himself had made amid wicked scoffs and revilings. But a day is very near now when the world will be brought into judgment for this; when those who have rejected the Lord Jesus Christ, and thus taken part with his enemies will have to answer before God for their wicked ingratitude to him who has done so much for them. In that day the heir of glory, the Lord of all, the rightful owner shall take possession of all that belongs to him, and his wicked and ungrateful enemies, shall be **BRANDED FOR EVER** with "the fire that never shall be quenched." O awful day for those who have received so many favours, so many benefits, so many mercies, the greatest of all being the gift of God's dear Son—in vain! "For God *so* loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life." Ungrateful world! ungrateful guest of a most bountiful Preserver, most gracious Deliverer, most precious Friend, who shall pity thee in that day? Little reader, will you imitate the **UNGRATEFUL GUEST**?



Psalm cxxvii.

HIDDEN BY THE WINE-PRESS.

(Continued from p. 13.)

To return, then; to our narrative. The very first words which the Lord spoke to him were the words of grace, "The Lord is with thee." Taken in connexion with Gideon's trying position and with the covert act in which he was engaged — which so strongly marked the trouble he was in,

and the fear that possessed him lest all the fruits of his laborious husbandry should be swallowed up by the enemy, and his family, already poor, be brought to actual famine—these were words of sweet and tender sympathy, and like him who uttered them; who loves to “raise up all those that be bowed down,” blessed be his name! Gideon’s answer is worthy of deep consideration: “O my Lord, if the Lord be with us, why then is all this befallen us, and where be all his miracles which our fathers told us of?” How much may be conveyed in a few words! First observe that word “us”—already incidentally pointed out to the readers of *Good News* in a former paper. With what spontaneous humility he passes over the word “thee” contained in the salutation of the angel! “The Lord is with *thee*,” says the angel. “If the Lord be with *us*,” Gideon replies—his young heart is full of Israel; he ignores *himself*; he cannot afford to be severed even in thought from his people; nay, he seems so occupied with them as to have forgotten, for the moment, his individuality! for it is evident that he is quite unconscious of that word “*thee*” having been used at all, and proceeds to comment upon the gracious salutation, as if the angel had said “The Lord is with *Israel*.” What a beautiful lesson to those who, “members in particular,” too readily forget that they are but “one body.” In Gideon’s case, the forgetfulness was all the other way! Yes; there were springs of thought and feeling in the heart of this young Israelite, known only to the Lord, and which, responsive to the touch of his divine hand,

flowed forth in words that proved, that although engaged about his wheat, he was not occupied with *himself*, but with the Lord's people Israel; with whom he *will* be identified—ruined, degraded, greatly impoverished though they be.

The misery they are in too, is his *own* as well as theirs. "Why then is *all* this befallen *us*?" not simply *them*. *He* still had wheat to thresh, but *they* in the mass had "no sustenance." He could still find a kid and unleavened cakes to offer as a present to one whom he evidently took to be a prophet; but to them was left "neither goat, nor ox, nor ass." Oxen too, his family had, wherewith to thresh the wheat; yet "all this" ruin and impoverishment had not simply befallen them, but "us." He suffers with them; their state is his; and although there was evidently a considerable difference between the actual condition he and his father's house were in and that of the great majority around them, Gideon sees not any distinction, his eye is on them, and his heart too. That the Lord's protecting hand was over Gideon's home, in spite of his father's idolatry, is evident. One pious member of a household is an unspeakable blessing, and in the desolation that had come upon the land, Joash little knew how much he was indebted to the goodness of the Lord in giving him a godly son. Nevertheless to Gideon it was "all this has befallen us." Humility and love for the people of the Lord are apparent in Gideon's reply; and he is evidently all unconscious of it, which makes it the more beautiful to see. There is a *naturalness*

about it all, which is assuredly not natural to the heart of man whether young or old. This marks the source from whence it sprang. It was the work of God. How different this to trying to be or appear something! How utterly unconscious, too, he seems of any difference between himself and the idol worshippers with whom he lived and by whom he was surrounded! No word of reproach about their sinful courses, as the very cause of all the trouble he referred to, and with which he so readily identified himself. No. Too humble to sit in judgment on them, and too conscious, it may well be, of the waywardness of his own heart, he can only mourn over their ruined state and suffer with them. This was true humility indeed, and genuine love.

If you, Christian reader, have unconverted relatives, members of the household you form a part of, do you ever feel tempted by your own heart (*so like theirs!*) to vaunt even in *thought* your superiority to them? Learn a lesson from a young Israelite, who had not your advantages by very many. "What hast thou which thou didst not *receive*?" And as to sitting in judgment on your brethren, how Gideon's "*us*" rebukes the thought!

Then further, "If *the Lord* be with us"—ah, the Lord! bad as we have been in departing from and sinning so grievously against him, worshipping Baal and doing evil—"if the Lord be with us," he who is so full of *grace*, "why then is all this befallen us?" Faith in the *grace* of Jehovah forbade the thought that if HE were *with* Israel all the misery and wretched-

ness they, as a people, were in, could possibly have come upon them.

To what *extent* Gideon may have understood grace, we cannot say; but he appears to have seen something of that which Moses saw in the mount (Exod. xxxiv.), when *because* Israel was so stiff-necked he besought the Lord to go among them. Wonderful thought! The very sinfulness of a people pleaded as a reason for God's presence in grace to overcome the evil—to bring good out of it—to save them from the sad consequences of their own wilfulness. Well may we read, "He made known his *ways* unto Moses." That this young Israelite knew something of the Lord's grace, and knew also in consequence how to show grace towards others, we shall see as we go on.

"If *the Lord* be with us, why then is all this befallen us, and where be all his miracles that our fathers told us of?" The Midianites may be as grasshoppers for multitude, Israel prostrate before them, greatly impoverished, scattered to the winds, hidden away in caves and strongholds, reduced by famine and defeat to a condition of such abject hopelessness as to have no means, no prospect whatever of deliverance; yet "if the Lord be with us," why then, before his miracles of delivering power all this would be as nothing.

Nor is even this all that Gideon's reply conveys. "Did not the Lord bring us up from Egypt?" This was REDEMPTION. But redemption is the basis of everything, of every blessing Jehovah can bestow.

Redeemed by blood, brought up from Egypt (*up from*—how much these simple words convey!) to HIMSELF—they were *his own*, and being so, God was *for* them, and if only with them now in grace, Gideon felt that he could count upon him for them, whatever their condition, and therefore asks, “Why then is all this befallen us?”

Reader, do you know anything of redemption? I do not mean that outline which some have got mapped out in human words and call a “plan.” Do you *know* what it is to be redeemed by blood? If not, *you* have no right or title to count upon the Lord for anything, and therefore are emphatically as one “having no hope, and without God in the world!” This may not trouble you while all things are smooth, but *wait a little*. I have just come from the death-bed side of one who by his own confession has been all his life in your condition, and never till now concerned about it. He is sitting propped up by pillows—to lie down would be instant suffocation. Reason wavers, sight and sense are failing, life itself is fast ebbing out, and he *knows* he is *not* saved, and lacks the power to believe in HIM of whom he often heard in days now gone for ever. Would that you could realize such a state of things, as if it were your own! It may be you would be aroused at last to some conception of what it is to be “without God in the world” when on the point of leaving it for JUDGMENT. But how widely different was Gideon’s state. Faith in Jehovah as the God of redemption, which includes

everything—grace, love, omnipotence—love for and oneness with the Lord's people, and genuine humility are all implied in his memorable answer, and at once explain the words which follow: "Go in this *thy might*, and thou shalt save Israel from the Midianites; have not I sent thee?" "Ah, I see!" you will exclaim, "Gideon was *not* a mighty man of valour in himself at all, but in the Lord." Yes: "The Lord looked on him," and saw that which man could not see. "Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart!" and there he saw FAITH in himself—faith which *once in exercise* could bring the God of redemption into the midst of the scene of ruin. This was Gideon's "might." There, too, he saw LOVE—love which *would* identify itself with HIS people, though in the dust. This would make him "valorous" for them. And mingled with it all a LOWLINESS that made nothing of self and everything of that which pertained to Jehovah—this would keep him dependent. Here, then, hidden by the wine-press, in the recesses of a vineyard, where to human eyes was nothing but a timid youth stealthily engaged in laboriously trampling out the wheat that was perchance to save his house from famine, the Lord found a fitting instrument for his gracious purposes towards his people; fitting, but not yet *fitted*.

No. Faith, love, lowliness, were there indeed, but visible only to him who looked on him in *grace*. "O my Lord, wherewith shall *I* save Israel?" Wherewith indeed! Even Gideon himself is unconscious of

possessing aught that could make him mighty and valourous. Only grace, blessed grace, could see it! And when we remember how keen our self-love is to detect, how gladly it finds, how tenaciously it holds, how readily it vaunts anything good in self, even though finer than the gossamer thread of a spider's web, this fact, that grace saw and owned what the young man himself could not see, doth sweetly exalt the blessed ways of grace. How dear to the believer's soul the thought that he has to do with one who ALWAYS beholds him in grace! Yes, fellow believer, let this truth give you "boldness and access with confidence," for even under sense of failure you may still draw *near*, and looking upward meet an eye that still and evermore looks upon you in grace. Faith was there, but not yet in *exercise*; love existed, but was not *active*, could not do or dare aught for its object, sincerely as it bemoaned and identified itself with their sad condition. Gideon, therefore, though a fitting instrument for the Lord's gracious purposes, was not yet fitted for the work he had to do. It yet remained for him whose grace originated, saw and owned that which was *in* him, to bring it out into active exercise, and make it, through his wondrous ways towards him, a dominant power that should sweep all before it to the glory of Israel's Jehovah, and the deliverance of his people.

FRAGMENTS ON SCRIPTURE LANDS.

“LIKE GRASSHOPPERS FOR MULTITUDE.”

(Read Judges vi. 1—6.)

“FOR several days previous to the 1st of June we had heard that millions of young locusts were on their march up the valley toward our village, and at length, I was told, they had reached the lower part of it. Summoning all the people I could collect, we went to meet and attack them, hoping to stop their progress altogether, or at least to turn aside the line of their march. Never shall I lose the impression produced by the first view of them. I had often passed through clouds of *flying* locusts, and they always struck my imagination with a sort of vague terror; but those we now confronted were without wings, and about the size of full grown grasshoppers, which they closely resembled in appearance and behaviour. But their number was astounding; the whole face of the mountain was black with them. On they came like a living deluge. We dug trenches and kindled fires, and beat and burned to death “heaps upon heaps,” but the effort was utterly useless. Wave after wave *rolled up* the mountain side, and poured over rocks, walls, ditches, and hedges; those behind covering up and bridging over the masses already killed. After a long and fatiguing contest, I descended the mountain to examine the *depth* of the column; but I could not see to the end of it. Wearied with my hard walk over this living deluge, I returned, and gave over the vain effort to stop its progress. By the next morning the head of the column had reached my garden, and,

hiring eight or ten people, I resolved to rescue at least my vegetables and flowers. During the day we succeeded, by fire and by beating them off the walls with brushes and branches, in keeping our little garden tolerably clear of them; but it was perfectly appalling to watch this animated river as it flowed *up* the road, and ascended the hill above my house. At length, worn out with incessant skirmishing, I gave up the battle. Carrying the pots into the parlour, and covering up what else I could, I surrendered the remainder to the conquerors. For four days they continued to pass on toward the east, and finally only a few stragglers of the mighty host were left behind.”
—From “*The Land and the Book.*”



THE NEEDLE'S EYE.

Matt. x. 25.

“On my return to the city (Hebron) with my two Jewish guides, we entered it further to the north than the side from which we had begun our walk. We were proceeding through a double gateway, such as is seen in so many of the old Eastern cities, even in some of the modern, one wide arched road, and another narrow one by the side, through the latter of which persons on foot generally pass to avoid the chance of being jostled or crushed by the beasts of burthen coming through the main gateway. We met a caravan of loaded camels thronging the passage. The drivers cried out to my two companions and myself, desiring us to betake ourselves

for safety to the gate with the smaller arch, calling it 'Es Summel Kayût,' the hole or *eye of the needle*. This entrance gate is low and narrow. The sumpter camel cannot be made to pass through it unless with great difficulty, and stript of all the encumbrance of his load, his trappings, and his merchandise."—*Lands Classic and Sacred*.

"I have seen these strait gates and narrow ways 'with here and there a traveller.' They are in retired corners, and *must be sought for*, and are opened only to those who knock; and when the sun goes down and the night comes on they are shut and locked. '*It is then too late*'" (Luke xiii. 24—29; Matt. vii. 13, 14).—*W. M. Thomson*.



THE POOL OF SILOAM.

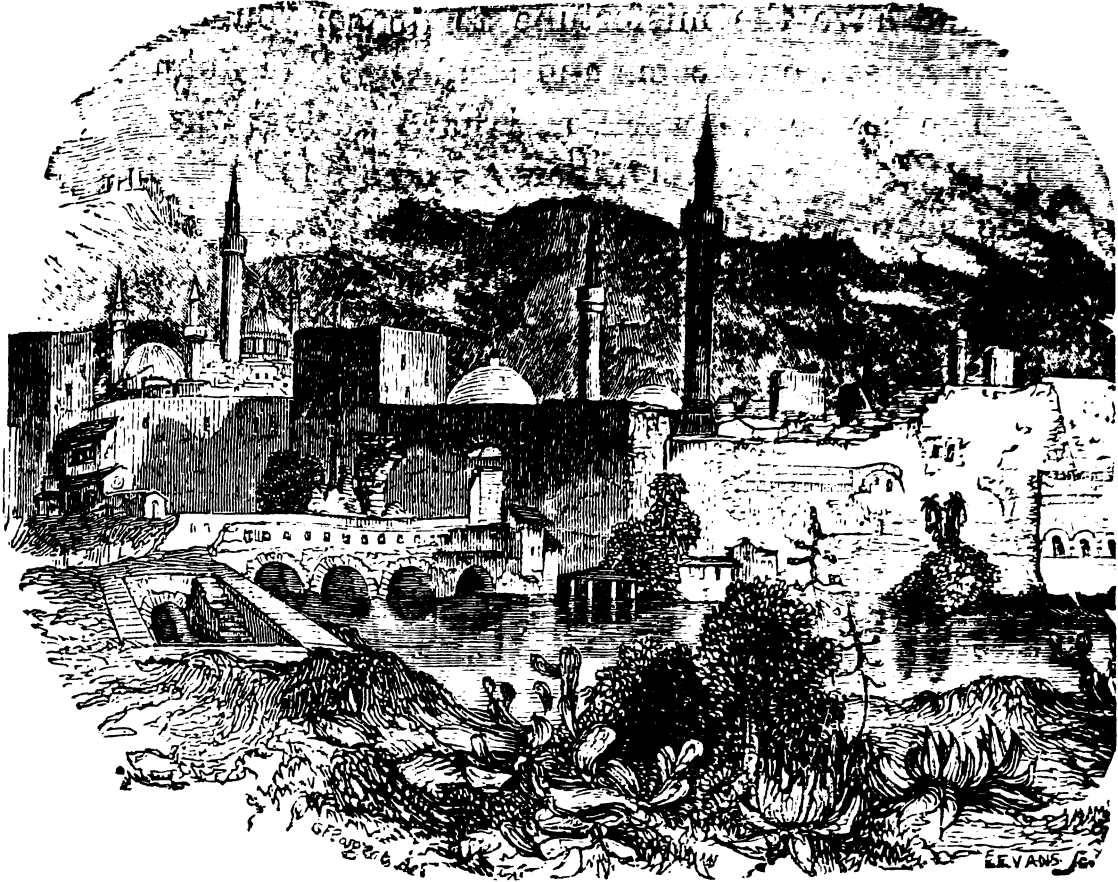
JOHN ix. 7.

"Beneath Moriah's rocky side
A gentle fountain springs;
Silent and soft its waters glide,
Like the peace the Spirit brings.

"The thirsty Arab stoops to drink
Of the cool and quiet wave;
And the thirsty spirit stops to think
Of *Him* who came to save.

"SILOAM is the fountain's name,
It means, *One sent* from God;
And thus the holy Saviour's fame
It gently spreads abroad.

"O, grant that I, like this sweet well,
May Jesus' image bear;
And spend my life, my all, to tell
How full his mercies are!"



AN EASTERN CITY.

THE BROKEN WINDOW.

A PARABLE.

A BOY was once bidden by his father to clean a shop-window. The weather was frosty, and the boy knew, for his father had told him often, that at such times glass is more than usually brittle (Rom. vii. 14, 18); he was therefore afraid that he should break the window in his attempts to polish it, and said so. "Well," replied his father, "I shall be very sorry if you do, and trust you will be very careful (1 John ii. 1); but if, notwithstanding all your care, you

should have the misfortune to do so, you have my forgiveness, only come and confess it" (1 John i. 9).

The boy set to work, and hard work it was (Phil. ii. 12), for the breath of persons who had looked in at the shop window, and the dust together, were in some places congealed upon the glass, and presently snap went a large pane! "There now!" exclaimed the boy, "I knew how it would be;" and his first thought was to run and tell his father; "But then," thought he again, "if I go and tell him so readily it will look as if I thought lightly of it. Such a large pane as this is a serious matter; and so soon, too, after he told me to be careful! I had better wait a little while and try to make *some* amends by doing the rest of the work right. I know *that* won't mend the window, but it will at least show how careful I have tried to be, and how sorry I am, and that I think a good deal of my fault, and feel I ought to do something more to get forgiveness than by merely confessing it, as if it was a little matter." Poor boy! what a many great *I's* there were in all this! Well, while thinking thus he continued his work, but now the trouble he was in unfitted him for his difficult task, and with his mind full of the broken window, he had once or twice nearly cracked another; and, at last, in a momentary fit of absence of mind, pressing a little too hard on the last pane, he starred it in the middle. Poor fellow! he would fain have wept at his untoward accident, but somehow he could not (Psalm xxxii. 3). Into the shop he went, full of sorrow. His father was in the back parlour, and

he could hear his brothers and sisters talking cheerfully and happily with him, while he felt like an outcast. Sitting down behind the counter in the cold solitude of the shop, he tried to recall his father's kind words: "Only come and confess it." "Ah!" thought he, "if I had but done as he told me I should not perhaps have broken the other pane. The first *was* an accident; I tried all I could not to break the window, and father's telling me 'only come and confess it' made me more anxious not to break it (John xiv. 15), but the second was all through not doing as he told me. O dear! how sorry I am! how cold it is here, too; and how the warm fire-light glows through the glass door where they're all so cheerful and happy! Ah, I see now why dear father said 'only come and confess it.' It was not because he thought little of a broken window—those panes are large, and cost him a good deal to put in—but he knew it would keep things right between us; it would keep *me* right anyhow (John xiii. 10), I can understand *that* by what I feel now. *I* can't go in there and be happy with my brothers and sisters; I feel as if I did not belong to them! How kind of him to say 'only come and confess it.' It was because, however much he might think of a broken window, he thought more of *me*. Yes! to have me right with him, that so I might be happy in his company, was the great thing with him; while I, thinking only of *myself*, wanted to show how sorry *I* was, and so making a fuss about *my* sorrow, I wanted somehow to deserve forgiveness; and father

didn't want me to deserve it, not he." Then another thought struck him, "No; and confessing wouldn't get it either (Heb. ix. 22). Confessing would have set me right with *myself*—I can feel that sharp enough now!—and I suppose," said the boy to himself, trying to understand the matter, "I suppose it's like putting away (Job i. 8) from oneself something that is disagreeable to another—something that has come between us; but as to its getting or deserving forgiveness, that's quite another thing. No, no; it would have kept me right, but it couldn't of itself have *set* me right with father; *that* he could only do himself (1 John iv. 9, 14). And hadn't he done (John xix. 30) that already? Didn't he say, 'You *have* my forgiveness'? (Eph. i. 7; Heb. ix. 12, x. 14; Acts xiii. 38, 39.) O how blind I have been! I was already forgiven and didn't see it! If I had only *kept in memory what father said, and believed him all along*, I shouldn't have stopped away, and then I shouldn't have had all this to bear, and another broken pane besides my disobedience to confess."

How long the poor boy might have sat there in the cold reproaching himself, it is impossible to say, for although he seemed to see matters in their true light now, he still remained where he was. But his kind father had heard the window crack, and guessed how things stood; he therefore sent one of the boy's brothers to fetch him into the parlour, and there in the father's presence (Psalm xvi. 11) all was soon set right.

Dear Christian reader, can you see anything in

this little parable at all resembling some of your past experiences, and the mistakes most of us have made at one time or another? Do you *still* suffer from them? If so, look through the "Broken Window" carefully, and listen to the plaint of him who did the damage.

Or, better still, consider prayerfully the fourth chapter of Hebrews, from the fourteenth to the sixteenth verse, and the tenth chapter of the same epistle, from the nineteenth to the twenty-third verse; and may the gracious words therein spoken by the HOLY GHOST come with power to your heart and understanding, that so at once and for ever you may shake yourself free from a net with which Satan has often enthralled those *dear to God*, and kept them "in the cold" for days, for weeks, sometimes for months to their own great sorrow, dishonouring him who bought them with his precious blood, casting doubt upon his all-accomplished work, questioning the love of him who sent him, and almost making grace itself incompetent to meet their need! Till he that troubleth you can prove that *Christ is not risen*, ought you to be so easily persuaded that "you are yet in your sins"? Depend upon it the "Slough of Despond" and the "Castle of Giant Despair" exist only in Egypt.

"Heir of glory,

What is *that* to thee and me?"

In the regions of unbelief the Christian is surely never called to tread. Having crossed the Jordan, *stay there*.

HIDDEN BY THE WINE-PRESS.

CHAPTER II.—TOUCHED BY THE STAFF.

READER, have you ever seen a slumbering lion in a menagerie? How quiet and harmless he looks! His enormous head reposes peacefully upon his huge fore paws, his fangs and talons are invisible, his eyes are closed, or opened only now and then to look sleepily at you, and, but that you are better informed, you would suppose the creature to be as inoffensive as some large good-natured dog. He certainly does not *look* so dangerous as the shaggy bison with his fiery eye and massive horns. But now only let the keeper touch him with his staff, at the same time exposing to his gaze some object of prey, and how he is changed in a moment! His form dilates as he springs from his recumbent position; his fierce eyes flash fire; his great jaws expand enormously; his talons are protruded; his ponderous head is raised; his every muscle is strung to tension; and his roar shakes the den as he bounds with desperate force at the object presented before him. His energies are all aroused, and you see before you a picture of power, ferocity, and daring hardly to be equalled in nature.

But all these features were in the slumbering lion, although, till touched by the staff, they might not have been even suspected to exist by one entirely ignorant of the creature's nature. They were there, but not active. Now we have already seen that in natural character Gideon was not one of the lion-like men of old; no amount of *rousing* would have discovered

in him qualities at all resembling those which they possessed. But we have also seen that there was by grace that in him which, though as yet invisible to human eyes, and even to himself, was more mighty far than the fiercest king of beasts that ever trod the desert, or shook with a roar like muttered thunder the woods in which he prowled. Yes. Who shall limit the power of FAITH? Who shall say to it, "Thus much mayest thou accomplish, and no more"? Ah, but faith, which breathed so truthfully in Gideon's reply to the angel's salutation, is slumbering now! Called to prove in deeds the faith which was in him, *nature* only speaks! As he mentally gazes on the countless hordes of Israel's enemies, his heart fails, and he looks around for *means* wherewith to meet the overwhelming difficulty. Manasseh may be a powerful tribe, but Gideon's family, although a part of it, has no influence to move them against the foe; and even were it otherwise, his personal weight even in his own father's household is wholly insufficient to rouse them to the attempt! The *means*—the means—alas! there are no means. "O my Lord, *wherewith* shall I save Israel? behold, my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house."

How true to nature and our oft experience is all this. Difficulties no sooner present themselves than the believer's first thought too often is to glance at the *means* which may be brought or left to meet them.

But patient grace can bear all this and more. Perhaps it was well for young Gideon that HE whom

he took to be only a man—a prophet, was not a man at all. How sternly might Elijah have rebuked the manifest inconsistency between Gideon's first and last reply. But no word of rebuke proceeds from the gracious mouth of him who had stooped to sit beneath the oak of Joash the idolatrous Abi-ezrite. No. Grace passes by the failure, and words of full comfort and encouragement meet the utterances of despondency and unbelief. "Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man." These are ever the ways of grace. Love leaps the barrier which our faults and failures would obtrude upon its path, passes over all and takes us to itself.

Now Gideon assumed that he who thus addressed him was only a man, a prophet. Nevertheless he takes for granted that he speaks as the Lord's representative, and at once receives the gracious message as the word of the Lord. Faith instantly responds. Doubts and fears are given to the winds; difficulties are forgotten; means are forsaken; the Lord, the Lord is enough, only let him be assured that it is he indeed, and not a noon-day dream. "If now I have found grace in thy sight" (how full of humility are such words addressed as *he* intended them to be to a man only), "then show me a sign that thou talkest with me. Depart not hence, I pray thee, until I come unto thee, and bring forth my present, and set it before thee." In glad haste he goes to prepare his offering of gratitude and love for the messenger of the Lord, and on his return "a sign"

is vouchsafed him, such as he had little anticipated. Touched by the staff in the hand of the Lord, fire proceeds out of the rock and consumes the kid and the unleavened cakes, dimly understood but recognized types, to an Israelite's faith, of Him the great Offering and Sacrifice to God of sweet-smelling savour by whom alone he could approach. Thus by the Lord's own act Gideon was made nigh by sacrifice, and so brought into a position to serve Jehovah—a lonely worshipper in the midst of a crowd of idolaters. And what made it all the more gracious was, that it was entirely the Lord's own doing. Gideon had not *approached* in the ordinary way by sacrifice. True, he had intended his gift as an offering to the Lord in the person of one whom he took to be his representative, but the Lord not only accepted it, but going in grace beyond all Gideon's thoughts, *turned it into a burnt offering with his own hand*, thus, as it were, *constituting* Gideon a worshipper, and giving him "a sign" far beyond all his hopes and expectations. Surely this was a fitting conclusion to an interview so graciously begun. "Then the angel of the Lord departed out of his sight."

Gideon was now indeed in a position to serve the Lord; he himself had set him in it, and none could take it away. But he was not yet in a *condition* to do so. Does the difference exercise our souls as it should do? We make much, and rightly, of our standing, would it not be well if we felt a little more concerned about our *state*? The first should make the question as to the last all the more important in

our eyes, and would ever do so if rightly apprehended. "What manner of people *ought we* to be IN ALL holy conversation and godliness."

But Gideon was very far from apprehending his position as yet. Indeed it is doubtful whether he at all understood what the Lord had done for him. His heart was not yet set free from the spirit of bondage again to fear; so far from it that he no sooner discovers that he had seen an angel of the Lord face to face, than, utterly unconscious that the Lord had *made* him nigh and set him where he *might* commune with himself in holy liberty, he cries out, "Alas! O Lord God! for because I have seen an angel of the Lord face to face!" How slow our hearts are to comprehend the goodness of the Lord! Nevertheless patient grace can still bear with Gideon's weakness, ignorance, and unbelief, and although he might justly have been reproved for so readily forgetting all "the kindness of God" in word and deed shown unto him, "Peace be unto thee, thou shalt not die," comes like rain upon the tender herb and lifts his drooping spirit once more into assured security.

Thus the Lord had sought him out, looked on him in grace, passed over all his failure, brought him nigh, and spoken peace to his troubled soul; drawing him with cords of love, with the bands of a man, that so, as fire sprang from the hard, cold rock when touched by the staff in his hand, Gideon, touched to the heart by grace, might yield in the divinely-begotten energy of faith and love, service acceptable to the Lord God of Israel.

And so it was. “*Then* Gideon built an altar unto the Lord, and called it Jehovah-shalom.” In the stronghold of idolatry, in the midst of Baal’s worshippers, in Ophrah of the Abi-ezrites, who owned no other god, he raised a testimony for Jehovah, and called it by a name which at once declared the Object of his worship, the Source of his hope, and the desire of his heart for Israel: “The Lord send peace.” Thus the work of faith began.

GOD HEARS WHAT LITTLE CHILDREN SAY.

God hears what little children say,
He loves to listen when they pray;
And when they tell him all they need,
They find that he is rich indeed.

Why should you little children cry,
Or fret when such a friend is nigh?
Dear little ones, look up to heaven
Till happy thoughts to you are given.

Think of the blessed Saviour’s love,
How Jesus left his home above:
But men despised the words he said;
And crowned with thorns his holy head.

They did not love the Saviour dear,
Who came in grace to sinners here;
And though he sought the lost to save,
They killed and put him in the grave.

But lo! he’s risen from the grave,
And bears the greatest, sweetest name—
The Lord, almighty now to save
From sin, from death, from endless shame.

Dear children, are your sins forgiven?
Oh, look to Jesus up in heaven;
Believe on him this very day,
His blood can wash your sins away.



A SCENE IN AMERICA.

CHRISTIAN FARMERS IN THE WILDERNESS.

“Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.”

A COMPANY of between thirty and forty believers in the Lord Jesus Christ associated themselves together for the purpose of emigrating from New England, in America, in order to form a settlement of their own in the western wilderness. Arrived and settled in their new home, they were industrious and frugal, and all things prospered under their hands. But soon wolves came near the fold in the shape of reck-

less, unprincipled adventurers—believers in the advantages of force and cunning, and who acted according to their creed. The colony of Christians spoke to them of their depredations in terms of gentlest remonstrance, and repaid them with unvarying kindness. They went farther—they openly announced, “You may do us what evil you may choose, we will return nothing but good.” Lawyers came into the neighbourhood, and offered their services to settle disputes. They answered, “We have no need of you. As neighbours we receive you in the most friendly spirit; but as far as we are concerned, your occupation has ceased to exist.” “What will you do if miscreants burn your barns and steal your harvests?” asked the lawyers. “We will return good for evil,” replied the Christian settlers; “we believe this is the highest truth, and therefore the best expediency.” When the unprincipled in the community heard this, they considered it a marvellous good joke, and said and did many provoking things, in which they found much amusement. Barns were taken down in the night, and cows let into the corn-fields. The Christians repaired the damage as well as they could, put the cows into their own barn during the day, and at twilight drove them gently home, saying, “Neighbour, your cows have been in my field; I have fed them well all day, but I would not keep them through the night, lest the children should suffer for the want of their milk.” If this were fun, those who planned the joke found no heart to laugh at it.

By degrees, a visible change came over these troublesome neighbours. They ceased to cut off the horses' tails, and break the legs of the poultry. Rude boys would say to a younger brother, "Don't throw that stone, Bill! When I killed the chicken last week, didn't they send it to my mother, because they thought that chicken broth would be good for poor Mary? I should think you'd be ashamed to throw stones at their chickens." Thus was "evil overcome with good," till not one was found to do them wilful injury.

Years passed on, and I saw them thriving in worldly substance beyond their neighbours, yet beloved by all. From them the constable and the lawyer obtained no fees. The sheriff stammered and apologized when he took their hard-earned goods in payment for the war tax. They mildly replied, "'Tis a bad trade, friend; examine it in the light of conscience, and see if it be not so." But while they refused to pay such fees and taxes, they were liberal to a proverb in their contributions for all useful and benevolent purposes.

At the end of ten years, the public lands which they had chosen for their farms were, according to custom, advertised for sale by Government auction. According to the regulations then existing, those who had settled and cultivated the soil were considered to have a right to bid it in at the Government price, which at that time was one dollar twenty-five cents per acre. But the fever of land speculation chanced then to run unusually high. Adventurers from all

parts of the country were flocking to the auction, and capitalists in Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York, and Boston were sending agents to buy up western lands. No one supposed that custom or equity would be regarded. The first day's sale showed that speculation ran to the verge of insanity; land was eagerly bought in at seventeen, twenty-five, and forty dollars an acre. The Christian colony had small hopes of retaining their farms. As first settlers they had chosen the best lands, and persevering industry had brought them into the highest cultivation. The market value of their settlement was much greater than the acres already sold at exorbitant prices. In view of these facts, they had prepared their minds for another remove into the wilderness—perhaps to be again ejected by a similar process. But on the morning that their lot was offered for sale, they observed with grateful surprise that their neighbours were everywhere busy among the crowd of strangers, begging and expostulating: “Don't bid on these lands! these men have been working hard on them for ten years. During all that time they never did harm to man or beast. They are always ready to do good for evil. They are a blessing to any neighbourhood. It would be a sin and a shame to bid on their lands. Let them go at the Government price.” The sale came on; the cultivators of the soil offered the customary one dollar twenty-five cents, intending to bid higher if necessary. But among all that crowd of selfish, reckless speculators, *not one bid over them*. Without one opposing voice, the fair acres returned to their possession, and

thus the Lord, in whose hand are the hearts of all men, and who had thus wonderfully interposed in their behalf, graciously rewarded their faithful obedience to his command, "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."

THE ORPHAN MARY.

A STORY FOR THE LITTLE ONES.

IN a country village not very far from Manchester, there lived a poor little orphan girl. Her mother was dead, and her father had quite forsaken her, so that she was an orphan indeed; but he who loves little children had taken her under his gracious care. In the first place, he had provided her a home in the house of a Christian friend, and more than even this, which was kind indeed to a desolate orphan child, he had, by his grace, brought her to a knowledge of himself. She had been taught by the Spirit, through the word, that "the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin;" for although but a child, she knew she was a sinner, and that nothing less than that precious blood could put away her sin. She did not trust to being a good girl, and saying her prayers, and going to church, and reading good books, and all those other things that little people, and big people too, are so apt to trust to for salvation. No, not she! She knew, for God himself had taught her, that though all those things were right and becoming, they had nothing to do with

salvation. *That* was a work which Christ alone could do for us, and did fully and perfectly accomplish for all who believe in his name. She knew that he did it all—

“Long, long ago,”

and that she could neither add to it nor take away from it. She knew it was done once and for ever, because he said, when he was dying on the cross, “It is finished!” She believed HIM, and the thought of his love for her made her to love him in return. And then, of course, because she loved him, she tried to do those things that are pleasant in his sight. This was very different to doing them *in order to buy salvation with them*, was it not? Well, this dear little orphan girl found it a happy thing to know and love and serve Jesus; but better still, she hoped some day to see him in his own bright home, where orphan sorrows are unknown; and her hope was to be fulfilled sooner than she had, perhaps, expected, for it came to pass that she fell ill. Now it is a sad thing for little boys and girls to be ill. They like so to run about and enjoy themselves in the bright sunshine. A little boy once going along with his mother, holding her hand, suddenly gave a bound, and exclaimed, with a skip and a jump, “O mamma! isn’t it a happy thing to be ALIVE?” Now this just expresses what children feel—they like to be *alive*.

But the little orphan Mary, though she, too, liked to be “alive,” knew that there was a happier scene to live in than any on the earth. She knew that “to depart and be with Christ was far better.”

When a friend who came to see her said how sorry he was to see her so ill, she replied, "Yes, I am very ill, but I do not wish to get better. I want to go to Jesus in heaven, and to see my brother." Her brother had been accidentally killed a few years before, and, as she had loved him much, she greatly desired to see him again. Although in much pain, she was so taken up with thoughts of Jesus Christ, her Lord and Saviour, that she hardly seemed to feel or attend to the pains of her poor body. With much interest she repeated the words of Christ, "Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven;" and when her friends knelt and offered prayer for her, she united with them as well as she was able. When somewhat easier in body, she would sing such hymns as she had been taught, and took delight in expressing the love she felt for and her desire after Jesus. Thus her time was passed in prayer and praise, and conversation with Christian friends on "the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." Her remarks pleased all who heard them, and surprised many. It was a pleasant sight to see a little one thus able and delighting to tell of the love of Christ, was it not?

Now if *you*, little reader, should be thus called away—if you should be taken ill suddenly, and find yourself about to die, could *you* take pleasure in speaking of the things of God, and feel very happy in the hope of soon seeing Jesus face to face? If not, you do not love him yet. Oh, let the example of the little orphan Mary stir you up to be in earnest

in going at once to Jesus, for he has said, "Him that cometh unto me I will in nowise cast out." Then if the Lord should come, or you should be taken ill as she was, you would be ready, and not only ready, but glad to go.

Well, Mary did not suffer long. One Lord's-day morning, before the sun rose to gladden little boys and girls with his bright beams, Mary's happy spirit took its flight from its earthly tabernacle—far, far away—to regions brighter than the brightest day that ever smiled upon little children here.

"We sing of the realms of the blest,
That region so bright and so fair;
And oft are its glories confest,
But what must it be to be there!"

Mary soon knew what it was to be there; and if you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ now, you too will know some day, and we cannot tell how soon. Have you ever been taken by your friends to the sea-side, and, standing on the sand where the rippling waves make tiny furrows at your feet, looked out upon the wide ocean to the verge of the horizon where the waters seem to meet the sky? If so, you have perhaps felt as a little boy once did who, looking thus across the sea just when the setting sun was sinking into the deep in a glorious flood of golden light, thought he was on the very verge of eternity, and that that was heaven's open door letting the glory through upon the waves. Heaven seemed very near to him then. And it is good to stand as it were upon the "verge of eternity," and gaze

mentally on that bright and blessed home which awaits those who love Jesus. It may be nearer to some of us than it even *seemed* to be to the little boy on the sea-sands.

If this little story about the orphan Mary should lead you in spirit on to the "verge of eternity," and cause you, though but for a moment, to look wistfully at that "open door," turn not away until you *know*, as little Mary knew, that you have entrance there, whensoever the hour may come, through that precious blood which has purchased everlasting life and a place in the Father's house for all who believe in his dear Son.



FAREWELL.

Nay, shrink not from that word "Farewell!"
As if 'twere friendship's parting knell;
Such fears may prove but vain,
So changeful is life's fleeting day,
Whene'er we sever, Hope may say
"We part to meet again!"

E'en the last parting earth can know
Brings not unutterable woe
To souls that heavenward soar;
For humble Faith, with stedfast eye,
Points to a brighter world on high,
Where hearts, that here at parting sigh,
May meet to part no more!

SCRAPS ON SCRIPTURE LANDS.

THE POTTER.

JER. xviii.

I HAVE been out on the shore again, examining a native manufactory of pottery, and was delighted to find the whole Biblical apparatus complete, and in full operation. There was the potter sitting at his "frame," and turning the "wheel" with his foot. He had a heap of the prepared clay near him, and a pan of water by his side. Taking a lump in his hand, he placed it on the top of the wheel (which revolves horizontally), and smoothed it into a low cone like the upper end of a sugarloaf; then thrusting his thumb into the top of it, he opened a hole down through the centre, and this he constantly widened by pressing the edges of the revolving cone between his hands. As it enlarged and became thinner, he gave it whatever shape he pleased with the utmost ease and expedition. This, I suppose, is the exact point of those Biblical comparisons between the human and the divine potter: "O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the Lord. Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in my hand, O house of Israel" (verse 6). And the same idea is found in many other passages. When Jeremiah was watching the potter, the vessel was marred in his hand, and "so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it" (verse 4). I had to wait a long time for

that, but it happened at last. From some defect in the clay, or because he had taken too little, the potter suddenly changed his mind, crushed his growing jar instantly into a shapeless mass of mud, and, beginning anew, fashioned it into a totally different vessel (Rom. ix. 21).

It is evident from numerous expressions in the Bible that the potter's vessel was the synonym of utter fragility; and to say that the wicked should be broken to pieces as a potter's vessel, was to threaten the most ruinous destruction (Jer. xix.)

Arab jars are so thin and frail that they are literally "dashed to shivers" by the slightest stroke (Psalm ii.) Water-jars are often broken by merely putting them down upon the floor; and nothing is more common than for the servant to return from the fountain empty-handed, having had all his jars smashed to atoms by some irregular behaviour of his donkey.—*The Land and the Book.*



THE COVENANTERS.

'Twas Lord's-day morn, a lovelier never rose,
 And nature seemed in holy, calm repose ;
 No cloud was seen along the azure sky,
 And the pure streamlet glided softly by :
 From tree to tree the warbling minstrels sung,
 And heaven's bright arch with nature's praises rung.
 Though all was still, yet persecution's rage,
 With awful fury, scourg'd a bleeding age ;
 Then Scotland groan'd beneath a tyrant's yoke,

Till her proud spirit seem'd for ever broke.
Her sons were hunted from the abodes of men
To savage wilds, or some sequester'd glen.
Justice stood mute, for demons gave the law,
And many a bloody scene her mountains saw.
What though this morning rose so calmly bright,
The eye which saw it trembled at its light.
On Loudon's braes the bird might find a nest ;
On Pentland's hills the wounded deer might rest ;
But terror there her gloomy watch did keep,
Like the death-storm which overhangs the deep ;
And homeless man from place to place was driven,
Bereft of hope, and every stay but heaven.
God's people met amidst the lonely wild,
Like wretched outcasts, from a world exiled ;
In a lone cave, the eagle's drear abode,
They met to worship and to praise their God.
The fretted rocks around their temple hung,
And echoed back the praises as they sung :
Though half suppress'd, the thrilling accents rise
To God, who hears and answers in the skies.
The preacher rose, and every voice grew still,
Save echoing breezes round the lonely hill ;
With solemn awe he opes the blessed book,
Earnest in voice, and heavenly in his look,
While from his lips the soothing accents flow,
To cheer the flock and mitigate their woe—
For who could tell how soon the sent'nel's breath
Might give the signal of approaching death ?
For every moment seem'd to them the last,
And days to come more gloomy than the past.
Within that place a rude unshapen board
Was spread in memory of their risen Lord ;
While the deep thunder rent the thickening cloud,
And lightning flashed along the mournful crowd ;
And when with lowly hands the bread was broke,

The sheeted flame fell on the living rock,
 Illum'd the table with its symbols spread,
 As if heaven's brightness rested on their head.
 With placid looks they saw the dark'ning cloud,
 Which hid Jehovah in his awful shroud ;
 And when the voice fell deaf'ning on the ear,
 No murm'ring word proclaim'd them men of fear ;
 But calm and sweet the heaven-tun'd " Martyrs " * rose,
 Like zephyrs sighing at the tempest's close.

* * * * *

In caves and glens their Lord's-day hours were spent,
 'Till the pale moon illum'd the firmament ;
 And there they wandered at the dead of night,
 When the dim stars withheld their glimmering light.
 And oh ! how oft their wild retreat's been found
 By those who sought them like the blood-train'd hound ;
 And made that place—their oft frequented cave—
 The holy martyr's solitary grave ;
 Where nought but winds their dreary death-knell rung,
 And the scar'd birds their mournful requiem sung.
 Yet heaven saw, and bade their spirits rise
 On angel wings from sorrow to the skies ;
 While all they suffer'd shall be ne'er forgot,
 Their grave be hallowed, and their dying spot.

* * * * *

Peace to their memory ! let no impious breath
 Soil their fair fame, or triumph o'er their death !
 Let Scotia's grateful sons their teardrops shed
 Where low they lie in honour's gory bed,
 Rich with the spoils their glorious deeds had won,
 And purchas'd freedom to a land undone ;
 A land which owes its glory and its worth
 To those whom tyrants banished from the earth.

Weir.



THE POOL OF SILOAM.

HIDDEN BY THE WINE-PRESS.

CHAPTER III.—CONFLICT.

WHAT an eventful day was that for Gideon in the which, when hidden by the wine-press through fear of man, the Lord sought him out, nor left him until in a figure he had made him nigh, and given him power to confess his name, and in the teeth of all Baal's worshippers to testify that he, a youth, "the least in his father's house," timid by nature, helpless and alone, would own none other than Jehovah for his God; that to him, and him only, he looked for

peace for down-trodden Israel, who lay so near his heart—peace which the Abi-ezrites were so vainly seeking at the hands of Baal. Nothing less than the divine energy of faith would have sufficed for this. Nature has no power under such circumstances. Its energies may carry a man very far, but it is only to make the fall the heavier. “Though I should die with thee,” said Peter, “yet will I not deny thee;” and, true to its instincts, affection seeks to follow its object even into the very midst of the scene of danger, there only to expose its utter weakness, denying—and that with oaths and curses—him whom it would nevertheless have fought for to the death! (Matt. xxvi. 35, 51, 69—74.) Nature can do a great many things under excitement, but in the recesses of the vineyard of Ophrah there was nothing to excite, but everything to depress its energies. Yet there, where there was no voice to applaud, no eye to gaze in admiration, he builds an altar to Jehovah, and the same love which characterized his reply to the angel’s salutation is expressed in the name by which he calls it. The Lord had spoken peace to him. Now Gideon’s supplication is, “The Lord send peace” to them. Though standing alone in his testimony, in separation from the evil they are in, he is still linked in love to them; his affections must go out after them; he cannot help but plead for them, even while raising a testimony against the grievous idolatry into which they had fallen. How different this to that pharisaism which, while making much of “outward observances,” and mere formal separation from evil,

turns in contempt on those it esteems defiled, saying, "Stand thou by thyself, for I am holier than thou." Or that more subtle form of sanctimoniousness which, making much of a little bit of knowledge, and the actings founded upon and springing from it, regards with contemptuous pity those who are "ignorant and out of the way."

"And it came to pass the *same night* that the Lord said unto him, Take thy father's young bullock . . . and throw down the altar of Baal that thy father hath, and cut down the grove that is by it." How readily grace responds to Gideon's work of faith! Although as yet no eye had seen the altar he had raised, Gideon has no sooner confessed Jehovah thus, than "the same night" he owns him for his servant, and condescends to use him; instructing him, too, that before "peace" there must be "purity," and that Jehovah cannot have an altar side by side with Baal, but that if Jehovah's is to stand, Baal's must be swept away. "Throw down the altar of Baal that thy father hath . . . and build an altar to the Lord thy God." This is the first time that Jehovah is called *Gideon's* God: "The Lord *thy* God!" How gracious is the distinction thus conferred upon him! and because his "heart is not haughty, nor his eyes lofty," he can bear to be reminded thus that of all the Abi-ezrites, to him alone Jehovah is God. Alas for them! they too were Israelites, and yet it is not "Build an altar to the Lord God of Israel," but "the Lord *thy* God." "Them that honour me I will honour;" and well for them it is

when the honour given of grace does not lift them up above their brethren.

But why build a second altar when the first was yet standing? Gideon's first altar was indeed a testimony to the truth, and a very bold one; nevertheless, as far as it had gone, it was rather of the passive than the active character. The Lord graciously accepted it as between himself and his young servant, but to be *owned* the testimony must be *active*. Religiousness, under whatever form it may present itself, can tolerate a passive testimony, and make a merit of doing so, miscalling it "charity," "liberality," "large-heartedness," and other fine names, by which it seeks to quiet consciences, secretly ill at ease, and excuse its own persistence in evil. And the men of Abi-ezer appear to have raised no opposition to Gideon's altar—"Jehovah Shalom." They did not pull it down. "It is yet in Ophrah of the Abi-ezrites," says the inspired writer, as if to mark this fact. Yes; if the Abi-ezrites saw it, as no doubt they did on the day following its erection, their reasoning about it would probably be very similar to that employed in more modern times: "Let us be friends. *You* worship the Lord, and *we* worship the Lord,* only under different names and forms. It is hardly worth while to quarrel about non-essentials. You have a right to your opinion, and we to ours. We are Israelites, so are you. If you leave us to pursue our way in peace, we will do

* Baal means lord.

the same by you," and so forth. More than this, it is just possible that the more "large-hearted" men of Abi-ezer may have been secretly glad to see an altar raised to Jehovah. What if, thus honoured and tolerated in their midst, he should indeed "send peace"? How important to them and their families! This species of large-heartedness will embrace a great deal for food and raiment. At all events, the altar did no harm standing there in the vineyard of Ophrah.

Did not the Athenians raise an altar to "The Unknown God" in a period of public distress? Is it not said that an image to Christ was even set up in the Pantheon at Rome? Yes; expediency has always been a leading feature of religiousness, and "liberality" can tolerate anything, providing it will consent to be and remain passive. Had not Ananias a "good report of all the Jews which dwelt in Damascus"? Yet was he a Christian, and without doubt a godly man.

It by no means follows that the Abi-ezrites must needs see such an altar to be a testimony *against* the worship of Baal, although it surely was so. Religiousness is blind; and "the heart (whence it all emanates) deceitful above all things," as well as "desperately wicked." The "larger" it be, therefore, the worse for those who boast its possession.

But in Gideon's inmost soul there was conflict such as the men of Abi-ezer had no thought of. As he went in and out among them all the day following that "same night," how those words, "Throw down

the altar of Baal that thy father hath," must have rung in his ears! How oft, too, must his eye have turned to look where the "grove" threw its shadow on the ground, and hid the cursed thing which mocked by its presence HIM whose grace had made him nigh! And as that shadow lengthened, so deepened the struggle in his heart, as, conscious of procrastination, an accusing conscience did but weaken while it spurred him to the deed he dared not do! How very full of trouble must his soul have been! "He *could not* do it by day;" nor can we wonder, for he was young and meek-hearted. And if indeed it was so that the Abi-ezrites treated him and his altar with gentleness, how would it increase his difficulty! They had let *his* altar stand, and must he throw *theirs* down? He *loved* the men of Abi-ezer, too, for they were Israelites; how, then, could he find it in his heart to do that which would be an open declaration of "war to the knife" against everything they revered as sacred, especially when they probably considered it "all the same, only under another name." What bigotry—what narrowmindedness—what insolence—what outrage! And then, to intensify the conflict, it was his father's altar, and can we doubt his love and reverence for his father?

But who shall write the secret history of but *one* heart, tried as the hearts of those who are called to any special place of service always are tried? Not "till the day shall declare it" will the details be known, nor even then but to HIM whose grace supported them, and to those to whom shall be given

the "white stone, and in the stone a new name written which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it."

And what had Gideon to uphold him all that long, weary day, which, as it drew towards its close, seemed all too short, because the dreaded hour of action was at hand? That one gracious word, "the Lord *thy* God!" Grace knows how to meet our need. "Jehovah *thy* God," most suited word to Gideon's circumstances, and spoken by HIMSELF, too, as he knows how to speak, in words so tender, yet so full of power. What though all Abi-ezer should be against him, was it not because Jehovah was *his* God, and not theirs? Why heed their universal condemnation of his act, when the cause of it lay in that precious word, "the Lord *thy* God"? What though it was his father's altar that he must throw down—a father's feelings he must wound—a father's condemnation he must bear? Very dear to his affectionate heart that father doubtless was, but dearer still the Lord *his* God! While he fed upon that word, and kept the eye of faith full on him who spoke it, his soul would be in peace. But when his eye turned upon the men of Abi-ezer, and their thoughts and ways, their power to harm and rage against him; when his father, who evidently loved him even more than he loved his idol Baal, crossed his mental vision, and the insult he was about to cast upon him came in all its breadth before him; when, looking at himself, he contemplated his own insignificance, his solitariness in all that crowd of Abi-

ezrites, his heart must indeed have failed him, and full sore must he have found the conflict.

But the Lord his God was with him in it all. The day declined at last—the night drew on: patient grace had borne with his procrastination, and now the hour for action had arrived. “Then Gideon took ten men of his servants, and did as the Lord had said unto him.” And there, beneath the star-lit canopy of heaven, trampling under foot the lordship of Baal, surrounded by the ruins of his altar and felled grove, he raised an altar to the Lord *his* God; and though in conflict still, yet victor by faith over his own fears and all the power of the adversary, he drew near and offered a burnt sacrifice to Jehovah. Thus a priest unto God, though not of the tribe of Levi, but, better still, *made* nigh in a figure by grace, he stood a lonely worshipper, called out and separated from the multitude around, wholly given to idolatry; and as he turned the grove of Baal to ashes, and the flame of the burnt sacrifice went up to heaven, who can doubt but that his heart rose with it in praise and adoration to him who had *given* him a place so blessed, and had led him on, in spite of all his fears and failure, to take it? Surely the believer, as he contemplates this scene in Ophrah of the Abi-ezrites, may well be reminded by it of the more blessed position into which he is brought; and as he meditates upon the grace of Christ Jesus, the true Burnt Sacrifice, in whom and by whose precious blood he is made nigh—not now in a figure, but in truth and verity—may his heart, too, ascend in praise

and thanksgiving to him who to accomplish all for us stooped not merely to sit beneath the oak of an idolator, and to touch with a staff the kid and unleavened cakes, but *himself* was smitten, wounded, nailed to the cursed tree, numbered with transgressors, and poured out his soul unto death, “even the death of the cross.”

And can the *unbeliever* look unmoved upon all this? Will a *nominal* position meet your need in the hour of death and judgment?



REST!

A POEM FOR LITTLE ONES.

REST! rest! it is a pleasant thing
 To rest when tired of play;
 And sweetest rest the night will bring
 When wearied by the day.

But there is other rest, I know,
 Better and truer far—
 Rest from the weariness and woe
 Of sin, and pain, and care.

I see and hear it in the look
 And prayer of those I love;
 And read of it in God's own book—
 The heavenly rest above.

O God the Father! I would fain
 This rest should be for me;
 Heart-rest in Christ, till I attain
 Eternal rest with thee.

Extracted..

FRAGMENTS ON SCRIPTURE LANDS.

FLAX.

IN looking at the wild flowers of our rural districts, the eye is sometimes arrested by the blue blossoms of the flax plant, which, apparently insignificant, has, by the labour and ingenuity of man, been made to assume an entirely new appearance, and to contribute both to pleasure and health, by furnishing him with agreeable and ornamental apparel.

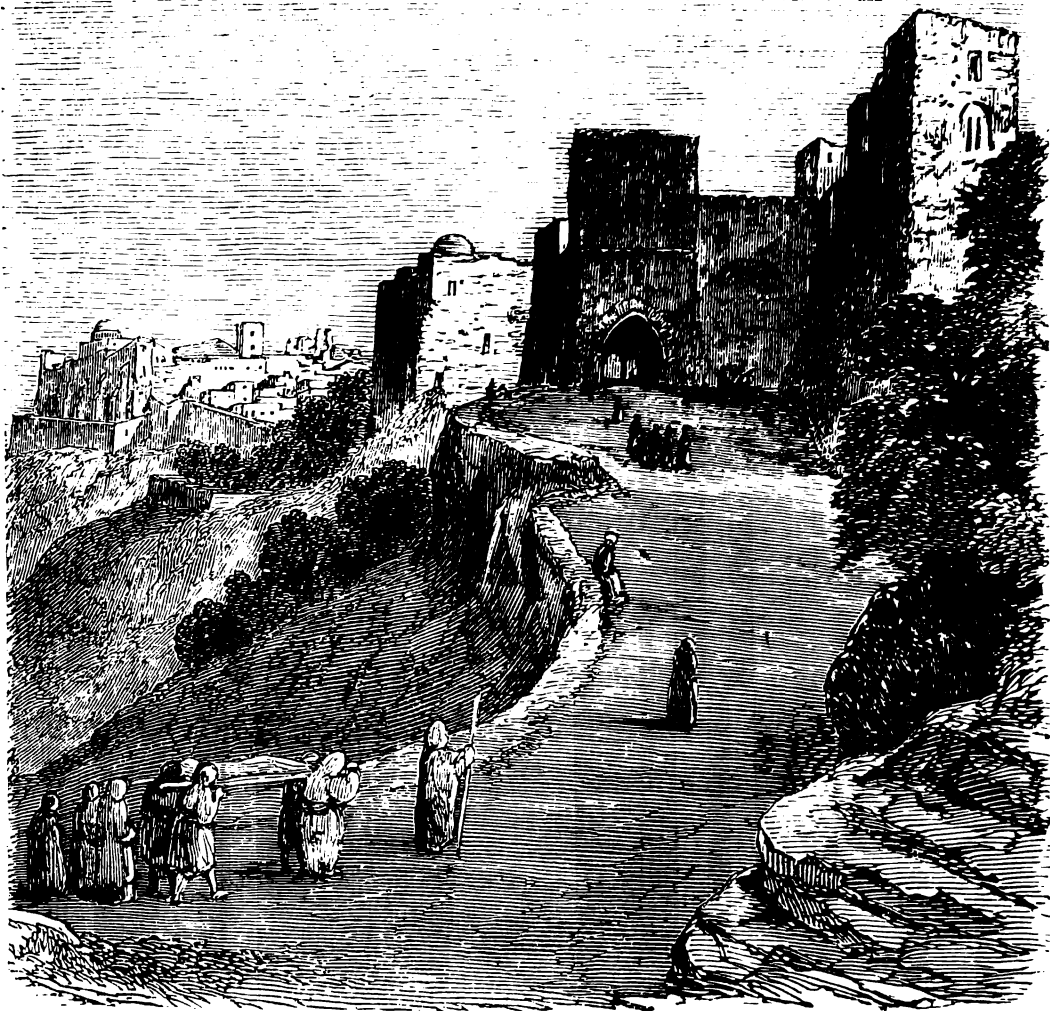
The dark waters of the Nile numbered among its valuable vegetable products the field of flax, even so early as the days of Moses (Exod. ix. 31). At the present day flax is extensively cultivated in Egypt, and arrives at great perfection, attaining a size which it never attains on an European soil. It is still among the chief products of Fayum and the Delta; and the linen made from its fibres not only supplies clothing to all the inhabitants of the country, but also to all people in the lands of Northern Africa, as well as in some parts of the interior, while Egyptian linen is worn throughout the Levant, and it is imported occasionally by the French and the Italians. It appears, from more than one passage, that flax was cultivated at a very early period in Jericho. There it is said of Rahab that she sent the spies "to the roof of the house, and hid them with stalks of flax, which she had laid in order on the roof" (Josh. ii. 6). This treatment of flax was part

of the preparation of it for the production of textile fabrics. Thus Pliny describes the course pursued in Egypt: "The stalks are immersed in water, warmed by the heat of the sun, and are kept down by weights placed upon them; for nothing is lighter than flax. The membrane or rind becoming loose is a sign that they have been sufficiently macerated. They are then taken out, and repeatedly turned over in the sun till they are perfectly-dried." The process described by Pliny is continued in the East to this day. Rae Wilson observed it carried on on the roofs of the houses at Damascus, which he describes as flat like a terrace, being spread over with plaster, which is made firm with a roller. After the flax was dried, it was, according to Pliny, "beaten by mallets on stone slabs. That which is nearest the rind is called *stupa*, 'tow,' inferior to the inner fibres, and fit only for the wicks of lamps. It is combed out with iron hooks, until all the rind is removed. The inner rind is of a whiter and fairer quality. After it is made into yarn, it is polished by striking it frequently on a hard stone moistened with water; and when woven into cloth it is again beaten with clubs, being always improved in proportion as it is beaten."

Sir J. Wilkinson adds, "They also parted and cleansed the fibres of the flax with a sort of comb, probably answering to the iron hooks mentioned by Pliny, two of which, found with some tow at Thebes, are preserved in the Berlin museum, one having twenty-nine, the other forty-six teeth."—*Extracted.*

MAKING UNLEAVENED BREAD.

The Arab tribes, who are always moving from place to place, bake their bread on a slightly convex iron plate, called a *sadj*, moderately heated over a low fire of brushwood or *camels' dung* (Ezek. iv.) The lumps of dough are rolled on a wooden platter into thin cakes, a foot or more in diameter, and laid by means of the roller upon the iron. They are baked in a very short time, and should be eaten hot. The Kurds, whose flour is whiter and more carefully prepared than that of the Arabs, roll the dough into large cakes, scarcely thicker than a sheet of paper. When carefully baked by the same process, it becomes crisp and exceedingly agreeable to the taste. The Arab tribes that remain many days in one place, make rude ovens by digging a hole about three feet deep, shaping it like a reversed funnel, and plastering it with mud. They heat it by burning brushwood within, and then stick the lumps of dough, pressed into small cakes almost half an inch thick, to the sides with the hand. The bread is ready in two or three minutes. When horsemen go on an expedition, they either carry with them the thin bread first described or a bag of flour, which, when they come to water, they moisten and knead on their cloaks, and then bake by covering the balls of dough with hot ashes (Gen. xviii. 6). All Arab bread is unleavened (Judges vi. 19).



A FUNERAL AT THE ENTRANCE OF BETHLEHEM.

ONE MOMENT TOO LATE!

INCIDENTS CONNECTED WITH THE WRECK OF THE LONDON.

WHEN all hope of saving the vessel was abandoned, Stedding, the boatswain, and several others, made up their minds to leave the sinking ship in the remaining small boat over the cuddy. One boatful had already got away. They had provisioned and launched her; all was ready; another moment, and they too would escape the swirl of waters around the stern of the fast

foundering ship. But just when about to put off, the vessel suddenly slid beneath the waves, leaving for a moment an awful gulf, within whose walls of dark whirling waters they instantly fell, with every human being and every article around. In the din of the tempest, no cry could be heard. Hurlled into the yawning chasm, they vanished from sight of man without a sound!

“Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian,” said one of old time. Conviction must have been very strong to wring such a confession from such a man under the circumstances. Where is he now?

He was almost ready to “put off” from a position which if maintained was certain and everlasting destruction. Did he ever do so? Who shall say! “And as Paul reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season I will call for thee.” He, too, seems to have been “about to put off;” he probably quite intended to do so at that “convenient season.” Did it ever come? We only know he “left Paul bound,” and therefore judge it never did. Do you, reader, yet cling to the world, intending at some future time to “put off”? How many times have you been on the very eve of doing so! Something or other has always interfered with your intention. The lost men *provisioned* the boat before launching and pushing off. No doubt the two or three minutes so employed cost them their lives. Was it wise to be occupied about provisions when every moment threatened impending destruction?

And have *you* hitherto allowed comparative trifles to engage your attention at the risk of ETERNAL RUIN? One boat had already put off, and its occupants are now safe at home. Oh that the others had put off with them! Do you know any converted friend or relative who is now "safe at home"? Be persuaded before it is *too late*. "Put off now"—now at once! A moment sooner, and who shall say but that Stedding and his companions might now be in safety? A moment later, and *where* may you be?

The first boat just alluded to had put off from the vessel but a few minutes before. The rowers had great difficulty to force their boat out from the trough of the sea made by the sinking ship, which threatened to drag them down with it. They had but just succeeded, when a lady rushed on deck, and throwing out her arms imploringly, shrieked in an agony of apprehension, "A thousand guineas if you will take me in!" Shrill above the roar of the waves, the howling of the storm, the cries of those around, rose her agonizing scream; her countenance was livid with horror; death to her was evidently inexpressibly terrible; but—she was *too late*!

Ten times a thousand guineas would not have tempted the rowers to return. To have done so would have been self-destruction. A moment sooner, ere the boat was cut away, they would have received her gladly, and for nothing. *Now*, no amount that man could name, or wealth propose, would purchase the safety of their boat.

Dear reader, the word of God tells us that the

Lord is coming; that his coming will be sudden; that at his coming, the dead saints, and they only, will be raised, and the living believers, "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye," changed and caught away with the risen ones to meet the Lord. Believers are taught to look for this every day, every hour, every moment. There is absolutely nothing to hinder its taking place now, even while you read. All that mistaken teaching which confounds "the day of judgment," the "end of the world," and other important events and periods (true in their place) with the coming of Christ, is only so much dust thrown into the eyes of men to blind them to the imminent nearness of the coming of the Lord *for his own*, and, by consequence, the imminent danger they are in who are *not* his own. As the hapless lady rushed on deck, having probably heard below that a boat was launched to rescue *some* from death, did any tell her, "You are too late—the boat is cut away"? As she flew to the ship side, and stretched her arms beseechingly, amid the tumult of the waves and the howling of the blast, while she could *feel* the vessel sinking under her feet, and her eye rested on the little ark of safety tossing on the billows, did the thought flash across her quivering heart, ONE MOMENT SOONER, AND YOU HAD BEEN IN TIME! Oh, if it were so, how it must have intensified her anguish! And *you*, reader, what would be your agony if while you now read—if while you sleep this night—if just as daylight greets your waking eyes to-morrow—if while busied with the cares and occupations of the day, at an

instant, suddenly the moment came, the trumpet sounded, the saints were caught away, and *you*, aroused at last, yet ONE MOMENT TOO LATE, stretched your hands imploringly to heaven while with a shudder you recalled those solemn words of the Lord Jesus, "Many, I say unto you, shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able. When once the Master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye *begin to stand* without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us . . . he shall answer and say unto you, I know ye not whence ye are" (Luke xiii. 24, 25)—And what if, to add to the horror of your situation, a father, a mother, a sister, a brother, a husband, wife, or child, near and *very* dear to you, were caught away from your side, while you alone in your despair felt that to yourself, and yourself alone, you owed all this unutterable woe, because you *would not* be persuaded till TOO LATE!

"This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." Do you feel your danger?

"All the fitness he requireth
Is to feel your need of him."

Fly to him at once. Could you but hear the first note of that awe-inspiring trumpet, you would not hesitate—no, not a moment. "The trumpet *shall* sound." Hark! Are you sure it is not even now about to do so? If it were possible for you to hear but the very faintest far-off sound of that trumpet, you would already be—TOO LATE!

“FEAR NOT.”

Isaiah xli. 10—14.

[The following verses were originally written for the comfort of one who was passing through a very trying season, with the prospect of its intensity daily increasing. It did so; and when it reached its climax, the Lord so graciously used the “FEAR-NOTS” of his own blessed word to “stablish, strengthen, settle” the sufferer, that she was kept in peace, and richly enjoyed the comfort of the Holy Ghost.]

Now gloomy clouds, O Lord, appear,
 I greatly need Thy aid;
 And Thou hast said, my heart to cheer,
 “Fear not—be not dismay’d.”

To sight and sense my way seems rough,
 For storms my path invade;
 To stay my mind this is enough—
 “Fear not—be not dismay’d.”

Though waves of trouble round me roll
 I need not be afraid;
 This happy word can calm my soul—
 “Fear not—be not dismay’d.”

And should the billows louder roar,
 And all seem gloom and shade,
 Whisper this word to me once more—
 “Fear not—be not dismay’d.”

Thou gav’st Thy Son to set me free,
 On him my sins were laid;
 How canst thou cease to say to me—
 “Fear not—be not dismay’d.”

On thee I cast my care, O Lord!
 Let peace my mind pervade;
 And let my heart enjoy this word—
 “Fear not—be not dismay’d.”

Though I am feeble, poor, and weak,
 Thou wilt not me upbraid;
 But this sweet word to me wilt speak—
 “Fear not—be not dismay’d.”

Soon shall I leave this dreary vale,
 And like to Christ be made;
 Till then, this word shall never fail—
 “Fear not—be not dismay’d.”

N.

STAYED ON GOD.

FOR LITTLE ONES.

JUST two hundred years ago, nearly everybody in England believed that the end of the world would come before the year closed. It seems strange that people should be so very ignorant in a so-called Christian land of the plain teaching of God's word on this most important subject, but so it is. They do not know, although it is as plain as plain can be, that long before “the end of the world,” as they call it, the Lord Jesus will come from heaven to take those that love Him away to that blessed “place” in the Father's house which he has prepared for them. “For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven” [how kind, and yet how like him to come *himself*] “and the dead in Christ” [not those that have died *out* of Christ] “shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain”—living as we now do, and going about our employments—will be suddenly changed, so that our bodies will be made like unto Christ's glorious body, all in a moment; and then we “shall be caught up in clouds,” together with the risen ones, “to meet the Lord in the air.” Of course the people that are not caught up, because they do not love Christ, and therefore are not children of God (John viii. 42), will not see him at this time. The clouds are a long way up above the earth, and “the

air" into which the Lord will descend is further off still. It is thought that the stars which twinkle so brightly at night, and which the little boy thought were "holes to let the glory through," float in ether, which is a kind of air, and if *that* is "the air" into which the Lord will descend, why it is far, far away indeed. However, he will descend into the air, that's certain, because God says so in his word; but *which* air—whether the "lower" that we breathe, or the "upper" that no bird's wing has ever stirred—doesn't matter much to you and me. Only I sometimes think when I see on a summer's evening a great flight of rooks who have been busy all day in the fields, soaring away high above the earth to their home in the wood on the hill, "How pleasant it must be to soar so high and to float away home so easily far above everything in this poor world below!" And then I think again, "We who love Christ shall one day soar away far, far higher than they. And as we float away homeward to meet the Lord in the air, how *very* little this poor world and all its belongings will seem to us then!" Nor do we know how soon this may be. We only know that we are taught in God's word to "look for" it every day. Now this is called "the coming of the Lord," but it is not "the end of the world" by any means. Oh dear no. For even after we who love Jesus are gone, the world will still roll on, as it has done for nearly six thousand years; and a great many things will happen in a very short space of time, and people who have refused to come to Jesus while the day of grace lasted (which is now, you know),

will be terribly deceived by him who deceived our first parents in the garden of Eden. The world will be a terrible place to live in then ; such a place as I trust none of my little readers will *stay to see it*. And remember, if you do stay to see it, it will be all through your own unbelief. But I cannot now tell you all that will happen—only this : that after a short space of time, we who have been all the while happy up there with the Lord, while the poor wicked world has been going on sinning and suffering, shall come with him “to execute judgment upon all” living sinners (Jude 14, 15 ; Matt. xxv. 31—46),—not the dead ones,—*they* will not be raised and judged till a “thousand years are finished” (Rev. xx. 5, 11—15): Well—

“Jesus shall reign where’er the sun
Doth his successive journeys run ;
His kingdom stretch from shore to shore,
Till moons shall wax and wane no more.”

Now this reign will last a thousand years, and only after that will the end of the world come. Yet people thought it would come two hundred years ago ; and as there were about that time some very strange meteors in the heavens, and other wonderful sights and startling events, the idea became so general that not only the ignorant people, but the learned also believed it. Well, it happened during the summer of 1666, that while the assizes were being held in the western circuit, a remarkable storm very suddenly arose. The court was then sitting, and the bench was occupied by Sir Matthew Hale, at that time Lord Chief

Baron, a true and earnest Christian, who was noted for his consistency at a time when wickedness was practised more openly and more generally in this country than it is even now. A barrister who was present has described the scene. Very suddenly, an awful darkness overspread the heavens; vivid flashes of lightning at intervals lighted up every object in court with a lurid brilliancy, startling and terrific; tremendous peals of thunder rattled loud and long, and seemed to shake heaven and earth, and the building in which they were assembled. The effect on those present was strange and fearful. A general consternation seized all, and each looked in terror at his neighbour. Presently a whisper ran through the assembly that the dread moment so commonly expected had arrived indeed—that the day of judgment had come, and that the terrible battle of the elements then raging was but the beginning of more awful scenes yet to follow! Everybody, as by common consent, forgot the business in hand: the counsel rose from their seats, and the whole multitude, in a fit of great terror, betook themselves to their knees, and cried aloud for mercy. What a scene this must have been! Had you been there, young reader, what would you have done? Would you have cried for mercy too, or have you obtained it already through Christ Jesus our Lord? There was *one* person present in that scene who was quite in peace. The barrister who describes the circumstances says that, happening to look towards the judicial bench, he saw the judge, Sir Matthew Hale,

sitting there perfectly unmoved—calm, self-possessed, and showing both by his looks and manner that he was perfectly composed in the midst of the general confusion and alarm around him, evidently conscious of having nothing to fear. From this the barrister drew the conclusion that he whom he was watching had his mind so stayed on God [that no surprise, however sudden, could discompose him; and “he verily believed that if the world had then been really to end, it would have given him no considerable disturbance.” *Stayed on God*,—what a blessed position! To be stayed on God, the soul must know him; and Judge Hale did know him, for he was a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ: his sins were washed away by his precious blood; he was a new creature in Christ Jesus, and a child of God. What had he to fear? It was his *Father* who raised the storm; why should he be terrified? A father will not harm his child; and had that storm been really meant to usher in the coming of the Lord, instead of cause for fear, it would have been an occasion for great joy, unspeakable and full of glory. It is said that he continued to make his notes just as if nothing was the matter. Perhaps he really thought the hour was come when he should see his Lord, and so wished to finish his business thoroughly as a faithful servant who, in whatever he did, sought to do it all to the glory of God; for those believers whose minds are stayed on God, know well the importance of being *faithful*. Even a believer, if walking carelessly, cannot have his heart stayed on God. No, little believer,

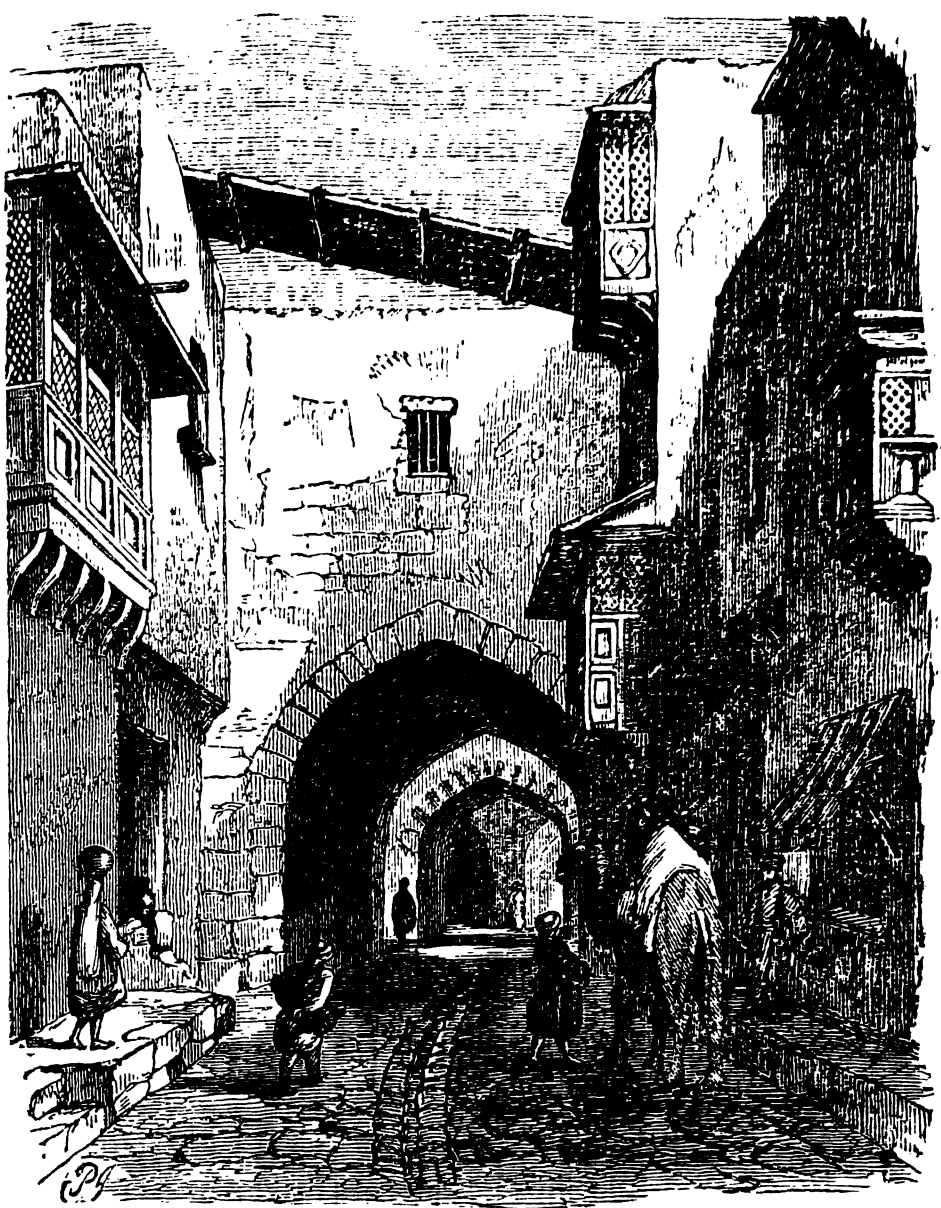
if your *ways* are wrong in anything, your *heart* is not right with God. Think of these things, and whenever you witness a thunder-storm, remember Judge Hale, whose heart was STAYED ON GOD.



THE POOL OF BETHESDA.

AROUND Bethesda's healing wave,
 Waiting to hear the waters move,
 Which spoke the angel nigh who gave
 Their healing virtues from above,
 With earnest, fix'd solicitude
 Were seen the afflicted multitude.
 Among them there was one whose eye
 Had often seen the waters stirr'd;
 Whose heart had often heav'd the sigh,
 The bitter sigh of hope deferr'd;
 Beholding, while he suffer'd on,
 The healing virtue giv'n—and gone.
 No power had he, no friendly aid
 To him its timely succour brought;
 But while his coming he delay'd,
 Another won the boon he sought;
 Until the Saviour's love was shown,
 Which heal'd him with a word alone!
 Had they who watch'd and waited there
 Been conscious who was passing by,
 With what unceasing anxious care
 Would they have sought his pitying eye,
 And crav'd with fervency of soul
 His sov'reign power to make them whole.
 But habit and tradition sway'd
 Their minds to trust to sense alone;
 They only sought the angel's aid,
 While in their presence stood unknown
 A greater, mightier far than he,
 With pow'r from ev'ry pain to free.
 Bethesda's pool has lost its power!
 No angel, by his glad descent,
 Dispenses that diviner dower
 Which with its healing waters went;
 But he whose word surpass'd its wave
 Is still omnipotent to save.

BARTON.



STREET IN JERUSALEM.

HIDDEN BY THE WINE-PRESS.

CHAPTER IV.—GRACE.

How great must have been the astonishment of the Abi-ezrites, when the morning rose, to find the altar of Baal overthrown, and the wood of the grove burning on the altar to Jehovah, which, built upon a rock, stood out a testimony to the triumph of truth over

error, and of weak things against the strong; while the smoke of the sacrifice curling upward in the morning light spoke of a way of access yet open to those who had sinned so grievously, if haply they would turn and repent. But no! "Bring forth thy son that he may die," is the universal cry of the multitude as they look in rage upon their desecrated idol-altar. Israel had cried unto the Lord but a little while before because of oppression; he had reminded them of redemption, and how they requited him, saying, "Ye have not obeyed my voice;" and now the men of Abi-ezer rise "early in the morning," and seek the altar of Baal, probably to offer the customary sacrifice at the rising of the sun. Was it that the Abi-ezrites had no part in Israel's appeal to Jehovah, or was *this* really obedience as religiousness understands it? If so, they were blind indeed; and did we not know how completely human monition in things religious can lead astray, substitute wrong for right, error for truth, and "call evil good, and good evil," this would seem hardly possible; yet once allow *opinion* to become the standard of truth, and who shall say to error, "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further; and here shall thy proud waves be stayed?" "To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." No light! how great then is the darkness; and what wonder if in such darkness the Abi-ezrites mistake the altar of Baal for that of the Lord; and when they find it overthrown, verily think they are doing God service in demanding the

blood of him who had been the happy, honoured instrument of setting before them "the old paths," and the way of escape. Yet, surely, sincerity is no atonement, although it is a very general mistake to suppose that it is. An infidel, who had been convinced against his will that the Bible is the word of God, once asked the writer whether God would forgive him at the day of judgment if it turned out that he was *sincerely mistaken*; but to the question, "How did you *become* sincere in thinking as you do?" his only reply was to tremble. With Gideon's testimony before their eyes, the Abi-ezrites were utterly without excuse; and but for the **WHOLE BURNT OFFERING**, the type of which was now upon the altar, judgment instead of deliverance must have awaited them. As in ages long before, "the Lord smelled a savour of rest, and the Lord said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake, though the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth;" so now, if the altar raised to Jehovah was a testimony against the evil his people were committing, the sacrifice upon it, placed there by his own command, opened a way for grace, superabounding grace, to come in, and in the very face of all the evil to be *with* his people, so that when the enemy should come in like a flood he could "lift up a standard against him." Here then, under the worst of circumstances, grace is exalted, and we are again reminded of Moses in the mount, how he said, "Let my Lord, I pray thee, go among us, **FOR** it is a stiffnecked people." Stiff-necked indeed we find them on this occasion, de-

manding the life of the servant of the Lord, *because* he alone of all the Abi-ezrites had confessed Jehovah, and thrown down the altar of the "shameful thing," hardly restrained from pouring out his blood in the very face of the testimony which left them without excuse. How very nearly such a course approaches the verge of that open-eyed, wilful, determinate, *conscious* persistence in evil, to which God can have nothing to say but to judge it (Matt. xii.). How strikingly in contrast with all this is the inimitable *goodness* which foresaw it all, and commanded the "second bullock"* to be offered on the altar, that so a way might yet be possible whereby mercy, sweet mercy, might reach the vile murderous idolaters, and that in spite of themselves! How the GREAT SACRIFICE is honoured in every age! And as the believer looks upon the dark background of this sad picture, he owns with joy that its very blackness does but make the all-importance, the infinite value and blessedness of that "Offering and Sacrifice to God of sweet-smelling savour," to shine out with a breadth and brightness no tongue can express—a lustre all its own. For lack of words, he can only say, "He is precious," while his heart delightedly sings—

"How sweet the name of Jesus sounds

In a believer's ear!

It soothes his sorrows, heals his wounds,

And drives away his fear."

* The *first* bullock led the team, and was a trained animal. To have had *that* offered in sacrifice would have been an irreparable loss to Joash, especially at such a time. The *second* bullock is therefore selected, and that not by Gideon, but the Lord. Yet was Joash a worshipper of Baal.

For although conscious of failure, and "that continually," with *such* a Propitiation, how can he fear to draw nigh?

"Then all the Midianites and the Amalekites and the children of the east were gathered together, and went over and pitched in the valley of Jezreel."

Yes, "all" of them, but they may come now, the Lord can act; his altar once more throws its protecting shadow o'er the land; the savour of the offering is yet around it; his instrument is almost ready. There is no "wherewith shall I save Israel?" now, although all the power of the enemy is gathered in terrible array, threatening desolation to the already ruined land and people. No; "But the Spirit of the Lord came upon (clothed) Gideon, and he blew a trumpet," and that was the only means he used—the Lord's "wherewith," and not his own (Num. x. 9). "And Abi-ezer was gathered after him." The men who had sought his life when he confessed Jehovah, are, now that God owns him, gathered to fight the Lord's battles.

Owned of God! How great the privilege to Gideon! how great the grace to the poor blind religionists, who, instead of being left to follow their own devices, are "called after" the servant of the Lord, and leave their religion in its ruins to the owls and the bats! And let us remember that, without the Offering grace itself had placed upon the altar, this would have been impossible. Righteousness demanded that every man in Abi-ezer, who had worshipped "the shameful thing," should die. Yet they are spared, and not

only spared, but “called *after*” Jehovah’s servant, and therefore called *out* of that they had been in. To *spare* them was most merciful, to *bless* them was indeed most gracious.

Owened of God ! May each of his dear ones seek the precious privilege. But mark the way in Gideon’s case. He was first made nigh, in a figure, then called out in separation from evil—evil in *religion* ; then made an *active* testimony for God ; and then, *in it* owned of HIM whose grace had done it all. Were every child of God now in the wilderness led on in the same wondrous path (and each *would* be if from his inmost soul he sought it, John vii. 17), there would be, as it were, an earthquake which would shake the world to its foundations !

The time was now come for action, the time of which the Lord had said, “Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man.” But Gideon had passed through much since that gracious promise was given, and we commonly think that *our* changes affect the Unchangeable in some such way as they do ourselves. Conflict had brought out much failure, and failure had left weakness behind it, as it always does. Grace had “passed over” all but the remembrance of his own disobedience, when, all through that weary day, “he *could* not do” as the Lord had commanded him, remained, and to his godly soul was doubtless magnified in the light of the lovingkindness he had experienced. Ah, Gideon ! HE who sought thee by the wine-press foreknew all that thou wouldst do when *tested*, and when

he called thee "mighty man of valour," was looking not at thy trembling heart and faltering footsteps, *sure* to stumble, but at the faith and love his own Spirit had wrought within thee, and which his gracious ways towards thee would yet intensify, and rouse to action for the comfort and edification of his weak ones through all time. But to return. In the energy of the Spirit he had blown the trumpet, and his very enemies were gathered after him. He had sent messengers throughout Manasseh, and they, too, were gathered after him, whose family was but "poor" among them. And Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali had, at his call, come up to meet them. But now, at eventide, alone in the solitude of the threshing-floor, whither, perhaps, he had retired to gather strength for the coming fight with the overwhelming foe, his thoughts revert to himself. Since the hour when, hidden by the wine-press, he had said, in all the untried freshness of faith and love, "If the Lord be with us, why then is all this befallen us, and where be all his miracles which our fathers told us of?" how much of his *own* weakness had he seen! Ah, it is comparatively easy to exercise faith at a distance from the danger; and to "see his wonders in *the deep*" is a very different thing from seeing them in the *shallows*! It is easier still for the heart, when reposing on the shore in quiet, to sit in judgment on those "that do business in great waters;" so much knowledge is gained at little cost to lookers on, and the heart so soon mistakes that knowledge for power!

“And Gideon said unto God, If thou wilt save Israel by my hand as thou hast said, behold I will put a fleece of wool in the floor, and if the dew be on the fleece only, and if it be dry on all the earth beside, then shall I know that thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, as thou hast said.” “If thou wilt do as thou has said,” sounds strangely and almost like an insult to him to whom it is addressed. “Hath he said and shall he not do it?” faith might ask. Aye, but Gideon’s thoughts may have replied, as he mentally gazed on the way he had taken since the gracious promise was given, he said, “Goin this thy might,” and have I done so hitherto? I did indeed throw down the altar of Baal, but when and how? By night and in the fear of men! And when the worshippers of Baal demanded the life of him who had overthrown the altar of the shameful thing, who pronounced the righteous sentence of the law against them? Not I, but my penitent father! Have I then at all vindicated the honour of Jehovah as I should have done? Can he use an instrument that as yet has only and always failed? Alas! what am I! Will he indeed save Israel by *my* hand, as he said to me in that happy hour by the wine-press, ere I had shown at every step my utter unfitness for such an honour?” Even so. “For he rose up early on the morrow and thrust the fleece together, and wringed the dew out of the fleece, a bowl full of water!” Thus grace meets weakness, and “raiseth up those that be bowed down.” But Gideon has not yet done with his fears. Perhaps his sense of his own

unworthiness was too deep to be readily re-assured. His love for Israel, too, would magnify the responsibility he had taken on himself in calling them together to meet an overwhelming foe. What if he had made a mistake? What if the dew in the fleece was a merely natural effect? The night-wind might dry the "floor," and the fleece absorb and so retain the moisture. Had the Lord done it, or was it a mere accident? "And Gideon said unto God, Let not thine anger be hot against me and I will speak but this once, let me prove I pray thee but this once with the fleece—let it now be dry only upon the fleece, and upon all the ground let there be dew."

" In weakness and trial
With God we *may* plead,
No fear of denial,
We're *sure* to succeed."

So says the faith of his saints, and so says this precious history. Man might have lost all patience with such repeated misgivings, recurring continually at every step of the way; even the subject of them trembles at the *daring* of his own *fears*; but Omnipotent Power can take up utter weakness into its arms, lay on hands of love, and bless, where little man would scorn to stoop. "And God did so that night;" yes, without a word of rebuke or a thought of impatience, "for it was dry upon the fleece only, and there was dew on all the ground." Blessed be God!

LOOK WELL TO YOUR FOOTING.

A MAN was passing along a highroad one day, when he saw a boy standing on the edge of a chalk-pit which was being worked at the time.

“Look well to your footing, my lad!” he cried, for he thought it not unlikely that the bank might give way. The boy, thinking he was safe enough, paid no heed to the kind warning. He did not care to move, but stood gazing idly before him. Suddenly the edge fell in with a terrible crash; down he went headlong, and was buried in the rubbish. Help was at hand, and the men worked hard to dig him out; but twenty minutes elapsed before they could reach him, and when at last they succeeded it was too late. Smothered in the *debris*, the boy had lost his life because he would not heed the warning, “Look well to your footing!”

Reader, where are *you* standing? The edge of a cliff, the brink of an abyss, though undermined and ready to fall, may nevertheless look green and fair to the eye, and to a superficial observer as sound and firm as the solid earth around. So *religiousness* has a most specious and attractive appearance to the heart, just because, like itself, it is “deceitful”—aye, and “desperately wicked” too, for was not religiousness in the van of that multitude which, eighteen hundred years ago, cried “Crucify him! crucify him!” (Mark xv. 10—14). Yes, the religious of that day were the most persistent, the most bitter enemies of Christ, and are still. The openly profane, the infidel, the

very atheist has *some*, though it may be an involuntary, respect for a consistent Christ-like deportment; but the religious hate it with an intensity equalled only by that of the high priests, elders, and pharisees of the old time. An orthodox belief, a mass of forms, a moral exterior, which, like a whited sepulchre, does but hide the corruption working within; much acquaintance with "the plan of the Gospel," but entire ignorance of the Person it sets forth; a strict attention to self-imposed duties and so-called spiritual exercises, taught by the precept of men,—these are the things that go to make up religiousness, and with this Satan deceives the sinner, and hides Christ from his view. On this platform thousands take their stand, and not a few in total ignorance of the true nature of their "footing." The poor foolish boy on the edge of the chalk-pit thought he was safe enough. He did not *intentionally place* himself in danger; but when that warning reached his ears, all the responsibility of his position became his own.

Reader, "look well to *your* footing," and if indeed it be that your standing is in religiousness instead of CHRIST, turn and flee while you may. Every moment increases your danger—the responsibility *now* is all your own—the warning has met your eye; God grant that it may reach your *heart*.

You are not addressed as one who is *intentionally* deceiving others by a profession which you *know* to be unsound, but as one who, it may be, has unconsciously taken his stand upon the hollow and dangerous ground of that thing which has mocked the God

of grace and love so long. It is ripening fast for judgment. The cry has long since gone forth, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord." Will *you* turn a deaf ear to the command?

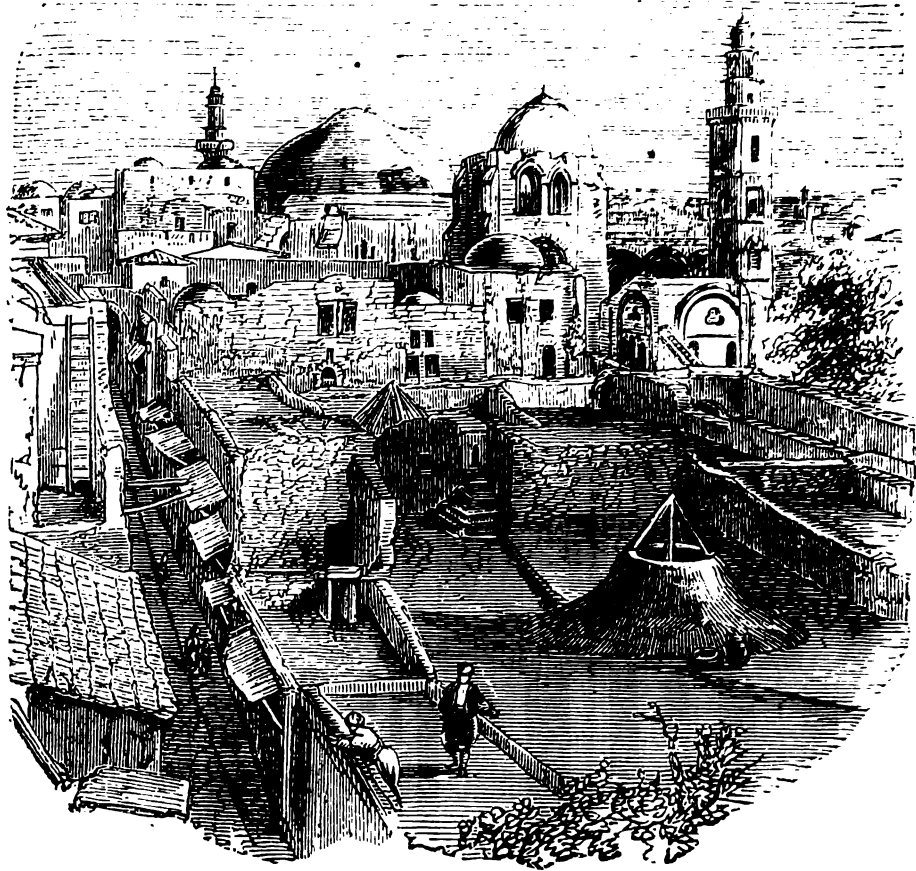
Engulfed in the ruins of that on which he had taken, and in spite of the warning, *kept* his "footing," the boy lost his life. In your case, far more than this little space of earthly existence is at stake. Your position *now* is wilful; you can plead ignorance no longer. Go to Christ at once. He "came into the world to save sinners." If you take your stand on *anything* short of HIMSELF, it will fail you in the hour of your utmost need, and the consequences will be eternal. Once engulfed, it will be for ever and for ever. The blood of Christ is your only refuge; let it be your only trust—the alone ground of your confidence. All else is unsafe—nay, more, it is destruction. "Look well to your footing!"



WILD BOARS.

"The boar out of the wood doth waste it."—Psalm lxxx. 13.

Mr. F. C. Cooper, an artist who was sent out by the trustees of the British Museum to assist Mr. Layard in making sketches of the ruins at Nineveh, states that on the banks of the Tigris there are plantations of melons, which the natives are obliged to watch, particularly in the night season, as herds of wild boars come down from the mountains to slake their thirst at the river, and that they would utterly waste these, did not their owners alarm them by their cries.



VIEW IN JERUSALEM.

THE STORM AND THE CALM.

FOR THE LITTLE ONES.

ONE day a great number of people from the country round came together to hear what the Lord Jesus was teaching his disciples, out of doors, by the clear blue waters of the Lake of Galilee. If you had been there, you would have seen quite a crowd of men, and women, and children standing on the grass along the

border of the lake, which is also called the Sea of Tiberias. There were so many that Jesus entered into one of the fishermen's sailing-boats, and sat where all who wished could see him as he spoke, and listen without losing any of his gracious words.

To know a little better what the scene was like, you may fancy a broad bright sheet of water, very deep and clear, with hills all round, except where the river Jordan flowed in and out of the lake. Here and there you would see beautiful flowers growing at the water's edge, and birds flitting about, and storks wading among the rushes. Travellers tell us the lake of Galilee is about five or six miles across, and rather more than twelve miles long, and we find from the Bible that there were plenty of fish in its waters. Peter and John, you may remember, were fishermen, who had sometimes to mend their nets on shore.

I do not tell you to-day what the Lord Jesus said to the people, but you will find many of his words in the fourth chapter of Mark. He spoke in parables, and when they were alone, Jesus explained all things to his disciples.

That day, when even was come, he said, "Let us pass over unto the other side." If one of the disciples had replied, "I fear we shall all be drowned before we get there," would not the rest have been sorry for such needless fears, and bid him be of good courage? Ah, it was fine weather then, and the sea was smooth, so they had no thought of danger. By and by they

found out how little they had learnt to trust in the Lord. They knew that he meant to take them right across the lake, for he had said so beforehand; and that one word ought to have kept them in perfect peace all the night through, and so it would, if their mind had been stayed on *him*. Before getting into the ship with Jesus, they sent the people away. There were also other small boats with him. And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full, and He was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow. Jesus was asleep, but they were in too much fear to think of rest. It was getting so dark, and there was such a noise of wind and water all round them, that they were quite terrified, and came and woke up the Lord Jesus, as if he had made some mistake, or did not know what was going on. Can he make a mistake? Oh, never, never! He did always the things that pleased the Father, and doubtless he was pleasing the Father even when sleeping in the storm. Yet they said to him, "Master, carest thou not that we perish?" Though he had said only an hour or two before, "Let us go over unto the other side," they were afraid of being drowned when half-way across. Was not Jesus taking care of them? Yes, and the stormy wind was fulfilling his word.

Look in Psalm cvii. and you will find it is written, "He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still. Then are they glad because they be quiet, so he bringeth them to their desired haven."

This is a beautiful text for you to learn; and now see how it came to pass. "He arose and rebuked the winds, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still." And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. Had he a word for their troubled hearts as well as for the raging sea? Yes: He said, "Why are ye so fearful?—how is it that ye have no faith? They were greatly afraid, and said one to another, *What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?*" In Zechariah's prophecy there is God's answer to this question, "*The Man that is My Fellow.*"

"And they came over *unto the other side*, into the country of the Gadarenes."



THE ABBESS OF JOUARRE;

OR, THE POWER OF PRAYER.

IN a small town in Normandy, named Jouarre, there once stood a famous nunnery, long since in ruins, but still remembered as the home of Charlotte de Bourbon. Charlotte was born in the middle of the sixteenth century, and her father was the Duke of Montpensier, of the royal house of Bourbon. His property had become reduced, and being unable to give his daughter a dowry equal to her rank, he—a stern, proud Romanist—resolved that she should enter a nunnery.

This resolution was very distressing to the child's mother on many accounts, but especially because she had her eyes opened to the errors of Romanism, and, by the grace of God, had been brought to know the truth as it is in Jesus. As she was unable to change her husband's mind, she made the best use of the time during which her dear child was yet to be left in her charge, by instructing her in the blessed truths of the Gospel, spending many hours with her over the word in her private chamber, where mother and daughter often wept and prayed together. Although Charlotte does not seem to have been brought to know the Lord at this time, the teaching, *prayers*, and tears of her affectionate Christian mother were not to remain unfruitful. God never forgets the prayer of faith. Christ, his own dear Son, has pledged *himself* that the request made in his name shall be granted. *This* the Father never can forget. Oh that this simple, yet all-important, truth were ever present to the minds of those who love his name! At the early age of thirteen, Charlotte was torn from her dear mother's arms, and taken by her father to the nunnery of Jouarre. There, in accordance with the gloomy system of Romanism, her ~~hair~~ was cut away, her dress was changed to coarse linen and haircloth, a cord was tied around her waist, and with downcast looks and heavy heart she trod the stone-bound cloisters by day, and rested at night on the floor of her tomb-like cell. A few years passed away; her loving mother had fallen asleep in Jesus; and, beset on every side by false teaching and example,

Charlotte began to be not only in some measure reconciled to her condition, but partly to believe that her self-denial and sufferings were well-pleasing to God, and that the reward of a life of such useless seclusion would be certain glory in heaven. But her mother's prayers, though almost obliterated from her memory, were not forgotten before God. The time was at hand for the long-looked-for answer to be given, and that, too, when, according to all appearance, the nun of Jouarre was quite established in self-righteousness; for she had obtained so high a character for piety and self-denial, that, although still very young, she had been raised to the lofty position of Lady Abbess, and head of the whole convent.

Suddenly, light entered the nunnery of Jouarre in the form of Protestant tracts. The Lady Abbess read them, and their teachings revived in her memory the loving words which her departed mother had spoken long years before in her private chamber at home. The large Bible, and the truths read from it by a voice now silent in the grave, the prayers, the tears, the exhortations, the happiness of her childhood, all came back again as fresh as if but of yesterday. The Spirit aroused conviction in her heart, and she fled as a lost sinner to the cross of Christ. Counting her own righteousness but as filthy rags, she looked to the blood of Christ as alone able to put away her sins; and as the blind man rejoices when his eyes behold the sun, so did the Abbess of Jouarre when the light of the Gospel beamed brightly on her soul. Charlotte de Bour-

bon was saved! But now how was she to escape her gilded chains as Lady Abbess of the Romish convent? For a nun to leave a convent in those days, and "return to the world," as it was called, was certain death, and that, too, by one of the most cruel methods that religiousness could devise. When recaptured, the unhappy prisoner was first subjected to a mock trial before a secret tribunal of monks, and then carried to a dungeon where a niche in the wall had been previously prepared, in which she was placed with a loaf of bread and jug of water, and a wall being built up in front, she was literally entombed alive, and left to perish miserably! Skeletons have been found from time to time thus entombed in the crumbling walls of ruined monasteries. How, then, should Charlotte de Bourbon escape? In this, too, her mother's prayers were to prove effectual. It was in the year 1572 that the noise of battle was heard around Jouarre. It came nearer—nearer—to the very doors of the convent. In vain did the nuns supplicate their images; the gates were assailed by an infuriated soldiery; they yielded; and the nuns, driven in terror from their cloistered home, sought a temporary shelter in the neighbouring woods. Charlotte de Bourbon was free! The proud self-will of her ducal father had imprisoned her there, but her gentle mother's prayers had "burst the gates of brass, and smitten the bars of iron in sunder." Not all the power of Romish superstition, with a Bourbon to back it, could hinder the accomplishment of a lonely *Christian* mother's prayer

for her helpless child. Vain had been all the efforts of the adversary to destroy the seed sown in secret by a mother's voice, and watered by her tearful supplications; vain the enticements of a gaudy religiousness; vain the stone walls and iron gratings of the gloomy convent: "the snare was broken, and the prisoner escaped!"

Adopting various disguises, she fled through France. Her peril was great: detection was death, or lifelong imprisonment; and often was she on the eve of being discovered, but her mother's prayers were her protection still. After many narrow escapes, she at last reached Heidelberg, where there were Christians glad to receive and able to protect her from the baffled rage of the Romish priesthood, and the vengeance of an angry and bigoted parent. Here she made a public renunciation of the Romish religion. It grieved her to the heart to disappoint her father's wishes and purposes thus, but she was supported by that word, "Whoso loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me." That a lady abbess, the daughter of a duke, and of the royal house of France, should thus sacrifice everything for the truth's sake, and contentedly enter into obscurity, was a cause of joy to those who loved the Lord, while it was a source of bitter disappointment to the pride of the Bourbons. But she was not long allowed to remain in the obscurity she had willingly sought. William, Prince of Orange, had heard of her piety, and the sacrifices she had made; and being himself a Protestant, he sought and obtained her hand in

marriage. Thus raised to a position higher than that she had resigned for the Lord's sake, she became an example alike to the noble ladies of her court and the lowly mothers in their families ; and if the meekness, charity, and devotion, which characterized the whole after-life of Charlotte de Bourbon were blessed to any, it too was traceable to the teaching and prayers of that mother who, in her childhood, had sought to lead her to him who said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not."

As Princess of Orange, and the highest lady of rank in the Netherlands, she had a wide sphere of opportunity for adorning her Christian profession, and thus giving glory to him who had loved her, and bought her with his precious blood. And when at last the time of her departure arrived, she resigned her spirit into his hands with a confidence and an assured hope which nothing but faith in that blood could give. Surely a Christian mother's prayers proved an unspeakable blessing to the Abbess of Jouarre !

It will interest the reader to know that she was an ancestress of our present Queen. Her daughter, Louisa, was the wife of Frederick the Fourth, the Elector Palatine of the Rhine, and grandmother to Sophia, Duchess of Brunswick, who was the mother of George the First of England, whose great-grandson, the Duke of Kent, was the father of Queen Victoria. Thus the sovereign of Great Britain derives her descent from one who, but for a mother's prayers, might have lived and died the Abbess of Jouarre !

THE LITTLE LEPER.

2 Kings v. 13.

“WASH and be clean,” I hear it cried,
And some with joy obey;
While others, filled with sinful pride,
Are seen to turn away.

But open, Lord, mine eyes to see
Those precious streams of Life in thee,
In which there’s cleansing e’en for me,
The little leper.

“Wash and be clean:” the words are sweet,
And suited to a child.
And each the offer may repeat
To such as are defiled.
And those who wash, for God are fit;
The blood, it cleanses every whit,
E’n *me*, if I am washed in it—
The little leper.

“Wash and be clean:” the stream is nigh,
I have not far to go,
For though the Lamb of God’s on high,
I have his word below;
The Bible bids me not refuse
To hear and love the happy news,
That Jesus cleanses and subdues
The little leper.

“Wash and be clean:” ’tis quickly done,
So simple is the way;
One look of faith at God’s dear Son
Would cleanse this very day.
And I, without a spot of sin,
To Paradise might enter in,
And sing his praise who came to win
The little leper.

FRAGMENTS ON SCRIPTURE LANDS.

SPINNING.

The wool, flax, or other material, having been duly prepared, and having been sometimes dyed, was, in ancient Greece, rolled into a ball, not made tightly, but sufficiently loose to be easily drawn out by the spinner's hand. The upper part of the distaff was then inserted into this mass of flax or wool, and the lower part was held under the left arm, in such a position as was most convenient for the purpose. While the fibres were drawn out they were spirally twisted, chiefly with the forefinger and thumb of the right hand, and the thread thus produced was wound upon the spindle until there was as much as it would carry. The spindle was a stick of 10 or 12 inches long, having at the top a slit, or catch, so that the thread being fixed in it, might, as it was formed, be carried down by the weight of the spindle. Its lower extremity was inserted into a small wheel, which was made of wood, stone, or metal, its use being to keep the spindle more steady, and to aid its rotation. The spinner occasionally twisted the spindle with her right hand, so as to twist the thread more completely; and whenever, by its continual prolongation, it let down the spindle to the ground, she took it out of the slit, wound it upon the spindle, and, having replaced it in the slit, she drew out and twisted another length" (Prov. xxxi. 13—19; Exod. xxxv. 25, 26).

RED POTTAGE.

“Feed me, I pray thee, with that same red pottage, for I am faint.”

Genesis xxv. 30.

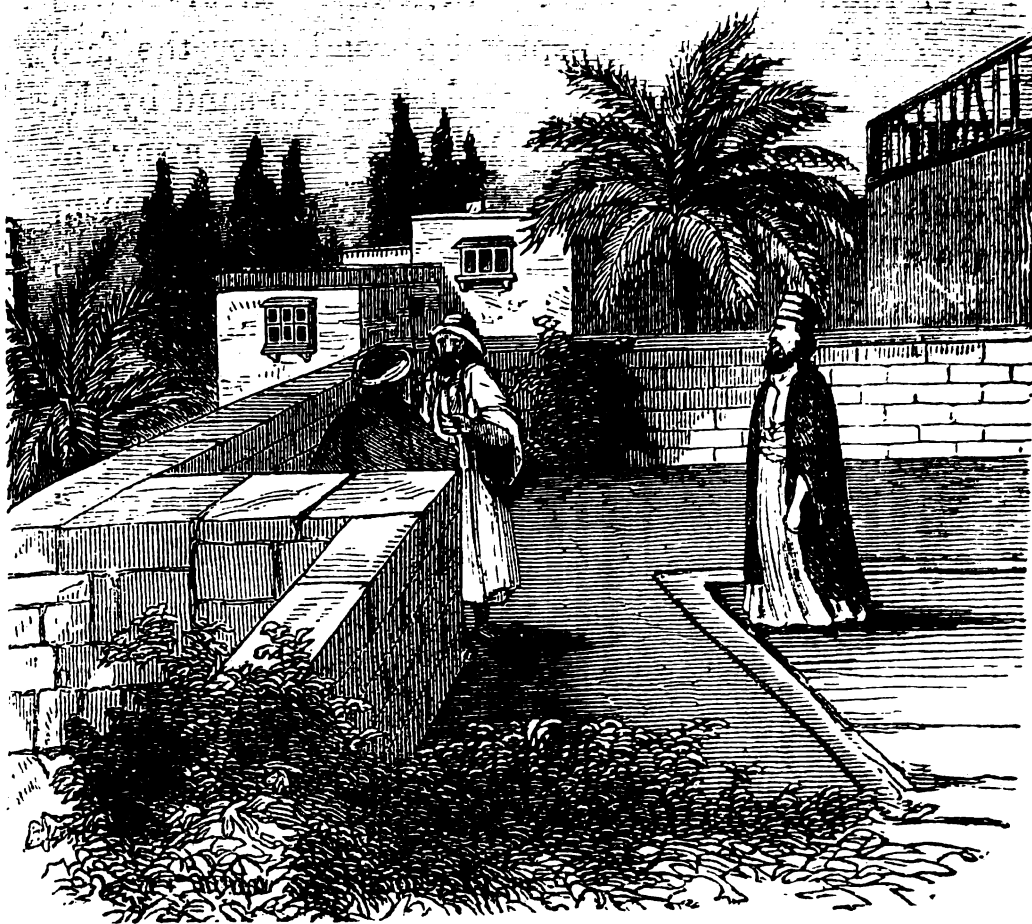
“As it was Lent, the monks (of the Chaldean monastery of Rabban, or St. Hormuzd) were unprovided with meat, but I received with much thankfulness a bowl of red lentils, made into pottage, and called Ades. This is evidently the same with the *Adesh* of the Scriptures, the word used in the original Hebrew to signify the red pottage for which Esau sold his birthright to his brother Jacob. The Ades in question was savoury in the extreme, and its odour very tempting to a hungry man. Its taste resembled exceedingly that well-known luxury of sailors, pea-soup.”—*Fletcher's Nineveh*.



WHITE ASSES.

“Speak, ye that ride on white asses.”—Judges v. 10.

“The white asses of Bagdad are much esteemed in the east,” says Mr. Layard. “Some are of considerable size, and, when fancifully dyed with henna, their tails and ears bright red, and their bodies spotted like an heraldic talbot with the same colour, they bear the chief priests and the men of the law, as they appear to have done from the earliest times. The judges of England, before the reign of Mary, were accustomed, not to ride upon horses, but mules. Cardinal Wolsey rode a mule, as did also other dignified ecclesiastics of his age.



EASTERN HOUSETOP.

HIDDEN BY THE WINE-PRESS.

CHAPTER V.—MERCY.

THE Lord's gracious "ways" had fitted his chosen instrument at last for the work before him; his "acts" had separated even the Abi-ezrites from the religious evil they were in. "*Then Jerubbaal, who is Gideon, and all the people that were with him, rose up early, and pitched by the well of Harod.*" Unconsciously, perhaps, they take up the position which in a moral

sense belonged to Israel, for they were "above," while their enemies were "beneath" them in the valley—a countless host spread abroad over the face of the earth; their very camels "as the sand by the sea-side for multitude," while the little army of Israelites, not much exceeding thirty thousand men, were all that could be mustered to meet the foe. Yet, small as that number was, it was too great for the Lord to deliver the Midianites into their hand. He must have all the glory, as was surely most fitting, for who but He could, or would, have *made* a way whereby his own grace might flow down to those who had gotten so low as to seem almost beyond the reach of mercy—much more of blessing? Their condition had indeed been most hopeless, yet notwithstanding this, the rebound from such a state to one of victory and triumph would, ~~after the first~~ flush of gratitude, stir up the natural and irradicable pride of the heart, and the very vileness grace had so signally passed over, would but hasten the conclusion, "Mine own hand hath saved me."

"And the Lord said unto Gideon, The people that are with thee are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel vaunt themselves against me, saying, Mine own hand hath saved me." "Lest Israel *vaunt themselves against me!*" Is it possible, some might ask, that man could be capable of a thing so vile, so shameful, under circumstances so signally gracious? Alas, yes! No word more true than that "The heart is deceitful above all things, and *desperately wicked*; who can know it?" Who,

indeed! Believers are not unfrequently humbled at the discoveries they make, as they go on, of the evil of their own hearts; and when the effect of such discovery is heightened by the false teaching of such as insist upon "perfection in the flesh," the mischief is often very great. "I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing," is the sorrowful confession of every child of God; but he should know also that he is "not in the flesh, but in the spirit," and that there is "no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." Nothing like a sense of *grace* to "bind the wandering heart" to him to whom we owe so much. "Under grace," and conscious of it, the believer finds that practically "sin shall not have dominion over" him. But under the humanly-invented principle of "perfection in the flesh," or any other principle of law, he is weak indeed. The blessed light of truth, which would gladden his eyes, "strengthen him with strength in his soul," and "make straight paths for his feet," is shut out from him, and, aiming at the impossible, conscious of failure, and cast down by it, he stumbles on in the darksome way that man has made for him.

"The Lord has given me up, and I am lost!" was once the bitter exclamation of a child of God, who, very shortly after her conversion, was startled by some fresh discovery of the depravity of the old nature. "The Lord has given me up, or I never *could* be so bad;" and for several *weeks* she could neither read the word nor pray, nor did she even feel any desire to do so. Wretched in the extreme, seeing no hope in any

direction, oppressed by a sense of sin and distance from God, she went about, as she described it "like one in a dream." At last, one day, as she was listlessly turning over the leaves of her Bible, her eye fell upon a passage which went like an arrow to her soul. In a moment she was on her knees, and with a heart broken by superabounding grace, and with a flood of tears, she poured out her confession at her Father's feet. "It is twenty years ago now," she said, in closing her narration, "and from that hour to this, I have *never fallen into the same offence* which brought me into such terrible despair, although I know that in myself I am as bad as ever, but *grace* has held me up." Yes, "under grace," she, and not sin, had the dominion thenceforth.

Well had it been for Israel, as they mustered on Mount Gilead to the standard of Jerubbaal, had they understood the grace that had led them there; but whatever *he* had learned of its "blest ways," they had only known the "acts" of the Lord, and, like those who saw his miracles long afterwards (John. ii. 23, 24), were ready to rebel against him at any moment. Yet, knowing they were capable of such insolent ingratitude and wickedness, he still goes on with them unhindered in his purposes of love and compassion, resolved to save them from their enemies, but going about also to preserve them from themselves, anticipating, and guarding them from their own terrible evil! Twice were their numbers reduced, the first time by a test applied to faith, the second time to character. At the proclamation that

every man who was "fearful and afraid" should depart early from Mount Gilead, two-thirds of the little army fell away! How much Gideon's heart must have sunk within him at the sight, as "twenty and two thousand" availed themselves of a permission which was as kind as it was wise, and forsook the camp, the nation, and the Lord!

But ten thousand stout hearts still remained, and, without doubt, their faith tested by the defection of so many in the face of such an overwhelming host as that which lay encamped beneath them, gave glory to God. Yet for their *own* sakes their number must again be lessened, "lest Israel vaunt themselves" against the Lord, and so fall afterwards into greater mischief than that he was about to deliver them out of. Brought down to the water, all who bowed down on their knees to drink, drinking greedily, were dismissed. Even though men of faith and courage, the self-indulgent were not permitted to serve the Lord in this emergency; that honour was reserved for the far smaller company of the three hundred, who "lapped as a dog lappeth," and who, though not necessarily men of greater faith, or more courageous, appear to have possessed one characteristic all-important in service—they were more *self-denying*, less attentive to the calls of appetite and ease, content to meet the *necessary* demands of the body, but no more. At all events, they were the lesser number, and by using them, the Lord would take away all possible opportunity or occasion from Israel to say hereafter "Mine own hand hath saved me."

And now the gracious Lord turns his attention once more to his young servant, Gideon. That he was cast down by the defection of more than two-thirds of those who, at the trumpet's call, had gathered to his standard, we can hardly doubt. It was as "Jerubbaal" (the "*Trier of Baal*," as the Arabs translate it), that they had been "with him," and because he loved Jehovah, and his people Israel, his heart had no doubt rejoiced to see so many "come up to the help of the Lord against the mighty," so many gathered out of the religiousness of the grove and the altar of Baal. It must, therefore, have saddened his inmost soul to see them "fearful and afraid," forsake the place they had taken and the testimony he had set up, and return to their homes, there to hide in secret till there was nothing for them to do but to share the blessing won by the toil of their brethren. No doubt it tried the love, the faith, the patience, of this servant of the Lord, as such things do. It may be, too, that *numbers* had occupied a place in his eye and heart, which belonged only to his Master; and, more than this, it may well have been that a subtle selfishness had crept in and mingled with the gladness with which he saw so many "called after him," as the servant of Jehovah. Was there no corner of the heart where self sat exultant, that *he* had been "used" to gather out more than thirty thousand from the ruin they were in? Ah! the servant needs to sift the joy he feels, and watch the tone and character of the very praises that he offers up when *he* is used of his gracious Master.

How gracious to bear with all that he can see commingling with our services, and even our thanksgivings, we shall never know till "that day;" nor perhaps fully even then; only that the crown of glory and the "white stone, and the new name written," and many a reward beside, will enhance the value of *the blood* beyond all power of praise, though sounded forth by harps of gold of God's own giving.

"And it came to pass the same night that the Lord said unto him, Arise, get thee down unto the host; for I have delivered it into thine hand." Those "same nights" must have been very precious to Gideon's memory in after years. It was on the "same night" belonging to the day in which he had built an altar to Jehovah-Shalom that the Lord stooped to employ him as his servant. It was in the night, when bowed under a sense of responsibility, failure, and weakness, that HE gave him the reassuring sign he had asked at his gracious hands; and again repeated it in another form on the night following. And now, [if it were needful for Israel's sake, to bring their numbers down almost to nothing, the Lord would not that his dear servant's faith should be brought down too. If he had reduced the means, he would increase the power of him who was to employ them. If Gideon was "cast down" by the events of the day, the Lord would not leave him so, but "the same night," unasked, would speak assurance to his heart, turn his eye from the numbers lost to him, the mere handful left, the stupendous difficulty yet before him, full upon HIM-

SELF. "I HAVE DELIVERED the host into thine hand." This should have been enough. But Gideon was still afraid to go down to the assault of the foe with the little band of three hundred men, notwithstanding all the promises of the Lord, and all that he had known of his most gracious ways! How deep, how very deep, must have been his sense of his need of *mercy* under these circumstances! Had not the Lord from the beginning told him, "Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Medianites as one man"? Had he not twice granted him a sign that he *would* save Israel by his hand? Had he not said, even on this "same night," "I *have* delivered the host into thine hand"? And was Gideon still afraid? Yes; and the Lord knew it. His loving eye was on his poor weak servant that "same night;" his gracious heart yearned over him. The insult to himself, involved in doubts and fears, which should have vanished at the word "I *have* delivered," his grace passes by, and instead of sharply reproving him, he shows him mercy, meets the fears his servant dared not express, and by his "pitifulness" seeks to raise him out of his depression, comfort, "strengthen, stablish, settle" him. "But if thou *fear to go down*, go thou with Phurah, thy servant, down to the host: and thou shalt hear what they say; and afterward shall thine hands be strengthened to go down unto the host." This was mercy indeed, *following*, as it did, the declaration "I *have* delivered," which should have been received at once, without an instant's doubt or hesitation. It is

very sweet to see the ways that patient grace can take with weakness. "Whoso is wise and will observe these things, even they shall understand the lovingkindness of the Lord."


LITTLE MINNIE TO THE LITTLE ONES.

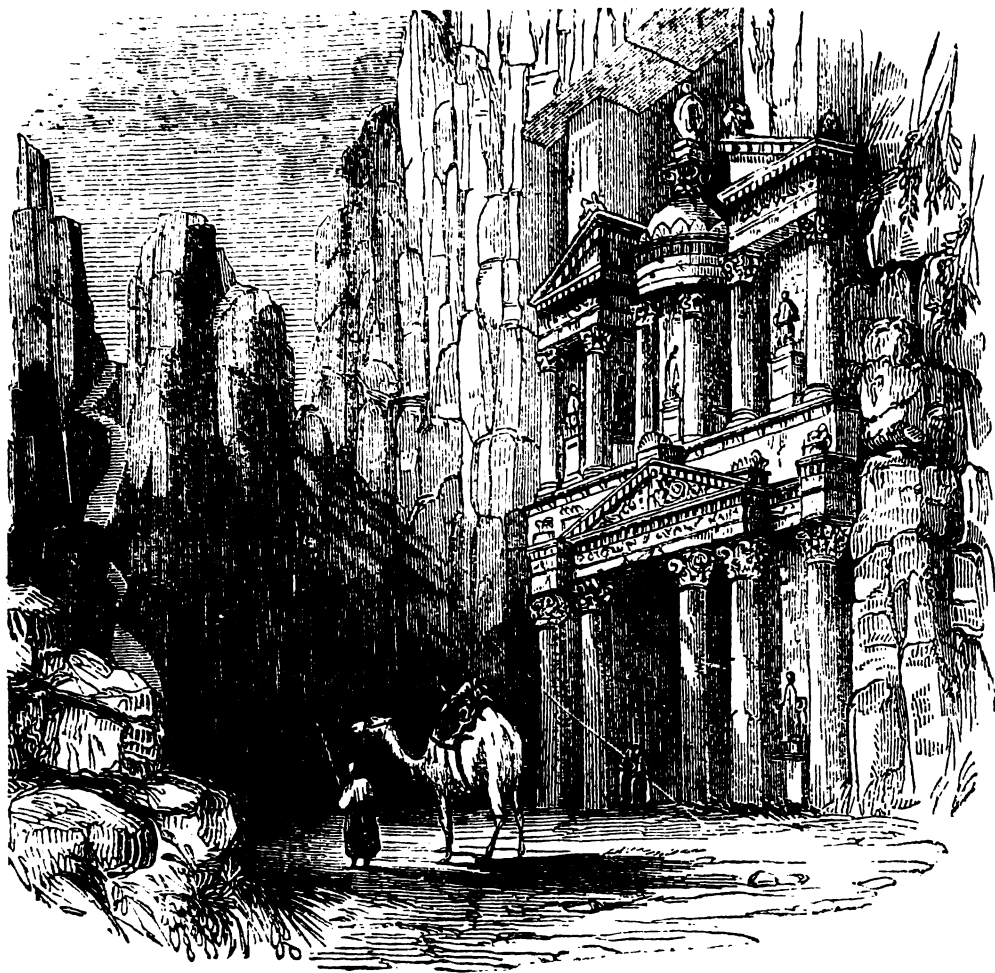
A DEAR little girl, only about eight years of age, living in Germany, was lately brought to Christ. A young friend wrote to her wishing her "A happy New Year." Quite of her own accord, although so young, she wrote back to tell her friend how *very happy God had made her*, begging her to come to Jesus, and own herself a sinner. How much I should like to see that letter, shouldn't you? Written by such a little hand, written in German, too, and pleading with a little friend to come to Jesus; it must indeed be a pleasant sight to look upon. Well, we have not got the letter, but we have some of the words that were in it, and I will tell you presently what they were. When people are anxious about their sins, whether they are big people or little people, they sometimes think that the Lord is *unwilling* to have anything to do with them; and even though they see other persons rejoicing in Christ, they can take no comfort. Why not? Because they think that, perhaps, those who are rejoicing in Christ were never so bad as they, or that they were more earnest in seeking the Lord, or that there was some-

thing in them, or about them, that made the difference; in short, that somehow or other they were *better worth having*, and so Christ was more willing to have them. Now, I have seen a great many anxious sinners, in a good many different places, in widely differing circumstances, young and old, clever and simple, educated and ignorant, and have often found that these two thoughts were common among them: namely, that the Lord was unwilling to have them, although they were willing to have him; and that those who are happy in the Lord, were, for some reason, better worth having than themselves. But this dear little girl could have had very little experience about other peoples' thoughts and feelings on this subject; yet hear now what she says to her young friend. After entreating her to come to Jesus, this is the way she pleads: "*Jesus is so willing to save you. I was not worth having more than you; NONE OF US ARE WORTH ANYTHING, BUT HE IS SO FULL OF GRACE.*" Every word in this little sentence is full of truth and meaning, aye, and wisdom, too, because it so perfectly meets the thoughts of many hearts. "*Jesus is so willing to save*" even *you*, dear little reader, and will you hang back? How sad to think that you should do so! But perhaps you will say "*I am willing.*" Well, then, only believe little Minnie's testimony, and the thing is done. Better still, only believe the Lord Jesus himself, "*Come unto me . . . and I WILL give you rest.*" Believe, go, and you are saved! Now, at once, believe him, for "*he is so full of grace.*" Why, then, should you wait another

moment? You are not worth having? Very true; "none of us are worth anything," how can we be? But "he is so FULL of grace." You have been worse than little Minnie? Very likely; yet, for all that, she declares that she "was not worth having more than you," only "he is so full of GRACE." You are little, and afraid, and don't know what to say to him when you go? No matter, "HE IS SO FULL OF GRACE." Only try him now, at once, and you will surely find that little Minnie spoke the truth when she said, "Jesus is *so* willing to save you," for "he is so *full* of *grace*." Happy little Minnie! Thou art young, indeed, to be a preacher of the Gospel, but "out of the mouths of babes and sucklings he hath perfected praise." Many an eye will see your words, and many a heart receive them, because he in whom thou hast believed is still, towards all, "so FULL OF GRACE."

"I wish," said little Minnie, speaking to a Christian friend, "I wish that everybody *I* love, and everybody *you* love, and everybody *any of us* loves and prays for, would be converted now directly; and then THE LORD WOULD COME TO TAKE US ALL TOGETHER TO HIMSELF!" What a precious thought for a little child of eight!





PETRA.

THE CLEANSING BLOOD.

A VISITOR among the poor was one day climbing the broken staircase which led to a garret in one of the worst parts of London, when his attention was arrested by a man of peculiarly ferocious and repulsive countenance, who stood upon the landing-place, leaning with folded arms against the wall. There was something about the man's appearance which made the

visitor shudder, and his first impulse was to go back. He made an effort, however, to get into conversation with him, and told him that he came there with the desire to do him good, and to see him happy, and that the book he held in his hand contained the secret of all happiness.

The ruffian shook him off as if he had been a viper, and bade him begone with his nonsense, or he would kick him downstairs. While the visitor was endeavouring, with gentleness and patience, to argue the point with him, he was startled by hearing a feeble voice, which appeared to come from behind one of the broken doors that opened upon the landing, saying, "Does your book tell of 'the blood which cleanseth from all sin?'" For the moment the visitor was too absorbed in the case of the hardened sinner to answer the inquiry, and it was repeated in urgent and thrilling tones, "Tell me, oh, tell me, does your book tell of 'the blood which cleanseth from all sin?'" The visitor pushed open the door, and entered the room. It was a wretched place, wholly destitute of furniture, except a three-legged stool and a bundle of straw in a corner, upon which were stretched the wasted limbs of an aged woman. When the visitor entered, she raised herself upon one elbow, fixed her eyes eagerly upon him, and repeated her former question, "Does your book tell of 'the blood which cleanseth from all sin?'" He sat down upon the stool beside her, and inquired, "My poor friend, what do you want to know of 'the blood that cleanseth from all sin?'" There was some-

thing fearful in the energy of her voice and manner as she replied, "What do I want to know of it! Man, I am dying; I am going to stand naked before God. I have been a wicked woman—a very wicked woman, all my life. I shall have to answer for everything I have done." And she groaned bitterly, as the thought of a lifetime's iniquity seemed to cross her soul. "But once," she continued, "once, years ago, I came by the door of a church, and I went in, I don't know what for, I was soon out again; but one word I heard there I have never forgot. It was something about 'blood which cleanseth from all sin.' Oh, if I could hear of it now! Tell me, tell me, if there is anything about that blood in your book." The visitor answered by opening his Bible and reading the first chapter of the first epistle of John. The poor creature seemed to devour the words, and when he paused, she exclaimed, "Read more, read more." He read the second chapter. A slight noise made him look round; the savage ruffian had followed him into his mother's room, and, though his face was partly turned away, the visitor could perceive tears rolling down his cheeks. The visitor read the third, fourth, and fifth chapters before he could get his poor listener to consent that he should stop, and then she would not let him go till he had promised to come the next day. He never from that time missed a day reading to her, until she died, six weeks afterwards; and very blessed it was to see how, almost from the first, she seemed to find peace by believing in Jesus. Every day the son followed the visitor into his

mother's room, and listened in silence, but not in indifference. On the day of her funeral he beckoned him to one side as they were filling up the grave, and said, "Sir, I have been thinking that there is nothing I should so much like, as to spend the rest of my life in telling others of 'the blood which cleanseth from all sin.'"

Thus the mother and her son were saved; the one to "depart, and be with Christ," the other to remain yet a little longer in the wilderness, "to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven."

The despairing woman in her hopeless, helpless misery, was snatched almost at the last moment from eternal woe by infinite pity; the morose and bitter opposer of Christ was brought to his feet, and changed into the zealous messenger of his grace! The one is taken home, to be for ever happy with the Lord; the other is permitted the precious privilege of serving for a "little while," that so, beside salvation, he might, through grace, if faithful, have reward in that day. How gracious is all this! Who cannot see that it was the Lord who led his servant, just at the critical moment, to ascend that broken staircase, to assuage the anguish of that deathbed, and to meet and answer the question which stirred her inmost soul as to "the blood that cleanseth from all sin?"

Who shall tell what she suffered till that question was answered? What must have been her remorse to think that she was once on the eve of hearing all about that precious blood, but madly turned away, and

would not hear! As she tossed upon that bed of pain, her mental agony must have been very similar to that which we may suppose THE LOST endure, who have *rejected Christ*. We can well imagine the bitterness of her self-reproach, the intolerable anguish, the terrible despair that must have wrung her heart! It was probably this that had driven her son from the room—the scene was too terrible even for his morose and savage nature. Oh, reader, if you are *not* saved, be warned in time; for this day—now, while you read—you have either received Christ, or you have *rejected him*! You know more than this woman knew about “the blood that cleanseth from all sin,” your responsibility is, therefore, greater than hers. Think but for a moment; *you may be on the very eve of passing through* what she endured before the messenger of mercy came! And since you have, if not already saved, gone even further than she went in regarding Christ, who shall say that mercy would be offered you? “The blood of Jesus Christ, God’s Son, cleanseth us from all sin.”



A VOICE FROM THE SEA.

AT page 85 of GOOD NEWS, some incidents connected with the wreck of the emigrant ship, the *London*, were given, and painful incidents they were, showing the sad, sad consequences of being but one moment *too late*. What the eternal condition of those there referred to may be, is known to the Lord only. The solemn secret has gone with them down into the

fathomless ocean, where the sea shall keep it, either till the Lord shall come, or until that awful hour when "the sea shall give up the dead that are in it," after the end of the thousand years. But of some we know more. When the condition of the storm-beaten ship had become hopeless, and death was inevitable to her crew and passengers, there was one sitting calmly down, engaged in writing a letter, as a last message, to surviving friends in England. It is thought an act of courage to storm the breach—to rush fearlessly up to the very cannon's mouth—to dash headlong upon the serried ranks of an enemy—to walk calmly to a martyr's death on the scaffold; but to sit down, and write amid the roar of winds and waves, the rocking of the ship, the rush of many footsteps overhead, the mingled cries of crew and passengers, some in prayer, some crying aloud in an agony of fear—to hold a pen with a steady hand, and write a deliberate farewell in the very face of instant and violent death, *this* was a courage altogether above and beyond the powers of mere nature. Not all the courage of the soldier, nor the boasted stoicism of a "vain philosophy" has ever equalled this. Yet this was done on board the *London* at the moment when all hope was gone, and while preparations were being made to save a few in the only boat that lived to reach the shore. The writer *knew* he should not go off in the boat—he knew he must die; but his heart yearned towards those he had left behind in England; he would fain say goodbye to them if it were possible; and, more than this, he longed to

leave a testimony behind him to the blessedness, even in such extremity, of faith in Christ as the Saviour of the sinner. This he has done; and the letter, cast into the boat as it left the ship and all who were in it to certain death, into which they were in the very act of sinking, as the writer, with the last effort of love, threw it from him, comes as a VOICE FROM THE SEA to all. The hand that penned it has gone down into the fathomless abyss; the poor body, so sorely tried in that terrible storm, there waits the "little while," till the trumpet shall sound; the soul, that is so sweetly rested on the Rock, whence not all the rage of the tempest could tear it, is "with Christ;" but the VOICE is here before you, reader, calling to you, as it were, from the depths of the ocean, to believe in the Saviour of sinners, inviting you to consider the blessedness of those who can say as the writer says, "Blessed be God, I am *resting on the Rock*. I know in whom I have believed. Christ is precious to me." Consider the circumstances under which these words were penned. Could the strictest attention to that vague category called "moral and religious duties"—could the greatest integrity, the most blameless life before men—could anything short of faith in the finished work of the Son of God, assured forgiveness through the blood of Christ, have given the writer such peace in such a solemn, trying hour? No; impossible! You feel this instinctively. But you think, perhaps, he may have been a better Christian—as some express it—than others. Not so. He deplores opportunities

lost, and mourns over his past indifference to the spiritual welfare of others. No. Within, without, in the past or present, there is not a shred for hope to cling to. *Nothing but Christ*. Yet he is so all-sufficient, that he can *bless God* as he sinks into the fathomless sea, amid the roar of the tempest, the shrieks of the dying, the pitiless rush of the overwhelming waves! The Gospel of Christ is indeed “the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth;” and it would be hard to find a more striking testimony to its sufficiency than this letter,* written in such a scene, and in the very face of such a death. May it be owned of God to many, that he who was “precious” to the writer may be glorified, and the desire of the writer’s heart fulfilled—“if by any means I might save some.”

Steamship “London.”

My dear Brother,—Before your eyes will look on this, your brother Frederick and I will be engulfed in the depths of the sea. We left Plymouth on the 6th. The weather was then stormy, but not such as to render any fear of danger. However, as we proceeded, the gale increased, and while I am penning these few lines, the awful rocking of the vessel is such, that it is with the utmost difficulty I can hold my pen. I cannot describe to you the state of agitation which is written on every countenance; some waiting, with the utmost composure, their fate, others so alarmed at the prospect of death, that their shrieks are truly heartrending. But amidst all, I am resigned to my fate. BLESSED BE GOD, I AM

* Published in the form of a little book, by F. A. Ford, Upper Street, Islington, London.

RESTING ON THE ROCK. I KNOW IN WHOM I HAVE BELIEVED. CHRIST IS PRECIOUS TO ME. I do not know whether by any means you will receive this. Oh that I could see all those with whom I have been acquainted! I mourn now over my indifference towards their spiritual welfare; and now, with death staring me in the face, I feel that I could do anything if by any means I might save some. Tell Sarah not to neglect the salvation of her soul. Tell Joseph to give his heart to the Saviour at once. I want to meet all in heaven. And now, my dear brother, farewell. Many have been the happy meetings we have had together on earth; our next meeting will be, I trust, where not a wave of trouble shall roll over us. I cannot say any more. God bless you, and keep you.

Your affectionate brother,

GEORGE THOMPSON.

HAPPY NANCY AND HER SECRET.

IN an old brown cottage in a rural neighbourhood there once lived a solitary woman. Alone in the world, so far as family or relatives were concerned, half blind, lame, deformed, and earning a scanty subsistence by means of her little garden, knitting, and spinning, she was nevertheless so remarkable for cheerful contentment as to be known everywhere from village to village by the name of "Happy Nancy."

She was a child of God by faith in Christ Jesus. Her sins, by his precious blood, were washed away: "being justified by faith, she had peace with God." But this was not all. Great and all-important as it is

to have sin forgiven—to have peace *with* God, Happy Nancy had not stayed there, but had gone on to know and enjoy the *peace of God* which passeth all understanding, and which so kept her heart and mind by Christ Jesus that she always displayed the same equal, happy frame, whatever her outward condition or circumstances.

“Well, Nancy,” would the chance visitor say as he stopped at her door, “so you are singing again?”

“Oh yes! I’m for ever at it.”

“I wish you’d tell me your secret, Nancy. You are all alone; you work hard; you have nothing very pleasant in your surroundings;—what is the reason you’re so happy?”

“Perhaps,” replied Nancy, “it is because I haven’t got *anybody but the Lord*. You see rich folks like you depend upon their families and their houses; and they are mighty afraid of troubles ahead, too. I aint got nothing to trouble myself about, *because I leave it all to the Lord*.”

“Well, but, Nancy, suppose a frost should come after your fruit trees are all in blossom, and your little plants out; suppose——”

“But I don’t suppose,” replied Nancy; “I never can suppose. I don’t want to suppose but that the Lord will do everything right. That’s what makes you people unhappy; you’re all the time supposing. Now, why can’t you wait till the suppose comes, as I do, and then make the best of it?”

Perhaps because some of those she thus addressed were not in a *position* to do so; possibly because

others may not have been in a *condition* to do as she did. As to the first, only those who are in the place of nearness to God—only those who are “made nigh,” are in a *position* to confide in him. Nominal Christianity does not confer this privilege on any. Morality, religiousness, integrity, uprightness, amiability—all these are utterly vain to make nigh to God. It is by the blood of Christ, and through faith in him alone, that the sinner is set in that blessed place in which he may confide in God, as a child in a loving, gracious Father, “who spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all,” and who assuredly will “with him also freely give us all things.” These only have by grace a claim on his fatherly care; these alone *can* trust him. But even of those who are in this blessed place of nearness to God, there are not a few who find it impossible to imitate Happy Nancy’s example. They plead circumstances, and no doubt the circumstances of some are more trying than those of others. Natural character, too, has not a little to do with cheerfulness of disposition, and comparative freedom from care, or their opposites. Disease has even more to do with it, and not unfrequently produces a degree of despondency which, as in the case of the poet Cowper, is often distressing to witness. Nevertheless, these are but secondary causes after all; and though varying in degree, it is *possible* to rise above them.

“BUT ONE THING IS NEEDFUL.”

If “careful and troubled about *many* things,” how can the believer enjoy peace in a wilderness which,

however pleasant it may *seem* to sense, is like a labyrinth of rose trees—*full of thorns*.

Happy Nancy's secret lay in *unhindered communion*, and is expressed in the words, "I haven't anybody but the Lord." He filled her eye and her heart too. With him she walked continually. Ignorant of much that more intelligent believers are acquainted with, and probably quite incapable of communicating even the little that she did know, she was happy in this, that whatever else she lacked, she "*had* the Lord," both *with* her and *for* her (Rom. viii. 17, 31), her one gracious COMPANION, her sole and all-sufficient FRIEND. To him she looked under every condition, *expecting* his gracious interference, but submissive to his will. On his almighty arm she leaned with a whole-hearted confidence, persuaded of his love, "not wanting to suppose but that the Lord would do everything right." Thus careful for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving," she let her requests be made known unto God; and the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, kept her heart and mind by Christ Jesus (Phil. iv. 6, 7). Occupied with himself, those things that are "venerable, just, pure, lovely, and of good report" would fill her thoughts (verse 8), and by consequence shine out in her actions (verse 9). So the "God of peace" was with her, and she was *conscious* of it. "I haven't anybody but the Lord!" Him she had, and because, in her estimation, he was *enough*—her all-in-all—she was "Happy Nancy." Is not this *possible* to every child of God?

THE LORD IS EVER NIGH.

John vi. 16—21.

CONSTRAINED by the Lord to embark,
And venture without him to sea,
The season tempestuous and dark,
How grieved the disciples must be !
But though he remained on the shore,
He spent the night for them in prayer.
They still were as safe as before,
And equally under his care.

They strove, though in vain, for awhile
The force of the waves to withstand ;
But when they were wearied with toil,
They saw their dear Saviour at hand.
They gladly received him on board,
His presence their spirits revived,
The sea became calm at his word,
And soon at their port they arrived.

We, like the disciples, are toss'd
By storms on a perilous deep,
But cannot be possibly lost,
For Jesus has charge of the ship.
Though billows and winds are enraged,
And threaten to make us their sport,
The pilot his word has engaged
To bring us in safety to port.

If sometimes we struggle alone,
And he seems withdrawn from our view,
It makes us hide, willing to own
We nothing without him can do.
Then Satan our hopes would assail,
But Jesus is still within call ;
And when our poor efforts quite fail,
He comes in good time and does all.



CAMELS AT REST.

HIDDEN BY THE WINE-PRESS.

CHAPTER VI.—VICTORY.

THE darkest hour of the night is usually that which immediately precedes the dawning of the day. We find it so in our spiritual history often. How deep is the darkness that settles down upon the converted sinner, “a darkness that may be felt,” just before the blessed light of the Gospel of the grace of God bursts upon his astonished vision! How intense the joy which follows! How like the glad fresh light of early sunrise chasing the shadows of the night away!

And often too, in their after-history, Christians find it so. Sorrows follow thick and fast upon each other—

“They mount up to the heaven,
They go down again to the depths :
Their soul is melted because of trouble.
They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man,
And are at their wit’s end.
Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble,
And he bringeth them out of their distresses.
He maketh the storm a calm,
So that the waves thereof are still.
Then are they glad because they be quiet ;
So he bringeth them to their desired haven.”

It was probably in the shadowless darkness of deepest night that Gideon and Phurah stealthily descended the crags of Gilead, and crept under cover of the gloom towards the outposts of the Midianitish camp. It was a solemn moment for Gideon, solemn as the hour itself. He knew not in the least what was to take place ; in what particular direction, or to what point of the immense camp, he was to go. It lay extended before him through the valley like a boundless sea. The snort of the sleeping camels, which for number were as the sea sand, the stertorous breathing of the slumbering host, countless as “grass-hoppers,” came up and around him on the night wind ; but there was no voice to guide, no hand to lead. The risk he ran of being overheard, as he and his servant crept down the rocks and through the brushwood, where the snapping of a twig, the roll of

a stone, a false step, would have betrayed them to the waking sentinels; the utter uncertainty that surrounded him, the doubts that must have assailed him, even as to the nature of his errand, because of the weakness and fear that it betrayed, must have filled his heart with conflicting emotions. He was going rather by *permission* than in obedience to a command. The Lord had said unto him, "If thou fear to go down [that is, to the assault with three hundred men], go thou with Phurah thy servant down to the host. . . . Then went he down with Phurah his servant," and in doing so acknowledged that he *did* fear to attack the foe with so small a force, although the Lord had said, "I *have* delivered it into thine hand." When the day previously he saw the "twenty and two thousand" confess to being "fearful and afraid," by departing "early in the morning," had his heart sat in judgment on them? If so, what were his thoughts now, as he stole towards the camp? Might not the Lord have sent him on this errand to rebuke and chasten, to teach him forbearance towards others, to check "spiritual pride," to show him how like their's his heart still remained, notwithstanding that he had known exercises, mercies, lovingkindnesses, teachings, such as they had not so much as dreamt of? "They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters; *these* SEE the works of the Lord," others only *hear* of them. And had he seen so much, to find himself at last so like them? Was this a suited errand to a servant of the omnipotent Jehovah, who had already said, "I *have* de-

livered"? Was it a fitting return for all the Lord's "pitifulness" towards him, thus openly to declare his doubts of HIS word? And yet how oft the Lord's people make similar return for all his grace towards them! how oft insult the majesty and truth of their infinitely patient, gracious God! It is an insult to an honest *man* to doubt his word; it is giving him indirectly the lie. The soul shudders at the thought, and yet the heart doubts again and again. But, stranger still, there are not a few who think it *humility* to doubt, and that in a matter of the first importance. How many of God's dear children are there who, in the face of such declarations as, "He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, HATH everlasting life, and SHALL NOT come into condemnation;" "My sheep shall NEVER perish;" "We HAVE redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins," still go on under various senses, doubting, fearing, questioning the fact of an *accomplished* salvation, mourning over sin, praying for forgiveness, drooping like bulrushes by the water-side *over their own image*, instead of looking up at Christ. Yet are they believers, undoubtedly washed from their sins in his blood; not mere professors—persons who have believed to the saving of the soul, "born from above," "new creatures in Christ Jesus." One cannot be in their company long without discovering unquestionable evidence of this fact. "I often hold the telescope with a trembling hand to look wistfully upon the promised inheritance," once said a believer of many years' standing, and a *preacher of*

the Gospel, too, to the writer. What he intended to express was, that he looked *doubtfully* upon his ultimate salvation and entrance upon the promised inheritance. Moreover, he evidently seemed to think that this was but becoming humility. What a mistake! Is it humility to doubt God? Was it humility in Gideon to *need* to have his hand strengthened by a visit to the Midianitish camp *after* the Lord had said, “I *have* delivered”? At what was Gideon looking that he *needed* to be “strengthened” at all? At the three hundred men, at the immense host of Midianites, and *not* at the Lord, or but faintly. At what are such believers looking? At themselves, at their own hearts, their own thoughts, ways, and *experiences*; at the power of the adversary. No wonder they “hold the telescope with a trembling hand.” But why a “telescope”? Is the matter so far off? “The word is *nigh thee*, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart . . . that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou SHALT BE SAVED.” “Ah, that is just it,” some one will exclaim, “I look into my heart to see whether I really do ‘believe,’ and I can get no decided or satisfactory answer.” Nor ever will while you look *there* for evidence. It is not “if thou shalt *believe thine heart*,” for that is “deceitful above all things;” how, then, can its evidence satisfy or give ground of peace? At what should Gideon have looked when the Lord said, “I *have* delivered”? At the word of the Lord; at the assurance thus given

him; at the great and ever-blessed Giver himself. *Then* he would have been in peace as to all the power of the enemy. He would not merely have looked into his heart to see whether he believed or not, but believing, his heart would have reposed upon the word, "I have delivered." And should any doubts have arisen afterwards for the passing moment, one believing glance at that precious word, not at his own heart, would have settled his fears at once and finally. Go, thou trembling saint, and do likewise. Insult the Lord no more with "voluntary humility." Mourning and tears, which have their root in an indomitable self-love, are *not* suited sacrifices, though your own heart may persuade you that they are. Have done with thyself; look outward and upward, and henceforth find rest in HIM whose word declares, as to your salvation, "IT IS FINISHED."

But to return to Gideon. Guided, perhaps, by the light of a watch-fire, he advanced with Phurah towards an outpost of the enemy, and there, concealed behind some rock or intervening tree, he awaited the issue. One of the marauders, who had apparently been just awakened from sleep to take his turn in watching, relates a dream to his fellow. Dream-like, it was strange, inconsistent in its details, improbable. "Behold, I dreamed a dream, and, lo, a cake of barley bread tumbled into the host of Midian, and came unto a tent, and smote it that it fell; and overturned it, that the tent lay along." Who, on hearing such a narration, could see in it aught beyond the strange and fitful fancies of the

brain in sleep? That a cake should prostrate a tent was as unlikely as it seemed to be devoid of meaning; and as Gideon listened, he may well have thought that he had indeed made a mistake in the direction he had taken, and the quarter of the camp he had reached. In danger of his life, if he moved hand or foot to go on or to return, in doubt of the character of his errand, many thoughts must have flashed through his mind: "What shall I do? Whither shall I turn? Had I any business to come at all? Is it thus the Lord would rebuke my folly and unbelief in seeking in the camp of these uncircumcised that strengthening of the hands which I should have found in his own gracious assurances? Are these the chastenings of love? or will they prove to be the pitifulness which grace so tenderly shows to utter weakness?" Has the reader never passed through some such scene as this? If not, he can form but a very faint estimate of the conflict and depression Gideon may well have known, as he lay there stealthily listening to the strange dream of the superstitious Midianite. But how must his heart have leaped within him, when, almost prostrate with self-condemnation, doubt, and misgiving, he heard the dreamer's fellow-soldier say, evidently by the word of the Lord, though a Midianite, "This is nothing, else save the sword of Gideon, the son of Joash, a man of Israel: for into his hand hath God delivered Midian, and all the host." It is when, under a deep sense of failure, we meet with some unlooked-for mercy, some superabounding grace,

that we are most powerfully affected by it. It is thus that grace often sanctifies our very failures, brings good out of evil, "turns the curse into a blessing," and makes that which in itself is a source of sorrow, a cause for praise. That the Lord should go so far out of his way as to cause a Midianite to dream a dream, and another to interpret it, and all to strengthen and rouse to action his poor, weak, hesitating servant; that this should occur just when he was in a situation which declared him unable to repose in simple trust upon the word of the Lord, after all that he had shown him, was grace indeed, and more than Gideon, with all his experience of the Lord's tenderness with weakness, at all expected. It seems to have been the crowning act of all the Lord's patient ways towards him, and to have gone straight to his heart at once. Self was swallowed up, and all the fears that had their root there vanished immediately, and for ever. Henceforth Gideon is another man—bold, resolute, self-forgetful, in very deed a "mighty man of valour." And there, in the darkness close beside the unconscious sentinels, while a strange dread of coming evil starts the cold dews of affright on their swarthy brows, the happy servant of the Lord bows down in heartfelt worship before his gracious God, for "It was so, when Gideon heard the telling of the dream, and the interpretation thereof, that he worshipped, and returned to the host of Israel, and said, Arise; for the Lord HATH delivered into your hand the host of Midian."

LEPROSY.

SAUNTERING down the Jaffa Road, on my approach to the Holy City, in a kind of dreamy maze, with, as I remember, scarcely one distinct idea in my head, I was startled out of my reverie by the sudden apparition of a crowd of beggars, “sans eyes, sans nose, sans hair, sans everything.” They held up towards me their handless arms, unearthly sounds gurgled through throats without palates—in a word, I was horrified. Having never seen a leper nor had my attention drawn to the subject (for, a quarter of a century ago, Jerusalem and its marvels were not so well understood as they are now), I at first knew not what to make of it. I subsequently visited their habitations. It appears that these unfortunate beings have been perpetuated about Jerusalem from the remotest antiquity. Leprosy is not confined to Jerusalem, for I have met with it in different and distant parts of the country. And what is particularly discouraging is, that fresh cases appear from time to time, in which it *seems* to arise spontaneously, without hereditary or any other possible connexion with those previously diseased. The fact, however, has not yet been fully established. It has ever been regarded as a direct punishment from God, and absolutely incurable, except by the same divine power that sent it. God alone could cure the leprosy. It was so understood by Naaman the Syrian, who came from Damascus to Samaria to be cured by Elisha; and when “his flesh came again as the flesh of a

little child," he said, "Behold, now I know that there is no God in all the earth but in Israel."

It is a curious fact that this hideous disease still cleaves to Damascus, the city of Naaman, for there is a mild kind there (which is sometimes cured, or apparently cured) even at this day. I have met with cases, however, where the cure is only temporary, and perhaps it is so in every instance. There is nothing in the entire range of human phenomena which illustrates so impressively the divine power of the Redeemer, and the nature and extent of his work of mercy on man's behalf, as this leprosy. There are many striking analogies between it and that more deadly leprosy of sin, which has involved our race in one common ruin. It is feared as contagious; it is certainly and inevitably hereditary; it is loathsome and polluting; its victim is shunned by all as unclean; it is most deceitful in its action. New-born children of leprous parents are often as pretty and as healthy in appearance as any, but by and by its presence and working become visible in some of the signs described in the 13th chapter of Leviticus.

Medicine has no power to stay the ravages of this fell disease, or even to mitigate sensibly its tortures, and finally the miserable victim sinks into the grave, and disappears.

Who can fail to find in all this, a most affecting type of man's moral leprosy?—*The Land and the Book.*

FRAGMENTS ON SCRIPTURE LANDS.

BUSINESS IN THE GATE.

WE mounted our horses as the moon rose, and resumed our journey, accompanied by a strong escort, which left us when we were within five or six miles of Semil. It was late in the forenoon before we reached our halting-place, after a dreary and fatiguing ride.

We were now fairly in the Assyrian plains; the heat was intense, that heavy heat which seems to paralyse all nature, causing the very air itself to vibrate.

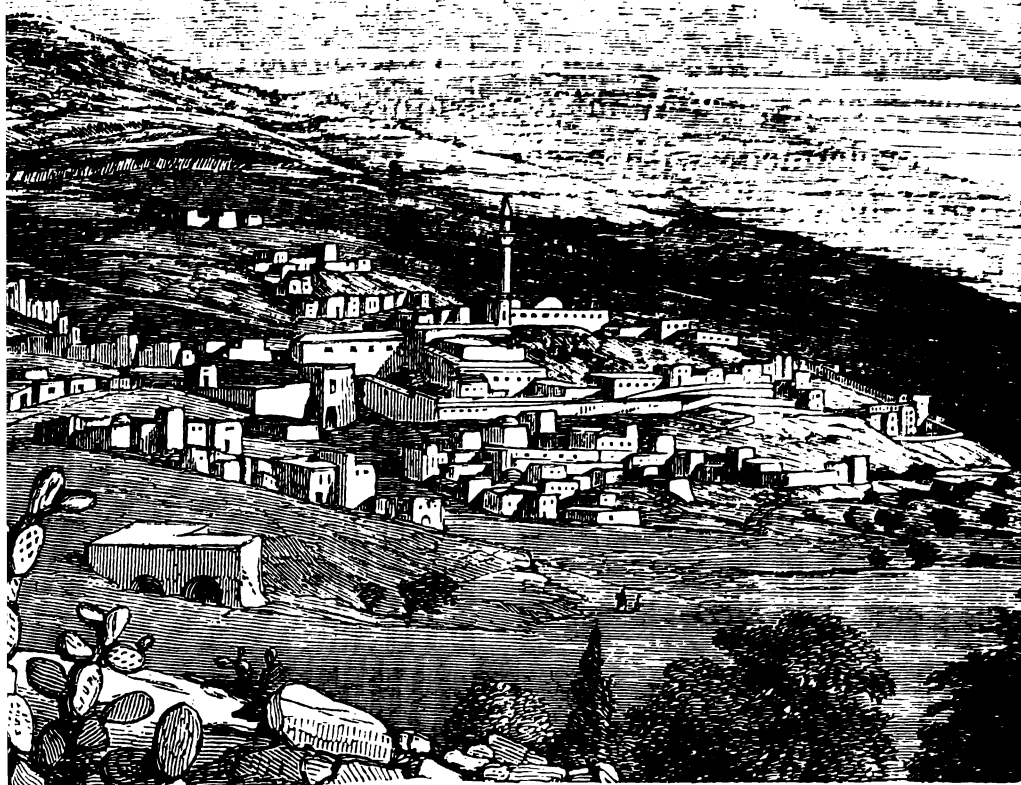
The high artificial mound of the Yezidi village, crowned by a modern mud-built castle, had been visible in the distance long before we reached it, miraged into double its real size, and into an imposing group of towers and fortifications. Almost overcome with weariness, we toiled up to it, and found its owner, Abde Agha, the Yezidi chieftain, seated in the gate, a vaulted entrance with deep recesses on both sides, used as places of assembly for business during the day, and as places of rest for guests during the night. The custom of assembling and transacting business in the gate is continually referred to in the Bible. (See Gen. xix. 1; Ruth iv. 1; 2 Sam. xix. 8; 2 Chron. xviii. 9; Dan. ii. 49; Matt. xvi. 18.)

The gates of Jewish houses were probably similar to that described in the text. Such entrances are also found in Persia. Frequently in the gates of cities, as at Mosul, these recesses are used as shops for the sale of wheat and barley, bread and grocery.

Elisha prophesies that a measure of flour shall be sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, *in the gate of Samaria* (2 Kings vii. 1, 18). —*Layard's Discoveries.*

ARAB MODE OF GRINDING CORN.

THE wandering Arabs have no other means of grinding their corn than by hand-mills, which they carry with them wherever they go. They are always worked by the women (Matt. xxiv. 41 ; Rev. xviii. 22), for it is considered unworthy of a man to engage in any domestic occupation. These hand-mills are simply two circular flat stones, generally about 18 inches in diameter, the upper turning loosely upon a wooden pivot, and moved quickly round by a wooden handle. The grain is poured through the hole of the pivot, and the flour is collected in a cloth spread under the mill ; it is then mixed with water, kneaded in a wooden bowl, and pressed by the hand into round balls ready for baking. During these processes the women are usually seated on the bare ground ; hence in Isaiah (xlvii. 1, 2) is the daughter of Babylon told to sit in the dust and on the ground, and “ to take the millstones and grind meal.”



NAZARETH.

THE BRIDAL PARTY.

It had been a snowy night, succeeded by a morning of dazzling brightness. Every roof, and tree, and shrub was decked in radiant white; and not a spot or blemish appeared to interfere with the pure beauty of the scene. Mud and mire, dead branch and withered leaf, brick and stone, thatch and hedge, ditch and stream, were all hidden beneath the crisp mantle that shone sparkling and beautiful in the beams of the morning sun. "Cold, cold as Lapland, Norah!" said a gentleman, looking out from the

door of a pretty cottage, which stood in the midst of the snowy landscape ; “ but it will not hurt you, if you are well wrapped up.” And forth he stepped, accompanied by a young lady, enveloped in a warm, furred cloak. “ What a morning for the wedding,” she exclaimed, with a shiver ; “ but oh, how beautiful ! how exquisitely beautiful ! Look, there is not a particle of winter’s gloom left upon a single thing ; the very ends of the leafless sprays are hung with icy diamonds. It is almost a pity to step upon this pure, lovely carpet ; but—I must beg you to wait a moment, dear uncle, I have dropped my handkerchief ; it lies at the door there. Dear, dear, what a dirty thing ! I must run back for another ; this cannot be the right one.” She presently returned, saying, “ Yes, it is the handkerchief I had laid ready ; but it looked such a strange colour. I thought I had made a mistake.” “ I hope you have not made a worse mistake, and put on a dirty gown, Norah,” said her uncle, gravely ; “ you know it will be a bright and gay assemblage at our friend’s this morning.” Norah was greatly disconcerted, for her dress looked something like pale, dirty yellow. But after gazing a moment in vexed surprise, her countenance brightened again. “ Oh, now I know what it is !” she cried. “ Don’t you see, my dear uncle, that everything pretending to whiteness must look discoloured upon the dazzling snow, which not even the smoke of the cottage chimney has yet presumed to defile. My dress will look well enough among the rest, I doubt not ; but how very stupid I was not to perceive what

made my poor handkerchief look so badly!" "Oh, is that it?" replied her uncle, drily; "then come along. We shall see presently whether your laundress is at fault or not; but I hope you will not look conspicuously dirty." Norah laughed gaily as she replied that no texture, nor soap, nor skill could produce anything to bear a moment's comparison with the whiteness of new-fallen snow.

By this time they had reached their destination, which was at a short distance; and the good uncle presently saw his niece mingling with the happy group of young friends, as fair and elegant as any of them.

"Well, dear uncle," she said, as they met at home after the enjoyments of the day were over, "did you notice any peculiarity in the colour of my dress, after all your misgivings upon its cleanliness?" "Nothing very different from those of the whole party, my dear, I thought you all looked dirty together, in comparison with the dazzling purity of the scene outside the house." "It really was a most unfortunate morning for showing off our white bridal costume in procession; but I never thought you would have taken so much notice of us, nor have cared so much how I looked, dear uncle." "I notice and care about everything that concerns you, my child; and being invited to another bridal party, which I wish you to attend, it is important that the apparel in which you are to appear be considered carefully before the time arrives." "Dear uncle, where can it be? It must indeed be important, for you to think of such a thing as dress."

“It is the only party at which I am intensely solicitous about your appearance, my precious child,” said he, gazing fondly on the young face that was turned towards him with an expression of doubt and inquiry. “It is to the marriage supper of the Lamb. Is my Norah ready to accompany me there? Has she a robe white and beautiful enough to bear the scrutiny of the royal gaze, when the King comes in to see the guests? It must be whiter than snow, radiant as light, whiter far than fuller on earth can whiten it. Have you such a dress, my child?” “I fear not, uncle,” she said, hesitatingly. “I know I am not holy enough to meet the searching eye of God.” “Then you could not attend that wedding party, Norah, without the certainty of being disowned and rejected by the Bridegroom; for no guest may tarry there in any but the attire which he has himself prescribed.” “I am sincerely anxious to be good, dear uncle. You do not know how often I resolve, and how hard I try to keep my resolutions. I have begun to work for the poor this winter, and to visit them. I give away all I can spare. I teach the children at the school; and all these are right, are they not?” “Quite right, my dear Norah, and tell very well among your fellow-creatures. They are like your white dress, which looked clean enough among those which were no whiter; but which, contrasted with the snow, looked absolutely dirty. Compare your efforts after holiness, your good resolutions, your right actions that you have just named, with the pure, spotless righteousness of God, and see

how they will look." "I confess they will look as my cambric handkerchief did upon the new-fallen snow—like dirty rags." "Most true, dear Norah. Then we must give up the hope of spinning this bridal garment out of our own good deeds, must we not? Nothing we can produce is fit to present before God as a title to acceptance for the future, or in atonement for the past. Left to ourselves, we are in sorry plight for the summons to the great presence-chamber of the King of kings. Yet appear we must, to joy and blessedness, or to woe and shame for ever. Have you ever thought of this, or is such a solemn theme distasteful to you?" "It is interesting to me now, my dear, kind uncle, from the manner in which you have introduced it, and I desire much to learn all you will teach me; but I know such thoughts have been too often dismissed as dull and intrusive, and therefore my heart cannot be easily touched with the love of God. Tell me how I may hope to be with you among the accepted guests." "There is a robe, dear child—a robe of surpassing beauty—ready for all who, casting aside every other, really desire to be covered with it. It is a costly robe, yet a free gift. In one word, it is Christ himself—"Christ our Righteousness," in whom all who believe are acceptable to God. To believe in him, to appropriate him under a consciousness of our own utter helplessness and sinfulness, as having put away our sins by His precious blood, is to be saved. It is to array ourselves in the dress that will stand the most searching scrutiny, that will shine in spotless beauty for ever.

Thus clad, we may sing with the prophet, 'I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God: for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation; he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness.' This was Paul's desire; to be 'found in Christ, not having his own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.' Do you at all understand this, Norah?" "I think I do a little, dear uncle. It means that we must hide ourselves, as it were, in another, and that only other the Son of God, so that when God looks on us in Christ, he sees nothing of ours, but only Christ's perfection. Is that the meaning?" "It is, my dear girl. Only let your heart clasp what your reason apprehends, and you will be robed as I desire; but it is 'with the heart man believeth unto righteousness.' No *creed*, no *theory*, however scriptural, can make this righteousness our own. God bestows, and man is to receive salvation. Then the bestower is honoured." "I see," said Norah thoughtfully; "I see that I have made a great mistake for a long time past; and perhaps other young people may be doing the same. I thought that by trying to do good, and to keep my mind from wicked thoughts, and by being kind to the poor, God would be pleased with me; and if I did unfortunately do wrong yesterday, I would make up for it by increased goodness to-day." "You are not the first little Pharisee who has tried that plan, my Norah; it is the religion of the natural heart.

But it is in God's book alone we find 'the way, the truth, and the life.' You cannot, by a life of penitence and tears, blot out the guilt of one single sin. The description of the redeemed is this: they 'have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.' Of the Lamb's wife it is said, 'To her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white; for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.' See how the snow has covered up all the impurities and deformities of the objects on which it has fallen; so does the righteousness of God, imputed to us" (1 Cor. i. 30).

"But one thing more, and I have enough to think upon at present. Tell me, uncle, if we cannot make ourselves acceptable to God, where is the use of those good works to which we are exhorted so earnestly?" "They are the good fruit of the good tree, Norah. I did not say that they are not acceptable when they are the fruit of the Spirit. On the contrary, everything done for the love and honour of God's dear Son, is not only acceptable, but rewarded. Even the most insignificant action, arising from the right motive, shall not lose its reward. But if done as a ground of merit, a plea for pardon, a bargain-making with an offended God, a million of good works are utterly vain in his sight. As the fruit on the tree, as the flower on the stem, good actions, sweet tempers, gentle words, kind charities, should abound to honour God, to bless our fellows, and adorn ourselves; but the richer the fruit, the more fragrant the flower—the less you will find it depended on by him who bears

it, and the dearer is that spotless righteousness, the sweeter that lovely name, that is reposed on for every hope, and pleaded for every mercy, which cheers the just man's brightening path to glory. Now, good night, my Norah. Forget not the bridal-day of God's chosen people, and seek that beautiful attire which will out-dazzle the sun in his strength, and cast into shade even the white purity of new-fallen snow."—*Slightly altered from "The Rothsay Monthly Visitor."*

“ASK WHAT YE WILL, AND IT SHALL BE
DONE UNTO YOU.”

IN the beginning of 1814, when war convulsed the continent of Europe, troops of Swedes, Cossacks, Germans, and Russians, were within half an hour's march of the town of Sleswick. Many and fearful reports of their behaviour had preceded them, and the townspeople were in great alarm at their approach. There had been a truce, but it was to terminate at midnight of the 5th of January, which was rapidly drawing near, and all the horrors of war and uncontrolled licence were again about to burst upon the helpless inhabitants of the country.

On the outskirts of the town of Sleswick, on the side where the enemy lay, was a house which stood alone, inhabited by an aged pious woman, who on hearing of the approach of the enemy, prayed, in the words of an ancient hymn, that God would “raise up

a wall around them." The inmates of the house consisted of herself, her daughter, who was a widow, and her grandson, a young man of twenty years. The latter, on hearing the prayer of his grandmother, could not refrain from saying that he did not understand how she could ask for anything so impossible as that a wall should be built around them which could keep the enemy away from their house. The old woman, who was very deaf, on understanding what her grandson had said, remarked that she had only prayed for protection for herself and household; but added, "Do you think that if it were the will of God really to *build a wall* around us, it would be impossible to him?"

At last the dreaded night of the 5th of January arrived, and about midnight the troops began to enter on all sides. The house containing the family just mentioned lay close by the road, and was larger than the dwellings near it, which were only small cottages. As parties of soldiers entered one after another, going to the neighbouring cottages and demanding what they wanted, in boisterous and threatening tones, the inmates of the roadside house listened anxiously, expecting every moment to hear the loud summons of the soldiers at their own door; but although the hum of voices, the incessant tramp of horses' feet, the ribald jest, the loud laugh, seemed all around them, none approached their threshold. Onward through the night the army passed into the town. At length four parties of Cossacks, wild, half-savage men, brought up the rear. There had been a

heavy fall of snow all day, which had now increased to a violent storm; and the Cossacks, unwilling to proceed further into the town, sought immediate shelter for themselves and horses in the cottages at hand, which, being small, were soon crowded to overflowing. Like a flight of locusts, man and horse swarmed upon the wretched inhabitants, devouring everything before them; and a terrible night it was for those who were completely at their mercy.

But amid all the tumult and uproar which raged everywhere around, the praying woman's house was in peace; not a single straggler from that savage band, not even an affrighted neighbour, approached the door. Hour after hour passed away. The watchers wondered at their marvellous preservation from interruption and annoyance; and while faith and fear alternately possessed their hearts, morning dawned at last.

But now again the troops are on the move; the *reveillé* is sounding; the brutal Cossacks will surely plunder every house before they march on to meet their death. Will prayer yet prevail to save them from the danger which threatens now more imminently than before? If under cover of the darkness, and the furious storm that raged all night, they escaped observation, the morning light will surely betray their home to the plundering Cossack, and its superiority to surrounding dwellings tempt an instant assault. No; the Lord does not deliver by halves and then forsake. Let faith but hold its own, and say, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me,"

and, so to speak, that aged, simple-hearted woman, watching there, and, it may well be, trembling while she hopes and prays, will prove mightier than a whole host of ruthless Cossacks. Yes; her house is still protected; no footfall is heard on the threshold; no rude hand attempts the gate.

And now at last they have courage to look out, and at once discover the means which the Lord himself had made and used for their deliverance. The snow, that had fallen so heavily all the day previously, had been drifted by the storm which came on at night, to such a height between the house and the road, that to approach it was impossible; and thus a wall had been literally raised around them, according to the aged woman's prayer.

"Do you *now* see, my son," she exclaimed, "that it was possible for God to raise a wall around us which should keep off the enemy?"

"All things are possible to him that believeth."



LITTLE LUCY, AND THE WORDS SHE SANG.

A LITTLE child, six summers old,
 So thoughtful and so fair—
 There seemed about her pleasant ways
 A more than childish air—
 Was sitting, on a summer eve,
 Beneath a spreading tree,
 Intent upon an ancient book,
 Which lay upon her knee.
 She turned each page with careful hand,
 And strained her sight to see,
 Until the drowsy shadows slept
 Upon the grassy lea.

Then closed the book, and upward looked,
And soon began to sing
A simple verse of hopeful love,
This very childish thing :

“ While here below how sweet to know
Christ’s wondrous love and story ;
And then, through grace, to see his face,
And live with him in glory ! ”

That little child, one dreary night
Of wintry wind and storm,
Was tossing on a weary couch
Her weak and wasted form.

And in her pain, and in its pause,
She clasped her hands in prayer
(Strange that we had no thoughts of heaven,
While hers were only there),

Until she said, “ Oh, mother, dear,
How sad you seem to be !
Have you forgotten that he said,
‘ Let children come to me ? ’

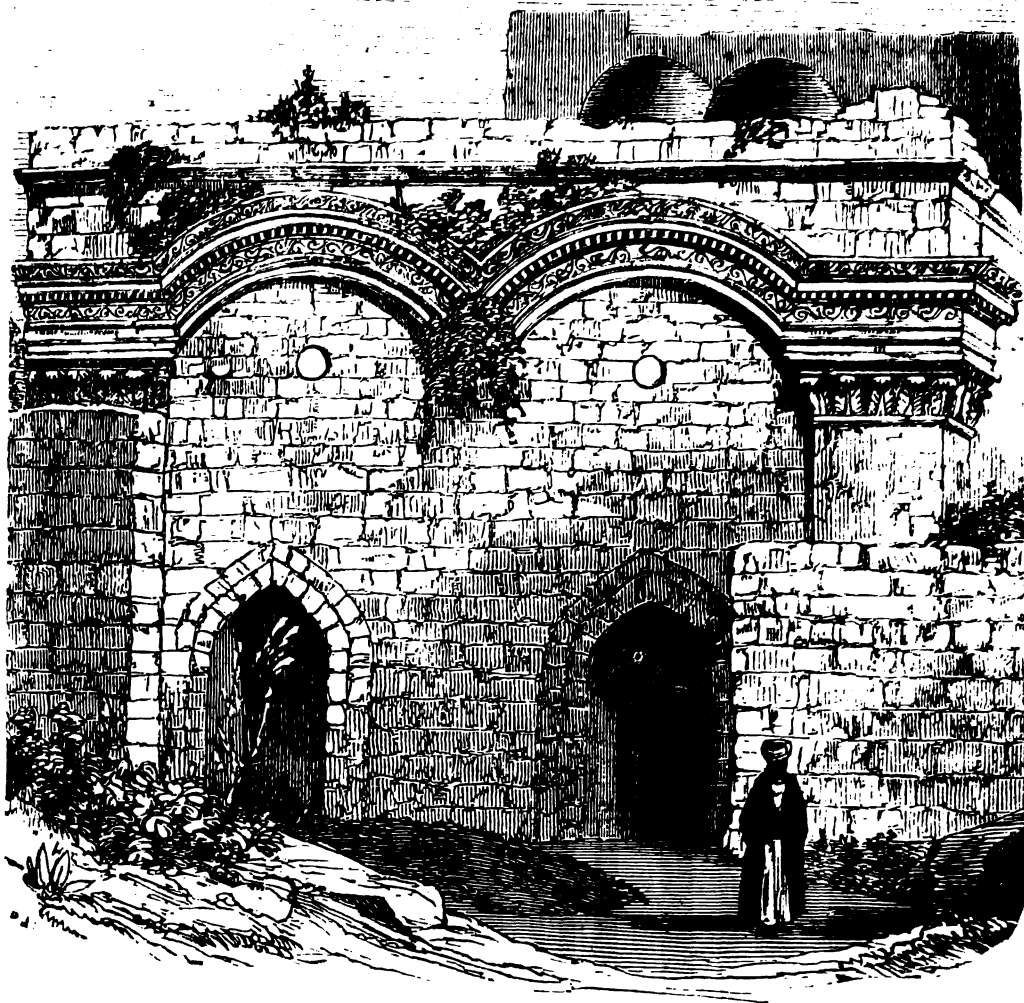
“ Dear mother, bring the blessed book,
Come, mother, let us sing ; ”
And then again, with faltering tongue,
She sang, that childish thing—

“ While here below, how sweet to know
His wondrous love and story ;
And then, through grace, to see his face,
And live with him in glory ! ”

Underneath a spreading tree
A narrow mound is seen,
Which first was covered by the snow,
Then blossom’d into green.

Here first I heard that childish voice,
That sings on earth no more :
In heaven it hath a richer tone,
And sweeter than before.

For those who know his love before—
So runs the wondrous story—
In heaven, through grace, shall see his face,
And dwell with him in glory.



THE GOLDEN GATE, JERUSALEM.

HIDDEN BY THE WINE-PRESS.

CHAPTER VII.—TRIUMPH.

“THE joy of the Lord is your strength ;” and so Gideon found it. Self emptied, his fears fled before the blessed influences of grace, as the mists of night vanish before the beams of the rising sun ; and, with a heart full of worship and praise, he “returned into the host of Israel, and said, Arise ; for the Lord hath delivered into your hand the host of Midian.” He

does not say, "my hand," though the Lord had said to him, "thy hand." He does not even say, "our hand;" self is lost sight of utterly. Moreover, he can now say, "the Lord *hath* delivered:" faith is in full activity, there are no more doubts; the eye is off circumstances altogether, and on the Lord alone. It is always blessed when this is the case with the child of God. How rapidly difficulties sink into nothingness; mountains become a plain; even the bitter cup of sorrow is sweetened, and the soul returns in praise the grace bestowed, by which it is enabled thus to rise above its circumstances. Happy it is when this is the case, because God is glorified, and that precious name, by which all grace flows down to ~~us~~—all praise returns to God, is exalted, as every believer will surely say it well deserves to be. Gideon ~~was~~ not privileged to know ~~that~~ precious name; nevertheless, as an Israelite, and one who, in a figure, had been made nigh, he "worshipped;" and in the energy of the spirit of worship it was that he could return, and say, "the Lord *HATH* delivered."

Where worship fills the soul, self and its surroundings are forgotten—the Lord is everything; his word suffices, his presence is power, he himself is the all in all to the heart, and there is no room for aught beside. This gives true energy for service, which nothing else does—energy without excitement. The energy of the flesh may make more noise, and seem for the moment to be even the stronger of the two, but while the former may be compared to the calm,

quiet flow of some deep river, whose onward current turns not aside for any obstacle—whose pathway is marked by fruitfulness—whose waters fail not in the burning heat of summer, the latter is like the babbling brook, or rushing torrent, hurrying on its short and fitful course with much ado, too rapid in its passage to effect permanent benefit to anything, dependent for its existence upon rains that often come not, and leaving in the drought of summer a dry, pebbly bed, to mock the thirsty traveller, and mark the course it took, but could not keep. Compare the calm, lofty, immutable energy of the blessed One in his pathway to the cross, with that of Peter in the Gospels, particularly John xiii. to xviii. With what a divine and quiet step the Lord moves onward through the scene to his terrible death on Calvary, occupied with his own to the last, without a thought of self, girded with a towel, washing his disciples' feet, pouring out his love in last words to them, hardly referring to what awaited him, except so far as it affected *them*; and when at last the floodgates of violence are opened upon him, going forth to meet the mob, and saying, "If ye then seek me, let these go their way"—only concerned for them and his Father's glory in it all, utterly forgetful of himself; and that not in stoicism surely, for the dew of agony was yet upon his brow from dark Gethsemane. O inimitable grace and energy of love, who shall tell it out, or worthily speak its praise? How perfect in its whole career, from the manger to the tomb! though brightening by contrast as the

way he took, in meek obedience and love, grew darker.

To return to Gideon. He can not only say "the Lord *hath* delivered," but can prove his faith now by his works. When first the Lord sought him by the wine-press, precious faith was there, but not active. Now we see it, energized by grace, prepared for anything, and fully equal to the demands made upon it by the circumstances in which its happy possessor is placed. Nay, he can now go beyond what was merely needful; and, as if he would deny all confidence in the flesh, he subdivides that little band, which, *united*, was all too small and weak for him before. And then, as though he would teach them, in a symbol, how the Lord had brought about a change so great in poor, weak, timid Gideon, he placed an *empty* vessel in each man's hand, and a lighted lamp within, shadowing forth the condition into which the patient ways of grace had brought himself. Grace had emptied him of self, and filled the void once occupied by that great idol with the burning light of faith and love. Moreover, if, as an empty vessel, he would go forth to meet the foe, it was as a *broken* vessel he would triumph over him, that so Jehovah might have all the praise. The vessel must be broken to shivers, or it would hide the lamp, which, though a "burning," could not become a "shining light" till the vessel was shivered. How often self obscures the "shining" of the light! "*Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works.*" Grace will own them *yours*; but if you would make

them seem so, the light is obscured, and men will not "glorify your Father which is in heaven." "Shine ye as *lights* in the world," not as *vessels*. There is a class of believers who are ever occupied with "the earthen vessel" and its experiences. Well would it be for them, both here and hereafter, if they would listen to Gideon's counsel: "Look on me, and do likewise . . . as I do, so shall ye do." And what was that? He broke the vessel to shivers, and let the light *alone* be seen—that light once hidden by the wine-press, now so brightly manifested in the face of the foe. Nor does he forget that gracious word, "the Lord *thy* God," which at the first gave him power to confess Jehovah before the Abi-ezrites. In the battle-cry he gives his followers, he can, without presumption, declare himself a co-worker with God. Jehovah's sword is his, his sword is Jehovah's—"The sword of the Lord, and of Gideon;" while the trumpet in every man's hand invoked the aid of God, and brought His almighty power into the scene. The symbol was complete. As empty vessels with the burning lamps within, they went forth to meet the foe. As broken vessels and shining lights, they enter into conflict; but when in conflict, they *stand every man in his place*, and the cry of faith brings Jehovah's power to their aid. Their weapons are his; their triumph is the Lord's. Surely the believer cannot fail to see in all this a most instructive figure of what he should be, of what grace would make him. "And the three companies blew the trumpets and brake the pitchers, and held the lamps in their left hands, and the

trumpets in their right hands to blow withal: and they cried, The sword of the Lord, and of Gideon. *And they stood every man in his place round about the camp* [Had every believer done so too, from the Day of Pentecost right onward, should we still be in the wilderness?]: and all the host ran, and cried, and fled. And the three hundred blew the trumpets, and the Lord set every man's sword against his fellow, even throughout all the host." They needed not to strike a blow; they did but "stand still" (every man in his place), and "see the salvation of the Lord."

Acknowledging him in all their ways, confessing him fully in the face of the foe, he could and did own them. Victory was assured to them before, by faith, and now all is triumph. Whether in all this we are intended of the Spirit to see a *prophetic* symbol of Israel's future, when at the cry of the faithful remnant, the broken vessels of the last days, a greater deliverer than Gideon shall come, and save, and lead them on to victory and everlasting triumph in himself, we do not say. The time is not far off when Israel's true David, and Gideon's antitype, shall "stand upon Mount Olivet," and His and his people's countless enemies shall turn every man his sword against his fellow and "consume away while they stand upon their feet" (Zech. xii., xiii., xiv.) And, blessed thought, if that time is not far off, the hour is nearer yet when the "earthen vessel" shall cease to trouble us. If not broken to shivers, it shall be "changed" and, "fashioned like unto his glorious body"—shall shine

in his perfections, the image of himself, the trophy of his matchless grace, obedience, love, and power, for ever more, in God's own light.

“But who that glorious blaze
Of *living light* shall tell?
Where all his brightness God displays
And the Lamb's glories dwell.

(There only to adore
My soul its strength may find;
Its life, its joy, for evermore,
By sight, nor sense defined.)

God and the Lamb shall there
The light and temple be,
And radiant hosts for ever share
The unveil'd mystery.”



FRAGMENTS ON SCRIPTURE LANDS.

SHEPHERDS AND SHEEP.

JOHN X.

OWING to the wild wadies covered with dense forests of oak and underwood, the country above us has ever been a favourite range for sheep and goats. Those low, flat buildings out on the sheltered side of the valley are sheep-folds. They are called *mârâh*, and, when the nights are cold, the flocks are shut up in them, but in ordinary weather they are merely kept within the yard. This, you observe, is defended by a wide stone wall, crowned all around with sharp thorns, which the prowling wolf will rarely attempt to scale. The *nimer*, however, and *fahed*—the leopard and

panther of this country—when pressed with hunger, will overleap this thorny hedge, and with one tremendous bound land among the frightened fold. Then is the time to try the nerve and heart of the faithful shepherd. These humble types of him who leadeth Joseph like a flock, never leave their helpless charge alone, but accompany them by day, and abide with them at night. As spring advances, they will move higher up to other mârâhs and greener ranges; and in the hot months of summer they sleep with their flocks on the cool heights of the mountains, with no other protection than a stout palisade of tangled thorn-bushes. Nothing can be more romantic, Oriental, and even Biblical, than this shepherd life far away among the sublime solitudes of goodly Lebanon. We must study it in all its picturesque details. See, the flocks are returning home as the evening draws on; and how pretty the black and spotted goats with their large liquid eyes and long pendent ears—now in bold relief on the rocks, now hid among the bushes, but all the while rolling along the hill-side like a column of gigantic ants! If some sharp-witted Jacob should take all the spotted, ring-streaked, and speckled of these flocks, he would certainly get the lion's share; nor do I wonder that the countenance of that money-loving father-in-law of his should not be “toward him as yesterday and the day before.” These bushy hills are the very best sheep-walks, and they are mostly abandoned to flocks and herds. They are now converging to this single point from all quarters, like the separate squadrons of an

army. The shepherd walks before them, and they follow after, while the dogs that Job talks of bring up the rear. These Oriental shepherd dogs, by the way, are not, like those in other lands, fine, faithful fellows, the friends and companions of their masters, and fit to figure in poetry. This would not suit Job's disparaging comparison. They are a mean, sinister, ill-conditioned generation, kept at a distance, kicked about, and half starved, with nothing noble or attractive about them. Still they lag lazily behind the flocks, making a furious barking at any intruder among their charge, and thus give warning of approaching danger. As you mentioned at the Damûr the other day, I noticed that some of the flock keep near the shepherd, and follow whithersoever he goes without the least hesitation; while others stray about on either side, or loiter far behind; and he often turns round, and scolds them with a sharp, stern cry, or sends a stone after them—not altogether unlike the Good Shepherd. Indeed I never ride over these hills clothed with flocks without meditating on this delightful theme. Our Saviour says that the good shepherd when he putteth forth his own sheep, goeth before them, and they follow. This is true to the letter. They are so trained, and so tame, that they *follow* their keeper with the utmost docility. He leads them forth from the fold or from their houses in the villages, just where he pleases. As there are many flocks in such a place as this, each one takes a different path, and it is his business to find pasture for them. It is necessary, therefore, that they should be taught to

follow, and not to stray away into the unfenced fields of corn which lie so temptingly on either side. Any one that thus wanders is sure to get into trouble. The shepherd calls sharply from time to time, to remind them of his presence. They know his voice, and follow on; but if a stranger call, they stop short, lift up their heads in alarm, and if it is repeated, they turn and flee, because they know not the voice of strangers. This is not the fanciful costume of a parable; it is simple fact. I have made the experiment repeatedly. The shepherd goes before, not merely to point out the way, but to see that it is practicable and safe. He is armed in order to defend his charge; and in this he is very courageous. Many adventures with wild beasts occur, not unlike that recounted by David, and in these very mountains, for though there are now no lions here, there are wolves in abundance; and leopards and panthers, exceedingly fierce, prowl about these wild wadies. They not unfrequently attack the flock in the very presence of the shepherd, and he must be ready to do battle at a moment's warning. I have listened with intense interest to their graphic descriptions of downright and desperate fights with these savage beasts. And when the thief and the robber come (and come they do), the faithful shepherd has often to put his life in his hand to defend his flock. I have known more than one case in which he had literally to lay it down in the contest. A poor faithful fellow last spring, between Tiberias and Tabor, instead of fleeing, actually fought three Bedawin robbers until he was

hacked to pieces with their khanjars, and died among the sheep he was defending. Some sheep always keep near their shepherd, and are his special favourites. Each of them has a name, to which it answers joyfully; and the kind shepherd is ever distributing to such portions which he gathers for that purpose. These are the contented and happy ones. They are in no danger of getting lost, or into mischief, nor do wild beasts or thieves come near them. The great body, however, are mere worldlings intent upon their own pleasures or selfish interests. They run from bush to bush, searching for varieties or delicacies, and only now and then lift up their heads to see where the shepherd is, or rather where the general flock is, lest they get so far away as to occasion remark in their little community, or rebuke from their keeper. Others, again, are restless and discontented, jumping into everybody's field, climbing into bushes, and even into leaning trees, whence they often fall and break their limbs. These cost the good shepherd incessant trouble. Then there are others incurably reckless, who stray far away, and are often utterly lost. I have repeatedly seen a silly goat or sheep running hither and thither, and bleating piteously after the lost flock, only to call forth from their dens the beasts of prey, or to bring up the lurking thief, who quickly quiets its cries in death. Isaiah has a beautiful reference to the Good Shepherd: "He shall feed his flock like a shepherd; he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those which are with young." Have you ever noticed these actions

mentioned by the prophet? Yes, in every particular. In ordinary circumstances, the shepherd does not *feed* his flock, except by leading and guiding them where they may gather for themselves; but there are times when it is otherwise. Late in autumn, when the pastures are dried up, and in winter, in places covered with snow, he must furnish them food, or they die. In the vast oak woods along the eastern sides of Lebanon, between Baalbek and the cedars, there are then gathered innumerable flocks, and the shepherds are all day long in the bushy trees, cutting down the branches, upon whose green leaves and tender twigs the sheep and goats are entirely supported. The same is true in all mountain districts, and large forests are preserved on purpose. Life in these remote and wild woods is then most singular and romantic. The ring of the axe, the crash of falling trees, the shout of the shepherds, the tinkling of bells and barking of dogs, wake a thousand echoes along the deep wadies of Lebanon. I have ridden five hours at a stretch in the midst of these lively scenes, and the mere remembrance of them comes back now like distant music dying out sweetly along the solemn aisles.—*The Land and the Book.*

YOUTHFUL PILGRIMS.

How sweet are the flowerets in April and May!
Yet often the frost makes them wither away.
Like flowers, you may fade; are you ready to die?
While "yet there is room," to the Saviour fly.



LITTLE MARY.

FOR THE LITTLE ONES.

A POOR woman, who knew not the Lord Jesus Christ, had a dear little girl who attended a school where, by the Lord's blessing on the labours of her teacher, she was brought to believe in Jesus. In the place where this woman and her child lived, the Roman Catholics were very active in trying to bring people to their religion, and as they were not so successful with grown-up people as they wished, because those who had heard even ever so little of the truth, could

not easily be persuaded to believe the mummeries and superstitions of popery, they made great efforts to get hold of poor children, thinking they could more readily lead them to worship images and believe their wicked falsehoods. One morning they called upon this woman and offered to give her a blanket and a cotton dress, if she would consent to send her little girl to their school. The miserable woman, caring nothing for the soul of her poor child, consented. Was it not a shocking thing for a mother to do? to sell her child, as it were, to those who, as she well knew, would bring her up in a false religion; and all for the sake of a blanket and a cotton dress! It is plain that she valued these trifles more than the soul of her little one; nay, further, that she actually preferred a cotton dress and a blanket to Christ the Son of God!

How forcibly this reminds us of the soldiers at the crucifixion, who, after they had nailed the Lord Jesus to the cross, "took his garments and made four parts, to every soldier a part," carefully dividing his clothing among them, while for *himself* they did not care. They despised Jesus, the Son of God, and preferred his worn clothes to himself! And, as if to make this plainer still, we are told that his "coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be." Yes; they could nail the blessed One to a cross, they could rend his gracious hands with nails; but they said of an old coat, "Let us not rend *it*." They could crucify the

Lord of glory, and “cast him out,” then, turning their backs on HIM, they could struggle for the possession of his coat! What contempt to pour upon the head of the Son of God! What stronger proof could they give of the wickedness of the heart? Had it not been for that precious blood which was poured out for sin, surely the judgment of God must have fallen at once on their most guilty heads. Thus the very wickedness of these men shows out the value of the blood; for because of that, they were spared from instant judgment, that so they might have opportunity to repent. And had not this woman the same wicked heart that those soldiers had? Yes; for she showed that she thought less of Christ than of a blanket and a cotton dress. “Ah!” you will say, “I would not be so wicked as that.” But have *you* believed in the Lord Jesus Christ yet? Have you come to him, and learned to love him? If not, are you not very much like them? You are fond of toys and other things, and no doubt sometimes take a good deal of trouble, in your way, to get them, and thus show how very much *in earnest* you are to obtain them; but have you ever yet been as much *in earnest* to get Christ? If not, what does it prove? Why, that just as the soldiers were so much in earnest to get the coat, that they cast lots for it to see whose it should be, so you are in earnest in getting almost anything rather than Christ! Just as this woman liked a blanket and a cotton dress better than Christ, so *you* like toys and such like things so much better than Jesus, that you are in earnest to get the one, but not to get the other!

Well, then, are you not just like them? Now I want you to think about this, and if you find it is all too true, go to Jesus at once, and kneel down to him and tell him how wicked you have been, and believe him when he says, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Feeling your sinfulness, believe God when he says, "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."

But I must tell you the rest of the story about the little girl and her bad mother. When little Mary came home, her mother told her what she had promised the papists to do. Poor Mary begged her mother not to send her to the popish school, but she would not listen. "You must get ready to go to-morrow morning at ten o'clock," said her hard-hearted mother. On hearing this, little Mary turned as pale as death, and, falling down upon her knees, prayed thus: "Dear Lord Jesus, I know you are my Saviour, and that you love me, then do not let me go to the popish school, where I shall be taught to kneel to images, and become a papist; *let me rather die* than be a papist." Then she went to bed. In the morning her mother called her early to get up and get ready for the Romish school, but she did not answer. Again she called, still louder, "Mary, get up;" but in vain. Running upstairs to see what was the matter, you may guess what she felt when she saw by the cold pale face that lay upturned upon the pillow that her little Mary was dead! The Lord had heard her cry, and to save her from the evil into which false teachers would lead her, he had taken her home to

himself. Happy little Mary! Her arms lay folded over her bosom, a smile of peace was on her loving face—her spirit was with Jesus.

Should you be as ready to die as she was, if called away to-night? She was no *better* than you are in herself, but she believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, and his blood had washed away her sins, and so made her ready and fit for heaven.



“PIOUS JACK.”

A SAILING vessel, returning from the West Indies, was approaching the end of her long voyage, when the weather became squally, and they occasionally shipped a good deal of water, which made things very uncomfortable on board, especially as several of the passengers were ill.

A sailor, who had behaved very badly at the commencement of the voyage, and with whom the men had declined keeping company, was also prostrated by fever. He had been a very wicked man, and now that he was apparently drawing near to death, it was very desirable that some regard should be shown for his soul by those around him. The captain and crew were quite indifferent on this subject; but there was on board the ship a dear little Christian cabin-boy, who went by the name of “Pious Jack” among the sailors, because of his unmistakable godliness. This boy, whose real name was John Pelham, bore the scoffs and sneers of the ungodly around him with a meekness and patience which gave glory to the

grace that had made him to differ from them; and during all the time that the dying sailor had been ill, little Jack had been unremitting in his attentions to him. Among the passengers also was a negro woman, who had charge of a little girl, which she was bringing from the West Indies to its relations in England. This kind-hearted negress, who was called Cloe, her real name being Cleopatra, ministered unceasingly to the temporal wants of the sick man, Williams, nursing him with great tenderness, and preparing with her own hands whatever she thought likely to tempt his failing appetite. She also showed much concern for his soul, being herself anxious about her own. She could not read, but she knew that the Bible was the word of God, and was wont to sit, with devout attention, listening to every word which the dear boy Jack read, not only from day to day, but whenever he could persuade Williams to hearken to it. For some time it would seem that little Jack's labours, though blessed to poor Cloe, were vain so far as the sailor was concerned. Williams' hard heart was untouched by all the attention bestowed upon him. But at last the word was effectual, conscience was touched; he became convicted of sin, and then the scene of his dying bed was terrible. Tossing in anguish upon his pillow, emaciated, dying, horror-stricken, he declared there was no forgiveness for him; that hell was his doom; that he had resisted too long; that there was no hope for such a wretch as he. In vain poor Jack, with the tears streaming down his face, implored him to listen to the gracious

words of the Saviour of sinners, “Him that cometh unto me, I will in NO WISE cast out;” in vain the little servant of Christ read to him the history of the thief on the cross, the parables setting forth God’s love for sinners, or told him how Christ Jesus came into the world on purpose to save sinners, even the chief. All for a time was useless; he declared he could not believe, and he flatly refused to pray. His case seemed hopeless : poor Jack was at his wit’s end; he had exhausted every argument; entreaty had been tried to no purpose; what more could be done? Poor Cloe, too, who, in all simplicity, had at once received the truth, sat by in tears, and vainly implored the dying man to pray. No, he would not; prayer was not for such as he; he longed indeed to be forgiven, but he dared not ask for it! At last little Jack, having used every persuasion he could think of in vain, fell upon his knees, his face bathed in tears, and, with the weeping Cloe by his side, cried out, “Open thine eyes of mercy, O most gracious God! open thine eyes of mercy on this dying man, who most earnestly desireth pardon and forgiveness, but will not pray for it!”

“Oh, most earnestly,” exclaimed the wretched man, in a voice so full of bitterness and anguish, that its very tones expressed despair. The dear boy paused, and looked at Williams with an eye of unutterable supplication, beseeching him, with his whole soul, to repeat the simple petition. But the wretched man’s only response was a look of inexpressible horror! Again the little suppliant began to pray, “For the

sake of Christ, who bore our sins in His own body on the tree, O God, show pity on poor Harry Williams!" Then, taking the hand of the dying man, he attempted by gentle compulsion to raise it into an attitude of supplication. "He has no hope, O Lord, but in Thy sweet mercy. Oh! visit him with Thy salvation!" "I have no hope," cried the dying man, wringing his uplifted hands in despair. "I have no hope!"

"Oh, look down, and hear the groaning of this poor prisoner," prayed the boy; "and loose him who seemeth now to be appointed unto death!"

"Oh, I *am* appointed unto death!" groaned the sailor.

"O Lord, wilt thou not regard the prayer of the destitute? Behold, he is destitute, we can do nothing to help him—help thou him, Lord God!"

"Help me, O my God!" at last exclaimed the sinner, praying unconsciously.

"O Lord, save, save this poor dying man! Oh, save Harry Williams!"

"Lord, save Harry Williams!" was the instant response of the dying sinner and all present, even of the little child who had crept to the side of Cloe and knelt beside her, peeping, with tearful eyes, through her tiny fingers, in sympathy with her weeping nurse.

Overcome by the compassion of all around him, and touched to the heart by grace, Williams sank back on his pillow in a torrent of tears, the first he had yet shed. For a long time his emotion, like a

torrent that has burst all bounds, was uncontrollable, and only ceased at last from sheer exhaustion. A few days passed away in much conflict, during which every moment that “Pious Jack” could spare from his duty as cabin-boy, was devoted to reading and expounding the word to the fast sinking man. Williams now often prayed, and soon began to speak less of the justice, and more of the *love* of God. He once said to Jack “that it was a thing he could not understand.” “Nor any man,” replied his little teacher, “for *it passeth knowledge*.” Tremblingly at first, but soon more firmly, he began to hope, and then to believe in that love; and soon his faith grew stronger and stronger, while his poor perishing body waxed more and more feeble. The ministrations of the little servant of Christ were owned of his gracious Master, and the despairing sinner at last became a rejoicing saint! It was indeed a passing from death unto life. His very countenance expressed the change, and as the light of a lantern hanging from a beam over his hammock fell upon his features, there might be seen in them an expression so placid, so peaceful, so truly happy, that not a word was needed to tell how truly *precious* he had found that blood which was shed to put away his sins, and in the faith of which he could now welcome that hourly approaching death, once so inexpressibly terrible to his despairing soul! Yes, he had found Christ, or rather had been found of him. The word of God, set before him so persistently by dear little Jack, had led him to the Saviour’s feet, and now, in

joy unspeakable, and full of glory, he awaited the happy moment when he should "depart, and be with Christ."

"I am conqueror," he exclaimed to one who visited him at this time, "I am conqueror through him that loved me, and gave himself for me. Oh, that wonderful love!"

Every word that his little instructor uttered was now as much a source of joy to him as it had once been of dislike. He seemed to take pleasure in drawing him into conversation. "It is calm now, Jack—all calm—is this peace?" "Yes," said the boy, "I trust it is peace—the peace of God, which the Bible says, '*passeth understanding*.'"

"Who has given me this peace?" asked Williams, as if delighting to hear the ascription of praise to his Redeemer. "Who has given me this peace?"

"Christ," said the boy, in a voice so solemn and so soft, that it seemed rather the breathing of an angel than the utterance, though whispered, of a human voice. "Christ is our peace; he hath made peace for us."

"Yes," answered the dying man, "BY THE BLOOD OF HIS CROSS!"

And now the hour of his departure had come. Spared till grace had accomplished its blessed work, he was now to be taken home to rest for ever. No sound disturbed the deep repose of all on board, save the ripple of the waves against the ship's side, and the man at the helm as he pattered on the deck, steering the vessel through the mighty waters, and

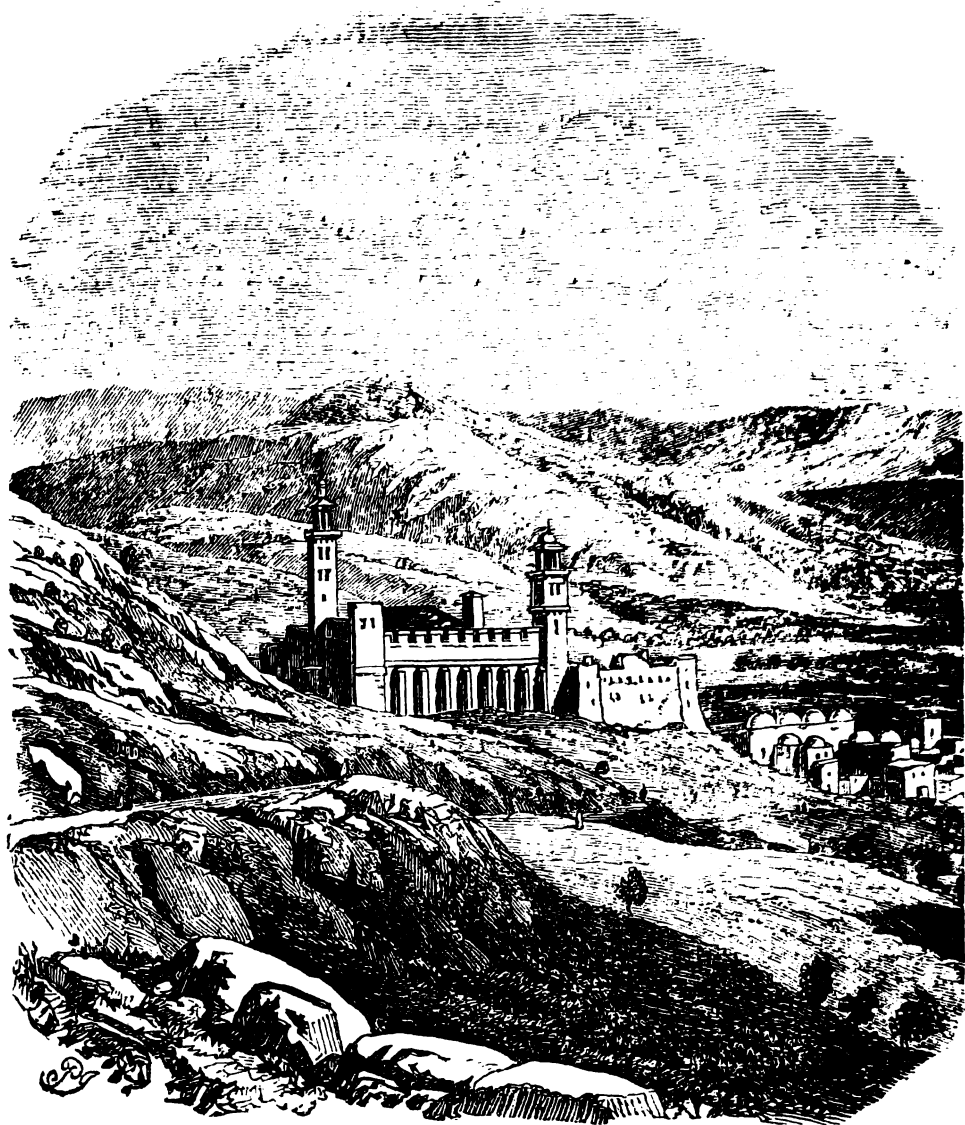
chanting from time to time some seaman's doleful song. In the midst of this quietude the happy spirit of Harry Williams left the body, and entered the presence of him who had redeemed him.

Two days afterwards his body was committed to the deep. The poor boy seemed on this occasion to feel as if, for the first time, that his friend and pupil was indeed no more. But when he heard the heavy plunge of the corpse in the water—when he heard the waves with a gurgling sound close over, and shut up from his sight, all that remained of his dear friend, the boy, unable any longer to control the violence of his feelings, uttered a piercing cry; and, so infectious is unfeigned sorrow, his grief seemed to find its way to the hearts of most of those present, and many a hardened tar, whose iron countenance gave no indications of a heart within, felt that day his cheek bedewed with tears.

Poor boy! he was not long separated from his dear Harry Williams. When nearly in port, a storm arose, so violent that the ship was driven before it for many miles, and at last struck upon a rock. When morning dawned, being within sight of land, and expecting that the ship would go to pieces, a boat was lowered and manned, the passengers and the little preacher, with Cloe and her little charge, were put into it, and, amid the howling of the storm and the rage of waters, an attempt was made to reach the shore. Hundreds of spectators, collected along the coast, anxiously watched the advance of the frail boat. But presently a tremendous squall involved

everything in total darkness, and torrents of rain shut out the boat from view. 'Then the sky cleared almost as suddenly as it had been overcast, the squall subsided, the sun shone out. In ship and on shore all strained their eyes to look for the boat, while the cry from every side arose, "Where's the boat? where's the boat?"' The sea indeed answered the question, and gave up the boat, but not the dead! Keel uppermost, the little vessel was driven before the storm, but those who had but a moment before freighted her were all gone beneath the waves! Washed ashore afterwards, one by one, their bodies were borne to the neighbouring cottages. There on a bed lay poor Cloe, and her little nursling, locked in an inseparable embrace, the child's head nestling in the bosom of her faithful nurse, and the swarthy arms of Cloe round her little darling. And there, on a sheet upon the floor, lay dear "Pious Jack," a blue chequered shirt his only shroud, and by his side the Bible that he loved so well. Happy little servant of the Lord! his work was done, and he was taken home. Not many hours had elapsed since Harry Williams had preceded him, and now, with Cloe and her tiny charge, he enters his dear Master's presence there with them to wait the "little while," and then, raised in glory, to unite for ever with them, and the redeemed from sea and shore in every clime, in praising eternally the grace that saved them BY THE BLOOD OF HIS CROSS.

Does the believing reader admire "Pious Jack"? Let him note three things concerning him. He loved the Lord, he loved His word, he walked consistently. Love filled his heart, "the sincere milk of the word" nourished his soul—the result was fruitfulness, open and manifest to all around him. The Lord could therefore make use of him. "Them that honour me I will honour." "Go thou, and do likewise."



HEBRON.

HIDDEN BY THE WINEPRESS.

(Conclusion.)

WE have traced Gideon from the winepress onward to victory and triumph in the Lord. Much precious truth still lies "hidden" in the narrative of the Lord's gracious ways with him—like virgin gold in the mine—truth, which it is hoped the reader will seek out for himself. The anxious, convicted, seeking sinner, the mere babe in Christ, "young men" and

“fathers,” may each find there, if they search for it, something, yet unseen, to profit, but especially the weak and failing ones. Indeed, it seems for these, beyond all others, that this inspired narrative was written : it might have been well entitled “The ways of grace with weakness and failure.”

It was under failure, deep and grievous failure in Israel, that the Lord came and sat under an oak pertaining to an idolatrous Abi-ezrite, and in grace sought out a deliverer for his people, when all hope of deliverance on the ground of righteousness, was utterly gone. It is with failure even in the chosen instrument himself, and the manner in which grace meets it at every step of the way, that the narrative has to do up to the point to which we have traced the history ; and, sorrowful thought, the narrative closes with failure, for the “religious memorial” of the Lord’s goodness to himself and Israel, which Gideon raised, “became a snare to him and to his house,” as every departure from God’s order in things religious is sure to be. Nevertheless, Gideon, on the whole, was a true and faithful servant from the moment that he “heard the telling of the dream and the interpretation thereof,” and saw in it all the tender compassions of the Lord towards himself. The remainder of the narrative need not detain us long.

The experiences he had had of God’s grace towards himself, had taught him to show grace to others. Of this we see a striking instance in the opening verses of chapter eight, where the men of Ephraim complain of his not having called them to the battle when he went

to attack the camp of the Midianites. Gideon, in his reply, shows much meekness and grace, as well became one who had known so many mercies. He might have replied, that in going into the battle with no more than 300 men, he was but obeying the Lord, and that his authority was sufficient for the course he had taken. He might have gone further, and justly demanded why, when they saw the oppression of Israel, they had not of themselves gathered to fight against the common foe, instead of waiting for his call; he might well have questioned the sincerity of their professed zeal in the Lord's service, and reminded them that it was an easy thing to be zealous when the danger was past, and there was nothing to meet but a defeated and flying foe. But instead of all this, he meekly takes the lower place, sets them above himself, and places his own deeds of faith and courage below theirs, saying, "Is not the gleanings of the grapes of Ephraim better than the vintage of Abiezer? God hath delivered into your hands the princes of Midian, Oreb, and Zeeb: and what was I able to do in comparison of you?" Comparing this with Jephthah's conduct under somewhat similar circumstances, in chapter twelve, how forcibly we see the contrast between the actings of grace and those of nature; in the latter case, as the result, there fell of the Ephraimites, forty and two thousand; in the former case "their anger was abated toward him when he had said that;" and however unreasonable that anger was, Gideon, by "a mild answer," obtained the victory, overcoming evil with good, and by his

humility and grace, gave glory to God, and showed his love to His people.

Yet he can deal in righteousness with offenders against the Lord and Israel, when there is need for it. When he and his company, "faint, but pursuing," asked the aid they were justly entitled to at the hands of the men of Succoth, and were refused, Gideon did not excuse them, nor forget to chastise. So, also, with the men of Penuel. These cases differed from that of Ephraim. Their offence was personal to himself, and though trying to the flesh, he could forgive it. The others sinned against the Lord, and the people of the Lord, whom Gideon loved, and whose enemies he was seeking to exterminate, that "they might not rise up again." He deals, therefore, in righteousness with them, as Moses with those who made the golden calf (Exod. xxxii. 25—29). Thus grace and righteousness go hand in hand. The weak *allowance* of evil is not grace, though sometimes mistaken for it. To "daub the wall with untempered mortar" is not tenderness, but iniquity. To suffer sin upon a brother for fear of "wounding his feelings," is worse than weakness, it is disobedience. Indignation against evil is quite compatible with the meekest spirit of love (Mark iii. 5). Who, to hear Moses command the slaughter of the worshippers of the golden calf, would have anticipated the scene in Exod. xxxii. 32? Who, to see Gideon as he "taught the men of Succoth with thorns and briars," beat down the tower of Penuel, and slew the men of the city, would have judged that he loved Israel better

than himself? Yet so it was. But the root of all this lay in his love to Jehovah. This is strikingly brought out at verses 22, 23.

Ever prone to *idols*, Israel offers Gideon the place which belonged to the Lord alone, attributing their deliverance to him instead of Jehovah. "Then the men of Israel said unto Gideon, Rule thou over us, both thou, and thy son, and thy son's son also, for thou hast delivered us from the hand of Midian." How terribly soon they fail! But *just* delivered, they deny their God, and would fain set Gideon in his place as king over Israel. What perfect grace in him who, foreknowing all their base ingratitude and ready forgetfulness of his mercies, did nevertheless deliver them, nor stayed his omnipotent hand until he had perfectly freed them from their oppressors. What an opportunity for Gideon to establish his "dynasty!" Jephthah coveted a lesser honour than this as the price of his services (Judges xi. 9—11). Can we wonder that the victory in his case brought him a life-long sorrow, and that his name and family ceased in Israel? How inevitable it is that "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap"! But "Gideon said unto them, I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you; THE LORD SHALL RULE OVER YOU." This was a fitting reply, for how could he forget the lovingkindnesses of the Lord towards him? Thus he proves that the Lord, who sought him by the winepress, who showed him mercy in many an hour of failure and sorrow, who stood with him in his weakness, and led him on

so tenderly to victory and triumph, is still "his God," and that he can be "valorous" in his cause, whether against Baal or man-worshippers. He "received not grace in vain." Sad it is to think that some of us should do so, and that the fruit is meagre indeed compared with the labour bestowed upon us.

A "mighty man of valour" now, in truth and verity, to grace he owed it all: that grace which pronounced him so when in himself he was the opposite. And here we see a truth most comforting to the anxious soul, seeking peace with God. Looking at yourself, you feel it impossible to believe that you are justified in God's sight. If Gideon at all considered himself and his surroundings when the Lord said, "Thou mighty man of valour," he must have thought that the words were spoken in the bitterest irony. But the Lord looked on the faith that was in him, and on the ground of *that*, pronounced him so. And it was true of him, even *then*, weak, timid, "hidden by the winepress" from the foe though he was; because faith united him to God, and although not yet in exercise as to circumstances needed, as we have seen, but to be energised by grace, "touched by the staff," to make him practically, what in principle he was already. Now this is most important to those commonly called "anxious inquirers." You desire peace with God, but considering what you are in yourself, feel that God's holiness forbids you to hope. You have no power to rise above your own evil, and you ask how can a holy God accept me as I am? As a dear young man, now with Christ, once

expressed it to the writer, "I *dare* not think that God can count me righteous, when I *know* I am such a sinner in myself." Yet, on being closely questioned, it was evident that he was *looking to the blood of Christ*, and to the blood *alone* for salvation. If he was to be saved at all, it must be by the blood; *that* was his only hope; all other he utterly rejected. Is this your case? He believed that Christ died for sinners, *because God said so*. Do you? He was sure that the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, was able to cleanse from all sin. Are you? But his difficulty was this, he had no power to appropriate that to himself—that is, what he really meant, was, that he could *find no evidence in himself* that he so appropriated it. Is this your difficulty? But God did not require him to find any evidence in himself as to power to appropriate, or as to anything else in which *self is concerned*. *He was quite sure, that if he could but believe*, he should certainly be saved, because God had said so. But what was this but FAITH, faith in God, faith in the blood, faith in the ALL-SUFFICIENCY of the finished work of Christ upon the cross? He was really looking to that precious blood as his alone ground of hope, and did not perceive that he was doing so, because troubled about *himself*; he was justified *before God* by faith, but did not think he was so justified, because he was looking *at* himself, though really looking *to* the blood. The publican in the temple was looking *to* the Propitiation when he cried, "God be propitiated to me the sinner;" yet "would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote

upon his breast," expressing a condition of hopelessness almost amounting to despair, because he was looking *at* himself. But Jesus says, "I tell you, this man went down to his house JUSTIFIED." Are we to suppose that the publican knew it at that time? Assuming he did not, would *you* say he was not justified? Had his knowing it, anything to do with God's judgment as to his state? What he *ought* to have known from the testimony of the word, is another question. The one before us is, what was *God's* judgment as to him? *He was justified, because looking to the Propitiation alone* for forgiveness, though hardly daring to hope. Still *that* was in his eye, dimly it might be, and distant as the brazen serpent to the glazing eyes of the dying serpent-bitten Israelite in the wilderness. He trusted *nothing else*; he hardly *trusted* that, not because it was little in his sight, but because his sense of guilt was great and overwhelming. The typical propitiation was his only ground of hope; if *that* failed him, he was lost indeed. Now this was *faith*, faith in the blood, and he was therefore justified. It may be you trust in nothing *short* of the blood; you are confident that that is sufficient. Your doubts respect *yourself* only, not the Sacrifice. Never mind yourself: Abraham considered not himself, nor should you. You *have* faith, and God declares respecting it, and therefore you who have it, "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God." Take him at his word. You *are* saved; he is at peace with you; Christ "has made peace" for you; his word assures you of it; why should you remain

at a distance? The young man referred to above, was at last enabled to see that his trembling hope in the blood alone was faith, and that having faith, he was justified through our Lord Jesus Christ in spite of all his sinfulness, lack of power to appropriate, &c. This conviction came like a flash of light upon his soul, and trembling from head to foot with astonishment and joy, he exclaimed, "I see it!"

Not many weeks afterwards, he fell asleep in Jesus, and his last words, as he raised his clasped hands to heaven, were, "Thank the Lord: '*It is finished!*'"



THE DISOBEDIENT CHILD.

WHEN I was a little boy, like most children, I was very fond of going to see my grandmother; and as she and my parents lived in the same village, my visits, as you may suppose, were very frequent. Not far from my home was a small brook, in which a fisherman had placed some large trunks with holes pierced therein, in order to catch the small fish, and make them his prey. As these trunks were close to the water's side, small groups of children might be often seen either running to and fro on their tops, or amusing themselves with the water by which they were surrounded. Now, it so happened, that on my way to my grandmother's cottage, I must pass this brook, and seldom did I leave my mother without being told not to go too near the water's edge, but especially to keep away from the fish-trunks. For some time I obeyed her voice; but on one occasion I

stopped to look at the boys who were playing thereon, and one of their number invited me to join them. At first I refused; but when he and his companions laughed at me, my pride was nettled, and to show them that I was not a coward, I was soon in their midst, and playing as merrily as though the word of warning had never reached my ear. But my joy was of short duration, for, by some mishap, I lost my balance, and fell headforemost into the water. *How* I got out I do not know, but I *did* get out, though, as you may suppose, in a very sorry condition, and that to the delight of my associates, who, like myself, had been terribly frightened. And now, what was to be done? Return home I dare not, for I dreaded my parent's anger. Her unheeded words sounded in my conscience, and the thought of her presence filled me with dread. Under these circumstances, I soon resolved what to do, and whither to go. With my grandmother lived her only daughter, my father's sister, and with this aunt I was quite a favourite. I judged that she at least would pity me; and to her I went at once. I could scarcely speak for crying; but my sad plight told its own tale, and produced just what I expected. She wept over me, stripped me of my wet clothes, and put me in a nice warm bed.

The news of my misfortune had spread rapidly, and soon I heard my mother's voice relating the repeated warnings she had given me—warnings which, had they been heeded, would have prevented my accident—and the severe chastisement I deserved and ought to receive; but the entreaties and intercessions

of her who dearly loved me, saved me from her merited displeasure. I was allowed to remain the night; the next day I was taken home, and received with a mixture of sorrow and of joy—of sorrow because of my disobedience, of joy because of my deliverance from a watery grave.

And now, my young readers, I have not related the above incident *merely* to show you that disobedience to parents ends in sorrow, but to call your attention to the solemn fact that you, if unconverted, are exposed, not, indeed, to the risk of temporal death by drowning, but to that which is much more fearful, even the destruction of both body and soul in hell. True it is you may forget this, despise the warnings of love, and be determined “to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;” but should you continue to

“Sport upon the brink of everlasting woe,”

you will find, to your eternal shame, that “the end of these things is death.” And oh! remember that as I fell into the water through *my own folly*, so you, if you go “down to the pit,” will be left without excuse, and have no one to blame but *yourselves*. The Lord, in his infinite mercy, give you to know *where* you are and *what* you are, that, being convinced of your dangerous state, you may “flee from the wrath to come,” and take refuge in Jesus, the Friend and Saviour of sinners.

But I trust that some of my youthful readers *are* conscious of their danger, and truly anxious to know the way whereby they can be saved. Be assured that, while I managed to get out of my position by

my own efforts, *yours* are useless—thoroughly, totally useless, that your prayers and tears are all unavailing. You need a “Daysman,” and there is “one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.” The very one you dread, from whom you shrink, and whose presence you shun, has “found a ransom” in the atoning sacrifice of his own Son, and by virtue of it, can be gracious unto you, and deliver you from going down to the pit. Christ has once and for ever satisfied the claims of a holy and sin-hating God; the Father’s satisfaction with the Saviour’s work has been proved by his raising him from the dead; and the instant you gaze by faith upon the cross where sin was judged and put away by the precious blood of the Lamb, you will “enter into rest,” and have “no more conscience of sins.” Yes, the moment you believe the record that God hath given of his Son, your guilty fears will be removed, and you will be able to look up to God as your loving, gracious Father, and in spirit hear him say, “Rejoice with me, let us eat and be merry.” The Lord grant to your anxious, weary souls, a simple confidence in “the glorious Gospel of the blessed God,” that you may receive *at once* what love has given and grace provided, and to which, even while you read these pages, you are really and heartily welcome.

“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”—MATT. xi. 28.

“Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.”—JOHN vi. 37.



PRECIOUS RECOLLECTIONS OF OUR EARLY- FOLDED LAMB.

MY DEAR SISTERS,—You well know the deep sorrow through which we have been called to pass, in the illness and death of our precious little Dottie; but while sorely distressed on account of our loss, we do greatly rejoice in the exceeding grace of God manifested *to* and *in* our darling; and for the praise of him who said, “*Suffer* the little ones to come unto me;” and to encourage you to bring your own dear children *early* to Jesus, I want to tell you how sweetly our darling’s heart was drawn to Jesus, when a babe of less than three years old.

We received her as a precious gift from the Lord, in the place of our sweet Katie, whom he had taken to himself about sixteen months previously; and sweetly did she fill the void, for she grew full of life and love, and was so open and winning, that all who *knew* her *loved* her; and she was, so to speak, the sunshine of our home. The memory of her short sojourn here is very precious, with scarcely one sorrowful exception. Our great desire was to lead her little heart to Jesus; and oh, how graciously were our desires met, and our efforts blessed! The Lord indeed caused the seed sown to take root, and bear fruit an hundredfold; to his dear name be all the praise!

Before our darling was two years old, the sweet tale of Jesus taking little children in his arms and blessing them, had won her heart, and she would listen with intense delight while told about it. As soon as she could talk, she would get on my lap, and say, "Now, ma, tell me about Jesus;" and resting her head on my bosom would listen as long as I would speak to her, and then say, "I like that."

Her brother Charlie had a book with many pictures, that pleased her exceedingly, but none of them so much as one of the crucifixion; *this* she would select from all the others (indeed the page is quite soiled with her reference to it), and with her elbows on the table, and her little head in her hands, she would look at it a long time, and then say, "*That's* Jesus; he died for us; he loves us;" and the quiet con-

fidence of her manner showed that she comprehended the precious truth. Indeed, I believe one of the first things that she felt and believed was that she was a sinner; Jesus died for her. Well may we say with the Lord Jesus, "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes." About this time she wanted "to learn a little prayer to say to Jesus," and one of her sisters taught her—

"Gentle Jesus, meek and mild,
Look upon a little child;
Put thy gracious hand on me,
And make me all I ought to be."

Kneeling in her sister's lap, she would repeat these words, and then of her own accord would add, "Please, Jesus, make me good;" and as she grew older, other little petitions were added, with all the simplicity of an infant's heart. She would never omit her little prayer, if she could help it; but more than once, when I have gone to look at her in bed, supposing she was asleep, she has said, "I have not said my prayer, mamma; I *must* get out of bed and say my prayer;" and then she would do so with such earnest simplicity, and afterwards go to bed so happy; when she had her good-night kiss, she would often say, "I not afraid, ma; *Jesus can see me*," and at another time would add, "*God never goes to sleep*."

Her faith and trust in Jesus was very precious, and she seemed to delight in the thought that he saw

her always. The manner in which she spoke of him was at times almost startling; she always did so with the greatest solemnity, and yet as a real *living person*, one who *loved* her, and whom she loved.

God she seemed to know as a *Father*, and would say, "God gives me food and nice clothes, and takes care of me" (Matt. vi. 32); but of Jesus her constant tale was, "He died for us; he can make us well," evidently in her heart appreciating the precious truth in one of her hymns—

"He went about, he was so kind," &c.

I had often told her of her two little sisters in heaven, and one day, after telling her again how happy they were, I added, "*They see Jesus*;" she looked up, and, in her own sweet assured manner, said, "*I shall some when*." Precious child! I little thought that in a few months she would see him whom, unseen, she loved. She had a most retentive memory, and was intelligent beyond her age; before she was three years old, she could repeat many hymns, and was very fond of singing. Her grand-mamma gave her a little book, "Tracts for Children," and she had it read to her till she knew all the tales the pictures were about; but the hymns pleased her most, and as they were read to her, she would say of one, "That's a prayer," of another, "That's a hymn," and again, "*I shall sing that to Jesus*." It was not only her delight in hearing about Jesus, but the sweet, intelligent remarks she made showed how fully she understood what she heard, and her eyes

would brighten with joy as she heard of the love of Jesus.

Her love to the Bible, which she called "God's book," was very great; and although she could not read, she had a Testament of her own, and always held it open at our morning reading; scarcely a day passed without her bringing it to me, and saying, "Now, mamma, read to me about Jesus," and with great delight she would listen to the oft-repeated tale of Jesus dying and rising again, and of his wonderful works while living, and respond to all most sweetly.

She had a beautiful manner of responding to what was said to her, and, for instance, when repeating to her the hymn,

"I think, when I read that sweet story of old,"

she would say at the end of each verse, "Ah, I wish I had!" "Yes, I do," &c.

She was very fond of Bible stories, especially of David's killing the lion, and rescuing the lamb. I recollect once telling her that David loved his lambs, and would not let the lion have one; *that* was like Jesus, he loved his lambs, and would not let Satan have one of them; but that Jesus did more than David, *he killed* the lion, but Jesus *died* for his lambs. She took up the thought directly, and made some sweet remarks which I have now forgotten; but I know my heart greatly rejoiced at her faith in the love of Jesus, and as long as she lived, Jesus as the Good Shepherd had a peculiar hold on her heart.

The following hymn she was very fond of, and in her dying hour it gave her comfort:—

“A little lamb went straying
Among the hills one day,
Leaving its faithful shepherd,
Because it loved to stray.
And while the sun shone brightly,
It knew no thought of fear,
For flowers around were blooming,
And balmy was the air.
But night came over quickly,
The hollow breezes blew,
The sun soon ceased its shining,
All dark and dismal grew.
The little lamb stood bleating,
And well indeed it might,
So far from home and shepherd,
And on so dark a night.
But, ah! the faithful shepherd
Soon missed the little thing,
And onward went to seek it,
And home again to bring.
He sought on hill and valley,
And called it by its name.
He sought, nor ceased his seeking,
Until he found his lamb.
Then to his gentle bosom
The little lamb he pressed;
And as he bore it homewards,
He fondly it caressed.
The little lamb was happy
To find itself secure;
The shepherd, too, was joyful,
Because his lamb he bore.

And now, dear little children,
There's a Shepherd up on high,
Who came to seek the straying,
Who all deserved to die.

For sin each lamb had ruined,
And far from God had led ;
But, oh, what love unbounded !
He suffered in their stead.

On the Sunday-school being opened, she greatly desired to go, but being so very young (only two and a half years), we objected, but her pleadings prevailed, and ever after, nothing could induce her to stay away. *There* she soon learnt to sing hymns, and then, as she nursed her doll, or played about, her little voice, clear and strong, would be heard singing some of her hymns, but most frequently, "There is a happy land ;" "Glory, glory, glory ;" "Here's a message of love ;" and "Mothers of Salem." These she *loved*, and often when she has sung her hymn has she said (with a look I cannot describe), "*I shall sing that to Jesus, ma ; God will let me, won't he ?*" Truly, "Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings God has perfected praise."

The Lord's-day was one of especial enjoyment to her ; entirely of her own accord she would lay aside her playthings, and as each blessed day returned, very soon after breakfast, she would say, "I must not play on Sundays ; but I may have my book and my pencil, and you must read me my hymn." This hymn was on an illuminated card, and greatly trea-

sured by her, for it was the echo of her own little thoughts—

“’Tis Sunday morning, dear mamma,

I do not wish to play ;

Last night I put my dolls and toys

Safe in my box away.

I’ll come and sit down by your side,

While you the story tell,

Of the good little Joseph, whom

His father loved so well.

And how the infant Moses, too,

Floated the Nile along,

And how his mother made for him

The basket-cradle strong.

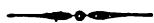
Please tell these Bible stories, then,

And take me on your knee,

And I’ll sit still, my dear mamma,

And listen quietly.”

(To be continued.)



THE LAST WARNING ;

OR,

“PITCH IT WITHIN AND WITHOUT WITH PITCH.”

A CONVICTION grows, and spreads increasingly among believers, that the coming of Christ is at hand. Unconverted persons, nay, even *infidels*, confess that “something of great importance to the human race is about to happen.” They know not what it is, nor do they perhaps care to inquire of those who could tell them; proud of the vain supremacy of reason, they prefer its vague conjectures and inferences to the solemn declarations of God’s word.

It was so eighteen hundred years ago. History tells us—history written by heathen hands, and therefore deriving no bias from the word of God—that just before the first coming of Christ, a very general impression prevailed in the world that some remarkable event was about to take place.

Without doubt, these convictions are traceable originally to that word of prophecy, which, however much men may despise, abuse, and mistake its teachings, is, like the preaching of Noah, meant, in grace, to warn men of what is coming, if haply they will listen and repent. Much mischief has been done by some professed writers on prophecy, in seizing upon every important event in the current history of the world, especially of late years, and endeavouring to give it a place in prophecy, and even to fix periods and foretell results, which, failing, as a matter of course, have given occasion to men to despise the whole subject, and to lay upon prophecy itself the onus of the mistakes into which its would-be interpreters have fallen. That Satan should take advantage of these mistakes, to divert the attention of serious minds, nay, even of believers themselves, from the entire subject, is only what was to be expected, however much it is to be deplored. Nevertheless the conviction deepens, and spreads abroad, that the coming of the Lord is at hand; and since this conviction is found to be strongest in those who, by grace, are walking nearest to the Lord, habitually studying his word, and most deeply taught in truth generally, and in prophetic truth especially, it is a fact which, without fear of the charge of enthusiasm, we

may well take for granted. To faith, indeed, the coming of the Lord is *always* nigh, and always has been. But when we find the very world itself declaring that "something is about to happen;" when we who *do* "take heed to the sure word of prophecy, as to a light that shineth in a dark place," see around us (without presuming to declare as to details) broad and palpable evidences of a state of things foretold as indicating the approach of the end of the age, we may well take up the cry, "Behold the Bridegroom cometh." No sign, indeed, is given in the word, as preceding or ushering in the coming of Christ. He could have come at any time these 1800 years without breaking the chain of prophetic events; for the coming of the Lord is taken out of the "stream of time" altogether; yet that "stream" has surely both a beginning and an end. But *before the end*, how long before we know not, the Lord will come. If, then, there be abundant reasons for believing that the end is rapidly approaching, that it is *near*, how much nearer must be that most blessed moment when those who love the Lord shall see him face to face!

One indication of the approach of the end will be the overturning of the existing grouping of the nations comprehended within the limits of the ancient Roman empire, in order to give place to another, long ago foretold in Daniel ii., vii., &c., and Rev. xiii., xvii., &c. Whether the disturbed state of the Continent, the fierce and sanguinary battles recently fought, in which armies of half a million strong have been hurled against each other, have any immediate connexion

with the prophecies above quoted, we do not say. To pronounce positively respecting it, would be to imitate those who have already done irreparable mischief to the souls of men. That some such convulsion of the nations has long been foreseen by statesmen (though not in its relation to prophecy); by the man who now rules France; by persons utterly regardless of God's word—a convulsion which even they declare is to terminate in “a new arrangement of the balance of power,” is well known. Has that convulsion begun to shake the nations of Europe? Is there any indication of a movement which threatens the speedy absorption of the minor states by the greater, and thus a rapid reduction of the number in excess of the required TEN? Does “the balance of power” appear to incline all on one side? That the ten kings must and will arise, because God has said so, the reader need not be told. No sooner is the circle of kingdoms now comprehended within the bounds of the Roman empire reduced to that number, than one arises to take the headship over all, as foretold in the Scriptures referred to above. But when *he*, the “MAN OF THE AGE,” for whom infidel writers declare they are looking, is manifested, the Day of Judgment—that day which is as a thousand years (2 Peter 3)—is *present*. Let the reader consider the inevitable conclusion to which this would bring us. First, *if the movement referred to has really begun*—and the bare *possibility* of it only is suggested here—we are on the very threshold of the DAY OF JUDGMENT. Secondly, *before that day over-*

takes a Christ-rejecting world, the Lord descends into the air (not on to the earth), the saints, living and raised, are caught away, and—solemn thought for those left behind!—"the door is shut." How startlingly near this brings the sinner, the mere religious professor, the conscious hypocrite, the utterly careless, the avowed infidel, to that tremendous hour! When Noah was building the Ark, some might mock, others perhaps "suspended their judgment," and waited. There was time yet; the flood could not come till the ark was finished. But when he began to "*pitch it within and without with pitch*," the hour of judgment grew so near, that it was madness to delay.

O sinner, be persuaded! Again do we say the Lord may come at any moment. You cannot with safety wait till you see some sign, some unmistakable proof that his coming is at hand. None is given. He may come *now*, while you read; he may come to-night, while you sleep; to-morrow, while you are busy in your office or your shop. These startling events on the Continent have nothing whatever to do with his coming, they neither hasten nor retard it. If they be *not* what they seem to be, the Lord may come, the door be shut, and you—LOST FOR EVER. But if they be that which, at the least, seems *probable*, we do not say the Lord *may* come, but that he *must* come, and therefore, to speak figuratively, the ark is being "*pitched within and without with pitch*," and to delay is wilful self-destruction, eternal misery, intensified a thousandfold by the never-dying reflection that you were warned in time, and would not hear.



THE MOLTEN SEA.—1 Kings vii. 23.

JOTHAM'S PARABLE.

CHAPTER I.

“AND all the men of Shechem gathered together, and all the house of Millo, and went, and made Abimelech king, by the plain of the pillar that was in Shechem. And when they told it to Jotham, he went and stood in the top of mount Gerizim, and lifted up his voice, and cried, and said unto them, Hearken unto me, ye men of Shechem, that God may hearken unto you. The trees went forth on a time to anoint a king over them; and they said unto the olive tree, Reign thou

over us. But the olive tree said unto them, Should I leave my fatness, wherewith by me they honour God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees? And the trees said to the fig tree, Come thou, and reign over us. But the fig tree said unto them, Should I forsake my sweetness, and my good fruit, and go to be promoted over the trees? Then said the trees unto the vine, Come thou, and reign over us. And the vine said unto them, Should I leave my wine, which cheereth God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees? Then said all the trees unto the bramble, Come thou, and reign over us. And the bramble said unto the trees, If in truth ye anoint me king over you, then come and put your trust in my shadow: and if not, let fire come out of the bramble, and devour the cedars of Lebanon."

What a solemn narrative of incessant failure and rebellion is the book of Judges! How truthfully "it holds the mirror up to nature," and rebukes the insensate folly of self-righteous man! But, dark as is the picture thus presented to our eyes, there is a bright side too; for if the continual ingratitude and iniquity of the Lord's people present a fearful portrait of man to our contemplation, the untiring patience, the unwearied grace, the wondrous goodness of the Lord shine out most sweetly. How *could* he bear with such a people? How indeed, if he were not what he is? Read all that has been the subject of our meditations for the past nine months; think how the Lord sought out, found, and fitted a deliverer for Israel; swept their countless oppressors from the

land, and gave them peace; and then read this, "And it came to pass, *as soon as Gideon was dead*, that the children of Israel TURNED AGAIN, and went a whoring after Baalim, and made Baal-berith their god. And the children of Israel remembered not the Lord their God, who had delivered them out of the hands of all their enemies on every side: neither shewed they kindness to the house of Jerubbaal, namely, Gideon, according to all the goodness which he had shewed unto Israel."

Ingrates to God and man, they forget both the grace, mercy, and goodness of the One, and the services of the other, and, burying in Gideon's grave all that they should have learned of Gideon's God, they set up again, in a viler form than ever, that "shameful thing," against which Gideon's testimony had been raised, and which (as is implied in the inspired narrative) was "yet in Ophrah of the Abi-ezrites." Nor did they stop there. If God be forgotten, and all his ways of grace despised, what wonder if his servant, and his faithfulness to the Lord and them, should be forgotten also? Nor only forgotten, but his memory outraged in the slaughter "upon one stone" of all his legitimate children save one. Yes, even so far could the "men of Shechem" go in sinning against Jehovah, and his chosen and fitted instrument and channel of goodness to them. Yet God bears with them still, and, instead of instant and overwhelming judgment, rebukes and warns them, in gracious words, by the mouth of the only one that had escaped the slaughter, namely Jotham.

The appeal might well have touched their hearts; for if Gideon were indeed an olive tree, a fig tree, and a vine to Israel—if he were in any measure an instrument of grace, sustenance, and fruit to them, it was only by God's grace; and so far as they reaped blessing through him, or brought forth any fruit Godward, it was because Jehovah loved them, notwithstanding all their rebellion against himself. But, as the subsequent history shows, it was all in vain; as was also the warning contained in the closing figure of the parable, meant in grace to turn them back again ere they should fully reap where they had so fearfully sown. But although it failed to reach their consciences, this interesting parable is full of instruction to us, viewing it as we can do in the light of the truth which we possess. Gideon was but a type of One who in all things has the pre-eminence, and who, above all others, is to us the alone source of all blessing. For ever blessed be his name! Its very mention

“ Shall bow our hearts to worship him ; ”

and without pronouncing positively as to the Spirit's mind in the parable, we may take the opportunity which the figures employed afford us of meditating upon some of the moral glories of Gideon's great Antitype. Let us, then, as the Spirit shall enable us, “ consider him.”

“ The trees went forth on a time to anoint a king over them.” This is true as to Gideon. The men of Israel had sought to make him king, but, as we have seen in former meditations, he preferred the more lowly place of service to rule—he would rather glorify Jehovah than exalt himself; he would be servant to,

not king over, the Lord's people ; he would not suffer them to thrust him into the place belonging to the Lord alone. Happy would it have been for the people of the Lord in the present dispensation, if those who profess to be God's servants, had always been of the same mind—happy both for them and those they profess to serve. Alas ! how many thrust themselves into that place which belongs alone to our glorified Head ! And many love to have it so ; for religiousness must have an object visible to *sense*, or all would be confusion in its estimation. How little do the dear children of God consider that in suffering this they are practically disowning the Lordship of him “who loved them unto the death” ! Consciously, intentionally, they would not do this, we are persuaded, for they love him—and well they may ; but whenever a man is permitted by them to take a place belonging to our LORD, those who, even by silence, allow it, are so far virtually denying him who alone is Lord over his own house. It is truly said that “silence gives consent.” In this case it does so most fully : and sad it is to think that the Blessed One should be *thus* requited for all his love. Gideon would not suffer it in his day—“I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you [neither I, nor any other, however dear to me] : THE LORD SHALL RULE.” Memorable answer ! may those who *serve*, and they who are served, remember it !

But in choosing the lowly place of service to that of authority, power, and pomp, Gideon did but faintly shadow forth him who, when he “perceived

that they would come and take him by force to make him a king, departed into a mountain himself alone" (John vi. 15)—taking a place far above their carnal thoughts, alone though he might be in it, as to all human sympathy or fellowship; for even his disciples were unable to understand or feel with him in this. Blessed Jesus! at all cost he must do his Father's will. The path he took might lead to suffering, scorn, and death; but what was that to him, who never for a moment thought of himself? It was the path of obedience, and illimitable submission to his God and Father, as well as that which would result in infinite blessing to us, and that was enough. Alone—yet not alone, for his Father was with him—he *chose* the way—the toilsome way, the steep and lonely path, which, if it led far above and beyond all the thoughts of men, led also to deeper suffering than tongue can ever tell out, or heart of man conceive. Think, dear reader, of the blessed Man, Christ Jesus, *preferring* such a path. What must have been the love! And yet how little can we estimate or measure it as we should! To us who believe, the tale of Jesus' sufferings is a subject of continual meditation; and the more we think thereupon, the more our admiration grows. But, after all, it is so faintly that we can apprehend it. Now and then some one feature in those sufferings strikes us more powerfully than another, and then we bow in wondering adoration. What he endured in the unceasing "contradiction of sinners against himself," who shall ever tell? The very tenderness of his gracious heart, the love and compassion which dwelt

so richly in him, must have enhanced this species of suffering to a degree our poor selfish hearts can in no wise enter into. Nor can we forget how oft his holy soul must have shrunk from much which his all-seeing eye witnessed even in those who were the constant companions of his pilgrimage, and who if, as he graciously said, they had "continued with him in his temptations," had not unfrequently *increased them*.

But, more than this, there was the unceasing sorrowing over his much-loved people Israel. Go where he would, this followed him. Their very need of his healing, delivering power, every time he stretched forth his loving hand to heal, or spoke the word that drove the tormenting spirit of evil from the racked and wretched object of his compassion, this sorrow was revived, intensified, and struck home to his heart of hearts, until he sighed for very anguish (Mark vii. 33); for why were they, his beloved Israel, thus subjected to the power of evil? Was it not because of their departure from himself? (Deut. xxviii.) This was a sorrowing that sometimes *would* not be restrained, so that on one occasion, as if the fountain were too full to be controlled, "when he beheld the city, he wept over it." And when for the last time "he went out, and departed from the temple," his words, full of burning love and infinite compassion, form one of the most pathetic and beautiful passages in the Scriptures—"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under

her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." Is it not like the last pleadings of a breaking heart? Nor could he forget them even in the hours of his great agony, when, forsaken of his own, and followed by the malicious, triumphant Pharisee, the howling multitude, the brutal soldiery, he turned to the weeping women, and cried, "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children." No, nor even when quivering in anguish, as they nailed him to the tree, he cried, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

How constantly he had mourned over Israel, how oft he had wept for them in secret, how unceasingly he had grieved, utterly forgetting all they did or could do against himself (for *when* did he ever think of self?) who shall say? Well might the Spirit pronounce him "a Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." Yes, it was LOVE that intensified his sufferings, and made them what they were. And, if all through and over all this deep path of sorrow the deeper one of Calvary's dark hours loomed; if the *end* of this path were ever present to his blessed mind; if the way in which his loved people would *at last* requite his patient love, pressed constantly upon his spirit (and who can doubt it?), can we wonder that "his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men"?

O patient suffering One, how the remembrance of all thou didst endure for us should win our hearts to thee! But there was yet a sorrow deeper far than all that could spring from man's double-dyed ingratitude, and without doubt pressing always upon that pure and spotless heart. Of that, let the mysterious agony of "dark Gethsemane" speak. It is too deep for words, too terrible for comment. Enough that he, the holy Jesus, foreknew that he would on Calvary be "made sin for us," that he would bear our sins "in his own body on the tree," that HE whom he loved as never man loved, *must* forsake him there! If, reader, you would attempt to measure the weight of *this* sorrow, you must first measure his purity, holiness, and abhorrence of sin, and, harder even than this, HIS LOVE TO GOD. Who shall attempt this? Who, then, shall adequately comment upon the path of sorrow in which he walked, and which, be it remembered, he *chose*, and took, and kept right onward to the dreadful climax, that so his God and Father might be glorified, and we, enemies to him by wicked works, eternally blessed in himself? Eternal ages shall sound his praise, and countless myriads bless his name and tell of his infinite love; but not all the hearts that shall be gathered through his precious blood around the throne, shall fathom what he suffered *willingly* for them.

"Yet, Saviour, thou shalt have *full* praise;
We soon shall meet thee on the cloud,
We soon shall see thee face to face;
In glory praising as we would."

“GOD IS LOVE.”

THE flowers which deck my pathway round,
And skirt the shady wood,
Proclaim, as with a thousand tongues,
That God is very *good*.

The ripened fields of waving grain,
For man and beast assigned,
Tell that the great Creator is
Not only good, but *kind*.

The glorious sun, and peerless moon,
And stars which round them wait,
Prove God to be not only good
And kind, but very *great*.

But, oh! the cross where Jesus hung,
Doth yet more strongly prove
That though so *good*, and *kind*, and *great*,
The mighty God is LOVE.

A. M.

“EBENEZER.”

1 SAM. vii. 12.

O BLESSED Lord, to thee I raise
A feeble song of grateful praise;
For thou, in ev'ry changing scene,
“A very present help” hast been.

In times of conflict, sorrow, care,
To thee I've look'd in faith and prayer,
And gracious answers from on high
Have proved that thou didst hear my cry.

When trials have my soul depress'd,
In thee I've found my peace and rest;
Nor could I lonely be with thee,
Whose perfect love encircles me.

When none could understand the way
In which I've walked from day to day;
With thankfulness I freely own,
That *then*, E'EN THEN, thy help I've known.

And since thou ever art the same,
I'd joy and glory in thy name,
Till that blest day when I shall raise
A sweeter song of endless praise.

N.

PRECIOUS RECOLLECTIONS OF OUR EARLY- FOLDED LAMB.

(Continued from p. 212.)

THE last Lord's-day my darling could stand, she brought her hymn to be read. She loved to go to the meetings, and her quiet manner and happy face were often remarked; though she did not understand what was said, she knew that Jesus was the theme, and that the bread and wine were taken in remembrance of his death; and that was quite enough to arrest her attention, and awaken in her little heart thoughts of love and peace.

One Lord's-day, before she was three years old, her papa was very poorly, and could not go out; and as it was very cold, we thought it best for Dottie to stay at home. At first she objected, but her papa said, "We'll have a meeting at home, Dottie;" she was then quite willing to stay, and when we returned from the room, she ran up to me full of glee, and said, "Pa and me had a meeting, ma"—they had sung some hymns, and talked about Jesus; indeed, her papa was astonished at her remarks. In the course of her conversation, she had said to him, "I have two little sisters in heaven, and they have white frocks on, and harps in their hands, and crowns. *I have got a very wicked heart, but Jesus will wash it in his precious blood, and make me so clean;* and I shall go to heaven, and have a harp and a crown too." In the evening of the same day her papa read to her and her

brother Charlie a little book, entitled "I love Jesus." When he had finished, she said very earnestly, "I love Jesus, *I do*. Do you, Charlie?" appealing to her brother.

She often asked of others if such a one loved Jesus; and if told they did, her heart would open to them at once. That *she* loved Jesus with no childish love was apparent to any one who spoke to her about him.

During the last four months of her little life, we could plainly discern the work of the Spirit in her heart; she expressed herself so clearly and sweetly about the Lord Jesus and his "precious blood;" she always said, "PRECIOUS blood," and that little word showed how she valued it. Surely this was the work of the Spirit, for no human teaching ever made Jesus, or his blood, precious to one soul. We must adore the wonderful grace of God in revealing the power of that blood, and showing the *need* of it to such a little one; nothing but the work of the Spirit could have led my darling to say, "I have a *very* wicked heart, but Jesus will wash it in his PRECIOUS blood, and make me *so clean*, and I shall go to heaven, and have a harp and a crown." Precious Gospel! that gave my little one such full assurance; she had no doubts, no uncertainty, but simple faith in the precious blood, and joy in the result of its perfect cleansing. It is sweet to remember how her heart was occupied with Jesus; it really seemed "*full* of thoughts of Jesus, and of heaven where he is gone."

Heaven seemed so near to her, she would associate it with anything that gave her pleasure, and she

would speak of it as a place to which she was soon going; for instance, she had a pink frock made, and the first time she wore it, she said, very simply, "I must have my pretty frock in heaven." She was told she would not want it there; Jesus had a white robe for her in heaven. She answered, "Very well," and never again referred to her frock.

To talk or sing of Jesus was her great delight. To any one she would sing of his love; even in the workshop her voice was not silent. We have often missed her, and found she had been singing "Happy land" and "Mothers of Salem" to the men, and telling them she was going to heaven, and should have a harp and a crown. So much was one impressed by what she said that, when she was ill, he said, "That child will not get well; she has told us so often that she was going to heaven."

In little things it was sweet to see her how her heart was turned to the Lord. She would not eat without a blessing had been asked; and if any at the table began before it was done, she would say, "Stop! we have not said a blessing."

One day she was sent to fetch something from upstairs, and by mistake she brought a very *large* instead of a *small* thing, and as she let it fall at my feet, I said, "How could you bring it down, my darling?" "*God helped me,*" was her ready answer. This was her real feeling; there was no lightness in her manner when speaking of the things of God, or of God himself; but at other times she was full of life. It is a matter of great thankfulness to us that our

darling scarcely knew a naughty word, or any of the foolish nursery rhymes so common ; she had no heart for *them*, but the pretty lines to the cow, pussy, fly, &c., she was very fond of, and often as she stood watching the flies on the window have I heard her saying, in a low voice—

“ God is very kind and good,
Gives even little flies their food.”

She was intensely fond of her baby brother, and, with her arm round his neck, she would sing—

“ Little brother, darling boy,
You are very dear to me ;
I am happy, full of joy,
When your smiling face I see.”

Very sweetly, but firmly, had her winning ways and loving heart entwined themselves around our affections ; but we knew not how we loved her till she was passing away ; and though sometimes we were astonished at her words, and felt how sweetly the good Shepherd had drawn our little one to his loving heart, yet we did not think how soon he might take her to himself. But Jesus had beheld and loved her, and now he called her to come to him ; he would carry the lamb in his bosom ; he came into his garden to gather this lily, and though we sometimes sing, “ He hath done all things well,” yet how hard it is to give up these precious lambs and say, “ Even so, Father ; for so it seemeth good in Thy sight.”

The last time she went to the Sunday-school was just a month before she died ; she was then in good health, and had been for some time very open, so ready to speak of Jesus: that afternoon she came home very happy (a brother had addressed the children), and with great delight she said: "Oh, ma, Mr. R—— told us about Jesus making lots of bread for the people, and there was too much ; and we sang "Mothers of Salem ;" and I LIKED IT, I DID." On the Monday, with her own money, she bought several little books to give away, and she told Mr. R—— what she loved to tell—"That Jesus would wash her in his precious blood, and make her so clean, and that she would go to heaven," &c. Before the next Lord's day she had taken the whooping-cough, and was very poorly. We very soon saw that she would not bear it, she was very slender, never strong, and the cough tried her much ; but through all this trying illness, we were compelled to adore the grace and love of the Lord towards this lamb of His flock ; she was kept in perfect peace, never once cried or fretted, and when asked, "How are you, dear?" she would say, "Not very well."

To be talked to and sung to about Jesus, afforded her real enjoyment. One day I said, "We are very sorry for you, but we cannot make you well." "No," she answered, "but Jesus can." Another morning, on saying, "You have coughed very badly to-night, darling," she answered, "Yes, *Jesus* heard me cough, nobody but Jesus," and then

she added, "Nobody but you, and pa, and Jesus." She was evidently comforted with the thought that Jesus heard her cough; and we, too, felt that he who "tempers the wind to the shorn lamb," would not lay more on his precious one than she could bear. At another time she said, "I cannot say my prayer now." I said, "You can say, 'Jesus, bless Dottie.'" "So I do, ma," she answered.

About a week before she died she was exceedingly weak and ill (having for many days refused all nourishment). I undressed her for the last time, and when her night-dress was on, and I had wrapped her in a shawl, she said, "Now, ma, rock me, and sing to me; sing 'Happy Land.'" I did so. "Now, 'Mothers of Salem;'" but I did not know the tune, and she said, "That's not right." I then repeated the words she so loved, and when I said, "Jesus, sweetly smiling, kindly said, 'Suffer the little children to come unto me,'" she turned her expressive eyes upon me, and said, as though delivering a message, "*That means suffer me to come to him.*" (Ah, the Lord knew how hardly we suffered it; but from that hour we sought to give her up to him who had given her to us.) She then asked, "Now, ma, sing 'Around the throne of God in heaven;'" and *then* her little voice, clear and beautiful, rose above mine. I sang slowly, for her breath was short, and would have ceased at the third verse, but she said, "*No; you must sing, 'Because the Saviour shed his blood.'*" And again she sang every word to the end, "Glory, glory, glory."

A more touching scene I never witnessed, as I held

that precious little body, and looked at her sweet pale face, her whole soul beaming in her eyes, as she sang, "Glory, glory, glory." Anything more beautiful than that last dying strain I *never* heard ; nor can I ever forget. It was her last song on earth, but now

"She has learned the song they sing
Whom Jesus has set free,
And the glorious walls of heaven still ring
With her new-born melody."

Though suffering at times very much, the Lord dealt very gently with our darling ; she had sweet sleep and perfect peace. Once in that last week she rallied, and asked for her little book, and told her sister the stories the pictures were about ; but she mostly lay with her eyes closed, and scarcely spoke, unless to answer a question, or to ask us to sing to her. She had become very weak. Before the cough came on, she would moan very much, and it was most touching to hear her say, rather quickly, "Sing, sing ; sing 'Happy Land :'" and thoughts of that happy land would calm her distress. On the morning of the Lord's-day on which she was taken from us, she was greatly distressed, and called for one and then another to take her ; seeking relief, but not able to obtain it. We were only able to cry to the Lord to quiet her ; and as we told her Jesus was here, she said quickly, "Oh, sing, sing 'Happy Land ;'" but our hearts were breaking, and we could not sing. She then turned to her papa (who was nursing her), and said, "Tell me about the little lamb." He did

so. Her moaning ceased. The Lord graciously heard our cry, and it did not return.

Throughout the day she was sweetly sensible, and looked at us all more than she had done for some time, frequently asking to be sung to, and to be told about Jesus. In the afternoon, as I was nursing her, she said, "Ma, tell me about the little lamb," and once again I told her how the Good Shepherd went to seek the little lamb, and when he had found it, how he took it up in his arms, and was so happy, because he had found the little lamb. She responded to every sentence, and evidently enjoyed it.

A little while after, I said to her, "Jesus has sought and found Ma's lamb, and is going to take her to his loving bosom, and Dottie will be happy then." Though scarcely able to speak, she again responded in her peculiar manner. It was very evident that she was fast passing away, but she was so sweetly composed and quiet, that I laid her in her bed on the sofa, thinking she might sleep a little, but in a few minutes a cough came on, and she became insensible. Consciousness never returned, and in a few hours my precious lamb was safely folded. "Absent from the body, present with the Lord." She fell asleep in Jesus on July 5th, 1863, aged three years and five months.

"Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. xviii. 10).



THE DISOBEDIENT CHILD.—No. 2.

SOME time after the occurrence of the incident related in the September number of *GOOD NEWS*, my mother died, and my father gave up his home, and went to reside with his mother and sister.

In order, however, that my readers may the better understand what I am about to relate, I must tell them that my new residence was part of a double cottage, and that the piece of ground on which it stood formed an irregular triangle. By the sides of its gardens, the owner of the property had planted two

beds of osiers, amongst which grew some apple trees. To the east of the part occupied by my grandmother was the brook you read of in the number of Good News already referred to; and when I inform you that another brook emptied itself into it from the opposite side, you will perceive at once that, with the exception of our front, which faced the road, we and our only neighbours were surrounded by water. This was of little consequence so long as the fine weather lasted; but when a wet season prevailed, the waters would overflow their banks, and not only close us in on every side, but even enter our lower rooms and drive us upstairs, where we were obliged to remain till they subsided. Were it my object to relate a pleasing tale, I could tell you much of those occasions, but as I seek your profit, I will commence my story.

One afternoon, a few friends were expected to visit us; and as one of them was a little boy about a year older than myself, I anticipated his coming with much delight. After tea, we were allowed to play out of doors, but not before we had been strictly charged to keep at a distance from the water. And as the hirer of the osiers was shortly expected to cut them, we were told neither to meddle with them nor go among them. We amused ourselves very nicely for some time, but at length my associate caught sight of one of the apple trees which stood on the forbidden ground, and proposed that we should go and gather some fruit. The apples on that tree were of a peculiar kind, and its richly laden boughs so attractive,

that, after a little hesitation, I consented to accompany him. The twigs of the osiers hid us from the view of those who otherwise might have detected us, and as soon as possible we reached the desired spot. We ate till we were satisfied, well filled our pockets, and prepared to return. Before doing so, however, we wished to go to the end of the osiers, and as there was an offset (though a very small one) to the angle we were fast approaching, there was not much danger of slipping into the brook. But when we reached the paling which separated us from the side of the highroad, my playfellow would get over, and I, as a matter of course, must follow. After climbing the fence, there was a ditch to cross, and in trying to clear it I fell to the ground and rolled into the water. My terrified companion ran for help, but before he could reach the house, my affectionate aunt had heard my piteous cries, and was hastening to my rescue. She reached the side of the brook just in time to save me, and from that moment we loved each other more intensely than ever.

As a tree is known by its fruit, so is a child by its doings; and my disobedient ways must have convinced all my readers that I was a very disobedient boy. But what I wish to press upon your attention is the fact that these sinful acts were but the fruit of that vile and corrupt nature which I, in common with yourselves, inherited from our first father Adam, who when he fell involved us in hopeless ruin—a ruin so complete and widespread, that “there is none that doeth good, no, not one.” This is as true

of the youngest child as it is of the most elderly man; and the most amiable and affectionate reader of these lines possesses a nature as depraved as the very persons who "killed the Prince of Life," and who afterwards resisted the Holy Ghost. True it is that "*the works of the flesh*" are more manifest in some than in others; but the *flesh itself* is the same in all—that in which there "dwelleth no good thing." This is why, before your baby brothers and sisters can say, "I will and I won't," you see them pout and turn red when they are not allowed to do as they please; and for the same reason you listen to wicked thoughts, utter naughty words, commit sinful deeds, and show bad tempers when you are not permitted to follow your perverse and stubborn wills. How is it that sometimes you are sent to bed in the dark, and lose the sweet smiles, the loving embraces, and the fond kisses of those who dearly love you, or, perhaps, by your self-will and obstinacy, bring upon yourselves the rod of correction? How is it, too, that when your godly parents enclose your hands in theirs, and pray for you, you are glad when they cease; or when, with tearful eyes and sorrowing hearts, they beseech you not to trifle with your precious souls, you turn away in disgust? or when they take you to hear the Gospel preached, you, if left to your own course, would prefer to remain at home? *The secret of it all lies in the total depravity of your nature, and in the entire corruption of your whole being.* Yes; all these things—the love of that which is evil, and the hatred of that which is good, prove that you are "carnal, sold under

sin." And though by self-control and other means you *might seem* to improve your condition, all your labours would produce nothing except "a whited sepulchre," and "a fair show in the flesh." But "that which is born of the flesh is flesh;" and whatever form it assume, whether wicked or religious, it "profiteth nothing." Hence there is no more hope for you, *so far as yourselves are concerned*, than there was for me, when I, through my wilful disobedience, was sinking, helplessly sinking, in the water.

But as there was one who, notwithstanding all my waywardness, loved, me and saved me from my perilous condition, so Jesus came "to seek and to save that which was lost." The *motive* in each case was the same, though the love of the former was as nothing when compared with that of the latter; but what a *contrast* between the objects and the work to be done to deliver them. I was a fond relative—a dearly beloved nephew; but those for whose sake Christ was manifested were strangers and enemies.

"No man of greater love can boast
Than for his friend to die;
Thou for thine enemies wast slain!
What love with thine can vie?"

Again: My cries for help attracted her, who rescued me from drowning, and thankfully did I appreciate her efforts on my behalf, but the divine love led the blessed Lord to visit us in the depths of our guilt and ruin. He could say, "I was found of them that *sought me not*; I was made manifest unto them that

asked not after me." And not only was he an unsought guest in the world which we had made, and among his own nation, but their language was, "We will not have this man to reign over us . . . let him be crucified." In the contemplation of such unrequited love, it may be truly said—

"Not sinful man's endeavour,
Nor any mortal's care,
Could draw thy sov'reign favour
To sinners in despair;
Uncall'd, thou cam'st with gladness,
Us from the fall to raise,
And change our grief and sadness
To songs of joy and praise."

(To be continued.)

"JEHOVAH-JIREH."

GEN. XXII. 14.

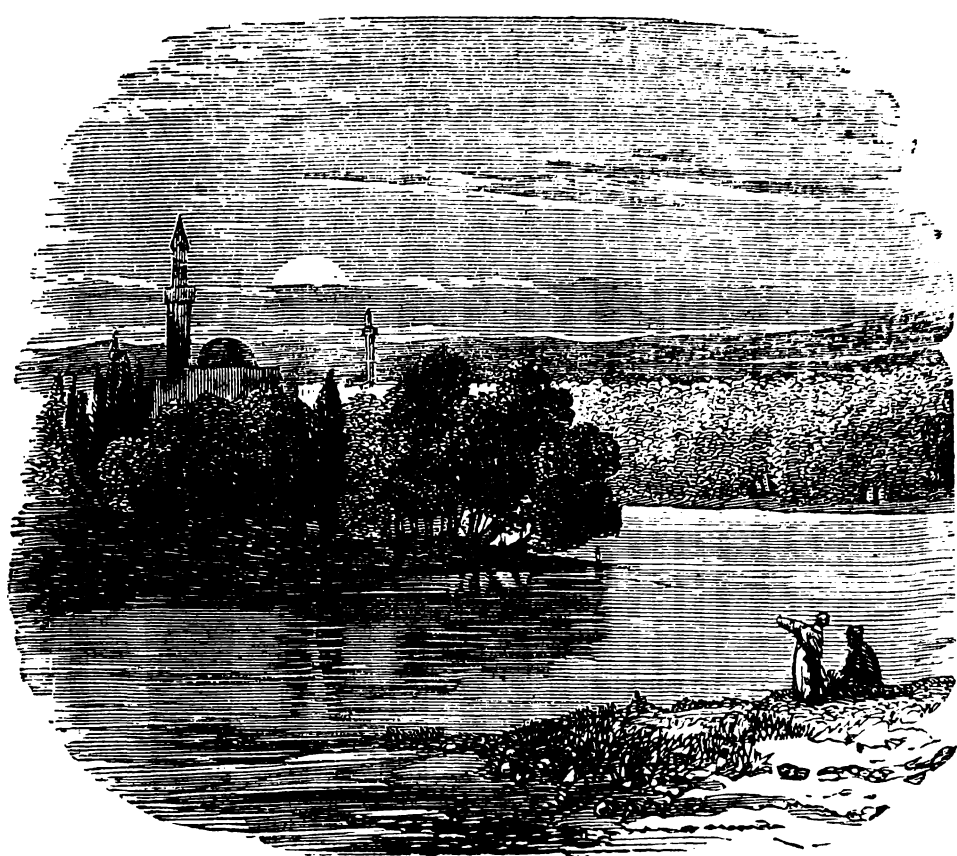
WHATE'ER may be my future lot,
O Lord, I cannot tell;
But since thou, Father, changest not,
All must with me be well.

Should sunny scenes my path surround,
I'd not be puffed up;
And if my sorrows should abound,
I'd drink each bitter cup.

I reckon on thy love and grace
To cheer me day by day;
And as I run the heav'nly race,
Thy pow'r in me display.

And be it thus the little while
I may remain below;
And let me have thy constant smile,
In grace and knowledge grow.

And when my earthly path is o'er,
I'll dwell with thee above,
Where, with thy saints, for evermore,
I'll sing thy ceaseless love.



JOTHAM'S PARABLE.

CHAPTER II.

“AND they said unto the olive tree, Reign thou over us. But the olive tree said unto them, Should I leave my fatness, wherewith by me they honour God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees?” What a picture of man and his ways is brought to our remembrance by the invitation “Reign thou over us”! As we saw last month, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, of feeding five thousand with five loaves and two fishes, they would “fain come

and take him by force, to make him King." It was so suited to their carnal thoughts to have One for King who could feed them by his power, that, *could* he have stooped to meet the desires of the flesh and of the mind (a thing, it is needless to say, impossible to him), they would gladly, nay, by force if needful, have exalted him over themselves. Nor was it altogether without some show of religiousness. "This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world." To own him the prophet that should come, because he had fed them, satisfied their natural hunger, given them a *meal*, was just like man. But as the sent One of God, as divinely presented to Israel as their Messiah, proving his claim in every gracious way, and manifesting Him who sent him fully, he was rejected. "We will not have this man to reign over us." Not all the divine perfection and glory of his walk and ways could win their hearts. To these they were blind, or, forced to see them, hated him. A solitary meal outweighed all his moral beauty in their estimation; *that* could stir them up to make him King, *this* to crucify him! How utterly base! And yet it was for such that Jesus came to die; "for this is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance"—as assuredly it is, and the more we consider what it involves, the more our hearts will love him—"that Christ Jesus came into the world to save *sinners*." It was for *this* he came: "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God." Most gracious will! most blessed subjection!

But first he must be presented to Israel as Messiah, only to bring out in result the utter depravity of

man's heart and nature, and his enmity against God. For surely the bare fact that men would have made him King by force for a meal of bread, yet cast him out, revile, and crucify him for his divine perfections, needs no comment. He would not, in the words of the parable, "leave his fatness," wherewith by him God and man were honoured, "to go and be promoted" in man's way, and by human hands for human ends, and so the cry is, "Crucify him, crucify him!" It does the heart good to *contrast* man's ways with HIS; it humbles us, and wins the soul to him. We can never dwell too much upon *himself*. To linger round the path he trod, and note each blessed footprint of the way he walked so patiently, is an employment those who have learned to love him for *himself* delight in. "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." And what a tale it tells—that man, seeing this, and *because of it*, cast him out, and killed the Prince of life! Yet so it was, although willing for a single meal, and in hope of more, to make him King, and trying to hide even from himself the utter baseness of the motive, by that rag of religiousness, "This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world"!

Fain would he in his gracious love have been as an olive tree to them—pouring forth from his own fulness that abounding grace and blessing which is as the "oil that makes man's face to shine" (Psalm civ. 15). But they had no heart for it. Yet he cannot give them up. He will maintain love's strife to

do them good, although it be an unceasing struggle between love and hatred to the end. In spite of themselves, in face of all opposition, opprobrium, contempt, and violence, he will not only present, but again and again bestow, the oil of gladness. From end to end of the land of Israel, from one side of Jordan to the other; from Phœnicia to Gadara he went, in untiring grace, to do them good. Rejected in one place, he does but go to another. If sane men, or those who think themselves so, will not have the divine unction, he will seek the furious demoniac on the desolate shores of Gadara, draw him by his power to his feet, and, while he with mad lips cries, "What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou son of the most high God? I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not!" he will cast out the legion, deliver the racked and wretched subject of their malignant power, and set him at his own feet, "clothed, and in his right mind. If the owners of the lost swine will drive him from them, he will not leave them without a witness of his grace; love lingers round them yet, though they prefer their swine to all he had to give so lavishly: "Go home," says he to the happy object of his delivering power, "Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee." Blessing yet may come upon them, though they pray him to depart, and expel him from their coasts. And who shall tell how many will in "that day" rise from the tombs of ruined Gadara to bless his name?

Offering the first-fruits of his victory over Satan to the despised Nazarenes, he is led to the brow of the hill on which their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong; yet in unwearying patience he goes again, and, if he can there do no mighty work because of their unbelief, he *will* thrust blessing on a few sick folk who cannot get out of his way.

Lingering near his beloved Jerusalem, to pour out the oil of gladness there to the utmost, he arouses the enmity and opposition of the pharisees, and, because he would in meekest grace avoid occasion of offence to them, he departs into Galilee. But how terrible the truth which this brings out! The manifestation of divine grace to men *gives occasion of offence*! They *will not* have God! Yet, if compelled to leave them for awhile, he must needs return again and again, although they seek to kill him on each occasion (John v. 16; vii. 1, 25; viii. 59; x. 31—39). Meanwhile, driven from his beloved people, he seeks the lonely outcast by Sychar's well. If Israel will not have the "oil that makes man's face to shine," he will seek the utterly wretched—perchance such an one will not refuse the precious gift. He *must* pour out blessing somewhere, though it should cost him a weary journey of many a mile beneath a burning sun to attain his gracious purpose, and reach the place of meeting at the right moment, when one who sought to shun all eyes would creep to the well at the hottest hour of noon. Yes, "he must needs go through Samaria." But who shall tell out all that is conveyed in that one little sentence, "needs must," and the

mingled joy and sorrow of that long weary journey? Who shall express the love and yearning compassion of his heart for his beloved city, on which now his back *perforce* was turned, and the anguish of *such* love rejected? A mother who has left an only and beloved son, with whom she has vainly pleaded to save him from a course of ruin, which she well knows will speedily bring him body and soul to destruction, may go on her weary way with bowed head and bleeding heart, and find her sorrow grow heavier as the distance lengthens; but even a mother's heart cannot feel for an only son as his heart felt for Israel. He could truly say, "There is no sorrow like my sorrow." For must not infinite love rejected, be an infinite pang? But if he must needs go from the people that he loved, because they would not have the divine fulness that dwelt in him, there was one poor sinner whose heart knew what *rejection* was, and he, the rejected One, would seek her out. That she had had five husbands, does not necessarily imply that she had been five times a widow: that would have been no fault. The practice of putting away was, and still is, common in that country; and, from the way in which the Lord alludes to her five husbands, and the effect the allusion has upon her, the implication is that she had been five times rejected in succession. And now, degraded to the miserable position of a concubine, a shame and dishonour to her sex, without one heart to feel for her, one arm to lean upon, lonesome and despised by all (for the very men led by her instrumentality to Christ, express contempt for her,

verse 42), she creeps to the well in the noontide heat, when, as she hoped, none would see her. But there was an omniscient eye of infinite compassion upon her that she knew not of, a heart of love which, sinner as she was, yearned over her, and, wonderful to tell, could *sympathize*. But from what opposite causes—opposite as the poles, antagonistic as light and darkness, good and evil, holiness and sin! If she were rejected, an outcast, and despised, it was without doubt for some grievous fault, perchance some persistent vice or vices. But he was “despised, and rejected of men” for his divine perfections, because he was “God *manifest* in the flesh”—because man would not have God. What a meeting this by Sychar’s well! Two hearts were there—the One all purity and grace, light, love, and holiness, divine, yet truly human; the other—who shall paint its blackness and defilement? And he, the rejected One, had sought her out, that the very cause of his rejection might become to her the well-spring of eternal consolation. She was in the dust; but, vile as she was, he would raise her up, and pour upon her head and heart that “oil of gladness” Israel had despised. For him indeed she had no more heart than those from whom he had been driven; but, while they were well content with their condition, and felt no need of that which he so yearned to lavish on them, she was wretched; deserved shame had covered her face. Her misery had a voice for him—a voice that reached his tender heart, even in Judea, so that “he must needs go through Samaria,” that he might lift her from her self-wrought degradation,

and "make her face to shine." And so it was. And when at last his patient grace had wrought its blessed work, and he had revealed himself to her, she who once shunned her fellows by the well, could go before all Sychar, and say, "Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?" Occupied with him, she can afford to lose sight of man's judgment; it is enough for her heart that ~~HE~~ has received her, though knowing all. God owns her confession of his Christ, and the oil of gladness poured on her is made a source of blessing to those around her. "Many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did." "And many more believed because of his own word," and thus, though driven from Judea, and rejected by his own, he found a way to pour out blessing, and a "meat to eat" that even his disciples knew not of. For it was his meat to do his Father's will; and the joy of it so filled his gracious heart, that he forgot to eat his necessary food.

RECONCILIATION TO GOD.

YE fallen ones of Adam's race,
Guilty, and lost, and doom'd to die;
Such are God's wondrous love and grace
That you to him may now draw nigh.

For you the Father sent his Son—
His only Son—to bleed and die;
That you, though by your sins undone,
Might *through his precious blood* draw nigh.

THE DISOBEDIENT CHILD.—No. 2.

(Continued from page 240.)

ONCE more. My aunt had but to *run* a short distance to become my deliverer; but the Son of God had to *die* for those who were “without strength” to do anything for themselves. What think you, my young friends, of love like this, and of him in whom it shone so brightly? “As the Lamb of God,” he has been slain for sin; his sacrifice has been accepted; and so well pleased is God with the work of his beloved Son, that he is now *beseeking* you to be reconciled to himself. Are you willing to own your perishing condition, and to receive the Christ of God? No preparation on your part is necessary; nothing is required at your hands. *As* you are, and *where* you are, you are welcome to “the unsearchable riches of Christ”—to *all* that love *can give* and grace bestow. Remember, you are on the very brink of the lake of fire, and, for aught you can tell, the next moment you may sink into “the blackness of darkness for ever.” Faithfully do I warn you of your danger, and affectionately do I invite you to come to him who alone can deliver you from it. The door of mercy is yet open, and Christ is still at the right hand of God, waiting to be gracious. Come, then, before the door is shut, and enter while “there is room.” Oh, do not, I entreat you, “die in your sins,” through refusing to “believe in him whom God hath sent;” do not seal your everlasting doom by rejecting, or despising, or neglecting God’s “great salvation;” but hasten to

Christ's outstretched arms of love and mercy, for there, and there *alone*, can you find perfect rest and safety.

I cannot close this paper without saying a few words to those of my readers who, by the Spirit's teaching, have been convinced of their helpless, perishing state, but yet do not understand the way whereby they may obtain immediate deliverance. From the moment you truly believed God's testimony about your ruined condition, you have been wretched; perhaps, too, you have made inquiries as to how you could obtain peace, and have received so many different answers, that your perplexities, instead of being lessened, have multiplied. One has advised you "to wait God's appointed time;" and another has told you "to cry for mercy; and that, sooner or later, you shall have what you desire." God forbid that I should write a single word that would lead you to think that he who feedeth "the young ravens which cry," can be indifferent to the cry of a sinner ready to perish. Such a thought would set aside the truth that he who is "Lord over all, is rich unto all that *call* upon him." It would also give the lie to the precious facts that, when the self-condemned publican cried, "God be merciful to me a sinner," and the dying thief, "Lord, remember me," they were heard and answered. But while the above cases prove that "whosoever shall *call* upon the name of the Lord shall be saved," they do not contradict those texts of Scripture which declare that while we are saved by grace, it is "*through faith*" that we are

filled "with all joy and peace *in believing*." It was *thus* that even bodily blessings were obtained from the Saviour during his sojourn among men. He was ever ready to listen to the cry of the needy, and allowed them to tell him all their wants. But before he healed them, he used to say, "*Believe* ye that I am able to do this?" and when they replied, "Yea, Lord," he would add, "According to your faith be it unto you." Thus while he did not despise their *cry*, their *faith* received what he delighted to bestow.

Now as what you require is obtained in the same way, do you not perceive that your spiritual advisers have misdirected you? And should not the fact that you have been crying for mercy, it may be for a length of time, without receiving the salvation of your souls, lead you away from the thoughts and opinions of men, and also cause you to ponder the following question, "How then shall they *call* on him in whom they have not *believed*?" That you should be unable "to wait" in a state of cold indifference, I can well understand; and that you should "cry for mercy" is no more a wonder to me, than that I cried for help when in danger of being drowned does not surprise you. But what would you have thought if, when my dear aunt had stretched out her hand to save me, instead of taking it *at once*, I had still continued to cry as before? Would you not have supposed that I was so bewildered and confused that I did not know how foolishly I was acting? Exactly so; and yet this is the very thing you are doing. I will try to make this plain.

God laid your sins upon Jesus, and is now entreating you to accept the boundless provisions of his grace. He desires that your weary souls should find rest in the atonement of his Son; that your guilty consciences should be purged by the precious blood of the Lamb; and that your doubts and fears should cease at once and for ever, *through faith* in his testimony concerning Christ, and what he has already given in him. But instead of gratefully *receiving* what is put before you, and thankfully *accepting* what is presented to you, you question and hesitate, as though it was too good to be true, as though you were too vile to be received, and too guilty to be pardoned. And yet you cannot be more anxious to be saved than God is to save you. Then why not hear “the words of eternal life”? why not listen to “the joyful sound”? why not welcome the Saviour who has fully met your need? why not “believe on the Lord Jesus Christ,” and set to your “seal that God is true”? The Holy Ghost testifies of him who, “when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high;” and you have but to renounce self in every shape and form, and to gaze by faith on the Friend and Saviour of sinners, and you will

“See your trespasses forgiven,
And your songs of triumph raise.”

“Be not afraid; *only believe.*” So shall you “have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,” and “rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.”



THE LOST BOY.

WHAT a wonderful thing is memory ! How quickly it recalls past scenes, and makes them to appear present realities ! Thus it is that events and circumstances of bygone days are ever and anon rising to our view, and looking us in the face. Whether the remembrance of such things be pleasing or painful, it is the same ; we cannot forget them, even if we would.

I was never more forcibly reminded of the truth of the foregoing remarks than a few weeks since.

While staying with a friend, the spire of a church in a market town caught my eye, and brought to my recollection the following story:—

Nearly forty years ago my father's eldest brother lived in that town, and I was invited to visit him. During my stay, a contested cricket match took place, and I went with my uncle and his sons to witness it. Before the game commenced, they committed me to the care of my cousins, and for some time we kept together. But being younger than they, I could not move among the numerous spectators so easily as themselves, and the consequence was that I became lost to them in the crowd. Getting out of it as quickly as I could, and bending my steps towards the town, I soon reached it, but being unable to find the street in which my uncle lived, wandered to and fro until thoroughly wearied. In consequence of the cricket match, there were but few persons to be seen in the streets, and, being naturally very timid and reserved, I could not muster courage to speak to an occasional passer-by. Finding at length that all my efforts to reach the place I sought were useless, and being very hungry as well as weary, I began to cry bitterly. My sobs and tears attracted the notice of a poor woman, who, coming to me, kindly inquired the cause of my distress. I told her my simple tale, and though she knew nothing of the name I mentioned, she took me by the hand, and, obtaining the necessary information from another person, led me to the house I had so long sought for in vain.

My aunt was rejoiced to see me, for my cousins,

having missed me, had been home to inquire if I had returned, and, learning that such was not the case, had hastened back to the cricket field, hoping to find me with their father. But when he assured them that he had not seen me since he committed me to their care, they became alarmed, and at once commenced a diligent search for me. However, as I could not be found, my uncle had just gone to the town crier to describe my person and appearance, when the kind-hearted old lady took me into the house. One of the shopmen was despatched to fetch him back, and to stop the bellman, and in a few moments my tears were dried, and all were rejoicing that I had returned safe and sound. Even the poor woman who received a shilling for her trouble, seemed to share the joy; and an aged retired sea captain who lived with my aunt, his niece, almost loaded me with sweetmeats. My cousins received a severe scolding for having neglected me, but as soon as we were alone, they laughed heartily at my ignorance in not being able to find their father's house, and for some time afterwards, they were accustomed to call me "the lost boy."

Simple as is the above, it contains a moral, from which much instruction may be drawn. Learn, then, in the first place, *what a short-lived thing is earthly joy*. When I entered the cricket-field in the morning, full of boyish glee and mirth, I thought no more of the sorrow that awaited me before the day was over than Belshazzar understood his approaching doom while drinking wine with his lords and praising his false

gods. If you, dear reader, are one of the “lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God”—one of the thousands who delight in concerts and exhibitions, in ballrooms and theatres, in pic-nics and excursions, be entreated to remember that you are spending your “money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which satisfieth not,” and that, sooner or later, you will find that all these things are but “vanity, and vexation of spirit.” Nor is this all; for, while the world’s gilded joys *end* in heaviness, “even *in* laughter the heart is sorrowful.” *Have you not found it so again and again?* While seeking to quench your feverish thirst at earth’s muddy streams and shallow waters—while pressing its poisoned cups to your parched lips, has not conscience stung you to the quick, and made you unhappy, *miserable, WRETCHED?* And though you may have tried, in every possible way, to hush its voice, to still its cries, to quiet its remonstrances, and to silence its accusations, you have not been able to succeed. Like the handwriting upon the wall, which so troubled “the king of the Chaldeans,” “that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another,” the remembrance, it may be, of a godly parent who sleeps in Jesus, and whose departing moments were not only peaceful, but marked by the possession of “joy unspeakable, and full of glory;” or the recollection of a fond brother or sister who longs for the salvation of your soul; or the thought of a letter once read in haste, and as hastily thrown aside, because the writer pressed upon you the importance and

necessity of conversion, makes you either turn pale or blush crimson, and, in spite of yourself, causes you to tremble from head to foot. Oh, it is a terrible thing to feel the bitter pangs of remorse, and to have your own conscience, with its many stings, for your enemy and accuser! And yet, if grace prevent not, this will be your everlasting portion, only to a more fearful extent, and in a more awful degree, than it is possible to realize now. Poor restless, unhappy one, you have tried man's "broken cisterns," and still are dissatisfied—you have an aching void within—you "thirst again;" no longer join the cry of the "many that say, who will show us any good?" but listen to the sweet invitation of him who said in days of old, and still says by his word, "If *any* man thirst, let him come unto *me*, and drink." Yes, the Lord himself is "the fountain of living waters," and "every one that thirsteth" may "drink, and forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more." God give you, dear reader, to know the value of "that living water" which has gladdened the hearts of millions, and so satisfied them, that they have turned their backs upon the "fleeting joys of earth" without the slightest wish to return thereto, knowing for themselves that Christ is their abiding portion, and that they "have in heaven a better and an enduring substance."

The next important truth which I desire to put before my readers, as drawn from the moral of my story, is the solemn fact *that they, both by nature and practice, are "LOST" sinners.* It is in this character

that man is addressed in the word of God; and though this truth is denied on every hand, and men are found who dare assert that there *is something good* in man—that he possesses some *latent* principle which can be acted upon—that he simply needs, as it were, a graft upon the tree in order to call forth the *dormant* life within, it is well to remember that the opinions of men, however great or learned they may be, are not to be listened to for a moment, when opposed to the plain teaching of the Bible. “*What saith the Scriptures?*” must be our motto; and that blessed book not only *declares* that man, as man, is hopelessly “*lost*,” but it *proves* him to be so, inasmuch as he has been tried again and again, and always with the same result. Look at Adam and Eve in Paradise. Surrounded by every blessing, the first attack of the enemy was too much for them, and they failed beneath it. Between their fall and the flood, man was left uncontrolled; and so vile did he become, “that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually,” and God destroyed him “from the face of the earth.” After the flood, mankind fell into idolatry, and Abraham was separated from his kindred and his country to be God’s witness upon the earth. To his posterity, the twelve tribes of Israel, the law was given, with what result is well known. Their history is one of entire failure, from beginning to end. Last of all, God sent his well-beloved Son; and how was he received? “*By wicked hands he was crucified and slain.*” This crowning act of daring wickedness brought the world’s probation to

a close, proved its guilt, and left it under judgment. "Now is the judgment of this world," said the blessed Lord in the contemplation of his death; and though God, *in grace*, still bears with it, and is even gathering out of it "a people for his name," it lies under the condemnation of having "crucified the Lord of glory," and of still rejecting "his unspeakable gift."

Such is God's description of man, without any reference to the castes and distinctions which abound among men. It is true of young and old, of rich and poor, of prince and peasant, of king and beggar, of the moral and the immoral, of the total abstainer and the most confirmed drunkard, of the most attractive and the most repulsive, of the one who prides himself upon his morality, and the one who glories in his shame, and, to narrow the circle, it is true, my unsaved reader, of *you*. You have gone astray from the womb, you have had your back upon God all your life, and every day you are wandering further and further from him. Satisfied with the world, in love with sin, and urged on by Satan, you are in the broad "way that leadeth to destruction." *Do you believe this, and are you willing to take your true place before the Lord as a "LOST" one?* If you are too proud to own this humbling truth, you are unprepared to receive "the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." There is, blessed be God, full and free, present and eternal salvation in him for the "*lost*;" but as long as you trust in yourself that you are righteous, you will know no more of the Saviour, than the scribes

and pharisees knew of him in days of old. Who needs the physician but the sick one? Who values the lifeboat but the drowning one? So none but the "lost" sinner welcomes Jesus, and rejoices in his "great salvation." But know this, that your refusal to acknowledge your real condition does not alter it in the least, nor make it one whit less dangerous. It is true, *because God says so in his word*, and if you still persist in your obstinacy, refuse to hearken, pull away the shoulder, stop your ears that you should not hear, and make your heart as an adamant stone, you will, ere long, experience what it is, not only to be "lost," but LOST FOR EVER. The Lord grant that you may yet be awakened to a sense of your guilt and danger, that you may rightly value him who came "to seek and to save that which was lost."

But I would fain hope that some of my readers have bowed to the truth of their "lost" estate; and to such I would say, My artless tale speaks to you. *It bids you cease from fruitless toil and useless labour, and to welcomes the One who know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary, and to lead him to the place of rest and joy.* It was after I had spent much time in trying to find my uncle's house, and had begun to despair of doing so, that I *stood still* to see the stranger approaching me who so kindly took me to my temporary home; and thus,

"Weary, working, plodding one,"

it must be with you. Perhaps, in ignorance of the fact that salvation is not "*to him that worketh*," "nor

of him that *runneth*, but of God that showeth mercy," you have been *going about* to establish your own righteousness, or in *seeking* to find out God and feel after him, or in *attempting* to improve your condition ; or, if you have been so far taught as to understand the uselessness of all your *works*, and consequently have ceased to rest in *them*, you may have become so occupied with your *sighs*, and *prayers*, and *mental anguish*, as to suppose that there is something good in *them*, and that, if they were but of a *deeper* nature, you would have a better title to Christ than that which you *now* possess. But this is a sad mistake, and one which even my simple story might correct. *My cries and tears left me as far from my friends as my paces up and down* the streets of the town in which they resided ; and you can be no more brought to God by your feelings than you can by your doings, by your tears than by your works.

“ Could your zeal no respite know,
Could your tears for ever flow,
Nought for sin could e'er atone,
But Christ's blood, and his alone ! ”

Yes, dear reader, it is the blood of Jesus Christ that is the *only* foundation of salvation and peace, and till you are clear and sound on this point, you will have nothing better to rest on than the quaggy ground of your own experience. Do not then, I entreat you, put your prayers or your tears in the place of Christ ; but as a “ *lost* ” one “ *stand still*, and see the salvation of the Lord,” and you will realize some-

thing of the love of "the good Shepherd" who goes "after that which is *lost*, until he find it," and who, when he hath found it, lays it on his shoulders, and carries it home rejoicing. Oh, the blessed portion of the sinner! The very moment he believes the testimony of God about the work of his dear Son, he finds himself, as it were, in the Father's arms, receives the kiss of forgiveness, and, with "the best robe," the ring, and the shoes upon him, feasts upon the fatted calf, without a single doubt or suspicion.

It was in this manner that the Gospel was received in the days of the apostles; and you have but to read the book of the Acts, in order to prove the truth of this statement. At Pentecost three thousand persons "were pricked in their heart," and before the day was over, they had "*gladly* received the word." When Philip preached Christ to the people of Samaria, the result was, "there was *great joy* in that city;" and as soon as the Ethiopian eunuch heard of Jesus, he believed with all his heart, was baptized, and "went on his way *rejoicing*." "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house," was the Apostle's reply to the jailor who had asked, "What must I do to be saved?" and at once, he "*rejoiced*, believing in God with all his house." Alas! that in this day of boasted light and knowledge, the Gospel should be so little understood, that it takes really anxious souls days and weeks, months and years, to learn what was once apprehended the moment it was preached. Without, however, stopping to inquire into the cause of this, let me assure you, my reader, that

the Gospel itself is unchanged, and when you believe it *as simply as I believed the one who promised to see me safe with those to whom I was "LOST,"* the gloom and distress which now fill your soul will give place to peace—and *instant peace too* ; there will be joy over you above, in the presence of the angels of God, and you will rejoice in the thought that he who sought, and found, and saved you, will lead you through the wilderness, and afterwards receive you to glory.

May every weary, heavy laden reader of these pages be blessed with the spirit of a little child—a spirit which neither hesitates nor reasons, but which accepts immediately whatever is presented to it and put before it, and the Lord alone shall have all the praise.

N.



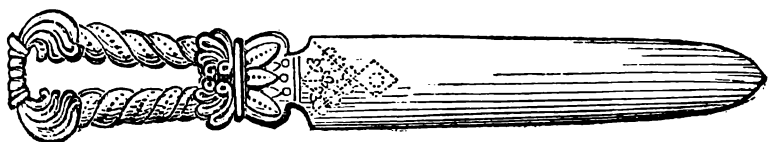
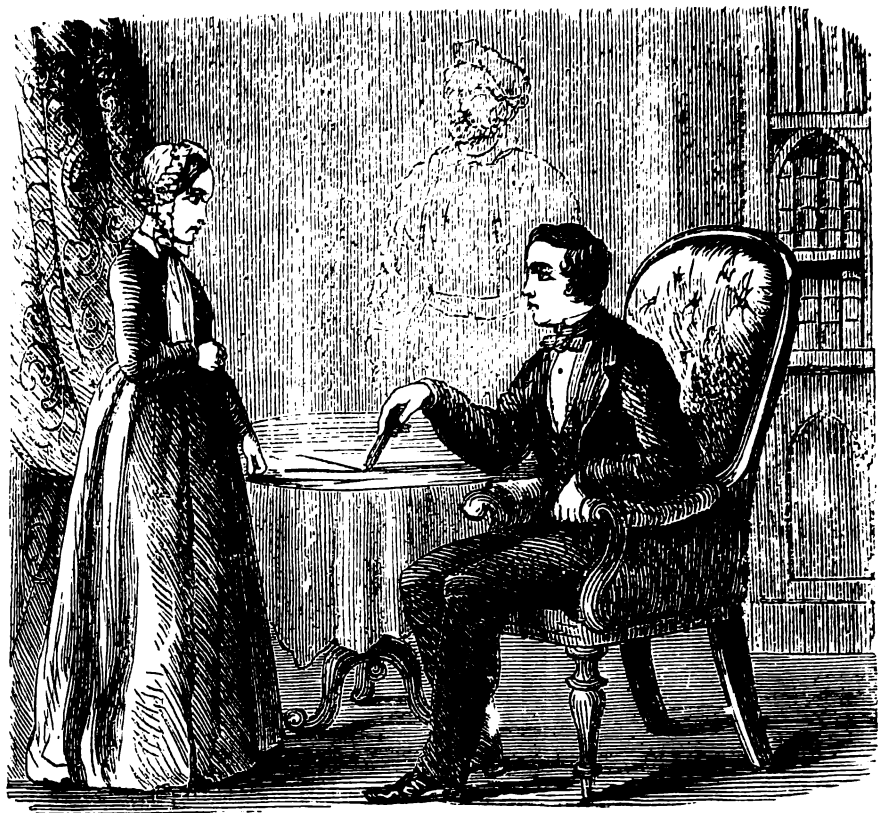
JESUS, AND JESUS ALONE.

1 JOHN i. 7.

ONE day, as a pastor on the continent was preaching, a very old woman was seen on her knees counting her beads instead of paying attention. A lady asked her if she understood what the preacher had been saying. "Oh, no, my lady. This gentleman speaks German, and I speak French." "Come with me," said the lady, "we will talk together. You seem very tired." "Oh, yes, I am. I have already walked six miles to-day, and I have twelve more to accomplish the penance of this day. It is hard at my age." "How

old are you ?” “ I am ninety-two. This is the fiftieth time I have undertaken a pilgrimage to Nôtre Dame, where I am going. Oh, I am a great sinner ! I have a great many sins to reproach myself with ; and the more I advance in years, the more I discover some which I have not seen before. I was told that to deserve forgiveness I was to do penance and undertake pilgrimages. I think this is the last time I shall be enabled to perform this journey. I hope I shall obtain forgiveness. But, alas ! if I don't I am a lost woman !” The lady replied, “ You seem agitated ; calm yourself, I pray you, and listen to what I am going to tell you. Can you read ?” “ Yes, Madam.” “ Then be so kind as to read these words.” Then the old woman read in the New Testament, “ Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.” “ And when Jesus had taken the vinegar, He said, IT IS FINISHED !” Then the lady proved to her that man cannot in any way save himself, but that Jesus *gives* His salvation. Every word went home to the heart of the old woman ; she seemed beyond herself at the thought of that FREE GIFT. Rom vi. 23.

All at once she got up, went in a hurry to the fireplace, and threw into the flames the beads she had in her hands. “ *It is done ! it is done !*” cried she, “ my sins are forgiven me ! Jesus has saved me ! I will set out again, but it is not to go to Nôtre Dame des Ermites. I will go home, to say to all my neighbours that *it is Jesus, and Jesus alone*, who has saved the old sinner !”



THE SWISS PAPER-KNIFE.

IN the face of the testimony of the whole word of God, how many there are who persist in believing that, because their outward acts are not immoral, they are better than others in God's sight; that they "are not as other men are," although partakers of the same corrupt nature; and that a course of religious duties, self-imposed, and for the most part invented by *men*, with the addition of what they call "good deeds," will win for them, or at the very least

result in, eternal salvation ! If, added to this, they possess a knowledge of Gospel truths, into which they have been educated from childhood, and which they believe in the same way as men commonly believe historical facts, they conceive themselves to be assuredly on the right road to everlasting life, and go on from year to year "making progress," as they fondly hope, "in the right direction."

A lady, whom we will call Miss E., was one of this class. In her case this view of her own state was so rooted, that nothing seemed sufficient to convince her even that she was a *sinner*. Who would suppose that so simple a thing as a paper-knife, made of the wood of the pine in the mountains of Switzerland, and purchased from some peasants there, would become the instrument of convincing one so deeply rooted in self-righteousness of her lost condition ? Yet such was the fact. A Christian friend who had brought this paper-knife from its native mountains to England, was one day in conversation with her on the subject of salvation. He had been acquainted with her from boyhood, and in later years had often tried to show her the state of ruin she was in, and that the way she walked in could not possibly end in everlasting life. He had tried in vain hitherto ; but on the occasion referred to he took up the Swiss paper-knife lying at hand, and with it drew two imaginary lines, diverging from one point, and forming the two sides of a triangle, asking her at the same time whether it was possible for those lines ever to meet, even though continued to infinity ? The one line was

intended to indicate "the narrow way which leadeth unto life;" the other, "the broad road that leadeth to destruction."

She did not appear at the time to take much notice of the figure, but the Spirit of God had applied it in power; and, some weeks afterwards, when her mind was undergoing a change, she reminded that friend of the figure he had employed, and said she intended to keep the paper-knife as a memorial; for that the moment in which it was used to illustrate her condition, was the first in her life in which she had had a doubt as to being right in the course she had been pursuing. A little while afterwards she found peace through a knowledge of Christ and faith in his precious blood.

Till shortly before her death, the knife was kept as a pleasing memento of the greatest event in her life—namely, her change from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God; and was then returned to the friend who had been the honoured instrument of her conversion, with the date of the event written with her own hand on the paper-knife, "*March, 1828.*"

This little incident is related in the hope that it may open the eyes of some to see the terrible mistake they are making. You, reader, desire to go to heaven, do you not? But which road are you in? There is but *one* way. Christ himself declares, "I AM THE WAY." Have you ever really been to *Christ*, and had to do with *him* personally about your sins? If not, you are yet in "the broad road that leadeth

to destruction;" for Christ declares again, "I am the Door;" and if you have never yet entered by him, you are most assuredly *not* in "the narrow way"—therefore, in the other. And, whatever your thoughts about yourself, depend upon it *the road you are in will never meet the one you seek.*

The friend who used the paper-knife, as related above, had a brother who occupied a religious post. Yet, sad to say, although he had so much to do with Gospel truth, he was entirely ignorant of his own need as a lost sinner; had never, indeed, felt that he was one, nor knew that "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Writing to his Christian brother on one occasion, he complained that he never inquired "what *progress* he was making"—that is, towards salvation. In reply to this, his brother sketched on a sheet of paper the simple figure which had been so remarkably used to Miss E., drawing, as before, two lines, writing "HEAVEN" at the end of one, and "HELL" at the end of the other. He then asked, "How is it possible to be *making progress* towards salvation, or in the way to heaven, while yet travelling on the broad road to hell?" To you, reader, if you are yet ignorant of Christ, the question is repeated. Observe, it is a question of the *way you are in.* You may be a very amiable person, leading what men would consider a blameless life; you may have made much progress even in religious knowledge; you may have discontinued the practice of much that you saw to be wrong, and added on much that you see to be right;

all this and more is quite possible ; but what has all this to do with *the road you are in* ? If *that* be wrong, the end must be destruction—everlasting misery, aggravated by the reflection that you were warned—solemnly, kindly warned, and would not turn. Again do we repeat that, unless you have had to do with Christ himself about your sins, *you are yet on the wrong road*. That road never can by any possibility reach the destination you no doubt aim at reaching. May God give you “repentance unto life,” and lead you to HIM who is alone “the Way, the Truth, and the Life ;” whose precious blood alone can cleanse you from all sin ; whose death upon the cross for sinners proves the terrible character of sin in God’s sight, and the fearful danger you are in if you persist in trying to reach heaven without that cleansing blood, without passing through the “Door,” *without Christ* ; for in the road you are on, *He is not*.

The year is fast closing in. Its last month has come ; its last hour will soon strike. Let not its closing moments find you on the road you have travelled so long. “*Turn you at my reproof* : behold, I will pour out my Spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you.” Let not this most gracious invitation meet your eye in vain. Turn while you may ; turn now. Should the perusal of the above incident lead, by God’s grace, to your doing so, you will have occasion, like her whose conversion it relates, to bless Him for

JOTHAM'S PARABLE.

CHAPTER III.

IN the last chapter we traced some few of the instances in which the Lord Jesus Christ so patiently sought to pour "the oil of gladness" on the heads of unwilling sinners, ever singling out the vilest, the most wretched, or those who *could* not escape his loving hands; as if to compel men to see, in spite of themselves, the grace that yearned to do them good. To pursue this part of our subject would be to rewrite the whole of the four Gospels; nor even then should we have all the acts of mercy and goodness he performed; for "there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written." But "he spent his strength for nought, and his labour in vain." The greater the grace displayed, the higher grew man's opposition. This is a terrible truth, and a solemn comment on the inspired words, "The heart of man is desperately wicked." If "he went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil," it did but increase man's hatred.

As the fig-tree supplies both food and nourishment to the wayfarer in Eastern lands, so he presented himself to Israel, crying, "He that cometh unto me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst." Sweet indeed was the "fruit of his ways" to Him who sent him. He was "the BREAD OF

God," the delight of the Father. His ever-perfect obedience was "sweetness" to Him; but to man the "good fruit" was offered in vain. "Bread strengtheneth man's heart," but *God's Bread*, which came down from heaven—and because it did,—was hateful to sinners. "From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him." "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone." Yes; if anything could prove it, if proof were needed, man's ways with "the delight of the Father" fully gave it. He must "leave his fatness, wherewith by him God and man were honoured"—must forsake his "sweetness and good fruit"—must leave his "wine, which cheereth God and man," or man would not have him. "Cheereth God!" what a remarkable expression! When, in days before the flood, God looked down from heaven, what did he see? "That the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart." As when Noah sent forth the dove, and she "found no rest for the sole of her foot," because the waters of death prevailed everywhere, so, from pole to pole, from the centre to the circumference of this wide earth, was there no spot, no heart on which that holy eye could rest. "And it grieved him at his heart." How tenderly the words fall upon the ear! How wonderful to find no words of just indignation, anger, and abhorrence! "God so *loved*

the world." Alas, that man will not believe it; would not when "God manifest in the flesh" was there, "pouring out his love" by offering himself to every form of human need, in every way man's desperate case required.

But, just because "God *so* loved," the precious outgoings towards man of that spotless, loving life were as wine to Him who sent him. Yes, blessed truth! "God so loved the world;" but who proved it? Christ, in all his works and words and ways toward man; and *therefore* it was that, independently of his precious fruit towards God, the outgoings of that life on earth were as wine that "cheereth God." Yet, the "wine that he had mingled," man would not have. For the loaves and fishes he would own him Lord—"Lord, evermore give us this bread;" but divine unction, sustenance, and fruit, he abhors; he will resist all his offers, expel him from his coasts, take up stones to stone him, blaspheme, and seek to kill him, rather than receive the "oil of gladness," the Bread of God, the wine of joy divine. Well might the sorrowing suffering One exclaim: "I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" So perfect was man's ruin, so irremediable, save *through death and resurrection*, that, although "God manifest in the flesh" was there—there in the world his own hands had made, sinners, as such, could not be happy. Satan came to man in innocency and needing nothing, and was heard and obeyed at once. God came in the Person of his blessed Son to man ruined, wretched, needing

all things, and was rejected—rejected *because* he was God! The hatred so persistently shown to Christ was not only personal to himself—it was *hating the Father*; for “he that hath seen me, hath seen the Father.” “They have both seen and hated both me and my Father;” for “the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.” And the intensity of this hatred is shown in the fact that every word and deed which so declared the Father, drew forth not only undisguised opposition, but also repeated attempts at violence against the blessed person of his dear Son. If “because his hour was not yet come,” he suffered not these desperate and persistent attempts to succeed as yet; if he “withdrew himself,” “escaped their hands,” “hid himself, and so passed by,” it was not, most surely, that *he* might escape, but that they might have yet a longer season of opportunity. But in vain. Man is a sinner; and so desperate was the ruin, that, *if he could help it, God himself should not lift him out of it!*

And what was the end of it all? “They took Jesus, and led him away.” And he, “bearing his cross” (oh, how meekly!), “went forth” (of his own free will—there was no resistance) “into a place called the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha: where they crucified him.” There the baptism he had to be baptized with was accomplished. There man gave Him the only reward he had to give for all His love. There those hands, so oft stretched forth in sweet compassion to bestow the needed grace—those feet, so swift, so untiring to hasten to the relief of the

wretched, they nailed to the cross. There that heart—which beat so true to them, mourned evermore over the ruin they were in, and was broken by reproach—they pierced. If my reader be yet ignorant of Christ, let him pause here for a moment, and consider. What must have been the love which, foreseeing all this, knowing beforehand how man would requite it, could proceed as Jesus did all through his gracious ministry? Read the inspired narrative of the Lord's ways when on earth with the cross in full view. Peruse each chapter with the *last scene* indelibly fixed upon the memory. Surely you cannot remain indifferent to such love? But, alas! you will, if the Spirit do not apply it in his own power to your heart; for you are yet just what and where they were who thus requited him. To you it may seem impossible that *you* could have acted thus, and yet, if you have hitherto remained content to be reckoned with the world, to be without Christ—if, having heard the Gospel of his grace so often, and being familiar with its teachings, you are still where nature placed you, still in the flesh—does not the indifference (to call it by no harder name) which you have shown to all his perfections *prove* you his enemy? Is *contempt* no symptom of enmity? Do trifles command an influence over you, which *all* you know and have heard again and again concerning Jesus, God's dear Son, cannot even approach, much less equal? If so, as compared with them, you clearly *despise him*. Have the invitations, the pleadings, the solemn warnings of his Gospel sounded in your ears, met your eyes, been

forced on your attention again and again in vain? If so, you have *rejected* him. Now, "he was despised, and rejected of men" when on *earth*; but *you* have despised and rejected him now that he is in *heaven*, "declared to be the Son of God with power, by the resurrection from the dead." Which is the heaviest responsibility? "Much more shall not we escape if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven." Have you done *this*? God bore long with Israel. Infinite grace in its wondrous searchings could see excuse for them where no other eye could see it (Acts iii. 17); but for you there is absolutely NONE. The old year is dying out; its moments will soon be buried in the grave of forgotten time. But the *responsibilities* they have brought to you, as one by one they have flitted by, will *rise again*, unless blotted out in the blood of Christ. Think of this as you listen to the death knell of the dying year, sounded from steeples which point upward to that heaven where he whom *you* have hitherto rejected is seated at God's right hand!

There, "exalted where he was before," the infinite love of his heart can now pour out itself unhindered. Through death and resurrection he is now all that his heart desired. His blood is shed, the way is made, in spite of man and Satan, and, "being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath," says Peter, "shed forth this which ye now see and hear." Through him, as the alone Source of all spiritual blessings, we who believe in his name, "washed from

our sins in his most precious blood," "have an unction from the holy One, and know all things." Antitype of the olive oil, the Spirit is poured out, and dwells in them that believe. "Blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ," the believer can sing—

"What in thy love possess I not,
My Star by night, my Sun by day;
My Spring of life when parched with drought,
My Wine to cheer, my Bread to stay;
My Strength, my Shield, my safe Abode,
My Robe before the throne of God?"

"Of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace." Led of the Spirit, as his power of communion, he feeds on the risen Christ. Like Stephen of old, "gazing stedfastly up into heaven, and seeing Jesus," "beholding with unveiled face the glory of the Lord," he is "changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." Taking his yoke upon him, and learning of him who is "meek and lowly in heart," he finds rest to his soul. Drinking of "the wine" that he has mingled,

"Full of light and life and love,"

he finds "the joy of the Lord," his strength. If "God and man are honoured" in any measure by him, it is only as he is partaker of the fatness of the true Olive-tree. If "sweetness and good fruit" fill his inmost soul, and yield results to the glory and praise of God, it is only as he feeds on the Bread of God, and, so feeding, finds communion at the golden table with Him whose delight He is. Wonderful thought! that

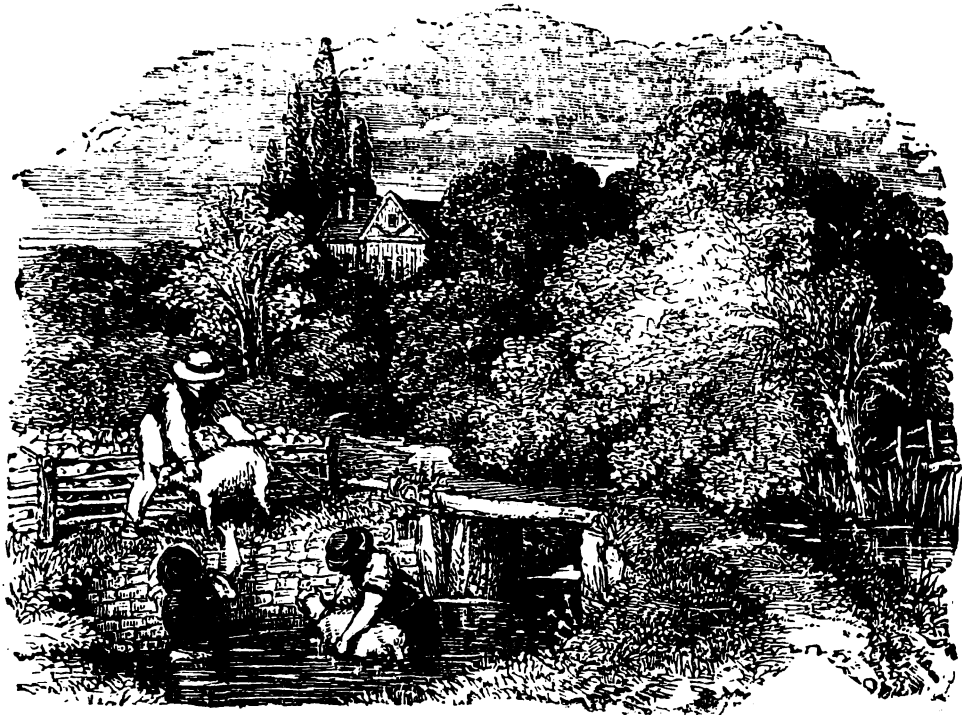
we should be permitted a communion so intimate, so blessed, as that of having one Object in common with the Father to gaze upon, and delight in! Would that we appreciated this most precious privilege more than we do! The wilderness would often "blossom as the rose," for how should the way seem long and dreary in such company?

JESUS FIRST.

A LITTLE girl, between six and seven years of age, when on her death-bed, requested her sister to read respecting Christ's blessing little children. The passage having been read and the book closed, the child said, "How kind! I shall soon go to Jesus; he will soon take *me* up in his arms—bless me too; no disciple shall keep me away." Her sister kissed her, and said, "Do you love me?" "Yes, my dear," she replied; "but, don't be angry, I LOVE JESUS BETTER."

GOD'S LOVE.

A MISSIONARY, addressing a pious negro woman, said, "Mary, is not the love of God wonderful?" and then, enlarging on its manifestation in the atonement of Christ, he made the appeal, "Is it not wonderful?" Mary simply but sublimely replied, "Massa, massa, me no tink it so wonderful, 'cause *it just like him.*"



LOST.

(FOR THE LITTLE ONES.)

HAS the little reader ever been lost? The writer has been on more than one occasion. Perhaps, if the Lord tarries, he may have opportunity of relating each of these occasions to you in succession, for they are several; but, as the last month of the old year has arrived, we must wait for the new year to do that. At present, one of these occasions must suffice. It was as follows. The writer, many years ago, lived in the country, a few miles out of London. He had been one day to see his friends in the suburbs of the great city, and, as night closed in, started for his home in Essex. It was a pleasant summer's night when he set out, the stars were shining, the air was warm and yet refreshing, the sweet smell of

numberless flowers came on the evening wind from many a garden, field, and hedgerow as he proceeded on his way; and altogether the walk was most delightful. As he neared his destination, it began to grow late, and, not wishing to keep the people up who were expecting him home, it occurred to him to take what I daresay you have often heard people call "a near cut," across a wide common. Turning, therefore, off the well-known and pleasant road he had hitherto pursued, he went down a lane which, having high green hedges on either side that shut out the glimmering starlight, he found a very darksome way. Nevertheless he persevered. He had never been in that lane before, and, although he had no doubt of being in the right direction, he resolved to make quite sure by asking the first person he met. Near the end of the dark lane he had the opportunity he sought. A man was just passing as he approached the wide common which lay stretched in the gloom before him.

"Am I right for such and such a place?" he inquired.

"Quite right," replied the man. "Keep straight across the common, and don't turn either one way or the other." And, accompanying his words with a motion of his hand, he pointed out the exact direction which the inquirer was to take. Thanking him, the latter passed on. The clouds now began to gather across the summer night's sky, and the starlight was obscured. But, sure of his road, and in haste to reach his destination, the wayfarer passed on. He

had gone about half-way across the common at a rapid pace, when suddenly the light of the moon, which had risen shortly before, broke through the cloud-bank which had intercepted it, and fell full upon the path he was so hurriedly treading.

What do you think it revealed to him? *A deep gravel-pit right in his way*, and into which another step would have hurled him! One step more, and you, little reader, would never have read this paper, simply because it never would have been written. *One step more!* think of that. How *near* destruction, yet how utterly unconscious of it! One step more, and plunging headlong into the deep gravel-pit, bruised and crushed to death, "the Lost" one would have been killed outright. But the light shining just in time saved him; and, turning instantly from the way he had pursued, he reached his home in safety.

Now, little reader, you know that "God made man upright." He set him in the pleasant paths of innocency. The sweet smell of Eden's flowers was all around him; Eden's joys, Eden's happiness were his. But, more than all else, the gracious God who had created him and all things, and then, as if to show his love, "*planted* a garden" for him (was not that kind?), was his God. But Adam transgressed; he turned from the pleasant paths of innocency; he went aside from God; he took the darksome way of disobedience; and ever since, man (you and I, and every one) has been by nature on the pathless common of this world's ruin. Darkness has settled down upon him; he knows not whither he is going; his

only natural guide, the only guide he *naturally* follows, is his own heart, and that points him on the exact road to everlasting destruction; until "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God" breaks upon his darkened understanding, he is going straight to ruin. Little reader, where are you going? If you are following the guidings of your own heart, you are in danger. *One step more* would have hurled the writer into death. One step more, and where may the reader be? Ask your parents. If they are Christians, they will be able to tell you at once whether you are in the way of everlasting life, or in "the paths of death." If they are not believers, your question, and the awful thought of your danger, may arouse their attention to think of their own. Therefore ask them. "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in *our* hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." Has that light shined in *your* heart? If not, you are in danger. If not, it is because you have not looked to Jesus Christ. "Look unto me, and be ye saved," says the Lord. Have you done so? Do you say "I don't know"? Then you are in darkness; the pit is right in the path you are treading; don't go on another day, *don't take another step till the Light shines*. Do you think the writer would have gone on, if he had known there was a gravel-pit right in his path? No; he would have waited for light. Jesus said, "I am the Light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."



KIND LITTLE JOSEPH.

SEVERAL years ago, the teacher of a school at —, was obliged to find fault with a boy for not minding what was said to him. As he did not seem to care for words, it was found necessary to punish him, and he was therefore told to stand for a quarter of an hour in a corner of the schoolroom. As he was going there, a little boy, much younger than he, went to the teacher, and begged that he might take the naughty boy's place—a request which astonished the teacher a good deal; but, wishing to see what would come of it, he did not ask any questions, but merely pointed out to him that, if he did as he wished, he would have to pass the whole of the time in the corner, adding, "A quarter of an hour is very long when one spends it in punishment. It is a shameful thing to be punished; and in the eyes of all the visitors who may come into the school you will seem to be a naughty and unruly child." But these words did not make him change his mind; he still chose to be put in the corner, and was allowed to have his wish.

The teacher was deeply moved, and silently prayed

the Lord to give him that wisdom which cometh from above, that he might draw from what had happened some lesson useful to the souls of the children entrusted to his charge.

There stood the little boy, patiently bearing the punishment due to another, until the time was up. He was then asked whether the other boy had led him to take his place?

"No, sir," he answered.

"Then did you think that he did not deserve to be punished?"

"Oh," said he, "he deserved it well."

"What, then, was the feeling which led you to bear the punishment in his place?"

"Sir," he answered, "it was because I love him."

What a touching reply! The other children had been earnestly watching all that took place; and when the teacher, to try them, ordered the disobedient boy to go in his turn into the corner, there was at once a loud outcry against it. "Oh, sir, that would not be right—that would not be right!" cried many little voices. "Nor just either," added one of the boldest.

"Why would it not be just?" asked the teacher; "has not your schoolfellow disobeyed?"

"Yes, sir; but you let Joseph be punished in his place, so you ought not to punish him."

"Does what has happened call back anything to your mind?" asked the teacher.

"Yes, sir," said several; "it reminds us that the Lord Jesus bore the punishment of our sins."

“What name would you give to Joseph now?”

“That of *Substitute*.”

“What is a substitute?”

“One who stands in the place of another.”

“What place has Jesus taken?”

“That of sinners.”

“Joseph has told us that he wished to take his schoolfellow’s place, and be punished instead of him, because he loved him. Why did Jesus wish to die in the place of sinners?”

“Because he loved us.”

“Tell me a passage from the Bible which proves it.”

“‘The Son of God who loved me, and gave himself for me’ (Gal. ii. 20).”

“You told me just now that it would be neither right nor just to put the naughty boy in the corner after punishing Joseph in his place: what do we learn from this?”

“That God will never punish any sinner who believes in Jesus Christ as his Saviour. And,” added quite a little boy, “he never will do so; for the Bible tells us that ‘God so LOVED the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life’ (John iii. 16).”

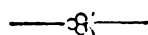
The teacher and the children talked a long time together about the grace and love of God, and spoke of him “who was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities; by whose stripes we are healed” (Isa. liii. 5) — even the Lord Jesus Christ.

FRAGMENTS ON SCRIPTURE LANDS.

"AND it came to pass," says the inspired historian, "when David was come to Mahanaim, that Shobi the son of Nahash of Rabbah of the children of Ammon, and Machir the son of Ammiel of Lo-debar, and Barzillai the Gileadite of Rogelim, brought wheat, and barley, and flour, and *parched* corn, and beans, and lentiles, and *parched* pulse" (2 Sam. xvii. 27, 28).

This is not the only instance in which the *parching* of corn is mentioned, and this was most probably the earliest mode of preparing these and other fruits of the earth for food. Parched corn is a kind of food still retained in the East. Thus Hasselquist says: "On the road from Acre to Seide we saw a herdsman eating his dinner, consisting of half-ripe ears of wheat, which he roasted and ate with as good a relish as a Turk does his *pillau*. In Egypt such food is much eaten by the poor, being the ears of maize or Turkish wheat, and of their *durra*, which is a kind of millet. When this food was first used, art was in a simple state; yet the custom is still continued in some nations, where the inhabitants have not even at this time learned to pamper nature." The flour of parched barley is the chief provision which the Moors of West Barbary make for travelling, and is, indeed, much used as a part of their diet at home. They provide, in fact, *zumeet*, *tumeet*, or flour or parched barley, for *limereece*. They are all three made of parched barley, which they carry in a leathern satchel. *Zumeet* is the flour mixed with

honey, butter, and spice; *tumeet* is the same flour done up with origan oil; and *limereece* is it also, mixed with water, and so drunk. This quenches thirst much better than water alone, satiates a hungry appetite, cools and refreshes tired and weary spirits, overcoming the ill effects naturally consequent on a hot sun and a fatiguing journey.



“ABSENT FROM THE BODY, PRESENT WITH
THE LORD.”

2 COR. v. 8.

FARE thee well, thou lovely stranger,
Guardian angels take your charge,
Free'd at once from pain and danger,
Happy spirit set at large.

Life's most bitter cup just tasting,
Short thy passage to the tomb,
O'er the barrier swiftly hasting
To thine everlasting home.

Death his victim still pursuing,
Ever to his purpose true,
Soon her placid cheek bedewing,
Robbed it of its rosy hue;

Sealed those eyes, so lately beaming
Innocence and joy so mild:
Every look, so full of meaning,
Seemed t' endear the lovely child.

In the silent tomb we leave her
Till the resurrection morn,
When her Saviour shall receive her,
And restore her lovely form.

Then, dear Lord, we hope to meet her
In thy happy courts above,
There with heavenly joy to greet her,
And resound redeeming love!



ARE YOU INSURED?

Not long ago a sorrowful event took place, of not unusual occurrence in stormy weather, at sea. A small coal ship, containing four persons, was sunk; the ship was insured, but the lives on board were lost. There had been wisdom shown in insuring the *ship*; but who can answer the solemn question, Were those four immortal SOULS insured? It must remain a secret till that day when the secrets of all hearts shall be revealed. But *their* earthly pilgrimage is over. Dear reader, *you* are spared a little longer; I would, therefore, earnestly and affectionately ask *you* the question on which your happiness for time and eternity depends—Is YOUR SOUL INSURED?

I entreat you not to pass by this question lightly,

or to suppose it one which cannot be answered. Why should any be wise for time, and foolish for eternity? If men insure their houses, and other things in their possession, "which all are to perish with the using," why should they not be equally careful for their never-dying souls?

"He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life" (1 John v. 12, 13).

