

The Kingdom of Heaven Taken by Prayer

or

**An Account of the Author's Translation from the
Kingdom of Satan to the Kingdom of God.**

William Huntington (1745-1813)

“The kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force...” Matt. xi. 12.

“Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the Kingdom of his dear Son...” Col.1:13

Republished by
Bierton Particular Baptists
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www.BiertonParticularBaptists.co.uk

Note for the Publisher

This work, 'The Kingdom of Heaven Taken by Prayer' was a great help to the publisher in 1973, when he discovered the doctrines of grace were those truths taught in the scripture. He tells of his own story of conversion from crime to Christ in Bierton Strict and Particular Baptists, listed as the end of this work.

Authors Preface

It is the desire of my soul that that person, whosoever he may be, who takes upon himself, after my decease, to republish any of my writings, should not alter the matter, nor the spirit of this my testimony for God; but that he should leave it as I wrote it, and even under the bad spirit in which some affirm it is written. I am the best judge where I got it, and how I came by it; and at the day of judgment it will be known whether it was from heaven, from earth, or from hell.

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Life of the Author (Biographer)

William Huntington S.S. (2 February 1745 – 1 July 1813) was an English preacher and coal-heaver.[1] It is said (This introduction is taken from the Wikipedia article William Huntington, Preacher) that he was known for preaching that the Law of Moses, commonly called the ‘moral law’ was not the rule of life for the believer, a theological view known as Antinomianism.

Huntington was a strict Calvinist who believed in the doctrines of grace, that some were predestined to be saved and some were not. He believed that on Judgment Day he would be identified as a true prophet.

His unusual, polemical preaching style and writings made him popular but brought him into conflict with other preachers throughout his life. He founded or opened chapels throughout England, many of which still survive.

William Huntington was born in 1745 near Cranbrook in Kent, and was given the name William Hunt at his baptism there five years later. It is said that his father was Barnabas Russel—his mother’s husband’s employer—despite his mother’s marriage to William Hunt. He was the tenth child of Elizabeth Hunt and the only male to achieve maturity.

He changed his surname to Huntington in 1769; his rationale was that the “ing” represented the present participle in words representing sinful activities, such as “stealing” and “swearing”; and “ton” referred to his being “a vessel of the Lord”. Later that year, he married Mary Short, a servant; they moved to Mortlake in Surrey and Huntington resumed his gardening work. Nevertheless, he was still very poor.

I Settled at Mortlake

AFTER many rambling about the country, I went and settled at last at Mortlake, in Surrey, where the effectual work

of drawing me from the world began to operate on my soul. I had lost my child by sudden death, as is related in the BANK or FAITH. My wife went to nurse a lying-in woman at Barnes, at a little distance from Mortlake; and, during her stay at that place, I was left entirely alone, both at my work and at home.

As I was one day at my labour, I was reflecting on the many sicknesses, soul troubles, extreme poverty, and disappointments, which I had met with in the course of my life. I considered the poor, tried, troubled state I was then in, together with the loss of my child, and my being almost an utter stranger in a strange place; and, upon a proper view of the whole, I murmured and fretted at my hard fate; and thought I might adopt the language of good old Jacob, and say,” Few and evil have my days been.”

But suddenly it was impressed with power on my mind, that all these evils were brought upon me for my sin: and that I neither knew, feared, loved, nor served, God as I ought to do, and therefore had brought these trials on myself; and that it was a great mercy God did not take me instead of the infant. This impression was attended with an uncommon flow of contrition: insomuch that I was, at times, overwhelmed with a sorrowful spirit; and so dissolved into meekness, that I went weeping and mourning all the day long, until “my soul was as a weaned child.”

This frame of spirit was attended chiefly with self-pity; because I had, by sin, exposed myself to so many hardships in this life, and, for aught I then knew, to more in the next. I was however at times a little tintured with godly sorrow, to think I had so much offended the Almighty; and this was accompanied with a fear that he would not be pacified toward me.

Under these workings of mind I began secretly to “call on the name of the Lord” in prayer, and embraced every opportunity that offered itself. My petitions were such as I

had learned out of books, with some expressions of my own, which I used in confession; as no form seemed to be sufficient to suit the complicated diseases of my troubled mind. This heavy, gloomy frame of soul was attended with a twofold blessing; for my heart being pregnant with compunction, drove me perpetually to God in prayer; and in pouring out my soul before God I found I had ease in my mind, until I got under a fresh reflection-of past offenses, and a future view of the effects as the just rewards of sin. Then my heart conceived again her fresh burden; and I evidently found that there was no release to be had but on my knees before God, where I could speak so as to be eased.

The other blessing that attended me under this oppression of soul was, that it weaned me from company. I was naturally of a cheerful disposition, which entangled me in the company of many acquaintances; but, when I began to be a little habituated to these gloomy regions of death, I found that all my anxiety after, love to, and delight in, company, was quite blasted, so that my spirit withered, like the green herb, to all the joys of mortals. Rural retirement seemed most agreeable to me, as it best suited my bewildered state of mind; till at length I began to detest all company, and fly from all my acquaintances: I dwelt “like a sparrow alone on the house tops, or like the pelican of the wilderness, or an owl of the desert.”

Keep From the Fellowship of the Wicked

Finding my spirit dead to all society, and no ease to my soul but on my knees before God in private, I earnestly solicited the Almighty to keep me from all fellowship with the wicked; having as I thought, accumulated guilt enough already. In answer to this it was suggested, as a voice to my best attention, that I must quit that place in which I dwelt, with all my companions, and never more have fellowship with any worldly company whatsoever. This impression sunk so deep

on my mind, that it never could be erased by all the frowns or smiles of the children of men, nor do I believe it ever will.

Under this impulse I went to Barnes, to inform my wife of my determination of leaving that place, and forsaking all my companions, and that for ever; and I gave her several reasons for this my determination, but concealed the worst of the matter. Her answer was, “Do just as you will; I am ready to go with you to any place you choose.”

I have often since thought of good old Jacob’s sending for Rachel and Leah into the field to him, to inform them of their father’s conduct toward him, and of God’s vision that was opened to him, and of the Lord’s commanding him to return into his own country; whose submissive answer was, “Now then, whatsoever God hath said unto thee, do,” Gen. xxxi. 16. A sweet submissive reply, well becoming a pious help-mate.

I now watched the hand of God, to see if an opportunity offered for my departure; but every door seemed for a time to be shut. However, I kept close to my church, endeavoured to shun all company, embraced every opportunity that offered itself to pour out my soul in prayer, and to show God my trouble; Psal. cxliiii. 2. Nor did the deep concern I was under in the least abate; but heaviness of spirit, meekness, and humbling sorrow, perpetually pursued me, and my mind was immersed in the meditations of futurity.

After my wife had returned from her nursery, she had an awful dream, which in the morning she related to me, It was this - that “the devil had appeared to her in her sleep, with a most formidable aspect, and was going to lay hold of her; but she cried out, and he immediately left her, and made a violent seizure of me.” I had not, at that time, told her much of my distress of mind; therefore she knew not how much the narrative of her dream contributed to the anguish of my spirit. I laid her words up, and pondered them over

in my heart. And, as I believed her to be a very pious soul, I was fully persuaded I should, ere long, feel the effects of her dreadful vision; which (God knows) I soon did, as my reader will observe in the sequel.

I had no thoughts of a violent temptation, by divine permission, a sailing me, that should strip me of fleshly confidence; but what I expected was, that death, judgment, and eternal damnation, would be the dreadful result of her dream.

Finding fresh troubles increase daily upon me, I longed to get out of the place I was then in, fearing that my companions would some time or other entangle me, and get me out a pleasure-taking on the Lord's day; for, as I found that my power against sin was little worth, I wanted to shun even the appearance of temptation. I went over to Mr. Low's, a nurseryman at Hampton Wick, and asked him to employ me; which he accordingly did. It was now late in the autumn; but he promised to employ me till he could provide for me in another way. I endeavoured to get a ready-furnished lodging at Kingston, but could not: I was therefore determined to walk to and fro, from Kingston to Mortlake, every day, rather than stay in that place, where I had contracted an intimacy with several persons whose company I did not relish. I continued in this situation for about a fortnight; but at length got a lodging at Kingston. I was now determined never to get acquainted with any person, unless he seemed to be religious; and, being in a strange place, where I was not known, I had not so many temptations to draw me into company.

I Take to Reading Books

I now took to reading any book that I could get; kept close to the church; kept up private and family prayer with my wife, and laboured to recommend myself to the favour of God. I learned several little short prayers to repeat on the road as I walked, or at my labour, or on my bed, which I judged

was redeeming lost time. However, I had one great difficulty to grapple with here, which was, we were obliged to go to a public-house on the Saturday evening to receive our wages, where each labourer was compelled to spend four-pence. This I could not avoid, though I found it a snare to me; because I was compelled to wait till the foreman had paid me, which sometimes would be as late as eight or nine o'clock; during this time I was obliged to hear all the songs that were sung, and all their filthy conversation.

This I found scattered all my religious thoughts, and made many breaches in that poor false peace which I had been patching up by the mere dint of hard labour: however, to close up these gaps, I generally worked the harder, said more prayers, read more, and got up earlier in the morning, in order to perform a greater task; and so, by these means, I pacified conscience with a double portion of dead works; Heb. ix. 14.

My fellow workmen perceiving me to sit silent at the pay-table, while they were so jovial, and finding that I would not join with them for liquor when at work, they suspected I had caught a religious infection. Upon this, I was set up as a butt for laughter and ridicule. And my bringing forth now and then a passage of scripture, to shew the end they were like to make if they died in sin, as they then lived, this gave great offence, and exposed my head as a mark for every scorner upon which to spend his shafts. This I laboured under for the space of many months.

For a while they suspected me to be a Methodist; but, finding I never went to the meeting, and that, in every argument with them, I pleaded for the church, their suspicion was, that I wanted to be better than other people, and to be more religious than was required of those who belonged to the church of England.

Having, as I thought, patched up a tolerable religion, and redeemed a deal of lost time by labour, I began to be

lifted up in my own mind, and to be filled with a vain conceit of my own righteousness. Finding my zeal and diligence to continue, and from my being now habituated to this religious course of life, I began to have a very high opinion of my religion, and to judge myself righteous and despise others. Indeed the language of my heart to most people was, “Stand by thyself, come not near unto me, “for I am holier than thou,” Isa. lxv. 5.

However, God permitted me to make several private slips in this my religious way of life, which brought fresh guilt on my conscience. This sting induced me to examine a little the root of my religion; and I found that I had no love to God in it; but that it was merely to pacify my conscience, escape the torments of hell, and “to appear righteous before men.” While I was perplexed with these thoughts, this was secretly suggested to my mind - “Suppose you could continue this course of religion till the time of your death, you can only rub off as you go; and hardly that; for you offend daily, in thought, word, and deed; and what is to become of all that black scroll that is behind?” I found, the more I meditated on these things, the deeper I sunk in distress; therefore I tried to east it from me, not liking to come to book. This put me a little out of conceit with my own righteousness; I thought there was something yet wanting on that head; and, conscience lashing me within for past offenses, as well as for present blots, stopped me from boasting, and shewed me a little of the hypocrisy of my own heart; - “God beholds the proud afar off; and those that walk in pride he is able to debase,” Dan. iv. 37.

I Steal Turnip Tops

I am now going to relate what I am almost ashamed of; but still I am determined to let my reader see the sable, as well as the shining side of the narrative.

It was now toward the spring of the year, and I was

extremely poor. My pay being very small, and lodgings very dear, I bid much-a-do to live, and keep my family decent and fit to appear at church. It fell out that I had bought a piece of bacon, which had entirely emptied my pocket; so that, though I wanted some vegetables to dress with it, I could not purchase any. I was therefore determined to go into a field belonging to my master, in order to steal some turnip-tops to boil with my bacon. I knew my fellow workmen had asked of my master, and he had granted them leave to get what they chose; but I had not asked leave, therefore my getting them was a theft. However, I went to the field; but, while getting over the gate, I was arrested in a most violent manner by my own conscience. I think an army of soldiers could not have stopped me more forcibly than the voice of God’s vicegerent within. Indeed I seemed as if I had been taken in a snare. I had no power to move for many minutes. I cried out, “What is it? what is it?” The answer was, “Thou shalt not steal.” I replied, “My master gave leave to the men to get some vegetables.” The answer came again, “You have not asked leave.” I looked about me, to see if I could discern any body speaking; but there was no body; the voice came from within. I sat and reasoned a great while, and was still answered; however, I saw no body. I thought it could be no great crime, therefore I was determined to get them, and accordingly went into the field; but was again rebuffed by the same powerful opposition of my own conscience, which drove me back again to the gate. I now stood and reasoned with myself what this voice and power could be. Whether it was my conscience, or what, I could not tell; but certainly conscience had a hand in it. However, I was resolutely bent upon having the spoil; therefore I said I would inform my master of it the day following, Never was any poor creature more harassed than I was while stealing these things of so little value I was obliged to gather them as fast as possible, and keep answering the voice, “I will acquaint my

master of it, I will acquaint, &c &c.” And thou ran off as fast as possible. However, I never did acquaint him. Thus a man’s own sin finds him out; Numb. xxxii. 23; or, as Bildad says, “The steps of his strength shall be straitened, and his own counsel shall east him down. For he is cast into a net by his own feet, and he walketh upon a snare. The gin shall take him by the heel, the snare is set for him in the ground, and a trap for him in the way. Terrors shall make him afraid on every side, and shall drive him to his feet,” Job, xviii. 7-11.

Indeed extreme poverty is a snare to man, as well as the abundance of wealth. This, I believe, the pious Agur found, and therefore prayed to be led between the two extremes; - “Give me neither poverty, nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me; lest I be full and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord? Or test I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain,” Prov. xxx. 8, 9.

I had very sharp work to settle these matters with my conscience; it cost me many a secret groan, and discovered to me much of my own weakness afterwards: but I laboured the harder to rub it off, as I thought, in my old way of working; for I knew nothing of God’s method of saving sinners freely by grace, therefore all my labour was but in vain; as it is written, “Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Then may ye also do good that are accustomed to do evil,” Jer. xiii. 23.

Many Months of a Legal Yoke

Having gone on many months with this legal yoke on my neck, labouring in my own strength, and drawing all my hopes of heaven from the law of Moses, which is “the ministration of death and condemnation,” 9 Cor. iii. 9, it pleased God to strip me of all this self-sufficiency and legal hope in a very astonishing manner; for it came to pass one evening, as I was sitting by the fireside reading my Bible, I came to these words, “At that day ye shall know that I am in

my Father, and ye in me, and I in you,” John, xiv. 20.

As soon as I had read these words, I began to consider them. “Ye in me, and I in you! “Alas! (said I) what does that mean? I am wrong; my religion is little worth; I know nothing what these words mean; there is something of a secrecy between Christ and those that he will save, that I am yet ignorant of.” While I was thus musing, behold all the sins that I had ever been guilty of came up fresh on my mind, in all their deformity and malignant appearance, and stood arranged before my mind; even all my crimes from my childhood: so that I possessed “the iniquity of my youth,” Job, xiii. 26.

Seeing my sins in such a dreadful light, I began to have fearful apprehensions of God’s awful displeasure; and immediately such an intolerable flood of divine wrath was poured forth on my guilty soul, that it swept away all my refuge of lies, Isa. xxviii. 17. This removed all my false hope, drove away all my vain props, and left me without one particle of that sandy foundation which I had laid for myself to stand upon; and down I went into “the deep waters, where there was no standing, so that the floods overflowed me,” Ps. lxix. 2; and I feared “the pit would shut her mouth upon me,” Is. lxix. 15.

This wrath being so forcibly revealed against me, I began to have very hard thoughts of the Most High; and, what is still worse, a mortal hatred to him, Rom. viii. 7. And immediately the devil was let loose upon me, and violently tempted me to blaspheme and curse the Almighty to his face.

I leaped up, with my eyes ready to start out of my head, my hair standing erect, and my countenance stained with all the horrible gloom and dismay of the damned. I cried out to my wife, and said, “Molly, I am undone for ever; I am lost and gone; there is no hope nor mercy for me; you know not what a sinner I am; you know not where I am, nor what I feel!” She seemed amazed at my appearance, asked what was the matter,

and endeavoured to comfort me, but all in vain; for the very name of mercy is but an aggravation of man's misery when all hope in God is dead.

I went to bed, and lay down in sorrow; but there was no rest for me. I thought the bed, the room, yea and every thing else, was running round; and my soul was sinking so fast under the wrath of God, that it was as if I fell a thousand fathoms a minute. I dared not sleep; for if I did, I thought, like the rich feel," in hell I should lift up my eyes," for I was already in torment.

At two or three o'clock in the morning I rose up and went down stairs, kneeled down to read the Bible, and attempted to pray; but oh I that horrid blasphemous temptation, to blaspheme the Most High, so foiled me, that I dared not look up. I could only confess my sin, but could not say, "God be merciful to me, a sinner." I went to work with my head swimming and legs staggering, like a drunken man; and, when I get on Hampton- Wick Green, I stood and viewed the horses, bullocks, and asses, and envied their happy state. "Ah I" said I, "you have no sin to answer for; no judgment-seat to appear before; no wrath from God to feel; no hell to fear! When you die, there is an end of you; but eternity is our lot! Oh that I could die like you, and be no more! Oh that I was but in the place of the worst of you! But I am a man and a sinner; and hell aims at sinners!"

O wretched state! Look which way I would, "my sin was ever before me," Ps. li. 3; and "my secret sins were set in the light of God's countenance," Ps. xc. 8. Within me there was the "sting of death," I Cor. xv. 56; a guilty conscience - the worm that never dies, Isa. lxvi. 24; Mark, ix. 44, still gnawing and feeding on my withered spirits. This made the leaf of my profession to wither, and my untimely fruit to fall like that of the olive. The thoughts of God's damning me filled me with hard thoughts of him, and even hatred to him. I felt the arrows

of his wrath already within me, Job, vi. 4; Ps. xxxviii. 2: and I knew God had thrust me down, Job, xxxii. 13. I fain would have fled out of his hand, Job, xxvii. 22, but could not. If I offered to pray, I was tempted to blaspheme; and that stopped the mouth of prayer. If I attempted to look up to God, my conscience smote me, and the heavens appeared to be iron, and the earth brass, Lev. xxvi. 19: so that my thoughts could not fly with hope to God, nor could the earth hide me from his presence. Eternity I knew had no end; and hell I found, by my sinking in despair, had no bottom. The unfathomable abyss of eternity affords no anchorage, and the impassable gulph of God's fixed decree allows no vessel of wrath, fitted for destruction, ever to pass to the haven of rest, Luke, xvi 26; or make any other land or port whatsoever. Oh what a profound deep! what a perilous navigation!

"Alas!" said I, "when I appear before him 'my own mouth shall condemn me,' Job, ix. 20. If I would get above him, I cannot: he is the Most High, and cannot be matched. 'If I speak of strength, lo, he is strong; and it of judgment, who shall set me a time to plead?' Job, xix. 9. 'He is of one mind, and none can turn him,' Job, xxiii. 19. He is holy; and the guilty cannot approach him. He is light, and that discovers my sin: therefore I hate it, for 'he has set them in the light of his countenance,' Ps. xc. 8. He has often warned me, and I persisted; my conscience has checked me, and I opposed it with violence. He has brought me to death's door by sickness, and I vowed to him what I would do if he raised me up. He did so but I broke all my vows. His patience is tired out. The verdict of my own thoughts casts me, Rom ii. 15. My own heart condemns me, I John, iii. 20. the curse of God is in my tabernacle, Prov. iii. 33; 'the wrath of God abideth on me,' John, iii. 36; the door of mercy is shut against me; and 'broad is the road, and wide the gate, that leads to destruction, and many go in thereat.' Oh that I had never been born! Job, iii.

10. Oh that no eye had ever seen me! Wherefore came I out of my mother's womb to see trouble? Oh that there was no hell, no judgment to come, no God, no hereafter!" Indeed I experienced these words effectually, "Thine heart shall meditate terror," Isa. xxxiii. 18.

This is "stumbling upon the dark mountains," Jer. xlii. 16; this is sitting "in the regions of the shadow of death," Matt. iv. 16; this is the horrible pit, and this is the miry clay, Ps. xl. 2; these are the "deep waters where there is no standing," Ps. lxx. 1, 2; this is "deep calling unto deep, at the noise of his waterspouts," while they are bursting and discharging their vengeance on the vessels of wrath, till "both waves and billows go over," Ps. xlii. 7. This is "God's shutting up a man, and there can be no opening," Job, xii. 14.. This is the employ of the damned, Isa. viii. 21, 22; "the chambers of death," Prov. vii. 27; the experience of devils, Matt. xii. 43; the gloomy land of darkness, without form or order, and the pains of hell, Ps. cxvi. 3; while the soul is harassed with the infernal intercourse and familiarity of devils, and your constant visitors and chief "guests are in the depths of hell," Prov. ix. 18.

No sinless perfection can live here; no Atheism can live here; no Deism, nor Arianism, can ever flourish here. No; those principles can only flourish upon the hard soil of a benumbed conscience, sacred with a hot iron, and kept hard by the perpetual industry of the devil, and the assistance of wicked company. But, whenever God awakens such a conscience, by letting his burning wrath into it, all those principles wither and die, both root and branch!

Oh how wretched the thought, that such principles should grow and flourish in the minds of men, that never yet struck one root in the minds of devils! and that men should labour to propagate such a nursery for Satan in a land of hope, and under the sunshine of mercy, that never could be found in

the regions even of the damned! But why do I wonder at this? The reason is plain; the devil sends them all here, because he cannot make them grow in hell.

Tempted To Put An End To My Existence

Here I was violently tempted to put an end to my existence, and to throw myself into the Thames. Long was I tempted to commit this rash act, and at times gathered comfort from the thoughts of it; but the consideration of guilt and wrath pursuing me beyond the grave often prevailed with me under that temptation. Oh the subtlety of this 'old serpent! He even tempted the dear Redeemer to self-murder, by wanting him to throw himself down from one of the pinnacles of the temple.

As for that wretched temptation - to curse all that was good - that constantly followed me; nor do I believe I was one hour free from it, unless when I was asleep, during fourteen months together. I believe pious Job laboured under this for many years, as appears by his suspicion of his children having been tempted to do it; as it is written, "And he rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt-offerings according to the number of them all; for Job said, It may-be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts. Thus did Job continually," Job, i. 5. This was the main point that the devil laboured to gain with Job, when he accused him to God: "But put forth thine hand now, saith he, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face," Job, i. 11. And again the second time: "But put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face," Job, ii. 5. And I am sure he would have done it, had not the Almighty been "the shield of his help," Deut. xxxiii. 29; for there is no other shield, but a bleeding Saviour, that can "quench the fiery darts of the wicked," Eph. vi. 16. However, Satan left no stone unturned; he made Job's wife his engine for mischief: "Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine

integrity? Curse God, and die,” Job, ii. 9.

This also was Paul’s “thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan sent to buffet him,” 2 Cor. xii. 7; as may be gathered from thorns being a badge of the curse which sin brought upon the earth, Gen. iii. 18; and from the parable of the thorny-ground hearers, Matt xiii. 7; and of Paul’s comment on it, “But that which beareth thorns lot [of covetousness] and briars is nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned,” Heb. vi. 8.

I believe Solomon was no stranger to this temptation, by his leaving that caution upon record, “Curse not the king, no not in thy thought; and curse not the rich in thy bed-chamber; for a bird of the air shall carry the voice, and that which hath wings shall tell the matter,” Eccl. x. 20.

Satan soon filled Peter’s mouth with oaths and curses, when he had got him to sift; and he would have gone farther if the Saviour had not propped him up with his prayer, that his faith might not fail.

Cursing The Emplacement in Hell

I believe this work of cursing to be the employment of all in hell, both devils and men, as it is the just sentence of God’s righteous law; therefore I believe that those who in hell suffer under it, are perpetually spitting it in the face of that righteous Judge who passed the sentence on them. And therefore Satan labours to get poor sinners to begin with it here, thinking that when he has done this, he has gained his end.

God having cursed the serpent, or Satan (the king of all the rest of the apostate spirits, he being the grand criminal on whom the sentence lighted), and through him God’s sentence having fell on all his political body, who are under him as their head; they, labouring under this curse, or just sentence, strive to tempt many poor sinners to throw that curse at the just Judge, who passed that sentence, and fixed Satan’s eternal

doom at the tribunal erected in Eden. “But God is faithful, who will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able; but will with the temptation (mark that! with the temptation) also make a way to escape, that we may be able to bear it.” O sweet and comfortable promise!

Having waded some weeks under this burden of guilt and wrath; being pursued with the fears of death and judgment, till my strength was almost exhausted; being terrified, too, almost to distraction, and fearing lest I should one day or other open my mouth, and let that horrid blasphemy escape my lips in some unguarded moment; it pleased my most gracious Lord to give me a little encouragement.

Some Gracious Encouragement

Going one morning to my labour, groaning under the perilous state that my soul was in, and I think as completely miserable as any mortal could be and live, it came suddenly into my mind, “I wonder In what part of the world Jesus Christ was born;” though at that time I had no more knowledge of him, who he was, or what he came to do, than one of the Arabs in the deserts of Arabia; for I had always attended the church of

England, where we hear nothing about Christ, in the pulpits, till they conclude, when they generally lug him in as a fag end to their little better than heathen morality. However, I was wondering where he was born, and it came into my mind that he was born in the east; because our clergy turn their faces to the east when they read their creeds. I then looked from point to point eastward; determined to be sure to dart my eyes, if possible, straight to the spot, if I darted them slowly round two quarters.

However, when my eyes came to the sun, which was then just risen above the hills, I felt such a love and spirit of meekness flow into my soul, from the thoughts of Christ’s name and birth, as I never had felt before. It so filled my heart,

that I was like a bottle that had no vent, Job, xxxii. 19, and I could not contain myself. I burst out and wept so loud, that I believe a person might have heard me at the distance of twenty or thirty rods. And, although I had at that time no idea what Christ came to do, or what he died for, yet I had an amazing sense of his sufferings on my heart, which filled me with love to him; and I pitied him in my soul, and found a great dislike to the Jews for using him so cruelly: still, however, I remained profoundly ignorant of the benefits of his cross.

As the spouse says that “his name is as ointment poured forth,” Song, i. 3, so I found it. What then must the fellowship of his sufferings, and the sweet fellowship of his resurrection be? Phil. iii. 10.

While I stood thus melting, mourning, and weeping, over the birth, name, and sufferings, of the Saviour, I heard a voice saying unto me, “He that overcometh shall inherit all things,” Rev. xxi. 7. Whether these words were in the Bible or not, at that time I did not know. I inquired of several persons, but none could inform me. However, at length I found them out; but it was even some months after they were spoken to me.

But to return; I went to my work, strongly convinced that God had a love for me: yea, for several days together I had such a humbling sense of his loving-kindness, that I was sure he was with me, go wherever I would; and so strongly persuaded was I of his eternal affection to my soul, that I was sure neither men nor devils could possibly hurt me, any more than they could hurt the apple of God’s eye, Zech. ii. 8.

This caused me to go melting in my soul, and weeping and praying, all the day long, under the sweet influence of such unmerited love, that flowed in to dissolve so hard and so impenitent a heart as mine.

The temptation, however, had not left me. I still had the thorn in my flesh, or the devil’s curses darting from his strong

hold, which is the old man of sin, the flesh, or the natural corruption of the heart; that is the devil’s own garrison. This messenger of Satan buffeted me perpetually from that fort. But all this while, as the presence of the Lord was with me, it lost its usual force; it was like storming a strong hold with bladders; or, as Paul says “God’s grace was sufficient,” though the thorn was not taken away, 2 Cor. xii. 7, 9. And in this situation he could glory, even in the midst of his infirmities, under the influence of sovereign grace.

An Unforgeable Sabbath

When the following sabbath arrived I went to Kingston church, as usual. After sermon there was an anthem sung, which concluded with the word Hallelujah, in a very pleasing manner; and was repeated often by each part and party. While they were singing this anthem I was enrapt in such a glorious frame of soul as I never before felt; whether I was in the body or out of the body, for a few minutes, I could scarcely tell; but blessed be God, I have enjoyed much of the same sort since, and I know now that it came from God. It was some of the good old wine; and that I found when the Lord sent me a little of it the second time. I believe I shall never desire new, for I am certain “the old is better,” Luke v. 39.

After this (never-to-be-forgotten) sabbath was over, I was shortly stripped of all joy, meekness, hope, and help; and left to sink again into the deep and gloomy regions of horror; and the blasphemous temptation pursued me with more violence than ever. To make my case the more desperate, I was violently tempted to believe that there was no God. Having been a little indulged with the comforts and joys of hope before this storm appeared, it was rendered more aggravating and violent than ever. However, I read my Bible, and prayed to God day and night. But what made my cause still more desperate, two passages of scripture were brought to my mind with all their cutting energy and power. One was, “But I say

unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give an account there-of in the day of judgment,” Matt. xii. 36; the other was, “We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not,” I John v. 18.

These passages snapped my cable, and drove me apparently from all anchorage in God; and, finding my hope removed, I was forced into all the billows of wrath, temptation, corruption, distress, horror, and despondency, that any mortal could possibly be in. This drove me to my wigs end. I was now again tempted to end the strife by leaping into the Thames, and so putting a period to my own existence: still, however, God prevented me.

I felt those distresses the keener from the circumstance of my having a strong faith in the justice of God. I was sure that he must be faithful to his threatenings, or cease to be truth, and consequently cease to be God. And, though I had been much comforted before in my own soul, yet I had no light nor judgment in the word of God; nor was I able to understand any passages but those which leveled their force and just sentences at me for sin.

Again this temptation recurred; that there was no God, nor any judgment to come; and that the holy Bible was false, therefore I had no occasion to “tremble at the word,” Psal. xiv. 1. These temptations being suitable to my wishes, I laboured hard to credit them, and to persuade myself there were none: yea, I wished in my heart that these suggestions were true; for then I should end in annihilation, and, like the happy brute, be no more.

But I could gain no safety there, though I fain would; for the storm of God’s wrath soon drove me from those moorings; therefore I know that Atheism and Deism cannot live in an awakened soul, even in this life; and, if a man “lifts up his eyes in hell,” he will soon see a just God, and feel the torments of his wrath too, and that will destroy all his Atheism

at once; for he may as soon persuade himself out of a sense of his punishment, as out of the existence of the just punisher.

In this deplorable state I knew not where to go. I was poor, and obliged to work hard, though I had hard work enough within; and these violent blasphemous suggestions I feared would one day or other break loose, and that then I should be dispatched immediately from the land of the living. And, indeed, it certainly would have so happened, had not the Almighty “set a watch before my mouth,” and by his own power “kept the door of my lips,” Psal. cxli. 3.

The enemy of my soul now tried another scheme, as that of Atheism had failed; which was, that the Almighty now intended to entangle me in my own confessions, and convict me from my own words. And he took a very suitable opportunity for assailing me with this temptation; which was when I was meditating on the power I had lately felt, and wondering why the Most High should give me much sweet felicity of soul for a time; and, after being indulged with that sweet consolation, leave me a second time in the hand of my tormentor, who laboured so hard to bring me to sin against him with so high a hand, and at a time when I was so desirous of serving him with a pure heart and with a willing mind.

The tempter suggested to me, in answer to this, that it was done in order to extort confessions from me, that God might, as it were, take the advantage of them; and, agreeable to his own words, “Judge me as a wicked servant out of my own mouth,” Luke, xix. 22.

Oh how does that infernal being hate, oppose, reproach, and belie, the ever-blessed, ever-loving, and ever-propitious” Father of all mercies, and God of all comfort!” 2 Cot. i. 3. But, in opposition to the accuser, the Lord made good his promise, that the gates of hell should not prevail; which words I believe mean the infernal council of devils; as causes were in former times heard and tried, councils held, and matters

settled, at the city gates, by the elders, in some parts of the Jewish nation; as appears in Ruth, iv. 1, 2.

However, the ever-blessed Lord brought his promise afresh to my mind again one day as I was at my labour “He that overcometh shall inherit all things.” And it was impressed powerfully on my mind, that this was the battle that I was to fight, and in which I must overcome if I inherited all things; but, if I lost this field, then all was lost for ever, as my poor distracted mind conjectured. Upon this I was contriving what method to adopt, in order to overcome in this battle; and it was suddenly brought to my mind that I should bless the name of the Lord every time the fiery dart came, and to continue to pray both day and night.

Blessing The Name Of The Lord

I immediately began blessing the name of the Lord; and this temptation began to come faster, and with more violence than ever; sometimes four or five times in a minute, for days and months together; but still I repeated, as fast as I could speak, “Blessed be the name of the Lord, blessed,” &c. and kept shaking my head, for fear I should listen to it and mutter it out unawares. I have been sometimes harassed in this manner till I have been quite weary, and almost senseless; and so far gone as not to be able to give any person a reasonable answer, nor even to conceive aright what I was about. My fellow-workmen, seeing me perpetually in motion, and my lips muttering, concluded that I was mad, and dealt with me accordingly.

I now found that my rationality was sometimes amazingly impaired, insomuch that I was hardly capable either of labour or conversation. At times I was so sorely tried, that I was afraid I should begin to tear my hair, cry out aloud, and run distracted; but I thought if I did I should run mad immediately, and then all would be lost. I perceived this to be the enemy’s aim; first to impair my faculties, and

then he could make me curse and swear as he pleased; but, in opposition to this, I perpetually prayed and blessed the name of the Lord; and still was insensibly supported by my gracious God in this doubtful engagement.

When we are baptized in the established church, they” sign us with the sign of Christ’s cross, in token thereafter that we should not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified; but that we should manfully fight under his banner against the world, the flesh, and the devil;” but I never knew what this meant till that period.

I have sometimes thought that my mind would not, in every sense of the word, have been so much harassed if I really had been in hell; because, when sin is conceived there, it is perpetually brought forth in horrible blasphemies. In that gloomy receptacle, tormented ghosts lust to envy the Most High; and “when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when finished, bringeth forth death,” James i. 15. This is the conception and progeny of hell, Where eternal death reigneth.

Death is the offspring of sin, Rom. v. 12; and destruction is the offspring of death; as it is written, “The first-born of death shall devour his strength,” Job, xviii. 13. Oh what an awful family has the Holy Ghost discovered in the word of God! Satan is said to be both the father and nourisher of sin. “When Satan speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own; for he is a liar, and the father of it,” John viii. 44. All sin is of the devil; and “death came by sin,” Rom. v. 12; and by death came destruction. What an infernal fraternity!

O blessed be God for Jesus Christ, who, in infinite wisdom, has dethroned them all, and by his almighty power hath delivered our souls from them! “He triumphed over [these] principalities and powers [on the cross], and made a show of them openly,” Col. ii. 15. And even now he shows them openly, in the light of his own word and Spirit, and

exposes all as a conquered host. These were powers of darkness, led on to engage the Saviour by the prince of this world; but he had no spawn, or sin, to work on in the dear Redeemer; as it is written, "The prince of this world cometh, but hath nothing in me," John xiv. 30. "This was their hour, and these were the powers of darkness," Luke xxii. 53.

When the Saviour "bowed his head and yielded up the ghost," they all fell (as the heathen temple did under the spiritual might that was given to the Saviour's type, Samson); but when he arose from the grave, it was then "All hail!" The prince of this world was cast out; John xii. 31. And, when Christ ascended, he led those our tormentors prisoners; as it is written, "He hath ascended on high, he hath led captivity captive," Psal. lxxviii. 18. "God is gone up with a shout, and with the sound of a trumpet," Psal. xlvii. 5. The all conquering "Lord of Hosts, mighty in battle," Psal. xxiv. 8. Thus giving us a certainty of overcoming all enemies through him; as it is written, "Because I live, ye shall live also."

These tidings of the Saviour's conquest caused the powers of hell to sit in sackcloth, and extorted a lamentable confession, both from death and destruction. First, a question is put, "Where shall wisdom be found?" Job, xxviii. 12. Secondly, the inquiry where she comes from, "Whence then cometh Wisdom? And where is the place of understanding?" And now the Holy Ghost shows us the lamentable confession of hell, "Destruction and Death say, We have heard the fame thereof, that is, the fame of Wisdom, with our ears," Job, xxviii. 20, 22.

O how cutting to the inhabitants of the infernal regions must the glorious Redeemer's triumph have been when he had vanquished them, and took them captive! And to this day he lets them loose, and checks their rage, as he thinks proper: as it is written, "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and

of death," Rev. i. 18. These must be lamentable tidings for all in hell! But the ever-blessed Immanuel shall reign in heaven; reign in his own hereditary right; in his royal robe of human nature, both sanctified and glorified; as the supreme Monarch, and universal Key-keeper; yea, he shall reign in heaven, while devils and sin, death and destruction, shall grind in hell.

The Sacrament of the Lord Supper

Having continued many weeks in this melancholy condition, I thought I would go to the sacrament of the Lord's supper, and see if that would afford me any relief. I purposed first to speak to the minister of the church which I frequented: but I did not intend to open my mouth about the temptations that I laboured under; as I thought, if I did, he would deem me mad, and have confined me in prison, or else have smothered me between two beds, as some have been who were bit with mad dogs. This I really believed; and therefore I would not divulge my case upon any consideration whatsoever. Even this temptation, through God's mercy, worked together for my good; for regard to my own safety led me to conceal my case. In short, if I had made it known to a blind guide, he would probably have recommended novels and diversions, or something else, just that I might stifle my conscience; and so he might "have healed my wound slightly, crying Peace, peace, when God had not spoken peace," Jer. vi. 14. And, as I was so fond of these blind watchmen, I should, in all probability, have eagerly swallowed down all that they might have said. Howbeit, God never suffered me to speak to him at all. I went several times, but never found him at home; which I was much grieved at, being very fond of him, because he seemed to take more pains than any I had ever heard. I used almost to adore him; for, if I passed him in his robes in the streets, my very soul would sink within me at the sight of so holy a being as I vainly thought he was. However, I bless God that I never spoke to him at all; for, after I was enlightened, I

went to hear him preach, but (poor soul!) he was as dead as a stone, and as blind as a bat.

I foolishly conjectured that, if any went to heaven, it must be the church clergy and their clerks; for I thought their very caring itself consisted of godliness, being too blind to understand the Saviour's meaning when he calls them hireling.

Howbeit, since God has given me understanding in his word, I confess I am of another way of thinking; for I believe there are few parsons and clerks who seem to be even in the way to heaven. The old question among the Jews was, "Have any of the rulers, or of the Pharisees, believed on him?" And, suppose they have not, shall they obtain heaven by their unbelief? No: "He that believes not shall be damned," Mark, xvi. 16.

As I could not find the parson at home to speak with about going to the sacrament, I was determined to get hold of the clerk, who took me to a public-house, to treat him with rum- and-water as long as I could find cash to pay for it! This would have aggravated my desperate case, had not the consideration of his being so holy a man by office appeared an antidote, or charm, against the devil and sin. However, my tutor, when he came staggering down the steps, advised me not to go to his master, nor to any other parson; and he advised me right; but, when he took his leave of me, he said he would tell me when to draw up, and where at the table I should kneel. Then he pointed with his finger up to the stars, and said, "Go there: look there. If I was in your case, I would always go there;" that is, to God, he meant. And thus, upon the whole, he acted the part of an honest hand-post; that is, he pointed to me the right way, but I believe he never went one step therein himself.

When the Lord's day arrived, which was appointed for administering the sacrament, I went to the table of the

Lord with all the horrors of the damned. The clerk seemed very officious, and told me when to approach, namely, when the quality had all done; and afterwards where to kneel, that was at the lower end of the table. But I believe I was one of the most welcome guests at that table, according to the pre-requisites of the communion service; for I could say from my heart, "I do earnestly repent, and am heartily sorry for, these my misdoings; the remembrance of them is grievous unto me, and the burden intolerable." Nor did I altogether go "trusting in my own righteousness to the table of my most merciful Lord, but trusting more in his manifold and great mercies;" for, as to the spider's web of my own righteousness or works, which I formerly had trusted in, Isa. iix. 5, this was in a great measure purged away "by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning," Isa. iv 4.

However, I came away with, all my guilt and distress, just as I went. And I am sure there is no pardon nor peace for a guilty conscience but in the Redeemer's blood; nor is there any life for a condemned criminal but in Christ, "the bread of heaven." Men may please themselves with dry forms and modes as long as they will, but "the hour of temptation shall come on all the world to try them," Rev. iii. 10; and that many will one day feel, who now insult God with a mocking form, expressive of what they never felt. For instance, when they say, "Deliver us from the crafts and assaults of the devil, from thy wrath, and everlasting damnation:" and again, "Raise up those that fall, and finally beat down Satan under our feet:" and again, "Grant that those evils, which the craft and subtlety of the devil or man working against us, may be brought to nought." These petitions are expressed, not offered up to God, by some who are half asleep, by some who are tittering and laughing, and by others who are darting the flames of lust out of every corner of their eyes. If this is not mocking of God, what is? Yea, I think it is worse mockery

by far than that which is practised at a masquerade, where they really appear in the character that the word of God gives them. The Scriptures call ungodly sinners devils, brutes, and children sitting in a market-place. Now at a masquerade some mimic the devil: here is no mockery; such a one is a devil both within and without. Others are masked so as to imitate a goat: and our Saviour says he will set these goats at his left hand when he judges the world. Here is no deceit in this; there is a brute in heart, and a brute in dress. Others mimic buyers and sellers; and others are like children, mimicking balls and burials, saying, "We have piped, and you have not danced; we have mourned, and you have not wept." And the Pantheon is a figure of the world, called by Christ a market-place, where sinners sell themselves, like Ahab, to work wickedness; or, like the fool, who gains the world and loses his own soul. Thus the masqueraders appear in character; which is more than those do who draw near to God with their lips, while dead to him, and at war with him in their hearts; therefore in vain they worship him.

My foolish heart was so wedded to the gown and cassock, that I thought none could know the mind and will of God but those men who were brought up at college, and ornamented with such popish rags. This opinion I paid dear enough for; and, if my gracious God had not been pleased to reveal his truth to me himself, they would soon have led me to Bedlam, and from thence to hell, for, "if the blind lead the blind, both fall into the ditch."

I hardly ever asked a scriptural question of a Jew, but his answer was, "You must ask the rabbies that; they can tell you, but I cannot." Yea, farther, that rooted enmity that they have in their mind against the Saviour, and their deeming him an impostor, was conceived originally by the devil in the hearts of the Jewish rabbies; as it is written, "Now when they were going, behold some of the watch came into the city, and

shewed the chief priests all the things that were done. And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers, saying, Say ye, The disciples came by night and stole him while we slept." A likely matter that they should prove that his disciples stole him when they were fast asleep! However, a lie will go down with credit from the mouth of a priest. "And, if this comes to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and secure you. So they took the money, and did as they were taught. And this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day," Matt. xxviii. 11-15. There was a two-fold death ministered in this lie; death to the soldiers for being asleep on their duty, and death to the souls of all that credited this lie: however, a priest could make it go down, though no other could. "We will persuade the governor, and secure you!" There was no doubt of that.

How dangerous is a letter-learned head, an eloquent language, a venerable appearance, a popish robe, and a garb of mock sanctity, accompanied with ecclesiastical effrontery. Where the devil reigns and rules in the heart, the more learning, eloquence, external show, and human power they have, the more mischief they do. If Aaron sets up a calf, few knees will refuse to bend; and what is patronized by a priest in the wilderness will be accepted at Bethel.

I believe Elijah had his reason for wearing a leathern girdle; and so had John the Baptist for wearing a garment of camel's hair; and, doubtless, the Saviour had his reasons for wearing a coat without seam, and sending his apostles out with this charge, "Take not two coats, and be shod with sandals." A blind watchman endangers a city; a false ambassador endangers a state: and a blind pilot leads his ship's crew to destruction; and, when he enters hell, his name is Legion.

Sometimes, in reading the Bible, I have received a little encouragement from these words, "Wherefore I say unto

you, all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men;" but then, in a few minutes after, this passage would come, and, to my confused judgment, contradict it: "Verily I say unto you, that man shall give an account for every idle word." My mind and judgment were so confused, that I could not reconcile these two passages of scripture together; and, indeed, all the scriptures seemed to contradict each other throughout the whole book.

O how blind is every man by nature! "The natural man discerneth not the things of the Spirit of God; nor can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned," I Cor. it. 14. However, this confusion laid in my blind understanding, and not in God's word; "for all the words of his mouth are in righteousness; there is nothing froward or perverse in them: they are all plain to him that understandeth, and right to them that find knowledge," Prov. viii. 8, 9.

I found that this long and severe trial wonderfully weakened my body, as well as impaired my reason. It brought me almost to death's door. My life hanging perpetually in doubt before me, tried my temper amazingly; till at last I gave way so much to peevishness and fretfulness, that I was quite a burden to myself and to my family. And indeed it is a rare thing to see a sensible criminal cheerful when the sentence of death is passed on him; it is a bad sign in a literal, but much worse in a spiritual, sense.

I still persevered in reading, though I did not understand the meaning of what I read, unless it were those passages that levelled their threatenings at me; and I still kept on praying, though my prayers were nothing but confusion; nor did I give up blessing the Lord while I was under those wretched temptations.

Hard To Keep The Sabbath Holy

I laboured hard also, for many months together, to keep the sabbath-day holy; putting great confidence in that act of

obedience, if I could but have compassed my design. But, alas, I never kept one Lord's day holy all the time I was in that despairing way; for something or other occurred to put me out of temper on that day above all the days in the week. I have often been tempted to rise by three o'clock on the Lord's day morning, and go into some distant wood, and there stay till night, that I might not see any body to provoke me to anger. For many months I was harassed with this temptation. But, alas, there is no more real religion in a wood than on board a ship, when this heart is destitute of the grace of God. I often thought my wife behaved more contrary to me while I was in this state than ever she had done before. This made me have very hard thoughts of her. However, no family can be happy where allegorical Hagar, or the law of Moses, keeps house.

My reader must "go and learn what that meaneth." At this time my wife knew not what cutting convictions were, therefore could form no judgment of my case: and I believe I tried her patience very severely; for my life was a burden to myself, and I went "mourning all the day long."

I laboured as hard when at church to keep my mind and thoughts on the minister as I did to keep the sabbath, and had just as much success; for I could not stay my thoughts on the prayers or sermon any more than I could create a world, not even at private prayer; for my thoughts were flurried and confused by the devil, or chained down to the horrors of despair; so that, as Paul says, "I could not speak a good word, or think a good thought." Nor is there a man living that can, if he is truly convinced of sin; for the Saviour declares that without him man can do nothing, John, xv. 5. And I am sure he cannot, unless the Spirit of Christ condescends to work in him both to will and to do.

Dying To The Law

This is dying to the law; and a long lingering death I had of it; as it is written, "I was alive without the law," Rom.

vii. 9; “but when the commandment came (that is, with its convincing power, and in its spiritual meaning), sin revived, and I died,” Rom. vii. 9. “But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence,” Rom. vii. 8. “For without the law sin was dead. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me; and the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death.” And thrice happy is that soul who is dead to the law, to all hope in it, and to all expectation from it; for such a soul is “alive to God through Jesus Christ,” and shall live by faith here, and in the full fruition of God hereafter, and that to all eternity.

But perhaps my reader has never been in these deep waters; and therefore is troubled in his mind, fearing he hath “neither part nor lot in the matter.” To which I answer, You are not to limit the Holy One of Israel. Has God blessed thee with a godly sorrow? for it is that which “worketh repentance unto salvation, not to be repented of,” 2 Cor. vii. 10. Let not my reader, therefore, desire to travel through these regions of confusion. If thou art a child of God, thou wilt meet with as much of it as thy faith will be able to manage. God had a particular work for me to do, and therefore he qualified me accordingly.

A Fisher of Men

Gospel-ministers are called “fishers of men;” and some mystical fish, that are to be caught, are playing among the rocks of error; some of the serpentine kind, like eels, are crawling in the mire; and some are swimming on the surface of pleasure and vanity: each of these chosen ones must have its particular hook, Amos, iv. 2; or net, Matt. xiii. 47. My design in writing this book is to fish for those in the mud, or among the rocks; and therefore I bait my hook with the very same bait which caught me. For this cause, also, I have spoken very plainly about my temptations; for which I shall possibly

be highly blamed by some who are not very well acquainted with heart-work; but wherefore should I regard that? seeing my testimony is that, and that only, which I received from God, “who revealed his Son in me.” Not a word of it is either feigned, forged, or borrowed. No man shall stop me of this boasting in all the regions of Britain. David says, “he will make his boast of God all the day long, and tell others what God hath done for his soul.”

I know there are many poor souls who lie under very grievous temptations, and yet are tempted never to reveal their case; for Satan knows that a skilful hand, under God, would weaken his strong hold; therefore he tempts such to be his privy council; for we know he is not divided against himself: if he was, his kingdom would be destroyed.

Howbeit, I am determined to write plainly about my temptations, as far as I can find them mentioned or hinted at in the scriptures; and those very black ones, which the scriptures are silent about, I will keep to myself, unless there be any poor buffeted soul who thinks his temptations to be without a parallel; such an one shall be welcome to a private conference with me.

What has much encouraged me to write this treatise is, that God has been pleased to bring many deeply-tried souls into gospel-liberty under my ministry, while the ministry of some others has floated too much on the surface for them. As for Infidelity, I know she will give this testimony of God the lie; and, indeed, I should wonder if she did not, seeing that God has declared twice in his word, that she shall do it; as it is written, “Behold, ye among the heathen, and regard, and wonder marvellously; for I will work a work in your days, which ye will not believe, though it be told you,” Hab. i. 5. And again, “Behold, ye despiser, and wonder, and perish; for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you,” Acts, xiii. 41. But

“shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? God forbid. Yea, let God be true, and every man a liar,” Rom. iii. 3, 4.

I find in scripture that many professors gave the testimony of Paul the lie, though they saw that the Lord set his broad seal to it, as a proof that it was from him. And those who were sealed under the sound of his testimony brought forth fruit to the glory of the Great Sealer, Rom. iii. 7, 8; Gal. iii. 1, 2.

I believe I shall ever have cause to bless the Almighty for bringing me the way that he did, though it appeared perilous; for it has made me more useful to others, and has also been a mean, under God, of effectually fixing my heart, and shielding me from many false doctrines that abound in our day. I have always thought those ministers, who have been well-stripped by a law-work, and brought out in a conspicuous manner by the revelation of Christ to their consciences, never stink so rank of Arminianism, or popery, as those who are not acquainted with the plague of their own hearts; and their trumpet generally gives a more certain sound: they are most skillful also with a wounded conscience; and such will ever be attended with the choicest flock.

Questions asked A Tempered Dejected Soul

If my reader be a poor tempted, dejected soul, he will long to put a few questions to me, which I conjecture may be these: -

He will say in his heart, “I have heard of your convictions, and of the convictions that have exercised others also. I have read of the cutting convictions of Isaiah, David, Job, Paul, and others; I have also read of the convictions of Cain, Judas, Ahab, and Saul: and I cannot distinguish the one from the other. David says, ‘I have sinned;’ and Job says, ‘I have sinned: what shall I answer thee?’ And Judas says, ‘I have sinned, and betrayed innocent blood.’ David says, ‘My sin is

a sore burden, and too heavy for me to bear;’ and Cain says, ‘My punishment is greater than I can bear.’ Their distresses and confessions are almost alike, says. My reader; and I am afraid my convictions are those of the latter class which you have mentioned. Now I want to know the difference between the convictions which end in gospel conversion, and those of the reprobate, or apostate, which lead to black despair, or to hardness of heart and desperate wickedness.”

You have asked me, I confess, a hard, puzzling question, and you ought to be wisely and soundly answered from the oracles of God; as a hasty, unscriptural solution may be attended, for a time, with bad consequences. I will, therefore, as God may enable me, give my reader as good an answer as he can expect from an illiterate coal-hearer.

Legal Convictions

I read a book some time ago, written by a very great man, who seemed to cast all law-work aside, and said it ought not to be regarded: but I trust I shall be enabled to set that forth in a scriptural point of view. We know there must be a beginning, and a labour too, before there can be a birth; and so it is with

God’s children; there is a labour, sooner or later, more or less, to bring them all forth; as it is written, they are begotten “by the word of truth,” James, i. 18; they “labour, and are in pain to bring forth,” Micah, iv. 10; and are born again of the Holy Ghost, John, iii. 5; and then “perfect love casteth out fear,” and glorious liberty from bondage takes place.

First, What is it to convince a man of sin? It is to prove a man guilty by the laws of God and of conscience; so as to persuade his mind that he is a transgressor of those laws; and to bring him to acknowledge it, either by confession, by a fallen countenance, like Cain, or by a guilty silence, like the adulterous woman; which proves he has nothing but guilty to plead, and therefore ceases to plead at all.

The man has these witnesses brought in against him; - 1st. His own thoughts; 2dly. His own conscience; 3dly. The voice of a holy God in his righteous law; which three-fold testimony is sure to convict him. Then the sentence of that law is revealed, which is a death-warrant from the legal ministration; and this stops the sinner's mouth, and he appears condemned by the law of God; so that he cannot disown but that the sentence is justly due to him, and the Judge strictly just in denouncing that sentence.

Secondly, What will convince a man of sin, and yet leave him without the grace of God? - I answer, The eye of God's justice fishing upon a rebel in his mad career of sin, and a visible view of the hand of God going out against him, may convince him of his acting diametrically opposite to the will of his Maker, as it is written, "And it came to pass, that in the morning watch the Lord looked unto the host of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and of the cloud, and troubled the host of the Egyptians, and took off their chariot wheels, that they drove them heavily; so that the Egyptians said, Let us flee from the face of Israel, for the Lord fighteth for them against the

Egyptians," Exod. xiv. 24, 25. Secondly, when the lips of truth appeal to a man's conscience, and bring him to a proper reflection, insomuch that he is internally convicted, from a conscious knowledge of his being guilty of the crime for which the lips of truth have made their appeal to him; as it is written, "So, when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him east a stone at her. And they which heard it, being convicted by their own consciences (mark that), went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last," John, viii. 7, 9.

Thirdly, A judgment denounced from the mouth of a minister against a sinner for his sin. After the sin has

been described by a preacher, though erroneous preachers contradict it, and try to heal the wound, this will convince a man; as is seen in the days of Ahab. Micaiah declares he shall not return from the field of battle in peace, and is hated and imprisoned for it. Four hundred false prophets declare that he shall prosper, and the Lord shall deliver the victory into the hand of the king; and these prophets pleased the king well, for they prophesied good to the king with one voice. Surely they ought to please their own master; for they were prophets of his own making, and were kept at his own expense; and the devil was in them all, as you read, I Kings, xxii. 23. Notwithstanding all this, the death denounced by old Micaiah stuck close to his conscience; as it is written, "And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, I will disguise myself, and enter into the battle; but put thou on thy robes. And the king of Israel disguised himself, and went into the battle," I Kings, xxii. 30. Honest conscience pleaded powerfully against the promised success of four hundred prophets; and the prediction of good old Micaiah was fulfilled at Ramoth-Gilead, by an arrow sent from a venturous bow, which gave him his death's wound and his royal blood became, in consequence, a banquet for dogs.

Fourthly, A man who has been much in the company of the righteous, has at times felt a superficial spark of joy from their fire, and has been an eye-witness of the providences and salvation of God in a temporal way; and who, after all this, turns an enemy to the righteous, whom he knows God favours; may, at times, convince a sinner, and bring him to confession; as may be seen in the case of Saul; "Return, my son David; thou art more righteous than I; I have rewarded thee evil, when thou hast saved my life; thou shalt surely be king."

Fifthly, A question put to a guilty sinner, either by God himself, in a way of judgment, or by the mouth of his ministers, will at times convict the sinner, and send the painful

arrow into his heart; as it is written, [Cain] “where is Abel thy brother? Thy brother’s blood crieth.” This brought down his countenance; nor could it ever stand afterward.

Now what effect had all these convictions upon these men? Did they bring them to confess their sins to God? No; only to men. “God fighteth against us,” said the host of Pharaoh. Were their eyes toward God for any help? No; they hated the light. Did their convictions bring them to God? No: they ran farther from him. Did they pray to him? No. Had they any hope in him? No. Were they convinced of the evil of their own hearts? No. Were they convinced of unbelief? No. Were they brought to hate sin, and loath themselves on the account of it? No; they sinned with a higher hand, and were yet more desperate. In like manner Ahab goes to battle; Saul also continues to persecute David, and even has recourse to the witch of Endor.

I will now endeavour to shew my reader the method which the Spirit takes to convince a sinner, of the effects of that method, and how convictions operate under the management of the Holy Ghost.

The New Covenant Law

First, The Spirit’s law of faith lays hold on the justice of God, and as fast a hold on the spirituality of the law of God; which law Of faith, though it has law and justice for its first objects, is, nevertheless, the new covenant law; as it is written - “I will write my law in their hearts, and will be their God, and they shall be my people,” Jer. xxxi. 33. We are first convinced of our actual transgressions; “My sin is ever before me.” Secondly, of the pollution of our nature; “We are all as an unclean thing, there is no soundness in us,” saith the prophet Isaiah. God the Spirit convinces us that the law is spiritual, and that every thought of our heart is carnal; even our religion is shewn to be sin, and we call it dung and dross, as Paul did; as it is written, “the law is spiritual, but I am

carnal, sold under sin,” Rom. vii. 14. Yea, the Spirit convinces us that we came forth from the womb polluted with original guilt, and by nature under the law, as children of wrath; as it is written, “Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one,” Job, xiv. 4. “How can he be clean that is born of a woman?” Job, xxv. 4. The Spirit leads us up to the fountain of pollution, by tracing the streams; as it is written, “In sin was I shapen, and ill iniquity did my mother conceive me,” Psal. li. 5. And from this he leads us up to Adam’s fall; as it is written, “Nevertheless, man being in honour abideth not; he is like the beasts that perish,” Psal. xlix. 12.

The Spirit of God not only convinces us of actual transgressions against the letter of the law; as also our internal pollution, evil thoughts, and rotten righteousness, before the spirituality of that law; but he likewise convinces us that there is a Saviour, and that there is mercy for the believer, but that we are in unbelief, and therefore cannot apply him; as it is written, “And, when the Comforter is come, he will reprove the world of sin, because they believe not in me,” John, xvi. 8, 9.

Imputed Righteousness

The Holy Spirit then proceeds to convince us of an imputed righteousness, or of the Saviour’s active obedience to the law, paid by him as our surety; and of that being accepted by God, who is our creditor; and this is witnessed by his having sent an angel to roll away the stone on the grave’s mouth, and thus taking him “from prison and from judgment,” and then “defying the world to declare his fraternity,” Isa. lilt. 8. Yea, “God raised him from the grave; accepted him, and the price he had paid as our surety; and his obedience as our full payment by him,” Rom. v. 21; and gave him “all power in heaven and earth;” as you read, Matt. xxviii. 18. God sends his own Spirit to convince us of righteousness, because Christ is gone to the Father, John, xvi. 10; which is a

proof that our surety is accepted, I Cor. xv. 27. This obedience of the Saviour is to justify many; as it is written, "By one man's obedience shall many be made righteous," Rom. v. 19. Christ Jesus brought in this everlasting righteousness Dan. ix. 24. God the Father accepts it, Isa. xxvi. 21; and make, a sinner righteous by it.

The gospel reveals this righteousness of God, and no other, Rom. i. 17; and puts it to the account of the believer, though before he was ungodly, Rom. iv. 5. The Spirit convinces us of the need of this righteousness, and reveals it to the understanding; and, as the Spirit of faith, works faith in the heart; and faith puts this righteousness on; as it is written, "It is unto all and upon all that believe," Rom. iii. 22. And thus "the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith," Rom. i. 17 - from a faithful God to every one that is ordained to eternal life through faith: it is also "witnessed by the law and the prophets;" and it is upon every faithful member of Christ's mystical body. In this righteousness a man shall find acceptance with God, and peace of conscience.

When the Arminians can overthrow this doctrine of imputed righteousness, they will overthrow the whole Bible, and render every soul that is now in heaven under the curse of Moses's law.

Now let us view the workings of these convictions, under the management of God the Holy Ghost. First, These spiritual convictions are attended with a looking to God for help; "Mine eyes are ever towards the Lord; for he shall pluck my feet out of the net," Psal. xxix. 15. Such a soul not only looks to God for help, but he desires to know what these workings of his mind mean; and therefore "he comes to the light, that they may be made manifest." "And his eye waits on the Lord, as the eye of a man on the hand of his master, until he has mercy upon him." But the reprobate goes another way to work. When the Egyptians saw the eye of justice flashing

from the cloud, they turned their eyes and backs too; such "hate the light, nor will they come to it, lest their deeds should be reproved," John, iii. 20. So the accusers of the poor woman went out from Christ the true light, as soon as conscience had done its office.

Secondly, These convictions of the Spirit are attended with a turning the feet to God; as it is written, "I turned my feet to thy testimony," Psal. cxix. 59. Yea, they follow after God while the chains of guilt and legal bondage lie heavy on them: and even then the Spirit helps them to cry and pray, while he holds them under the tuition of the law, as it is written. "They shall come after thee in chains, and with supplications and bitter weeping will I lead them," Isaiah, xlv. 14; Jer. xxxi. 9. But how does the reprobate act? Why he runs away. "The Egyptians fled; - the accusers of the adulterous woman went out role by one; - and Cain went out from the presence of God." I will never believe that Cain felt the burden of wrath with that keenness that some of the elect have done; for I was scarcely capable of fetching a tool for my work, or even digging up the ground; and for many months was quite dead to all the charms of mortals. But Cain went and married a wife in his trouble; set to work; built a city, and called the name of it after the name of his son, to gain the applause of the world.

Thirdly, Spiritual convictions are attended with heartfelt confession in private to God; as it is written, "For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid: I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord," Psal. xxxii. 4, 5. But does the reprobate confess? Yes, Judas confessed to the high priest, "I have betrayed innocent blood." Did impenitent Pharaoh confess? Yes, to Moses; "I have sinned against the Lord, and against you; entreat the Lord for me" to take away the frogs.

Does Cain confess? Yes, his punishment, not his sin; “My punishment is greater than I can bear,” Gen. iv. 13.

Fourthly, A soul convicted by the Spirit of God will call upon God; nor can all the devils in hell, nor all the persecutors in the world, ever stop the mouth of prayer, when the Spirit of the everblessed God takes possession. “The sorrows of death compassed me, and the Pains of hell get hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow. Then I called upon the name of the Lord: O Lord, I beseech thee, deliver my soul,” Psal. cxvi. 3, 4. The blessed Spirit will make such souls pray under the greatest discouragements; as we may see in the matter of Hezekiah. “In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And the prophet Isaiah, the son of Amos, came unto him, and said unto him, Thus saith the Lord, Set thine house in order, for thou shalt die and not live. Then he turned his face to the wall, and prayed unto the Lord,” 2Kings, xx. 1, 2. Thus the elect follow God with supplications, even when they are in chains; and pour out a prayer when God’s chastening hand is upon them,” Isa. xxvi. 16. “But the hypocrites in heart heap up wrath; they cry not when God binds them,” Job, xxxvi. 13.

Repentance Towards God

Fifthly, The repentance of a chosen vessel is said to bring him near to God; as it is written,” I testify both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God,” [mark that - toward God] Acts, xx. 21. But which way does the repentance of a reprobate drive him? Why, farther from God; as it is written, “Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, [mark that - repented himself] and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, I have sinned, in that I have betrayed innocent blood. And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself,” Matt. xxvii. 3, 4, 5. Thus the scripture was fulfilled, which saith, “Though wickedness be sweet in his mouth,

though he hide it under his tongue, though he spare it, and forsake it not, but keep it still within his mouth, yet his meat, or sop, in his bowels is turned; it is the gall of asps within him; he hath swallowed down riches, and he shalt vomit them up again: God shall cast them out of his belly,” Job, xx. 12-15.

Sixthly, Convictions by the Spirit are attended with an invisible hope, which, as a sure anchor, keeps the soul from drowning in perdition, as it is written, “Why art thou cast down, O my soul: and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God,” Is. xliii. 5. But where is the hope of the reprobate? “The hypocrite’s hope shalt perish; whose hope shall be cut off, and whose trust shall be a spider’s web,” Job, viii. 13, 14.

Seventhly, Those who experience spiritual convictions have always an intense desire after God, even though they meet with perpetual disappointments; as it is written, “Hope deferred maketh the heart sick; but, when the desire cometh, it is a tree of life,” Prov. xiii. 12. And again, “With my whole soul have I desired thee” in the night; “but the wicked say unto God, Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways,” Job, xxi. 15.

Eighthly, A man convicted by the Spirit is so humbled as to submit to the righteousness of God when it is brought near to him; “they count their own righteousness but filthy rags; yea, but dung, that they may win Christ, and be found in him; not having their own righteousness, which is of the law, but the righteousness which is of God by faith.” Thus “the elect, who sought not after righteousness [by the law], have attained to it.” But hypocrites are said to be “stout-hearted, and far from [this] righteousness;” as it is written, “Hearken unto me, ye stout-hearted, that are far from righteousness; I bring near my righteousness,” Isa. xlvi. 12, 13. They refuse this righteousness; as it is written, “For they, being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their

own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth," Rom. x. 3, 4. The elect are said to attain to this righteousness, and they that seek it by the works of the law are blinded," Rom. ii. 7; as it is written, "What shall we say, then? - that the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith: but Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law; for they stumbled at that stumbling-stone," Rom. ix. 30 - 32. And this is the stone that the Arminians have stumbled at to this day. They are denying and ridiculing the righteousness of the Son of God, and laying their own boasted merit at the bottom of the building; but "on whomsoever this stone shall fall, it will grind him to powder," Matt. xxi. 44. God declares "their webs shall not become garments, neither shall they cover themselves with their works," Isa. lix. 6.

Humility, Submission Sovereignty of God

Ninthly, The Spirit of God humbles the sinner; and brings him not only to own, but also to submit to, the sovereignty of his maker, Job, xliii. 6; and to close in with the doctrine of eternal election, Acts, xxii. 14. Thus God appears "just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus," Rom. iii. 26. But carnal convictions will stir up a man impiously to reply against God; as it is written, "Why doth he yet find fault?" The Spirit's answer to such is, "Nay, but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say unto him that formed it, Why hast thou formed me thus?" Rom. ix. 19, 20. Such wage war against God's sovereignty, and his revealed doctrines of election and predestination, as all Arminians do at this day, and even strive against God himself: but they shall never prevail; for God says, "We unto him that striveth with

his Maker" Isa. xlv. 9. God has laid a secret snare for mystical Babylon, and all merit-mongers; as it is written, "I have laid a snare for thee, and thou art also taken, O Babylon, and thou wast not aware: thou art found, and also caught, because thou hast striven against the Lord," Jer. 1. 24

Thus, courteous reader, I have gone a little out of my intended way, in order to answer thy supposed question; and I hope God will enable thee to make a comfortable use of it

Kingston Continuing in a Distressed Condition

But to return-

I had been at Kingston about seven or eight months, in the distressed condition which I have before mentioned; having just strength enough to move about and attend my work, and that was all. Being at that time sorely tried with the cruel mockings of my follow-workmen, I longed much to leave that place. It so fell out, that the foreman came to me one day, and informed me that a gentleman at Sunbury wanted a gardener; telling me at the same time that the gentleman's gardener had cut his throat, after having embezzled some of his master's money. I went immediately after the place, and was accordingly hired. In a few days after I went to my servitude; and my guilt, fear, horror, and temptations accompanied me. At that time my wife went to see her relations in Dorsetshire, and continued with them ten or twelve weeks. I was now got into a strange place, and my only companion had left me: the family that I served was in London; and, as they had lately bought the house, they did not intend coming into it till it was fitted up, and the gardens put in proper order. An old woman was also kept to take care of the house, until it was fitted up and furnished for the reception of the family.

Why Cut He His Throat

My curiosity prompted me to inquire strictly of the

housekeeper the cause of the gardener having cut his throat. She accordingly informed me that he had received money from his master to buy some clothes with; but, instead of that, he had spent it all: and that soon after a letter was found, which he had unguardedly dropped, that had come from a gentleman of the faculty, containing a large bill for curing him of the venereal disease, and many threatenings for having neglected to discharge it. She added, that it was supposed he had obtained this money under the pretext of buying clothes, while he meant to pay this bill; but, getting into company, he had spent the whole: which people conjectured was the cause of the violent attempt he had made on his life.

I then asked in what manner he had done it; she answered, that the gardener came home about four o'clock in the morning, went up stairs, and cut his throat with a razor; but, finding he had not done it effectually, he stopped the wound with his handkerchief, lest he should bleed on the stairs, while he went into the kitchen to fetch his pruning-knife, with which he cut it again; and, again stopping the wound with his handkerchief, went into the street, and walked on the road till he dropped down with the loss of blood. Some people soon after found him, and alarmed the neighbourhood. He was brought home, and a surgeon sent for to close up the wound, which was thought to be mortal, as the throat was deeply cut; however the wound was closed; but, under the operation, and with the loss of blood, he had violent fits; and, being a strong bony man, it was as much as five or six men could do to hold him: and no wonder that the devil afforded him such aid, when he had brought him so near an awful end. However, he was sent to an hospital; and, whether he lived or died, I cannot inform my reader. I then desired to see the room where he had committed this violent act. She accordingly shewed me the room, and where the blood had run on the boards, which they had endeavoured to plane out;

but, the boards being old, they could not get the stain out. I then asked her how he behaved when they had sewn up the wound, and whether he could speak? She replied, "Yes, just to be understood;" for the people asked him how he could be guilty of so rash an action: and he said, "It was that black man who stands in the corner of the room; he told me to do it, and he tempted me to it." The relation of these circumstances was like fresh fuel to feed the flame of wrath that was already kindled in my heart;

Sleep on the Same Bed

And, to complete all, she told me that was the bed I was to lie in. I now thought every thing conspired together in order to bring me to death and destruction. I was all day long tempted to do as this man had done. He was left to do it, and why not I? I thought his temptations could not be stronger than mine were. And he was left of God, and why should not I, seeing my mind was daily harassed with such blasphemies against him?

O the subtlety of the devil; first to deceive, and then to destroy, mankind! But who can wonder at this, when he tempted the blessed Son of God to self-murder, by advising him to throw himself down from the pinnacle of the temple; as it is written, "Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, and saith unto him, If thou be the, Son of God, cast thyself down; for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee; and in their hands they sit all bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone," Matt iv. 5, 6. You see the devil quoted scripture to obtain his end, and left out that part of the text that made against the temptation. Satan quoted the text from Ps. xci. 11, 12. And he handled it wisely, for he left out just seven words; namely, "to keep thee in all thy ways." The devil knew that rash presumption was not God's way, nor would God be tempted. How did the devil know that? my

reader may say. By his own experience; for Satan had been presumptuous even in heaven; and his presumption led him to break through the rules of happiness, and launched him into the bottomless pit, where he must ever lie under the guilt of the great transgression.

Satan likewise omitted another verse (the 18th) of the same psalm, which made point blank against him; it being written, "Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder; the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet." These words were made good to the ever-lovely Jesus; therefore the Saviour stood firm on the pinnacle, when the devil fell headlong; as it is written, "The accuser of the brethren is cast down," Rev. xii. 10. Christ cast him both on the pinnacle of God's house, and on the accursed tree also. We may here see the cunning which the devil uses to ensnare unguarded minds: he is always on the watch to support his own cause; for, as the Saviour says, "If Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself: how then should his kingdom stand?" Matt. xii. 26.

Sunk In Despair

I never was before so sunk in despair as at this time. My sins standing perpetually before my eyes - the guilt of them so keen within me - the scriptures leveling their dreadful threatenings at me as a sinners temptations very violent all day long - a room to lie in where, the devil had gained his point over a fellow sinner - and I at the same time so timorous and fearful that I was almost afraid to walk alone, having been so long haunted with these terrors - I used to go to bed with as much reluctance as the ox goeth to the slaughter, being fearful that every night would be my last.

The Whole Duty of Man

The old woman, who lived in the house with me, perceiving me very serious, and dead to all vain conversation, lent me a book - one of the best, she said, that ever was written

- THE WHOLE DUTY OF MAN!

This book I eagerly embraced, read in it every opportunity that offered, and laboured hard all day long to live up to its rules; and, if I made a false step, I endeavoured to mend that by performing a double task. During many months I was thus employed, but all in vain; for how can a blind man see there ways of God, or a dead man perform a divine and spiritual service?

Satan now began again to tempt me violently that there was no God; but I reasoned against the belief of that, from my own experience of his dreadful wrath; and I said, "How can I credit this suggestion, when his wrath is already revealed in my heart, and every curse in his book leveled at my head?" The devil answered, that the Bible was false, and only wrote by cunning men to puzzle and deceive people. I also reasoned against this, and the devil answered me as forcibly. I therefore do not at all wonder why Satan is so often styled "a familiar spirit." He argued with me thus: "If the Bible be true, it declares God to be loving, pitiful, gracious, merciful, willing to hear prayer, and to help the distressed; ready to forgive; and that he will be found of them that seek him. Now, can any creature try to please him more than you have done? Can any pray more? Can any stand in greater need of mercy than you do? And have you found him merciful? Have you not rebuked me in the name of Jesus, and prayed against me; and do I not keep possession of you still? And I will bring you back to sinning again, as bad as ever; I will wear you out, if I pursue you to the grave."

"There is no God," replied the adversary, "nor is the Bible true." I could not answer him, nor could I contradict this: I only asked, Who then made the world? He replied, "I did; and I made men too." "Alas?" said I, "what! Devils make men?" The answer was, "Yes, I made you." "Then," said I, "devils make devils, for I am filled with devils." I thought

this engagement would have driven me to distraction. Satan, perceiving my rationality almost gone, followed me up with another temptation: That, as there was no God, I must come back to his work again; and, as I had fled from his service to cry after a God, when there was no such being, I had acted hypocritically with him; and, when he brought me to hell, he would punish me more than all the rest, for he was the tormentor. I cried out “Oh. What will become of me? What will become of me?” He answered, that there was no way for me to escape but by praying to him, and that he would shew me some lenity when he took me to hell. I was obliged to set down my spade, and leave my work; and I went and sat in my tool-house, halting between two opinions; whether I should petition Satan, or whether I should keep praying to God till I could ascertain the consequences. When I was thinking of bending my knees to such a cursed being as Satan, an uncommon fear of God sprung up in my heart to keep me from it. Oh! how good is our God! He plants “his fear in our hearts, that we should not depart from him.”

Finding this strong preventing fear in my heart, and a thought that I should find a God some time or other, I told the adversary to cease tempting me; adding, that, if he could drag me to hell, his state would not be made better by that, for he was already damned. This fear fortified me so, that I was desperately bold, and almost the devil’s match. I told him he was damned, and he could not contradict it. This weakened the temptation for a time; and it was agreeable to that scripture which saith, “Resist the devil, and he will flee from you,” Jam iv. 7.

I now got up from my seat, and went to work. I lifted up my head to God in prayer, and there appeared a rainbow in all its beauty, the finest I ever saw; it seemingly encompassed the horizon. I cried out at the sight of this, and said to mine accuser, “There is a God, and the Bible is true; God’s word

says, I will set my bow in the cloud; and there it is; my eyes now see it. There is a God; and God’s word is true.” The enemy could make no reply to this; so the temptation was much weakened, and I had a few hours respite; not from the temptation itself, but from the fiery force of it.

Dealing With Temptations

I should not have mentioned this temptation so plainly, if I had not found the like mentioned in the Bible. Satan tempted the Saviour to believe that the world was his; and he might as well have said that he made it; for the maker of it must be the owner of it. However, Satan wanted even the dear Redeemer to pray to him and adore him; as it is written, “Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; and saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me,” Matt. iv. 8, 9.

“All shall be thine,” said Satan, “if thou wilt worship me.” And pray what is this but saying, I will give thee all these things, if thou wilt kneel down, and pray to me for them? I believe our dear Redeemer told his disciples of these temptations in private, in order to comfort them in their temptations; for as they could not be eye-witnesses, they must have remained ignorant of them, unless Christ had informed them.

Many more sore temptations did Jesus undergo, during his ministry, beside this first engagement, as appears evident from these words; “And, When the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him for a season,” Luke, iv. 13. Mark that, “for a season;” not for good and all. And I believe, too, that he had many temptations after that, which the apostles knew of while they sat under his ministry; as appears from that passage where the Saviour, in speaking to his disciples concerning his temptations, says, “Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations; [mark

that - temptations - many of them.] And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me,” Luke, xxii. 28, 29. Here the dear Redeemer is both commending and comforting them, “Ye have continued with me in my temptations; you have not turned your backs on me on that account; and I appoint unto you a kingdom, &c.” O! sweet encouragement to them; and a sweet cordial to Peter, who was just ready to go into the devil’s sieve, as appears in the following verses, “And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have thee, that he may sift thee as wheat; but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not; and, when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren;” or, comfort them that are tempted.

Thus the blessed Redeemer “was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin,” Heb. iv. 15.

Reader, art thou a tempted one? Take comfort from this consideration; that, if the devil would engage “the captain of our salvation, how can we poor common soldiers expect to escape? “We must fight manfully under the Saviour’s banner, against the world, the flesh, and the devil; and continue Christ’s faithful soldiers or servants.” There is a vein of the saints’ temptations runs through the whole Bible; and how sweet has that vein been opened to my soul since the Lord delivered me out of my troubles!

The Elect at War

I am fully persuaded, by the word of the Lord, that when the elect are engaged in the field of battle against the devil, they are engaged in the war that God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, have declared. First, God the Father declared it, “And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel:” which words must not be limited to the Saviour’s humanity only; but, in a figurative sense, they are applicable to his body mystical,

the heel of that body being the feeblest of the chosen tribes, or the weaklings in faith; such as those were whom Amalek, the devil’s type, engaged; as it is written, “Remember what Amalek did unto thee by the way, when ye were come forth out of Egypt; how he met thee by the way, and smote the hindmost of thee, even all that were feeble behind thee, when thou wast faint and weary; and he feared not God,” Deut. xxv. 17, 18. Thus he bruises the heel. The eye being the foremost member, and the heel the last, in the mystical body of Christ.

Secondly, The Saviour himself came to engage in this war, and then he proclaimed the same war for us,” I came not to send peace upon earth, but a sword,” and a fire; yea, saith the Saviour, “the hour of temptation shall come on all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth,” Rev. iii. 10. But he gives us a promise of power to tread, even as his father gave him. Mark that word tread; it is a quotation of the promise that God the Father made to Christ; as it is written, “Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder,” Psal. xci. 13. And the Saviour applies the same promise to us, “I will give you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the adversary; and nothing shall by any means hurt you,” Luke, x. 19.

Thirdly, God the Holy Ghost hath declared this war between the elect and Satan; [mark, Christ is one of the elect.] And it was the Spirit of God that mustered the battle, and led the Saviour forth to the field; as it is written, “Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness, to be tempted of the devil; and, when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterwards an hungered,” &c. Matt. iv. 1, 2. And I believe that it is the same blessed Spirit that leads God’s elect forth to the same conflict. Satan reigns and rules in all our hearts while we are disobedient, as the scriptures witness; but it is the Holy Ghost that “binds this strong man armed, and casts him out; takes all his armour from him wherein he trusted,

and divides the spoil,” as the Saviour saith. Satan, finding himself dethroned, or cast down, begins to wage war with us; and the Holy Spirit leads us forth to engage him, and to shield us in the combat, by working that faith in the heart which lays hold of Christ, and which leads us to the atonement of the Lamb; and we overcome Satan by faith in that blood, Rev. xii. 11. This shews us the power of Satan, the deadly evil of sin, the victorious power of spiritual faith, and the sufficiency of Christ, as a shield of that faith, to “quench the fiery darts of the wicked,” Ephes. vi. 16; and also leads us experimentally to know and enjoy the supporting and comforting influences of the blessed Spirit of God.

I found great comfort, when God delivered my soul, in seeing my own temptations so much like some of my blessed Master’s. And I was much amazed at that invisible assistance from God, which had “kept my mouth as it were with a bridle” all the while the adversary laid so hot a siege to my mind.

I Gain A Little Strength

But to return to my subject. Finding that I had gathered a little strength by the sight of the rainbow, I laboured and prayed more earnestly than ever; if I spake a word amiss ten times a day, I would run to prayer every time and beg pardon, being determined to rub off as I went. I made inquiry when the sacrament was to be administered, and found I had two weeks to prepare myself in; so I began upon that, and kept close to my daily task. And now most dreadful temptations came again afresh, with as much violence as ever. Finding this, I was determined to weaken them, as I thought, by fasting. And this was more than I could well bear, because I worked very hard; so that, when I came to add fasting to hard labour, it almost overset me. But what will not a guilty sinner do when he is at the gates of hell?

When the sacramental sabbath arrived, I went to the table in all the horror and terror imaginable; then back to my

pew, and there wept and prayed till I almost fainted, and was obliged to go home to bed. By this rigorous fast I had brought myself so low that I was almost in a decline; nothing would stay on my stomach for some time after. This I found would not do; therefore I never afterwards ran to such extremes.

My adversary now attacked me from another quarter; namely, that I had received the sacrament unworthily, and therefore had contracted the greatest guilt by it; that a worthy communicant was one who was free from all sin, but I was not; and that, if any communicant ever sinned after he had received the sacrament, there was no mercy for him. This drove me to my wit’s end; I could not sleep during the night, but used to lie crying and praying till my bed was wet with sweat and tears; commanding my adversary, in the name of Jesus Christ, to depart. However, it was all to no purpose, for my guilt and temptations stuck close to me; and many a time was I tempted to do as my predecessor had done, which made me afraid to look at a knife or razor.

Being quite worn out with these long trials, and fretting all day long, I began secretly to wish that I had never thought about religion at all; as then I should have had some ease in this world, if I was damned in the next. Wherefore I was determined to break through all bounds, let what would be the consequence. I therefore set off to an alehouse, got into company, and so drowned my horror for a time. But how I felt it the next morning, I shall leave those to judge who have tried the wretched experiment. However, I persisted in this resolution; and the next day went to see a review on Laylham Common; so got into company, and began with light, trifling conversation. This, with the assistance of liquor, kept the conviction of my conscience stifled for a time.

Damned I will Not be Damned Alone

I continued this dissolute course for some weeks, and offered desperate violence to my own conscience, striving

hard to drown all thoughts of God and futurity: and, if conscience would force in a word, I replied thus - "If I am damned, I shall not be damned alone; the greatest part of mankind will bear me company." And I believe I uttered this with my lips. Is this free will? Yes, this is the human will in all her boasted rectitude! Thus I went on, and had in a measure accomplished my wretched design; namely, that of hardening my conscience.

A Sermon Given me

About this time there came a man from Kingston, with whom I had contracted an intimacy; he was a very moral man, and a great reader. Knowing me to be of a serious turn of mind, he brought me a sermon in manuscript, copied from some author He made me a present of it; and, at his departure, I went with him and treated him, in order to keep conscience down, and I knew I should have dreadful work of it if ever conscience got the advantage of me again. However, at my return I opened this book, and found it to be a sermon from this text: "For Tophet is ordained of old; yea, for the king it is prepared, he hath made it deep and large; the pile thereof is fire and much wood; the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it," Isa. xxx. 33.

I took the book up stairs with me, and read it till my hair stood erect upon my head; and I thought for a few minutes, that I really was in hell. I cried aloud, for all those violent acts of rebellion were charged upon my conscience, after making so many vows, and frequenting the Lord's table; that now I had sinned out of the reach of mercy. I thought I should have torn my flesh from my bones. I stripped stark naked to read and pray; and made a vow to God, never to go any more into a public-house, during the time that I lived at Sunbury, if he would but pardon me for this desperate act of rebellion. But there appeared no signs of pardon; therefore I superstitiously laid the Bible under my pillow, to operate as a charm, in case

the devil should attempt to carry me away in the night. I wrapped myself up in the clothes, and lay till I sweated with anguish of soul. When the morning appeared I wept aloud to God, out of gratitude to him whom I had so offended, that another day had been granted me before I met my expected and dreadful end. For several weeks together I watched my animal frame, in order to observe whether sickness, or any disorder, had begun to chase my guilty soul out of her clay tabernacle. Sometimes I would fancy myself very ill, and then conclude that my long-expected end was at hand. But, when the next morning arrived, I wept aloud again, and said - "What! out of hell yet! O, good and gracious Lord! Would I let such a rebel live, if he was such an enemy to me as I am to thee? No; I would destroy him if it were in my power. And can I blame the Almighty if he damns such a rebel as I am? No; I deserve it; I have done all that I could do to offend him; and therefore it is my just due."

I now began to think that God had a secret regard for me; that he pitied me, and would save me if he could; but I supposed he could not, because I thought that I had sinned out of the reach of his revealed promise; and I knew it was impossible for him to lie, or to make his promise void: nor could I desire him to expose the honour and glory of his sacred majesty to the contempt of fools and devils, to save a wretch like me. I therefore began to love him, pity him, and feel for his honour. Yea, I sat down under these considerations, contented even with the thoughts of certain damnation; being fully persuaded, in my own mind, that God would shew me as much lenity, even in hell, as his truth and justice would admit of; "for God is not man that he should lie, nor the son of man that he should repent." He hath spoken, and he must make it good; his spotless purity, and his divine veracity, bind him to it. Every morning, therefore, when I waked, I cried out and blessed him for sparing me another night. I was certain that

he would let me dwell in the land of the living as long as his secret decrees would allow him; and I pitied and blessed him from my very heart.

If at any time a ray of comfort even seemed to operate on my mind, I coyly put it from me, not desiring his blessed Majesty to exceed the bounds of his revealed will. What a poor blind soul I then was! But God knoweth that I lie not; I simply inform my reader the whole truth, just as I then felt it. And, if I had gone no farther in the knowledge of God than this, it is better divinity than any branch of Arminianism I have ever yet heard of. For I had a strong faith in God's immutability, in his justice, and in his mercy, where it could be shewn consistent with his righteousness; and I was very far from thinking that God was a liar, like myself; as it is written, "Let God be true, but every man a liar."

I wish the Arminians would observe this golden rule; they would not then affirm that we may be children of God today, and be cast away as children of the devil tomorrow. They ought at least to let God appear as perfect as themselves. But no man will ever be clear in the immutability, faithfulness, truth, holiness and justice, of God, till he has, more or less, felt the severity of the law, nor will he preach up triumphant grace, unadulterated, until he has felt its power working a change in him, which, with all his efforts, he could not possibly accomplish.

During the time I was under this frame of mind I one night dreamed that I was climbing up the outside of a very magnificent building, and had got a great way towards the top of it; but some wretched beings kept throwing water in my face, to hinder my ascent, I found myself, in consequence, in imminent danger of falling, which I thought must unavoidably kill me, as I had got up into the upper regions, and had nothing to sustain me but my hands and feet as I climbed on the outside of this building. However, I reached the top, and found myself

delivered from all my fears, and filled with joy. In my joyful acclamations I awoke, "and behold it was a dream!" But I gathered the comforts of hope from it; and concluded that I should have dreadful difficulties to encounter in my way to heaven, but that I should arrive there at last. This gave me fresh encouragement to continue my efforts, though it was against both wind and tide.

I Go From Church To Church

I was now determined to go from church to church, till I should find a minister that could point out the way to me in which God, in his justice, could save a sinner. I had a strong faith in God's immutability, holiness, justice, and truth; and was sure he would be faithful both to his justice and mercy: but yet I did not see how I could be saved, because justice and holiness militated against me as a sinner. Still, however, by the dream, I thought I should get to heaven. I therefore was determined to pay all possible attention to the sermons which I heard; and would listen only to hear which way a sinner like me could be saved with justice on his side. This was all I wanted, and this I knew would answer my purpose. I had learned the other lessons already.

Methodist Preachers

On the Lord's day following I went to Kingston, to my old favourite minister; and, when I came there, was told there had been a great disturbance in the town about the methodists coming there; and that the people had been endeavouring to drive them out of the place, as they came to deceive ignorant people, and draw poor souls away from the church. I answered, It was a great pity that the king suffered them to preach; and added, that it fulfilled what Peter said, that false teachers should come; and that it was such wretches as these that would hasten the end of the world, which I was loath to meet. I inquired if many people went after them; and

was informed that several did, which I was grieved to hear. I therefore blessed myself that I had been kept from these “wolves in sheep’s clothing,” as I termed them; and then went with my burdened conscience to my favoured church.

The Church of England My Mother

As soon as I got into the bowels of my old solid mother, I bedewed her pavement with many a silent tear, and blessed her sacred walls in the name of the Lord of Hosts. When I had taken my seat, I viewed her venerable inside, and secretly vowed that nothing but death should ever separate that insensible revered parent from her poor blind child.

When the minister appeared I found it was my old favourite whom I was glad to see. But when he read his text, he rather staggered me, as I thought he was going to preach in favour of methodism. It was this, “And now I say unto you, refrain from these men, and let them alone; for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought; but, if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it, lest haply ye be found even to fight against God,” Acts, v. 38, 39. I thought he was going to caution the people not to misuse these false prophets. But he did not do that: though he spake enough against the methodists to convince me that he was a true son of the church; yet he did not belabour them as I thought he ought to have done. However, he soon cleared himself of that imputation also; for he told us that the churches of England were such plain, substantial buildings - their altarpieces and other ornaments so decent - the order of the establishment so apostolic - their prayers, collects, &c. so well adapted - and that she had stood unshaken on her basis (I think he said) fifteen hundred years; - and then he laid his hand upon his breast, and said with peculiar emphasis, “I speak from my heart, that she never has been overthrown, and I believe she never will.” To this I put my secret Amen, and that gave it a final close. In short, I enthroned him higher in my affections

than ever he was before. Indeed there is no fear of such religion being overthrown, for it has got the world on its side. And, while the names mother and church are applied to the building, and the title of Father in God put on a dead prelate, the family will always be of the same stamp. But surely we may warrantably say to such fathers, What begetteth thou? - and to such mothers, What hast thou brought forth? - But to return-

A Son of the Church of England

I now set off for Sunbury as an established member of the church of England, and filled with indignation against the methodists; and, when I came to Hampton town, I looked up at the church, pulled off my hat, bowed my head, and blessed her in the name of the Lord. I was become quite an iron pillar and brazen wall to the church; and should have made strange havock among the methodists, had I been intrusted with the office of inquisitor-general.

On the next Lord’s Day I proposed to go farther a-field, to some other church; but I was informed that there was a clergyman coming down from London to preach at Sunbury; which I was happy to hear; for I did not like the minister at Sunbury, because he was running about the fields all the week with a gun in his hand; so that I never thought his person was sacred unless he had his gown and cassock on. He likewise greatly disgusted me once at the church, as he was reading one of the lessons for the day; for, when he came to these words, “And David came to his house at Jerusalem; and the king took the ten women his concubines, whom he had left to keep the house, and put them in ward and fed them, but went not in unto them: so they were shut up unto the day of their death, living in widowhood,” 2 Sam. xx. 3: he was so agitated by his lascivious thoughts, that he tittered and laughed, and had much ado to refrain from laughing aloud. I now viewed him with indignation; and thought that, if he felt the evil of

sin, the wrath of God, and the pains of hell, as I did, he would not trifle thus in the house of God.

Cassock and Gowns

My foolish and blind heart had long been swaddled up in the gown and cassock: but these things now and then gave them a rent. However, when the next Lord's Day arrived, I went to hear a clergyman who came from London; and admired every word of his sermon; but never saw a minister with his hair dressed in such a manner in all my life. He is called the macaroni parson in London. I have often seen him in the print shops. Surely there never was one like him before, nor ever will be again, when God has cut him down. In the afternoon I heard him again, and liked him exceedingly; and I went and stood at the outside of the yard gate, along with my fellow-servants, intending to have made him a reverend bow, and take an affectionate leave of him. Presently I saw him coming down from the church with a rakish young fellow in his arm; and, when they came up to us, they gave one of my fellow-servants a wanton glance, and another such an amorous salutation as old Beau Nash would have given to Kitty Fisher.

I now looked at him with indignation; "Alas!" said I, "where shall we look for Christians, if the clergy are so destitute of Christianity? There goes a man who turns up his eyes to God, and looks and speaks in the pulpit like an angel; and, when out of the church, acts like the priests of Siloe, whom the Holy Ghost styles sons of belial, or of the devil." This gave the gown and cassock another rent; and I began to pity the cause of God my Maker, on the account of his honour, which they impiously sullied by their wanton conduct.

When the next Lord's day arrived I went over to Hampton church, where I saw a tall stout young man, with a venerable aspect; one that I had never before seen, and from whom I expected great things. His text was, "Enter into thy

closet, and pray to thy Father who seeth in secret." I gave him all the attention I could, in order that I might find out in what way a sinner could be saved. However, it was all in vain, for he could not speak to be heard; and as for prayer he said nothing about it. He told us that virtue would lead us to prayer, and that the Saviour spoke this against the Pharisees, who loved to pray in the markets, &c., and in about twelve minutes he wound up his incoherent odds and ends, and I went out in all the horrors of the damned. As I went along the church-yard I saw the blind guide come laughing out of the church with a pair of wanton lasses, one in each arm. I found my disappointment had wound me up in such anger against him, that I even closed my fist at him, and secretly longed in my mind to give him a drubbing; for I was grown quite desperate. Presently after a couple of reputable men passed by me; and I heard one of them say to the other, "I would sooner by half sit at home and read my Bible, than come to church to hear such a fellow as that, with his nonsense." I was glad to hear the man speak as he did, and thought he was seeking after the way to heaven as well as my self, and that he had been disappointed as well as me.

As I went mourning home, it came in my mind that the clergy knew which way God could save sinners, but they would not tell us, lest we should get as wise as themselves - that they had learned the path for themselves, but their keeping us ignorant of it was on purpose to keep us close to the church. These thoughts made me hate them still the more, till I was almost ready to vomit up the gown and cassock entirely. However, the next Lord's day I went over to my old favourite, and took my wife with me to the Lord's table. On that day we were entertained with a sermon on charity, about the wonderful feats of that virtue, and of its covering "a multitude of sins." This discourse I liked, as there were some passages of scripture in it. But then there was an impediment

laid in my way, which was poverty. Had I possessed the whole world, I would have given it all for one hour's respite from the horrors of hell that I then felt. Charity I found would do wonders: but I had no money to give, therefore I was ready to curse my poverty - and, consequently it led me to envy the rich.

However, I gave all the alms that I could, though I suffered greatly for want of necessaries myself; but this brought no deliverance to my soul; all my guilt, and all my terrors, still continued with me.

And indeed there is no charity that can cover a multitude of sins, but that which is in God, and which he shewed when he gave his Son; whose blood cleanses from all sin, and whose righteousness is a covering for all our imperfections.

Where Might I Find Virtue ?

The next Lord's day I went over to Upper Moulsey church, where there was preaching only once a fortnight, and that happened not to be the day. I therefore set off from thence, and went to Isleworth church; where my ears were charmed with the sound of an organ, which was like singing songs to a heavy heart; however, the minister rather pleased me; his behaviour was becoming the place. He treated largely on the properties of Virtue, but did not trace her to any origin, nor lay her down as a rule supported, by Scripture, to save a sinner: though he spoke much in her praise, yet he never told us whether she was from heaven, or of men. I therefore could not get at the bottom of the matter, nor find out who she was; describing her properties was not sufficient: I wanted to know her nativity. If she came from heaven, I thought I would pray for her; if she grew in the hearts of men by nature, then I knew I had no part or lot in the matter.

However, going home pensive and sad, ruminating in my mind what virtue could be, and sinking deeper and deeper in despondency, I came at last into Sir Philip Musgrove's park,

where I walked till near midnight; and all on a sudden I was enwrapped in all the comforts of hope - I blessed God and wept aloud - I talked with God, and kneeled down and prayed in the path way, and was as happy as my heart could wish. This continued till I got into my bed-room, where the man had before cut his throat, and then this frame of mind began to wear off a little. However, having got a little book that a person had lent me, which recommended vows to be made to God, I accordingly stripped myself naked, to make a vow to the Almighty, if he would enable me to cast myself upon him. Thus I bound my soul with numerous ties, and wept over every part of the written covenant which this book contained. These I read naked on my knees, and vowed to perform all the conditions that were therein proposed. Having made this covenant, I went to bed; wept and prayed the greatest part of the night; and arose in the morning, pregnant with all the wretched resolutions of fallen nature. I now manfully engaged the world, the flesh, and the devil, in my own strength; and I had hound myself up with so many promised conditions, that, if I failed in one point, I was gone for ever, according to the tenor of my own covenant; provided that God should deal with me according to my sin, and reward me according to mine iniquity.

But before the week was out I broke through all these engagements, and fell deeper into the bowels of despair than ever I had been before. And now, seemingly, all was gone - I gave up prayer; and secretly wished to be in hell, that I might know the worst of it, and be delivered from the fear of worse to come, I was now again tempted to believe that there was no God; and wished to close in with the temptation, and be an established or confirmed atheist; for I knew, if there was a God, that I must be damned; therefore I laboured to credit the temptation, and fix it firm in my heart. "But, alas!" said I, "how can I? If I credit this, I must disbelieve my own existence, and

dispute myself out of common sense and feeling; for I am in hell already-there is no feeling in hell but I have an earnest or - hell is a place where mercy never comes; I have a sense of none - it is a separation from God; I am without God in the world' - it is an hopeless state; I have no hope - it is to feel the burden of sin; I am burdened as much as mortal can be - it is to feel the lashes of conscience; I feel them all the day long it is to be a companion for devils; I am harassed with them from morning till night - it is to meditate distractedly on an endless eternity; I am already engaged in this - it is to sin and rebel against God; I do it perpetually - it is to reflect upon past madness and folly; this is the daily employ of my mind - it is to labour under God's unmixed wrath; this I feel continually - it is to lie under the tormenting sceptre of everlasting death; this is already begun. Alas! to believe there is no God, is like persuading myself that I am in a state of annihilation."

Thus, reader, the revealed wrath of God locked me out of that strong hold of the devil, in which, as in a refuge of lies, I fain would have taken shelter. I now began most wretchedly to lament, not only my certain damnation in the world to come, but also that I was rendered incapable of digging a bit of ground, or even of fetching a proper tool for my work. I therefore thought that I must inform my master of it, leave my employ, and advise my wife to seek bread for herself and child; and, as for myself, I would wander about in a starving manner till I was no more; and the sooner I was dead the better, as I then should know the worst of my eternal doom. I laboured much at this time to harden myself against fear; but, do what I would, I could not accomplish it. However, on the Lord's day following, I had appointed to walk with a person to see Lord C__ve's new house, then building at Esher. When I came there I asked the reason why they built the walls so remarkably thick? The person said that several had asked that question as well as me, and had received an astonishing

answer from the owner; namely, that their substance was intended to keep the devil out! I replied, that the possession of Satan was the man, not the building; and that the walls would not answer the end.

Hearing something more of the state of the owner's mind, it rekindled all my old fire. However, I got some liquor to stifle it for the day.

Whitfield and Romaine

When we returned home, I talked to my companion about religion. He said unto me, "Man can do nothing." "Do nothing!" replied I; "Then why are we commanded to do so much?" "Ah!" said he, "you can do nothing that will please God. I have heard Mr. Whitefield, Mr. Romaine, and all the great men in London; and they tell you plainly that you can do nothing." "Then," said I, "what will become of us?" "Why," said he, "the elect will be saved, and none else." "Then," said I, "there is no cause to try for salvation." "No," said he, "you can do nothing if you do." I urged my carnal reasons against this doctrine; but he advanced some scriptures, which cut up all my arguments, root and branch, and stopped my mouth entirely.

Election

The next day I considered this new doctrine of election, which I had never heard of before, except when I had repeated it in the catechism. However, I laboured to thrust it out of my mind, but could not. The next Lord's day I went to church; when a very old man, an entire stranger, preached to us: His text was "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this to visit the fatherless and widows in their afflictions, and to keep himself unspotted from the world," James, i. 27.

Having heard this discourse, I went home and fell to work again with the Whole Duty of Man; and for a few days

we kept pace one with another, and agreed tolerably well; but before the week was out we quarrelled, and were almost ready to curse one another. The Whole Duty of Man threatened me, because I could not deliver the tale of bricks; and I was ready to curse the book for binding grievous burdens on my shoulders, which I could not bear; Matt. xxiii. 4. So the Whole Duty of Man and I fell out and parted; and we have not been friends since; nor do I believe we ever shall, either in this world or in the next. And, as for the covenant-book, or the book that recommended vows, I dared not follow its rules any more, for I had broke through all the bounds which that author had set, and had violated all the “grievousness which he had prescribed,” Isa. x. 1.

Articles of the Church of England

It happened one Lord’s day that I got hold of an Old Common Prayer Book, where I found the articles of the Church of England; which I much wondered at, as I had never seen or heard of them before. I read them with amazement; and in these articles I found that all the man had said about election was true. However, I laid the thoughts of that doctrine aside; fearing, if that was true, it would drive me out of my senses at once.

After this I went to Moulsey church, where I had been before; and it happened to be on the day that their minister came. I heard him, but knew neither what he said, nor what he meant: so I went home again, with all my distress and misery, just as I came. This is the state of those who are spiritually poor and needy; as it is written, “When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them: I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys: I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water,” Isa. xli. 17, 18. And indeed, if the Almighty had not performed this promise, I

might have laboured and sought after the way of life till I had fallen into the jaws of everlasting death; for not one minister; out of all that I heard, ever dropped one scriptural hint about the way of salvation by a crucified Saviour. Some talk of giving alms, others of virtue some of keeping constant to the church. But all this will not suffice an alarmed prodigal, when the evil arrow of spiritual famine sticks fast in his conscience.

Of all characters under heaven, that of a blind guide appears the most awful. He sends his thousands to the tremendous tribunal of God with his lie in their hand; Isa. xliv. 20; and he follows them, polluted with all their blood. A blind guide is the sinner’s scorpion; Rev. ix. 3; the devil’s aid-de-camp, that receives and disperses his lies, and encourages sinners in rebellion against the gospel; yea, he is the very tail of the devil, as it is written, “And the prophet that teacheth lies, he is the tail. For the leaders of this people cause them to err, and they that are led of them are destroyed,” Isa. ix. 15, 16. The gown and cassock are vain garbs of priestly sanctity to deceive the blind and ignorant, and the forms of prayers are a stock for such to trade with; poor sinners are sold to work wickedness, and tithes and dues are the price of blood. But to return -

I now began to think I had worn out all my patched-up prayers, and therefore endeavoured to borrow more books on that subject; but, alas! I could find none that would suit the various breaches of my wounded spirit. I could not help laying another grievous charge against our clergy, because they did not furnish the world with more books of better prayers. I told some of the old people, who went to the Lord’s table with me, that the ministers would not tell us which way we could be saved, lest we should be as wise as themselves. “But,” said I, “they ought to write more prayers for us;” adding, that they should write all sorts of prayers, and then there would be some to suit every inquiring person: for the prayers in the

book which I had got did not suit my case, as my wounds lay too deep, and because they were so mingled with vows and resolutions which I dared not make, because I could not keep them.

I always found my temptations the strongest after I had made a vow, though I generally found ease while I was making it. I believe Satan has no objection to our binding our souls with vows; for he is sure to take us captive, unless free grace enables us to keep them., As I could not find any prayers that would suit me, I generally used to confess my sins to God first, and then conclude my confession with a few unconnected petitions of my own, until I sunk so deep, that for a time I could not pray at all; then I began to bid adieu to all thoughts of mercy, and found dreadful rebellion heave in my heart. I concluded that I should, ere long, arrive at my dreadful journey's end. And, indeed, I sometimes longed secretly to know the worst of it; for my rationality was so much impaired that I was not capable of doing my business properly, nor even of giving any person (as I have before observed) a rational answer. This caused me to grieve dreadfully about my wife and child, and to think what would become of them. I was sure I should not be able to get my bread long, being too far gone for that; and was fully persuaded that a few weeks more would bring me either to the grave or to the mad-house. I had also been informed that my master had been to the nurseryman from whom I came, to desire him to take me back again. He told Mr. Low that I was in a strange way, and one of the worst tempered men he ever saw, for he could not get a civil answer from me. And indeed he was right; for my mind was ruminating all day long upon the wrath of God, the torments of hell, the darkness of the place, the fire of it; and my wretched fellow-criminals being devils and sinners of mankind. "Black despair," said I, "has no hope; therefore the sinner can find no bottom, and eternity can have

no bounds." Then the word of God would come and confirm all my meditations. "A bottomless pit," says the Saviour; and again, "The smoke of their torment shall ascend for ever and ever." Meditate when I would about the torments of hell, the scripture would always occur to my mind to confirm it. While this was the employment of my mind I could not give a person a proper answer. If my master asked me any thing, I answered him as I did the temptation; and he has had answers from me at times, and gone away, before I could recollect myself so as to know who he was.

A Miserable Being For A Husband

My wife one night informed me that my mistress had sent for her, and that she was to be there the next morning. I longed to know what she could want with her. My dame went to her in the morning, and was with her some time; and at noon I inquired of her what the secret could be. She informed me that my mistress received her very courteously, and it was to condole with, and pity her hard fate. "Mrs. Huntington," said she, "I pity you; you seem a modest, decent, industrious woman, but your life must be dreadful." "Why, Madam?" said my wife. "Why, you have got so miserable a being for your husband. How can you live with him? I never received such answers from a man in my life, nor did I ever see one of such a temper." "Dear me, Madam," said my wife, "he is a very good husband to me." (I believe she made the most of it.) "I have no cause to complain; I wonder you should pity me on that account." I said that I thought it appeared very affectionate in my mistress to express such a concern for her happiness. To which she answered, that she coloured at her questions, and knew not at first how to answer her; and said she hated her for interfering with us. Why did she not mind her own concerns? What did she meddle with us for? And added, that she would not go nigh her again, for she did not like her.

I was much pleased with my dame's integrity; and I believe the poor blind soul spoke it from her heart. And, indeed, had my wife turned against me in this situation, I could not have borne up under the trial. However, since my wife has known what convictions mean, she has demanded as much patience of me as I did of her.

Sick of Going to Church

I now began to be almost sick of going to church, for I could not join in the prayers, except here and there a sentence; and some of the people, appearing so light and trifling in the house of God, used to wound me almost to death. In short, I despaired of ever hearing any minister inform me of the way in which a sinner could be saved; for some cried, "Lo! here;" and others, "Lo! there." Their lives, too, appeared as bad, or even worse, than those of the poor people; and, when they were in the desk, they ran through their task as if their souls were on the wheel till they had finished it.

At length I thought I would take to studying my Bible, to see if I could find any instruction there; but my intellects were so much impaired, that I could not reconcile one passage with another; and sometimes I really thought it was written on purpose to puzzle people; for I imagined I could defy all the divines upon earth to make every passage in that book harmonize, so as not to clash with, or contradict each other. Notwithstanding this, I could not deny its divine authority, because my feelings agreed so exactly with all God's threatenings: therefore I knew my condemned soul and God's eternal sentence must stand or fall together. If I could have got rid of my feelings, I should have been a deist at once. But, alas! to attempt to dispute myself out of the belief of the pains of hell, would have been to dispute myself out of the belief of my existence. I might here mention some of the most awful passages of scripture, that bent their force against me: but I forbear, as the work will swell beyond what I first intended.

Election, Predestination and Reprobation

In these my narrow researches after truth, the doctrine of eternal election began to appear very plain in the Bible, which led my mind into greater perplexity than ever: read where I would, it still appeared. However, if I found it in the prophets, or in the epistles, I regarded it not; but if it appeared in the four evangelists, then I thought it was Christ's own word, and would certainly stand fast for ever. I therefore got my pen, ink, and paper, and was determined to read every book in the Bible carefully, to see if each penman of the scriptures had written respecting this doctrine. This was a hard task for me, as I could not read one chapter with propriety. However, I began; and read through several books, writing down the chapters and verses in which the doctrine of election occurred: and the more I searched after it, the plainer it appeared; for the doctrines of eternal election and absolute predestination seemed to be the principal arteries of that whole body of divinity. However, I fled to the evangelists, in hopes of setting the doctrines of Christ by them, to contradict all the prophets. But, alas! I found Christ preached it more forcibly than all the prophets put together, as appeared by the following scriptures. "Ye are not my sheep," John, x. 26. "You shall seek me, and not find me," John, vii. 34. "I pray not for the world," John, xvii. 9. And he said, "Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to others in parables." And again, "But to them it is not given. I pray for them that thou hast given me. I lay down my life for the sheep," John, x. 15. "All that the Father hath given me shall come to me," John, vi. 37. "I know whom I have chosen," John, xiii. 18. "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him," John, vi. 44. "Many are called, but few chosen," Matt. xx. 16. "And the angels shall gather together his elect from the four winds." And, "of all that the Father hath given me, I shall lose nothing," John,

vi. 39. And I saw that the doctrines of predestination and election reflected the tremendous doctrine of reprobation in many passages of scripture.

All these doctrines run through the whole Bible. There are some whom Christ did not redeem; as he declares, "I lay down my life for my sheep; but you are not of my sheep," &c. No; for they had sold themselves to work wickedness. "And the house of such is established in the hands of him that bought it; it is fixed "in a walled city, and shall never go out in the year of jubilee," Lev. xxv. 30.

The renowned offspring for wickedness, springing from mixed marriages in the antediluvian world, selling birthrights in the patriarchal age, the sins of presumption under the law, the great transgressions in prophetic times, amount to the unpardonable sin under the gospel dispensation; and these sinners bear the mark of reprobation; for, if they were elected, they would not be allowed to break through into the hopeless regions; for election guards the gulph of reprobation, so that neither Abraham, nor Lazarus could pass over it. Let men say what they please, "God hath made all things for himself, yea, even the wicked for the day of evil."

These are some of the profound depths and the profound secrets of the Almighty God. But his "secret is with the righteous," Prov. iii. 32; Psal. xxv. 14.

I was then as firmly established in these doctrines as ever I have been since; though, at the same time, I was like to tear my hair, and run distracted. And I believe, had I gone to hell in my sin, I should have taken the doctrines of election and reprobation, established in my judgment with me; for the Bible appeared to be full of them. I am persuaded that the devils themselves are not ignorant of these doctrines, as they labour so hard to bring erroneous men to lampoon these awful truths of God. The learned Milton drops some hints of it in his second book of Paradise Lost.

PRIVATE"Others apart sat on a hill retired, In thoughts more elevate, and reasoned high Of providence, foreknowledge, will, and fate-Fixed fate, free will, foreknowledge absolute- And found no end, in wandering mazes lost."

Tremble When I hear Arminians Ridicule

I declare I have sometimes trembled when I have heard Arminians ridicule these sublime doctrines; who, with a seared conscience and an impudent heart, have been even laughing at them, and speaking more insolently of God than devils themselves dare to do. However, such never did much business in these deep waters; if they had, they would have learned to tremble at these truths, instead of laughing at them; and also to speak more reverently of the Most High God. I know there never was a man in this world, whom God brought up out of that horrible pit that I was in, with the doctrines of free agency and sinless perfection in his heart. No; these lying vanities may drive us into the horrible deep, as they did Jonah (ch. ii. 8); but, if ever they come out of "the belly of hell" by the power of God's grace, they will pay their vows, and acknowledge (as Jonah did) that "salvation is of the Lord," Jonah, ii. 8, 9.

But the Arminian thinks that God is just like himself, and that he will turn and twist like a weeping willow; say and unsay, call us by grace to-day, and damn us to-morrow. However, I found him to be "of one mind," as Job did, "and none can turn him." As he says, "I am God, and change not, therefore ye are not consumed." It appears to me that some heathens have had a stronger confidence in the immutability of devils than some Arminians (whom I have talked with) have in the immutability of the Most high; as my reader will find in the sixth book of Virgil's Aeneid.

"And how (replied the dame) could rise in man

A wish so impious, or a thought so vain!
Uncall'd, unburied, would'st thou venture o'er,
And view th' infernal fiends, who guard the shore?
Hope not to turn the course of fate by pray'r;
Or bend the gods, inflexibly severe."

And again,
"But 'tis a long, unconquerable pain,
To climb to those ethereal realms again,
The choice, selected few, whom fay'ring Jove,
Or their own virtue, rais'd to heav'n above."

This knowledge the heathens got by familiar spirits. And it is a wretched thought that heathens should rebuke some who are called gospel ministers. But no marvel; for God has, ere now, made a "dumb ass forbid the madness of such prophets," 2 Pet. ii. 16.

I believe I shall ever have cause to bless the Almighty for establishing my soul in so regular a manner, by making my spirit feel the impressions of his holiness, justice, immutability, truth, and faithfulness to his word, even before he revealed his dear Son in me; as the Redeemer sweetly declares, "It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me," John, vi. 45.

I had now fresh troubles to encounter; which were, that all my labour, seeking, and praying, were in vain; for, if I was not a chosen vessel, I should never prevail in prayer, nor should I ever overcome my temptations, do what I would. This is the devil's comment on the sweet doctrine of God's eternal election: and I know he is the commentator that the Arminians adhere to even at this day.

The Day Of Jubilee

I have now brought my reader to the day of jubilee; it was in the winter season, a little before Christmas. My

business at that time was pruning the wall-trees. I was one day cutting a large pear-tree; and, while standing on the ladder, pensive in thought, and sometimes fretting because there was no deliverance for me from this blasphemous temptation, and with my thoughts all captured and kept in hold under the sceptre of eternal death, I said to myself, "O, what a place hell must be! I have already got the earnest of it in my heart. Our clergy will not tell us which way we can be saved, though they know; yea, they must know, because they are learned. All the prayers which I have read will not do, nor do any of the ministers express my case in any of their sermons. The Whole Duty of Man holds forth what I cannot perform; the more I strive against sin, the more violent are my temptations, and the more defiled my heart appears. I strive to be holy, but I cannot. I strive to please God, and to appease his wrath, but in vain. I get worse and worse, and God's displeasure burns the hotter. When I go to church I am only grieved; for the parson longs to finish; some of the people sleep, and some laugh; while some only admire each other's beauty and dress. If I read the Bible I cannot make one part agree with the other; if one passage comes with any encouragement or comfort, another occurs to my mind full fraught with terror and vengeance, and cuts all off. The doctrine of election is dreadful. I have searched it out, and it is a truth; I have tried to write down all the places where it is mentioned, but cannot, for the Bible is full of it. If I am not elected I shall never be saved, do what I will; I will therefore strive no more, but expect the worst; which, ere long, I shall surely know. Oh that I had been upon the earth when the Saviour was! I would have followed him, however he had used me. But, alas! the Jews were a highly-favoured people. O, that I was a Jew! But I am not; I am a Gentile, and I am a sinner!

"I am a singular character. If report be true, I am a bastard, begotten by another woman's husband, and conceived in the

womb of another man's wife. I am the offspring of double adultery! Barnabas Russel was certainly my father; yea, he has owned it; I am his very image, and bear every feature of him; he secretly owned me as his own child; it was he that put me to school; every person in the place of my nativity used to laugh at me, and call me young BARNET. And where is that man of iniquity now, from whom I descended? Where! Why, according to the Common Prayer Book, he must be in hell; for that says, 'Cursed is he that lies with his neighbour's wife.' And God says, 'The whoremonger and adulterer God will judge.' And 'God is not man that he should lie; nor the son of man that he should repent,' Numb. xxiii. 19. Besides, his wretched and miserable end testified against him. He died in the greatest horror, crying out, 'Do what you will to me, if you can but save my life.' This my mother owned to me, and she was both an eye and an ear-witness, for she nursed him to the last. But do righteous souls depart out of this world in such horror and despair? No! 'Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright; for the end of that man is peace,' Psalm, xxxvii. 37. And what will become of my poor mother? God only knows; she sticks close to the church, and frequents the Lord's table, and yet has lived in adultery for years. Myself and a poor sister are living witnesses of this assertion; and the man has owned that we are both his children. If God's grace prevent not, my progenitors must be punished. And how can their progeny escape? They cannot; for 'A bastard shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord; even to his tenth generation shall he not enter into the congregation of the Lord,' Deut. xxiii. 2. And is hell to be the reception of both progenitors and progeny? I see no way of escape. Oh wretched end! I shall hate them both to all eternity, for being instrumental in sending me into the world as the miserable issue of their lewd embraces; and to all eternity they will hate me as an aggravation of their heinous crimes, and as venom

to their sting of guilt.

"My mother's husband (my father that should have been) was a poor, quiet, honest, God-fearing man, who was shut out of his own bed for years by a wretch that defiled both his wife and his bed. I was brought up at his table, though a poor one. I was a deceiver; I called him father when he was not - and he called me son, telling lies innocently. God shall reward his patience, and avenge his wrongs, and we shall pay for all. 'God visiteth the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, even unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate him,'. Exod. xx. 5. And what right have I to bear the name of that pious, injured man? None at all; it has been a dagger in my heart for years. Oh that I was a brute, a reptile, or an insect! Oh that I could sink into nonexistence! Oh that death temporal could but finish all! But there is 'a day appointed,' and 'God shall judge the world;' then all secret sins shall be brought to light; 'And, if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?' Oh that I had but more books of prayers - that I could but find out one prayer that would suit my case! But, alas! my case is singular - I am a bastard Besides, it is of no use to pray - I am not elected; and, if the Bible be true, as my own wretched state witnesseth that it really is, none but the elect of God shall ever be saved; as it is written, "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire," Rev. xx. 15. Oh that there was no judgment to come! But I know there is, and final doom fixed; and I shall shortly know the worst of it, for I am almost mad and almost dead!"

I now tried to put election out of my thoughts, but passages of scripture crowded in by troops. I reasoned against them, but they bore down all my feeble logic, stared me full in the face, and flashed the strongest conviction on my mind.

I am sure that, if all the Arminians under heaven were to unite their forces together, and were to be assisted by all

the power and wisdom of devils, in maintaining an impious war against the doctrine of eternal election, that blazing truth would flash in their faces; bear down their confused reasonings; break through all their oppositions; put all their carnal thoughts to flight; and, with the greatest rapidity drive away all the sandy foundations and fleshly bulwarks that the most impious rebels can raise against it. And at times it will give them such lashes of conscience for their pride, as shall even extort a desperate confession from their lips, expressive of the malice in their hearts; insomuch that any discerning Christian may see they are united, in the war of devils, against the sovereignty of the immutable and uncontrollable Jehovah.

Cavilling At Election

I know what cavilling at election is - I have been concerned in that work. I know, too, what that impious war is which is carried on against the sovereignty of God - I have been engaged in it. I speak this to my shame. And of this I am well assured, that God's truth is the shield of every sound Christian, but a dagger in the conscience of every one who fights against it. However, election is a leading truth; and truth will never strike her banner, turn her back, nor quit the field; she wilt display her flag, maugre all her enemies, and win the field; and that too with eternal triumph.

It is the desire of my soul that that person, whosoever he may be, who takes upon himself, after my decease, to republish any of my writings, should not alter the matter, nor the spirit of this my testimony for God; but that he should leave it as I wrote it, and even under the bad spirit in which some affirm it is written. I am the best judge where I got it, and how I came by it; and at the day of judgment it will be known whether it was from heaven, from earth, or from hell.

However, I had rather write the whole counsel of God in a bad spirit, if such a thing be possible, than do as one of my dignified accusers doth; that is, preach one gospel in

one chapel, and another gospel in another chapel. One would think that the death of Uzza, the conception of Ishmael, Abraham and Isaac's loss of their wives, and the vain attempt of reconciling Paul and the priest and rulers together, would have been cautions sufficient to have put a final stop to the supposed usefulness of human inventions, as furtherers of God's purposes. I doubt such hearts are not sound in God's statutes, because they deal deceitfully in God's covenant. But my prayers shall be, that God would "forgive them, but take vengeance of their inventions," Psal. xcix. 8. But to return -

While I was standing on my ladder, pondering on the doctrine of election; sinking in despondency, or rather despair; wishing for more books of prayers, and fretting because I could get none that would suit my case; behold, suddenly a "great light shined round about me" quick as lightning, and far superior to "the brightness of the sun;" but, whether my bodily eyes saw it or not, I know not; but this I know, that it "shined into my heart," 2 Cor. iv. 6, and it brought, as I thought, all the scriptures that I had read to my remembrance, John, xiv. 2(3; and impressed them, in their spiritual meaning, with uncommon energy on my mind, Jer. xxxi. 33.

Conditional and Unconditional Promises

And there appeared in the vision two straight lines, drawn throughout the whole world; and I know they were God's lines, "fallen to me in pleasant places, for I have a goodly heritage," Psal. xvi. 6. One of these lines consisted of commandments, conditional promises, threatenings, and curses; and these belonged to the wicked - they are their portion from God, Job, xx. 29; and the curses from Mount Ebal, Deut. xxvii. 13. The other line was unconditional promises, and sweet invitations from Christ; and these belong to God's elect. And the human race was divided into two classes, in the open vision, all arranged before the eyes of my mind; and there was no more. The one is "the line of confusion," Isa.

xxxiv. 11; the other, “the line of inheritance,” Psal. lxxviii. 55. All this was done in a minute. The plan is still on my mind, and will ever remain there; and is scriptural; as it is written, “Even with two lines measured he to put to death, and with one full line to keep alive,” 2 Sam. viii. 2. These are God’s lines, and agree with his curse from Ebal and his blessing from Gerazim; and these were the two lines which the apostles were sent to stretch out; Psal. xix. 4; 2 Cor. x. 16.

All my thoughts were taken up in pondering over the plan of these two covenants, and the two classes of people that were under them; and one of these cords must be stretched out to reach every stake of the tabernacle; Isa. liv. 2. I was asthough I had been enwrapped in the full blaze of the sun-beams. My hair stood upright, and my blood rankled in my veins, for fear this was to bring me to my dreadful and long-expected end; for I knew not as yet which class I was to die a member of, not being pardoned. Thus Paul was enlightened with the light that shined round about him (to which vision I have often compared mine); but it was three days after the light shined that he received the Holy Ghost in that powerful manner, as you read in the ninth chapter of the Acts.

I now came down from my ladder, and stood looking this way and that, but could see nothing, except the vision. I cried out, “What is it? What is it? What is it?” fearing it was something to bring me to my end, and that I should have no part in that sweet line of promises and invitations which I saw belonged to the elect, who are emphatically styled heirs of promise. Immediately I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me in plain words, “LAY BY YOUR FORMS OF PRAYERS, AND GO PRAY TO JESUS CHRIST; DO NOT YOU SEE HOW PITIFULLY HE SPEAKS TO SINNERS?” These are the words verbatim, for I think that I shall never forget them.

“I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision,” but went

to my little tool-house to pray; yet I cannot remember that I had at that time any faith in the Saviour, or expectation of being heard or answered - to all appearance I was sunk too low for that. I rather thought this vision was to bring me to my final end. Therefore I trembled in myself, and was almost desperate, fearing that I should shortly sink under that awful line of dreadful threatenings and curses.

When I came into my little tool-house, to the best of my remembrance, I did as I usually had done; that is, I pulled off my blue apron, and covered my head and face with it; for I was like the poor publican, I could not even look up to God - I was afraid he would damn me if I offered to do it.

I kneeled down, and began to pray extempore, in the language of one desperate, precisely thus - “Oh Lord, I am a sinner, and thou knowest it. I have tried to make myself better, but cannot. If there is any way left in which thou canst save me, do thou save me; if not, I must be damned, for I cannot try any more, nor won’t.”

The very moment the last sentence had dropped from my lips, “the spirit of grace and of supplication was poured into my soul,” Zec. xii. 10; and “I forthwith spake as the Spirit gave me utterance,” Acts, it. 4. I immediately prayed with such energy, eloquence, fluency, boldness, and familiarity, as quite astonished me: as much as though I should now suddenly speak Arabic, a language that I never learned a syllable of. And the blessed Spirit of God poured the sweet promises into my heart, from all parts of the scriptures, in a powerful manner; and helped my infirmities greatly, by furnishing my faltering tongue with words to plead prevalently with God. Yea, that blessed Spirit enabled me to compass the Almighty about with his own promises; which were so suitable to my case, that his blessed Majesty could not get out of his own bonds. It came to pass that, after I had been wrestling in this manner for about the space of a quarter of an hour,

behold, Jesus Christ appeared to me in a most glorious and conspicuous manner, with all his body stained with blood! He appeared in his aspect as one greatly dishonoured and much abused, and yet inclined to pity me. I turned my eyes from him, but he pursued me, and was still before me. I fell to the ground, and laid on my face, but could not shun the sight. I never before saw sin in such a light as I then did.

In the light of the law God appears dreadful to us: for as the law discovers nothing but sin, and the wrath of God against sin, the Lawgiver appears an enemy to us; which fills us with tormenting fear; and, as we expect no mercy from him, we naturally hate him. The law revealing no pity, we are moved with self pity: thus sinful self becomes the object of pity, and the carnal mind shews her enmity even against God, Rom. viii. 7. But the sight and sense of sin, which I had in the sight of a slaughtered Saviour, filled my soul with indignation against myself and my sin; and caused my bowels to sound with unutterable love, pity, and compassion, towards my highly-injured God and Saviour. My murmuring was completely slain at once, and I cried out, "Oh I cannot bear it? Oh send me to hell, to my own place, for I deserve it! I cannot, I will not complain. Oh send me to hell! I did not know till now that I had been sinning against thy wounds and blood! I did not know that thou hadst suffered thus for wretched me! I did not know till now that I had any concern in crucifying thee! I cannot beg mercy of my suffering Lord and Saviour. No; send me to hell, for I deserve it. Oh I will never complain, for I know that my complaining would be unjust!"

The more I strove to avoid him, the nearer he approached, the vision opened brighter and brighter, and the deeper impression was made upon my mind: and the more I condemned myself, and tried to creep into darkness from his sight, the more he smiled upon me, and the more he melted, renewed, and comforted my soul. When I found I could not

shun him, nor shut out his dissolving beams, I arose from the ground, and went into the garden. Here I found that all my temptations were fled; my hard thoughts of God, and the dreadful ideas I had of him in his righteous law, were dissipated; my sins, which had stood before me during so many months, with their ghastly and formidable appearance, had spread their wings and taken flight, as far from me "as the east is from the west," so that no bird remained upon the sacrifice. My darkness was dispelled by the rays of "the sun of righteousness;" and life and immortality appeared in such a glorious point of view, that I swooned in the soul-renewing and soul-transporting flames of everlasting love! All the horrors of the damned, and meditations upon their irrevocable doom, vanished; confusion and despair sunk into oblivion; the self-existent Jehovah, the God of armies, had put all to flight, and kept both throne and field alone, waving the banner of eternal love. The reprobate and the awful lines of threaten lugs were all set at the foot of the mount, and I was brought under the covenant line of God's elect; while the unconditional promises of an everlasting gospel stood as numerous as the leaves in autumn to secure my interest in a finished salvation. My thoughts were sweetly established; my heart was firmly fixed; my mind was serenely composed; my doubts and fears were finally fled; my conscience appeared a mysterious principality, divinely governed by the Prince of peace; my affections were rapturously inflamed; my will sweetly resigned; and Grace, with all her comforting operations, swaying her uncontrollable sceptre over every faculty of my soul. Thus sin, Satan, death, destruction, horror, despair, unbelief, confusion, and distraction, struck their flags; and were routed, vanquished, and slain, before the triumphant Redeemer's divine artillery, displayed from that wonderful armory, the mystery of the cross, where God and sinners meet.

Tools House to The Kingdom of God

I went into the tool-house in all the agonies of the damned, and returned with the kingdom of God established in my heart. Oh happy year! happy day! blessed minute! sacred spot? Yea, rather blessed be my dear Redeemer, who “delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling.”

I now went and tried to work, but could not; for I had not a thought at my command, nor an affection but what was in heaven’ nor was it in my power to recall them from thence, for my heart was where my treasure was; Matt. vi. 21. I went to my tool house to fetch a tool; but before I reached the spot forgot what I wanted. I stood trembling, laughing, crying, and rejoicing; and saying, “What do I want? What do I want?” But could not recollect which tool I wanted. So I went back again to my work, and stood looking at it; but my soul was fled to her own mansion, and the poor gardener was left alone. As I could do nothing without her, I was just like a mere machine without wheels. After I had stood considering a long time, I thought it was a hoe that I wanted; then I ran to my tool-house, crying out all the way “Hoe, hoe, hoe, hoe;” but, before I could reach the tool-house, my thoughts and the hoe were fled together. I then went back a second time, and stood looking at my work, laughing and crying aloud for joy. When I was able to consider a little, I remembered that it was a rake I wanted. Then I set off again, as fast as I could walk, to my tool-house, crying out, “Rake, rake, rake, rake;” but, before I could get to my journey’s end, the thought of the rake went after the hoe, so that I could get neither of them. I was like poor Peter, when he said, “It is good to be here,” but knew not what he said. I now went back the third time, and gave up all hopes of being able to work. And I considered with myself what I should do in this case. If I did not work, I could not with conscience receive my wages; and, if I received no pay,

my wife and children must suffer for want of bread. As for myself, I regarded not food; nor do I believe I should have felt the want of it, had I starved to death.

However, all my efforts to work would not do; Jesus Christ was come - it was the year of jubilee with me - and the earth must bring forth of herself, for I could not till the ground. The servant was now freed from his master, and my “hands were delivered from the pots;” my soul had got on the wings of a dove, and had fled to keep holy-day, and I was determined to keep holy-day also. I therefore left the garden, and went to Sunbury common, where I could walk as many miles as I pleased without being molested; and there I blessed and praised God with a loud voice, without any body listening to the glorious converse which I held with my dear Redeemer.

When I came there I was amazed; for the whole creation appeared in such divine embroidery as I had never before seen. “The glory of God covered the heavens, and the earth was full of his praise,” Hab. iii. 3. Indeed I could not compare myself to any thing, unless it was to one who had been shut up in a dark cell, from the moment of his birth, till he arrived at the age of twenty or thirty years, and then was turned into the world on a glorious sun-shiny day, and placed on an eminence, where he could survey the greatest part of the world at one view.

I now saw the wisdom of God in every thing, even from the canopy of the heavens down to the smallest insect. His omnipotence appeared in framing and supporting the world, and all the various tribes that inhabit it. His faithfulness shone sweetly in accomplishing his promise to Noah; as it is written, “While the earth remaineth, seed time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night, shall not cease,” Gen. viii. 22. His omniscience and wisdom were displayed in the government of a world, so confused and disordered by sin. In short, every thing conspired to make

my soul happy, to engage my thoughts, employ my mind, and attract my warmest affections to the divine Fabricator and universal Ruler.

I kneeled down, and begged of my Saviour to let me die: I earnestly entreated him to take me to himself, lest I should be left to sin again. But in this I could not prevail.

Indeed I used such simple expressions, and such familiarity, with my sweet Saviour, as I choose to conceal; being aware that I shall be styled an enthusiast for relating my inability to fetch a hoe or a rake. And indeed I should not have mentioned that circumstance, had not the Holy Ghost left the following simple expression of Peter's, upon the mount, on record, when he desired Christ to assist him in building "three [earthly] tabernacles; one for Moses, one for Jesus, and one for Elias." Fine buildings for the Lord and two glorious spirits to reside in! However, God's word has informed us that he knew not what he said. And yet I think none but a fool will call Peter an enthusiast for desiring to detain such a blessed company as he was with in the visions of God.

Having spent the remaining part of the day on the common, I walked home in the evening, and went into my green-house to pray; there I had nobody to disturb me, as the family was gone to London for the winter season, and had left only an old woman in the house. While I was at prayer, such unutterable joy flowed into my heart, springing higher and higher, and I felt my soul swimming in such inexpressible ecstasy, that I thought it was as though I had been in eternal glory. Fearing that an angel would be sent to me, I arose and went away, lest I should not be able to behold the sight.

I went into the house, laughing, crying, and saying to my dear Redeemer, "I have heaven enough. What can heaven be more? What can it add to this? I desire no other heaven; I have enough." I took the Bible down to read; and, as soon as I opened it, was so amazed, that I did not know it to be

the same book - the glorious light shone in all the dark and obscure passages; for "the day dawn and the day star had risen in my heart," 2 Pet. i. 2. I read the Bible in the language of my own experience; and could trace the spirit and feelings of the inspired penman, even from the gates of hell to the highest pinnacle of revealed felicity. My spirit and experience could pursue them, go where they would.

I found I was come "to Mount Sion [indeed], to the heavenly Jerusalem; to an innumerable company of angels, and to the spirits of just men made perfect; and to God the judge of all, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the precious blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than the blood of Abel."

I read the Bible as the will and testament of my heavenly Father; and in every promise that I saw faith laid hold of Christ, brought him into my heart, and conveyed all the sweetness of him to my soul, as the foretaste of heaven. My faith as naturally sought after the promises as a child does after the breast; and I found them scattered throughout the Bible, "here a little and there a little."

O sweet gleaning - precious picking - choice entertainments - of marrow and fatness, and of wines on the lees well refined!" Isa. xxv. 6.

As for the threatenings, conditional promises, and curses, they had lost all their formidable appearance, and shot their arrows at me no more. Jesus Christ shone sweetly throughout the whole book, and I was blessed with the spirit of revelation; and that blessed Spirit ploughed up the mysteries, and led my mind sweetly into them; so that I could perceive the scriptures sweetly testified of Jesus. And my faith would hunt him out of all the dark sayings, proverbs, parables, similitudes, figures, types, and shadows, or in whatever else he was wrapt up. O blessed be his sacred majesty! blessed be his holy name! who has hedged my soul round with so

many glorious promises, while the brazen mountain of eternal election stands like ten thousand columns under my redeemed soul. In short, my heart was like “Mount Zion, that can never be moved.”

I went to bed, but could not sleep; I laid and laughed, cried, sung, and blessed and praised God my Saviour, all night long. I talked out loud to him, as familiar as a man does with his friend, and he answered me in the joy of my heart, as an object of his unmerited love.

I tried now and then if I could bring my sins again to remembrance, and to feel after my troubles and temptations: but God had erased them both from my mind and memory; nor did they ever come back afterwards, and I am persuaded they never will. Thus “the sins of Judah were sought for, but they could not be found, for there were none,” as the scriptures witness. For, where my sins formerly stood in battle array, there now stood my dear Redeemer, with his vesture of human nature “dipped in blood,” Rev. xix. 13. He continued before me in this manner for many months together; nor do I think that I got wholly out of the vision for six or seven months.

I began now to search my Bible, to see if those visions of Christ, which the saints of old had, would agree with mine. I compared them by the following scriptures; and, as far as the scriptures warrant me, so far can I reveal them with all confidence.

The Spirit of Grace and Supplication

The first passage I found was, “And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplication; and they shall look upon me [mark that - look upon me!] whom they have pierced; and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son; and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born,” Zech. xii. 12. The next passage occurs in Job, xlii. 5, 6. “I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear;

but now mine eye seeth thee: wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.” The next was in Isaiah, xliii. 1-3. “Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? This that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? - I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the wine fat? I have trodden the wine press alone; and of the people there was none with me.” “These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him,” John, xii. 41. Again; “I saw in the night visions, and behold one like the son, of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him,” Dan. vii. 13. And again; “Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonished and rose up in haste, and spake and said unto his counsellors. Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O King. He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt: and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God,” Dan. iii. 24, 25. The next is - “And above the firmament that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone; and upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it,” Ezek. i. 26. The next was that of Joshua; “And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lift up his eyes and looked, and behold there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand. And Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries? And he said Nay, but as captain of the host of the Lord, am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship.” (Mark that; Joshua was no Arian, nor did the Saviour receive his worship as a creature.) “And Joshua said unto him, What saith Jehovah unto his servant? And the captain of the Lord’s host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe

from off thy foot.” What for? That thou mayst stand in my strength, or else thou wilt make a poor hand of the Canaanites; and to shew him that he must not stand in the inventions of men, but in the presence and power of God - “for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. And Joshua did so,” Joshua, v. 13-15.

I also recollected the Lord’s appearing to Abraham, to Moses at thee bush, and to Jacob at Bethel: yea, the time would fail me to tell; for Paul says “He was seen of above five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. And after that he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time,” I Cor. xv. 6- 8. And to John he appeared also; “And, when I saw him, I fell at his feet ms one dead, and he laid his right hand on me, saying, Fear not, I am the first and the last, I am he that liveth and was dead, and I am alive for evermore, and have the keys of hell and of death,” Rev. i. 16, 17. Yea, says the Saviour, “I will manifest myself unto them that thou hast given me out of the world.” And again, “The world seeth me no more, but ye see me (mark that - but ye see me); and, because I live, ye shall live also.” And to this agrees the ancient prophecy; “And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy; your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions: and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids, in those days, will I pour out my Spirit,” Joel, ii. 28, 29. And, blessed be his name, so he does; many servants and handmaids have received this invaluable blessing and soul-satisfying testimony, even under my poor feeble instrumentality as a preacher.

When the next Lord’s day arrived I went to church as usual, but could not join with them in their prayers; for I had enough to do to observe the behaviour of the congregation, and listen to what they said. And it appeared very shocking

to me to hear people in Egyptian darkness say that their eyes had seen the Lord’s salvation; and no less absurd for wanton, graceless souls, to beseech God not to take his holy Spirit from them - for the righteous Pharisees to call themselves miserable sinners - for free agents to declare there was no health in them - for haters of God and godliness to pray for their persecutors and slanderers - for spiritual criminals to tell God that his service is perfect freedom. And, for my part, I could not say that I was tied and bound with the chain of my sin. In short, the whole service appeared a string of shocking contradictions, and no less than a solemn mockery of God Almighty: nor could I join in it in any respect.

The people who sat next to me observed me very particularly, as I thought, because I did not perform my exercise as usual - I mean that of kneeling down and standing up at the word of command, sitting down when bid, and then wheeling to the east. I had lost all my motions, and the people took notice of it; for I used to be as active at my discipline, and as quick to rehearse my parole, as the best of them: but now I only sat in the tent, and looked on. I imagined they all looked at me, and I longed to get out; for I thought, and thought right, that I was in the congregation of the dead.

At last the irksome task was performed; the minister went into the pulpit; and I was determined not to lose a syllable of his performance, if possible, but to hear him with all the ears of a critic. His text was, “This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.” He attempted to prove that the Jews were all unbelievers - but that we, being brought up in a country where Christianity had been long established, were, consequently, all believers! And, when he came to the conclusion (to which he made hasty strides,) he said, “If faith will overcome the world, then what will good works do?” This last clause he spoke with peculiar emphasis; as though he meant to say it was easy to describe the victories of faith, but

that the heroic feats of human merit were past all description! And indeed so they are, and cannot possibly be guessed at, unless we could see the multitudes which human merit has captured and imprisoned in hell.

I never till then knew what the prophet Isaiah meant by these words," His watchmen are blind: they are all ignorant, they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber. Yea, they are greedy dogs, which can never have enough; and they are shepherds that cannot understand," Isa. lvi. 10, 11. I found he was blind, for he could see nothing of the devil or his works, and therefore he had no beasts to bark at but the poor Jews; and he could not bark at them, unless he barked by notes. Such are blind guides indeed, as the dear Redeemer says; and they guide thousands into the ditch as well as themselves.

Blessed be the Almighty, who has promised to teach his own elect himself, and to open our eyes to see our teachers; as it is written, "Yet shall not thy teachers be removed into a comer any more, but thine eyes shall see thy teachers," Isa. xxx. 20. And, blessed be God, that teacher was not hid from me. Jehovah held him forth to me in his true colours; and I tried him by the word of God, as we are commanded to do; "Try the spirits, whether they be of God," I John, iv. 1. And I found him in God's balance to be" lighter than vanity."

When I came out of the church I shook off the gown, the cassock, the building, and the discipline; and left all behind. I then experienced in reality, what I had often confessed, that "God's service is perfect freedom."

In my way home I was beset with this temptation; that it was impossible for me, a man who could not read a chapter in the Bible with propriety, to have such an understanding in the spiritual meaning of God's word, while these men of eminent learning appeared more ignorant than infants. I asked, "What is it then?" The temptation answered, "You are asleep, and

in a dream." I stood still and listened to it, and said, "I am awake, and it is real." "No," replied the suggestion," you are asleep, and in a dream." I was so perplexed that I felt my arms my knees, my head, my coat, and cried out, "There is 'Squire Boehm's house - there is my master's house - there is the sign of the Magpye - and I am in the horse-road. It is really so; I am awake, I know I am awake." And this scripture settled the matter, "I have more understanding than my teachers, for thy testimonies are my meditation," Psal. cxix. 99. I have often since thought of the confession of poor Zion when God proclaimed her enlargement: as it is written," When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like unto them that dream. Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing. Then said they among the heathen, The Lord hath done great things for them," Psalm, cxxvi. 1, 2.

Having proved myself awake, I walked home, examined the Whole Duty of Man, and some other old stuff?, of the same linseywoolsey manufactory, and passed sentence upon them, agreeable to what is written in the Acts of the Apostles, "Many of them which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all men: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver. So mightily grew the word of God and preveiled," Acts, xix. 19, 20.

The Church of England (substance)

I examined the doctrinal articles of the church of England, and found I had the substance of them in my heart. And indeed they seem to be almost all that the establishment has got, that appears from scripture to be of the apostolic plan; the greatest part of the rest seems entirely of human model. What it may be to patch up an outer court, to protect the invisible church, or hidden ones of Christ, I know not; the end will shew that. As for the articles, I never heard of them till I was twenty-five years of age. Our clergy act wisely in

keeping them concealed front the people; for they would be a candle to the congregation, if they were to be read, and a flash of lightning in the face of a blind guide while he was reading them.

I told my wife that the church people seemed to be all wrong; they were not born again, nor did they know any thing about a spiritual birth. Howbeit, I thought I would go and have a little conversation with two or three of the old communicants, who appeared in my eyes to be the most righteous among them. First I went to one Mr. Pease, whom I looked upon to be one of the most upright among them; and had a long conversation with him about the new birth and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Sacrament and Sixpence

The old gentleman heard me very attentively; and, finding I had got his ear, I was very zealous in enforcing the truth to his heart, thinking he must understand it, I laid it down so plain to him from scripture. After he had heard me a long time with great attention, and given his assent and consent to what I said, he asked me the following question: “Mr. Huntington,” said he, “you seem to understand the scriptures very well, I think; and I wish you would resolve me in this thing. You know I go to the sacrament constantly, and pay sixpence at the table. Some say that the sacrament does us no good, unless we pay something. I wish to be satisfied in this, Whether the sacrament is not full as useful to us, if we do not pay any thing, as when we pay money.” The old gentleman confounded me, and stopped my mouth at once; I had not a word more to say to him. Alas! (thought I) does he think the sacrament will save his soul! And is it but sixpence a time for him to approach his salvation! And does he want to save the sixpence! And is the brightest saint in appearance so ignorant as this! Then what must the others be!

We are Free Agents

I went and spake with another, whom I judged to be second best; and, after I had discoursed with him about two hours, he told me that he was surprised at my wisdom, and believed me to be a sincere man; but, as for his part, he was well persuaded that we were free agents; life and death were set before us, and we might choose which we pleased. Howbeit, I reasoned the point often with him, but free-agency was always his conclusion; so I left him also.

Exept A Man Be Born Again

I went to hear at two churches after this, but I found them just the same as the others; therefore I gave them up also, and told my wife that I believed there was nobody that was born again out myself. Elijah-like, I seemed quite alone, or “as one born out of due time.” And I one day asked God what was to become of all these? The answer was, “Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God,” John, iii. 3.

As I could not find one soul, among all that I knew, who could give me any account of a change of heart, or spiritual birth, I was tempted to think that I was wrong, for that the Lord’s flock could not be so few as they appeared to be. I therefore laboured to get back again into the same distress as I had been before, thinking that I must be wrong, and perhaps in a delusion. Yea, I even prayed to God to let me pass through twenty-five years of misery, as I had been twenty-five years a sinner, rather than suffer me to be deluded. I tried, therefore, to bring my sins to remembrance again, and the wrath of God with them, as usual; but all in vain, for God had separated my sins from me as far as the east is from the west. In this God did sweetly fulfil his promise; as it is written, “In those days, and in that time, saith the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of

Judah, and they shall not be found: for I will pardon them whom I reserve,” Jer. 1. 20. How sweet have these blessed promises been to my soul, “I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins,” Isa. xliii. 25. And again, “I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and as a cloud thy sins: return unto me, for I have redeemed thee,” Isa. xlv. 22.

Knowledge of Salvation

Thus God gives “knowledge (mark that, knowledge) of salvation unto his people by the remission of sins,” Luke, i. 77. The preacher that has got this pardon signed and sealed on his conscience is not afraid to face either men or devils. What can make a man’s countenance fall but a guilty conscience? And, if he is pardoned, the living testimony of God’s Spirit in his conscience will make his countenance stand in the work of God; for, as David says, “Thou art the health of my countenance, and my God.”

I bless God for this conspicuous pardon; for, since I have been called forth to preach “the forgiveness of sins” in Christ’s name, I have been enabled to preach that soul-saving truth with all boldness, and without a single doubt of its being an undeniable proof of our eternal election, and a certain earnest of our everlasting glory.

For this I have been often blamed by many; I mean for advancing the doctrine with such confidence. Some have attributed it to my pride; some to insensibility; some to rash presumption; some to infallibility; some to self-sufficiency; and others to a desire of appearing singular, and that I meant thereby to infer that there was no other preacher but myself.

These things shewed me how few there were, among the whole bulk of professors, that had received the atonement of Christ. However, I found that the sense of the pardon of sin enabled me to advance and enforce that doctrine with all authority, and not as a legal scribe, that knows not what

he says, nor whereof he affirms; nor yet as those “wizards, that peep and that mutter,” Isa. viii. 19; nor yet as a popish priest, who deals in the bulls of his holiness, and sells the guilty sinner twenty absolutions for thirty shillings, and then leaves him in purgatory; nor yet as an Arminian, who steps into Moses’s chair, and curses us for not swallowing down a budget of peradventures. But to return.

I went home, and told my wife that they were all wrong, and that I should not go to any place of worship any more, but would stay at home on the Lord’s day. I accordingly did so, and made a few hymns, and sung them. I read the Bible, and explained it a little to my wife, and prayed; and I found the Spirit of prayer abode with me. And surely these Sabbaths were Sabbaths indeed to me, for I had the spirit of devotion all the day long.

Beware of The Scribes

Satan would sometimes tempt me, when I saw a clergyman in his gown and cassock, to admire the venerable rag, in order to bring me back to the old stone walls; but, as I had suffered so much before, while following these blind guides, I was determined to weigh the passages which our dear Lord hath left upon record to caution such poor ignorant souls; as it is written, “Then, in the audience of all the people, he said unto his disciples, Beware of the Scribes, which desire to walk in long robes, and love greetings in the markets, and the highest seats in the synagogues (or bishops’ thrones in cathedrals), and the chief rooms at feasts; which devour widows’ houses, and for a shew make long prayers: the same shall receive greater damnation,” Luke, it. 45, 46, 47. I saw by these scriptures that they had no command from God for their gowns and popish trumpery, for God forbids it; as it is written, “And it shall come to pass in that day, that the prophets shall be ashamed every one of his vision, when he hath prophesied; neither shall they wear rough garments to

deceive,” Zech. xiii. 4.

Having searched the Bible in the light of the Lord, I compared our present clergy with the apostles and prophets. I examined the apostles’ dress, and compared it with the robes of our clergy - I also compared the Saviour’s humble prayers, and the prayers of the apostles, with our numerous long - written prayers - as also our parochial congregations with the chosen remnants that followed God’s ministers of old; and I found a very great disproportion between our clergy and them. Our clergy roll in their coaches; but they travelled on foot. Our clergy wear robes; but they had only one coat a-piece. Our clergy are ornamented with mitres; but they were “shod with sandals.” Our bishops are lords; the apostles were servants. Our clergy are enlarging their tithe barns, and go to law for their dues; but they were only allowed to “eat and drink what was set before them;” but never allowed to gain one sheaf, or one fleece of wool, by law. Our clergy also buy their sermons at a shilling a-piece, although, in general, they are not worth a farthing; but the apostles delivered theirs “as the Spirit gave them utterance.” Some of our clergy deny the operations of the Spirit, and hate those who contend for them; but the apostles declared that “if any man has not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.”

A Prelude to Purgatory

Upon the whole, I found that the religion which Christ had set up in my conscience was exactly agreeable to the word of God: but no more like the established religion which I had imbibed from my infancy, than the Pope’s absolution is like that blessed absolution which is applied by the only atoning Saviour: the former is a prelude to purgatory, and the latter an earnest of heaven.

When I read my Bible after illumination, I was astonished how I could remain so many years ignorant of the meaning of the word of God, which now appeared so plain; and how

I could be led blind-folded so long by men so profoundly ignorant of the scriptures, who only feed themselves and starve the souls of their flock; as it is written, “Son of Man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God unto the shepherds, Wo be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves. Should not the shepherds feed the flocks? Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool; ye kill them that are fed, but ye feed not the flock,” Ezek. xxxiv. 2, 3.

Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, who hath proclaimed liberty to my soul by his own Spirit, and made me appear like Naphtali, “a hind let loose,” Gen. xlix. 21; who hath enabled me to leap over all the bounds of human inventions. I have often been hunted, but God has taught me to “beware of dogs,” Phil. iii. 2.

O the heavenly communion that my soul enjoyed with Jesus Christ when I was delivered! I used to go mourning over him all the day long, while he appeared perpetually before my eyes in his “dyed garments;” and this sweet expression echoed in my heart, in a resounding voice from heaven, “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of God.” The sight of Christ crucified had such an effect on my soul, that I went loathing myself in dust and ashes, often declaring that I must have justified him to all eternity, had he “dealt with me according to my sins.” Oh that God would lead our Arminians upon this blessed spot of holy ground! Then we should hear no more of their free agency, self-righteousness, sinless perfection, and final apostasy from the all-conquering and all-sufficient grace of God. But, alas! the wind of error has wrapped them up in her wings, and when they will be disclosed I know not.

I had one night an awful dream; which was, that the end of the world was come. I saw on my right hand some astonishing “pillars of smoke,” Joel, ii. 30; which appeared

so great as to darken the whole earth; Isa. viii. 22. I looked about me; and, behold, on my left hand there appeared a flaming fire; 2 Thess. vii. 8. I stood astonished at this; but not so much terrified as might have been expected. While I stood musing in my dream what this could mean, there came such an amazing whirlwind as I never before saw; Isaiah, lxvi. 15. This wind took almost every thing that was upon the earth, and carried it into the air. The birds darted and flew in an amazing manner, and at last went quite out of sight. "Thus I beheld till the birds of the heavens were fled," Jer. iv. 25. Soon after this the darkness vanished, and a little light appeared - the whirlwind ceased, and there was a calm. I now looked up, and there stood all the offspring of Adam, who bore his image, covering the face of the whole earth; Rev. xx. 12. And there appeared to me to be six women to four men; Eccl. vii. 8. They fled, and screamed till the earth rang again; and their hair hung in a disordered manner, like that of mad women: their pale visages appeared with all the fury of devils, and the flames of wrath seemed to disfigure every feature of their faces; as it is written, "Howl ye; for the day of the Lord is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty. And they shall be afraid; pangs and sorrows shall take hold of them: they shall be in pain as a woman that travaileth; they shall be amazed one at another; their faces shall be as flames," Isa. xlii. 6-11. An awful passage indeed! Their faces were as flames! And so the wicked must appear; as it is written, "As a dream when one awaketh; so, O Lord, when thou awakest, thou shalt despise their image," Psal. lxxiii. 20. Looking awhile with horror on the dreadful scene, they then fled all manner of ways for shelter from the impending storm; Rev. vi. 16; but they found none; Job, xxxiv. 22; for every eye must see him; Rev. i. 7.

Having stood awhile to observe this lamentable sight, it suddenly darted into my mind that I knew the Saviour; and

immediately the sweetest calm of peace and love flowed into my soul, so that I could look up, and lift up my head, thinking that my redemption drew nigh; Luke, xxi. 28. And, when I had thus lifted up my head, behold there appeared the tremendous Judge indeed! 2 Chron. xviii. 18. "The judgment was set, and the books were opened," Dan. vii. 10.

I shall not enlarge; but I find that Daniel, Enoch, John, &c. &c. had the same vision in their days; therefore it is nothing new. It comes often fresh to my mind when I see troops of our painted ladies walking the streets, some of them almost worn out with hard labour, whose tender eyes, pale faces, and thin jaws, tell every beholder that they have been, as it were, parboiled in consequence of their impure connexions. Such are the very pictures which I saw in the vision; and I shall one day see them in reality. But to return -

I kept close to the Bible whenever I had an opportunity; and found that my dear Redeemer spake so sweetly to my worthless soul, in the blessed promises of the gospel, that reading the Bible was a greater delight to me than the reading of a will is to an old miser, where he appears the legatee, and finds his thousands in every paragraph. I found I was an heir of promise; and the sweet promises, with all their rich cordials, flowed into my heart, when my thirsty soul drew them in by the mouth of faith. Yea, they would at times appear to discharge their whole contents, till my heart was like a bottle that had no vent; Job, xxxii. 19. And the precious doctrine of eternal election propped me up like ten thousand columns, and afforded all the security and stability that my worthless soul could stand in need of, and that too against all the storms of life.

The condescension of my dear Redeemer was so great to his unworthy servant, that he communed with me all day long. If a doubt or a scruple arose in my mind, he answered my thoughts by his word - if I felt a burden, when I called

he took it off - if I doubted of the reality of the work, he renewed it again on my soul - if I met with a difficult passage of scripture, he would send me two or three passages as keys to unlock it, and sweetly lead me into the soul-establishing meaning of it. He also led my mind back to my infant state, and there shewed me how he had been with me from my mother's womb, as a cautioner - as a provider - as a preventer, when exposed to sin, and even bent on it-as a reprover - as a preserver - and a guide, to this decreed spot, where I was to meet with this ever-adorable Saviour. This truly is fellowship with him, and fellowship indeed!

He would at times lead me to his sufferings and death, and give me to feel such a fellowship with him in his agonies, that I have wept aloud, though I really felt a pain in my side when I have been thinking of the cruel spear that pierced him. At other times I have been indulged with such sweet meditations on his victories from the grave, that (as Paul says) I had fellowship with him in his resurrection. Daily experience teaches us what fellowship with him by the Spirit means; and every step we take in faith proclaims to the heart of a Christian what the fellowship of him as a friend means, and is a proof of his being the omnipresent God: as it is written, "And lo I am with you alway, to the end of the world."

O sweet companion! - delightful guest! - blessed familiarity! divine indulgence! - soul-enriching contemplation! - and soul-ennobling fellowship! - which conclude without the least stain of guilt; without any cutting reflection; without barrenness, doubts, horror, fears, or accusations: - but with a real anticipation of all that is meant by the incommunicable name of Jehovah, and heaven, his blessed residence. This is spending "our days in prosperity, and our years in pleasure," Job, xxxvi. 11.

Indeed he daily communed with me from off the mercy-seat, as a man doth with his friend; yea, and spake to me in

his eternal council, and shewed me his "goings forth to be of old, yea, from everlasting," Mic. v. 2. He communed with me also on the creation; and made "the heavens declare his handy works," and "the firmament the glory" of his power. In providence he shewed his paternal care over me, and made my reins instruct me in the woful fall of man; Psal. xvi. 7. My daily infirmities proclaimer his long-suffering mercy, and his slowness to anger; while all the temptations I had waded through, proclaimed his omnipotent power and preventing grace. The testimony of his Spirit within me, and the word of his grace, as loudly proclaimed his faithfulness and his truth. The ignorance and malice of sinners shewed me the awful doctrine of reprobation; and my appearing without a spiritual companion in the world, confirmed me in the doctrine of eternal election and predestination.

Arian Abuse

O happy state! O blessed Redeemer, who thus condescended to familiarize himself with such an unworthy worm! This sweet fellowship with the dear Saviour has been of great service to me since I have been in the ministry; especially when the Arians, both in town and country, have laid siege to my judgment; for, when they brought forth their infernal sophistry, I could always batter their iron breast-plate, Rev. ix. 9; or seared conscience, I Tim. iv. 2; with the weapon of my own experience. They never knew what communion and fellowship with Jesus meant; if they had, they would not thus abuse him.

Christ in scripture is called "a tried stone;" and the best way to try his deity is to go to him, as I did, burdened with sins - stung with guilt - harassed by devils - cursed by the law - and tormented with the pains of hell; and then pray to him as the only true God; and, if he delivers the sinner, let him say, as David did, "He that is our God is the God of salvation; and, if he brings the sinner forth in a lively hope, let him own that

the Lord Jesus is “the everlasting Father;” and say as David says, “Unto God the Lord belong the issues from death,” Psal. lxxviii. 20; and see if any other God beside him can deliver them. Peter says, “There is salvation in no other name.”

However, I prayed to Christ alone, and never rose from my knees till the kingdom of God was established in my heart; and I think, if the Saviour had answered the Arian as he did me, when he sent me from prayer with my face shining, and my soul melting in the flames of everlasting love, he would say, as Elijah did, “Let him be God that answers by fire,” I Kings, xviii. 24. But Arians are worse by far than Baal’s worshippers; for these last said to the prophet’s propositions, “It is well spoken:” but they still keep crying out, “O Baal, hear us!” However, if Christ should deliver them out of their errors, and save them from sin, they will then confess his deity; and, if they should drop into endless torments, and see the righteous in the bosom of God, even then they will own that he is “a just God and a Saviour.”

It appears plain in scripture that the eternal kingdom itself, and the throne of that kingdom, are established in the divinity of the Saviour; which also appears by the Father’s testimony of him, “But of the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom,” Heb. i. 8. His wisdom and ability to execute this prophetic office were the consequence of that omniscience which is declarative of his eternal Godhead; as it is written, “He shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears,” Isa. xi. 3, as men must do; no, “he knew all men, and he knew what was in man, and [therefore] needed not that any should testify of man,” John, ii. 25.

Our enjoyment of him, and fellowship with him, upon earth, is a sufficient proof of his omnipresence; as it is written, “And lo I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world,”

Matt. xxviii. 20. His ability to execute his priestly office arises also from his eternal power and godhead. “For your sakes I sanctify myself, that you may be sanctified through the truth.” His deity was the “altar that sanctified the gift;” as it is written, “He offered himself through the eternal Spirit to God.” And, because he is the eternal God, “he is a priest for ever and ever,” or an everlasting priest. His being an unchangeable priest, and having an unchangeable priesthood, are sufficient proofs of his immutability. And his being appointed to judge the world proves him to be the omniscient God, who searches all hearts and judges all men; as it is written, “For God is judge himself,” Psal. 1. 6; and this God is Christ; “for the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son,” John, v. 22.

Is it not therefore strange that Christ should be called the true Light - the Truth - the Life - the Resurrection and the Life - the Holy One - the Just One - the First - the Last - the Almighty - a just God and a Saviour - the Creator and Maker of all things - God over all, blessed for evermore, who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light - our Lord, whom we are commanded to worship, and whom all the angels of God are commanded to worship. - I say, is it not strange that every perfection of the Deity should be attributed to Christ, and yet Christ be esteemed no more than a mere man, as the insolent Arians affirm!!! - But why do I multiply such scriptures against the Arian, when he may be overthrown by the testimony of devils!

Christ says to his disciples, “Neither be ye called masters; for one is your master, even Christ,” Matt. xxiii. 8. Now let us see who this only master of the apostles is, according to the testimony of the devil: “And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, that a certain damsel, possessed [mark that, possessed] with a spirit of divination, met us, and cried saying, These men are the servants of the Most High

God [mark that, of the Most High God], which shew unto us the way of salvation. And this did she many days.” Let it be observed that it was no hasty confession of the devil, nor any slip of the tongue; but it was done with deliberation, and that repeatedly. There the devil was turned into a public bellman, and forced to promulgate the truth against his inclination. “And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved” (I suppose not liking this sort of assistance:) though Paul could not contradict his doctrine, yet he well knew who the preacher was; “Paul, being grieved (I say), turned and said to the spirit, I command thee, in the name of Jesus Christ, to come out of her.” And the devil added obedience to the above confession. Satan had declared Paul’s master to be the Most High God; and Paul now commanded the devil to quit his hold in the name of Jesus Christ, his master: accordingly the devil obeyed with all expedition; as it is written, “And he came out the same hour,” Acts, xvi. 16-18. Who can, from scripture, justly accuse the devil of Arianism? None; for “the devil believes and trembles.” - But the unbelieving Arian laughs at these truths, The devil confesses Christ plainly, “We know thee, who thou art, the Holy One of God,” Luke, iv. 34. The devils pray to Christ; as it is written, “When he saw Jesus, he cried out, and fell down before him, and with a loud voice said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God most High? I beseech thee torment me not,” Luke, viii. 28. Satan knew his Judge of old, and also his decreed doom; and guessed at the decreed time, as it is written, “Art thou come to torment us before the time?” Matt. viii. 29. Thus Satan confessed the Judge who was to torment him. The doctrine of Arianism, were it imputed to devils, would be a scandal even to them; for they confessed Christ, and they prayed to him not to send them into the deep, but to suffer them “to enter into the herd of swine,” and the saviour suffered them; and then chews his power by sending the swine and the devils into the

deep together.

I think that the Arians represent the devils as very great cowards, in praying to Christ, if he is no more than a creature; and then that a whole legion of them should run, with the herd of swine, in that violent manner, in consequence of the verbal order of a mere man. In short, the Arian is not faithful either to God or Mammon; for he first denies the record that God gave of his Son, and then denies the confession of the devils. How amazingly ignorant of God, therefore, must such men be, when they may read in the scriptures how Satan influenced the Goliath of Gath to defy “the armies of the living God,” and what a havoc Satan made in Egypt when God sent evil angels among them. And, after these amazing feats, is it a likely matter that Satan should fly before the face of Christ, if he is no more than a mere creature?

But the Arian is seemingly so anxious to cheat his soul of salvation, that he is obliged to dispute himself out of all his learning, and even out of common sense and reason, in support of his favourite tenet. Yea, God has so often taken off the wheels of Arianism, that they have been obliged to dispute themselves out of their boasted abilities, and prove themselves ignorant of the grammatical sense of words; wresting the scriptures, to put any gloss or construction on their shattered and withered cause. But the scriptures must be fulfilled, which say, “Many shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them; and shall bring on themselves swift destruction,” 2 Pet. ii. 1.

In short, the Arian appears to me to act worse with the Saviour than Judas did; for Judas for money only betrayed his innocent blood, and then hanged himself, that he might go quickly to his own place, and “receive the wages of his unrighteousness:” but the Arian levels all his malice at the Saviour’s eternal power and godhead; which bereaves his merit of all its divine efficacy, renders him no better than an

impostor, and the living oracles of God to be only the testimony of a creature; and thus he fixes in his own conscience the soul-piercing sting of infinite guilt; and, in the propagation of his damnable heresy, he endeavours to render others tenfold more the children of hell than himself.

O blessed be the dear Saviour, who delivers his redeemed flock from such “wolves in sheep’s clothing,” and, as their divine prophet, teaches them himself! The chosen vessel knows the Saviour to be “the true light,” because he shines into his heart; 2 Cor. iv. 6. He knows him to be “the resurrection,” because he has raised him to “newness of life,” Rom. vi. 4. He knows that he is the God of salvation, because he has delivered him “from the wrath to come,” I Thess. i. 10. He knows him to be the God of glory, because the glory of his God and of his Saviour is risen upon him; Isaiah, xl. 1. He knows he is a God that hears prayer, because he answers “him in the joy of his heart,” Eccl. v. 20. He knows he is “the only wise God,” because he makes him wise unto salvation, and wiser than all the carnal men in the world; I Cor. ii. 14. He knows he is the omnipresent God, by the daily communion which he enjoys with him; I John, i. 2. Nor can he doubt of his being the Judge of both quick and dead, because he has been honourably acquitted at the bar of his own conscience.

This is the secret mystery that lies between Christ and the elect, and which is entirely “hid from the wise and prudent,” Matt. xl. 25. It is this that creates a joy unspeakable in the believer’s heart, and “which the stranger intermeddleth not with,” Prov. xiv. 10.

This private method that the Saviour took in instructing me by his word and Spirit without the ordinary use of public ordinances, led me to love private study and meditation: and even to this time I had rather spend one day alone by myself, in communion with Christ, than a whole week in company with all the gospel ministers in the kingdom; yea, I would

rather spend a day in communion with Christ alone, than in company with the twelve apostles, even were it possible for them to pay me a visit from heaven.

If we have the joy of an heart-felt union and communion with Jesus Christ, what can add to it? It is Christ who constitutes heaven. The presence of him, the flame of his love, and the rays of his glory, are heaven in the abstract. If there is any other heaven beside the glorious presence of Christ, I shall not covet it. If I have Christ, Christ is enough for me; as saith the Psalmist, when he makes Christ his home, his portion, and the ultimate end of his wish. “The Lord is my portion,” says my soul. And again, “Thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations.” And “when I wake up with thy likeness, I shall be satisfied” with it. And so shall I; “for he is my life, and the length of my days,” Deut. xxx. 20. And “because he lives we shall live also.”

Having gone on awhile in this sweet way, a person in Sunbury asked me to go and hear the methodists Richmond. This I refused, fearing that I should get errors; for I had been told strange things of that body and I thought there might be some truth in the report. He kept persuading of me, till at last I consented to go. Prior to my accompanying him I went up stairs, and begged of God to keep me from imbibing any of their errors, and to shew me whether these people were right or not. I now went with the man, and we had a deal of discourse by the way. He seemed, I thought, to have the scheme of salvation in his head, but no feeling sense of the power on his heart.

When we came to the meeting he appeared much disappointed, as it was not the preacher whom he expected. The text was out of Jonah; “Arise, sleeper, and call upon thy God.” But he seemed to me to make very little use of it, at least I thought so. His name was Weeks. He might be a good man, but he never touched on the glorious joys which I had felt. He

did not seem to be one that could dive into the mysteries of Christ; but rather laboured to “roll away the stone from the well’s mouth.”

The person that took me seemed much disappointed, and asked me many questions, to know whether I approved of what I had heard or not. I told him, I thought he was a good man, &c.

The next Lord’s day he asked me to go again: I seemed rather reluctant, as I had neither won nor lost by the last sermon; however, I complied with his request, and went. When we came there my friend seemed much pleased, and told me it was the man that he before wanted me to hear. His name was Joss. I heard him with all the ears of a critic. His text was, “Thanks be to God and the Father, who hath delivered us from the powers of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son; in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins,” Col. i. 13, 14. This man handled his text like a workman, and reached my heart sweetly; and, through grace, I could see eye to eye with him in all he said. In the evening I heard him again from these words, “And to you who are troubled, rest with us, when the Lord Jesus Christ shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power,” 2 Thess. i. 7-9.

My companion was very solicitous to know if I approved of the doctrine held forth by the preacher. I told him, Yes; I believe Paul could not have delivered a better discourse than the first was. Indeed I thought the old apostolic days were come again; for the preacher appeared with his hoary head in the way of righteousness, and preached the Bible, a book which I had never heard preached before. In short, he came

without any popish robes or ornaments about him; he seemed to endeavour to lead souls to Christ Jesus, and was armed with nothing but gospel faith and simple truth, which are quite sufficient.

I have often thought, and I believe in the day of judgement it will be found a truth, that many in our days, who are good scholars, and who appear in their parsonic robes, cut a venerable figure before an auditory, have a fluent gift of eloquent speech, a choice and select assortment of gospel sentences, are, nevertheless, at the same time under the spirit of bondage. And this any Christian may find and feel, who has been at all influenced by “the spirit of love and of a sound mind,” by that bondage and legal striving which are communicated to those who sit under them; for it is not the expressions only that influence the flock - they only inform the judgment; but the flock drink into the spirit of the pastor, whether he be legal or evangelical. Such, not being able to give an experimental description of the liberty of the Holy Spirit, are, I think, instrumental in keeping many poor souls in chains, by leading the flock, as Moses did, to Horeb. There is such a thing as preaching liberty to others while the preacher is a servant of corruption, as the scriptures witness.

I once heard a person of this stamp preach; and was so taken with his venerable appearance, his oratory, and his choice expressions, that I thought, had it been in my power, I would have followed him to the grave; and yet I enjoyed nothing but his melodious voice. Notwithstanding this, he communicated such a legal frame to my soul, that I went home groaning under a hard heart till my breast-bone was sore; and I continued to feel its soul-entangling influence for many days after.

I now know some that sit under a very evangelical preacher one part of the day, and in the other part under one that preaches legality itself; and they see no difference; nor

do they get one step forward in the way of regeneration from year's end to year's end. And I am sorely afraid that, when they have served another seven years, they will be as far from Mount Gilead as they are now; for Mount Sinai is like the mountain of Gilboa, it affords neither dew nor rain. But to return -

After I had heard Mr. Joss I went home, and informed my wife that I had found a man who preached the Bible - a wonder I had never seen before; and that he preached without any gown or cassock; that the people called methodists were the Lord's elect, and I was delighted even with the appearance of them.

Was My Dame A Pharisee ?

I now began to consider the character of a pharisee, and had a strong suspicion that my dame was one of that number. I formerly had held her in very high esteem for her religion, and often thought that, if ever I got through my troubles, I should only be upon a level with her; for she appeared "a just person that needed no repentance." At other times it was a piercing thought to me that at the great day she would be invited into glory, while her poor husband would be thrust down to hell; therefore I viewed her at times as an angel of light: but I conceived myself to be one of the last that ever could appear before God with acceptance. My wife had informed me how earnestly she used to pray to God (with a little book of prayers she had got) that, if she married me, he would make me a good man and a good husband, and incline my heart to stay at home with her. Which I do not wonder at, as I was naturally of a cheerful turn of mind, and very fond of jovial company; therefore I had perpetually one young man or other after me.

Upon an impartial view of my wife's state, I perceived her to be a pharisee of the pharisees, therefore I constantly besieged a throne of grace for her; and God hid the state of

her soul so heavy upon my mind, that I travailed in pain until I had a hope of Christ being formed in her heart. I had the state of her soul perpetually before my eyes; and the thoughts of a final separation at the general doom was as a spur to the energy of my petitions.

Indeed, as the head of a family, I had an earnest desire in my soul to fear God with all my house, and to keep up the worship of God in it. I bless God that my wife did not reject my counsel, nor did she ever refuse to bend her knees with me in prayer; only she was tinctured with a little fear that I was going to be "righteous over much," and that too even to the endangering my sense, But, blessed be God, I soon saw some symptoms of a law-work on her also; which eased my mind greatly, and afforded some ground of hope. Thus one good turn deserved another. As she had informed me how she had formerly prayed to God for me, I likewise prayed to God for her; and I trust I prevailed with the blessed Majesty of heaven in this also.

A few sabbaths after I had first been at Richmond, I was asked by my friend to go and hear the word of God at Kingston, which I accordingly did. At noon we went and sat in the vestry, to eat the morsel we carried in our pockets; and there were several country people who brought their provision likewise, and sat and dined with us. After the minister had dined, he came out of the house into the vestry, and began to ask the people many questions about their souls. He spake to each of them in rotation; and at last it came to my turn. This seemed all new to me. I had never given any body any account of my religion, nor had I the proper use of my tongue, or words, to express my feelings. I told him that I was ready to die; meaning that I was delivered from the fear of death, which I had laboured under. And said I hoped I should die soon; by which I meant that I had prayed to die. I told him also that I had lately read a book, which advised men to weigh

well the fifth chapter of the Romans, and that I had it all by heart: I meant, that I had not only read it, but had experienced the whole of it in my heart. He shook his head, saying he was afraid I was deluded. I did not know then what the word delusion meant, therefore I could not contradict him. He looked very hard at me; and, seeing me smile and look so cheerful, thought it a very bad sign. He then asked how long I had heard the Gospel? I told him, "only three or four times." He shook his head. and asked the people if they knew me? They said, "No." He asked them if I had been there before? They said, "No; not to their knowledge." So my pedigree could not be traced, nor could the minister calculate my nativity. "I was one born out of due time;" or like the image Jupiter, that fell down from the moon: a marvellous thing was done, and yet they could not tell whence I was.

The good man tried to fasten a word of conviction on my heart, but he could not; I had felt enough of that before. Whereupon, meeting me so happy under all he said, he thought that I was "hardened through the deceitfulness of sin;" and, finding he could render me no service, he gave me up. As I went out of the vestry many of the hearers seemed to pity me, having heard my trial, and that the judgment passed upon me was - delusion.

The good man went up into the pulpit, and delivered a discourse from these words; "When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none. Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out. And, when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there. And the last state of that man is worse than the first," Matt. xii. 43-45. The preacher looked hard at me, and ignorantly levelled all his arrows at my head. I looked him full in the face, gave him all possible

attention, and endeavoured to expose my conscience to all that might be discharged from that text; to see if any breach could be made in my conscience, which the dear Redeemer had so sweetly healed. But all the arrows fell short, or flew beyond me; and so I thought they would as soon as he drew his bow. "But none but David and Jonathan knew the matter," I Sam. xx. 39. After this discourse was delivered I went home, and my friend asked me if the minister's examination did not distress me? I told him, No, it did not; for I believed that, had he preached hell and damnation against me for twenty years, he never would have fixed one threatening on my mind; for Jesus Christ himself had delivered my soul, therefore man could not bring me back again into trouble; nor was it in my power to get back again, even if I myself tried at it.

The above circumstance has been of use to me since I have been in the ministry; it has taught me to seek after the power of religion on the conscience, rather than to expect a confession of faith from the lips of babes. It is not every gracious soul that can make a creed; they are not all eyes in the body mystical. Had the good man begun to explain a law-work on the heart, and talked of temptations and soul-travail, and then explained a saint's birth by the Spirit, he would have touched my case, and have kindled the fire; he would then have spoken to me in my own language, and might have drawn as much out of my heart as would have satisfied all his inquiries. Paul became weak that he might gain the weak. But "counsel in the heart of man is like deep water;" and he must be "a man of good understanding that draws it out."

Unutterable Life and Glory

All this time my soul enjoyed unutterable life and glory. My communion with the Redeemer was so sweet to my soul, that I thought it was impossible to live upon the earth; and therefore I expected every day, for many months together, that I should depart and be with Christ, or else that the day

of judgment would shortly arrive. Wherefore I watched every cloud that passed, to see if the Saviour appeared in it; for I knew that he was to “come with the clouds of heaven:” and the language of my soul was, “Why tarry his chariot wheels?” or, in the language of the beloved apostle, “Come Lord Jesus, come quickly!” Rev. xxii. 20.

The hours of the night were generally the sweetest to my soul, for “God my maker gave me songs in the night,” Job, xxxv. 10. I therefore waged war with my eyes, and grudged them both slumber and sleep: yea, I besought God to take sleep from my eyes. But this the Lord did not altogether, yet he communed with my mind when I was asleep; as it is written, “I sleep, but my heart waketh; it is the voice of my beloved that knocketh,” Song, v. 2. And, when I arose in the morning, and the sun began to shine, it was as if the glory of God shone round about me in the sun-beams, till my spirit would dissolve in his rays; as it is written, “My soul melteth.”

When I went to prayer it was heaven upon earth, for my Saviour would pour his answers of joy into my heart before I could ask for them; as it is written, “Before they speak I will hear, and while they are speaking I will answer them.”

O, could the bed, the curtains, the hedges, woods, trees, and fields, speak, they would bear their testimonies to the holy triumphs of my soul! But, alas! all language is too poor to set forth the glorious manifestations of God the Saviour to his own elect. We must travel under it, as the prophets and apostles did - begin the thread, and then cut it asunder; as it is written, “For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, besides thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him!” Isa. lxiv. 4. Again, “Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God! nor doth it yet appear what we shall be,” John, iii. 1, 2. And again, “Whom, having not seen, ye love; and,

though now ye see him not, yet, believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory,” I Pet. 1. 8.

Pity for the Fallen Race and Devil

My adversary, being entirely overcome by faith in the dear Redeemer, now began to tempt me in another way, by leading me to pity the whole fallen race that appeared in their sins, and so to join with him in rebellion against the decrees of God. This was the first temptation that beset me after the Lord had thus wonderfully delivered me; and my poor deluded soul was caught in the snare, until I was tempted to pity fallen angels themselves. It is astonishing how far natural affections, or fleshly passions, will carry a person, if he is left to be influenced by Satan,” transformed into an angel of light.” However, many swallow this bait as the operation of the Holy Ghost, and then cry out, “If I have such pity for poor sinners, then what pity must there be in God!” To which I answer, “God’s pity as far surpasses yours as the heaven is high above the earth; and the objects of God’s pity, and the objects of your pity, are as far different as the east is from the west.”

What About The Rest ?

No Mercy For Fallen Angels

After God had delivered me from this strange temptation of pitying devils, beasts, and all the inhabitants of the world, and fighting against God’s decrees, Satan attacked me in this manner: “You are yourself a chosen vessel, and feel unutterable joys; and you believe in the doctrine of election: look at your poor wife and family; do you think they are elected? What will become of them?” I now listened with all attention, and dropped many a silent tear, not suspecting this to be from the devil. He added, “Look at the inhabitants of this parish; you cannot find one that is born again - What is to become of them?” Now it was that my heart began to heave against the

doctrine of election, and the sovereignty of the Most High. He also brought the Ethiopians, and other heathen nations, to my mind; and asked me what I thought of the doctrine of election then? All this time my heart was melting, and my eyes flowing with tears, pitying my fellow-creatures; at the same time fighting against the decrees of God. The adversary then led me to pity beasts; how hard they fared, and how hard they laboured, but there was no heaven prepared for them: and I was led to weep over them also. Afterwards the adversary asked what I thought of fallen angels? - there was no mercy offered to them; they were reserved in chains of darkness unto the judgment of the great day. I next was tempted to pity devils, which made me tremble. I immediately saw from whence the sounding of these compassionate bowels came; the snare was broken, and I was delivered. I will now inform my reader in what manner this deliverance came.

I had left my place of servitude in Sunbury, and was waiting till some other door was opened for me in a way of providence.

During the time of my being out of place I endeavoured to get some employment, till an opportunity offered for me to better myself. I was informed that a man wanted hands to gather cherries, there being a very great crop of fruit that year. Accordingly I went to work; and I believe there were near twenty hands employed. It came to pass, on the Saturday night, that we were ordered to come to work on the Lord's day morning. This I refused. The master asked me if I was a Whitfieldite? I told him it was a sin to profane the Lord's day, and I would not do it. This caused all the rest to hoot at me; and I continued to be sport for them all the time I wrought with them. The week following, as I was at work on the ladder, and often hearing a taunt from various parts of the ground, it came into my mind, "What do these people hate me for? Only because God has planted his fear in my heart, and

made my conscience tender of his honour. I should have the good word of them all, if I would serve the devil, and damn my own soul; but, because there seems something of the work of God on me, therefore they hate me. What has God done, thus to offend them, that they make such sport of him?" Here my bowels yearned over my much abused Lord. I was then led to look at the cherry-trees round about me, to see how they were laden with fruit, as a blessing from God; and to observe the conduct of my master and fellow-workmen, how unjustly they deserved such blessings. I said to myself, "God has bountifully hung these trees with fruit, but man only sins the more. The labourers are laughing and blaspheming the name of God all the day long; and the master says we must work on the Lord's day, or else we shall never be able to gather them all. Thus they labour by sin to make a fruitful land barren. If God had not sent this plenty, not half the oaths had been sworn, nor had his holy day been thus profaned." I then said, with tears to God, that I must justify him if he never sent another fruit year.

I next considered the conduct of the people in general, and the daily results that God received from them; the state in which we were first created, and the state into which we had brought ourselves by sin; the malice that Christ had met with, and the cruel usage that God and his word had received in Britain, Turkey, Italy, &c.; together with the rage and blasphemies of the devils against God, which my soul had felt. These things drove my spirit back again weeping to God; I left off caviling against his election, and justified him in my heart.

Perhaps it might stagger the prophet Ezekiel a little to see God drive his Israel and prophets into an enemy's land, and expose all the vessels of his house to the contempt of fools. But, when God led the prophet into the chambers of imagery, and shewed him their abominations in his temple (as

you read in the eighth chapter), the prophet soon saw enough to convince him that God was just in executing his judgments, and avenging himself of such a nation as that.

The week following we all were again commanded to come on the Lord's day to work. I declared I would not; and advised the man who gathered fruit with me not to do it: and I imagined he would not, as I had talked to him on religious subjects, when he seemed to attend and give assent to what I said. Notwithstanding this, he told me he would come in the morning and earn fifteen pence, and then leave off.

On the Tuesday following I asked my fellow-labourer if he had wrought on the Lord's-day? He told me he had. "And, after we had done," said he, "we went to the alehouse, and spent fifteen pence a-piece, and some of them abused the landlady, and a warrant has been issued out against them. Yesterday," continued he, "we could not do any work." I replied, "Cannot, you see the disapprobation of God in these things? You wrought in the forenoon, and earned fifteen-pence; in the afternoon you spent it all at the alehouse - thus God is abused. Yesterday you went to the alehouse again, spent eighteen-pence, and lost a day's work; which is worth two shillings or half-a-crown. Now, what have you gained by breaking the Lord's day, and what have I lost? Do not you see the curse of God on all you can earn on that day?" The words were no sooner out of my mouth than his feet slipped, and he fell from the top of the ladder to the bottom, and never gathered a cherry more while I continued in that work. A few days after I was informed that he was likely to lose the use of his arm. I could not shew any pity to the poor wretch; but I justified God in my soul and confessed that his judgment was just. But to return -

Having been delivered from this temptation, my communion with the Saviour was as sweet as ever; and I was much amazed to think that Satan could appear in such a form,

and operate in such a manner. However, it is nothing to be wondered at; the apostle declares "he is transformed [at times] into an angel of light;" and so I found it. The adversary often tempted me again upon this point, but it did not affect me; for I was fully persuaded that whatever induced me to entertain hard thoughts of God - prompted me to resist his will - or to despise or oppose any of his revealed truths - must proceed from the devil: for we are commanded to love the Lord with all our heart. And he that loveth father or mother, or wife, or children, better than Christ, is not worthy of him. I may add that those, who do not love him above every earthly object, never enjoyed heart-felt union and communion with him.

I still continued to go to Kingston meeting every Lord's day; and, as I had met with a little persecution, I determined to open my mind to some of them, thinking they would condole with me, as I felt such a love to them; and indeed they appeared like angels in my sight. I therefore told one or two of them how the worldlings used me; but they hardly spake to me. I was like Joseph with his variegated coat, my brethren could not speak peaceably to me. This sent me home groaning like a woman in travail: and I now went to my everlasting Father, and prayed him, if I was wrong, to put me right; if I was not his child, to make me his child, whatever I might suffer again. He came down on my soul "like rain on the mown grass, and as showers that water the earth." He did all the work over again on my spirit; appeared as precious as ever; and gave me such access to him, and liberty to pour out my soul before him, that I really experienced what David says; "He shall cover thee with Iris feathers, under his wings shalt thou trust, and his truth shall be thy shield and buckler." Thus I got rid of all my groanings; and clearly experienced this truth, "They have made the heart of them sad, whom I have not made sad," Ezekiel, xiii. 22.

I considered with myself what I should do in this case.

They had heard my trial at the bar of a minister, and he had suspected me to be in a delusion; which they consequently believed. Therefore I thought that on the next Lord's day I would endeavour to undeceive them, by informing them of God's dealings with me. Accordingly, on that day, when several of us were eating in the vestry, I began to tell them of my temptations and troubles; how I had seen Jesus; what he had done for me; how he continually comforted me; and the joys that I felt daily. As soon as I mentioned these things, one of them, who I thought was the brightest saint among them, got up, and went out into the body of the meeting, and his wife followed him; so they chose rather to sit in the cold and eat their dinner, than sit in the vestry with me. Some of the others looked at me as if I had been speaking Arabic to them, I seemed to convey such strange things to their ears. As my experience was deep, and my language very bad, they could not tell what I was, or what I meant; so I appeared as a speckled bird among them. I went home, as usual, groaning and crying to God my Saviour; who answered me again in the joy of my soul. And the blessed Spirit helped my infirmities for such a length of time, that my very soul was dissolved within me. And Christ appeared so precious, in his garments dipped in blood, that I pitied him, mourned over him, and talked to him in such a familiar way as I choose to conceal: though the Song of Solomon is full of it.

The next Lord's day was appointed for breaking of bread. When the table was spread I longed to go and partake, as I found such a love for Jesus, and felt such sweet union with him. When the people, therefore, drew up to the table I crept up among them, for I could not keep away. I thought they all looked at me; however, I ventured; but afterwards one Mr. Gates gave me a gentle reproof. This brought all my bearing pains on me again, and sent me groaning home in hard labour. But, as soon as I could get into a corner to

my dear Saviour, my soul bowed herself, and cast out her sorrows again; Job, xxxix. 3; and then it was well between him and me. The next week it came into my mind that my language was so bad they could not understand me; which might be the reason they could not find a union with me. I now endeavoured to meditate on these matters, in order to render my experience intelligible to them when we should next meet; and picked out a whole legion of scripture texts, to prove the work on me to be genuine. Accordingly, the next Lord's day I began again; but as soon as I opened my mouth several of the oldest professors went immediately out of the vestry; some went into the town; some sat, as usual, in the cold meeting; and others afterwards went continually to dine at friends' houses, and forsook the vestry entirely. This sent me home again pregnant with sorrow, wondering what it all could mean. But, when I came again to my dear friend the Lord Jesus Christ, all was set to rights. I begged him not to let me deceive myself; and that, if I was an hypocrite, he would show it me, and lead me right, whatever I might suffer in consequence thereof. He gave me no scriptural answer; that is, he applied no text, but sent an answer of peace to my soul, and still appeared as crucified for me in the open vision of faith. I found, as the Redeemer had said, "In this world ye shall have tribulation;" but, when I went to him, I found that in him I had peace.

The next Lord's day I had the same exercise as before, and went groaning home, as usual. I was now much tempted to give up going, and secretly wished that I had never been near any congregation of professors at all, as I had so much delight in Christ when in private. However, I have since seen that God was preparing me for the ministry, though I knew nothing of it then. But to return -

Going home, I was violently tempted to believe I was an hypocrite, as all those that appeared so bright in my eyes

refused even to sit with me in the vestry; and this scripture came to my mind, "He that loveth him that begets, loveth him that is begotten of him:" which made me suspect that I was not begotten, for which reason those pure souls, who were old Christians, despised even my appearance. This drove me again to a throne of grace with all the energy of prayer wishing that I might wade through the confines of the damned, rather than be a hypocrite, which I thought one of the blackest characters upon earth. But when I went to prayer to Jesus, I again found all right. I desired him to let me go back into all my former troubles; but that door was locked up, and more light and love than ever was communicated to my soul.

This thing staggered me exceedingly, as I could not reconcile the Lord's astonishing love to me with the saints' hatred against me. On the next Lord's day I went out of the meeting, and walked to and fro from Hampton Wick to Hampton Court Green. And it being cold weather, and the snow lying on the ground, I could not help shedding many tears over my hard fate. I thought that such pure holy Christians as they were would have rejoiced at seeing such a poor miserable sinner as myself brought out of despair and madness, as I found my soul was desirous of seeing sinners converted to the faith of Christ. "But, alas!" said I, "I am wrong - their religion is not like mine, I am deluded-they, precious souls, look like angels; they cannot be wrong, I am the deluded one - I could take them all in my bosom, but they hate me with a perfect hatred - Oh! that I had never come among them! - Am I a peace-maker? No; a divider and a scatterer; they fly from me, they will not sit with me - 'with such a one. no, not to eat!' - I am the man, I have divided the flock of God; one goes one way, and another another. Oh that I had never come among them to create this division! - 'He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me (says the Saviour) scattereth.' I am the man. - Oh that such an unworthy wretch

as I had but kept my proper distance! I might have gone safely to heaven through the blood of the Saviour, without defiling or scattering so pure a body of saints. But, alas! I always was of a froward and forward turn of mind, and this will prove in the end my own decay."

When I went home at night all was well again between Christ and my conscience; but what all this meant I knew not. To suspect their religion I could not, they seemed so holy; and, indeed, I thought that every individual who carried a Bible and an hymn book, must surely be at the very portals of heaven.

I Read, Expound and Pray in Private

Soon after this I removed to Ewell in Surrey, where a man and his wife seemed to be wrought upon by my private conversation with them. They invited me to their house; and I often went and read, expounded, and prayed with them. Others seeing a change wrought in these, came also and I expounded to them likewise. This soon raised a persecution against me; I therefore longed to get to Kingston to inform them of it, thinking (as Job says) that "pity should be shewed souls in trouble." But, alas! when I mentioned speaking to the people, the holy being, as I supposed him to be, took down the book of Ezekiel, and read the chapter about the duty of a watchman, and of warning sinners, or else their blood would be required at the watchman's hand, &c. This sent me home almost distracted; and I was tempted to curse the day that ever I saw the meeting, to bring upon my soul this perpetual cross, and make every Lord's day a day of "lamentation, mourning, and woe." On my road home I groaned till I nearly fainted; and was almost in despair to think that such a wretch as I should open my mouth for God, and pursue the way of presumption, which would bring the blood of all the unbelieving sinners, who heard me, upon my guilty head. I therefore begged God ten thousand pardons, and promised

never to attempt the like again. But, when the night came, the woman came up - "William, arise, the house is full of people, who are come to hear you;" and these words pursued me, "He that puts his hand to the plough, and looks back, is not fit for the kingdom of God." Oh what a sore travail! I went weeping and mourning down to the house, begging God to pardon me for this presumption; and promising, if he would deliver me from this enthrallment, that I would embark no more in this dangerous work. When I began to speak, my adversaries' mouths were stopped, and much power and liberty were given me. By this I was comforted: but, when I began to consider what the next Lord's day would bring forth, that cast me into my old trembling disorder again.

Accordingly, the next Lord's day I went into the vestry, and asked the minister what he thought of my speaking to the people! He set the work forth to be such a momentous task as almost drove me out of my senses. I went home mourning in sackcloth and ashes, promising never to open my mouth any more if God would but pardon this crime. The next week two or three young men who lived at Epsom, and who had been awakened, heard of me, and came to see me. With them I conversed freely; and they seemed to understand me perfectly, but were much amazed to see me in so poor a lodging, and such sorry habiliments (for I had on my working clothes). After prayer they left me, but soon came to visit me again; and, as fresh matter arose in my mind by daily meditations, I communicated it to them whenever they came to see me; till, in a short time, began to speak regularly to them twice a-week.

It came to pass one Lord's day, as I was sitting in the vestry, that the people called the good man, who sat in the meeting, to go to prayer with them in the vestry. He came in, and, looking very hard at me, asked me if I could not pray with the people. I told him I could pray in my family, and

in private, but I had not words to pray before old Christians. He replied very roughly that people who had felt so much as I talked of, surely knew how to pray. I had heard him speak in prayer before, and his words I found were placed in order. But, as to my prayers, they were a jumble of various offerings mixed together. If I had sinned, I confessed it - if I received comfort in confession, I praised the Lord - and, if troubles were removed, I then began to bless the Almighty. My prayers consisted of many scraps, and were subject to various changes; but this good man's prayers were properly arranged, therefore he was the most proper person to speak before a society of old Christians. I thought God had not as yet furnished me with gifts or abilities to speak in public, so I rather chose not to attempt it. On my road home I found my soul in hard labour again; and was tempted to believe that I was not right yet, because I could not pray as that good man could; therefore I groaned in the disquietude of my soul, fearing that I was deceived. "My language," said I, "they cannot understand, it is so bad - I have told them what I felt in my soul; they hate to hear it - the good man says he wonders I cannot pray before people, as I talk so much about what Jesus Christ has done for me - Alas! I cannot pray before people - I am certainly wrong. - yet, oh that I could but pray before people as that holy man can!" But when I came to the Saviour again in prayer, he appeared still precious to my soul, and gave me much liberty to speak, and to leave my complaints with him. I found I could get any thing that I asked for my soul's good from the Saviour, though my poor petitions were so unconnected. But I wanted a gift of prayer, thinking that the people would then be more reconciled to me; especially that good man who fled from the vestry, and who I conceived to be so bright a saint. I therefore entreated God for that gift, as I longed to see them shew a regard for me as a sinner saved. Indeed I would have done any thing to have satisfied them, I

found such a regard for them, as they appeared so holy in my sight.

When the next Lord's day arrived I went there, hoping that God would grant me the gift of prayer, and enable me to speak with propriety, if I should be asked; as I thought they looked so cold on me because I could not pray. There came that day a very able minister to Kingston, and he shewed us the difference between saving grace and gifts. As to all he said about grace, I could find in my own soul, and more too; but when he came to shew gifts without grace, I found I had none of them; and when he came to shew the danger of gifts to graceless souls, I found my heart burn within me for joy. I fought the whole discourse was sent to me, and I received it as such. When I returned home, I repented in dust and ashes for asking gifts of God when there was such danger attending them; and my soul was drawn out to love the Lord more than ever, for his great goodness to his unworthy creature. "O Lord," said I, "gifts, I find, are dangerous! thou in pity has withheld them from me - grace is saving, that thou hast freely bestowed - in private prayer thou givest me liberty to speak to thee, and givest my soul every spiritual blessing that I ask for; but thou wouldst not indulge me with that, lest it should lift me up with pride. Oh the goodness of my God, not to answer my prayer when I asked for that which hypocrites have obtained as well as the most sincere saints!"

It happened, a few weeks after I heard the above-mentioned discourse, that we were disappointed of a preacher on the Lord's day at Kingston. The people in the forenoon, when the congregation was assembled, finding no preacher was come, proposed to sing an hymn, and speak in prayer, before the congregation. I hoped they would not invite me to speak, as I had blessed God for withholding gifts from me. However they asked me in my turn to speak in prayer: I accordingly went trembling to prayer; and I found God

gave me "a door of utterance" immediately, which continued with me from that day forward. I then found what the good man meant by the danger of gifts, by what I felt in my heart, after a few encomiums had been passed on me. However, I was determined not to venture any farther with my gift of utterance than I was forced by the invitation of believers, or an impulse from God.

I was one day reading the New Testament, and these words came with power," For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth."

Imputed Righteousness

The imputed righteousness of Christ was a doctrine which I never had a proper sight of before. I had laid fast hold of Jesus as my "all in all;" but now the Lord led me sweetly into the various branches of his finished salvation. The revelation of Christ's righteousness to me was like a second conversion. I traced my Bible perpetually after that blessed doctrine, and found it revealed both through the Old and New Testament; and wherever I found it I marked it with ink, till I had a cloud of gospel witnesses on my side in its behalf. Indeed it appeared in a most glorious light; I saw it was the vail in which our spiritual Isaac receives his spouse - the skirt that covers all that lie at the foot of Boaz - the garment the Saviour made for Adam - and the skin that covers the dry bones after the Spirit has entered into them. Thus the dear Redeemer, who was born under the law, fulfils that law, which says, "He that hath two coats, let him impart one to him that has none." The Saviour fulfils this precept; he clothes the naked, as well as feeds the hungry. For many weeks did my soul seek after and rejoice in this most soul-comforting and soul-establishing doctrine; and, since I have been in the ministry, I have been astonished to hear people ridiculing and exclaiming against the everlasting righteousness of the Son of God: but the self-righteous ever did and ever will. No man

can ever appear righteous before God till he is brought, like Job, to abhor himself “in dust and ashes;” or, with Paul, to call his own merit, “but dung and dross for the excellency of Christ.”

All the time Job held fast his own righteousness God kept him on the dunghill; a very fit throne for a sinner in such a robe: but, when he confessed he was vile, then God made an high-priest of him; and told his friends to carry their sacrifices to his servant Job, and that he should pray for them, for him would God accept. But to return -

Another temptation beset me; which was, that I should one day or other fall away from this my profession, and then there would be no more sacrifice for sin. This temptation at times staggered me much. My adversary never attempted to dispute me out of my reception of the Holy Ghost, but suggested that some had sinned against him - that others had tasted the heavenly gift; and that if they fell away, it was impossible to renew them again to repentance - and “let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall” - and “be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life” - and again, “but he that endureth to the end shall be saved.”

The Saints Perseverance

These things drove me to look over my Bible again for those passages which would secure, or assure, my heart of a safe arrival at my journey’s end; and my ever-blessed Redeemer condescended to confirm my mind in this particular also, The glorious doctrine of the saints’ perseverance was sweetly revealed to my soul; and though hypocrites fall away and perish, yet it is never said that the just finally perish; for” the righteous shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall grow stronger and stronger;” “the law of his God is in his heart, none of his steps shall slide.” Most delightfully did this blessed doctrine appear to me - “None shall pluck them out of my hands.” Most delightfully, too, has God

secured our souls in the way of regeneration. This glorious doctrine shines throughout the Bible, and it shone sweetly in my heart. Thus God enabled me to “cleanse my way, by taking heed thereto, according to his word:” he led my faith sweetly into the happy enjoyment of that blessed doctrine, which secures our safe arrival at glory. But to return -

I still continued to give exhortations at times at Ewell Marsh; and the people who came to hear me began to increase in number. A young man, who came from Epsom, it seems, was wrought upon by my ministry; till at last I had four young men who attended me from the same place, and who, I believe, now fear God. A poor man at Ewell, who also attended, I believe still continues in the faith; and his wife, who was a violent persecutor, and a very profane swearer, being persuaded to come and hear me once, went home wondering at my memory, instead of giving the glory to God. A few nights after, she dreamed that the world was at an end: in her distress she cried out, “There is light at Ewell Marsh;” which was the place where I lived and preached. From this circumstance she constantly attended me from that time forward, nor did I ever hear her swear again: whether she continues the same, I know not. She had a poor daughter also, who was a cripple, and had never walked, I believe, who seemed effectually called by grace.

A young man, named Shepherd, who attended me for some time, of whom I had some hope, and who I endeavoured to teach to read, as he had never learned letters, after having associated with me for a few months, was prevailed on by his father to leave me, and go to the alehouse, and so was dragged again into the service of Satan. After this he would never meet me, if he could possibly avoid it. But I once got hold of him, and talked to him very sharply; when his countenance fell, and he gave me no answer. This young man tried me severely; I was grieved for him at my heart, and thought his father had

acted a most awful part. I could not banish the thoughts of this young apostate from my mind day or night, especially as I was very zealous for Christ and his cause in those my early days. But God delivered me from that anxiety by a dream. I dreamed one night that I was contending warmly with this young man, and that I was reproving him for obeying the voice of his wicked father in matters of conscience, where his soul was at stake. I thought he laughed at me; and while he was laughing the end of the world came. I thought I saw the earth stagger like a drunkard, and afterwards float like the waves of the sea; it began to roll wave after wave, ready to take its flight; as it is written, "Before whose face the heavens and the earth fled away." I looked hard at him in my dream, and said "The end of the world is come: now, John, you will see whether you or I am right." And immediately his face turned pale, he sunk down into the earth, and I saw him no more. This circumstance convinced me that my endeavours to reclaim him were all in vain. I saw him about two years after at Thames Ditton; he was then in the Surrey militia, and in the broad way to the pit of destruction.

I continued exhorting the people at Ewell till I disturbed almost the whole parish, and raised a very great outcry against myself and the simple few that followed me. But, as they increased, I waxed rather bolder: and one night I thought I would venture to take a text, which I accordingly did, out of the Song of Solomon; "A garden enclosed is my sister, my spouse; a spring shut up, a fountain sealed," Song, iv. 12. After this I found my heart like a springing well. The next morning passages of scripture flowed in upon my mind, till I longed to pour them out; and various heads of discourse would naturally arise from various texts. Indeed the scriptures were my meditation day and night.

When I left work I used to take my book and walk out into the corn fields, sit down among the standing corn, and

there read and pray, and talk to my Redeemer, who seemed to shew his loving kindness so conspicuously to me. In the lonely fields, and under the hedges, I used to continue till nine or ten o'clock in the evening, and it was like bathing in the river of pleasure. In the morning I generally arose very early, and had most delightful soul-humbling times in prayer; which sent me to my labour its peace, knowing and feeling that all things stood fair between Christ and my conscience: when this was the ease, I knew all was well.

At times my comforts would abate, and my persecuting enemies would increase. Then I longed for the Lord's day, in hopes that some of the brethren would comfort and encourage me in the work, as they saw several souls awakened under me. But I was mistaken; for that good man, whom I supposed to be the brightest saint, would pick out such chapters to read to the people as he thought would distress me most. I also spoke to one or two of the ministers. But I found this inscription written on the foreheads of all earthly comforters - No refuge here. This sent me mourning home in sackcloth and ashes, beseeching God never to let me presume to speak in his name any more. I begged his Majesty's pardon, and promised never to presume to open my mouth in his name any more, if he would forgive me. I now was convinced that I was wrong; the ministering servant at Kingston, and his righteous children, disapproved of it. I was convinced that I had presumed too much. That night I went home, determined never to preach any more. It was on the Lord's day evening that I used at times to preach. However, that evening I did not go to the place of meeting; but went to my lodging, comforting myself that I had done with it, and hoping that the people of Kingston would now leave off smiting me.

As soon as I had promised myself peace and safety, then trouble came; for I heard my poor daughter in the faith coming up stairs, and then I began to tremble. In she came,

crying out “William, come, are you not ready? There are all the church- singers come up to hear you, and to dispute with you; the house is full of people, and you must come directly.” I ran and hid myself behind an old curtain to pray, but I could not. “Oh, what have I suffered this day for preaching, and now must I rush into that dangerous work again? I have no room to go into by myself to pray to God. If I preach, I am terrified to death by God’s children, who tell me not to run before I am sent. I have put my hand to the plough; and, if I look back, I am not fit for the kingdom of God.” Then these words came with power, “He that is ashamed of me and my words, of him will I be ashamed before the angels of God.” I got up, and went down in the spirit of one desperate, and found the house full of people indeed. I preached from this text; “Upon this rock will I build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” I fell to work upon my text, and God gave me great liberty in the work, and a mouth and wisdom which they could not gainsay or resist. It was preconcerted that they were to contradict me, if I had spoken any thing wrong; however, God stopped their mouths, and opened mine.

After this night I continued preaching two or three times a week, and God kept me very happy amidst all the oppositions and threatenings I then met with. On the Lord’s day I generally went to the meeting very happy, but was sure to go wounded home; therefore I hated the place, and dreaded the arrival of the Lord’s day, and yet I had no power to stay away. However, I had many arrows at times shot at me from the pulpit by some good men, who had been informed that I ran before I was sent. I then endeavoured narrowly to watch their doctrine, and to compare it with my own; and I generally found that there lay a mine of choice experience under most of the texts which I heard handled, and that sweet mine was seldom touched by them: they could not get into it for want

of a deeper experience. A man cannot dive unless he has been used to the deep waters. There was not one in twenty of those who came to preach there that could describe my soul travail, or my blessed deliverance. These considerations rendered their arrows of no force against me; I was more and more established in my own mind that I was intended for the ministry; and this persuasion never left me until I appeared a public minister of the gospel.

I Am Asked To Preach

It happened one Lord’s day at Kingston that the preacher did not come. A gentleman was there from London, who had been informed of my preaching at Ewell; he was a proprietor of the meeting, and sent for me into the vestry, desiring me to ascend the pulpit; I refused; he insisted on it, and his wife scolded me for refusing. However, I would not take the Bible, nor a text, nor would I go into the pulpit; but I went into the desk, and gave an exhortation, full of fear and trembling. The Lord seemed to bless it, and the people appeared satisfied, desiring me to preach in the afternoon, which I refused.

I was much amazed to see how the good man (who always shone so bright in my eyes) was settled when I went into the desk; I thought he would have gone out of the meeting. I began to watch narrowly what all this could be for; why he should shew such displeasure against me, as I had a great regard for him, though for above a twelve- month he had behaved very shy to me.

But I soon found out the cause of it. He seemed to be a stranger to the pardon of sin: therefore my speaking of receiving the atonement cut up all his religion, and provoked him to jealousy. This I soon perceived; and it staggered me much, as I had often heard people say, that that man had grace in his very face. And indeed so he had; and in his feet too, to all appearance; insomuch that I have often envied him, and wished to be like him. But, alas! alas! God looketh not as

man looketh; man looketh at the outward appearance, but God looketh at the heart. This convinced me that it was not a gloomy countenance, a circumspect foot, and a faltering speech, that constitute a saint; for these might he find where pride, self-righteousness, enmity against the truth, and the power of it, unbelief, and every other heart-sin, reign and rule. And this I clearly saw in many characters. The more external shew of sanctity a man has, the farther he is from God; if his conscience is not purged by the blood of Christ, the publican and harlot are nigher the kingdom of heaven than he is. How it staggered me, when I found so many of these holy beings, as I thought them, so ignorant of the pardon of sin! Alas, what is religion without it? A man must be pardoned or damned; and to persuade men they are pardoned, when they are not, is fighting against the verdict of their own consciences.

God having now opened my eyes to see these things, I envied none of them any longer; but blessed God with all my heart for teaching me himself, without the use of public means; and was angry with myself for desiring to appear as bright a Christian as some, whom I now saw to be as much filled with the sin of covetousness as any usurer in the world. However, if the Bible be true (and sure I am it is), such cannot enter into the kingdom of God. "Alas!" said I, "how few are there in the way of regeneration! How small is the bulk of gospel professors, when compared to the world! And not one in five of these can give any account of the pardon of sin, though God says he will pardon whom he reserves, and give them a heart to know it." But to return -

I continued preaching at Ewell Marsh, and the Lord was with me. My congregation increased till the little thatched house was full of hearers; and the Lord often visited us with precious gales from the everlasting hills, and made that little thatched hovel a Bethel to us; yea, the house of God in reality, and the very gates of heaven! I was requested by a young

man, who attended my ministry, to take a journey with him to Hersham, the place of his nativity. I accordingly went with him; and found that the gospel had been lately preached there, and that many people assembled at times to hear the word, when the Lord was pleased to send a minister among them. They desired and persuaded me to preach to them, to which I agreed. They then informed the people of it, and a great many assembled together; but before the hour arrived I found much fear and trembling. I now desired to retire for a while in private. A woman took me into a chamber where there was a picture of Mr. Whitefield, a man whom I had never seen, but of whom I had heard much talk. Alas! thought I, am I going to engage in the work of that great man? How shall I get through it? I meditated on this till I was at my wit's end. But, after wrestling with the Lord in prayer, I recovered myself a little, and delivered a discourse from this text, "Go forth, O ye daughters of Zion, and behold king Solomon, with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals, and in the day of the gladness of his heart," Song, iii. 11. I was overwhelmed with fear and shame; which towards the close began to wear off. Speaking before so many people rather emboldened me for the future, and gave me greater liberty in my delivery.

I continued to preach at Ewell twice a week; and my little flock increased much. I found that the more I preached, the more matter was poured into my heart, and my judgment gradually ripened. We met with a deal of opposition, and many threatenings from the wicked; but God never suffered any of them to hurt us. One evening I had been delivering a discourse, in which I experienced much warmth and enlargement of heart, and it seemed a glorious season to many of my hearers (and indeed we had many such seasons, for God made our little hill a delightful sunshiny bank:) but the next morning I awoke, like Samson when his head was shorn

by the Philistines, bereft of all my peace and comfort; my Lord was gone, and all was gone, "For the good man had taken the bag of money with him, and was to come again at the time appointed, Prov. vii. 20. When that all pointed day was to be I knew not. Oh how terrible is the Lord's departure to a soul that has been indulged with sweet access to him, and familiarity with him! it is like the second death. Never did I feel more distress; I quarrelled with the sin, for shining on me. "Alas!" said I, "why dost thou shine on my worthless carcass, seeing my Saviour is gone? He is gone, and I am left alone. My God is gone; and when I shall enjoy his sweet presence again I know not. Oh, ye angels, you can see him; you always enjoy the smiles of his sweet face; your residence is a Peniel to all eternity; you can sing his praise without being molested by a tempting devil, or clogged with a body of sin and death! But I cannot approach at this time without both. Oh that I could change stations with you! Yea, I even envy you the glorious rays of my dear Redeemer. Oh, ye birds, sing not to me; try not to charm my ears with your notes; you have no sin; you can sing when you please! But my singing days are over; my God is gone, and all is gone. Oh that I could leave my work, and go into some wood! I would there wander after him, like Elijah when he wandered to Horeh, till I starved and died. I would kneel down and pray till he comforted my soul, if I prayed myself to death. But, alas! I am yoked; I am chained up every hour of the day to labour for a bit of bread, and cannot get half enough to support nature! And what is this body of sin and death good for, if God has left the soul? Why should I labour to feed this body, seeing my God is gone? Nay, I had rather die than live, if my God comes no more to me. Oh, my blessed Saviour, why didst thou woo me, and draw my soul to love thee so dearly? Was it done to shew me the loss of infinite blessedness, and to make my hell the hotter? Oh the pains thou didst take to engage my soul! Thou didst

capture every thought, and engross my warmest affections! Thou weanedst me from every earthly comfort, nor wouldest thou let me rest till thou hadst got possession of my whole heart! I confessed my manifold sins to thee, and even told thee to damn me, for I deserved it. Oh, didst thou give me that glorious manifestation and deliverance on purpose to entangle me in my own confessions, and then to send me to hell under my own sentence? O, Lord, we poor mortals often labour hard to entangle each other's affections, and cruelly triumph where we have made a conquest. But surely my dear Redeemer will not prove inconstant in his love! No; he changes not; he cannot deceive. "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" Far be it from God that he should do iniquity! Far be it from the dear Redeemer to deceive the soul that is sick of love! Work! I cannot, I will not work; my God is gone, I will go after him." Down I threw my scythe on the grass, and set off into the fields and woods, in search after the best of friends; but in vain for that day. "I sought him, but found him not; I called him, but he gave me no answer."

Had I Sinned Against The Holy Ghost

I was now tempted to believe that I had sinned against the Holy Ghost, and that there was no pardon for me either in this world or the next. My heart was too hard to pray, and my eyes too dry to weep. I continued so till the ensuing sabbath; and the temptation pursued me on the road to Kingston. "Alas!" said I, "why do I hear the word of God? There it no pardon for sin against the Holy Ghost. I had better go back: none will condole with me at Kingston; they have envied me my happiness; and some of them have behaved as if they would chase me back to the gates of hell again, from whence I came. They have acted with me as the midwife did with Pharez when she quarrelled with him for getting loose; 'How hast thou broken forth? This breach be upon thee,' Gen. xxxvii. 29." In short, I turned round to go back, and thought I would

give all up and go no more; for there “was no more sacrifice for sin,” seeing I had been guilty of “the great transgression.” I resolved, however, to go once more, and then bid a farewell to all hearing for ever. When I came to the meeting I found Mr. Brookbanks was to preach, under whom I had at times received comfort; I was therefore glad to see him go into the pulpit. As he was discoursing on the love of God, he spoke thus: “Some of you have tasted this love of God; your souls have been filled with comfort; you have thought that your comforts would never abate, and you have nursed your sweet frames till you have lost them; and now Satan tempts you to think that you have sinned against the Holy Ghost, and you think God changes as your frames change.” Thus he touched my case, and hit the right nail on the head. This I knew was from God, as I had not mentioned it to any body. Satan immediately fled, my soul escaped, and I ascended the mount of transfiguration, where I had been before.

O how sweet a blessing is an experimental ministry! “Whether Paul or Apollos, Cephas or Christ, life or death, are all ours.’ I tarried there all the day, and heard him again in the evening. As I returned home, about ten o’clock in the night, I had joy and peace beyond expression. It was in the winter season, and very dark. When I came into the fields between Kingston Common and Ewell Marsh, where I had been tempted to go back, I found the Saviour’s presence so precious to my soul that I could not help bantering the devil. “In this place,” said I, “you told me I had sinned against the Holy Ghost, and that it was in vain for me to go and hear the word any more; there was no more comfort nor pardon for me! O thou wretch!” I stamped with my foot, and struck the ground with my stick, saying, “Come now, come now, the Lord is with me; yea, ‘compass me about like bees, and in the name of my God I will destroy you.” Thus I stood still and challenged Satan, and was ready to say, as the apostles

did, “the devils are subject to us through thy name.” I then travelled on, talking to and enjoying my dear Redeemer, till I thought the woods and hedges must hear my voice.

In the following week, to the best of my recollection, being at my labour, I had a most wonderful view of that city, or heavenly Jerusalem, mentioned in the book of the Revelation. It was in the day-time, and I had an open vision of it. God showed me its sweet foundations, its columns, its gates, its illustrious light; and the oaths, promises, and atoning blood of the Lamb, that secure it; yea, every perfection of the Deity stands as its eternal security. I shall not enlarge, lest I give another offence. But I saw the standing of God’s elect so firm, that I looked up, wept, and blessed the Saviour, and said, “I stand as firm as thy throne, and have the same basis;” and this would confirm it, “He that trusteth in the Lord, shall be as Mount Zion, that cannot be moved;” the reason is, because the Most High establishes her.

O the sweet love of the dear Redeemer! the infinite worth of his great salvation! We shall never know the worth of Christ till we are filled with all the fullness of God in heaven, and have a perfect knowledge of the state of the damned in hell. Then, but not till then, shall we know the invaluable worth of the discriminating grace of the dear Redeemer. But to return -

The sweetest moments I enjoyed were generally early in the morning at prayer. This sweet privilege I experienced near a twelve-month, some few intervals excepted: and the evenings were almost as sweet to me in reading the Bible. But I was suddenly bereft of these blessed privileges by a state of lethargy, which quite overwhelmed me. As soon as I took the Bible in hand I found myself grow drowsy. If I prayed I was ready to fall asleep on my knees. In the morning I seldom could wake till it was time for me to be at work, and then I could not stop to pray; this sent me groaning to work

with hardness of heart. For many weeks I laboured under this lethargic frame, and could not overcome it. I thought I would go to bed at seven o'clock, rather than lie so long in the morning at the expense of such sweet communion with Christ. I used formerly to wake at three o'clock, but now I could not rise till six. However, all my efforts to overcome it were in vain. It came in my mind to pray against it, but I thought it could not be a temptation; I knew beloved sleep was the gift of God; Psal. cxxvii. 2; this I had enjoyed: but this was not beloved sleep, for I hated it. However, at last I prayed God to wake me at such an hour, and he did; but I found myself so overwhelmed that I could not rise. It was amazing how this frame troubled and foiled me, till this scripture came to my mind, "Without me ye can do nothing." And indeed I found it so; and therefore prayed the Lord to take it away, which he accordingly did.

A little while after this, the poor man, who had been awakened under my ministry, came to me, and said, "I know not what to do." I asked him, "What is the matter?" He replied, "We are obliged, two or three times a week, to get up at three o'clock to lead the carriage with powder; but I have such a sleepiness comes upon me that I cannot wake in time; and the men tell me that I sit up preaching and praying till I cannot get up to do my business, so that other people are obliged to do my work. I have gone to bed," continued he, "by seven o'clock, in order to rise early, but I cannot overcome it." I told him how I had been beset, and advised him to pray: he did so, and got rid of it. Reader, beware of a sleepy devil, for he is as bad as any. When once you begin to cry, "A little more sleep, a little more slumber, a little more folding of the hands to sleep; then shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man," Prov. vi. 10, 11.

I had long entertained a desire to live or labour under some family that feared God, as those I then worked for

seemed to be sworn enemies to him. Besides, I thought that I should be instructed in the ways of God more than I was at that time. Here I had no old Christian to converse with, none to minister a word of comfort to me. I had all these young ones to feed, whether I was happy or miserable; but none of them could afford any comfort to me. At times I secretly prayed to the Lord that he would send me to labour among people that feared his name. I often found a check within me when I put up these petitions, as I appeared discontented in that station wherein God had placed me. However, it so happened that my master turned me out of the garden because I refused to work on the Lord's day. I then preached my farewell sermon to my poor little flock, whom I dearly loved. My text was, "Through faith he kept the passover and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the first-born should touch them," Heb. xi. 28. The poor souls were drowned in tears, and we had a most affecting scene at parting. One of them, who a little before had said that he should not be sorry when I was gone, because I wanted to keep them so strict, now that the last night arrived, seemed more affected than any of the rest; for he did not go to bed the whole night, but sat up in the kitchen at my lodgings: and I believe his conscience smote him, for he had exercised my patience severely by his instability.

In the morning I walked abroad, and wept at the thoughts of leaving the little thatched cottage, where I had dwelt and experienced so many sweet moments. I could not help telling the dear Redeemer that there would be none to proclaim his name, and contend for his honour when I was gone; they would abuse his name, and treat his children as they pleased, unless his blessed Majesty would be entreated to send some preacher among them. "Thus I spake as a child, I thought as a child, and I understood as a child," 1 Cor. xiii. 11.

I Carry Coals

I now went to Ditton, and there carried coals; where,

as my master and mistress were old professors, I thought I should be in heaven. I watched narrowly to know whether the Lord was with me on the road, and I found he was. If I had lost his presence I should have been sure that I had taken a wrong step; but, as I experienced him precious to me and present with me, all was well.

When I was settled in my place I found my affections run after those poor souls whom I had left at Ewell; I cherished a greater love towards them than to my own family; and used to cry and pray to God for them every time I was in private. Indeed I could not help going to Ewell now and then on the Wednesday evening, after I had done work, to preach to them: and at eleven or twelve o'clock at night they would walk a mile or two with me on my road home, when we used to part with prayer on the wild common. But this door was soon shut. The good man left his house; and another of my poor children would have opened his door, but his master informed him, if he did, he would turn him and his family into the street; so I could go no more there, having place to preach in.

My Master Cavils at the Doctrins of Grace

I now expected a heaven upon earth, as I was employed by old Christians; but I soon found my mistake, and repented in dust and ashes for praying to leave Ewell. My master used to cavil against the doctrine of election, imputed righteousness, and the final perseverance of the saints. These were the very truths that the God of heaven had revealed to my soul as her eternal establishment. This man had made a profession of Christ for thirty years, though he was so blind to the plan of salvation. And, what was still worse, he was at war with the very basis of the covenant of grace. What shall we say to these things? Why, we must say as Paul did, "Such are ever learning, and yet never able to come to the knowledge of the truth," 2 Tim. iii. 7.

How staggering was this to my feeble soul, especially

as I expected to meet with gospel liberty and stability in its greatest perfection! But, alas! I found no such religion as I had left behind me; wherefore I wished myself again at Ewell, to feed on barley bread; for I began to be sick of this sort of Christianity. My mistress would talk to me about religion all the day long, if opportunity offered; but my heart was barred against all she said; for her whole conversation was to inform me what great feats she had done for the cause of God, while my delightful element was informing people what God had done for me; therefore we could no more unite in heart than the north and south poles.

I soon perceived that she envied my happiness: but I believe conscience at times secretly accused her of hypocrisy, and then prayers were called for; that is, I must kneel down and pray to God for her as soon as any opportunity offered. When I began to watch her conduct I suspected her awful state; which made me go to prayer with her very reluctantly, till at last my soul loathed it. I could compare my gift of prayer to nothing but David's harp. Every time the devil got hold of Saul David must play on the harp - the devil would not be charmed without music. And every time my mistress had any qualms of conscience I must pray. In short, the devil that I had to deal with was "transformed into an angel of light" - a religious devil; therefore he must be charmed with prayer.

I was astonished to see a woman, who had taken so much pains to bring the gospel to different places - to receive the ministers of it into her house - and to make such a blaze in the world about religion - act in the manner she did. So profoundly ignorant was she, as not to know the meaning of any one passage in the word of God. I once asked her if ever God had given her any answers to her prayers; or if she had received the atonement of Christ in her conscience? All the answer I could get was this: "When we first came into this business we were poor, and I prayed God to help us forward

in the world; and these words came to my mind afterward, ‘Though thy beginning is small, thy latter end shall increase.’” I told her these words were only a promise of temporal things, for she only prayed for such. But this was all I could get from her; faith, repentance, and the new birth, were left quite out of the question. May God deliver my soul from such an empty profession as this! But to return -

I was invited to preach the word of God at Woking, &c. Accordingly I went; and God greatly blessed it to many souls. He generally sent me groaning to the work, and returning home with prayer to him to forgive me if I ran before I was sent, which I was often tempted to suspect. This made me promise never to go again: but, when the Lord’s day came, I had no more power to stay away than I had to create a world. I have sometimes been so filled with terror at the thoughts of running from the work, that I have trembled in myself, and have gone all the way in chains: but, when I began to speak, my bondage forsook me and fled; and I evidently saw that God blessed the word greatly. However, as soon as I got on my road home I found my chains return again; or, as Paul says, I went “bound in the spirit.” My temptations would come on as usual, and then I begged that God would never let me presume to speak in his name again if it was displeasing to him.

Having gone on a few months this way, I was determined to give it up, and not to go on in the manner I then did, suffering with hard labour, extreme Poverty, buffeted by the devil, and travelling all night on the road, in order to get home soon enough to do my business. Accordingly, when the next Lord’s day came, I set off another way. However, I paid dear for this; and therefore I went again to Nineveh, and preached what God ordered me.

For two or three years I continued in this situation, doubting at times of my call to the work, even though I had

twenty or thirty seals to my ministry. I had the same travail in my soul, to make my call to the ministry clear, as I had to “make my calling and election sure:” and it is visible in the scriptures that others had the same. Moses disputed the point with the Lord, and several miracles were wrought to confirm him. Jeremiah tells God he could not speak, for he was a child; and at last curses the day of his birth, and the man that first brought tidings of it. And my poor brother Jonah travelled both by sea and land to escape, though we all know he made a very bad voyage of it. Therefore he, who is a stranger to this internal call from God to the work of the ministry, has a right to doubt of his call being from him. “How shall they call on him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall one preach except he be sent?” And again, “No man taketh this office upon himself, but he that was called of God, as was Aaron.” And, if God calls him, he will let him know it. God made it known to all Israel that Samuel was established a prophet of the Lord. And God will, in our days, make all his spiritual Israel know who are and who are not ministers of Christ, by their experience and power. If they have neither experience nor power, they never were sent of God; as it is written, “But I am full of power by the Spirit of the Lord? Mic. iii. 8. This I find is Paul’s challenge to the false apostles; “But I will come unto you shortly, if the Lord will; and will know not the speech (mark that - not the speech) of them which are puffed up, but the power. For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power,” I Cor. iv. 19, 20. Experience also is needful for the ministerial function; for “it is experience that worketh hope;” and a good hope emboldens the preacher; as it is written, “Hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost given unto us.” Luther says that temptation, meditation, and prayer, make a minister. A minister chosen of men only may for a time please men;

but, if he is chosen of Christ, he will labour to “please him who hath chosen him to be soldier,” 2 Tim. ii. 4.

It being known that I was extremely poor, now and then a friend would offer me a shilling or two; which I dared not take, as Satan used to follow me with this scripture, “Taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind,” I Pet. v. 2. To guard against this lucre, I was ready to starve myself, until the Lord applied these words to my heart, “He that preaches the gospel shall live of the gospel:” and again, “The labourer is worthy of his hire.” During the time I preached freely I expected to have cut off every occasion from them that sought occasion, as Paul says. But, notwithstanding my over-care to cut off occasions, my enemies found out means enough to bespatter me.

Accused of many Things

God shewed me that it was not in my power to escape the cross; for tidings were brought me one day that I had stripped a poor man’s house of all his furniture, not leaving the poor soul so much as a candlestick! This touched my feelings exceedingly, and I rebelled against the cross. Soon after it was spread abroad that I had stripped another poor man’s house of all the bacon he had, leaving his poor children starving. These things still called for patience; and I found the Saviour’s words verified, “He that will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me.” This I found required patience, and I had but little; for one report succeeding another made me (like Job) almost ready to curse my day.

Soon after this it was rumoured that I had stolen a goose from the common, which belonged to a poor man. And shortly after another report was propagated, that I had stolen some roasting pigs out of a poor man’s pound; that several people had watched me, and seen me carry them off in a bag. After this a letter was sent me by a man who made

a profession of religion (and merely a profession); in which he expressed great grief at hearing that I preached for money; and wondered much at it, as he knew me to be a man fearing God, and thought I would stand at a distance from sullyng the glory of Christ, &c. At this time I was in debt, and almost starved to death for want of necessaries; as might justly be expected, having five in family to maintain on the scanty pittance of ten shillings per week. All this time I had given my ministerial labours freely; therefore I felt this letter as a cruel stroke. Since God had lifted up my head, I called on the person who wrote me that letter, to beg a trifle towards building a chapel at Worpolsdon, in Surrey, not doubting but he would willingly grant my request, being a man of property, a single man, and one who (by his letter) appeared such a foe to covetousness. However, I could not drag a mite from his coffers; which convinced me that, when he wrote the letter, agreeable to the Kentish proverb, he measured my corn by his own bushel. But, after all our measuring, we must come to God’s standard; and God declares that covetousness is the thorn that chokes the gospel, Mark, iv. 7; that the possessors of it are the friends of the world, James, iv. 4; the enemies of God, James iv. 4; the slaves of the earth, Eccl. iv. 8; the porters of thick clay, Hab. ii. 6; the grinders of the poor, Isaiah, iii. 15; the pests of society, Eccl. ix. 8; the oppressors of a nation, Eccl. iv. 1; the scandal of the church of God, John, xii. 6; the objects of God’s hatred, Psal. x. 3; the servants of mammon, Matt. vi. 24; the idolaters of the world, Eph. v. 5; and the heirs of damnation, Job, xxiv. 18; Psal. xvii. 14; Luke, xvi. 25. But to return -

An Experience Meeting

I found I had work enough to bear my daily cross, and that all my efforts to gain the esteem of the world were in vain. And indeed it is little better than striving against the decrees of God to labour for it; for God has declared we shall

be hated of all men for his name's sake; nor is it in our power to prevent it. However, this scripture was of great comfort to me; "Blessed are ye when men shall revile and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you, falsely, for my sake: rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven; for in like manner did they persecute the prophets which were before you," &c. These scandals reconciled me to the cross and emboldened me so much in my ministry, that I became like a brazen wall, or an iron pillar therefore I felt very little of it afterwards. My mistress, perceiving me called forth to the ministry, laboured hard to pull me down from the mount; and I believe she envied me my sweet enjoyment of Christ as much as Saul envied the happiness of Samuel and David. She desired me to go with her to Kingston, to what they called an experience meeting, where her brother was the examiner. Accordingly I went. When we came there we found several people assembled together, and sat down with them. There being nobody to speak to the people, I opened my mouth, and spake to them from the scriptures by way of exhortation, till her brother should arrive: but my mistress desired me to hold my peace, as I did not understand their order. I accordingly obeyed her voice, and said no more; so we had a silent meeting for near an hour. At last her brother came, and began to examine as round with respect to a work of grace on our souls. When he came to me, I answered him in a few particulars, which I knew a man must experience, if he were saved. It seemed rather to puzzle him. He said, "Some people take fancy for faith." I told him faith would bring into the conscience pardon and peace from the Redeemer's blood, but fancy could not - fancy floated in the head, but faith worked in the heart, I partly knew what I was brought there for, and therefore was determined to defend the gospel which I had received from the Lord, and the Spirit's work on my soul. As I suspected that they intended to rob me of my

comfort, I was determined to withstand them. Accordingly he levelled his arrows at my consolations, and I levelled mine at a luke-warm profession: he quoted old authors, and I quoted the Bible, and of course silenced him. This disappointed my mistress much. On the road home she asked me what I thought of her brother? I told her I knew not what he was in God's covenant, but he was dead in soul, if God's words were true, of which truth I had no doubt for my part. I went no more to that meeting, for it appeared to me to be nothing but a nursery for hypocrites; and so it proved. It was casting pearls before swine, and teaching hypocrites to speak about the operations of the Holy Ghost; which they only learned of others, but had no experience of themselves. An experience meeting ought to be managed by an experienced man, who can "separate the vile from the precious," otherwise he will do the devil's work; I mean, he will sow "tares among the wheat," or bring in the children of the wicked one among the children of the kingdom.

Whenever my reader sees people at God's house turning up their eyes, lifting up their hands, and groaning at every sentence, he may suspect such to be young exotics, which have sprung up and been nursed at an experience meeting. When Jesus groaned at Lazarus' grave, it was moaning in spirit; the beholders might see him weep, and all his friends with him pensive in sorrow, even till the ungodly spectators cried out, "behold how he loved him!" All that affectation, crying aloud, and ridiculous gestures, which are to be seen under the doctrines of Arminianism, are little better than a devilish frenzy. When Peter's hearers cried out "What must we do to be saved?" it was not under the sound of sinless perfection, nor of free agency; but under the awful charge of imbruing their hands in innocent blood, sweetly softened with the soul-humbling promise of a free pardon, accompanied with the promise of the Holy Ghost, as you may read in

the second chapter of the Acts. In my greatest distress, or under the sweetest humblings, I never let any mortal hear my groaning nor acclamations, if I could help it; and I have always rebuked it in others; and am determined not to hatch any such cockatrice eggs, but to crush them till they break “out into a viper,” Isa. lix. 5.

My reader may object, and say, Who forbids our groaning before people? I answer, God forbids it; as it is written, “And the land shall mourn, every family apart; the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Levi apart, and their wives apart; the family of Shimei apart, and their wives apart. All the families that remain, every family apart, and their wives apart,” Zech. xii. 12-14. The words that I have quoted are not to be understood or applied as some of the Quakers apply them; namely, that when a young couple are espoused they are to be kept apart for a season, to mourn, before they come together: this is nothing but mourning after one another. “Who hath required this at their hands?” Isaiah, i. 13. Not God, I am sure: for he says, “When a man hath taken a new wife, he shall not go out to war, neither shall he be charged with any business; but he shall be free at home one year, and shall cheer up his wife (mark that - free at home, and cheer up his wife) which he hath taken,” Deut. xxiv. 5. By which it appears that it is not the mourning of the temporal bridegroom and bride after one another that God requires; for the day of espousals is called in scripture “the day of the gladness of a man’s heart,” Cant. iii. 11.

But the mourning that God means is at the sight of Christ crucified, when we have that sight under the operation of the Holy Ghost; as it is written, “And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications; and they shall look upon

me whom they have pierced, and shall mourn for him as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him as one that is in bitterness for his first-born,” Zech. xii. 10. And then follows, “mourning apart, and their wives apart.” Such people pervert the word of God, and declare publicly that they cannot distinguish between a carnal marriage and a spiritual birth But to return -

My mistress finding that she could not get me altogether stripped of the peace and happiness I then enjoyed, went another way to work; for, whenever any minister or professor came to her house, she informed them of my preaching; and, as I could not pray with her, she told them I was so spiritually proud that I would not join with her in prayer. It was not, however, my pride, but her sin, that stopped the mouth of prayer; for how can a person pray with people one minute, and quarrel with them the next? Whatever Christian or minister called at the house was sure (after having a little conference with her) to come to me at the wharf, saying, “So, my friend, you preach, I am informed; take heed you do not run before you are sent,” &c. Others would come to me, saying, “Beware of pride, my friend; pride is dangerous.” And others would tell me of the importance of the ministerial work, without telling me wherein my sufficiency lay.

I had these things sounded in my ears till my soul was bowed down within me. These cautions were out of season to me; for I had run away once from the work already, and had suffered severely for it; therefore I knew it came from my mistress, not from God. Nor was I much in danger of pride, while carnal professors were harassing my soul all the day long, and a poor family wanting bread at home; bowed down with hard labour for ten shillings per week; and no clothes to preach in, except a fustian frock, an old pair of leather breeches, yarn stockings, and clouted shoes. A God-fearing person, thus equipped, who has the galling yoke of an

hypocrite upon his neck, and who is daily fighting against the peace of his conscience and the comfort of his soul, will not find much to lift him up with pride.

At last, however. I began to answer these gentlemen's cautions from the word of God, which stopped their mouths. For, when they cautioned me to take care, I told them my taking care would not do, we must cast all our care upon the Lord, who careth for us; I Pet. v. 7. And again, "For we are kept by the mighty power of God through faith unto salvation," 1 Pet. i. 5. And, when they have told me to beware of pride, I answered, that the same Christ, who hath redeemed me "from the curse of the law," had redeemed me also from "deceit and violence," Psal. lxxii. 14; and from all other evil; Gen. xlvi. 16. When they have talked of the wisdom that was required in a minister, I replied! Christ was, "made of God unto us wisdom" - that Christ had promised to give me "a mouth and wisdom which all mine enemies shall not be able to gainsay nor resist," Luke, xxi. 15; and that he had given me faith to believe that he certainly would accomplish it. I found that a few evangelical answers were sufficient to stop the mouths of such legal advisers, who lead our minds from the Saviour, instead of leading us to him, without whom "we can do nothing," John, xv. 5.

My mistress used to watch me all the day long; and, if at my meal-times she saw me go into any of the out-offices, she would suspect I was gone to prayer, and would follow me, desiring that I would let her join with me, and that I would pray for her. Instead of which, my business was to pray to God to deliver me from her. Finding that I made use of a little place by the Thames-side for prayer and reading of an evening after I had left work, she locked it up, though it was of no other use. In short, I could compare her to none but the enemies of St. Stephen, of whom it is said that, when his face shone before the council like the face of an angel, his

adversaries gnashed their teeth at him.

Reader, art thou a young Christian? Take heed of these comfort-killers; who carry a lance in their mouths, to let out the very power and life of godliness; and only envy thy happiness, and grudge because they themselves are not satisfied with it. They would rather make thee as dead as themselves, than feel the flames of jealousy. Keep close to Christ; balance thy accounts between him and conscience two or three times a-day; and expect your daily penny from him, and your "expectation shall not be cut off." Real religion consists in a pure and heavenly mind; a purged and peaceable conscience; and gospel affections, going out after the dear Redeemer. These thou canst not enjoy, unless thou maintainest a close union and communion with Christ, which communion is kept up by living faith and fervent prayer. There is much head and tongue religion in the world, while there is but little of this vital religion. I have been amazed at times to think how such hardened hypocrites could sit under the gospel. But the scriptures convinced me that it was always so; for the very devils appeared among the angels in heaven before they were east out - Cain got into the first church - Canaan into the second - Ishmael into the third - Esau into the fourth - Saul among the prophets - Judas among the apostles - Nicolas among the deacons, and Ananias and Sapphira among the primitive saints. Thus, says the Saviour, "Let the wheat and the tares grow together until the harvest." I know the language of my soul was, "Lord, shall I pluck them up?" But the Lord says, No, "Let them grow together until the harvest." I believe David had an itching finger against these tares, when he says, "Who will rise up with me against the evil doers? I will surely destroy all the wicked of the land, that I may cut off all the wicked doers from the city of the Lord," Psal. ca. 8. However, David could not destroy all the hypocrites; for, when he had got rid of Saul, Ahithophel found him out,

and got to his very table, cabinet, and conscience; he was his counsellor, his guide, and his familiar friend.

I was once in a stage coach with two gentlemen, who were speaking to each other about rogues. One was mentioning how he had been taken in by a swindler; when the other observed - "If there is a simple fool in the world, a villain will find him out." This witness is true.

If such a man as David could not escape such hypocrites, how shall we? The dear Redeemer travelled in this path also. If a woman, moved with pity, would anoint Jesus in faith to his burial, Judas wants the unction turned into cash, with a pretence to relieve the poor. If the Saviour hungered or thirsted, he might beg wafer of the woman at the well; and if he would feed his followers, he might work miracles to do it - Judas bore the bag, and loved that which was put therein, for he was a thief. If the Lord makes a supper, Judas is there; while he is taking his mournful leave, Judas is selling his blood; and, when he is in the greatest agonies in the garden, Judas comes, as a general of Satan's army, at the front with a kiss; the chief captains in the centre; and poor ignorant souls, armed with the weapons of indignation, in the rear. Thus the dear Redeemer travelled this path also; he was pestered with an hypocrite as well as we. However, he left his heavenly Father to pluck Judas up; and we must leave Christ to pluck our tares up also.

Notwithstanding all my endeavours to keep up the life of religion in my soul, this woman damped it much at times; for she would come and quarrel with me till she made me angry, and then my peace and comfort left me. When this was the case she had banquet and I had a fast; for she could not make fast while the bridegroom was with me; but, when malice drove him away, then I fasted. At last I began to be so stripped, that her spirit would come upon me even if I was at the bottom of the wharf, when I heard her quarrelling, till

I felt myself both wounded and naked. "Alas!" said I, "how hard did I wrestle to get this sweet frame of mind; and now what hard work it is to keep it! Parsons and people, professors and profane, wonder that I have not left my first love; and endeavour to insinuate that I shall shortly lose that sweet way of living, and be brought to live by faith, which, according to their account, has neither life nor love belonging to it." Whenever any preacher has began to level his discourse at the comforting power of religion, I began to tremble; for I would as soon have parted with my life as with my comfort. But this I observed, that none of them could clear such a point with the word of God on their side: for there is not a word in all God's book that speaks against spiritual life and divine love in the soul of a believer. No; every promise is pregnant with these blessings, and they are conveyed to the souls of men by the Holy Ghost; and the gospel is to be preached to encourage and nurse this life and love, wherever quickening and inflaming grace hath operated.

I often felt a rebuke in my conscience for not reproving my mistress, and telling her of her awful state; but the consideration of my being a labourer, and she my mistress, prevented me from doing it. If any good Christian came to the house, she would immediately take down the Bible, and lay it open in her lap. It was a rare thing for any professor to see her without it; and yet I verily believe she scarcely read a chapter in a year. I one day went under a hedge in the garden, and there prayed to God to enable me to tell her of her wretched profession. As soon as I came back to the wharf she called me in, and told me she wanted me to go to prayer with her. This was a most painful task to perform. However, I was going to kneel down, or else to play my harp; but she prevented me, by saying, "Stop, William, I want to have a little conversation with you; I want to know what you think of the state of my soul." I replied, "I am your servant, or labourer, and as such it

is my duty to obey you; but, if you ask me about divine things, you put me in the place of a gospel minister; and as such, I must lay by the thoughts of servitude, and tell you (as in God's sight) what I really think you are. For my part, I verily believe you are a hypocrite in the sight of God; your religion is nothing else but to deceive yourself and others, nor can I call you honest in any sense whatever." She raged, saying, "You are no judge of the matter." I told her, if she really thought so, she should not have applied to me for counsel. And I informed her how she might know whether I had told her the truth or not. If she would go into her closet, and pray to God to make her conscience do its office; and if her conscience did not bear the same testimony against her as I did, she was right, and I was wrong. However, conscience and I agreed in our verdict; and, after I had talked to her till she was a little cooled, I went to prayer with her, and begged God to bless the message; which was the last time I ever prayed with her. After this she went to Kingston, and informed the good people there that I had called her a hypocrite; without telling them that she had asked my opinion of her state, or mentioning my having apologized to her as a servant, this prejudiced many good people against me. The preachers from London were informed of it; and heavy charges were brought against me for my rash conduct. However, God's word justified me for my deliberate reproof, and so did my own conscience too; and, as good Mr. Bunyan says, "If there was a little more of this faithful dealing, the society of the godly would be too hot for talk, tires." But many good men blaming me, and pitying her, "healed the wound slightly, crying, Peace, Peace, where God had not spoken peace." When she went to complain to one good man, he said he believed that I had told her the real truth; for he had often declared that, among all her friends, she had not one faithful one, who would tell her the state she was in.

One day when I was praying, and found great liberty with Christ, and sweet access to him, I asked his blessed Majesty what I could be kept in that place for, where there was nothing but sin any misery? And I came away satisfied of the reason. Before I went to that place I was no more fit for a minister than an infant. I had been so long in convictions, and had afterwards been blessed with such a soul-humbling deliverance, that my spirit was as a weaned child. Whoever carried a Bible or an hymn-book I viewed as an eminent saint, and to such would unbosom all my experience; for I could not suspect any to be hypocrites who sat under the gospel. Therefore it was perpetually impressed upon my mind that I was kept there to learn how to distinguish between real grace in Christians and the mimicry of hypocrites; and that I was to go forth into the public ministry as soon as I was prepared under this woman's tuition. I found that "the testimony of Jesus was the spirit of prophecy" to me; for it so fell out that, as soon as I left that wharf, doors were opened to me continually. And I must confess that I am beholden to that woman (as the chief instrument under God) for every discourse that I have been enabled to deliver against a hypocrite. And I soon saw the effects of this when I came publicly into the work, by the great quantity of old leaven which God used me as an instrument to purge out. It was also of farther use, as it enabled me to endure persecution, and to withstand these canting professors.

A spirit of meekness is excellent when it has tender consciences to examine, or established flocks to feed. But, if Elisha is called to do Elijah's work, he had need of a double portion of Elijah's spirit. If such a spirit of power and prevalency with God should appear in our days, some of our dignified gentlemen would call it a bad one, though the scriptures inform us that all those who resisted it resisted the Holy Ghost, which plainly proves that the spirit of Elijah and that of St. Stephen were the same spirit; as it is written,

“Ye stiff-necked, and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted?” Acts, vii. 51, 52. Some in our days call it an Old Testament spirit, hinting thereby that the spirit of the New Testament differs from that of the old; so they will divide the substance of the Holy Ghost, rather than allow him to divide his gifts “severally as he will.”

I found that I must be drove from all refuge, either in the world or in the church of God, and stand in the promised strength of the Lord alone; for which I have reason to bless God for ever, though it was trying to flesh and blood. I should not have mentioned so much of this, but I think it may be of use to poor young souls, who are buffeted in their first love by dry, legal, bitter professors, who never knew the plague of the human heart, nor the blessings of God’s Spirit, that they may shun them. Being fully persuaded that I was kept there for the aforesaid purposes, I rested the more contented, though I daily suffered loss in my comforts.

The report of my robbing people of their bacon, geese, pigs, &c, having much prevailed abroad, and many carnal people crediting the report, a scheme was laid to bring me and the gospel into contempt. There was a company of young men at Ditton, farmers’ sons in general. One of them attended my ministry, and behaved as though he had been wounded by the word, appearing very serious for many weeks. According to report, these young men usually met at a public-house at Weston Green, to play at cards and other diversions; and this young man sat under my ministry while the others were rioting at the meeting-door. His companions would often tell me of preaching for money: and one evening he followed me home, saying he heard I was very poor; and, as I fed his soul by my preaching, he ought to help to feed me in a temporal sense, as he could well afford it. I told him God would provide

for me; if I was made useful to him, it was all that I wanted. He insisted on my taking his present; but I would not not on any account whatever. A few days after this they reproached me for having taken money of this young man; however, I believe conscience made him tell the truth to his companions; for this reproach soon ceased, and the young man never sat under my ministry afterwards, nor would he meet me on the road if he could by any means avoid it. Thus “they set traps in my way, and spread nets for my feet;” but God kept my feet from being taken.

At Wooking also, after I had been preaching out of doors, a friend came, and asked me to give him a pinch of snuff; taking occasion thereby to drop money into my box; which I took out, and gave him again: when he told me that it was not his, but that a young man, who had heard me, was convicted by his conscience, and desired him to give it me; but, as he thought I would not take it, he had put it into my snuff. I told him to return it to the young man again - he did so; and soon afterwards the same young man appeared among the rioters and scoffers at the gospel. Thus God “cut off occasion from them that sought occasion,” and kept me from falling “into the pit which they had digged.” But to return -

My mistress, pursuing me perpetually, made me almost as dead as herself. Her continually quarrelling with me almost drove my comforts away, and then I cared not what became of me. Her cavilling spirit would so overwhelm me at times, that I lost all sight of the Saviour, and of the sweet covenant of grace; and fell into a gloom of melancholy; and went fretting all the day’ long, meditating on the hard travail I had formerly waded through: but now since the Lord in his tender pity had delivered me, and brought me among his people, they used me worse than the world did. Indeed one Saul is worse than a host of Philistines.

I do not wonder at poor Samson’s desiring the men of

Judah not to fall upon him themselves, and that he obtained an oath from them that they would not; though they afterwards took care to bind him, and deliver him into the hands of his enemies. We have many such binders in our days; who, through the fear of man, and their rotten legality, bring the spiritually-minded into bondage: and we generally lie in their cords till the Spirit of God comes upon us, and then they are like tow before he flame, Judges, xv. 14.

I Return To Horeb

In this gloomy frame of mind I lost sight of the dear Redeemer; and legally wandered back to Horeb, where I met with nothing but the earthquake, the wind, and the fire. The law raged afresh in my conscience, and kept me in bondage; my heart grew hard, and my mind was filled with confusion; so that went “bound in the spirit,” and had lost the happy enjoyment of gospel liberty. Finding this bondage had such an advantage over me, heavy temptations came upon me. I was tempted to entertain very hard thoughts of God for bringing me into the hands of such people, and suffering me thus to be hunted out of all peace and happiness by one who appeared (according to the report of scripture) to be the most profound hypocrite in all the world. My prayers not meeting with success, made me set light by that glorious privilege; and the consequence was, flint my joys withered like the green herb.

As the law began thus to rage in my conscience, so sin began to get the dominion over me: the more I strove against my daily failings, the more I stumbled and fell by them; and, the more I stumbled, the more I murmured; till unbelief wholly gained the ascendancy over me, and “my heart fretted against the Lord.” My mistress now had a feast - the witness that tormented her was apparently slain; poor Samson was bound, and “the Philistines shouted against him:” but, as soon as the bonds of the poor ass were loosed, the jaw-bone slew her again. Thus the triumph of an hypocrite is short when the

innocent stir up them selves against them, Job, xvii. 8.

I continued long in this legal frame, striving against sin in my own strength without any success; and my prayers began to be as legal as my frame, which consisted in calling upon God to help me in the work. But, alas! where self is agent God will not be an assistant: this is not making him “all in all.” However, these prayers brought nothing home, therefore it was labouring in vain. My master, being an Arminian, generally talked to me about good works: and I watched narrowly to see what good works shewed forth themselves in him; but found none; therefore I perceived he said and did not. I observed upon the whole, that true faith would work, though she dare not boast; but Arminianism will boast, though she does not work. For that man, with all his free-will, perfection, and good works, dwelt in such things as would have struck me dumb, and brought my conscience to the very gates of hell.

Legal Labyrinth

Having wandered about six weeks in this legal labyrinth, without any appearance of getting out, I began to be almost desperate under the burden of a hard heart, a lifeless hope, and frozen affections; without any power to recover my former blessedness. At times I saw the Christian’s liberty, but could not enjoy it; for I was shut up, and could not come forth; Psal. lxxxviii. 8. This made me almost desperate, as an evangelical view of the covenant rather aggravated the circumstance. Going one day (when I was at the worst, as I thought, and bereft of all comfort) into a field a little way from the village, in order to turn a horse out to grass, and mourning under this miserable frame, I concluded that I would lie down in the field, and pray till God heard and delivered me; with a full determination not to get up till he brought “my soul out of trouble.” I therefore turned out the horse, and pitched upon a spot suitable for the purpose; where I was determined to die

or be delivered. To the best of my remembrance, I addressed the Almighty in the following manner: "Oh God! if I, or any other being or creature, except thyself, have wrought this change in my soul, I cannot expect thee to own it or bless it; and, if thou hast not done it, tell me who has - tell me, O Lord, who could deliver my soul from such temptations, guilt, despair, and horror! and who it was that gave me that deliverance and unutterable love to thee. Who could wean my soul from every other object and make thee more dear to me than even my life itself? If this work is not thine, inform me who did it, and let me know the worst: but, if it was thy own work, then, O Lord, own it as such. If thou ownest the work to be thine, then I must be thine; and, if I am thine, undertake for me, and deliver me out of this miserable frame, which now overwhelms me. I cannot go on thus; I will not get up till I am delivered. If I am thine, own me and deliver me; but, if not, destroy me; for, if I am not thine, I am quite indifferent what becomes of me."

I had not prayed long before Moses's "veil was rent from the top to the bottom," and Christ," the end of the law for righteousness," was sweetly revealed to my soul. I should not have mentioned this circumstance, but for the probability that some poor soul may read it, who may be entangled in the same net; and I think no experimental Christian will be offended, because he knows more or less of it in his own experience. As to the man who is a stranger to real religion, he cannot condemn it, because he does not understand it. Experimental religion will never be despised by the wise, nor can it be condemned by the foolish.

Look Unto Me And Be Ye Saved

The manner in which I was delivered was by the application of these texts. "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth." "I will keep that man in perfect peace whose mind is stayed upon me, and will save him

because he trusteth in me." "Trust in the Lord for ever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength." I was enabled from that minute to see myself "complete in Christ Jesus;" yea, "without spot," being justified in his righteousness; as it is written, "Thou art all fair, there is no spot in thee." And, while I was enabled to view Christ by faith as my righteousness - my strength - my hope - my peace - my wisdom - my sanctification - my light - my way - my gate - my dwelling-place - my fortress - my portion - my head - my representative - my advocate - my counsellor - my guide - my Redeemer, Master, God, and Lord; I say, while I kept Christ thus in my view by faith, I could see myself complete in him, as he represents us so before God. Now all things went well with me; my heart found peace and happiness, and Christ was all in all to my soul. I looked back at my folly, and well understood what the apostle's caution meant, when he says, "Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made you free, and be not again entangled with the yoke of bondage." I evidently perceived that I had been wandering back to the law, and that Moses had brought in his bills afresh for daily infirmities: accordingly I endeavoured to settle matters with him, but in vain; for, the more I strove against sin, the more the law raged and strengthened it. Moses having blinded my eyes with his veil, led my conscience into prison, and laid me in irons; which hardened my heart, and stirred up the enmity of my mind against the Lord. This is the very quintessence of legality. Reader, never presume to balance accounts with Moses, without taking an imputed righteousness, and an all-sufficient atonement, in the hand of faith; if thou dost, thou wilt get thy feet in the stocks, and there thou wilt lie until thou lookest to that great Ransom which alone can deliver thee.

While my soul was on this sweet mountain, with its glorious shining top, I had a pleasing view of the intricate paths which my soul had travelled through. Well might Job

call it “a path which no soul knoweth, and which the vulture’s eye hath not seen; the lion’s whelps have not trodden it, nor the fierce lion passed by it,” chap. xxviii. 7, 8.

My communion was now sweet with the Lord; my views of the ever-blessed covenant clearer than ever; and I found, as Hezekiah says, that “by these trials men live, and in all these things is the life of our spirits; so God revives us, and causes us to live.” No frame of mind on earth is so sweet as that which arises from a believing view of Christ crucified; while that undeserved love for sinners, which moved him to undertake and die for us, sweetly flows into the mind, and spreads its fragrant balm over every faculty of the soul. This makes the soul rise up in the springtide of divine and everlasting life, till the world, and all its vain amusements, are left as burdensome luggage at the foot of the mount. Oh that my dear reader may experience many of these sweet ebbings and flowings! then he will not stigmatize the author as an enthusiast; for it really is an experimental bathing in Ezekiel’s river. I enjoyed this glorious frame for some time after that long and severe exercise under the spirit of bondage; and indeed I thought it was impossible for Moses again to imprison me, I saw the workings of legality so clearly. But, alas! it is in the Lord’s “light that we see light;” and, if he hides his face, we are soon troubled.

Finding that God had loaded me with ministerial work, I was determined to leave the employment of coal-heaving, as it was impossible for me to keep up communion with God while in it. Therefore I informed my master of my intention, and accordingly left him. Never was my soul more happy than when I got out of that miserable company, from that miserable employment, and from under that miserable mistress. I had now many doors opened to me, and free liberty to lengthen Zion’s cords and strengthen her stakes, and to break forth on the right hand and on the left.

Having gone on for some time in a very comfortable frame of soul, I chiefly preached comfort in my sermons; which drew together many people to hear me, both good and bad: therefore I was to have another cross to try me. My mistress, not approving of my leaving her servitude, told several ministers and Christians that I had left them suddenly, before they were provided with another labourer. The truth was, I left the same person that I succeeded in the place at my departure, and went about my heavenly Father’s business. My mistress, however, prejudiced many good men’s minds against me, by saying that my leaving them was hurtful to their business. But even this was serviceable to me also, as it tended to wean me from all human props, and led me to trust in my dear Redeemer alone. Every evil report had a tendency to drive me to prayer, in answer to which I found the testimony of my God still with me. My departure from coal-heaving was like Jacob’s departure from sheep keeping; and my mistress was as willing to hold me in slavery for little or nothing, as Laban was to hold Jacob because he saw his cattle were increased. However, God had set my face toward Mount Gilead, and my business was to raise up an heap of witnesses for him.

Having been very comfortable for a long time, I preached comfort perpetually to the people; and my discourses savoured a good deal of the joys of the mount, which some of the poor tried ones could not get at: therefore the Lord was pleased to lay my soul in irons, in order that I might speak to them who were in the horrible pit. I now found my chains come heavy upon me; and expected they would burst, as usual, when I went into the pulpit. But no; I was left to stand in the pillory, as a good man terms it; I mean, to preach in bondage. While my soul lay in this gloomy state, I preached from passages of scripture that were suitable to my then melancholy frame of mind: and was quite surprised to find the people receive it so

cordially, smiling and rejoicing in it. When

I came down from the pulpit I was ashamed to look them in the face, thinking I had delivered such heavy and melancholy tidings to them: but, alas! they laid hold of my hand, blessed me, and seemed all alive. This was a path that I had not travelled before, therefore I knew not what to make of it. In the afternoon it was the same again. "Alas!" said I, "doth God keep my soul in misery, and bless them with such comfort under my ministry! Surely I am not going to preach the gospel to others, and be a castaway myself? Wherefore I began to be very much alarmed at seeing them so happy, while my soul was bowed down within me. And sometimes, when I have expressed my soul troubles in my discourses, they have appeared to be filled with joy. I could not conceive the meaning of this; their joy appeared to me like the shout of the Philistines when Samson was bound. I began at last to envy them their happiness; and was grieved at my heart to see such comfort ministered to them under the word, while there was not one drop of it that flowed through my heart. I never understood this passage till I got out of that miserable frame; "And, whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation," 2 Cor. i. 6. On my road home I was much distressed indeed at this strange experience: however, I still continued in bondage, do what I would; nor could I pray myself out of it; till I began at last to be filled with cruel jealousy, and to envy the happiness of those who rejoiced in the dear Redeemer. This wretched frame of mind filled my soul with terror, to think that my heart should swell with anger against those who enjoyed the sweet influences of the Holy Ghost! "Alas!" said I, "this is no better than sinning against the Holy Spirit of God." I was now entangled in a fresh mystery; nor could I by any means unriddle it. I still continued to preach from texts of scripture expressive of trouble; such as these - "And when I am tried I shall come forth as gold;" "We that are in this

tabernacle do groan, being burdened;" "These are they that came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, &c.;" and, "Oh that I knew where I might find him!"

Under these melancholy discourses the people who heard me were greatly blessed, until their joys appeared an aggravation of my misery; and I was ready to grudge them their comfort, as I went mourning all day long without the sun. I longed to run away from the work, rather than stand up and preach comfort to others while my own soul was bowed down within me.

I have often thought it was such soul-distressing frames of mind as these which made the prophets cry out, "The burden of the word of the Lord," as much as the heavy judgments which that word contained. This my present state of bondage was attended with another cutting trial - that of spiritual jealousy. For, when I saw young Christians triumphing in the love of Christ under my ministry, while I went mourning under the hiding of the Saviour's countenance, travelling in chains, buffeted by Satan, and distressed with hardness of heart - yet compelled to preach through the fear of apostacy, which kept me in awe - I could not endure to see the Redeemer indulge others with such divine consolations, while I was denied his blessed presence. This experience taught me effectually the meaning of the earnest suit, and soul-humbling confession, of the spouse in the Song of Solomon - "Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm: for love is strong as death, jealousy is cruel as the grave; the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame. Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it: if a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned," chap. viii. 6, 7. While I was under this raging jealousy, I often preached from such texts as these - "They have provoked me to jealousy with that which is not God;" "I will provoke them to jealousy with a foolish people," Deut.

xxxii. 21; and “Salvation is come to the Gentiles, to provoke them to jealousy,” Rom. xi. 11; which seemed to afford to my hearers great comfort also. And I varied in my doctrines as my frames varied, being always led to choose texts suitable to my own feelings. Thus God kept me in bondage to speak to them that were bound, as bound with them; suffered me to travel in the dark, to speak to those upon whom the day-spring had scarcely begun to dawn; and caused my life to hang in doubt, that I might speak to doubting souls. While I continued in this melancholy frame, many escaped from the horrible pit under my ministry, by my speaking to them in the language of their own distresses. But this I knew not till afterwards; nor did I know, till I was delivered, what Paul meant by travelling in birth until Christ was formed in them; Gal. iv. 19. I went one night to preach at a good woman’s house, who seemed rather distressed; I asked her what was the cause of her looking so sadly. She told me, that her husband, though he had long followed the gospel, had never experienced much of the power of it; but that she had been greatly indulged with comfortable communion with Christ. “But lately,” said she, with tears in her eyes, “my husband is blessed with great consolations, and my comforts are all gone. This is like the Lord’s leaving Saul, and going to David: and I can compare myself to none but Saul, for I really envy my husband his happiness.” Hearing such things from an old mother in Israel was a sweet cordial to me; for, being entangled in the same net, I could describe it to her feelingly, and shew her, from the scriptures, that others had felt the same. My conversation was blessed to her, and she was delivered out of trouble. But when I found she was delivered by my conversation, and that I was left behind, it added to my misery; I envied her as well as others, and went groaning home, almost desperate.

My wife, seeing me perpetually cast down, began to wonder at it; having formerly seen me so happy and zealous

in the ways of the Lord; which I believe had provoked her to jealousy when she was in soul-trouble: but, being now cast down, whom she supposed to be a strong believer, gave her some ground to hope that her religion was genuine; for she saw that

I was in distress as well as herself; which afforded her great comfort; nor did I ever see her so cheerful and happy before. This increased my misery, and I thought that I had wrestled and prayed day and night for her - had reproved her - watched over her - admonished her, &c., and now God had heard my prayers for her, and had cast me off. So that I envied her also.

While I continued in this gloomy frame, my dame appeared to carry herself rather cold towards me, as I thought, and to speak more cheerfully to other people than she did to me; which was another provocation; and a spirit of nuptial or carnal jealousy came upon me; and I was jealous of my wife, though without the least cause; which grew so high, that I could not endure that any body should look at her. This I never felt before, nor could I conceive how it would terminate. My wife at last began to taunt me, and said she doubted of my state. This was most cutting to my soul indeed. I told her not to triumph; for, as sure as she was born, so sure the spirit which I laboured under would come upon her as soon as the Lord delivered me. And so it surely did; and continued with her many months, if not some years. Thus Leah polishes Rachel, Rachel polishes Leah, and both polish Jacob; and under these jealous cavils humbling grace operates, fervent prayers are put up by the supposed injured parties, and conspicuous answers from God establish their souls in faith. “God saw I was hated,” said Leah, “therefore he gave me this son.” “Surely God is on my side,” said her faith. “And Rachel said, God hath judged me, and hath also heard my voice, and hath given me a son; therefore called she

his name Dan,” Gen. xxx. 6. And Jacob said, “Except the God of my father, the God of Abraham, and the fear of Isaac, had been with me, surely thou hadst sent me away now empty; but God hath seen mine affliction,” Gen. xxxi. 42. Thus they tried one another, and God tried and purified them all. But to return I laid in this miserable affliction many weeks, until I was almost desperate; and at last even doubted of my salvation. This drove me to wrestle hard with God in prayer; but I found no deliverance. I had plenty of matter, and great liberty of speech in the pulpit, and the power of God attended the word spoken; until I was enraged at the happiness of the people, and secretly vowed that I would not preach to comfort others if I myself was left to perish.

It happened that, while on my road home, between Cobham and Esher, I was violently tempted to believe that God had east me off for ever - that he would reveal himself to me no more - that I had sinned the unpardonable sin; and that my hard heart and desperate anger against the comforts of others, were proofs of it - that my jealousy, and determination not to preach any more, was that rebellion which reigns and rules in such sinners’ hearts. This drove me to prayer on the road; but, finding my prayer met with no success, I told the ever-blessed and everglorious God that, if he sent me to hell, I would declare before all the damned, both devils and men, and that to his dishonour, that he had called me by his grace - regenerated me by his Spirit, and sealed me to the day of eternal redemption - had filled my soul with the comforts of the Holy Ghost, and justified and sanctified me exactly agreeable to his own word - but that his faithfulness had now failed, and I was disappointed of my hope, &c. Very soon after this my chains began to burst, and the most blessed Redeemer delivered my soul from all my troubles. He appeared as sweet to my soul as ever. And now I could clearly see why I had been thus exercised. Whereupon I began to preach up the

faithfulness and immutability of God - the impossibility of a believer’s perishing - and that, if God brought us down to the gates of hell by afflictions, yet he would raise us up from thence; for the gulph of God’s decree was fixed, and no chosen vessel could pass over it. Thus I found that, as God had kept me long in trouble in order to feel after the consciences of troubled souls, and to comfort them by my afflictions; so now he had delivered me from all my fears, that I might confirm their souls in the faith of the unchangeable love of God. This doctrine I had now sweetly sealed to me, and I preached it with all authority. And the final perseverance of the saints was cordially received by my flocks as a most comfortable and soul-establishing doctrine.

Thus, reader, I spake as I was moved by the Holy Ghost; which operated under my various crosses, as expressed by ministers of the church of England at their ordination. And indeed we can never preach to profit souls unless we are; for a preacher is to lead his flock; and that I plainly perceived, blessed be God who enabled me to cleanse my own way by taking heed thereto according to his word.

As I made my own ground good by experiencing the truth, and proving my experience to be genuine by the word of God, I then led my flocks into the same establishing doctrines which had settled my soul, as it is written, “Lo, this we have searched, so it is: hear it, and know thou it for thy good,” Job. v. 27. Thus the preacher is a taster for the children of God. Ezekiel must eat the roll before he prophesies to others; and John must eat the little book, and taste both the bitter and the sweet, before he is to prophesy again; Jeremiah too must find the word of God, and eat it likewise, before he can feed others. When this is the experience of a minister, he may say as Paul did, “Ye are all partakers of my grace.” But to return -

After my deliverance I could plainly perceive that this trial had been revealed to me before it came on; but, alas!

“God speaketh once, yea, twice, yet man perceiveth it not. In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, then he openeth their ears to instruction,” &c., Job, xxxiii. 14-16. I had one night the following dream, which was rather awful. I dreamed that I was in a large field; and, behold, a beast of an ill shape and dreadful appearance ran at the open-mouthed in a most furious manner. This beast was somewhat like a lion, rough-haired, and had a most dreadful wide mouth. In running furiously at me, he started back when he was within the space of a yard, which amazed me much, as he approached so near. At the formidable appearance of the creature I was dreadfully terrified in my sleep, especially as he suddenly made at me the second time, and appeared to come rather closer; but still he started back, as before. The third time the creature flew at me, but still was checked when he approached very near me. At length, when I found he could not reach me, I stood still, to see what was the occasion of it. When I perceived a chain go quite round the loins of the beast; and, behold, at the end of the chain stood one of the most handsome men I ever beheld, with his face shining like the face of an angel. He held the chain in his hand; and, when I looked at him in the face, he smiled sweetly upon me, and kept the beast close to his feet. Accordingly, when I saw that the creature was kept by a chain in his hand, I took up stones and threw at it; and, in swinging my arms, I awoke. I could not then help thinking that that dream was from God, as a prelude to some temptation, it appeared so scriptural. I considered the devil’s being compared to a dog and a lion. First, to a dog; “Deliver my soul from the sword, my darling from the power of the dog,” Psal. xxii. 20. Secondly, to a lion; “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: whom resist steadfast in the faith,” I Pet. v. 10. The chain which I saw in my dream appeared to be scriptural also. “And

I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the devil and Satan, and bound him a thousand years,” Rev. xx. 1, 2. This angel is Christ Jesus, the angel of the everlasting covenant, as appears from his having the key of the bottomless pit; as you read, “I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death,” Rev. i. 18. Throwing stones at him seemed to be likewise scriptural; as it is written, “The Lord of Hosts shall defend them; and they shall devour, and subdue with sling stones,” Zech. ix. 15.

Having got rid of this internal cross, I soon found some external ones. But these are nothing when compared to the hiding of God’s countenance; which resembles hell the most of any thing, because his frowns in a cloud always reflect wrath; as it is written, “In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment, but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee,” Isa. liv. 8.

Upon the whole, I found there was a daily cross for me to take up, and rather more than faith and patience could manage at times; but none so dreadful to an indulged child as the hiding of his father’s countenance. My next cross was the oppositions I met with from erroneous men. At Farnham, in Surrey, a free-will Baptist minister began to cavil at me as soon as I had delivered my message; and the contention lasted till midnight: but God enabled me to stand my ground till he was quite out of breath, and I believe of ammunition too. Carnal reason against the decrees of God is like attempting to overturn a mountain of brass with the web of a spider. The gentleman, enraged and routed, afterwards sent me a challenge to dispute with me at a public-house, where he would bring many friends with him, as witnesses of the great exploits of free agency. Howbeit, I had no occasion to go there to hear

lectures on the trophies of free-agency; I could get at them nearer home; for my own heart told me that, wherever free-agency was enshrined, there the devil himself was enthroned. There never yet was a free-agent in this world, since Adam's fall, except Christ, that was not under the dominion of the devil, and led captive by him into the commission of every besetting sin. I accordingly sent that gentleman word that I should continue to preach at the places to which I was called; nor would I give place to the devil, if he came in my way; but I had no warrant to meet Satan half way, nor to contend with him upon unconsecrated ground.

Arian Baptist

After this an Arian Baptist beset me at Worpolsdon, in Surrey, and brought others with him. These harassed me at times for a year or two; but God enabled me to oppose their errors as fast as they discovered themselves; nor did I lose one sheep by means of these evening wolves.

Some of my friends were angry with me at times for being so warm and severe in my delivery; but the Saviour's reproofs, given to the angels of the churches in the Revelations, bore me out, and warranted me in my zeal; nor could my friends persuade me to be a dumb dog while these wolves haunted the fold. There was also a Scotch Seceder at Guildford, whose head was very well furnished, who at times contended with this old leading Arian: and I was told that he overthrew his arguments; but soon afterwards he fell into that very error himself, and then plunged into open profanity; so that he is now an Arian both in principle and practice. This circumstance effectually taught me that a well-furnished head is not sufficient to keep the devil out of the heart. Satan does not mind the head, it is the heart that he wants - "The strong man armed keeps possession of the palace." The devil mimics the Most High in this respect; for God says, "My son, give me thine heart."

Opposition A Great Service

I found all these oppositions of great service to me: for God gave me so uncommon a spirit of meekness at my first setting off to preach, that I found myself rather too tender "to declare the whole counsel of God." I was more fit for the character of a nurse than for that of a soldier. But, when these Arians came to tear up the very foundation of my hope, that spirit of meekness gave way to a fiery zeal. When I came in private before God my soul was overwhelmed with contrition; but when I got into my pulpit I was "clad with zeal as with a cloak." Farewell meekness, when we have to do with devils; God grant that my bowels may never sound with compassion on that ground where the vengeance of heaven burns with indignation! When our dear Redeemer was with his disciples Mary and Martha, at their brother's grave, he wept and groaned in spirit; but, when he upbraids Capernaum - reproves the generation of vipers - and drives the buyers and sellers out of the temple - then the zeal of God's house ate him up, and he appeared the dreadful Judge. Thus you see the just God and the Saviour that was wonderfully manifested at the Red Sea. Christ looked with compassion on his Israel, and led them forth like a flock, redeemed them, and saved them; but he looked as a judge on the Egyptians, and destroyed them. Behold, then, both goodness and severity displayed from a just God and a Saviour, Emmanuel, God with us! As a ransom, he redeemed Israel; and, as a just God, he gave Egypt for their ransom. But to return -

I found that Satan beset me with most dreadful temptations to Arianism; he laid perpetual siege to my judgment; and brought their damnable sophistry continually to my mind. While I was labouring under these wretched temptations God gave me a most precious promise; which was, "Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not," Jer. xxxiii.

3. This scripture the Lord sweetly fulfilled to my soul, after permitting me to be long tempted; for he gave me a most glorious vision on Ripley Common, just by the little public-house called the Hut, where he shewed me, in the light of the Scriptures, his essential divinity, and led me to see that every perfection of deity is attributed to Jesus Christ by God the Holy Ghost. And I think the judgment, the revelation, and the application, of the Holy Ghost, are sufficient to establish the heart of any Christian on this head, though all the arians in the world should contradict it. I could see the Saviour's deity established to us by the following testimonies. First, by the testimony of God the Father, Heb. i. 8; "And the Father himself, who hath sent me, hath borne witness of me," John, v. 37. Secondly, by God the Saviour, Rev. i. 8; "Though I bear record of myself, yet my record is true," John, viii. 14. Thirdly, by God the Holy Ghost, as it is written, "Christ saith, how then doth David by the Holy Ghost call him Jehovah; saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand till I make thine enemies thy footstool? If David then call him Jehovah, how is he his son? And no man was able to answer him," Matt. xxii. 42-45. Fourthly, by the angels; "And the angel said unto them, I bring you good tidings of great joy; for unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, who is Christ, Jehovah," Luke, ii. 11. Fifthly, by patriarchs, Gen. iv. 8, 15, 16; and xxii. 14-16. Sixthly, by prophets, Jer. xxiii. 5, 6; Isa. xl. 3; and xliii. 10, 11. Seventhly, by apostles, 2 John, v. 20; Rom. ix. 5; Jude, 2, 5. Eighthly, by the adoration of all the hosts of heaven, Heb. i. 6. Ninthly, by the testimony of devils, Acts, xvi. 17. And, tenthly, by the predicted confession of all the damned, Isa. viii. 21, 22. And I clearly discerned that, if there be not three distinct persons, or personal subsistences, in the Godhead, the law, as the ministration of death, fails to the ground; for no man is to be put to death by the temporal or spiritual sword, but at the

mouth of two, or, at the most, three witnesses; Deut. xvii. 6. Take away temporal death, and eternal death is dethroned. Therefore Israel, in the indictments brought against them, are accused of sinning against the three glorious persons in the Godhead; yea, against each person distinctly, according to the Scriptures. First, against the Father, Deut. xxxii. 6 - the eternal Lawgiver, who promised to send his angel, the angel of the everlasting covenant, who would not pardon their unbelief; Exod. xxiii. 21-24. This was Christ, the Rock that followed them, whom they tempted, and by whom they were destroyed, I Cor. x. 9. Secondly, they sinned against Christ himself, the Rock that followed them; as it is written, "They lightly esteemed the Rock of their salvation," Deut. xxxii. 15. Thirdly, "They rebelled, and vexed his Holy Spirit, so that he was turned to be their enemy, and he fought against them," Isa. lxiii. 10. Thus the triune God is a swift witness against unbelieving and rebellious Israel, Mal. iii. 5.

So we see they sinned against the Lawgiver in the Mount, the Mediator in the cloud, and the Holy Spirit of all grace in Moses, Aaron, Miriam, &c. Explain away, therefore, the ever-blessed Trinity, and the law is of no force; consequently down comes the throne of judgment. Justice stands on a precept; and judgment is the execution of a sentence by justice on the transgressors of a precept. "Justice and judgment are the habitation of Christ's throne:" take away the first, and down comes the latter. With respect to a covenant of grace, the Father delivers the roll of his secret decrees, or book of life, to the Son, which none but himself is able to open, Rev. v. 2-5. The Son receives the book, and performs the conditions, Rev. v. 7; Psal. 1.7. The Holy Ghost appears both as the witness and sealer of the covenant, Rev. i. 4; iii. 1; and v. 1: and seals the testimony on the heart of every chosen disciple, Isa. viii. 16. Thus "there are three that bear record in heaven; the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are

one,” I John, v. 7. Take away the divine witnesses, and the covenant of grace is of no force. Thus the Arian makes void both law and gospel; pulls down both the throne of grace and the throne of judgment; and opens a sluice for all the rapid floods of Atheism and Deism to pour in upon the Christian world.

If Christ be a real angel he cannot open the book, nor look thereon; for angels are creatures. He that redeems must be the Most High God, Psal. lxxviii. 35. If Christ be no more than a mere man, the angels are idolaters, Heb. iv. 6; the apostles are idolaters, Luke, xxiv. 52; and his redemption is void; for no man can redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him, Psal. xlix. 7. If Christ be a creature, he is dead, and by no means the resurrection and the life; for no man “can keep alive his own soul,” Psal. xxii. 29. If Christ be only man, cursed are they that make flesh their arm, and in heart depart from Jehovah, Jer. xvii. 5. And again, if Christ is not that God who made heaven and earth, he is perished, Jer. x. 11. But Christ is the Lord from heaven, I Cor. xv. 45; and blessed are they that trust in him, Psal. it. 12. But to return -

At Ditton I was perpetually beset with the Arminians, who corrupted almost every soul that appeared to be the least serious. These things tried my soul exceedingly, being ignorant of such errors; for I had never read any erroneous books since God had brought me forth into the liberty of the gospel; therefore I knew not what to do with any error, except that of Arminianism; into which I had fallen at my first setting off, as is related in my Arminian Skeleton; wherefore I knew not what it meant; but all other errors were entirely new to me. Of the two, I would rather be a Deist than an Arminian; for an established Deist sears his own conscience, so that he goes to hell in the easy chair of insensibility; but the Arminian, who wages war with open eyes against the sovereignty of God, fights most of his battles in the very fears and horrors of hell.

At Richmond I had both the Arminian and Antinomian errors to cope with. The latter I had never heard of before; nor did I know what to do with so strange a beast, which seemed all tongue, but no heart. But I soon perceived that it was not a sheep, because there was no mark upon it, Ezek. ix. 6; nor could it feed upon the green pastures, Psal. lxxix. 13; and I saw that it was too noisy a creature to rest at noon, Cant. i. 7. I told the good people at Richmond, publicly from the pulpit, that that beast was sent as a snare to entangle and carry away two or three from among them; and that I secretly judged who those were. And my judgment was right; for those persons only were taken captive by that error. They soon afterwards got above all ordinances, and said the law was no more - nor was there any Sabbath or Lord’s day to be regarded - and that all preaching was in vain.

Having waded two or three years through these floods of error, they began to be obstructed in their rapidity. The free-will Baptist at Farnham quitted the field for want of ammunition. The Arians from Guildford complained that they could not sit quiet under me; therefore they forsook the flock and the pastor with indignation; but I had rather they should hate the shepherd than kill the sheep. At Ditton also I prayed to God night and day, and invited others at times to assemble with me in private prayer, for the removal of the Arminians. One night the very person that we had prayed God to remove (and his wife also) called to inform me that they were going to leave the place. Thus God sent us an answer to our prayers by the person for whose removal we had earnestly prayed. From Richmond also our Antinomian hearers withdrew, having taken with them those persons whom we suspected were not living branches in the true vine, John, xv. 2.

After this storm had blown over I began to experience a little calm in my ministry, and hoped to find a cessation of arms. But, alas! it is “through much tribulation that we

must enter into the kingdom of God!" For, soon after this whirlwind of error had ceased, I was brought to preach in London, in a chapel comparable to a homer's nest. At this place a Deist preached on one night - an Antinomian on another - after that an Arian - then an Arminian - and next a man who preached that departed souls re-visited the earth again after death! However, God at length appeared, and shut up the Arminian in the King's Bench. The Deist forsook the pulpit, and took to the Pantheon. The Antinomian went to Scotland again, from whence he came. The Arian lost his custom, and left his shop. But God enabled me to pray to him to look me out a place to preach in, that I might escape "from these mountains of leopards, and from the lion's den," Song, iv. 8. And, blessed be his holy name for ever, he led me and my little flock to Bethel, where we have anointed the pillar. Poor David says, "I am a wonder to many;" and I think I may say, "So am I also." But I am a greater wonder to myself than to any other, considering myself as a person of neither parts, abilities, nor learning: nothing but a mere "bruised reed," and yet supported by the omnipotent hand of a most gracious God! I have stood amazed to think that I have not hitherto fallen. Nay, at times I have thought it was impossible for such a defenceless worm to wade through such oppositions, while so many, who seemed to be pillars, have given way. But these words have often been of great comfort to my soul, "The law of his God is in his heart; none of his steps shall slide," Psal. xxxvii. 31. And again, "If I fall, I shall rise again; and, if I sit in darkness, the Lord shall he a light unto me," Mic. vii. 8.

I found, in all these difficulties, that God balanced my troubles with many comforts; for, though erroneous men opposed me, yet God gave me the affections and ears of many pious souls. And, when I have preached so close a sermon that many formalists and hypocrites have railed at me, God has sent some poor soul sweetly blessed under the

same. Thus "God, who comforteth those that are cast down comforted me by the coming of Titus." And I verily believe in my conscience, according to my judgment, that God has blessed me with as loving, as liberal, as sound, as humble, and as discerning a people in general, as any that I ever stood before; for whose use and benefit these my poor scribblings are chiefly intended: and may God bless them to the remnant of his chosen, whom I may leave behind, when the poor weather-beaten coal-hearer is no more! Amen, and Amen.

Thus, courteous reader, I have told thee a little of the heads of the Lord's dealings with me, even as much as I can remember, and as exact as I am able to relate it at present, seeing it is about twelve years since the Lord was pleased to proclaim my liberty. But the pains of hell and the foretastes of heaven can never be truly painted in this life; no, not by the learned, much less by me. But, if my reader be a poor, doubting, tempted, self-condemned sinner, he may say, "I have read all your temptations, and they are many; and a most merciful God has brought you through them all; but mine are worse than any that you have mentioned." I could not mention any of my temptations warrantably, if the scriptures were silent about them; but, as they are not, I have taken care to mention those, and those only, which the Bible mentioned, and that in a plain way. I had one temptation, which followed me for fourteen months or more, worse by far than all those which I have here related, as it was levelled wholly at the ever-blessed Son of God. Satan levels his chief malice at the Saviour, for he is the "rock of offence." It was he who bruised Satan's head, and he will never forget it. If Satan can get us to fight against Christ, he has done the work, unless grace prevent.

If the dreadful temptation about which I have been silent be hinted at in the Bible, it is in one of the following texts - "manifold," I Pet. i. 6. - "divers," Jam. i. 2 - "all manner,"

Rom. vii. 8. Howbeit, even this dreadful temptation was of use to me in the ministry; for I once found a poor awakened soul much dejected indeed, and desirous of unbosoming some sore conflicts; but they were too black to mention, and they were all against the dear Redeemer, the chief butt of Satan's fiery darts. The poor creature dropped a hint, and I guessed at the rest. I then mentioned mine to him, and the temptation lost its force; he obtained relief, and afterwards much comfort. Upon the whole, I found, as Luther observes, that, "temptation, meditation, and prayer, make a minister." These temptations were of great use to 1474 me, even when I heard the gospel, as well as since I have been called to preach it; for, while I sat under the gospel, my temptations have been often so violent, that I could receive nothing from the pulpit unless it was clearly proved by the word of God. Sore temptations make a man look well both to the ground of his hope and to his way; for, if he has not God's warrant for his faith and hope, he cannot rest satisfied, because of the strong dispute between him and Satan. I remember once hearing a gentleman preach at Kingston, and his drift seemed to be chiefly intended to administer comfort to the people. He said, "Some of you are distressed because you have not experienced a deep law- work; you think your convictions have not been severe enough, therefore you are troubled on that account. But why so? What if God has put a live coal into your hearts by the back door, your business is to blow it up." Great joy was communicated to many by these expressions; and some who went home with me rejoiced exceedingly. I said nothing to them; but thought, if they placed so much faith on, and received so much comfort from, such unscriptural expressions as those, they were deceived; for what was there in those words that could hold them up in a trying hour? Nothing at all. But, as the wise man says, "The simple believeth every word; but a prudent man looketh well to his way." And I hope

God will enable me, according to the little light given me, to cleave close" to the word of his grace, which is able to make us wise, and build us up," through the spirit of faith, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Perhaps my reader may desire to know whether I was remarkably wicked before I was called. As I promised to slew the, the black side as well as the bright, I will tell thee. From a child I was naturally prone to foolish jesting, and a mighty mimicker of people: and I believe I should have been a most wretched blasphemer, had not God followed me up with some cutting convictions, which I experienced for many years, until at last they terminated in a real change of heart; for which I shall ever remain a debtor to sovereign grace. Indeed I had at times such lashes of conscience, that I have gone into the fields and wept for hours together; but when these convictions wore off I went on again, as usual, in a course of vanity.

As to gambling, I ever detested it; nor did I ever learn to play a game at cards in my life. Plays also my soul hated. Fortune- telling I always thought was dealing with the devil, and so I do now. And I have often been grieved when I have seen the wanton daughters of Belial robbing their master's cellar and pantry to give to the gypsies, as a reward for telling their fortunes; which generally is a lying prediction about some man in love with them, whom they are soon to marry. This is the offspring of Mammon receiving the wages of unrighteousness from the offspring of Belial But I was very fond of jovial company, singing, ranting, jesting, telling stories, and the like, to make fools laugh: which I afterwards paid dear for. These legal lashes of conscience are not sufficient to curb "a wild ass's colt," Job, xi. 12; he must be held in with a better "bit and bridle," Psal. xxxii. 9.

I have not related the base part of my life to encourage others to sin; but to slew why I was so sorely afflicted, and to leave it as a caution to others. If the true penitents scarcely are

saved, where shall those who die impenitent appear? But, if my reader is desirous of inquiring more particularly into my pedigree, I must send him to the place of my nativity, which is Cranbrook, in the Weald of Kent. The house in which I was born lies between Goudhurst and Cranbrook, about the midway between the two parishes, but in the parish of Cranbrook. If a person walks from Goudhurst to Cranbrook on the main road, he comes to a little green, with what is called the Old Park on the left, and Glassenbury House, once the seat of Sir Walter Robarts, on the right hand. On that green is a road that turns to the left, and leads through the woods to Cranbrook. About a quarter of a mile from that green, on the high road, is a place called the Four Wents, where four roads or ways meet. At that place are three houses: a farm-house on the left hand, and two small houses on the right - in the first of those small houses, on the right hand, is the place where my mother brought me forth to see many an evil day. But, blessed be God, through rich grace, "I know in whom I have believed;" and I trust, through grace, that Jesus will "keep that which I have committed to him against that day."

Reader, fare thee well. Should any part of this narrative be of use to thee, glorify God on my behalf; and at a throne of grace remember him who is thine to serve with such as God has given him.

William Huntington S.S.

Other Publications

Huntington was a prolific writer and publisher of religious tracts, polemics, sermons and other pieces. His works and letters continued to be published after his death.

The Kingdom of Heaven Taken by Prayer (1784)

Epistles of Faith (Part 1) (1785)

God the Guardian of the Poor and the Bank of Faith (Part 1) (1785)

Living Testimonies (Part 1) (1794)

The Naked Bow, or, A Visible Display of the

Judgments of God on the Enemies of Truth (1794)

Epistles of Faith (Part 2) (1797)

Correspondence between Noctua Aurita and Philomela (1799)

God the Guardian of the Poor and the Bank of Faith (Part 2) (1802)

Living Testimonies (Part 2) (1806)

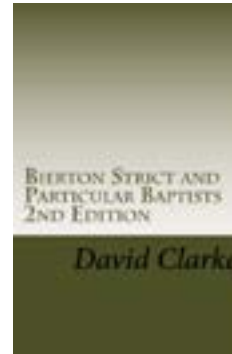
The substance of the last or farewell sermon of the late Reverend William Huntington, SS (1813; posthumous)

The Sinner Saved: a memoir of the Rev. William Huntington (1813; posthumous)
Gleanings of the Vintage (1814; two volumes; posthumous)

Posthumous Letters (1815; three volumes; posthumous)

Posthumous Letters (1822; posthumous)

Bierton Strict and Particular Baptists



Authored by Mr David Clarke Cert. Ed

My Testimony and Confession

This book tells the story and life of David Clarke in the form of an autobiography. It is no ordinary book in that David and his brother were both notorious criminals in the 60's, living in Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, where they were MODs. They were both sent to prison for carrying a fire arm without a license and malicious wounding. They were however both converted from crime to Christ after which they turned their lives around and from crime to Christ. This story tells of David's Conversion in 1970 and that of Michael, 1999 some 30 years later. It tells of their time in HMP Canterbury Prison and David's time in HMP Wormwood Scrubs and then Dover Borstal. It also tells of David's criminal activity and the crimes he committed before his miraculous conversion from crime to Christ, during a bad experience on LSD, in 1970.

It tells how he became a Christian over night, how he learned to read in order to come to a fuller knowledge of the gospel. He learned to read through reading the bible and classical Christian literature.

He tells of the event that led to him making a confession to the police about 24 crimes he had committed since leaving Dover Borstal in 1968 and of the court case where he was not

sentenced.

It tells of his life as a member of the Bierton Strict and Particular Baptist Church, which was a Gospel Standard cause, and how he was called by the Lord and sent by the church to preach the gospel.

David tells of the various difficulties that he faced once he discovered the many doctrinal errors amongst the various Christian groups he met and of the opposition that he experience when he sought to correct them. David recorded his experience and findings in his book “The Bierton Crisis” 1984 written to help others.

David’s tells how his brother Michael was untouched by his conversion and how he continued his flamboyant lifestyle ending up doing a 16 year prison sentence, in the Philippines, in 1996, where he died in 2005.

It tells how David’s educated himself and went on to Higher education, and graduated with a Certicate in Education and how he went on to teach Electronics, for over 20 years, in colleges of Higher and Further Education.

It tells how David felt compelled to write this story under the title, “Converted On LSD Trip”. once he got news of his brothers arrest, in the Philippines, via ITN Television news broadcast, in 1995. This book was published when he got news of his brothers conversion from crime to Christ in 1999, which was after serving 5 years of his 16 year sentence.

David tells how Michael too was converted through him reading C.S. Lewis’s book, “Mere Christianity”, and him being convinced that Jesus was the Christ the Son of the living God, after this it tells of David’s mission to the Philippines to bring help and assistance to Michael, in 2001 and of their joint venture in helping in the rehabilitation of many former convicted criminals, not only in New Bilibid Prison but other Jails in the Philippines.

This story is told in there book, “Trojan Warriors”, that

contains the testimonies of 66 notorious criminals who too had turned there lives around, from crime to Christ, 22 of which testimonies are men on Death Row.

David say he believes his story could be of great help to any one seeking to follow the Lord Jesus.

Publication Date: Mar 03 2015

ISBN/EAN13:1508408270 / 9781508408277

Page Count:372

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