

# WRITINGS OF ROBERT HAWKER

by Robert Hawker

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*A collection of theological writings, sermons, and essays by Robert Hawker, compiled for study and devotional reading.*

37 Chapters

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## 01.00. Zion's Pilgrim

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Zion's Pilgrim by Robert Hawker, 1827

"They shall ask the way to Zion with their faces turned towards it, saying, Come let us join ourselves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant that shall not be forgotten." Jeremiah 50:5 "And confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth." Hebrews 11:13

## 01.00p. PREFACE

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### PREFACE

It was not until that I had passed a very considerable portion of time life, that I felt the full conviction of my being but "a stranger and a pilgrim upon the earth"—and it becomes even now, one of the most astonishing circumstances, in the new view of things which are continually opening before me, that there should have been so much ignorance in my mind by nature, on a subject which in itself appears so exceedingly plain and evident. Not that I was altogether void of apprehension, that the present life formed a bounded prospect; but yet my ideas were like those of the great mass of unawakened characters, who believe as though they believed not; and who, though ready enough to confess in the general, that man is but a dying creature, yet, in the particular instance, as it concerns themselves, live as though they never thought to die.

I pause—in the moment of recollection, to look back upon the whirlpool, in which for so many years I was hurried on by the unceasing current! unconscious of the perilous situation in which I then moved, and unconcerned at what I saw of the sudden departure of those around me, swallowed up in the vortex!

Dread Power! awful even in your mercies! Do I now stand secure on the edge, upheld by a strength not my own, no longer within the reach of the tide, and beholding the solemn prospect of thousands still engulfed? Can I call to mind the past danger and the present deliverance, unmoved with pity over the unthinking throng, and untouched with gratitude to you the sole Author of every mercy? I feel (blessed be the grace that inspires it!) the rising hymn of thankfulness in my heart, while the tear drops from my eye—"Lord, how is it that you have manifested yourself unto me, and not unto the world?" The reader who condescends to interest himself in the history of a poor traveler to Zion, must be content to admit of these occasional interruptions by the way.

You may, perhaps, my brother, consider everything of this kind but as the unnecessary parentheses of the tale. But they are not so to the writer. The life of a pilgrim, and of Zion's Pilgrim particularly, furnishes but a comfortless view in the retrospect. It is like treading over large tracts of waste, thorny, and unimproved ground. Every little spot, therefore, which can be looked back upon with delight, is like the sweet herbage and the refreshing stream, here and there only to be found on the barren heath—and which are, beyond all calculation, precious to the traveler.

If the reader cannot enter into a full participation with the writer in these enjoyments, he hopes he will at least allow them to remain as so many episodes in the history. It is possible, from an unison of hearts, some fellow-traveler on the road to Zion may find in them an harmony of sound corresponding to his own song of praise; and to him they will not be uninteresting.

One reflection, I think, cannot fail to strike the gracious mind with force, in the review of a long period of unawakened nature, when once brought out of it; and that is, the distinguishing properties of preserving grace. I never knew, until grace taught it me; how much I owed, and was continually accumulating the debt, during the season of my unregeneracy, to this one

principle—but now, under divine teaching, I have learned somewhat of this spiritual arithmetic, and can enter into the full apprehension of what the apostle means, when he says, "Preserved in Jesus Christ, and called." (Jude 1:1.) Do you ask what that is? Every man's personal experience becomes the truest commentator—but for the grace of preservation in Jesus Christ, there never could have been a calling to Jesus Christ. Calculate, if you can, how long a space you lived, unconscious of your state, "without God and without Christ in the world"—and had you been cut off in the awful state of an unawakened, unregenerated mind, where would have been your portion? And were there no seasons of peculiar peril, no sickness, no intemperance, no hair-breadth escapes, in which life hung as by a thread over an hopeless eternity? Oh! the countless instances of preservation in Christ Jesus, before the redeemed of the Lord are brought to the apprehension of divine things which are of Christ Jesus! Have you never seen the unconscious babe watched over, in all its helpless, defenseless hours, by the sedulous tenderness and care of its anxious parent? Such, and infinitely higher, must be his preservation of his people, who not only watches over them "every moment, lest any hurt them," (Isaiah 27:3.) but, what peculiarly endears his loving-kindness to the heart, he watches over them for good, in those moments also, in the days of their unregeneracy, when they are "making Him to serve with their sins, and wearying Him with their iniquities." (Isaiah 43:24.) Is this view of the subject wholly unprofitable to the soul not in the actual possession of grace? I trust not. Is not every one a monument of sparing mercy, while continuing on praying ground? And if preserved in Christ Jesus, why not hope there may be yet a calling to Christ Jesus? I have often thought that if the most senseless mind could be but brought to stop in the mad career of folly, and put the questions to the heart, "For what purpose am I preserved to this hour?—and why is the morning light again given to one who but lives to abuse it?"—such a solemn appeal to the heart, in the cool moment of reflection, if awakened by grace, would be blessed by grace, and induce a new train of thought, and new principles of conduct in the mind. "How does the Lord wait that he may be gracious unto you? and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you; for the Lord is a God of judgment. Blessed are all those who wait for him!" (Isaiah 30:18.)

I hardly know at what period to commence my history. All that part of life which I spent prior to my conversion, I cannot reckon in the estimate of really living. He only lives, who lives to God's glory—all else is but a blank in creation. And were the sum total of my days to be made up under this numeration, it could only correspond to the character of him, who, being regenerated after he had attained the age of threescore, ordered for the inscription of his tomb-stone—"Here lies an old man of four years old."

I can only tell the reader, that if from my first apprehension of divine things must commence the calculation of my real life, I have but a little path to go over. But from this era would I desire to date my history.

What were the secondary means which the Lord in his providence was pleased to employ, it is not so interesting to the reader to be informed of, as to behold their efficacy under grace. It will be sufficient for him to know, that from an ardent pursuit, like that of the generality of the world, of the several objects which attract attention in the circle of life, I found my mind suddenly arrested by matters of an higher nature; and among the first evidences of the renewed life, I discovered two or three leading principles manifesting the mighty change. As for example—from being occupied in an unremitting regard to things temporal, I now found my heart earnest to pursue the things which

are eternal—and if at any time the necessary and unavoidable claims of the world broke in upon me, to call off my attention, my heart, like the needle under magnetic influence, which cannot be long diverted from the object of its attraction, soon was turned again to its favorite pursuit. In like manner the troubles of life and the disappointments necessary to the present preliminary state, which in the days of my unregeneracy operated with all their severity, now lost their power, or at least became lessened, in the great anxiety of what might be my situation in the world to come. This, like the ocean, whose boundless bosom takes in all the rivers flowing into it, swallowed up every lesser stream of sorrow; and an awakened concern for the "one thing needful," made me forget every other consideration.

Add to these, I had been exceedingly prodigal of time, while I knew not its value; and have been literally sending out into the streets and lanes of the city to invite passengers to take it off my hands; but when it pleased God to call me by his grace, I found every part of it to be so precious, that, like the fugitive man-slayer hastening to the gate of Refuge, I dreaded every moment lest the adversary should seize me before I had found a sanctuary from his fury. As well as I recollect (and great cause have I to recollect everything connected with a situation so critical) I was in this state of mind when my desires were first awakened to an inquiry after Zion—and the question involuntarily was bursting from the fullness of my heart, "Who will show me any good? Lord, lift up the light of your countenance upon me; and it shall put more gladness in my heart than in the time when corn, and wine, and oil increase!"

Awakened to a concern which I had never before experienced, and called upon continually by a voice from within, which neither the engagements of pleasure nor the clamor of business could wholly stifle, I found myself, insensibly as it were, entered upon the road to Zion, eagerly disposed to ask everyone by the way, "Who will show me any good?" though unconscious at that time what that good meant, or whether there were any means of attaining it.

It was in the midst of one of those highly interesting moments, when my heart seemed to be more than ordinarily impressed with the consideration of the importance of the inquiry, and perhaps too ready to receive the bias of any direction which might first offer, that it occurred to my recollection, there was a person who lived in the neighborhood, who might help me in my pursuits of happiness; whom, for the sake of distinction I would call

## 01.01. THE MORAL MAN

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THE MORAL MAN His house lay on the left hand side of the road in the way to Zion; and, therefore, it would not be going much out of my direct path to call upon him. I mention this for the better information of those travelers who may come after me on the same errand, concerning both his situation and character.

I had long known him, and not infrequently been witness to some striking instances of the benevolence of his mind. He was well known indeed to all around for the extensiveness of his charity. The poor man never went from his door with his tale of misery unheard, or his needs unrelieved; and it was said of him, almost to a proverb, by the pensioners of his bounty, that if ever any man went to heaven, it would be him. I considered myself particularly fortunate in the recollection of such a character, to whom I might unbosom myself on the subject which lay so near my heart; so that, calling upon him with that kind of freedom which necessity begets, and which a confidence in the person you address will always excite, I communicated to him, without reserve, the state of my mind.

He heard me with great attention—now and then only, as I stated my distress, expressing much pity for my concern on a subject which he considered to be totally unnecessary; wondering, as he said, that there should be a single person upon earth weak enough to interrupt the enjoyment of his own happiness with an anxiety so ill-founded; and which according to his ideas, tended to reflect so greatly upon the goodness of the Deity. "For my part," says he, "I have too high notions of God, to imagine that he ever made any creature to be miserable; neither can I fancy the possibility of what some gloomy minds are so much alarmed about—of the doctrine of future punishments. It appears to me altogether inconsistent with the benevolence of the Divine Character."

"Hold, Sir," I interrupted him, "and pray satisfy my mind on this point, before you go farther. I readily join issue with you in the highest acknowledgments of the goodness of God; and am most fully persuaded that all praise must fall infinitely short in the description of what it really is; but I see as plainly as though written with a sun-beam, that much misery may, and in fact does, consist with the Divine goodness in the present life; and, as I suppose, no one will venture to impeach God's goodness in the permission of evil here—I cannot form the vestige of an argument, why that goodness may not be as consistent with the existence of evil hereafter; especially, when Scripture comes in to the aid of my feeble reason, declaring, in a tone of the most determined and unalterable decision, that 'the wicked shall be punished with everlasting destruction, away from the presence of the Lord!' (2 Thessalonians 1:9.) Can you explain to me how I am to reconcile these things with your opinion? And do you not imagine that there is great danger in entertaining such unqualified notions of the divine character—of complimenting God's goodness at the expense of God's truth?" My neighbor waved the question—taking shelter under the general covering of a supposed inoffensiveness of conduct, and a well-intentioned frame of mind. "I do not," he replied, "trouble myself with matters of this nature. Providence has blessed me with ample circumstances,

and I do all the good I can in my little sphere of usefulness. While, therefore, I enjoy the present, I am thankful for the past, and fearless of the future. These are my sentiments," added my neighbor; "and in the discharge of moral duties, I rest satisfied for the outcome."

"It would be very unfitting in me;" I replied, "to contradict your opinion, having called upon you for instruction, and not to instruct. But forgive me if I err in the apprehension, that what you have advanced in the eulogy of moral virtues, relates more to earthly concerns than heavenly—more to the present well-being of man, than to the future enjoyment of God. There is, unquestionably, a loveliness in moral virtue, which cannot fail to gain the esteem of every beholder; and happy would it be for the circumstances of mankind, if its influences were far more general than they are. And while a proper distinction is made between the duties connected with the present world, and the preparations suitable for the eternal world, too much cannot be said in praise of morality. But if, in the sight of God, an imperfect obedience to a moral system could have answered the purposes of futurity, (I say imperfect obedience, because no one upon earth will venture, I imagine, to think higher of his practical attainments in morality, than that they come short of perfection) the religion of Christianity would have been an unnecessary revelation. What nation ever exceeded, in point of morals, the Roman and the Lacedemonian commonwealths?—and yet, after all, we can only place them in the class of unenlightened heathens in respect to religion. Is there not some grand deficiency in that system which totally shuts out, or at least throws far into the background of the piece, the acknowledgment of Him who, one should suppose, would form the first and principal character?"

"Permit me to place the argument in a point of view which may, in some measure, tend to decide it. If I mistake not, you have a large family of children, all branched out in life, and you have already made for them a most ample provision, and it is by your liberality that they are enabled to move in a sphere suited to their rank and circumstances. Put the case now, that these children of yours live in the greatest love and harmony with each other; and not content with the bare practice of moral honesty and justice, are kind, affectionate, friendly, tender, even to the anticipation of what one conceives may promote the other's happiness. But suppose, that in the midst of all this attention to the mutual and general felicity of each other, they are never heard to express an affection towards the person of a father, from whom as the source they had derived all their enjoyments—would not any man consider them as deficient in the first and best of all possible obligations? And is not this the very state of those who, priding themselves in the discharge of moral duties to their neighbor, pass by the reverence, the love, the gratitude, and obedience they owe to God?"

"Bear with me, I beseech you, Sir, and correct me if I am wrong. I merely state the objections to what you have advanced, as they appear to me, in order that your better judgment may remove them.—But, indeed, it has often struck my mind very forcibly, that there must be some latent principle of evil lurking under a fair form, when I have beheld characters of the greatest respectability, who appear to be everything which is amiable to their fellow-creatures—generous, noble, affectionate; but at the same time totally dead to devout sentiments. Often it has been my lot, in times past, to have been introduced to their tables, where the plentiful provision of all the bounties of God's providence seemed to be continually inviting the conversation to some remarks on the goodness of the great Provider. But, alas! during the many hours which I have sometimes spent at one meal, not a word has dropped in honor of the Almighty Master of the feast. The gifts have been enjoyed—but the Giver totally forgotten. It has been frequently my reproach I assure

you, Sir, when returning from such tables in the days while I attended them (for I have long since given them up) that there must be some malevolent principle in the human mind to produce such effects. Will you help me to account for it?" My neighbor seemed a little hurt at the closeness of the question. "You will excuse me, Sir," he replied, "it is not my province to preach. I would recommend you rather to the worthy vicar of our parish, who is thought by all who attend his church, to be one of the most elegant preachers of the age. Perhaps he may be able to satisfy your enquiries; and I shall very much rejoice if your mind can be made easy."

Disappointed as I found myself in the information proposed from my visit, I could not but be thankful for my neighbor's candor; and finding my anxiety increase rather than diminish, in desires after the attainment of something, which I knew not by what term to distinguish, I thought it might be right to follow up my neighbor's advice; and, accordingly, on the on the next Sunday I went to hear

## 01.02. THE MORAL PREACHER

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### THE MORAL PREACHER

He took his text from the prophecies of Micah, chap 6 ver. 8. "He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you—but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?" I felt much pleasure in the very idea of the subject proposed from this text of scripture, the moment it was mentioned; and therefore listened with the more attention, in order to discover some leading points, which might be brought forward to give me comfort. The substance of the preacher's sermon, when separated from the flowery ornaments of it, was directed to show that the path to happiness was set before everyone; that God had shown man what was good; and that it was man's own fault if he did not follow it; that what the Lord required was nothing harsh, or unreasonable, or difficult; but the plain, easy, self-rewarding virtues of moral obligation; and that, if, in addition to the line of doing justly, the circumstances favored the love of mercy, in relieving the needs of the wretched, where ability reached, and dropping over them the tear of sympathy where it did not, and instead of studying to be wise above what is written, respecting divine things, to walk humbly with God—these made up the sum and substance of all moral and religious concerns.

"Well, Sir,"—cried my neighbor, who had attended also the church that morning, and was coming out of the porch at the same moment with myself—"well, Sir, what are your sentiments now? I hope our worthy vicar has fully satisfied your mind." And this he said loud enough to be heard by those around, and with that kind of triumph which a man feels when he fancies he has fully established an opinion long disputed.

"It is my mercy," replied a poor man, who overheard my neighbor's observation, "that I have not so learned Christ. God has indeed shown me what is good; and could I look up and say that I have followed it, all might be well. But alas! 'I have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.' I know not what others feel; but I am free to confess, that in many instances which my recollection now reproaches me with, and others, no doubt, which my treacherous heart has long since forgotten, I have neither 'done justly, loved mercy, nor walked humbly with my God.'

"Though I have reason to be very thankful that God's preventing and restraining grace has kept me from the more open and flagrant acts of injustice, yet I am conscious that self-love and self-interest have betrayed me into the doing of many things which would not bear to be ascertained by the strict equilibrium of a standard of justice, which admits no partiality. I am no less convinced also that in speaking, I have committed, on numberless occasions, a breach of that golden rule of justice which forbids reporting to another's injury, what in similar circumstances, I would have thought wrong to have had spoken of myself. And from the imagination of man's heart, which scripture declares to be 'only evil continually,' I am persuaded that, in thinking, many unkind thoughts have arisen in my mind against my neighbor, which become a violation of that law of charity which thinks no evil. I dare not, therefore, whatever others may do—I dare not risk the final decision of my everlasting welfare on the point of 'doing justly.'

"Neither under the condition of loving mercy,' can I find greater confidence; for I discover in my nature anger, resentment, pride, and the like corrupt passions; which, in spite of all my endeavors to suppress them, like the eruptions of a volcano, which plainly bespeak the heat within from the lava thrown without, too clearly testify that the love of mercy is not the ruling passion; and therefore never to be estimated by the few casual acts of alms-giving, which, if the heart would be faithful to acknowledge, are sometimes more the result of pride, than the pure effect of real love and charity.

"I blush at the bare mention of 'walking humbly with God,' in the recollection how often my rebellious heart has risen, and is continually rising, in opposition to His government and authority. Fretful and impatient under the slightest afflictions, unthankful for the greatest mercies, and though desiring in my daily prayer that His will may be done, frequently wishing it may not, and even displeased if it is, when it thwarts my own; can such a creature be said to 'walk humbly with his God?'" My neighbor listened to the poor man's observations; and when he had finished, walked away with out making a reply. For my part, though it appeared that his reasoning was conclusive and unanswerable, yet I ventured to say, "If this is the state of the case, what becomes of the morality of the Christian religion? and in what sense are we to accept the sermon on the mount, with which the great Author of it opened his commission?"

"The morality of the Christian Religion," replied the poor man, "stands, where it always stood, upon its own fixed and immoveable basis; and, sooner shall Heaven and earth pass, than one jot or tittle of the law shall fail. God does not lose his authority to command, because man has lost his power to obey.—The creditor forgoes not the right to his just due, because the debtor is become insolvent. By "the Law is the knowledge of sin." (Romans 3:20.) Hence the great Author of the Christian system opened his commission with the promulgation of this law, that its unalterable terms might ever stand in the front of his gospel; and 'the man that does them shall live in them.' (Galatians 3:12.) If, therefore, any man can appeal to this standard of decision; can look up with an uncovered, undaunted front, and challenge the strictest scrutiny over every thought, and word, and action; if there be such an obedience found as can give life, 'truly righteousness shall be by the law.' (Galatians 3:21.) But if both scripture and experience have concluded all under sin; if all have sinned and come short of the glory of God, and by 'the deeds of the law, no flesh can be justified in his sight;' then it will be found that the moral sermon of the great Author of Christianity on the mount, as well as the moral system of the great Jewish lawgiver in the wilderness, were both designed to act as 'the school-master to bring unto Christ' (Galatians 3:24.) and, that 'He is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.' (Romans 10:4.)

"Pause therefore one moment, and examine how the account stands between God and your conscience. In the present season of lightness and inattention, a multitude of occurrences of frailty, and sometimes what deserves a harsher name, pass away in the stream of time, noiseless and inaudible, and are soon swallowed up in the gulf of oblivion. But in that hour, when the Lord will lay 'judgment to the line, and righteousness to the plumbline,' if you and I have no better righteousness than our own to trust in, no Surety to stand in our stead, no Advocate to plead our cause—an effect infinitely more awful than that which loosed the loins of the impious monarch we read of will take place, when 'weighed in the balance and found lacking.'" (Daniel 5:6.)

I knew not what to reply, and therefore remained silent. The poor man, bidding me farewell, left me to ruminate on the solemn inquiry, "How should man be just with God?" (Job 9:2.)

I felt the same force of what he said. It was a harsh sound; and the vibration long dwelt upon my ear, "How shall man be just with God?" It followed me to what Job calls the "visions of the night;" (Job 4:1-21) and even then, like the spectre which he saw, the same expostulating voice seemed to cry, "How shall man be just with God?" The stern demand rang through all the chambers of the conscience, as if a thousand voices had concurred to proclaim the utter impossibility of answering the question in the very moment of proposing it; and as an echo reverberates from broken walls, so the sound of conviction returned from my broken heart. "By the deeds of the law no flesh can be justified in his sight." (Romans 3:20.)

It is with some degree of grateful recollection that I look back upon this part of my history; and bless God, while I trace his divine hand graciously interposing by the instrumentality of this poor man, to rescue me from the dangerous path of delusion into which I had turned, when seeking justification by the deeds of the law. I can now enter into the participation of David's experience upon a similar occasion, and feel somewhat of that spirit which he felt in the instance of the wife of the Carmelite, when under a deep conviction of that sin-preventing providence, he cried out, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, who sent you this day to meet me; and blessed be your advice, and blessed be you." (1 Samuel 25:32.) In like manner I find cause to bless God in the review of this instance as the Author, the poor man as the instrument, and his advice as the means, which the Lord was pleased to commission, for the emancipation of my mind from a self-confidence which, if cherished, must have ultimately ended in my eternal ruin. And my reader, will I hope forgive me if I interrupt the progress of the history for a moment, only to remind him, that unless the mind be brought under similar conclusions respecting the unalterable and inflexible right of God's demands, "woe unto him who strives with his Maker!" We may fancy what we please, and frame a standard of our own for God to go by, according to our notions of the fitness of things; as if an arraigned culprit at the bar should stand up and prescribe laws to his judge! but it would be well to consider, before it be too late, the very solemn tone of decision in which scripture has settled the point, which leaves the subject at once determined and without appeal. "Behold he puts no trust in his saints, even his angels he charges with folly. What then is man, that he should be clean? and he which is born of a woman, that he should be righteous?" (Job 4:18; Job 15:14.) The reader will forgive me if I introduce an anecdote in this place, which will serve under divine teaching to explain this memorable scripture of the Lord by the prophet, and throw a light upon it, in perfect analogy to the whole tenor of the gospel. When I was in Gloucestershire, some two years since, a clergyman, whose views of divine things did not then perfectly agree with mine—but who kindly called upon me to propose certain questions, on those passages of scripture in which he supposed we very much differed; and began his interrogations by proposing this portion in the prophecy of Micah. "Suppose (said he), I was to preach tomorrow among my people on this text, how would you recommend me to comment upon it?" I said, "As soon as you have read before them the sacred words themselves, you might very safely say, I take for granted, that everyone who hears me is desirous to follow up the footsteps of the prophet in those acts of holy obedience. And as the highest instance of every other must be to do justice to God; are you everyone of you so convinced of sin, and the natural state in which everyone of you was born in the Adam-fall transgression, that both by original, and actual iniquity, you justly merit the present, and

everlasting displeasure and punishment of Almighty God? And that in yourself, as you stand alone before God, you cannot escape the damnation of hell? This conviction wrought in the heart by the Holy Spirit, and unreservedly acknowledged by the mouth before God; is doing justice to Almighty God. And where this conviction is deeply wrought in the soul, what the prophet adds will immediately follow, namely, to love mercy; that is to know, and love, and delight in the glorious Person who is mercy itself, and whose glorious work, of the great salvation, wrought out by the Lord Jesus Christ, brought in mercy and peace and all covenant blessings. And where those two leading principles are inwrought in the regenerated heart by the divine unction of God the Holy Spirit; that self-convinced, self-condemned, self-loathing sinner will indeed walk every day, and all the day, humbly with God. (Deuteronomy 8:2-3. Ezekiel 16:63.) My visitor expressed himself so much satisfied with this view of the subject, that he said, he would certainly preach upon it according to this statement the following Lord's day. What took place afterward, I know not—but the reader will forgive this short tangent.

## 01.03. THE FAMILY AT PRAYERS

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### THE FAMILY AT PRAYERS

Forever driven from the asylum of moral duties as a justifying principle before God; and still restless and uneasy from the suspense of an awakened mind, in respect to the solemn events of futurity, I found myself compelled to go farther in the pursuit of the wished for happiness; though what path to explore, or where to direct my inquiry, I knew not.

There lived a family of long reputed piety, whose place of residence lay not far out of my way, from whom it struck me that some information might be obtained; I instantly directed my steps towards the house—and I was led to consider it as a very peculiar coincidence of circumstances, and not unfavorable to my purpose, that the household were engaged at their morning devotions, just in the moment that I entered their dwelling.

There is a principle, I know not by what term to call it, which acts with singular energy on the human mind at the very appearance of religious worship. The heart is instinctively brought within the sphere of attraction, and is secretly inclined to participate in what it beholds. I felt this influence operating the moment I entered the room. I considered what this family was engaged in, as a common interest, a common concern; so that without giving any interruption, I dropped upon my knees, unbidden and uninvited, in the midst of the circle. When the devotion was finished, the master of the house desired me to be seated; and our conversation naturally taking its rise out of the incident of the moment, turned on religion.

"It is my uniform custom, Sir," said he, "to begin and end the day in prayer—I consider it to be my duty. I know it exposes me to the sneer of the fashionable world; but I cannot help that. It appears to me to be the obligation of every master of a family to set up the form of religion in his house; and for example's sake, to lead his household to the church on Sundays. For the same reason I make it a point that all the elder branches of my family, after they have been confirmed, should attend the monthly sacrament; and it is my wish, that my wife and daughters should go to prayers on the week days and festivals; and I believe they are pretty constant in their attendance. And, Sir, we all find the good effects of it. We are prosperous in the world, cheerful and happy, as you see. Religion has nothing gloomy with us. No family, I persuade myself, is more comfortable than ours." The master of the house said this with so much complacency and satisfaction, and there seemed to be so much cheerfulness appearing in every countenance of this household, that I began to hope the object of my visit was answered without farther inquiry. I concluded with myself, that if the observance of religious duties was capable of inducing so much happiness in their instance, it would have the same tendency in mine. I only remained therefore long enough among this apparently happy family to present my congratulations on what I had seen, and then took my leave, to put into practice the lesson which I had learned from them.

It is impossible to tell my reader what a round of duties I labored through, of reading, hearing, fasting, watching, praying; and to the constant routine of this kind, when the monthly sacraments

came about in their periodical returns, I added every page which is prescribed in the Weekly Preparations. I could not have ventured in those days to the Lord's table with any of the appointed forms unfulfilled, for the world; and as this path in the trammels of devotion opened a continual feast to feed the pride of my heart upon, I soon began to feel the sweet effects of it in the gratification it afforded me; for finding greater confidence from the supposed rectitude of my life and dutiful obedience towards God, than heretofore, I concluded that I stood on much safer ground for acceptance with him—not that I then thought that my goodness alone and without the merits of Jesus Christ would be sufficient to salvation (for by this time I had learned somewhat of the nature of the Christian religion) but I took it for granted, that what I did would be the sure method of recommending me to God for it—so that, upon the whole, I was well pleased with myself. There were indeed certain seasons, now and then, when upon the omission of any duty, or the commission of any sin, my mind would misgive me, and for the moment induce fear. But these were but transient impressions, which I endeavored to efface as fast as possible, in atoning for the evil, by increasing diligence in the path of what I thought goodx—and thus by carrying on a communication with God, I strove to make up what was remiss or offensive in one instance, by an over-attention in another.

How long I should have gone on under a delusion so fatal, I know not—but a circumstance occurred which at once threw to the ground the whole edifice I had been building up for myself with so much labor, and leveled all my fancied goodness in the dust. I had been reading a chapter in Paul's second epistle to Timothy, when those words arrested my attention so forcibly, that I could not help dwelling upon them—"Having a form of godliness—but denying the power thereof—from such turn away." (2 Timothy 3:5.) What if this should be my case, I thought with myself; and after all, I am taking up with the form, while destitute of the power of godliness? The very idea made me tremble; and the bare possibility of the thing itself induced me to bring the matter to an instant issue by examination; and the result terminated to my confusion. That single appeal of the apostle, which I found I could not make, convinced me all was wrong. "God is my witness" said he, "whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son." (Romans 1:9.) "Alas," I cried out, "I am no spiritual worshiper. I have the form indeed—but not the power of godliness. Mine is the shell, the carcass, the shadow only of piety."

Under this renewed conviction and distress of mind, I sat down pensive and melancholy. I considered now that all hopes of salvation were over; and was in a state little short of despair. I knew not at this time that these were the blessed effects of divine teaching; and that God the Holy Spirit was thus, one by one, removing all the props of self-confidence, and emptying the soul—in order to prepare it for receiving out of the fullness of the Savior. Oh! it is a gracious process of mercy. We must become poor in order to be made rich; and the apostle's paradoxes must be literally verified, to be "dying, that we may live; sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; having nothing, and yet possessing all things." (2 Corinthians 6:9-10.)

Oh! you mourning saints, be not astonished at your afflictions. Be they ever so heavy, or of ever so long continuance, there is a needs be for every one of them; your God is faithful in sending the affliction; and your God will be equally faithful in carrying you through it. Settle this in your mind as an everlasting maxim, every one of them shall terminate to your benefit. The Lord appoints it for the exercise of your faith; and if your faith gives glory to God, God will confirm and honor your faith. This is among the all things which must work together for good to those who love God.

## 01.04. THE TRAVELER

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THE TRAVELER In the frame of mind which I have here just described, I was seated pensive and melancholy, when a traveler approached me.—"You seem dejected, Sir," he cried, as he advanced towards me. "Yes, Sir, I am indeed," I replied; "I have discovered sin to be a heavy burden."

"Sir, I ought to congratulate you," the man answered, "on this discovery. The knowledge of our misery is the first step towards a cure. There is a striking analogy between the diseases of the mind and those of the body. The man in supposed health will refuse the application of medicine; it will be grateful only to the sick; and our Lord says, that 'the whole need not a physician.' It is one of the sweetest and most affectionate recommendations of his character, that he came not to heal the healthy—but to cure the diseased. If you know your malady, depend upon it you are not far from obtaining relief. It has been long my complaint, that 'in me dwells no good thing.' And though I have been some years in the school of self-knowledge, I have made but small proficiency in the science. A science indeed so general, which comprises the whole of man, is not easily acquired. The deepest investigations do not reach to the bottom; for we are told by an authority not to be questioned, that 'the heart of man is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked;' and that 'none can know it' but he who 'tries the heart and searches the thoughts;' (Jeremiah 17:9-10.) for it is not this or that particular instance of sin only—but our whole nature which is virtually all sin; and not a member or faculty of the body but what is tainted by it. Ask the most devout saint the earth ever produced—can you restrain the mind from wandering in seasons of worship? even if you close your eyes from all the objects around, will not crude and impertinent thoughts rush into the mind like unbidden and unwelcome visitors? Do you always find freedom for the affections to mount on the wings of faith and prayer, when you draw near the mercy-seat? Alas! there is not a single sense but what is in confederacy to promote sin in the soul! Our eyes are continual purveyors of evil, and our ears inlets to bring home subjects of defilement. What a train of filthy and impure ideas will some times pass over the most chaste heart, which no education can restrain—but which a man would blush to unbosom to his nearest friend!

"And what makes this awful view of man's total depravity still more awful is, that there is no exemption from it—but it is universal. Corrupt nature is the same in all. This hand of mine is as capable of perpetrating any heinous act of sin; and the heart, which gives birth to the action, of devising it—as that of the vilest wretch that ever lived; for the only distinction of character between man and man, is in what God's grace effects, not what man's merit deserves. You seem to be surprised; but such is the fact. Look here," he cried, taking a handful of seeds out of his pocket, "here are a number of seeds, all taken from one and the same stock—if I were to put all of them into the earth in the same soil, the same situations, under the same aspect of sun, and rain, and dew, they would as certainly produce the same in equal fruitfulness. But if I put a part only into the earth, and reserve the remainder in my pocket, is it not equally as certain that the part reserved will remain inert and unproductive; and that which is cast into the ground be alone fruitful? The human heart, like those seeds, being from one and the same stock, and in its genus, species, and

kind, in all instances the same—must invariably in all cases be alike, if all other circumstances concur; so that if this be not induced, it arises not from a diversity of character—but from other causes. It is grace which prevents the sun, and rain, and dew (if I may be allowed the figure) of temptation and opportunity, from exerting their influence; and then, like the seeds in the pocket, in the absence of those causes, they remain barren and unfruitful."

"But, Sir," I replied, "if such is the universal state of mankind, what a deplorable situation is our nature in! And how then can any be saved?"

"It is this very state of our nature," the traveler answered, "which made way for salvation by grace. Because man is fallen, Christ died. If you were not a sinner, what necessity would there have been for a Savior?"

"Tell me," I cried with great earnestness, "is that Savior for me?"

"I shall be ready," rejoined the traveler, "to answer any questions you think proper to propose to me upon the interesting subject, as far as I am able; from whence you may be assisted to gather information on the point."

"I thank you, Sir," I answered; "but one circumstance I will beg you previously to explain. In calling lately upon a family, whom I found at their devotions, I discovered nothing like what I have since felt of the deadness and unprofitableness of my heart; but they all seemed to be perfectly cheerful and happy. From what principle will you account for this?"

"The thing speaks for itself," replied the traveler. "In a state of unawakened, unregenerated nature, the carnal security and blindness of the mind induces this false joy, and prevents a real concern for 'the one thing needful.' False reasonings, presumptuous hopes, and views of religion different from those of the openly profane; these act as mighty persuasives on the imagination, and speak 'Peace, peace—when there is no peace.' Like children amused with the rattle, such people take up with the carcass, and shell of religion, and are ignorant of the vital principle within. An outward form of godliness satisfies for the inward power of it. And thus resting upon the means, and unconscious of the end, their forms and ceremonies of devotion, instead of leading the heart to God, tend to carry the heart from God; and they know nothing more of religion than the name; and herewith their conduct uniformly corresponds. You will find such characters as well at the play-house as at the church. They can sit both at the Lord's table and the card-table, and are as well known at the one as the other. Thus they live in the vanity and ignorance of the mind; and thus not infrequently they die; ignorant of themselves, ignorant of their own corruptions, strangers to all the principles of grace, without God, and without Christ. The portrait of these people is accurately drawn by the pencil of God in holy Scripture; and you may view two correct outlines of it in Job 21:1-34, and Psalms 73:1-28. Very different is that which the blessed Spirit has given us in sweet miniatures of his people, throughout his whole word. But come, Sir, as you have seen the gaiety of the formal worshiper, let me lead you into the assembly of the real. I am just going to a prayer-meeting, where you will be introduced, if you think proper, among that 'poor and afflicted people' which the Lord said he would leave in Zion."

I arose, and followed my guide towards the place, with strong expectations of improvement.

## 01.05. THE PRAYER MEETING

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THE PRAYER MEETING My guide led me into a room upon the first floor of a dwelling, in which everything around indicated the humble circumstances of the owner, where we found several people assembled for the purpose of devotion. They had just begun their evening service, and were engaged in singing a hymn as we entered; the words of the hymn were interesting, and, as I thought, not inapplicable to my state and circumstances:

Come, you sinners, poor and wretched,

Weak and wounded, sick and sore;

Jesus ready stands to save you,

Full of pity joined with power, etc. The hymn was followed up by prayer, which issued from a voice that I thought I had heard before. And it was an agreeable surprise to me, at the close of it, to recognize in the person praying, the countenance of the poor man, whose observations at the church-porch had made such impressions upon me. He noticed me also, and with that kind of regard which seemed to say "I am glad to see you here." But the meeting so occupied his whole attention, that he appeared to have no leisure for other objects. By what followed I was led to conclude that, if any place of pre-eminence was found in this humble circle, it was his province; for as soon as prayer was ended, and the company seated, he took up the Bible, which lay upon the table before him, and read from the part where it happened to open, Psalms 16:1-11. I could not be mistaken as to the number of the Psalm, by what followed in his observations upon it.

## 01.06. THE POOR MAN'S EXPERIENCE

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### THE POOR MAN'S EXPERIENCE

"In relating my experience," he said, "of the Lord's gracious dealings with my soul, I desire to acknowledge, 'to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he has made me accepted in the beloved,' that I can, with all humility of mind, adopt this language of the Psalmist, and say as he did—'The Lord is the portion of my inheritance, and of my cup. He maintains my lot.' Since that blessed period, when it pleased God to call me by his grace, and to quicken my soul which was before 'dead in trespasses and sins,' through a long series of five and twenty years, I have been learning, little by little, to discover more and more of my own emptiness and poverty—and of the infinite fullness and suitability which is in the unsearchable riches of Christ Jesus to supply all my needs; and the attainment to which at length, under the teaching of God the Holy Spirit, I am arrived, is to know, that Jesus is the only portion of his people; for there is salvation in no other. The inheritance lost in the first Adam, can only be recovered in the second. Jesus is the fountain of all blessings, temporal, spiritual, and eternal. 'Men shall be blessed in him;' and outside of him there is not a single favor provided for any of the bankrupt race of Adam's children; and it is my peculiar mercy, and a lesson which I have learned from our Great Master in the Lord's school, that while the blessed Spirit declares in his church, that 'the Lord's portion is his people, Jacob is the lot of his inheritance,' my heart can make reply to the sweet sound, from the persuasion of a reciprocal interest in the Redeemer—'The Lord is the portion of MY inheritance, and of MY cup. You maintain my lot.' (Compare Deuteronomy 32:9, with Psalms 16:5, for a precious evidence of this doctrine.)

"It has not been, however, without many hard lessons to flesh and blood, with which I have been exercised, that I have arrived to this knowledge. It was a long time before I could rightly understand, and still longer before I could rightly relish, when understood, the humiliating doctrine of living outside of myself, and living wholly upon Jesus. The pride of my heart continually revolted at the idea of depending, like the beggar at the gate, for my daily supply. Though the heavenly manna became doubly sweet by its freshness, yet I frequently found a rising desire within me to have a little stock which I might call my own; and even now, though repeated lessons which I ought to have learned better, and though the preciousness of every gift is enhanced by its being received immediately out of the hand of the gracious Giver—yet such is the remaining power of the unhumiliated pride of my heart, that I discover much rebellion at times rising within—and I am prompted very frequently to tell my heavenly Instructor, that surely now I might without danger be rendered somewhat more independent. Blessed be the patience of Him with whom I have to do, that whenever this is the case (so very gracious and condescending is he) a renewal of my old lesson soon sets all to right again, and makes me bless his holy name, that I am placed under a wiser and better direction than my own. By carrying my forgetful heart back to the first principles of learning in the divine science, and by calling to mind my original stock and present measure of indwelling corruption, I learn the peculiar blessedness of having 'all my fresh springs in Him;' and the sweetness of this life, when grace is in exercise, is inexpressible. While I am enabled to see

that Jesus is my portion, every dispensation comes in a way of mercy. When my heart is under the assurance that my Lord is in it—it matters not what it is. His presence alone has the wonderful property of converting crosses and pains—into enjoyments and pleasures. Every affliction which comes directed by his hand, has the sure mark of affection folded up within the cover; and while I sit down with tenfold pleasure to the enjoyment of the thousands of mercies which my God is continually giving me, because I behold with the eye of faith his presence at the table smiling graciously upon all, I no less am enabled, in the hour of calamity to await the outcome, because I can and do hear with the ear of faith that soul-sustaining voice, 'What I'm doing you don't understand now—but afterwards you will know.' Oh, the sweetness of having 'Jesus for our portion!' and 'of living a life of faith upon the Son of God, who has loved me, and given himself for me!'"

I was musing upon the happiness of a frame of mind like this, as the Poor Man ended his talk; and reflecting on the little probability that I should ever arrive at such a state of blessedness, when a deep sigh, accompanied with a voice of complaint from a person near me, roused me from my meditation, and at once spoke both my feelings and his own.

## 01.07. THE MOURNFUL BELIEVER

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### THE MOURNFUL BELIEVER

"Oh that it were with me as you describe!" said the mourner; "but my case is far different. I fear that I have only 'a name to live, while I am dead before God!' It is not possible, surely, that such a state as mine can consist with a life of grace in the soul. If the love of Christ has been shed abroad in my heart, could I live as I do so far from him? My mind is at times as lifeless and unconcerned towards Christ as theirs can be, who never loved his name. It is true, I feel at certain seasons great desires after the Lord; and I know that a change has taken place in my mind—for the world and its pursuits, which my heart was once running after with the greatest eagerness, now have lost their influence—and the society of the people of God, who were once my song of reproach, I now above all things value. Yet still, so much sin is mixed with all I do, so little do I live to Christ, and to the remembrance of his dear name, and the throne of grace is so often neglected by me from day to day, that I very much fear my hope is all a delusion!" Had I been called upon to relate my own experience, I could not have done it in more suitable words. I felt my heart drawn towards the speaker, from the affinity that existed between us, and waited with the most awakened expectation, for some kind brother in this humble society to say a word of consolation to a case so much my own. It was not long before the Poor Man, to whom I owed so much before, took up the subject, to answer the doubts and remove the fears of the mournful believer; and in doing this, he added to my obligation to him tenfold.

"Your case, my friend," cried the poor man, addressing himself to the mourner, "is by no means singular; it is the uniform complaint of the faithful in all ages. What one ancient servant of the Lord groaned under, all of them have found, that when 'we would do good, evil is present with us;' and the reason is obvious. It arises from the workings within of the different principles, grace and corruption. There are in every regenerated person two principles; a body of sin and a spirit of grace—the flesh lusting against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other, so that you cannot do the things which you would.' In the renewed nature, the understanding is enlightened, the affections spiritualized, the will inclined to God—while in the unrenewed nature still remaining, there is darkness in the understanding; carnal and earthly affections still continuing in the heart; and the will stubborn, rebellious, and frequently inclining to disobedience. In short, the mind is like the region of the earth while twilight is upon it; it is neither dark nor light—but a mixture of both—no portion of the hemisphere being so light—but the shades of darkness are blended with it; and none so dark—but the tints of light are beautifully incorporated; and this is perfectly accountable. A state of grace is a middle state, between that of nature and glory. In a state of nature unawakened, unregenerated, unrenewed, sin reigns with unrivaled sway. In a state of glory, grace reigns uninterrupted, and without any opposition; but the intermediate state is a state of warfare; everyone in this state feels and experiences the conflict; and as it is said, in allusion to this very circumstance, in the allegory of the bondwoman's son and the heir of promise, so believers find it—'As then he who was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now.' (Galatians 4:29.)

"But however mortifying this doctrine is to our nature (and abundantly so it has ever been found to the best of men) yet as it tends, under divine grace, to make the believer go softly all his days, as it makes Jesus more dear; and as it affords to the believer one of the truest evidences of the renewed life—he ought rather to inquire how such a state may be over-ruled to God's glory and his own benefit, than by a false estimate, to question the tender mercy of the Lord toward him, in the very moment of receiving the strongest proofs of them.—Let me ask you to examine your own complaints again; and to see whether in the very moment of receiving the strongest proofs of them, even in the midst of your groaning under the apprehension, that there is no grace in your heart—whether great grace is not then in exercise. You say that if the love of Christ were shed abroad in your heart, you could not live so far from him as you do; that if you really were under grace, you could not stay away from a throne of mercy as you do. But say—could you complain of the lack of love to Christ, if you had never tasted what that love is? And if you visit not a mercy-seat so often as you wish, say—are not these things your continual burden? Do you not groan under such marks of a dead and lifeless heart? And are not these sorrows of the soul, for the unhallowed sins of the body, very plain evidences of the spiritual warfare? They never groan at sin, though they may be fearful of the punishment of sin—who have no renewed nature. It is the believer only who dreads the sin, more than the penalty due to it. And if grace be thus in exercise to endear the person of the Lord Jesus, still more in proportion as we see our daily need of him, to long for the time to come when sin shall be rooted out; and to cause a sense of our weakness to prompt the soul to a greater dependence upon divine strength, by thus over-ruling all dispensations to his glory and his people's welfare—we see a needs-be in every dispensation, and discover the beauty and tendency of that Scripture, which says, 'After you were illuminated (not before—but after) you endured a great fight of affliction.' (Hebrews 10:32.)

"In a word, however we may long for an exemption from all sin, and would purchase it, were it possible, with the price of a thousand worlds; however we may and do groan under this body of sin and death, which we carry about with us; yet, while Jesus, who could, if he saw it right, deliver his tried ones, whom he has chosen in the furnace of affliction, with a word speaking, sees it not fit—let us not despond. If your sense of sin and spiritual infirmities leads you to a more firm reliance upon him; if it makes his promises dearer, his faithfulness more evident, and his presence more desirable—depend upon it, by and by, your groans will be changed into songs of rejoicing, and your language will be like that of the Apostle, 'Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!'"

## 01.08. THE CRIES OF UNBELIEF

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### THE CRIES OF UNBELIEF

There sat an old man at my right hand in the prayer meeting, to whom the leader of this little circle next addressed himself, in order to inquire into the Lord's gracious dealings with his soul. "I hope," said the poor man, calling upon him with all the freedom of one who had been long acquainted; "I hope," said he "that you will now be able to give us some testimony of the word of his grace. I long, methinks, to hear from an old disciple like you, some evidence of the faithfulness of our covenant-making and covenant-fulfilling God."

"Alas!" replied the old man, "my language must be much the same as you have often heard. I still groan under the burden of unbelief, and know not when I shall obtain deliverance from it. It will be a long time, I fear, before I shall be able 'to comfort those who are in any trouble, by the comfort with which I myself long to be comforted of God.' I frequently compare myself to the unworthy spies, whom Moses sent to view the promised land; and fear that, like them, I shall never attain the possession of it, through the same besetting sin of unbelief. If I attend the means of grace, I return, for the most part, unbenefited, through the suggestions of this evil heart of unbelief. If I hear the word of a preached gospel, though I know the truth as it is in Jesus, and love to sit under the sound of it—yet too often, like the Israelites, it does not profit me, not being mixed with faith. If at any time I read the Bible, and turn to those 'exceeding great and precious promises,' which belong to the Lord's people, their sweetness is lost in me, through a fear that I have no right to them; and how many of the providences of my God, which I well know to be every one of them fraught with a sure blessing in their final outcome to his people, are perverted in their effects on me, by the impatience and distrust of my unbelieving heart! And can such a creature say anything by way of encouragement to the Lord's exercised family, when he himself is so faithless and unbelieving?"

"I confess," rejoined the poor man, "that such a state as you describe cannot afford much assistance to the cause of Christ; but blessed be our God, this is the Christian's character—that 'if we believe not, yet he abides faithful; he cannot deny himself.' Your lack of faith indeed is injurious to your peace—but not to his cause. Unbelief, like a worm at the bud, cankers the bloom and fragrantcy of the sweetest flowers of grace; and had our fathers of the church in the wilderness been in this frame of mind, instead of surrounding the Christian pilgrim as they now do, with such a glorious cloud of witnesses, they would have stood in the highway only as so many pillars of salt. But let me tell you, my drooping brother, that I am too well acquainted with your real character, as well from an insight into your experience as from my own, (long exercised as I have been by unbelief, both in times past—even now too frequently feeling its influence) not to know that the very sorrow which you express, on account of the supposed lack of faith, carries with it an evidence that you must have some faith thus to complain. That your faith is not equal to your wishes, I will readily allow—for indeed whose is? But that you differ most essentially from those that are shut up in total unbelief, is most evident. In proof of what I say, compare your situation now—with what it was in the days of your unregeneracy. You were then, not only 'without Christ

and without God in the world,' but absolutely unconscious of your lack—whereas now, your most earnest desires are, that 'Christ might dwell in your heart by faith,' and be fully formed there 'the hope of glory.' If there were no faith in your heart, whence arise these desires for more? It is the preciousness of the gift, which makes you long for greater manifestations of the giver; and it is a consciousness of this shameful unbelief, which makes you apprehensive that you have no faith at all. While, therefore, you groan under those fears, every sigh proves that they are but effects from which the merciful goodness of our God will, in his own time, deliver you. Carry your complaints to Him who is both the 'Author and Finisher of faith.' Let us copy the apostle's prayer, 'Lord increase our faith!'—and depend upon it, that if our faith be but as a grain of mustard seed, however small and inconsiderable it may be, still it is not of nature's growth, nor of nature's production. That small portion which you possess, is the gift of the same Almighty power who created the faith of Abraham. Receive it, I entreat you, as 'the pledge of the promised inheritance, to the praise of his glory.'

"And while I say thus much, by way of convincing you that, in the midst of all your complainings, you have great cause of thankfulness before God, let me remind you also, that what you complain of forms a part of the complaints of all the Lord's people. No, more; the greatest instances of faith we meet with in scripture, afford at the same time the greatest examples of unbelief; as if the dear Lord of his people intended to teach all this important lesson—that man is nothing in himself; but that all his sufficiency is of Him. Abraham, who is handed down to us in the church's history, as the great pattern of faith, and who could and did exercise such unparalleled confidence in the Lord, in the instance of his intended sacrifice of Isaac, yet even this man could not, upon another occasion, trust in God's faithfulness to extricate Sarah from danger. (Genesis 20:1-18) Job, under the influence of faith, could confidently say of the Lord, 'Though he slays me, yet will I trust in him;' yet so much, at another time, was he borne down, under the pressure of trouble, that he impatiently cried out, 'O that I might have my request, even that it would please God to destroy me!' (Job 6:8-9.) And David's whole life, as it may be gathered from his book of Psalms, was made up of conflicts between believing and doubting. I need not mention Peter's case as an additional proof of the fluctuating state of the human mind; who, in the mount of transfiguration, gave so glorious a testimony; and in the hall of Pilate, uttered so shameful a denial of his Lord's character. (Compare Matthew 16:16, with Matthew 26:69.) All these and ten thousand lesser instances, serve to show what man is in himself—and what the same man may be when supported by the grace of God.

"Let me beg of you then, in the estimate of your spiritual state, as it stands before God, never to lose sight of these things; and while a deep sense of the unbelief of your heart makes you humble, and is continually leading you to a mercy-seat for an increase of faith, from Him whose gift alone it is; do not overlook that portion of the blessing which the bountiful Lord has already bestowed upon you. Never forget that the smallest degree of faith is faith; perfectly distinct from all the operations of nature, and far above all human power to produce. Do not forget also, that it is not the quantity—but the quality, which constitutes the principle. 'By Him,' says the apostle, 'all who believe are justified from all things.' Observe the expression, All who believe. He does not say believers of such a description and character, or who come up to such a standard; but ALL who believe. While, therefore, you possess the smallest degree of faith, bless God for that. The smallest measure indicates from whom it comes; and declares whose you are, and to whom you belong. It is the one uniform family-feature of the Lord's household of faith; for 'as many as believe

are ordained to eternal life.' Large portions of so precious a grace are, no doubt, highly desirable; but to poor, timid, unbelieving believers (if I may be allowed the expression) it is a refreshing thought, that the Great Shepherd 'gathers the lambs with his arm, and carries them in his bosom,' and they are as dear and precious in his sight as the strong of his fold.

Those feeble desires, those wishes so weak,

'Tis Jesus inspires and bids you still seek—

The God whom you do you seek will not tarry long—

And by him the weakest are safe as the strong."

## 01.09. A BELIEVER UNDER THE HIDINGS

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### A BELIEVER UNDER THE HIDINGS OF GOD'S COUNTENANCE

"Your observations, my dear brother," said another, who sat at the corner of the room, "are truly refreshing to my soul. I have been long exercised under the hidings of the divine countenance, and sometimes tempted to cry out, with the church of old, 'My hope is perished from the Lord.' But I perceive, from what you have been saying to our friend, mourning under the unbelief of his heart, that the same arguments, by a parity of reasoning, are applicable to my case also. Spiritual darkness and spiritual doubtings are but too nearly allied, and proceed from the corruption that dwells within. It may be said of both, 'It is your iniquities which have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you;' and when this is the case—when, as in Paul's voyage, 'neither sun nor stars for many days appeared, and no small tempest' is added to the darkness of the horizon, faith will be at a low ebb, and all hope that the soul is then in a state of safety, will for a time be taken away.

"But blessed be God, when I can find no comfort in myself, I know that Christ is the same. I still see a loveliness in his person, and a suitableness and all-sufficiency in his power to save—when I cannot say that I see my interest in him to be clear. 'When will you come unto me?' is frequently the language of my heart, though I cannot always call him mine; and the recollection of past experiences is sometimes a lift to me during the passing cloud. I call to mind the time and place, and the gracious manner and means, when, where, and by which the Lord has heretofore comforted and refreshed my soul; so that, like the wife of Manoah, I am led to conclude, 'if the Lord had not intended mercy, he would not have showed me all these things;' and I always find that sweet text of the prophet to be consolatory during the heaviest night of this kind of trial—'Who among you fears the Lord and obeys the word of his servant? Let him who walks in the dark, who has no light, trust in the name of the Lord and rely on his God.'"

"I rejoice, truly, my dear brother," replied the poor man, "in the testimony you bear to the faithfulness of your God under your sufferings. It is an easy thing to speak a word for God's goodness, when the Lord is surrounding us with the sunshine of his blessings; but it must be a gracious soul indeed, to rejoice in God, when he has nothing but his word to trust in; and when God hides his face from his people—stands at a distance from their prayers—seemingly thwarts all their desires—gives no answer by Urim and Thummin—then to hold fast by God, and to lie passive before him. This is what the Prophet felt, and what none but those who are taught of God the Holy Spirit can say with him, 'Even though the fig trees have no blossoms, and there are no grapes on the vine; even though the olive crop fails, and the fields lie empty and barren; even though the flocks die in the fields, and the cattle barns are empty, yet I will rejoice in the Lord! I will be joyful in the God of my salvation. The Sovereign Lord is my strength! He will make me as surefooted as a deer and bring me safely over the mountains.'"

I had entered with so much earnestness of participation into every man's case, as they related their several experiences one after another, that I was unconscious of the lapse of time, and felt

not a little distressed, when I heard one of the company say, "Our hour is finished—it is past eight o'clock." The following hymn was then given out and sung; which appeared to be a very suitable conclusion to the solemn service— No more, my God, I boast no more

Of all the duties I have done;

I quit the hopes I held before,

To trust the merits of your Son.

Now, for the love I bear his name,

What was my gain I count my loss;

My former pride I call my shame,

And nail my glory to his cross.

Yes, and I must and will esteem

All things but loss for Jesus' sake

O may my soul be found in Him,

And of his righteousness partake! The best obedience of my hands

Dares not appear before your throne;

But faith can answer your demands,

By pleading what my Lord has done!

But, if I felt myself pleased with the hymn, my mind was more abundantly refreshed and delighted with the concluding prayer which followed it, in which the person who prayed, did not confine himself to general expressions; but, more or less, included therein the needs and desires of all the Lord's tried family; and in particular, the several cases which had been spoken of during the evening. Neither, as a stranger and visitor in this little society, did the leader in prayer forget to mention me at the mercy-seat; that the Lord would supply all my needs, whatever they might be, out of the abundant riches of his grace, which are in Christ Jesus.

After withdrawing from the room, and taking leave of the friend who had conducted me there, I retired to my closet to meditate upon what I had seen and heard; and the conclusion I formed upon the whole was this—I had discovered in the Scriptures of truth, that in all ages of the church, the Lord has had a seed which served him. I no less discovered also that this seed were distinguished from the rest of mankind by certain marks and characters. I observed very clearly in the little circle to which I had now been introduced, that its members were widely separated from the unawakened world—in all their pursuits, complaints, and desires. I remarked yet farther, that although their complaints and desires differed in their degree of earnestness, yet, like a family feature, there was a sufficient similarity in all to manifest their relationship to each other; but what became my highest gratification, was the discovery that, however unconscious of it before, their situation was my own; and I felt that union of soul which the mind feels in a state of nature on the discovery of affinity, so as to be drawn towards them in the warmth of a lasting love and affection. I

resolved therefore to cast in my lot among them, and to have the same portion. The sweet language of Ruth to Naomi exactly speaks the feelings of my heart—"Don't ask me to leave you and turn back. I will go wherever you go and live wherever you live. Your people will be my people, and your God will be my God. I will die where you die and will be buried there. May the Lord punish me severely if I allow anything but death to separate us!" My mind has been much exercised through the night, in reflecting upon what I had seen and heard at the prayer-meeting; and the morning had but just opened upon the earth, when I arose to prayer and meditation.

I felt the influence, and having "bowed the knee before the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," I entered upon the meditation of the subject which had engaged my attention so much the preceding evening. The more I considered it, the more I stood convinced that there is a seed in the earth which the Lord has distinguished from the world; and I felt no less conviction also, that it is divine grace alone which makes all the difference between "him who serves the Lord, and him who does not serve God." But that I should be the object of his grace when I sought it not, nor was even conscious of the need of it—here appeared the greatest mystery!

I found my eyes overflowing in the contemplation of such unmerited goodness of my God towards me; and was lost in the thought, when a call at the door roused me from my meditation. It was the traveler, whom I have before mentioned, who had kindly introduced me to the prayer-meeting, and who was come to enquire what were my sentiments concerning it; and to offer me that assistance which I had requested of him at our first interview.

I very frankly opened my whole heart to him upon the subject, and hesitated not to tell him how much I felt interested in what I had heard, and particularly in the case of one who had spoken, from the similarity of his experience to my own. "How, or when," I said, "or by what means, the Lord has begun the work of grace in my heart, I know not; but, like the poor man we read of in the Gospel, I trust I can say that 'whereas I was blind, now I see.' It is, indeed—but a confused and ill formed view of things which I have at present, in looking at the bright objects of divine truth. I see but indistinctly men as trees walking; yet, I cannot but hope that He who has graciously touched my eyes, will touch them again, and make me see clearly."

"Doubt not," replied the traveler, "the divine faithfulness. The 'pledge of the Spirit' becomes no less the 'pledge of the promised inheritance;' (Compare 2 Corinthians 5:5, with Ephesians 1:13-14.) and an Apostle says, 'We may be confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in us, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.' As nothing under divine grace will tend to open your apprehensions more clearly to 'the truth as it is in Jesus,' than the possessing right notions of the covenant of grace, on which the whole system of the Gospel is founded, I have brought with me a sermon, written upon the subject, and which, according to my conception, places the doctrine in the plainest point of view possible. If it be agreeable," he added, "I will read it to you."

"Nothing," I answered, "can be more desirable to me."—He accordingly took it from his pocket, and read as follows:

## 01.10. THE SERMON

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THE SERMON "I will make an everlasting covenant with you—even the sure mercies of David."  
Isaiah 55:3

It was a very sweet note which God the Holy Spirit put into the mouth of his servant the prophet, when commanding him to proclaim salvation in the mountain of Israel, when He called it "an everlasting covenant, even the sure mercies of David." In nothing did the Lord more consult the needs and happiness of His people, than in folding the Gospel up under such a cover, and marking it by such distinguishing characters.

Tell me, my brother, do you not feel a very high gratification in the consciousness that salvation is not a work of yesterday—but founded on that "everlasting love with which the Lord has loved his people?"

Besides, an everlasting covenant naturally connects with itself all those properties which are necessary to its completion and design. There must be included in it everlasting wisdom to guide, everlasting counsel to direct, everlasting strength to secure, and everlasting faithfulness to make good all its promises. Every attribute stands engaged in its establishment, and it is the consolation of the true believer in Christ, that all the perfections of Jehovah are pledged for the accomplishment of that purpose "which was purposed in Christ Jesus before the world began." The "sure mercies of David" imply as much, to make them sure. Nothing new to God can ever arise to counteract the divine purposes concerning them. Neither can any one circumstance occur for which provision is not already made. In the everlasting covenant, God himself is the only contracting party. Jehovah answers both for himself and for his people, 'I will—and they shall.' Such is the language of it.

Tell me once more, my brother, does not this consideration also very highly gratify you? You see that, as nothing of merit on your part could have given birth to a covenant which is from everlasting to everlasting; so nothing now of demerit shall arise to defeat its operation—which can owe nothing to you. The subject opened to our meditation in these words of the Prophet, leads to the most delightful view with which the human mind is capable of being exercised in the present unripe state of our faculties. The text indeed contains but five words—but it would furnish a sufficient subject for as many volumes. It is a text in which, as we say, every word is pregnant with truth. I consider it a perfectly unnecessary service to lose time by way of pointing to His person, who is here called David. No one for a moment can imagine that it means David the son of Jesse; or, as an Apostle has observed, this David, "after he had served his generation by the will of God, fell asleep, and was gathered to his fathers, and saw corruption." But he of whom the prophet speaks in the text, who is David's Lord, "saw no corruption:" but when God the Father raised Him from the dead, as if in confirmation of this very subject, and to show its personal application to him, He expressed himself in these very words, "I will give you the sure mercies of David." (Acts 13:33-34.) In the farther prosecution of this subject, the arrangement I propose shall be as follows—my text, in allusion to this everlasting covenant, calls it "the sure mercies of David." I shall first, therefore,

follow up this idea, in showing that the redemption by the Lord Jesus Christ is a system of grace and mercy from the beginning to end. I shall then, secondly, go on to prove that these mercies are "the sure mercies of David;" being founded on that everlasting covenant, by which "grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord." May God the Holy Spirit, who first commissioned the prophet to proclaim, now enable the preacher to explain those mercies of David; that "our Gospel may not come in word only—but in power, and in much assurance of faith!" My first intention is to show, that the redemption by the Lord Jesus Christ is a system of grace and mercy from beginning to end; and nothing can more decidedly manifest the truth of the observation than the character in which the prophet was commissioned to promulgate it; for when it is distinguished by the property of an everlasting covenant, the very term carries with it a most positive testimony that it must be founded in grace, unconnected with any human power, not depending upon any human merit; for what first originated in the free and unmerited mercy of God, confirmed as it was by covenant-engagements between the Father and the Son, before man was created, and is promised to be carried on in all its purposes and effects, by the same divine power, independently of man's agency after his being brought into being—can come under no other description surely than that of grace. Whatever God has done, or is doing, in the accomplishment of his designs concerning it, must all be referred back into the eternal counsel of his own mind, by virtue of its everlasting nature. To this, most evidently, it is that believers owe their being chosen, called and regenerated; and their establishment in grace, their dependence upon the promises, and their hopes of eternal glory, all are founded on that everlasting love with which God had loved his people before the foundations of the world were laid. "I have said," the language of God is "mercy shall be set up forever;" and the reason follows—"I have made a covenant with my chosen."

Look, my brother, into yourself, and into your own experience, for a confirmation of this doctrine. A covenant founded in grace can derive no aid from works. You can have nothing to give but what you have first received; and what you have first received is not in fact yours—but the great Giver's; and what he has given, may, without any impeachment of his justice, be again recalled. Neither can you have anything to offer but what God has a right, as his own, to demand. Even all those sweet effusions of the soul, which appear in the worship of the faithful, when drawing near the mercy-seat; as these are wholly the result of the blessed Spirit's work, who brings them forth into exercise, as the sun by his warm beams draws forth a fragrant smell from the flower, and have their origin in God's grace, and not in man's merit—so there can be no merit in them before God. The language of such a creature as man, even in his highest attainment, and among the first order of the glorified spirits of "just men made perfect," must still be the same—"By the grace of God, I am what I am." Everything that has a reference to salvation centers in Jesus Christ; and may be clearly traced up to its origin in that everlasting covenant which God made with him before this world had being.

I will advance yet one step farther in the argument; and in ascribing the "sure mercies of David" wholly to grace, observe that it was most unmerited grace which admitted the Lord Jesus to be man's surety and sponsor, to fulfill in our stead the law which we had broken, and in his sacred person to endure the penalty due to the breach of it. There would have been no impeachment of the divine justice, if God had insisted on the sinner's suffering it himself. "The soul that sins shall die;" and was it not then an act of free, spontaneous mercy and grace in our God to admit the

substitute? In speaking, therefore, of our subject in general terms, as applicable to the church of the Lord Jesus at large, it must be confessed that the everlasting covenant is very properly called the sure mercies of David; for it is nothing else but a system of grace and mercy from beginning to end! And I am very confident, that every humble soul in particular who is the happy subject of such bounty by a personal interest therein, will be ready to join with the apostle, and say—"But God, who is rich in mercy, of his great love with which he has loved ME, even when I was dead in sins, has quickened me together with Christ, for by grace am I saved." And as the original cause in conversion sprung from grace, so the preserving and carrying on the great work in the soul since, is wholly owing to the same great principle. When you call to mind, my brother, the coldness and deadness of your best affections, your wanderings and backslidings from God, the provocations and sins with which your life has been marked, (Oh, to grace how great a debtor!) will not you, with the utmost humility, exclaim with the apostle, "Unto him who does exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end!" But while it thus becomes delightful to the soul, under divine teachings, to be able to see that redemption's work from beginning to end is wholly a system of grace, it becomes doubly sweet at the same time, to have a clear apprehension, that this grace works and "reigns through righteousness;" that these mercies of David become sure mercies, being made so by virtue of that everlasting covenant of righteousness in Christ Jesus; by which "God can be just, and the justifier of him that believes in Jesus," and the sinner, though in himself nothing but sin and iniquity, can look up and plead the righteousness of Christ as the foundation of his acceptance before God, because in that covenant "God made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." This was the second point of doctrine, I proposed to prove, and which I now proceed to illustrate and explain, under a few leading particulars. The mercies of David become sure mercies to the Lord's people, by virtue of that everlasting covenant which occupied the divine counsel in the ages of eternity before the creation of the world, in which there were mutual promises made by the high contracting parties. Jesus on his part undertook to answer all the demands of his Father's righteous law, for the objects of his and his Father's eternal love; who it was foreseen, would subject themselves to everlasting ruin by the breach of it; and God the Father promised, on his part to remit that punishment to the person of the sinner, by inflicting it on the person of the Lord Jesus, as the sinner's surety; and then to entitle the sinner, by virtue of the Redeemer's righteousness, to everlasting life. These were the terms by which each party guaranteed to the other the sure fulfillment of the covenant. Jesus therefore was to assume at a certain period, called "The fullness of time," our nature, and in that nature to repair God's broken law, and sustain the penalty due to the breach of it. Moved with unbounded love to our fallen race, all this the Lord Jesus actually performed when, leaving "that glory which He had with the Father before all worlds," he came into this world, and accomplished all those great events which we read of in the history of his life; and when, by doing and dying, he had wrought out and brought in an everlasting righteousness, he returned to the bosom of the Father, to make efficient the whole process of his redemption, by sending down his Holy Spirit to apply his merits to his people's necessities, while he himself is exercised in the high character of our Intercessor to plead the efficacy of his death, and continually to appear "in the presence of God for us."

These are the great outlines of the everlasting covenant, as referring to the engagement of God the Son; and the promises, on the part of God the Father, were, that he would anoint Christ to the

work, and accept of him in lieu of the sinner; and that when the Redeemer had made his soul an offering for sin, "he should see his seed, he should prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord should prosper in his hand." "My righteous servant," says God, "shall justify many, for he shall bear their iniquities. As for me, this is my covenant with him, says Jehovah, my Spirit that is upon you, and my words which I have put in your mouth, shall not depart out of your mouth, nor out of the mouth of your seed, nor out of the mouth of your seed's seed, says Jehovah, from henceforth and forever." Such then being the stipulated terms between the high contracting parties, and having been fulfilled on the part of the Lord Jesus, the mercies promised on the part of God become sure mercies to all the Lord's people. "Grace reigns through righteousness;" and the positive assurance of pardon and salvation is brought home to the heart by a conviction founded on the veracity of that God "who cannot lie."

Let any man now review the ground we have hastily trodden over, in quest of the testimonies with which these mercies of David are made sure. Let him behold an everlasting covenant, founded in grace, accomplished by the great Representative of his people in grace, and in all ages accomplishing in his people by grace; let him observe how each principle harmonizes to secure God's glory, while it tenderly secures man's welfare; let him carefully remark how grace reigns through righteousness; and I venture to hope, if God the Holy Spirit be the teacher, that the result will be the most absolute conviction that our text very properly characterizes this great salvation, by calling it "the sure Mercies of David." The application of this doctrine, though of all other considerations the most interesting, may be brought within the narrowest compass—the whole terminating as it respects every individual, in this single question—'Am I, or am I not, the highly-favored object of these sure mercies of David?'

If it be said, How shall this point be ascertained; and by what marks or characters is it to be known?—the answer is direct—God has not left himself without the witness of his Holy Spirit in the hearts and minds of his people; and although it is with the children of God in grace as it is with the children of men by nature—in the infancy of life, while the faculties of the mind remain unopened, the child is unconscious of the inheritance to which he is born—so they to whom "he has given power to become sons of God," will frequently remain a long time unassured of the incorruptible inheritance to which they are begotten by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead; but as the spiritual apprehension is unfolded by the heavenly Teacher, they are brought, by little and little as children under education, to see their interest in "the sure mercies of David," from the characters in which they find themselves distinguished in the everlasting covenant.

See, my brother, see whether you do not possess what Jehovah promised, by virtue of this covenant, to give to Jesus' people. Have you not the new heart and the new mind, which God, by his covenant, is engaged to bestow? Do you not feel those covenant impressions, which are common to his people? Is not the "Messenger of this covenant" whom God has chosen, become the object of your choice also? If God the Spirit is promised to certify your interest in this covenant, "have you received the Holy Spirit since you believed?" In a word, if these, and these only, are the sure mercies of David, are you seeking salvation in no other way?—and do you say as David did, "This is all my salvation and all my desire?" These are precious tokens of being interested in the sure mercies of David, when pardon, mercy, grace, righteousness, sanctification, and strength, equal to our day, are sought for in nothing else but God's everlasting covenant. My unawakened brother, what do you know of these sure mercies of David? I cannot, I dare not, be silent, while

endeavoring to comfort the people of God with a view of their privileges, without calling upon you to examine and look diligently, lest you fail of this grace. O that the Lord may incline your heart that you may come! O that you may hear the joyful sound and live!—that God may give you also these sure mercies of David!

How shall I conclude my sermon better than by desiring the afflicted, mournful, exercised believer of every description and character, to fold up the sweet text of the Prophet in his bosom, as a motto of consolation for every occasion? And may God the Holy Spirit write upon every heart "I will make an everlasting covenant with you—even in the sure mercies of David!"

## 01.11. THE REMARKS

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THE REMARKS When my friend had ended this discourse, he waited as I perceived by his looks, for my observations upon it. I anticipated his enquiry for my opinion, by giving it unasked. It appeared indeed to me very plain, that the sermon comprised the leading principles of the covenant of grace; which, though certainly a subject of all others the most interesting, is perhaps the least understood. For my part, I am free to confess that, previous to this explanation, I had very imperfect conceptions of it. My first object, as soon as he had finished reading the manuscript, was to thank him for his "labor of love," in bringing me acquainted by this means with a doctrine so highly important. How sweet and consolatory is the view, that redemption-work originated in grace!—is carried on and completed in grace! and yet, as if to remove all fears and apprehensions from the believer's mind, it is "grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord;" so that, though founded solely in mercy, it calls in to its assurance to fulfill the covenant-engagements and covenant-faithfulness of Jehovah. Well might one of old, in the contemplation of it, say "Mercy and truth have met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other!"

One branch of this subject particularly arrested my attention; to which, on account of my imperfect conceptions of it, I ventured to communicate to my friend my objection. The scriptures of truth (I observed to him) very strikingly distinguished those "sure mercies of David" as arising out of an everlasting covenant. This being the case, the operation of those mercies must, by their very nature, be perpetual, and without any interruption. There can be no period in which they cease to act; for what was promised to be eternal, can never admit the smallest alteration in time. Is there not, however, sometimes a suspension of those mercies, when afflictions abound in the lot of the Lord's family?

"No, never," replied my friend, "is there the least interruption in the unchanging mercies of God in Christ Jesus; and however dark and seemingly mysterious at times the dispensation may appear to us, yet there is but one and the same purpose of mercy invariably pursued by a faithful God to his people; and the difficulty of apprehending this would be soon removed, by only taking into the account the whole process of the divine administration towards believers, and not forming a judgment upon every single and detached part of it. As men regulate their opinion of some admirably well-constructed machine, from a contemplation of the whole when complete, and not of its several constituent parts in a state of separation, so God's divine ordination respecting the government of his people, must be viewed upon the whole—causes with effects; and then all is grace, mercy, and loving-kindness. An earthly parent considers it as no diminishing of his tenderness to a beloved child, that he sends him abroad for education, or that he himself instructs and disciplines him at home; because his future prospects in life are best promoted by this process. So why should our heavenly Father be supposed to have lost sight of 'the sure mercies of David,' to his children, because absence and discipline are made use of by him to forward his gracious designs of greater tenderness towards them? But when we call in question the evidences of divine love, we forget where we are, and the reasons for which we are here; and hence it is a

great testimony of those very mercies of David, that the Lord makes use of the ministry of affliction to proclaim that 'this world is not our rest, because it is polluted.' Had Jesus intended this world for the enjoyment of his people in a state of worldly prosperity, very different would have been their accommodations—but they are 'strangers and pilgrims upon earth,' and are going home to their Father's house; and what does ever make home more desirable to the traveler—than the ill reception he frequently meets with on the road?

"Sir, look at the subject again, and see whether it does not challenge your highest admiration and praise, when you discover that the afflictions of the Lord's people are among his tenderest mercies?—in that they are so admirably contrived, that not a single trouble shall ultimately do them harm; but, on the contrary, shall as positively work for their good. Set down this as an everlasting maxim, and compare with it either your own experience or your observation of others. Let us suppose now, for example's sake, that in the great mass of characters in the Lord's tried family, some are laboring under heavy afflictions of body, and some under anguish of mind—some impoverished in worldly circumstances—some smarting under the lash of false tongues—some groaning under the pains of sickness—some bitterly bewailing the effects of sickness in others; yet, be the trial what it may (and wisely ordered it is, exactly suited to everyone's necessities) look only forward to its final outcome, and you will find that not a single individual of the Lord's household is injured by it. Each affliction becomes to them a messenger of sanctification and wisdom, and acts medicinally on the mind, as much as medicine on the body; and can those things be properly called evils, which minister good? Will any man blame the physician, because the medicine he administers is found somewhat nauseous to the taste, and operates roughly?

"But it is not enough to say that afflictions do no harm; they must also do good. The promise else would be lost; 'All things work together for good to those who love God;' so that, unless in every single instance good is wrought to the lovers of God, the truth of Scripture would become questionable. But of the perpetual occurrences which are going on through life, in attestation to this precious assurance, a volume would only give the mere outlines—and who is competent to describe them? Generally speaking, all afflictions which tend to bring the soul to God, keep up a life of communion with the Redeemer—make us sensible of the gracious influence of the Holy Spirit—spiritualize our affections—wean our hearts from a world from which we must soon part, and promote a more intimate acquaintance with that world in which we are shortly forever to dwell; whatever things induce these blessed principles, are undeserving the name of afflictions—they are among the sweetest mercies of God! God removes earthly comforts, in order to make room for heavenly delights. He empties the soul of all creature-comforts, that He may fill it with Creator-mercies. Can there remain a question but that the believer is a gainer by the exchange? No, I am fully persuaded, that if grace were in full exercise, we would embrace our afflictions, as affording the choicest proofs of divine love—and how refreshing would it be to a bystander near the bed of some suffering saint, to hear him say—Praise my God with me for the pains I now endure! for the dearest friend which I have upon earth, if his affection for me and his wisdom were equal to those of my heavenly Father, would inflict every pain and trial which I now feel from His gracious appointment."

## 01.12. THE DEAD CHILD

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THE DEAD CHILD My friend was going on in his discourse when a shriek from a window in the street, accompanied with a loud voice of distress, interrupted him. We heard the lamentable cry, "My child is dead!" and hastened to the door, to seek the cause of this sorrow. Upon inquiry, we found that it was the only child of an affectionate mother, which had that moment breathed its last in her arms. Alas! thought I, Rachel's case is not singular—the same voice which was heard in Ramah is heard throughout the world. The sorrowful mother refuses to be comforted, because the child is not.

"See here, my brother," cried my companion, taking me by the arm, and leading me, as he said it, involuntarily down the street, "see here an exemplification of our subject. Let us only suppose that this afflicted mother is a gracious woman, and her history I will venture to assert, shall sooner or later prove the truth of all that I have been saying. In the first paroxysm of grief she is perhaps insensible of it; for nature is nature, and is allowed to express, if without murmuring, her sorrows. But suppose that you or I were permitted to call in upon her at some future period—how different should we find her sentiments! A plain proof this, that it is the state of the mind, and not the affliction itself, which constitutes the difference; and when the appointment comes, as it must come to every gracious soul, in a covenant way, the united wisdom of men and angels could not have ordered an event equally suitable, so as to have answered the purpose of God in his merciful dispensations towards her. However painful—it could not be spared. Let us consider it for a few moments, as it concerns herself, and as it refers to the child.

"As it concerns herself. It is more than probable that this beloved, this only child, stole away her heart from the Lord. Perhaps, her visits to the throne of grace were less frequent than heretofore—perhaps, her anxiety for the future provision of this babe made her omit or diminish her charities to the poor; made her question the providences of God; made her affections more earthly, her conversation more savoring of the things of time and sense; and, in short, induced a train of conduct all tending to lead the heart more from God, and not bringing it (as ought to have been the case) to God. And was it not then, do you think, among the choicest "mercies of David" to remove the cause of all this evil? Was it not time for God to recall his gift, when that gift formed a cloud on the mind to hide the hand of the giver?

"And as it refers to the sweet babe. Supposing the most favorable thing that can be supposed—that it was a child of grace, a child of many prayers. Are "the sure mercies of David" altered, because those prayers are answered, and Jesus has housed a lamb of his fold beyond the reach of the prowling lion or the raging bear? Say, you long tried, long exercised soldiers in the Redeemer's army, are the summer's heat and the winter's cold—the furious assaults of the enemy without, and the distressing fears within; so very desirable, that you regret the close of the campaign? Oh, how much the reverse! And who knows but the gracious Lord, reading in the index the whole volume of this infant's life, in mercy shut the book, to stop at once the parent's anxiety and her offspring's sufferings! Thus then here is at once a whole chapter of mercies—mercies to

the old, and mercies to the young; and nothing but mercy to all, both in time and eternity! And where is the cruel parent that would retard the flight of his child under such circumstances, and hinder it from taking wing to meet the Lord in the air? Surely, might the infant say, in just reproof to such mistaken fondness, "If you loved me, you would rejoice, because I go to my Father!"

"And what if we reverse the circumstances (for grace is not hereditary) let that parent determine, for none else can determine, what it must be to see a graceless child rising up in life, in spite of all our remonstrances, all our prayers—at once regardless of his present peace and future happiness.—Oh, how awful!"

## 01.13. THE SUICIDE

THE SUICIDE As my friend uttered these words, a crowd of people ran across the street in which we were walking, which excited our curiosity to inquire into the cause. The information was a sad one—A rash youth, it seemed, unable to brook the various disappointments which a long pampered habit of poor parenting had induced, dared to defy Omnipotence, by putting an end to his earthly existence! The crowd was running to behold the unhappy object.—As for me and my companion, we both stood motionless, struck with horror.—At length my friend recovered himself, and broke silence. "Holy Lord," he cried, "what a dreadful world is this, through which your people are passing! How close we walk on the confines of everlasting misery, while in the very moment we are the monuments of your saving mercy!—Blessed God," he exclaimed, "write, I beseech you, that solemn truth upon my heart, Those who are kept, are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation."

"Oh, what a lesson is here, my brother," he cried, "for the sorrowful mother whom we just now noticed! And what would this young man's parents give (for perhaps he may have both to survive him) had her case been theirs!" My heart was too full to reply. I felt all that kind of sensation which the poet entered into, to the contemplation of a subject so hopeless and awful, when he said,

Then if it be a dreadful thing to die,  
 How horrid yet to die by one's own hand!  
 Self murder!—name it not!—dreadful attempt!  
 Just reeking from self-slaughter, in a rage,  
 To rush into the presence of our Judge!  
 As if we challenged him to do his worst,  
 And valued not his wrath!—'Tis mad!  
 'Tis worse than madness—nothing can describe  
 A phrenzy half so desperate as this! (Blair's Grave.)

It was some time before I prevailed on myself to move from the spot of this awful scene—but at length I caught the arm of my companion, and we walked away together towards the end of the street, which terminated in the fields. We had gone a considerable space without any conversation, the minds of both being, I imagined, fully absorbed in ruminating on a subject that was, beyond all others, the most distressing! For my part, the circumstance had awakened in my bosom a train of thoughts which tended to dissipate all my new-formed hopes. "What," I said to myself, "if an end so horrible should be at length the termination of my pilgrimage! What if all my fond desires of grace, should ultimately prove a delusion? Are the people of God exposed to such overwhelming temptations of the enemy? May they really be awakened to the life of God in the

soul—and yet finally fall away?"

I found these, and the like distrustful questions involuntarily arising in my mind, and inducing much anxiety, when my friend, as if privy to what passed within me, broke silence—"How gracious," he exclaimed "is our God, in the midst of such awful judgments as are walking by our side through the world—to keep us unhurt! Do you not perceive the evidence of that Scripture, 'A thousand shall fall at your side, and ten thousand at your right hand; but it shall not come near you—only with your eyes shall you behold and see the reward of the wicked.' (Psalms 91:7-8.) Oh, it is a blessed, soul-reviving thought—that amid all the melancholy proofs around us, that we are passing through the enemy's territories, that there is a gracious nevertheless in the covenant which screens us from his malice! 'Nevertheless,' says the Apostle, 'the foundation of God stands sure, having this seal, the Lord knows those who are his.' (2 Timothy 2:19.) 'Let mine outcasts dwell within you, Moab—be a covert to them from the face of the spoiler.' (Isaiah 16:4.) This is enough. Outcasts, and sometimes considered as the 'offscouring of all things,' they are; but still they are God's outcasts. Tempted they may be, and certainly will be—but conquered they shall not be; and could an onlooker but see objects spiritually, he would discover, as the impious monarch of old did, "One walking with his people in the hottest furnace, that even the smell of the fire may not pass upon them." (Daniel 3:25, Daniel 3:27.)

"You very much rejoice my heart," I replied, "by what you say. My fears were all alive in the view of this awful scene, lest an event so truly hopeless might one day be my portion."

"That," answered my companion hastily "is impossible to a child of God. The promise is absolute. 'No weapon formed against you shall prosper.' (Isaiah 54:17.) And God 'is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted above that you are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape; that you may be able to bear it.'"

"But is it not said," I replied "that some who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and been made partakers of the Holy Spirit—have fallen away?"

"Yes," replied my companion, "but none of those so spoken of were ever children of God, or 'born again of that incorruptible seed which lives and abides forever.' Only observe the vast distinction of character by which those enlightened people whom the apostle speaks of are marked, from the Scripture-features of the truly regenerate, and the contrast will immediately appear. They are said to be 'once enlightened,' that is, with head-knowledge; not renewed in heart-affections. They are described as those who have tasted of the heavenly gift; tasted but not approved, like people whose stomachs nauseate what the taste rejects, and digest it not. They are said to 'have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit;' that is, in his common operations upon the understanding, not in his quickening and regenerating grace in the soul. In all these and the like instances, there is not a single syllable said of the Spirit's work in the great and essential points of faith and repentance, and the renewed life. But the whole account is confined to the common operations of nature, as distinguished from grace, in which natural men frequently excel, and sometimes indeed to such a degree, as to surpass in head knowledge children of grace; and God the Holy Spirit is pleased to work by their instrumentality, while they themselves remain unconscious of his power. He blesses his people by them; but they feel not his power in them; for rather than his household should lack supply, he will feed them even from the table of their enemies. They become therefore like channels of conveyance, which conduct to others—but retain nothing themselves; or like the

signposts on the road, which point the traveler to the right path—but never stir themselves a step towards it. These things may be done, and perhaps very often are done by men who are total strangers to vital godliness; and therefore when they cease to appear in their assumed character, they are said by the world to have fallen away from grace; whereas the fact is, they were never in grace. Everything in such people is derived from natural causes, is supported by natural means, and adopted for natural purposes—and thus beginning in nature, they end in the same. And if a proper attention was paid to these things, to discriminate between nature and grace, it would, under the divine blessing, very much tend to diminish the apprehensions of the humble and fearful believer, respecting the danger of apostatizing from the faith."

"But is there not a difficulty," I said, "to the cordial reception of this doctrine, in the cases of those unhappy people who die by their own hands, and, as is generally supposed, from the effects of religious melancholy?"

"Not the least," replied my friend, "by those who consider the subject in a proper point of view. It is the grossest mistake to ascribe such instances of suicide to a religious melancholy, when, in fact, they are induced altogether from the total absence of true religion.

"Men, from the awakenings of conscience, and from the dread of divine displeasure, in the recollection of a mis-spent life, may be driven to despair; and, if there be no grace given to them by God, to make application of the sweet promises of the gospel in the hour of temptation—but left to themselves, may be prompted to do an act at which nature shudders! But who would presume—but a fool, to put this down to the score of true religion, when every circumstance tends but to prove the very reverse—in the total lack of all true religion? Let us only suppose a case in point, which is enough at once to answer all the childish observations which the world has made on a subject of this nature. Let us suppose a man under the immediate pressure and alarms of a guilty conscience, in the prospect of the wrath to come, feels the rising temptation to do away with himself. Let us suppose further, that in this distressed state of mind, some precious revelation and promise of the gospel is, through divine grace, revealed to his heart; that he hears and believes what the gospel graciously proclaims, that 'Though his sins are as scarlet, they shall be made white as snow; though red as crimson, they shall be as wool; that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from all sin.' Is it not evident, that if the mind of such a man is brought to believe in this precious promise, there can be no despair, and consequently there can be no self-murder? And will prejudice itself, even the grossest prejudice, venture to say, or even believe, that a single instance of suicide was ever committed under such circumstances?"

"Hence therefore, you see my brother," continued my friend, "it is not faith—but the lack of faith; not from true religion—but from the total absence of true religion—that a melancholy pervades the mind, which sometimes terminates so fatally as in self-destruction."

## 01.14. THE PLOUGHMAN

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### THE PLOUGHMAN

I was about to reply, when the voice of one singing attracted my attention. It was an farmer at his labor, busily engaged in ploughing the field, and at the same time exercising his mind in strains of melody. From the solemnity of the tune, I was induced to believe that it was a psalm or hymn that he was singing. How mercifully (I thought with myself) has the Lord provided for the laboring part of mankind, that while the hands are engaged day by day on things of the earth, the heart is unfettered, and able, through grace, to soar among the objects of heaven! As we approached nearer, we paused, and could very plainly distinguish the words, as thus he sung—

Arise, my soul, my joyful powers,

And triumph in my God;

Awake, my voice, and loud proclaim

His glorious grace abroad. My friend whispered in my ear—"Do you recollect what the prophet predicted of the last gospel-days? 'In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD!' (Zechariah 14:20-21.) Such shall be the gracious prelude to that day, when there shall be no more the Canaanite in the land, that the highway and the way of holiness shall be so plain, that 'the way-faring men, though fools, shall not err therein.'" (Isaiah 35:8.) The farmer still sung:

He raised me from the depths of sin,

The gates of gaping hell;

And fixed my standing more secure

Than 'twas before I fell.

"Is not this strange doctrine?" I cried to my friend.—"Ask him yourself," he said; "for if he sings with the Spirit, and with the understanding also, he can explain."

"Are you not mistaken, honest man," I said, "in what you are singing?"—"Oh, no Sir," he immediately answered, "He who raised me from sin preserves me now from falling— The arms of everlasting love

Beneath my soul he placed;

And on the Rock of ages set

My slipping footsteps fast. The city of my blessed abode

Is walled about with grace;

Salvation for a bulwark stand,  
To shield the sacred place.  
Satan may vent his sharpest spite,  
And all his legions roar;  
Almighty mercy guards my life,  
And bounds his raging power.

"Does this seem strange to you, Sir?" continued the countryman—"surely you ought to know better than I—but for my part, I thank God, I know enough to know that they are safer who are kept by grace, than those who never fell. The angels who kept not their first estate fell, from having no security but their own strength; and our unhappy first father, who had more strength of his own than ever any since of his fallen race have had, soon manifested what that strength was, when left alone. I do therefore desire to bless God that my strength is in another, and not in myself. Oh, it is a sweet morsel to my soul which says 'O Israel you have destroyed yourself—but in Me is your help!' (Hosea 13:9.) Besides, Sir, had Adam continued in his original state of uprightness, and all his children have partaken in the same, this would have been no other, after all—but the righteousness of the creature; whereas now 'the salvation of the righteous is of the Lord.—He is the Lord our righteousness, and therefore he is himself our strength in the time of trouble,' (Psalms 37:39.) and while the soul whom divine grace has snatched, as the Lord has me, from the gates of destruction, can take up that scripture, 'Surely, shall one say, In the Lord have I righteousness and strength.'—God the Holy Spirit applies that other precious assurance of his word, 'Israel shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation; you shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end.'" (Isaiah 45:17.) The countryman waited not for a reply—but resumed his labor and his song together—

Arise my soul, awake my voice,  
And tunes of pleasure sing;  
Loud hallelujahs shall address  
My Savior and my King!

Happy soul, thought I, you have that which empires cannot purchase—God for your Father, Jesus for your portion, and the Holy Spirit for your Comforter!

I saw the countenance of my companion glow with pleasure at what the countryman had said—while he finished the observations of the laborer, with asking and making answers himself to some few questions of his own. "Why is it," says he, "that the divine promise of perseverance should be so difficult to be received by our unbelieving hearts—but because we think we must have strength enough of our own? Why is the doctrine of the Redeemer's righteousness, as the sole means of justification before God, so hard to be accepted by us—but because the unhumiliated pride of our nature cannot brook the mortification of being saved without doing something towards it? And why is it, that sinners are so averse to believe that their salvation is wholly the result of being chosen in Christ 'before the foundation of the world,'—but because it becomes a gratifying

compliment to our proud nature, to have it thought that we first sought Christ? But the poor sinner desires that it should be always kept in view, that if we love him—it is because he first loved us. His language is, 'Lord, it is all distinguishing grace from beginning to end. I know I would fall every hour—but for the promise of being upheld by Him, who having 'loved his own, loves them unto the end.' And as I am fully conscious that I have no righteousness of my own, how precious becomes that assurance to my soul, wherein you have said, 'My salvation shall be forever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished!'" (Isaiah 51:6.)

## 01.15. THE STRAYED SHEEP

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THE STRAYED SHEEP At that instant a sheep leaped over the hedge, just where my companion and I stood, as if pursued by some enemy. The poor animal seemed much distressed and affrighted. He looked at us—but appeared disappointed. As he stood still I called to him; but he knew not my voice. At length a man appeared at the fence, over which the sheep had broken, and calling in a particular tone which the poor animal understood, he turned and looked upon him. The shepherd then came over the hedge, and advancing gently towards him, still continuing his call as he approached him, the sheep came to meet him, and seemed rejoiced at his presence; and they went away both of them together.—"Ah!" I cried, "I think I could spiritualize this occurrence." "Do so then," replied my friend, "for such should be the custom of Zion's pilgrims—to extract spiritual improvement from everything which they see or hear."

"I would suppose," I said, "this poor strayed sheep to be the emblem of the wandering sinner. And I would suppose that the man pursuing it is the emblem of Jesus, which the silly animal thought to be an enemy. And under those images, if I mistake not, several very sweet doctrines of the gospel may be discovered. As for example, that the Lord Jesus had a fold before the foundation of the world, is evident; for in the close of his ministry he thanks the Father for those who he had given him, and of which 'he had lost none.' This fold, by the entrance of the prowling wolf into paradise, wandered, and was scattered abroad in the wide wilderness of the world—for so the Lord speaks of them—'My sheep wandered through all the mountains, and upon every high hill; yes, my flock was scattered upon all the face of the earth.' (Ezekiel 34:6.) But though wandering and scattered, they were the Lord's sheep still. That little foolish wanderer we just now saw, was never altered in his nature, though wayward and perverse in his track. Though he left the sheepfold, yet he was still the sheep, and not the goat. In like manner, Christ's spiritual sheep did not lose their relation to him when they left his fold. This character of Jesus' sheep should never be forgotten by us, for it is plain that Jesus himself never loses sight of it. In the moment he speaks of them as wandering and scattered, as diseased and weak—he calls them still my sheep; and hence, in the recovery of every one of them, the same idea is carefully preserved—'I will search for my lost ones who strayed away, and I will bring them safely home again. I will bind up the injured and strengthen the weak.' (Ezekiel 34:16.)

"And what can there be more refreshing and encouraging to a poor sinner than the consideration, that if of the fold of Jesus, originally given by the Father, however scattered over the face of the earth; however pent up in the den of beasts by the accursed enemy of souls; still he is the sheep of Jesus; concerning whom the promise is made and passed, 'My sheep shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand!' (John 10:28.) The eye of the good Shepherd is ever over them; he beholds them as his sheep while they appear among wolves; and when the hour is come, according to his blessed promise, like that poor animal we just now beheld, they shall hear his voice and follow him, though they flee the voice of strangers. How expressive to this purpose are the words of God by the prophet—'For this is what the Sovereign Lord says: I myself will search and find my sheep. I will be like a shepherd looking for his scattered flock. I will find my

sheep and rescue them from all the places to which they were scattered on that dark and cloudy day.' (Ezekiel 34:11-12.)

"And if this doctrine be well founded," I continued, "what a volume of consolation it holds forth to the sheepfold of Jesus, under their own diseases, weaknesses, and wanderings; and the long wanderings and wayward obstinacies and rebellions! The lion and the bear may have taken the tender lamb from the fold; but our David will in his time, and not ours, and the proper time too, go out after him, and deliver him from his devouring mouth. 'My sheep,' says Jesus, 'shall never perish.' That's enough!—'Fear not then, little flock; it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.' (Luke 12:32.) And how eternally secure must be every one of the fold, when the final presentation of them before the throne of glory is to be expressed in these words—'Behold, I and the children whom the Lord has given me'" (Isaiah 8:18.) When I had finished my remarks, my friend thanked me. "I am much pleased," he said, "I assure you, with your ideas upon the subject. You have, in my opinion, very sweetly spiritualized the incident of the strayed sheep—and you certainly have ample authority from Scripture, for the several observations you have made. The frequent allusion which is there adapted to the various circumstances of a sheepfold, is expressly done with this intention, to describe the Lord's gracious dealings with his people.

"There is one view of the subject which has often struck me—but which, so far as my reading extends, has not been sufficiently noticed, if at all, by any writer—I mean, where Jesus is following the thousands of his fold through all their wayward paths, amid the lion's den, and over the mountains of darkness—his eye is still over them for good, and his arm unremittingly stretched forth to keep them from everlasting ruin; though they, as yet in their unconscious state, senseless either of his presence or his favor, continue to weary him with their iniquities! There is somewhat in this view which opens to them a most precious and endearing trait in the character of the Lord Jesus; when once the film which obstructed vision in them is removed, to see things as they are, and that he has brought home any of his wanderers to his fold 'on his shoulders rejoicing!'

"If you and I, my brother," he added, "had the faculty of discerning objects spiritually, we would discover many in this situation now, who appear to every eye but His who knows his own under all disguises, as goats, from their behavior—but yet are the real sheep of Jesus, which, by and by, he will gather out, and say to them, as he did to the church of old, 'Come with me, my spouse, from the lions' dens, and from the mountains of the leopards.'

"Gracious Power!" he exclaimed, "while speaking of your patience to your people, oh! let me never forget for how many years that patience was extended to me!"

"And to me!" I cried. A moment of silence followed, when my friend resumed his discourse.

"I cannot help remarking, my friend," he said, how wonderfully the Lord has brought you on your way—and particularly in the knowledge of divine things. Many there are who, notwithstanding they are very precious plants which the Lord's right hand has planted, do not make great advances. But I may truly say of you, as the apostle did of the church of the Thessalonians, 'Your faith grows exceedingly.'"

"Alas!" I replied, "I fear I do not grow at all. I cannot perceive in myself any progress." "Do not say so," he answered, "for this borders on unthankfulness. In our desires after greater measures of knowledge and grace, let us never overlook the less; nor, while we earnestly beg the Lord to

bestow more, unthankfully forget what he has already given. It is very true, as the apostle observes, that our highest attainments in the present state are only as the attainments of children; and that 'if any man thinks he knows anything, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know.' Nevertheless, an apprehension of the very first principles in grace, no, the circumstance of being taken into the school of Jesus, is an unspeakable mercy, which a whole life of thankfulness is not sufficient to acknowledge."

"Look back, my brother," he added, "from the first traces you can discover of God's manifestations in your mind—to the present period; and compare your situation then with now, and you will at once perceive what rapid advances you have been making in the divine life, under the teachings of God the Holy Spirit. And this is, in fact, the only method whereby to form a true estimate of ourselves; for when we draw conclusions for the present only, or when we erect as a standard, whereby to judge ourselves, the excellency of others more advanced; all these models being ill-constructed and ill-chosen, must invariably induce mortifying views of ourselves by the comparison. This is not, therefore, the right plan by which we are to ascertain our state. But if we so judge of our progress in grace, as we estimate growth in the works of nature, the method will be more accurate. In the vegetable kingdom, for instance, however certain an advance in growth may be, yet the most intense eye can never discern any one plant actually growing—but, by the comparative observation of a few days, every one is enabled to discover that a progression has taken place.

"And while I am speaking of this subject of growth in grace, I would desire to add another observation, which is intimately connected with it—The apostle says, 'Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.' Now, if I really grow in grace (as increasing grace humbles more and more the soul) I shall grow more sensible of my own worthlessness and Christ's all-sufficiency; deeper views of sin in my fallen nature will induce all those gracious effects which tend to enhance the Savior; a conscious sense of need will awaken as conscious a desire of having those needs supplied; and every day's experience will make self more lowly—and Christ more exalted. This is to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord together. The progress of grace therefore, connected with the progress of the knowledge of the Lord, must ever produce those effects. A little grace, like the dawn of day, when shining in the heart, enables the believer to discover by this twilight, something of the darkness around. In proportion as the light advances—he sees the objects clearer; but he then only becomes sensible of all the evils lurking within, when the meridian brightness is completed. Grace, in like manner shining in its full luster, discovers to us more clearly the corruptions of our nature; and while it accomplishes this purpose, it answers the other blessed purpose also, which the apostle connects with it, of giving us 'the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.'"

## 01.16. AN INN

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### AN INN

It became a matter of much satisfaction, I believe, to my fellow-traveler as well as to myself, to behold the appearance of an inn on the road; for we both needed rest and refreshment; so that without any deliberation we entered the door.

"Can you accommodate us?" said my friend to the host, who happened to be near the door as we approached the house. "Certainly," answered the man; and showed us into a room.

"You do not forget, my brother," whispered my fellow-traveler to me, "who it was, among the pilgrims passing through this world, who could not find this accommodation? There was no room for Him in the inn. How sweetly is it arranged in all the various circumstances of life, to discover somewhat of his bright example going before us in almost every situation; not by way of reproach—but of pointing out to us, in numberless instances, the superiority of our accommodations to his!

"There is something in the very nature of an inn," continued my friend, "which serves, as it appears to me, to promote the sacred purposes of a pilgrimage like ours, more effectually than almost any other situation; and had I my choice on this point, I would like it, of all others, for my abode in the dying hour; for everyone is so taken up with his own concerns, that there is neither time nor inclination to attend to the affairs of others; so that here a man might be free from the troublesome importunity of attendants, which sometimes becomes a sad interruption to the soul, in her preparations for her journey into the invisible world, while the carriage is at the door." Our refreshment, consisting of a little tea and bread, was soon served up; which, my friend having first implored the divine blessing to sanctify the use of, we really enjoyed. "Tea is a very pleasant beverage," said my friend, "to my taste; and I should find some difficulty to get anything as a substitute, were I to be deprived of the use of it. I have heard many speak of it as pernicious; but I truly believe, that one great reason why it proves so is, because it is a graceless meal. If we do not beg God's blessing over our food, how can we be surprised if, instead of being wholesome, it proves hurtful?"

After we had finished our meal, and, like well-fed guests, had arisen from the table, blessing the kind Master of the feast, "who gives us all things richly to enjoy," we were about to enter upon the perusal of the word of God, by way of profitably filling up the measure of time until the hour of rest; when a circumstance occurred, which at once arrested the attention of us both.

## 01.16. THE JEW

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THE JEW The instant we arose from the table, as before observed, there crossed the courtyard of the inn, opposite to the room where we were sitting, a Jew (as he appeared to be) with a basket of pens. My friend seeing him, hastily ran to the door, to inquire of him whether he knew a man of the name of Abraham Levi, one of their people. "Yes," he said, "I know him very well; but he is not one of my people." "How is that?" replied my friend; "are you not a Jew?" "No" the poor man said, "I thank the Lord I am not! I was once indeed; but, I trust, I am now a lover of the Lord Jesus." The effect wrought upon my mind by this short conversation, was like that of electricity. "Please, my friend do us the favor," continued my companion, "to come into this room. We are both lovers and humble followers, like yourself, if you are so, of the Lord Jesus and we shall much rejoice if you will communicate to us the pleasing information how this change was wrought." "That I will, most readily," replied the man; "for if it will afford you pleasure to hear, much more will it delight me to relate, a change to which I owe such unspeakable mercies."

"Without going over the whole of my history from my childhood," he said, "which has very little interesting in it, and is unconnected with the circumstances of my conversion, it will be sufficient to begin it at that part which alone is worth your hearing. It is about two years since that I first began to feel my mind much exercised with considerations on the deplorable state of our people. I discovered, from reading the scriptures, the ancient love of God to our nation. In our history, as a people, I saw the many wonderful and distinguishing mercies with which, from age to age, the Lord had blessed us. I remarked also, how, for the disobedience and ingratitude of our people the Lord had punished us; but what struck me most forcibly was, that prophecy of Scripture 'That the scepter should not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until the Shiloh should come,' (Genesis 49:10.)—whereas I saw very plainly that our nation was without a scepter, without government, without temple. I remarked, moreover, that our people were a light, vain, and worldly-minded people, who took it not to heart; and if the Lord had punished our fathers for their sins, we deserved his displeasure more. Added to all these considerations, which very powerfully operated on my mind, I saw a great mass of people living around me who professed themselves to be followers of the true God; and who asserted, in confirmation of their faith, the Shiloh was come, and to him was the gathering of the people. Distressed and perplexed in my mind, by reason of these various considerations, I knew not what to do, and could hardly find power or inclination to prosecute my daily labor.

"It happened one day, while walking over the bridge of the city, that my mind being more than usually affected, I could not refrain from pouring out my heart in prayer to God. I paused as I stood on the bridge, and lifting up my eyes towards heaven, I cried out 'O God of my fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, who has declared yourself as keeping covenant mercy for thousands, look down upon me, a poor Jew! Teach me what I must do! You know my desire is to serve you, if I knew the way! You are justly displeased with our nation and with our people; for we have broken your commandments. But oh, Lord, direct me!'

"It was with words somewhat like these," continued the poor man, "that I prayed; in which I wept much. At length I walked on; and passing by a place of worship, where I saw many assembled, I found my heart inclined to go in. Who knows, I thought within myself—but the Lord may have directed me here! I went in; and near the door finding a seat unoccupied, I entered into it, and sat down. The minister was discoursing on the mercies of God, in sending his Son to be the Savior of the world. If this Savior was my Savior, I thought, how happy would I be! I felt myself considerably affected, and frequently turned my face to the wall and wept; and many times, during the continuance of the service, so much was my heart interested by what I heard, that I wept aloud, and could not refrain.

"I had disturbed some of the congregation, it appeared, by my behavior; so that as soon as the service was finished, two or three of the men came towards me with much anger, asking me what I meant by coming there to interrupt their worship with my drunkenness; but when they discovered the real state of the case, and I had told them the whole desires of my mind, they almost devoured me with kindness. This served very much also, under God, to convince me that their religion must be the true religion, which produced such effects.

"Not to fatigue you with my story, it will be sufficient to observe, that from that hour my mind began to discover hope; and as the kind people, into whose congregation I had thus entered, undertook to instruct me in the principles of the Christian faith, I soon learned, under God, the fulfillment of the Jewish Scriptures in the Christian New Testament; and now I find cause every day, more and more, to bless the Lord for what he has done for my soul.

"One little event more," he added, "I will, if you please, relate, which happened soon after my going into this church. My business of selling my pens obliged me to go to another city, about twelve miles distant from the one where I dwelt; and calling at a pastry-cook's shop, who occasionally dealt with me, a circumstance occurred which became highly serviceable to me in my new path of life. There sat in the shop a venerable gentleman, dressed in black; the mistress of the house stood behind the counter; and I was just within the door. A poor beggar, looking miserably sick, came in for a tart. "Ah! John," cried the old gentleman, "what—have you left the infirmary! Is your disorder declared to be incurable?" "Yes, Sir," replied the poor man, "they say they can do nothing more for me." "Well, John," answered the old gentleman, "there is one Physician more which I would have you try; and he never fails to cure—and he does it also 'without money and without price.'" The poor man's countenance brightened at this; and he said "Who is he?" "It is the Lord Jesus Christ," said the gentleman. "Hasten and go to him, John and if he is pleased to heal your body, it will be a blessed recovery for you indeed; and if not, he can and will heal your soul!" The poor man did not relish the advice; for he went away looking angrily. As for me, I cried out (for I could not refrain) May the Lord bless you, Sir, for what you have said in your recommendations of my Master and Savior! He is indeed all you have described him; for he has cured both my body and soul. Astonished at what I said, the gentleman expressed his surprise, in observing "I thought you were a Jew!" "I was, sir," I answered, "once; but by grace I am now a Christian." He caught me by the hand and entreated me to go with him to his house; where I related to him, as I have to you, the means under God, of my conversion; and when I had finished my story, at his request, we dropped on our knees in prayer; and oh! Sirs, the fervor and earnestness with which he prayed, and the thanksgivings which he expressed for the Lord's mercy to my soul—I shall never forget! The recollection even at this distance, continues to warm my heart." When the poor man had

finished his narrative, my friend and I looked at each other, then at him, and then upwards. One sentiment, I am persuaded, pervaded both hearts; and this was the language, "Great and marvelous are your works, Lord God Almighty! Just and true are your ways, you KING of saints!" My companion offered him money; at which he seemed hurt. "I am sorry" he said, "that you should think so unfavorably of me." "Well—but," answered my friend, "we have detained you from your employment, and it is but just; as you have so highly contributed to our pleasure, we ought not to make it detrimental to your interest." "I would be very sorry," replied the poor man, "if my diligence would not make up for those occasional interruptions which are so sweet and refreshing in my own heart, while giving satisfaction to others. No, Sir, I thank you for your intentions; but I cannot accept your offer. Besides, I need it not; I have enough and to spare. God supplies all my needs, and enables me sometimes to help the needs of others." The poor man took his leave, after mutual wishes and prayers for our spiritual welfare; and the night being now advanced, after reading the scriptures and prayer, we departed each to his chamber. The town-clock struck five, just after I awoke from a state of sleep much refreshed. I called to mind that sweet promise of God to his people, and found cause to bless him, in that it had been again verified to my experience—"When you lie down, you shall not be afraid; yes, you shall lie down and your sleep shall be sweet." (Proverbs 3:24.)

I recollected also, that many of the Lord's children were at that moment in a state of pain and suffering, and, like Job, complaining that "wearisome nights were appointed unto them." (Job 7:3.) I felt my heart drawn out, under the fullness of the impression, to adopt the language of the sorrowful sisters, and to tell the Lord "Many whom you love are sick." (John 11:3.) When we consider the defenseless state of sleep, and the many dangers to which our poor fallen nature is then peculiarly exposed—not merely to the ravages of enemies, against which bolts and bars might cast up some little security—but the carelessness of friends, from which none but His watchful eye, "who never slumbers nor sleeps," can guard us—how suitable is that sentiment of the church of old, to form the first impression of the mind at the dawn of day—"It is of the Lord's mercies we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not; they are new every morning." (Lamentations 3:22.)

I have often thought, when looking upon some dear child in its unconscious state of sleep—what creature of all God's works is so truly helpless, and so much exposed to danger, as man in that season! But I have not infrequently found relief therefrom, in the assurance that this very state, in the necessity of it, implies the existence of a peculiar superintendence; and indeed the eventual experience of thousands is continually bearing testimony to the truth of that precious promise—"My people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings and in quiet resting-places." (Isaiah 32:18.)

## 01.17. THE DIARY

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### THE DIARY

According to my constant custom, since the Lord was pleased to call me by his grace, I opened my Diary, in my little Pocket Companion, to enquire what is the word of the Lord recommended to my serious consideration today? for it is a favorite maxim of mine, with the first dawn of day, to seek a morning-blessing from the Lord in this way, in one of his sweet promises. The promises of God are the present heritage of his people—they are evidently intended to be their support and stay in the house of their pilgrimage. In a little book which I always keep by me for this purpose, to have recourse to as occasion may require, and which I call my Pocket Companion, I have also a Diary, containing some refreshing portion of Scripture for every day in the year; and though it cannot be supposed (neither will anyone I should hope imagine) that, by a selection of this kind, a preference is given to one gracious promise to the exclusion of the rest, "which in Christ Jesus are all yes and amen," yet, as the mind is not sufficiently capacious, nor sufficiently alive to exercise itself in the meditation of them all, it should seem to be no unpromising plan of usefulness to have recourse to one or more of them in this manner.

I shall be exempt, I trust, from the charge of presumption, if I add that I have found at times, the promise in my Diary so strikingly suited to my then circumstances, as if a voice had accompanied it, like that of the apostle to the men of Antioch—"To you is the word of this salvation sent." The promise for this day I have found to be, Psalms 121:5. "The Lord is your keeper." Sweet and precious indeed to all his people, is this assurance! My mind, as I lay upon my bed, was much exercised in the contemplation of God as a covenant-God, in keeping his people. It is he who keeps them in the faith; keeps them in the hour of temptation; keeps them from the power of the enemy—from a thousand unseen, and as many visible evils—from finally falling, and from eternal death!—and though he has nowhere promised to keep his people from tribulation, or persecution, or the strife and slander of tongues—from sickness, or sorrow or the like—yet he has promised, that "no weapon formed against them shall prosper—no temptation shall take them, from which he will not make a way for them to escape. He will bruise Satan under their feet shortly." Oh, the blessed privilege of those who have the Lord for their keeper!

## 01.18. MARKET-DAY

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**MARKET-DAY** From the very great noise which I heard in the street, as I arose from my bed, occasioned by the passing of horses and the tumult of the people, I concluded that something more than usual occupied the public attention. In looking for the cause from the window of my chamber, which opened into the street, I discovered that it was market-day. Though the hour was so early, and the sun had not far advanced in climbing the heavens, yet the world was risen, and everyone eagerly engaged in preparation for the sale of their different commodities.

Ah! thought I, how just is that aphorism of our blessed Lord, "The people of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own kind than are the people of the light." If, on the market-days for the soul (I mean the sabbath-days of the church) they, whose office it is to bring forth out of God's treasure things new and old to the people, we were truly as anxious as those men of the world—what gracious effects might we hope would follow under the Spirit's blessing! The apostle of the gentiles desired the church of Corinth to consider him and his faithful companions under this character. "Let a man," says he, "so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God." A steward is an upper servant in a family, one whose office (according to our Lord's own explanation of the Jewish householder) is to provide for the family, &c. whom "his Lord has made ruler over his household, to give them their portion of food in due season." And were that also properly considered, which the apostle adds, that "it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful," the solicitude of the earthly market-man would fall infinitely short of that which he feels who ministers in heavenly things—in proportion as the object and the end of the latter transcend in importance those of the former. How early would the stewards of Christ's mysteries arise, in order to prepare the "feast of fat things, of wine on the lees, and of fat things full of marrow—for the feast of the Lord's house!" How extremely anxious would they be that no hungry nor thirsty soul of God's household would be overlooked nor neglected!—and conscious, after all their best and most earnest preparations, that there can be no actual enjoyment, no real participation on the people's part—but from the predisposing grace of the Lord, how ought every steward to bring forth what he has prepared with prayer and supplication, that the Lord himself would direct every heart and influence every mind!

Imagination can hardly form a character more truly valuable than the man who ministers in holy things; who spends his time, his gifts, his talents—in short, his all—to this one purpose; who becomes indeed the "faithful and wise steward," to feed the babes of Christ's household with the "sincere milk of the word, that they may grow thereby;" and those who are of "full age, with strong meat, when by reason of use their spiritual senses are exercised to discern both good and evil;" and who to both can humbly recommend, like the apostle, the goodness of the food, as being what "he himself had seen, and looked upon, and tasted of the word of life." It must be a refreshing consolation, I can well conceive, in the close of life, to every faithful steward, after the day's fatigue to provide spiritual food is over—to be able to take up the same language as the apostle Paul—"I have kept back nothing that was profitable—I have not shunned to declare the whole counsel of God—I have fed the church of God, which he has purchased with his own blood—and now I

commend you to God and to the word of his grace!" When I came down from my chamber, I found my friend waiting breakfast for me, for the hour was by this time past eight—and, as his custom was, he proposed inviting as many of the family as felt disposed, to attend our morning-prayers. The mistress of the house, with only one servant, accepted the offer—and after my companion had read a portion of God's word, he followed it up with prayer. When the mistress and the servant had withdrawn, we sat down to breakfast; my friend having first implored the usual blessing on our food:

## 01.19. THE GRACE

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### THE GRACE

"Bountiful Father of mercies, who is supplying the daily needs of the millions which are looking up to you from all parts of the universe, we desire grace to praise you for this seasonable and suitable portion of food, which you have spread before us for the support of our perishing bodies; and we entreat you for grace from your Holy Spirit in the use of it, that we may receive this and every other blessing, as coming from our Covenant Father and God in Christ Jesus. Give, dearest Savior, to sit at the table which you have furnished, and may we be among those "who shall sit at your table in your kingdom;" and while, as your children going home to your house, you are refreshing us thus by the way, though all the benefit be ours, let yours be all the glory. Amen."

## 01.20. THE PARALYTIC

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### THE PARALYTIC

We had scarcely finished our meal when the mistress of the house came in, to inform us of the situation of a poor man in the street, who had been bed-ridden from age fifteen. "He is a very pious person," added the mistress, "and a great number go to visit him. I thought it might be pleasant to you to hear of him." My friend replied, "We will go to see him; where is his dwelling?"—"Only five doors from our house." When we came to the poor man's room, though everything manifested the indigence of his circumstances, yet it was that kind of poverty which recommended itself by its cleanliness. There stood a lady at the foot of his bed in conversation with the sick man. "How do you live?" I heard her say as I entered the chamber. "Live, madam!" replied the poor man, "I am in very good circumstances; I am not only rich by reason of present possessions—but I am heir to a large estate."—"Astonishing!" said she, "you were pointed out to me as a very poor man; and I came to give you some relief."—"That you may still do, madam, if you please," answered he, "for the riches I possess, and the inheritance to which I am born, do not at present make me above charity. I am only 'rich in faith, and an heir of the kingdom of God.'"—"Oh," replied the lady, "is that all? but in the mean time, how do you manage for this world?" "My God," cried the poor man, "supplies all my need, according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound. I am instructed both to be full, and to be hungry; both to abound, and to suffer need. When my worldly stock is reduced low, and I have neither bag, nor bread, nor money in the purse, I make use of bank-notes." "Bank-notes!" exclaimed the lady. "Yes, madam," he answered, "here is a book full of them;" taking up a Bible which lay upon the bed, and opening it; "and oftentimes I find many folded up together in the same place to which I open. Look here, madam," he continued; "see here is a promise suited to every man's case. 'The poor and needy search for water, but there is none; their tongues are parched with thirst. But I the Lord will answer them; I, the God of Israel, will not forsake them. I will make rivers flow on barren heights, and springs within the valleys. I will turn the desert into pools of water, and the parched ground into springs.' (Isaiah 41:17-18.) And the high value of those promises is, that they are sure and certain. Faith draws upon the Almighty banker, and his is all prompt payment."

While the poor sick man said this, he opened the Bible to another part, and he exclaimed again, "See, madam, here is another promise to a soul under doubts and fears—'I will instruct you, and teach you in the way wherein you shall go; I will guide you with my eye;' (Psalms 32:8.) and thus, madam, in every state and every circumstance of life, in this blessed book, are assurances exactly suited to the wants both of my body and soul. Promises of provision for the way; deliverances under danger; preservation in seasons of affliction; support under trouble; direction in times of difficulty; and the Lord's assured presence in every time of need. 'Fear not, for I am with you—be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, yes, I will help you; yes, I will uphold you with the right hand of my righteousness.'" (Isaiah 41:10.) The lady, without adding anything, put a piece of money into the poor man's hand, and withdrew. What her sentiments were, I know not; but as soon as she was departed, my companion addressed the sick man—"I am much delighted,"

he said, "to see you, my friend, so cheerful. It is a pleasing consideration that your sickness is sanctified; but are you enabled always thus to rejoice in the promises?"

"Oh, dear Sir," the poor man answered, "no; very frequently, through unbelief, I am tempted to exclaim with the church of old, 'My hope is perished from the Lord.' (Lamentations 3:18.) I have seasons of darkness, and times of temptation; notwithstanding I can and do say, through grace strengthening me, sometimes under both, 'Rejoice not against me, O my enemy; for though I fall I shall arise; though I sit in darkness, the Lord will be a light unto me.' (Micah 7:8.) Yes, in my haste, I cry out, "All are liars;" but blessed be the Lord under all, my God is faithful. He is better to me than all my fears." At the poor man's request, my friend and I sat down, and we had a most refreshing season. I could truly say, It is good to be here!

We parted not until we had spent a few minutes in prayer; and in the conclusion, the paralytic broke out in a faint and trembling voice, My willing soul would stay

In such a frame as this

And sit, and sing itself away

To everlasting bliss. Our departure from the sick room was affecting. We parted as those who were to meet no more on this side the grave. At our return to the inn, our intention was to tarry only for the moment, just to settle with the host, and be gone; but an event took place, which not only retarded that intention—but finally set it aside. How short-sighted is man! what a perilous path he is walking!

We were returned to the inn, and while my friend left me to pay the expenses which we had incurred there, he visited, as his manner was, the stables, in order to drop a word on the best things among that class of people who inhabit those places, and who are not in the way of hearing it elsewhere. He used to say, that in his opinion, no order of beings whatever stood in a situation more pitiable. Formed as their society is, for the most part, of the children of the poor, they are introduced from their earliest days into this path of life without the smallest education, or the least idea of its usefulness; and as they advance in years, though advancing at the same time in all the corrupted manners of the stable, they remain totally destitute of any apprehension of divine truths. Perhaps without a breach of charity it may be said, that very few of the whole body of this order, have any more consciousness of "the things which accompany salvation," than the cattle with whom they herd.

What a vast body of such characters (could the imagination form the group) do the various inns of the kingdom contain! And what a mass of corrupt living is perpetually produced in their daily interaction with one another, without a single sentiment flowing from the lips of any to "the use of edifying," so as "to minister grace unto the hearers!" And what tends to make the evil greater, as if the contagion of the stable, in the corruption of manners, had not sufficient scope for exercise during the six days' labor of the week, there is no remission to this unhappy class of beings on the Lord's Day. The warning bell of the church, which kindly calls all ranks without discrimination to the house of prayer, calls in vain to them. Unaccustomed to any means of grace, and unacquainted with either the morning prayer, or the evening worship, they who among them find no immediate employment, lounge their time in the stable—while by far the greater part are engaged as drivers of stages, and diligences, and chaises to conduct, (in defiance of all laws, human and divine,) a

set of sabbath-breakers like themselves, in their several journeys of business, and journeys of pleasure. The number which the various inns of the kingdom pour forth upon those occasions every Lord's day is incalculable.

How frequently has it excited my commiseration, when in some sweet morning of the sabbath, the Diligence has passed the street under my window! "Alas!" I have said, "what a wretched way of life must that be, which loses the very distinction of days by such uninterrupted labor! Surely, except in form, there can be no difference of character between the driver and the horses, when both are trained to expect the going over the same tract of ground in their daily labor."

How irresistibly has my heart sometimes, when pursuing the reflection, been impelled to admire, and in that admiration to adore, the distinguishing grace of God! "Who makes you to differ from another?" is a sweet morsel for the gracious soul to feed on, whenever such occasions of reflection occur. I have felt the full force of it many times on the Lord's day; particularly when in the same moment, in which I have beheld a party of pleasure-loving creatures, driving through the streets on their various excursions, in order to consume this blessed day in idleness and dissipation, I have seen some gracious souls gladly hastening to the house of God to adore his goodness, to hear his word, and to implore the effusion of the Holy Spirit on his churches, both ministers and people, on this sacred day of rest. The reader will pardon this digression, I hope, induced by the impulse of the moment. My friend, as was before observed, had left me in the inn, in order to visit those regions of ignorance and sin which the stable furnishes; and never surely was a mission to the most darkened nations of any hemisphere more needed, than to such British heathens of our own. My friend possessed every requisite for the office. Added to a natural gentleness of manners, and a suavity of deportment, he had acquired the most winning art of persuasion. He knew how to adapt his discourse in the least offensive method, so as to arrest the attention of his hearers; and although few perhaps were better formed to shine in the circle of the great and the learned, yet he had imbibed the full spirit of the apostle's lesson, and knew how "to condescend to men of low estate." His first endeavor was directed to find out some leading trait of character in the poor and uninformed mind of the person he addressed. His next object was to suit his discourse in correspondence to his apprehension; and in cases where but little opportunity offered of a personal conversation, if providentially any of the fraternity had acquired any knowledge in reading, he had the pleasing art of prevailing upon them to accept of one or more of the pious little tracts which are now so generally circulated, and which he always carried about with him in his pocket for this purpose.

## 01.21. THE STABLE BOY

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### THE STABLE BOY

It so happened that a poor boy in the stable, was engaged in rubbing down one of the horses in the stall, when my friend entered the stable. The gentleness and condescension with which my friend bid him "Good day," so very dissimilar to the surly language which he in general received, from his companions, soon called up his attention; and as my friend entered farther into conversation with him, first on subjects pertaining to his work, and then by an easy transition, and by a manner peculiarly his own, on matters of a higher nature, the poor lad's heart, like that of Lydia mentioned in Scripture, was opened to attend to the things spoken. The subject (as I afterwards learned) to which my friend adverted, was the happiness of "that rest which remains for the people of God," in the upper and brighter world, contrasted to the toilsome and unsatisfying nature of all things here below; and when he came to describe the love of the Lord Jesus in purchasing this rest for his people, and his affectionate desires that the poor and the weary and the heavy-laden should come to him, and find this rest unto their souls, the poor youth, unable to contain his emotions, melted into tears. He did not in so many words say what he felt—but his eyes expressed it. My friend, who possessed great quickness of penetration, perceiving the effect, without seeming to notice it, then made his discourse somewhat more personal, and held forth the pleasing consideration to his view, that this love of the Lord Jesus was intended for him. The poor boy wiped away the tear which had fallen on his cheek, and drew nearer to my friend, as to one whose kindness had begotten confidence and affection, and manifested that kind of sympathy of soul which seemed to thank him for what he had said, and to request him to say more.

## 01.22. THE DISASTER

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### THE DISASTER

Interested in the highest degree, with this awakened concern in the youth, my friend had forgotten the situation of one of the horses in the stall near him, and was unconscious of any danger until he felt its effect. By a violent kick which he received in his side, just beneath the ribs, he was thrown on the pavement in the stable, and remained in a state of insensibility for a considerable time, after we had brought him into the house, and placed him on a bed. The alarm given on the first rumor of this disaster, soon reached my ears, and it was some consolation to me in the very afflicting circumstance, that I was present to see him taken up, and very gently carried to his chamber. As soon as he had recovered from his fainting, I ventured to approach his bedside, and taking him by the hand expressed my great concern for what had happened. "How unfortunate (I exclaimed) is it, that you should have gone to the stable! How sad a thing that you should have stood so near this horse; if one could but have foreseen." "Be patient, my kind friend, I beg of you," he interrupted me, with saying, "and in your affection for me, do not forget the first principles of your holy faith. You are looking wholly to second causes, to the mere instrument, and totally shutting out our gracious God from the government of his own world, and all his tender concern and gracious watching over the persons, and interests of his people! Alas, my dear brother," he continued, "by this method you increase every trouble, and rob yourself of a thousand comforts. Would you have me to be angry with myself for going into the stable, or displeased with a senseless horse, for acting according to his nature as a horse? As well might we take offence at the winter's cold or summer's heat. Mere instruments are nothing—but as they are acted upon; and what folly it would be to ascribe to them a power with which they have no connection! No, no, my good friend," he continued, "never lose sight of that gracious and Almighty Being, who 'orders all things according to the counsel of his own will,' and then you will discover wisdom, and faithfulness, and love in every providence. It is not enough," said he, "in my apprehension, merely to acquiesce in the divine will—every true believer in Jesus ought to do more; he should approve of it. It is one thing to say 'The Lord's will be done;' and another to say 'Good is the will of the Lord concerning me;' and this is no more, after all, than what is frequently observed in the common circumstances of the world. If, for example, I see an artist of esteemed excellence in his profession, constructing his machine upon various principles of a complicated nature, though the whole appears to my view intricate and confused, yet I take it for granted that he knows how the several parts will harmonize together, and I yield an implicit obedience to his superior judgment. And shall we so readily ascribe such sagacity to men, and yet venture to question wisdom in the arrangements of God?

"Do my brother," he replied, "do settle this in your mind as an everlasting maxim—Our God, our gracious, covenanted God in Christ, is unremittingly pursuing, in every minute event of his government over his church and people, their real welfare, whether it be through the path of pain or pleasure. If they are exercised with suffering, or even deeply drenched in affliction, it is because there is a needs-be for it. Not a single pain or trouble could be dispensed with. It is not sufficient barely to say that the affliction will ultimately do them no harm—this is but a negative kind of

approbation. We must say more—It will do them, sooner or later, much good; and so infinitely interesting is the most minute circumstance in their life, that to prevent (were it possible) one trouble, or to add one prosperous event, would derange the whole plan of God's government. Oh, depend upon it, we are under a wise as well as a gracious superintendence! A synod of angels could not add or diminish, without manifest injury.

"With respect to the present providence," he added, "I know not what is the will of my God concerning me—but one thing I know, that 'all the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies,' (Psalms 25:10.) and lifting up his eyes he cried out, "It is my mercy, O dearest Lord, that my times are in your hands! I have long been enabled, by your blessed Spirit's grace, to commit my soul into your keeping. Well may I then leave this body of sin and death to your care!" My companion had quite exhausted the little strength left him, when he finished these words. I requested him to spare himself. He moved his head as if consenting, and turned his face upon the pillow. To everyone present, besides my friend, it appeared to be a matter of great uncertainty, for many days together, whether the injury he had sustained would terminate fatally. The surgeon whom I had desired to be called in on the occasion, did not (for indeed he could not) speedily decide upon the question. The contusion was very great from the violence of the blow; and the injury extended far around the regions of the loins; but the surgeon only ventured to speak of it in a general way, as a case which must necessarily be attended with great danger; but however others thought, the patient himself had already formed his opinion; and the event proved that that opinion was justly founded. The period was arrived for his "going down to the house appointed for all living." For my part, my concern was so great, that I seldom, unless from necessity, left his chamber. He had been a father to me; and I felt all that tender affection for him which a kind father might be supposed to excite in the mind of his son; and indeed independent of all personal attachment, my small services, during his confinement, were abundantly recompensed by the spiritual good that I had gathered from the many precious observations which dropped from his lips—and although I had so highly profited from the great lessons on piety which he had endeavored to teach me while living—yet in his dying hours he favored me with the sweetest instructions I had ever received. He had been a kind of candle, burning with much brightness, to enlighten me in the path of grace but, like a candle, the most vivid rays were those which were emitted while expiring in the socket. The reader will forgive me once more if I pause to remark how exceedingly mistaken, in their calculation of the means of happiness, are the children of the world—who seek it in the various haunts of what is called Pleasure, notwithstanding the constant and uniform experience of thousands, in every age, has determined that it is not there to be found. If my reader will give me credit for the assertion (and I do most solemnly assure him of the fact) never, until the hour of my friend's confinement, when living in his chamber, did I know what that pleasure of the heart is, which arises from all those solemn but infinitely interesting reflections which engage the mind under sorrowful dispensations; such, I mean, as considerations of the solemn government of God—the rich discoveries of the importance of salvation—the littleness of the earthly pursuits—the sweetness of the sympathetic feelings; and, in short, all that train of thought, connected with those ideas which a sick-chamber is so admirably calculated to induce. Circumstances of this kind, no doubt, are solemn; but if solemn, they are only the more congenial to the soul's purest enjoyments. The "countenance may be saddened—but the heart is made better." (Ecclesiastes 7:3.) But to return. The stable boy before mentioned, in whose spiritual interests my friend was so warmly engaged at the time when this providence visited him, soon

manifested the concern in which this affliction had involved him. It would indeed exceed all description to say what were his feelings. Every little portion of time which he could spare from the demands of the stable was employed in running up to the chamber door to enquire after my friend. One trait in his character of this kind was peculiarly affectionate. He was always found, with the first dawn of the morning, watching at the door of the room, in order to gather the earliest information from the people who should first come out, how my friend had passed the night.

Neither had the good man, amid all his pains, forgotten him. He mentioned to me several times, with much pleasure, the hopes which he had conceived of serious impressions forming on the youth's mind, from the conversation which he had with him; and upon being told of the lad's frequent and earnest enquiries after him, it served to confirm him in this opinion the more, and he very much wished to see him. The poor boy was soon introduced; and the interview was truly affecting. After frequent visits, the youth acquired some little confidence; and my friend found many opportunities of instructing him in that wisdom which, under God the Holy Spirit, makes "wise unto salvation."

It was seemingly a long season of uncertainty for the exercise of my mind, in waiting the Lord's will respecting the final outcome of my friend's state. Sometimes my hopes were high, and at others low, according as the symptoms appeared to vary—but having acquired a little portion of that precious lesson in the school of grace, that the Lord's mercies are nearest unfolding, when our expectations of them are nearest closing, I felt, I thought, much sweetness in that scripture, "It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord."

It was in the midst of these exercises the surgeon informed me, that his apprehensions were, that a deadly injury had set in. He had, as usual, in his morning visit, examined my friend's bruised body; and then, for the first time, it was that he discovered the advancing gangrene. Our hopes now were all over. Whether my poor suffering friend, from our looks, or from the whispering of the surgeon, was led to suspect the cause, I know not; but so it was that he anticipated the question, by saying, "I believe, Sir, that you find a mortal injury has taken place—I have been free from pain in the part injured for several hours." The surgeon expressed his hopes that it might not be so; but my friend, with a look of complacency which I shall never forget, replied, "Why would you wish so? It is not the smallest reproach, surely, to men of skill and ability, when the ordination of the Lord baffles all the efforts of medicine; and with respect to my feelings, allow me to assure you, Sir, that it is an event more to be desired, than dreaded. I have long been looking forward to this period as to the happiest moment on earth. Although I have the least cause of all men to be dissatisfied with the pilgrimage of this world (few travelers through it having been more highly favored) yet I long to be at home in my Father's house, and cannot but rejoice in the pleasing prospect; knowing that when I am 'absent from the body, I shall be present with the Lord.'" The surgeon expressed much satisfaction in seeing his patient so composed and tranquil, and soon after withdrew. When he was gone, I sat down by his bedside. Taking me by the hand with the warmth of affection which distinguished his character, he thus spoke—"My kind friend and companion, I am going to leave you; but I will say to you as Joseph did to his brethren, 'God will surely visit you.' I have nothing to bestow upon you but my prayers. Had I indeed the wealth of the whole earth, it would not be worth your consideration. The most invaluable legacy I pray the Lord to give you, is what the apostle coveted above all things for himself—"To know Jesus, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings." If the Lord gives you this, possessing it, you possess all things; and

'the God of all grace, who has called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that you have suffered a while, will make you perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you.'

"With respect to myself," he continued, "and my views concerning the solemn state about to open before me, blessed be God, from the security I possess in him 'who is the resurrection and the life,' I have no fears. I have been enabled again and again, during my confinement on this bed of sickness, to take the most deliberate reviews of the faithfulness of a covenant-God in Christ; and the result of the whole enables me to rejoice in the finished salvation of my God. It is indeed a solemn idea that, in a few hours, I am to appear before 'God, the Judge of all.' But it is my mercy that I am come also to 'Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant.' While therefore I look at him, who is "fellow to the Lord Almighty," I find holy confidence; for I discover in him and his redemption, a full, complete, and all-sufficient righteousness, adequate to every need, and answerable to every demand, to satisfy the law of God.

"Under the influence of this well-grounded persuasion which God the Eternal Spirit (I trust) has graciously wrought in my soul, I have more than once since this illness, been refreshed by the same comfortable promise with which the Lord favored the Patriarch of old, to encourage him in his journey—'Fear not to go down into Egypt; I will go down with you.' So, methinks, the Lord encourages me; and I know indeed, that Jesus will go down with me to the chambers of the grave. 'He has the keys of hell and the grave—he opens, and no man shuts, he shuts, and no man opens.' Oh, it is a rapturous consideration to my soul, that in all places, and in all states, my Redeemer is with me. The covenant holds as firm as ever in the grave; and death, which dissolves all other bonds, frees not the bonds of the everlasting covenant. Our union, my brother," he proceeded, "with our great mystical Head, is as perfect when in the dust of the grave as when that dust is animated in the body. When Jesus from the bush proclaimed himself the 'God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob,' this blessed distinction of character was carefully marked and preserved—'God is not the God of the dead—but of the living; for all live unto him.'

"Those patriarchs, though moldered at that time for many years into dust, were still as much living to God, in all the purposes of covenant connections, in their dust, as when in an animated body; and hence the apostle observes, 'Whether we live, we live to the Lord; or whether we die, we die to the Lord—whether we live therefore or die, we are the Lord's.'" My friend paused a moment to recover strength, and then proceeded—"This body of mine, my dear brother, will very shortly be fit only for worms and corruption; and when in this state the tenderest hearted friend, the fondest lover, would say of such a carcass, however engaging before it might have been, as Abraham did of Sarah, 'Bury my dead out of my sight.' But as these sensations are not his with whom we have to do; as Jesus never set his affection at first upon his people for the loveliness of their persons; so neither does that affection lessen when their loveliness is turned into corruption. Neither is their union with his person, even for a moment only, interrupted by death; for as the divine and human nature of the Lord Jesus received not the smallest separation when he died upon the cross, so of that union between Jesus and the members of his mystical body, there is no dissolution when their bodies are gathered unto their fathers, and they see corruption; for their souls are received into his bosom; and with respect to their bodies also, they still live to him. 'Because I live,' says Jesus, 'you live also.' Every particle of their dust, is the same to their great spiritual head, when dust, as before that change; for as the union in Jesus with their whole persons, that is, their bodies as well as their souls, is indissoluble, it is evident that the same must continue with the dust of their bodies. And

hence when Jesus says, 'Fear not to go down into the grave, I will go with you,' it explains in what a tender and consoling sense we are to understand this; and indeed, as in death so in the resurrection, the certainty of this glorious event arises from the same consideration; 'for if,' says the Apostle, 'the Spirit of him who raised up Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwells in you.' (Romans 8:11.) And thus the resurrection of the just is certified to them, not simply by the power of God—but from the indwelling residence of the same Spirit of God, by which they are first awakened in grace to a new and spiritual life, and then finally quickened to eternal glory, by virtue of their union to the person of Jesus, from the operations of the Holy Spirit." My friend would have proceeded—but his strength did not admit of it. He took occasion, however, at every interval possible, to say something suited to the circumstances of a dying saint. The poor stable-boy was indulged by his master to spend much of his time in the sick chamber; and the many precious sayings, which fell from my friend by way of caution, encouragement, advice, and entreaty, became truly edifying and refreshing both to him and to every attendant around.

It would swell the history of my pilgrimage to a large volume indeed, were the whole of the circumstances which attended my friend's departure to be written down in it. The reader will excuse the omission I hope, and rest satisfied without any further enumeration of particulars, than just to observe, that he continued to the last moment in the perfect enjoyment of his senses and the divine consolation. He sunk gradually; and as he fell lower and lower, the words which he uttered evidently proved that his views of the glory about to open upon him were fuller and brighter. I sat by him with his hand clasped in mine when he died. The last words on his trembling lips were, "Dear Lord!"

I buried him without pomp, and without any mourners but the poor stable-boy and myself, in a vacant corner of the parochial graveyard. The youth returned with me to the inn, where we took an affectionate leave of each other. I could only say, "May he who has, I trust, begun a good work in you, perform it until the day of Jesus Christ!" On the morrow, having paid all expenses incurred at the inn, I left it without regret. The time was now arrived when a reverse of situation was to take place in the circumstances of my pilgrimage. Hitherto I had met with little else but "joy and peace in believing." Some few natural fears and apprehensions, arising from the remains of unbelief, had now and then it is true arisen in my mind but the Lord had so graciously over-ruled them, that they generally ended in my stronger assurance.

I have been often led since to reflect, with peculiar pleasure, on the wisdom, as well as the mercy, of that process of grace through which the Lord is leading his people. Like Israel of old, in their emancipation from Egypt, of whom it is said that "God led them not through the land of the Philistines, although that was near, lest when they should see war, their minds should be tempted to return; but God led the people about through the way of the wilderness." (Exodus 13:17.) Similar to this now is the first opening of the spiritual path; the difficulties and discouragements are by no means like those which believers meet in the after-stages of their pilgrimage. Thousands there are who, like Israel, have sung the song of triumph, as they did at the Red Sea, when a forty years traveling through a dreary wilderness lay still between them and Canaan; and many, no doubt, like Israel too, afterwards, in the midst of some heavy unlooked-for trial, have been prompted to exclaim in the bitterness of their soul, "Is the Lord among us or not?" The reader will indulge me again to pause over this remark, and ask him if his experience has nothing of a

correspondence with it? I am persuaded the case is very general. The gracious leader of his little flock, who feeds them, as it is said, like a shepherd, "gathers the lambs with his arms, and carries them in his bosom; and gently leads those that are with young." He always suits the strength to the day—he proportions the burden to the back. Hence the earliest manifestations of divine love are generally the most pleasing, and, according to our conception of things, in that period the most powerful. It is in grace as it is in nature, first impressions are most affecting. When the eye of the body, suddenly emerges from darkness into light, the transition is most strongly felt; and in like manner, when the eye of the soul is first opened to see the wondrous things of God's law, the effect is proportionably greater than when accustomed to their view. I could wish the reader of long experience would consider this more than I am persuaded is generally done, and mark it down in the diary of his pilgrimage. These things formed many hard problems in David's life, until frequent experiments, aided by frequent visits to the sanctuary, explained them. It was not in the first trials that he adopted that sentiment, "I know that you in faithfulness have afflicted me." (Psalms 119:75.) It becomes a very blessed proof of advances in grace, when the tried soul can use such language. But to return.—The season was come when my trials were to be given me; and for the better opportunity of trial, all human aid was to be first withdrawn, that, like the pelican in the wilderness, being solitary, Jesus might be my sole resource. My faithful friend and companion, the Lord had removed out of my sight. He had sent the worm to destroy this highly prized gourd; and now the storm began.

## 01.23. MY RELATIONS

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### MY RELATIONS

I have not, according to the usual mode of histories, brought my reader in the former part of my tale acquainted with an account of my connections in the world. The reason has been, that objects of an higher and more interesting nature claimed a priority of attention. It would not even now be at all important in the memoirs of a Pilgrim to Zion, to inquire "To whom related or by whom begotten?" but if he wishes to know, he may be told, that I have not been without the enjoyment of those sweet charities of life. The Lord has given me many who are very near and very dear to my affection in the ties of nature. Even in the moment while writing, I feel all the tender influences of the claim, and pause to lift an eye of humble supplication to the God of all grace, that he may give to "everyone of them grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ." Grace does not destroy, it only heightens and refines our feelings.

Among the number there was one more intimately wrapped about my heart, whose influence in everything but religion I have ever found it to be both my interest and happiness to feel; for whom there needs no other claim than nature's feelings to call forth every energy of the mind in the promotion of her welfare; and in grace, my earliest and last prayers for her salvation will cease but with my breath.

Perhaps some reader, circumstanced in the same peculiarity of situation and of sentiment, may feel his mind drawn out in a similar affection. "As in water face answers to face, so the heart of man to man." (Proverbs 27:19.)

I sustained very much of conflicts and persecutions from the whole of my unawakened relations; but from her, in the sweet and almost irresistible claims in which her arguments were encircled, tenfold more than all. "You have made up your mind, I suppose," said one of them to me, in a very pointed and half angry manner, one day when the conversation had been serious, "to forego all your future prospects in this world. Neither the profits nor pleasures of this life can be worth your attention and as to the scorn and derision of mankind, no doubt you move in an atmosphere too high to be sensible of it." "I do very earnestly wish," said another "that you would reflect, before it be too late, on the folly and scandal of associating yourself with such low and ignorant people as you have lately made your companions—a man of your education and ability to be seen with such! Have you no pride, no regard to your own character?" A third upbraided me with blasting all the hopes of my family, and that I should certainly bring myself to beggary. And a fourth very jocularly desired me first to be assured of the reality of what I professed to be looking forward to another world for, before I relinquished all the prospects and enjoyment of this. But all these were trifling, compared to the solicitations, the remonstrances, the jealousies, displeasure, and a long train of other persuasions, with which that very near and tender friend before mentioned armed herself to prevail upon me to relinquish my pursuit; and if no power but nature had been with me to resist her claim, very sure am I, that I must have yielded to entreaties coming from an advocate so endearing. "If," said she, in a moment of peculiar solemnity, after speaking of a dear friend to both,

departed into the world of spirits, "if those new sentiments of yours be really founded in truth, what is become of him who died? It is impossible that so much sweetness and amiableness can be lost." The reader who knows what the conflicts of nature and grace mean; whose heart at times is like that of the Shunamite, in the contentions of two armies, will know somewhat of what I have felt in those seasons.—Adored Redeemer, I have not lacked, you know, that evidence of being your follower, in plucking out an eye, cutting off an arm, and taking up a cross! It was the legacy of my late companion, that I might know the fellowship of Christ's sufferings; and here was an answer to his prayer.

It was much about the same period, while thus deeply exercised with the unceasing importunity and persecutions of my relations, that I received a more formidable assault from another quarter. While I was seeking consolation from retirement and reading, in the intervals of a more important engagement, a circumstance arose, in consequence of the latter, which very much affected me.

## 01.24. THE BOOK

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### THE BOOK

I found an author, whose writings were particularly directed to the subject of divine grace. The title first attracted my notice, and invited me to the perusal; but the trial it afterwards proved to me, will be, I hope, thus far useful, to caution me against curiosity in future. "It is a good thing (the apostle says) that the heart be established with grace." (Hebrews 13:9.) But it is dangerous in the unexperienced and the unestablished, to be running about in quest of novelty. The leading doctrines of this writer's creed, were to this purpose—"That grace is equally free, and equally offered to all; the acceptance or refusal of it depended upon ourselves—and hence, that the improvement or misimprovement rests upon the will of man. That the regeneration of the Holy Spirit does not so operate as to be irresistibly effectual—but that a man's own conduct may frustrate the life-giving power; and lastly, the final perdition of the people of God is very possible, notwithstanding all that the everlasting love of the Father, and the infinite merits of the Redeemer, and the operation of the Holy Spirit, has wrought, in order to prevent it." The reader, who has accompanied me thus far in my pilgrimage, has seen enough of my weakness not to know that such a train of doctrine was sufficient for a time to throw a damp upon all my confidence. I am like the sensitive plant in these things; the least touch makes me recoil. To hear, therefore, of the bare possibility of falling from grace in the close of life, and apostatizing from "Him whom my soul loves," (and apostatize I certainly would—if the perseverance depended on myself,) what a distressing apprehension!

Neither did my trials end here. There was yet another in reserve for this season of temptation. What David remarks of the natural world, is equally applicable to the spiritual—"You make darkness, and it is night, wherein all the beasts of the forest do creep forth." When the Lord withdraws his shining on the soul; the enemy, who knows the time of darkness to be the most favorable for his work, "goes about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour;" and never until the "sun arises again, will he lay him down in his den." (Psalms 104:20-22.)

## 01.25. THE BROTHERS

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### THE BROTHERS

It happened one evening, while my mind was reeking under all these united attacks, that I walked forth into the way. My path lay through a field in which were two men, who, from the congeniality of their sentiments, more than from the tie of kinship, I considered to be brothers. They were so engaged in conversation as they walked before me, that I escaped their notice, so that I had an opportunity of hearing the whole of their discourse unperceived.

"Can you reconcile your mind to the doctrine of redemption," said the one to the other, "and place the least confidence in the merits of Christ? For my part," continued he, "I am quite a Freethinker; I see no necessity upon which it is founded. The world, take it altogether, according to my opinion, is good enough, and cannot need an expiation; and indeed, when I consider what modern discoveries have been made respecting the immensity of creation, and that the globe which we inhabit is but a speck in it, the idea lessens the doctrine of Revelation altogether in my esteem."

"You are perfectly right," answered the other; "I have long thought as you do, and have made up my mind to reject it altogether. All the doctrines of Christianity, excepting the moral part of it (and that the world had before) are, in my esteem, only calculated for weak and vulgar minds; and indeed their authority is precarious, depending upon writings that, for anything we know, may or may not be true." The reader will at once conclude that these observations tended not to dissipate my former gloom; and although, low as my spirits then were, I thought a mere child in grace might easily have refuted their false reasonings; yet my mind was too sore and too sorrowful in the moment to enter into controversy. Every application to a wound, if put on with roughness, acts like a caustic.

I had heard enough not to desire more; and therefore withdrew from the brothers as unperceived as I came. The words of Job struck my mind with great force as I left them—"Shall he who contends with the Almighty, instruct him? He who reproves God, let him answer it." (Job 40:2.)

It was a considerable time before I was enabled to shake off the ill effects induced in my mind by reason of the conversation which I had overheard between the brothers. Not that my faith (I bless the Great Author and Giver of it) was in any danger of being overthrown thereby; for a faith like mine, founded in grace, will ultimately triumph over all the powers of nature. He who is born of an incorruptible seed lives and abides forever, and therefore nothing corruptible can destroy it. It may apparently be choked with weeds, and may at times languish and seem ready to die; but die it cannot, for the seed is incorruptible; and by the way, I would desire my reader to set this down in the memoranda of his mind, as an everlasting maxim—That what originates in God cannot be lost by man. Divine teachings baffle all the malice of human reasonings. But my distress, induced by the conversation which I had heard, sprung from another source. There is in every man's heart, even when in a renewed state, a much stronger propensity to evil than good. Hence nothing is more easy than the introduction of a train of corrupt thoughts into the mind, which the greatest

exertions, void of divine aid, cannot afterwards expel; while, on the contrary, the chaste and pure images of grace, tending as they do, in every instance, to mortify and subdue the corrupt desires of our nature, nothing but a higher influence than what is human can gain admission for them at the first, or cause them to be cherished when received; and this explains why it is that false impressions, from being more congenial to our nature, are more easy of access, and more permanent in their duration, than the true.

I know not, reader, what your feelings on this point are; but with me, I confess, that it is quite the case. It is a work of much difficulty with me to keep alive in my mind the remembrance of some sweet portion of Scripture, or some delightful verse in a psalm or hymn, to help me on to the hour of meditation and prayer; whereas the idle, corrupt jingle of some foolish song, which was lodged in the memory of my boyish days, too frequently rises to my recollection, in spite of all my endeavors to suppress it; and I fear, that if encouraged, I could repeat it with the greatest exactness. Pause, to observe with me what a decisive proof this is of indwelling corruption!

It was an ill effect of this kind which the skeptical conversation of the brothers left upon my mind. By the ludicrous turn which they gave to some portions of Scripture, and the impious and bold reasonings which they made on others, they gave birth to a train of images within me, which, like a spectre, arose continually to my view.

I stop the reader one moment again to remark, (and what I humbly conceive, if closely adopted, will not prove an unprofitable remark) how little they consult their own happiness, who mix indiscriminately with the world, and who are not sensible of the dreadful consequences of seeing and hearing the corruptions which are going on in life! What from the lightness and indifference to divine things with which some treat the truths of God, and what from the open contempt poured upon them by others, it is really like running into the midst of pestilence, to come within the circle of their society. Our eyes are the purveyors of the evil, and our ears inlets of the corruption; and never was that aphorism of Solomon more easy to be observed than in the present moment—"Do not set foot on the path of the wicked or walk in the way of evil men. Avoid it, do not travel on it; turn from it and go on your way." (Proverbs 4:14.) For my own part, I have never found my peace of mind so unbroken, as since I have totally withdrawn myself from all but the necessary and unavoidable communion with men of the world. By ceasing from their communion, we live out of the reach of the contagion of their principles, and we live above the influence of their good or bad opinion; and it is a maxim of as much beneficial consequence to the mind as it is to the body, to breathe a pure atmosphere. You cannot come within the region of anything filthy and corrupt—but its poisonous effluvia will attach themselves to you.

I have often thought what a peculiar providence it was, that while my mind was under the impression of such accumulating trials, God should direct my steps towards the means of relief; but so it was, that in prosecuting the path of my pilgrimage, as I passed the road, there stood an house on my right hand with this inscription in the front of it:

## 01.26. THE HOUSE OF THE INTERPRETER

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### THE HOUSE OF THE INTERPRETER

I considered it then, as experience has taught me to regard it many times since, as among the special appointment of a Covenant-God that my path was directed this way. He has promised to "bring the blind by the way that they knew not" and in this instance nothing could be more pointed.

I pity the man from my heart, who passes through life and discovers nothing of divine wisdom arranging and ordering all the events of it; and particularly in those instances where the Lord's enemies are promoting and forwarding, by their unconscious conduct, the very designs which they are seemingly opposing. There is something very striking in proof of a Divine superintendence, when men unintentionally fulfill that will which all their designs and actions are directed purposely to thwart. When the sons of Jacob sold their brother for a slave, little did they dream that Joseph's future dignity and Israel's salvation were to result from this cruelty. No (what is infinitely more important, and a higher testimony than this), when the Jews had nailed the Lord of life and glory to the cross, who would have thought that from that very cross all the everlasting happiness of his people was to spring! And (to compare small things with great) when the persecutions of my relations, the false reasonings of the author whose book I had read, and the conversation of the infidel brothers—which all conspired to give me such distress, became the very foundation under God, of my establishment in grace, who will but conclude that such a peculiar coincidence of circumstances cannot be the result of anything fortuitous—but "comes forth (as the prophet speaks) from the Lord Almighty, who is wonderful in counsel and excellent in working." (Isaiah 28:29.)

It will be no doubt, one portion of the felicity of heaven to look back, and trace the whole of our eventful history to the full; but it is now, in my esteem, walking in the highway of communion with God, when at any time we are enabled to trace it in part here below. The house of the Interpreter.—I have read of such a house, and of such a character, as being in the pilgrim's path, when in my days of childhood; but I knew not at that time that I should myself live to behold either of them realized. A thought, however struck me, as I read the inscription—"Perhaps I may find here some help to explain to me the difficulties under which I am at present exercised!" I recollected what Job had said, that "if there be a messenger with him, an interpreter, one among a thousand, to show unto man his uprightness, then he is gracious unto him." (Job 33:23.) Encouraged by these considerations, I drew near to the house. The door was wide open. Jesus has said "Behold I have set before you an open door, and no man can shut it." (Revelation 3:8.) I found that it opened into a spacious vestibule; in one of the compartments of which there was written in large characters as follows:

## 01.27. THE RULES OF THIS FAMILY

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### THE RULES OF THIS FAMILY

First. It is expected that everyone who comes under this roof fail not to be present at Family-prayer, and the Reading of the Scriptures.

Secondly. It is hoped that, beside these things, attention be given to the private engagements of the closet. They who begin the day in prayer, will probably find cause to end it in praise.

Thirdly. The apostle's maxim is to be invariably followed, under the divine blessing—In all things, "conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ." "Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen" (Ephesians 4:29.)

Lastly. "Whatever is done in word or deed, all is to be done in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him. (Colossians 3:17.) To everyone who, looking up for grace to render it effectual, sincerely desires to act in conformity to these rules, the good man of the house says, "Come in you blessed of the Lord; why do you stand outside?" (Genesis 24:31.)

Thus invited, I entered the door, and found that it led into a large room like a hall. There were several people seated round a table, at the head of which a venerable old man appeared to preside. Having taken my place at the bottom, to which the kind looks of the master at the top seemed to invite me, I soon discovered by what dropped from his lips in discourse, that the characters around me were Zion's Pilgrims, like myself; and that the Lord of the way had directed them in his providence here, for refreshment and counsel.

It is a very precious thing when little societies meet together on gracious errands. There is a restraint upon the mind in the assembly that is mingled. "Two cannot walk together except they be agreed." I venture to believe that, more or less, every follower of the Redeemer knows somewhat of this in his own experience, and it should seem that the dear Lord himself, at his last supper, restrained those sweet and incomparable discourses which the apostle John has recorded in the fourteenth and following chapters of his gospel, until Judas the traitor had withdrawn; for as soon as he was gone out, Jesus said, "Now is the Son of man glorified!" and immediately the Lord began his farewell sermon. At this assembly of the Interpreter, there was something visible in every countenance which indicated that "they were all of one heart and of one soul." They were come together to lay down their several burdens, and to unbosom their minds to each other; and the good man of the house seemed to be deputed to speak a word of consolation to every case.

I found my mind much relieved under one part of my burden (I mean under the sorrows induced from the persecutions of my relations) by what the Interpreter said to a woman in the company under similar circumstances. "My best advice to you," he said, "will be to recommend you to seek grace, in order to adopt the prophet's example; for when he found no favor from man, he recollected that he had the favor of God—so that however wicked the times were in which he lived,

yet the righteousness of Jehovah was unchangeable. The best of them, (he said,) was as a briar—the most upright is sharper than a thorn-hedge. Who, therefore, could venture to come near either? Your case, you see, is not singular, in the unkindness you sustain from your relations on account of your religion. In all ages it has been the same; and hence the prophet says, 'Even the best of them is like a briar; the straightest is more crooked than a hedge of thorns. Don't trust anyone—not your best friend or even your wife! Your enemies will be right in your own household.' But what was the prophet's conduct under these heavy troubles? 'As for me, I look to the Lord for his help. I wait confidently for God to save me, and my God will certainly hear me.' (Micah 7:4-6.) The more the world frowns—the sweeter will be the smiles of Jesus; and the greater unkindness you meet with from your relations, the greater will be your esteem of the affection of the Redeemer. What though all your earthly connections fail, and their friendship is continually fluctuating and changeable—yet in Jesus you find an unchanging friend, 'at all times—one born for adversity, and who sticks closer than a brother.'

"And it should very evidently seem that God overrules those very events which tend to loosen our attachment to everything here below, on purpose to raise our affections, and to fasten them on the great objects which are above. By tinging our most innocent enjoyments in this mortal state with vanity and disappointment, what is it but in effect saying, 'Arise, and depart, for this is not your rest, because it is polluted?' There is much meaning in that word of the prophet, when he says 'Therefore I will look unto the Lord;' that is as much as to say, because all things else are dissatisfying, I will look where I am sure not to be disappointed. Though all creatures leave me, my Creator is the same; and though every earthly friend fails me, my heavenly Friend never will! O, depend upon it, let a child of God be persecuted, forsaken, slighted, or despised ever so much by man—yet while he has a God to look up to, and a Covenant-God to trust in—while he can say, 'my God'—he may at the same time, with full assurance, say, He will hear me. And I believe it possible, no more than possible, even frequently induced by divine grace, that where the love of God is shed abroad in the heart, in its fullness and strength, it drives out all lesser considerations—as the effulgent brightness of the sun outshines the fire of the hearth; and it is in this sense we must accept that otherwise seemingly harsh doctrine to flesh and blood, where the Redeemer says 'If any man comes to me, and hates not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yes, and his life also—he cannot be my disciple.' That the apostle Paul felt the influence of this hating his own life, no one will question who attends to the holy saint's groaning under 'the body of sin and death,' which he tells us he carried about with him; and that a believer in the present hour, who knows what it is at times to loathe, and even hate his own flesh from the corruptions of it, may, without violence to the purest affections, be well supposed to feel something of obedience to the Redeemer's precept, in hating every tie which tends to separate the soul from the great and unrivaled object of his love, will not be doubted. 'Whom have I in heaven but you? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside you,' is an appeal which many besides David have been enabled to make." When the Interpreter had finished his discourse to the woman, he addressed himself to me; and concluding, from my appearance among the circle, that one and the same motive as brought others to his house had brought me also, he desired to know what was the immediate subject of my present attention.

I simply repeated to him the distress with which my mind had been exercised since I had perused a little book on the subject of grace, and had overheard the conversation between The Brothers.

He prevented my adding more, by saying "I know very well that author's writings, and can easily conceive how his reasonings may have operated upon your mind; but a moment's reflection, under God the Spirit's teaching, will be enough to refute doctrines of such a tendency.

"To suppose that the gift of God's grace depends upon man's merit, is to invert the very order of things, and make the creature the first mover in his salvation; which is in direct opposition to the whole tenor of scripture. This, if true, would destroy God's foreknowledge.

"To imagine that our acceptance or refusal of grace is the result of our own pleasure, is to rob God of another of his glorious perfections of character; for it is in effect saying, that man is more powerful than his Maker, in that what God wills, man may defeat; and this takes from God his omnipotence.

"To fancy that our improvement or misimprovement of grace will render it effectual, or the contrary, is committing another breach on the divine attributes; for this is reducing the covenant of grace to a covenant of works; and hence, after all God has said and promised concerning the freedom, and fullness, and sovereignty of his salvation, in this case, the outcome of it would depend on the merit of the creature; and this is taking from God both his wisdom and his glory.

"And to believe, after what God the Father has given, and God the Son has accomplished for the salvation of his people in a covenant way, that souls renewed by God the Holy Spirit, and called with an holy calling may yet finally perish—this is bringing down redemption-work to so precarious and uncertain an outcome, as must leave it altogether undetermined whether a single believer shall be saved or not; and this throws to the ground the distinguishing character of God's immutability.

"I will very readily grant," continued the Interpreter, "that grace is brought forward into many sharp and trying dispensations in the lives of the faithful. God is certainly exercising the gifts of his holy Spirit which he bestows upon them, by temptations and troubles, and a variety of providences; and in fact, such must be the case; for unexercised grace would otherwise find no scope to manifest itself; but for anyone to imagine from hence, that our acceptance with God depends upon the event of those exercises, would be to make the present life a life of probation and trial, as some injudicious teachers have taught their people, and to render the Redeemer's merits and death still questionable, whether it would become available for the sinner's justification before God.

"Blessed be the divine benignity, things are not so! It is our mercy that the finished and complete salvation of the Lord Jesus does not rest upon so uncertain a tenure. 'An everlasting covenant ordered in all things and sure,' can never leave the outcome of it doubtful. What Paul says, when resting the whole stress of the sinner's hope for acceptance before God upon the justifying merits of Christ Jesus, may be equally applied to the case of every believer—'I do not,' says he, 'frustrate the grace of God, for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ died in vain.'" My heart rejoiced in the consolation. "God be adored, I cried, who has brought me to this place, and has given you (taking the Interpreter by the hand as I said it) the tongue of the learned, to know how to speak a word in season to him who is weary. (Isaiah 51:8.) I see now the fallacy of those arguments in that book, by which my mind has been exercised with distress."

## 01.28. THE PICTURE ROOM

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### THE PICTURE ROOM

After this conversation, the Interpreter led me, and the few pilgrims also who were standing at that time around him, into The Picture Room, to explain to us a beautiful representation of the Jewish Passover.

"Perhaps, said the good man of the house, "it may never have struck you, that so infinitely important a point in the salvation of sinners, is the precious death of the Lord Jesus, that the Holy Spirit caused it to be shadowed out, by various representations in his church, according as the several objects intended to be accomplished by it required.

"See here," said he, pointing to the first compartment in the painting, "'the passing over the houses of the Israelites by the destroying angel.' Here are no bolts, no bars to their windows; but behold that blood on the lintel and on the two side-posts—this became the security. Now this represents the deliverance of the sinner from divine visitation for sin. Hence the Lord Jesus is said 'to have delivered us from the wrath to come.'

"But it is not enough to deliver from the wrath to come, if that had been all that the Lord Jesus had accomplished by redemption; our nature, though rescued from merited punishment, would still have continued polluted and defiled, without an expiation; and, consequently, incapable of drawing near to God. See here, therefore," cried the Interpreter, pointing to the second compartment in the painting, "the great doctrine of Atonement, represented in the death of the Lamb; and this doctrine is again more fully typified by the sin-offering on the day of atonement. (Leviticus 4:1-35)

"Neither is that all. Our deliverance from wrath, and the expiation of our souls from sin, though exempting from merited punishment, and cleansing away the guilt of our nature, yet could not qualify for the enjoyment of happiness, without a change of heart. Hence, therefore, the regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, as essential to prepare the mind for divine communications here and glory hereafter, became an interesting point in the doctrine of salvation; and this was represented in the Jewish church by the typical purification enjoined under the law. Here," cried the Interpreter, pointing to a third division of the painting, "is a cluster of them sketched together. In the passover, 'the leaven was put away;' implying the regeneration of the heart makes all things new; and the cleansing of the leper, and the living bird dipped in the blood of the slain over running water, and causing it to fly away in the open field. These all shadowed it out. (Leviticus 14:1-57)

"And, finally, you see," said the Interpreter, "in order to confirm all the new covenant promises, Moses is hereby described as sprinkling the people with the blood, to intimate, that, in the conveyance of those mercies in Christ Jesus, it is not enough that the blood of Christ is shed; but it must be personally applied. This office of the Holy Spirit is therefore here represented in the fourth compartment of the picture, to testify that 'Christ is made God unto us, wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption; that, according as it is written, he who glories,

let him glory in the Lord.'

"I hope," said the Interpreter, when he had finished his remarks on the picture, "that God has given you grace to understand all these things. Now let me conduct you to a spot, which, if I mistake not, will do more under his blessed teaching to relieve your mind from the distressing doubts the sophistry of the infidel brothers has occasioned, than all the volumes of human learning. What a man's real sentiments are, will best be known in his dying moments! In that hour the mask of deception falls off; and you may be sure then to see his real features."

Saying this, the Interpreter took me by the hand, and led me into an outer court; the rest of our little company followed us. After descending a very deep flight of steps, we came to a cave. He opened an iron gate; and upon entering it, I found myself surrounded with

## 01.29. MONUMENTS

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MONUMENTS In this solemn spot, the first thing that caught my attention was the tomb of The Author of the Leviathan. "Alas!" said I, "is that the memento of that celebrated infidel of the last age?" "The very same," answered the Interpreter; "that is the man whose writings poisoned the mind of the Earl of Rochester, as that nobleman himself declared, after his conversion. The author of the Leviathan lived to be an old sinner; for he was upwards of ninety when he died. His life was rendered remarkable for the many blasphemous expressions he uttered against God and his holy word. He was always bold in impiety when in company; but very timid when alone. If he awoke in the night and found his candle extinguished, he was full of terrors. His last words, as related of him, were, "I shall be glad to find a hole to creep out of the world!"

"And pray whose monument is that," said I to the Interpreter, "which has a bust on the tablet of it, looking so pensive?" "Read the inscription it bears," replied the Interpreter; "and from his last confessions, which are there recorded, you will recollect whose it is." I looked with attention, and read as follows—

"I have run the silly round of business and of pleasure, and am done with them all. I have enjoyed all the felicities of the world, and consequently know their futility, and do not regret their loss. I appraise them at their real value, which is, in truth, very low. Shall I tell you that I bear this melancholy situation with that meritorious constancy and resignation which most people boast of? No! for I really cannot help it. I bear it, because I must bear it, whether I will or no. I think of nothing now but killing time the best way I can. It is my resolution to sleep in the carriage during the remainder of my journey."

"Well, my friend," cried the Interpreter, when I had finished reading the inscription, "what are your ideas of infidels now? Here they speak plainly what are their real sentiments."

"I think," answered I, "my situation is like that of David, when he went into the sanctuary of God—I now understand the end of these men. How truly awful!"

Turning myself round, by way of passing from the contemplation of a sight so very distressing, I beheld in one niche two sculptured figures together, on one column. "Who are these?" I cried. "This, on your right hand," answered the Interpreter, "is the great Apostle of Infidelity, as he wanted to be called, of a neighboring nation; and him on your left is a celebrated historian of our own.

"The former, in great agonies of mind, exclaimed to his physician, "I am abandoned both by God and man! Doctor!" cried he, "I'll give you half I am worth, if you can give me life six months!"—and upon the doctor's telling him he feared he could not live six weeks, "Then," he replied, "I shall go to hell!"—and expired soon after.

"The latter spent his last days in playing at cards, in cracking jokes, and in reading romances. He is said to have acknowledged, that, with his bitter invectives against the Bible, he had never read

the New Testament with attention." My mind was so sickened from the meditation on those few characters, that I begged to hasten from the place. I saw a group of other tombs, some with inscriptions, and others without, "whose memorials were perished with them;" but I could bear no more. We ascended the same steps by which we had come down, and on leaving the dreadful place, my heart exclaimed, "Oh, my soul, come not unto their secret! unto their assembly!"

What impressions the rest of the company felt I know not; but, for my part, never shall I forget the awfulness of the scene. "Is this the sure termination," I said to myself, "of Infidelity? Oh, for that warning-voice, and that more powerful grace to make the voice effectual, which the man of God uttered in the holy mountain, to be sounded in every infidel's ears—'Be not mockers, lest your bands be made strong!'" My mind acquired great strength and greater knowledge in divine things during my abode in the house of the Interpreter. I was with him somewhat more than three months, and the time seemed to me but a few days—for the reward in expectation which sweetened the whole. At length it became necessary to depart; and the morning arrived in which I was to bid him farewell.

There were several other of Zion's Pilgrims in the house besides myself, who were also on the eve of departure; and, therefore, the good man of the house called us together into the hall, in order to receive his parting blessing.

## 01.30. MOTTOS

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### MOTTOS

"It is my uniform custom," said the Interpreter, "when Christian friends are about to leave my house, to give them, by way of token, a written motto; consisting of some particular passage of God's word, which, by wearing it in their bosoms, may serve at once, through divine grace, to bring to their remembrance the instructions which they have received from me; and also furnish them with somewhat of consolation suited to the peculiar frame and constitution of their own minds." In saying this, he presented to a poor man who stood near me, and whose appearance indicated that the glass of his life was nearly run to the last sand, a piece of paper on which was written Jeremiah 49:11, "Leave your orphans; I will protect their lives. Your widows too can trust in me;"—and within this paper, there was another folded piece, bearing this inscription, Isaiah 54:5, "For your Maker is your husband—the Lord Almighty is his name—the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer; he is called the God of all the earth;"—and within this also a third, with this motto, Psalms 27:10, "When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up." As the Interpreter presented this paper to the poor man, he said, "You have heard all that I have said to you, my brother, on the subject of your own everlasting welfare; and I am much pleased to see, from the evidences which appear in your experience of the renewed life, that a work of grace is wrought in your heart, and that your hopes are well founded; but as I know that the several claims of nature in your family have a strong hold upon your feelings, I beg you frequently to have recourse to these sweet covenant-promises. The first is for yourself; the second for the beloved partner of your heart; and the third for your children." To another, who stood also near me, and whose concern had been very greatly exercised respecting the deceitfulness of his heart, and who feared lest, after all, his religion should be found to be nothing more than a cloak of hypocrisy, the Interpreter presented a paper with this motto—"Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts, and see if there be any evil way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." (Psalms 139:23-24.) And, as he presented it, he said, "Take this, my friend, and make it the subject of your daily enquiry before God. See whether you can pray with the same earnest desire as David did; or appeal to the great Searcher of hearts, as Paul did—'God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son.' (Romans 1:9.) If the approbation of God, and not the applause of man, be the desire of the heart—if the mind hates sin as sin, and not for its consequences—if you can bless a taking God, as well as a giving God—if you feel your soul humbled with a sense of unworthiness, while God is showering down upon you the abundance of his grace—if Jesus is loved for his own sake, more than for his gifts—these are all so many marks and touchstones of character which never can belong to hypocrisy, and therefore may be considered by you as evidences of a well founded hope."

"Young man," said the Interpreter to a very hopeful and promising youth who was in the circle, "the best motto I can present you with, is the declaration which the Lord commanded the prophet to make in the ears of Jerusalem—'Thus says the Lord, I remember you, the kindness of your youth, the love of your espousals, when you went after me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown,'

(Jeremiah 2:2.) Keep this precious text of scripture in your bosom as an infallible antidote against all the poisonous influence with which you may be surrounded in the long pilgrimage through which you have yet to pass. The man that has many days to count, has many wintry dispensations to be exercised with. Nothing can serve, more effectually, through divine grace, to bear up the mind under all its pressures, than the recollections of early notices of God and from God, and so sweet a promise of being remembered through all."

"And as for you, my brother," the good man said, addressing himself to me, "there is no passage of Scripture more suited to your case and circumstances than that which is contained in the prayer of the Lord Jesus, in the conclusion of his ministry upon earth, (John 17:11.) 'Holy Father, keep through your own name those whom you have given me.' Originally given, as all the faithful are, by the Father to the Lord Jesus, before the Redeemer manifests the Father's name unto them; evidently the property of the Father at the time of the donation, 'for yours they were, and you gave them to me;' fully proved to be redeemed by Jesus, by having the Father's name manifested unto them, and having kept his word; strongly and powerfully recommended to the Father's keeping by one whom the Father hears always, and whose joint interest in the believer is one and the same with the Father's, for 'all mine are yours, and yours are mine;' how is it possible that such can ever perish—or that any should pluck them out of his almighty hand? Keep this sweet scripture therefore, I charge you, always in your bosom, and carry it about with you wherever you go—that its influence may be perpetual, and that the will of the Redeemer, corresponding with the gift and grace of the Father, may never escape your recollection. 'Father I will that they also whom you have given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold the glory which you have given me.'" (John 17:24.) The Interpreter conducted me to the door; and as I stepped over the threshold, I turned about once more, to express my thankful acknowledgment of the affectionate manner in which I had been entertained. But it was an event which the coincidence of circumstances in a Pilgrim's life, like mine, could only produce, that soon after I left the house of the Interpreter, I met the poor man, of whom such honorable testimony is made by me in the former part of these Memoirs, accompanied with my moral neighbor, at whose instance I attended the elegant preacher's sermon, who is also mentioned in the first days of my enquiry for the way to Zion. Struck with astonishment at what I saw, that such an one should come on pilgrimage, I was going to express my surprise, when he anticipated all my enquiries, by accounting for the change. "To this dear friend," he cried, taking the poor man by the hand, "I am indebted, under God, for the gracious conversion of my mind from the error of its ways. I felt no small confusion from the strength of your observations respecting the ineffectual tendency of morality to justify before God; and particularly from the manner in which you stated it in your conversation, as instanced in the conduct of brethren towards another, while deficient in love and obedience towards their Father—but the remarks of this poor man at the church-porch, after the sermon we had heard, were such as threw to the ground, through God's grace, all the building of self-confidence which I had been rearing up from the supposed rectitude of my life; and since that time, I have been so thoroughly convinced, from the frequent instructions of this dear friend, whom I have made my constant companion, of the utter impossibility of man's being justified by anything of his own before God, that all my astonishment now is, not that I have forever relinquished the vain pretension—but that I ever should have imbibed it. I am now most fully satisfied, I bless God, that so far is the highest moral virtue from affording any ground of justification before God, that unless divine grace keeps the soul humble under all its attainments, it is apt to produce pride in our

hearts, and thereby to subject us to the greater condemnation. It may very safely be granted, that all moral excellencies will be the necessary result of true religion, as good fruit will be the natural production of a good tree; and that after the greatest pretensions, we have no authority to call that man truly pious who is immoral; but it must at the same time be insisted upon as strenuously, that so far detached is morality from piety in a great variety of instances, that nothing is more common in life than to see people who are truly irreproachable in their conduct towards man, who are totally remiss and even profane as to their demeanor before God. Hence, therefore, there are a thousand cases to which the best and most extensive laws of morality cannot reach; but yet they are all cognizable before Him who tries the heart. I discovered these truths by this poor man's instruction, through divine grace, and immediately found the fallacy under which I had been living; and, blessed be God, I have now learned, that 'without repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ,' the most punctual and diligent discharge of the moral obligations I owe my neighbor, cannot justify me before God." My heart rejoiced at what I heard, and secretly I felt within me the full force of that question, "What has God wrought!"

I detain not the reader with the relation of what followed this unexpected meeting; neither do I think it necessary to extend my narrative by an account of a great variety of occurrences with which my pilgrimage has since been distinguished. I promised him at the commencement of my history, that it should be a short one, from the hour in which the Lord was pleased to call me by his grace, to the period in which I sat down to communicate it; and having brought the subject thus far, I shall therefore now relieve the reader's attention altogether. To tell him of my present feelings, amid a mingled state of many precious assurances, tempered with many trying dispensations, would be to relate the uniform history of every pilgrim to Zion. These are the "spots of God's children;" and they all prove a family-likeness. I am frequently exercised with deep and sharp trials, and sometimes feel a heart disposed to tell my heavenly Teacher, that I think I might be spared many such lessons; but the upshot of the instruction generally brings me to this conclusion—"How happy is it for me that I am placed under a wiser and better direction than my own!"

I am now waiting the Master's call, rather I persuade myself (if I know anything of my own heart) with a pleasing than an anxious expectation. My desire is, "to die daily to the world, and to crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts." I wish to sit as detached as possible from everything here below, that, when the carriage to fetch me stops at my door, I may rise up instantly and depart, "to meet the Lord in the air." Under this view, my heart is weaning more and more, I hope, from all things beneath the sun. Little of this world can I speak, for I know but little of its employments. I am seeking "a better country, that is, an heavenly." And what is it to the man under sentence of death in Newgate, what is transacting on the Royal Exchange? And as to the full assurance of faith, respecting the possession of those immortal objects which open before me, I can and do say, with the humblest—but at the same time, with the best grounded confidence, "I know in whom I have believed; being confident in this very thing, that he who has begun a good work in me, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." That "crown of righteousness," which the apostle declared was not only laid up for him—but for all those who "love the appearing of the Lord," is laid up for me also. I have examined myself by this standard, as well as by every other which I know of. Do I love the Lord's appearing? Yes! I love his appearing in the conversion of every poor sinner whom God the Holy Spirit makes "willing in the day of his power." I love his appearing in the gracious, seasonable, and suitable relief of all his tried family. I love his appearing in the defense of his

oppressed ones from sin and Satan, in the ten thousand instances with which they are exercised here below. And, I trust, I am of that happy number who are said to be "looking for and hastening unto, the coming of that great day of his appearing, when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all those who believe."

Reader, farewell!—May our experience, when Jesus comes, correspond with the declaration of the prophet—"It shall be said in that day, Lo! this is our God, we have waited for him, and he will save us—this is the Lord, we have waited for him, we will be glad, and rejoice in his salvation." Amen.

## S. Search the Scriptures

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Search The Scripture Robert Hawker (1753-1827) "Search the scripture, - they are they which testify of me." John 5:39. The noble faculty of reason, which is the distinguishing excellence of man, among other eminent uses is evidently given him to direct his judgment, and to guard his mind from error and delusion. From the present imperfect state of things, however, reason, unassisted by some superior principle, finds perpetual difficulties, which perplex and confound the understanding. Human nature is always open to imposition. We frequently behold objects through false mediums. We argue from mistaken principles. We adopt opinions which we afterwards find to be erroneous; and yet too often, from the influence of those prepossessions, we draw our conclusions. Hence, therefore, we cannot be too much upon our how we hastily determine on any matter. After all our most vigilant observations, how little knowledge are we able to obtain even of the most common events of life, which pass in daily review before us! But when the great and awful points of religion are the subject of inquiry; when that sacred mystery hid from ages, the wonder of the universe, and which even angels do not comprehend, but "desire to look into," (1 Peter 1:12,) when this is brought before the mind for discussion, with what caution ought we to decide on a matter so abstruse and difficult! Here surely, if any where, reason finds her weakness and insufficiency, and therefore should gladly implore that divine illumination from above, which is promised in Scripture "to the meek and humble." In the preceding discourse some observations were made with a view to ascertain the dignity of our Lord. His preexistence to his advent in the flesh was proved from the authority of Scripture; and this fact was supported by another striking circumstance founded on the same testimony, namely, his being the Creator and Preserver of the universe.

Under such great and eternal characters does the Author of the Christian faith appear in those sacred records.

But, on the supposition of the truth of these premises, an observation meets us which demands attention. It is this. If Christ really possessed this existence and glory with his Father before the world, and is the maker and upholder of all things, is it not more than probable that some appearance of him should have been discovered through the many intermediate ages, from the fall of man to his advent in the flesh? For though the incarnation of the Son of God, for reasons unknown to us, was postponed to what is called "the fulness of time," in which all the predictions concerning this illustrious character of the Messiah centered; yet surely it is but reasonable to expect some vestige, at least, of this divine person in the earlier ages or the world, especially as God was pleased occasionally to vouchsafe to his fallen and degraded creatures some manifestations of his will. This observation is certainly a very proper one, and claims some regard. And though I cannot conceive a proof of this kind to be necessary, on the supposition that the fact itself of Christ's pre-existence is clearly assured, yet if any traces can be found in the Old Testament, corresponding to the account we find of him in the New, they will, no doubt, mutually illustrate and confirm each other; and altogether serve to place the blessed Redeemer's character in such an exalted point of view, as may help to strengthen our faith in this great article of religion.

And here a subject opens to our investigation, which may engage the closest study, and will reward the greatest exertions of the most enlightened mind. In searching the sacred volume for the footsteps of him "whose goings forth have been from everlasting," (Micah 5:2.) perhaps it will be found that all the dispensations of God, relating to mankind, from the very first dawn of revelation, have been uniformly and invariably carried on in the person of his divine Son: that he is JEHOVAH, to whom is ascribed the creation of the world; who resided occasionally among men before the fall; whose voice Adam heard in the garden of Eden; who personally appeared to Abraham, and to many others, in the patriarchal ages; spake unto Moses from the flaming bush; went before the children of Israel through the wilderness; descended on Mount Sinai enshrined in glory, and gave the law; and was visible, in a great variety of instances, to that people, as best suited the various purposes of his will. In short, from the creation of the world, to the final consummation of all things, it is he, and he only, who is the visible JEHOVAH, and hath carried on, and will complete, the executive part of the divine government, appearing under the several characters mentioned of him in Scripture, according as the circumstances of mankind required, in the several ages of the world. Hence he is our Creator, Preserver, Redeemer, and finally will be our Judge, when he cometh, agreeable to his promise, at the last day, to close the whole of his government in righteousness; "to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all that believe," (2 Thessalonians 1:10.)

Now, whether this opinion can derive any countenance and authority from Scripture, is the important question; but it must be confessed there is nothing in it which is foreign to our most natural ideas of the Supreme Being, or repugnant either to reason or revelation. On the contrary, there seems to be an admirable consistency and agreement with both. For that the same divine person who made the world, and by whose energy and power it is continually preserved and supported, should interpose to rectify and amend the evils crept into it by human infirmity, and at length should come to judge the moral subjects of his government, who by their different abilities are placed in a situation of becoming accountable creatures; this is certainly just what might be expected, and corresponding to all our notions of right reason. And, on the supposition that this is the true state of the case, I will venture to say, the mind of man cannot conceive any thing more magnificent and awful, than that of a divine and almighty Being descending from a state of glory, and taking upon him a form of flesh, in order to repair the desolations of many generations," and to restore perfect order among all the works God. The whole process of the divine dispensations, according to this scheme, is begun, carried on, and will be completed, by him who "is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever," (Hebrews 13:8.)

It cannot be supposed, in the very nature of things, that human faculties are competent to trace so mysterious a subject very far. "The way of God, (says the Psalmist) is in the sea, and his path in the great waters, and his footsteps are not known." (Psalms 77:19.) Yet as the divine goodness, in order as it were to excite the attention of man, hath graciously condescended to throw some rays of light around the darkness of the scene, and hath moreover promised the assistance of his Holy Spirit to all that, in humility of mind, seek instruction from above; there appears an evident duty, as well as a reward of the noblest kind, attending the investigation of this most interesting of all subjects. And what can engage the attention of the human mind with so much satisfaction, as the humble endeavour to explore the foot steps of that great Benefactor of mankind, to whom we owe such inexpressible obligations? In doing this, we are also obeying the precept which our blessed

Lord gave to the Jews, upon a similar occasion, when he referred them to the sacred writings for the evidences of his commission and authority: "Search the Scriptures (says Christ,) for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me." In obedience to this command let us direct our attention to this pursuit, and, after having first implored the Holy Spirit to be our guide, let us examine what information we can gather from thence respecting our divine LORD. Perhaps, now "the vail of the Old Testament is done away in Christ, we may" through the divine blessing, "with open face, behold as in a glass the glory of our Lord," (2 Corinthians 3:15, 2 Corinthians 3:18). The leading object of the present discourse will be to search the Scriptures for any traces of Christ, in the early ages of the world, sufficient to establish our belief of his personal appearance among men. The invisibility of the Divine Being to mortal eye is well known to be the doctrine of both Testaments of Scripture. "Thou canst not see my face and live," saith Jehovah to Moses. (Exodus 33:20.). And the apostles of Christ assert the same thing.

"No man (saith St. John) hath seen God at any time," (John 1:18.) And St. Paul assures us, "that God dwelleth in that light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen nor can see," (1 Timothy 6:16.). He is "the King eternal, immortal, invisible," (1 Timothy 1:17.) And our blessed Lord himself, to sum up the evidence, hath declared, that "no man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father," (John 6:46.) "Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape," (John 5:37.) From all which it is evident that the sight of God is inadmissible to man in his present state. This being a fact perfectly incontrovertible, the question is, what are we to understand from those numerous passages of Scripture where the presence of the Lord is most positively assured, unless we apply it to the person of God's only begotten Son, who is declared to be "the brightness of his glory and the express image of his person?" Without referring to all the instances of this kind which might be brought forward in proof, I believe every one Who is at all conversant with the sacred writings, will immediately recollect, that there are many very striking passages where the personal appearance of Jehovah is declared to have happened, and upon various occasions. I am not speaking of such as are visional, or figurative expressions: but real and certain. I am sensible of the allowances to be made for the metaphorical language of Scripture, so suited to the genius of the Eastern nations. Thus, the right arm of the Lord, and the voice of the Lord; these, no doubt are figurative expressions: and earthquakes, storms, and tempests, by way of figure, are sometimes called angels, and messengers of Jehovah. But this is not the case in the circumstance which I allude. When, for example, we read in the book of Exodus, "that Jehovah talked with Moses face to face, as a man talketh with his friend," (Exodus 33:11). So again, when in a conference like this with the great father of the faithful, Jehovah assumes to himself a supreme power, and speaks of his future dispensations respecting mankind, not as the agent of another, but as acting in his own name, and by his own authority, (Genesis 17:1-27) And when it is said also, in another place, "that Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of the people saw the God of Israel," (Exodus 24:9-10.) These instances surely can never be called visional, symbolical, or figurative. It is plain sense and plain meaning, and if there be any one matter of fact on which we may safely depend, it must be here; for if these repeated assurances of the personal appearance of Jehovah can, by any plausible argument, be reduced to a mere figure or vision, there is nothing to be met with in the whole volume of Scripture but, by a like accommodation, may be as easily construed away from its first and most obvious acceptation. That all these appearances were in the person of the Son of God, I by no means assert: upon so mysterious a subject I would be understood as speaking with the

utmost caution and diffidence. Could the point once be proved that it was our blessed Lord, there would be an end to all controversy respecting his divinity; such manifestations of GODHEAD, accompanied with such declarations of character, must for ever silence all doubts on this head. But if they be real appearances, and not figurative, and if (as an apostle tells us) that though "no man hath seen God at any time, yet the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him," (John 1:11,) it seems very likely to suppose that all the accounts, we meet with in Scripture of the manifestation of a personal Jehovah, might, with great safety, be explained by this infallible rule.

But, that we may not too hastily determine on this important matter, let us search the word of God further, and see whether we can gain any additional information that may illustrate this point more fully.

One leading principle, to help us in this inquiry, the Jewish Scriptures happily supply. In the relation they give of this appearance of Jehovah, we find, throughout the whole history, but one and the same being uniformly described. However distinguished by different appellations or titles, as might best correspond to the immediate purpose of his appealing, whether he be called the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of Israel, or the Angel of the Covenant, still one and the same person is invariably intended. The Jehovah which expelled Adam from the garden of Eden, was the same Jehovah who made a covenant with Abraham, and who declared that he would not leave him until he had done all that he had spoken to him of, and that in his seed should all families of the earth be blessed," (Genesis 28:15.) Accordingly we find he renewed this covenant with the patriarchs, and again revealed himself to Moses, from the flaming bush, under the same almighty distinctions. And when, from the Egyptian bondage, after a series of the most stupendous events, he had led the children of Israel through the wilderness, until he had brought them into the promised Canaan; upon every occasion in which he was graciously pleased to manifest his presence, the same great character was invariably proclaimed by which he was distinguished as their God, and they his people, and the sheep of his pastures. At length, when the Israelites were settled in their own borders, and a temple was built to the more immediate honour of their Lord, though the personal appearance of Jehovah was now withdrawn, the Shekinah, or manifestation of his glory, still appeared, shadowing the mercy-seat, but without form or similitude; yet before his departure, and when the temple was destroyed, the same Jehovah assured them, by his prophets, that "he would return again in the latter days, and dwell in the midst of them," (Zechariah 2:10;) that "the glory of the latter house should be greater than the former," (Haggai 2:9;) and that he would make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and the house of Judah, not according to the covenant that he had made with their fathers, in the day when he had brought them from the land of Egypt," (Jeremiah 31:31.) All which evidently and clearly proves, that one and the same Almighty Being constantly presided over the affairs of his church. This identity of person and character will be of great help to us in our inquiry to whom it belongs. And if we can find a single instance of sufficient authority from the New Testament, to suppose it applicable to our blessed Lord, it will throw a considerable degree of light upon the whole history, and become not a little conclusive to the point in question.

Among many circumstances of this kind, which might be brought forward as presumptive evidences to induce the belief, that the personal Jehovah of the Old Testament is the same being with the Lord of the New, the following are remarkably striking: When Jehovah appeared to Moses

in the flame of fire in the bush, he was pleased to reveal himself under that great and eternal distinction, "I am that I am," (Exodus 3:14;) which is the very appellation Christ assumed, when, discoursing with the Jews on the subject of his mission, he claimed a priority of existence to Abraham, and said, "Before Abraham was, I am," (John 8:58) an argument strongly presumptive, at least, that when our blessed Lord distinguished himself by this awful incommunicable name of the great Jehovah, he referred to this awful scene, and thereby intimated his real character. And that the Jews considered our Lord's meaning in this sense is more than probable, for they immediately took up stones to cast at him, for the supposed blasphemy; but he, by virtue of this very divinity, in a miraculous manner, so concealed himself from their knowledge, that "going through the midst of them," they knew him not, "and he passed by," (John 8:59.)

Another instance, very highly presumptive to justify our belief that our blessed Lord was the very Jehovah mentioned in the Old Testament, we meet with in the writings of the apostle Paul, in which he is illustrating a passage of the Jewish history. The passage is this. The children of Israel, in their journey through the wilderness, pitched in Rephidim, where they murmured for want of water; upon which occasion Moses cried unto the Lord, and the Lord commanded Moses, saying, "Go on before the people, and take with thee of the elders of Israel; and the rod wherewith thou smotest the river take in thine hand, and go. Behold, will stand before thee there, upon the rock in Horeb, and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel." Now, that no one should be at a loss for the explanation of this passage, we have the authority of an apostle to apply this personal appearance of Jehovah to our blessed Lord. "For they drank," says he, "or that spiritual rock that followed them, and that spiritual rock was Christ."

Similar to this, upon another occasion, in the history of that people, when Jehovah sent fiery serpents to destroy some for their disobedience and murmuring, the apostle, in his reflections and observations upon their unworthy behaviour, uses this remarkable argument to his Corinthian converts, to deter them from the imitation of so bad an example. "Neither," says he, "let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents." A plain proof that it was the opinion of St. Paul that the Jehovah who conducted the Israelites through the wilderness, and manifested himself to them upon various occasions, was no other than Christ.

Lastly; the Evangelist St. John makes an application of a passage in one of the prophets, which seems to remove all doubt that the glory of Jehovah, which the prophet beheld in a vision, was the glory of Christ himself. Our blessed Lord having wrought no conviction upon the hearts of his hearers, at a time when preaching his gospel to them, though his doctrine was attested with the operation of miracles, this brought to mind to the apostle the prediction of Isaiah the prophet: "He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart, that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart and be converted, and I should heal them. These things said Esaias, "when he saw his glory, and spake of him." This quotation from the prophet, which the Evangelist without hesitation applies to Christ, carries with it an evidence not easily refuted. And if the authority of such an expositor is at all valid to our argument, it must, I think, have great weight with every candid mind. But these evidences will be strengthened in their importance, when we proceed to consider also certain peculiarities ascribed to the person of Christ by the sacred writers, and assumed by Jesus himself; which could not with the smallest shadow of reason, be applied to him, but under the idea that he was the Jehovah and God of Israel, which appeared to

our fathers in the wilderness. St. John, in the first chapter of his gospel, speaking of the eternal Word, "which was in the beginning with God, and was God; who made the world, was in the world, and the world knew him not," Adds also, that "he came unto his own, and his own received him not," (John 1:12) This is a strong implication of Christ's being relatively known before. For, whether we consider the expression his own as referring to the Jews, who were called God's peculiar people, or whether by right, as the Creator of the world; in either case his pre-existence, and personal connection with mankind, by virtue of some priority of right and inheritance, must be presupposed and admitted. It could not be in his character, as the Redeemer of the world, for in this case the right would have preceded the purchase; and moreover, this would have made the expression inapplicable to the Jews only. It evidently proves, therefore, some antecedent connection, by virtue of which Christ was their Lord, and they his people. And where are we to look for this but in that history where it is said, "Jehovah chose them to be a special people to himself, above all the people who were upon the face of the earth?" (Deuteronomy 7:6.)

Again; Christ's lamentation over Jerusalem, and the particular and affecting expressions he made use of upon that occasion, is another very great probability (to speak the least of it) of our Lord's personal appearance and connection with the children of Israel, before his incarnation. St. Luke informs us, that "when he came near to Jerusalem, he beheld the city and wept over it," (Luke 19:41) and St. Matthew, in his account of this transaction, adds, that he brake forth into that tender apostrophe, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that were sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" (Matthew 23:37.) Now it becomes a very proper question, under what part of the sacred history of the life of Jesus Christ do we find this anxiety for Israel, before the season of his humiliation in the flesh? In what page of the Testament are we to look for those repeated instances of his love and solicitude for them? There is no one passage that can, with the smallest propriety, be considered as relating to Christ's passionate lamentation over this unhappy people. It is plain, therefore, that he must have alluded to some former period, when he says, he would often have gathered the children of Israel together, with an anxiety equal to that of the hen, when she seeks to cover her brood from danger, with the spreading of her wings. And corresponding to this idea, we find, in Deuteronomy 31:1-30, that Jehovah is represented as exceedingly anxious for the preservation of his people; that "he found them in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; that he led him about and instructed him, and kept him as the apple of his eye. Jehovah alone did lead him, there was no strange God in him." Now if Jehovah alone did lead him, and Christ, in his anxiety, evidently referred to some former instances of his affection; is it not a most probable conclusion, that this history is altogether applicable to our blessed Lord?

These circumstances are to me, I confess, very strong presumptive evidences at least, that, Christ was the visible Jehovah, who occasionally appeared both before, and under the Jewish dispensation. The application made by the sacred writers in the history of Christ to that period; the peculiarities distinguishable in our Lord's person; and the expressions he himself made use of, will hardly admit of any other construction. But there is another argument, yet remaining to be considered, which gives strength and confirmation to the whole, and is certainly superior to every other; on the truth of which, if I mistake not, depends, in a great measure, the connection of both Testaments of Scripture, and which, indeed if it be not allowed, destroys all consistency between them; and that is, Christ cannot be the Messiah, nor the real lawgiver of Christians, unless he

answers to the character predicted of him in the Scriptures of the Jews. This view of the subject is striking, and deserves a more particular discussion.

I have already observed, in the course of this sermon, that the history or the Jewish church, by preserving an identity of person in the great and almighty Protector of their nation, has happily supplied us with one leading principle to guide us through the mysterious part of our subject. And here it becomes most eminently serviceable. For it is evident, from all the history of that people, that the Jehovah who appeared to Abraham, and made an everlasting covenant with him, and confirmed this covenant to his descendants in the solemn promulgation of the law on Mount Sinai, and continued the manifestation of his presence among that people occasionally, as circumstances required, until the building of the temple; expressly promised, before he withdrew the glory of his appearance, that he would come again in the latter days, and dwell among them. "Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion; for, lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the Lord," (Zechariah 2:10) "And in that day it shall be said, Lo, this is our God, we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the Lord, we have waited for him, we will be glad, and rejoice in his salvation," (Isaiah 25:9.) All which plainly refers to one and the same person and character; for in that day it is said, "The Lord shall be king over all the earth; and there shall be one Lord, and his name one." (Zechariah 14:9.) And as a further confirmation of this, the prophet Jeremiah expressly declares, that the Jehovah who made the old covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah is the same Jehovah who would return again in the latter days, and make a new one. "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and the house of Judah; not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day that I took them by the hand, to bring them out of the land of Egypt which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband to them, saith the Lord; but this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people," (Jeremiah 31:31-32.) Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day that I took them by the hand, to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband to them, saith the Lord; but this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people," (Jeremiah 31:31-32).

Now from the testimony of these Scriptures we have authority to draw the following conclusions: first, That the same Almighty Jehovah which led, and governed, and protected the children of Israel, during the whole of their eventful history, was expected to come again and dwell among them in the latter days: and, secondly, that this Jehovah at his return, was to make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and the house of Judah, and different from the covenant which he had before made with their fathers, in the day he took them by the hand, to bring them out of the land of Egypt. Hence, therefore, it seems to follow, that if Christ be not the Jehovah which manifested himself to the Israelites in the wilderness, according to those scriptures he is not the Jehovah they were taught to expect, and consequently, not the Messiah. Neither could he be the Jehovah which was to make a new covenant with the house of Israel, unless he be the same Jehovah which made the old. And this identity of person and character, is not only essential to be preserved for the completion of these promises of Scripture, but must be carefully distinguished on another equally important consideration. The Jews were plainly taught to expect a change in their

system of legislation, but they were as plainly taught it should be accomplished by one and the same being. The Jehovah which was to make the new covenant, was the founder of the old, And this identity of person and character, is not only essential to be preserved for the completion of these promises of Scripture, but must be carefully distinguished on another equally important consideration. The Jews were plainly taught to expect a change in their system of legislation, but they were as plainly taught it should be accomplished by one and the same being. The Jehovah which was to make the new covenant, was the founder of the old; and nothing less than this could certainly be sufficient for its alteration: for as the law given on Mount Sinai was of divine authority, and accompanied with all the manifestations of the divine presence, it is evident none but the original lawgiver himself could possibly supersede, or do away its obligation. Nor was this change in the law of Moses the smallest impeachment of the immutability of the divine nature. For the alteration was not in God, but man. The moral law still continues the same, and will remain for ever for it is of eternal duration: and as Christ observed "Sooner might heaven and earth pass than one jot or tittle of this law to fail. He came," therefore, "not to destroy this law, but to fulfil it." But the ceremonial law could be no longer necessary, when the purpose for which it ministered was answered and completed; when the substance was once come, the shadow was, of course, done away. Besides, many reasons concurred also to render the removal of the Mosaic ordinances expedient. When the Israelites became scattered into divers countries, there could no longer remain the possibility of performing the sacrifices at the Temple, nor of appearing three times in a year at their solemn feasts at Jerusalem. And when the kingdom of the Messiah was come, which by a progressive influence was to extend over the whole earth, the name of Jehovah, no longer limited to an handful of people, was to be great among the Gentiles) and in every place incense was to be offered unto his name, and a pure offering." From these united considerations it appears to be a fair and probable conclusion, that the great lawgiver of Christians is the original lawgiver of the Jews; for this preserves an harmony (which otherwise is broken) between both Testaments of Scripture, and proves them to be consistent with the, divine immutability on which the whole is founded.

If there these circumstances, collectively taken from a body of evidence sufficient to rest our belief on, that the great Author of the Christian faith, whose dignity and character we have in part already reviewed, who was in possession, as he himself assures us, of "glory with the Father before the world was," and whom the sacred writers declare to have been in conjunction with his Father, the Maker and Preserver of all things; if the circumstances, I say, collectively taken, authorize our belief that Jesus is the Jehovah who personally appeared under the Jewish dispensation, and in the earlier ages of the world, I think it will follow, that every objection to his divinity must yield to the clear and express revelation of his having appeared among men previous to his incarnation; and we have reason to believe, that all the ordinations of God respecting mankind, have been uniformly and invariably conducted in the person of his blessed Son.

Though what hath been now offered cannot, from the very nature of things, be considered more than the fruit outlines of a subject, which taken in all its parts, surpasses human ability to explore; yet I should hope it is sufficient to give some little insight (as far as we have Scripture authority to carry us) into this part of the mysterious government of God. And from this view we not only perceive a wonderful consistency throughout the whole design of revelation, but also the conclusion naturally resulting from it; namely, that one and the same Almighty Architect both

planned and executed the physical and moral structure of our nature. And now I should hope, the evidence for the GODHEAD of Jesus, like a mighty river, increasing as it descends from the numerous streams pouring into it on every side, swells upon your mind and carries all opposition before it. And when we come to view the testimonies which appear in the history of our blessed Lord during his incarnation, all leading to the same conclusion, our hearts, overpowered with the torrent of conviction, will cry out with Nathaniel, "This is the Son of God, this is the King of Israel."

## S. Specimen of Preaching

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### ALL BLESSINGS TRACED TO THEIR SOURCE.

John 15:16 Ye have not chosen me but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

THERE is nothing more gratifying to the mind, than when in the enjoyment of any one given blessing, we are able to trace it to its source, and can discover, both the author of it, and his kind intentions in giving it.

If I am made happy, in the possession, of even one of the most common mercies of life, that mercy, be it what it may, is made doubly sweet, when the hand of God is seen in the appointment. It is a mercy then, twice blessed. First, in respect to its own nature, and secondly, as coming to me, with a peculiar, and personal direction, from God. The Traveler, who, on some sultry mountain, discovers unexpectedly a cooling stream, to assuage his thirst, will drink of it, with a tenfold pleasure, if in the moment of enjoyment, he considers it as flowing for his refreshment, from the immediate gift of heaven. Nay, will it not be allowed, that, in the pleasing intercourse of social life, our felicities are all heightened, from the consciousness of the good will with which the kindnesses of our friends are accompanied. If then in natural things, our enjoyments receive an increase from such causes, what an accession of happiness must it be in spirituals, when we are enabled to trace them up to him., and to his special appointment, who is the predisposing cause of all?

If I enjoy the gracious operations of the Holy Ghost in my soul; if the person, and gifts, and righteousness, of the Redeemer be dear to my heart; if I know what it is, to have fellowship with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ; will not these distinguishing mercies be yet abundantly increased, both in sweetness, and in value, when they are discovered to be the result of that everlasting love, wherewith God hath loved his people, before the foundation of the world? Such views, serve to confirm, and no less at the same time to explain, the meaning of that saying of the Apostle's, when speaking of a divine appointment in all our mercies, he refers the whole into God's sovereign will; who hath saved us and called us with an holy calling not according to our works but according to his own purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began (2 Timothy 1:9). And moreover, beside the enjoyment of the blessing itself, in those distinguishing properties of it, there are several other very interesting qualities, folded within its bosom. What method can be as effectual under God, to induce all the practical fruits of the gospel, as when, from pointing to the source, from whence all grace issues, is necessarily implied, from whence, all must be looked for? And is it not, of all possible arguments, the strongest, and the best, both to saint, and sinner, to manifest that He, who is the Author, and Finisher, of salvation, is the only Being, from whom every good and every perfect gift must come?

Tell me, you, who from a clear conviction of your own unworthiness, are ever ready, to ascribe your recovery, from sin, to salvation, to the praise of the glory of his grace wherein he hath made you accepted in the beloved, tell me, what motive do you find equally powerful in prompting you to show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light, as the consciousness, that God hath chosen you in Christ before the foundation of the world, that you should be holy and without blame before him in love? (Ephesians 1:4.) Doth not this conviction, operate beyond any other, to induce you to adorn the doctrine of God your Saviour in all things? And if by divine grace you find yourself preserved in the path of duty, is it not truly refreshing to the soul to discover the cause, that you are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them? (Ephesians 2:10.) And no less let the Sinner say, if it be God's choice, and not man's desert; if all the difference between one man, and another, originates in Him, who giveth to every one severally as he will, why should you question more than others, but that you may be the happy partaker of the same grace also? Surely, there would be abundantly more reason to doubt receiving the divine favor, if that favor, was depending upon your desert of it, than if it be the sole result of unmerited bounty and goodness!

I have been led into this train of observation, from the perusal of the precious words, of the Lord Jesus in the text. Ye have not chosen me but I have chosen you and ordained you that ye should go and bring forth fruit and that your fruit should remain that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name he may give it you. Abstracted from any personal relation, which those words may be supposed to have, as more particularly addressed to the disciples of Christ, at that period, and age, of the Church, in which they were first spoken; they contain this plain, and important truth, which is not confined to any period, but in all ages must have the same obvious, and determined meaning; that the personal salvation, of every true believer in Jesus, is founded, not in human merit, but in divine favor, not in our choice of Christ, but in his choice of us; for, that it is not of him that willeth nor of him that runneth but of God that sheweth mercy; or to sum it up, in the full comprehensive words of the Apostle, for of him and through him and to him are all things, to whom be glory for ever and ever. (Romans 11:30.)

If you will analyze the several parts of the text, you will find, that they all bear a corresponding testimony, to this one, and the same leading truth. Ye have not chosen me but I have chosen you. No one I venture to think, after this declaration of Christ, can be such an Advocate for the free will, and merit of man, as to invert the order of these words, and fancy, the reverse, of what the Lord Jesus hath said to be true. Depend upon it what John the Apostle observes, is a positive fact, and of universal extent; if we love him, it is because he first loved us. (1 John 4:19.) And the ordination, which follows in the text, this choice of the Redeemer, as plainly manifests, that the grace which hath appointed to the end, hath also appointed suitable and sufficient means for its accomplishment. I have ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit. It is all in the divine appointment. Thou O Lord (saith the Church) hast wrought all our works in us; (Isaiah 26:12.) or as the Lord expresses it himself, in another scripture; from me is thy fruit found. (Hosea 14:8.)

Neither is this all. It would not indeed answer the purposes of salvation, if like abortions in the natural world, the setting fruit of the fairest blossoms, was liable to fall off; Jesus therefore adds one circumstance more, and that a very material one; I have not only ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, but that your fruit shall remain. It is an object of the highest moment, to the

peace and comfort of the believer, to be well assured, that the grace which begins the work, will carry it on and complete it. And therefore, nothing can be more satisfactory, than to know, that being chosen, and ordained, by a will that is not his own, he shall be preserved by a grace, that is more than mortal; and kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation. And lastly, as a comprehensive expression, which conveys to the believer, the assurance of every blessing he may stand in need of, in passing on, through a life of grace, to glory; Jesus hedges in the whole, of the many precious things in this text, with that delightful promise in the close of it, and founded in the security, of his own all prevailing intercession, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name he may give it you.

I question, whether in the whole compass of scripture, a verse can be found, more copious in its contents, respecting those momentous doctrines of our most holy faith, than what is here contained. What I propose from it, as God the Spirit shall be pleased to enable me, is simply this; to shew you, that the whole sum and substance of our redemption from beginning to end is included in this free, sovereign, and unmerited choice of God, in Christ Jesus. This is the leading doctrine insisted upon in the text, and all the other parts naturally arise out of it. To this therefore alone, I shall limit your present attention. In the accomplishment of this purpose, the arrangement of my discourse, will be; in the first place, to establish the certainty of the doctrine. And then secondly, to point to the practical effects which arise out of it. And, if God the Holy Ghost, shall be graciously pleased (which I most humbly implore,) to be our Teacher, in confirming the truth of the doctrine, by a personal application of it to our hearts, we shall be enabled to assume the language of the Apostle, which he used to the Church of the Thessalonians, upon the same occasion, and say as he did, we are bound to give thanks always to God for you brethren beloved of the Lord because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth. (2 Thessalonians 2:13) In pursuit of the first object I proposed, which is to prove the truth of our blessed Lord's declaration in the text, ye have not chosen me but I have chosen you, the best method I humbly conceive, will be, by tracing effects, to their causes; which will fully demonstrate, that the first advance in the way of grace, evidently begins in God and not in man. For if, it can be shewn, that such things as accompany salvation, are altogether disproportioned, to the powers of man to produce, the inference will undeniably follow, that the appointment must be, in an higher ordination, and that ordination is God. And I venture to believe, that in no one circumstance of life, can this be more fully shewn, or perhaps equally so, than in the subject now under consideration. The Scripture, in a tone of decision, which admits of no appeal, awfully declares, that we are by nature, not only in a fallen, sinful state, but so totally ruined in all our faculties, that even the knowledge of divine things, much less a predilection for them, nature, untaught, and unenlightened, by an higher power, never could attain. And the Apostle Paul, under the teachings of God the Holy Ghost, considers this point as a matter so certain, and incontrovertible, that he sets it down, as a fixed thing; the natural man (says he) receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God for they are foolishness unto him neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned. (1 Corinthians 2:14.) And elsewhere he assigns the reason; Having the understanding darkened being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them because of the blindness of their heart, (Ephesians 4:18.) To suppose therefore, that characters of this description, should make the first advances in the renewed life towards God, would be as absurd, as to imagine a dead body, to arise by its own powers, to all the exercises of animal functions.

Equally inconsistent is it with the divine glory, and altogether destructive, of all the just conceptions, we can form, of the freedom, and sovereignty of God's grace, to suppose, that though it be admitted, God's choice is the first cause, yet, that choice, originated in the foreknowledge of God, that such as become the objects of his favor, would by their subsequent conduct, be found more deserving than others, and therefore, God foreseeing this, was directed in this predilection. This idea, is perfectly suited, to gratify man's pride, but becomes highly injurious to God's glory. And by the way, my Brother, let me beg of you, to mark this down, in the memorandums of your diary, as a never-failing maxim; that whatever tends to inflate the mind with the least exalted notions of any thing good in itself by so much robs God of his honor, and man of his happiness. Very sweet indeed I confess, is the reflection to the soul of the truly regenerate, when he can look back, and consider the change wrought upon him, that he who was once darkness is now light in the Lord. And still more pleasing will be the view, when he can trace the blessed effects of this change, in his life, in the progressive path of that light, which shineth more and more unto a perfect day. But in every review of this kind, there is a voice which accompanies it, and which the truly gracious soul delights to hear, who maketh thee to differ from another and what hast thou which thou didst not receive? (1 Corinthians 4:7.) That God's choice will be followed with the gift of God's grace in the heart, is unquestionable; for he that saith, I have chosen you, saith also, I have ordained you that ye should go and bring forth fruit. But to fancy, that this choice, is the result of some supposed latent worthiness in the object, and not of God's free and unmerited love, is to invert the very order of things, and to make the effect precede its cause.

Let us advance one step higher in the argument, in confirmation of this doctrine, and observe, that the term grace, becomes at once the most decided proof of the whole. For in fact, it looses its very name, if there be an atom of supposed merit in the receiver. It ceases then, to be a gratuitous act, but on the contrary, it partakes of the nature of a reward. If it be of works (saith an Apostle) then is it no more of grace, for otherwise grace is no more grace. (Romans 11:6.) Nay, so far are the highly favored objects of this bounty, from being considered, as contributing in the smallest degree, to the reception of it, that they are beheld, not barely as undeserving, but ill deserving; not simply as unworthy of mercy, but worthy of punishment. Grace therefore signifies, an act of unmerited clemency, bestowed upon a set of creatures, who in the very moment of receiving it, are justly deserving God's displeasure, You will immediately perceive from this statement, how impossible it is, consistent with God's glory, for man to assume any merit to himself, respecting his salvation; either in the original appointment, or in the after stages of grace. For if I fancy myself, even in the smallest possible degree, to have merited divine favor, the very character of grace looses its name. But if, (as is really the case) I see myself, in the very moment of becoming, the object of this distinguishing mercy, both in the first manifestations of it, and in all the after periods of life, as singled out from the throng of my fellow creatures, all alike unworthy, and all equally undeserving; such views of grace, will then afford proper ideas, of what it really is, and compel the heart of every one, who is conscious of being the happy partaker of it, to cry out with the astonished disciple Lord how is it that thou hast manifested thyself to me and not unto the world? But it were to leave the subject unfinished, tho' confirming the doctrine, were we to rest here, without connecting with it, some other delightful properties, which belong to the same. The fact once admitted, that all our mercies originate, in this predilection of grace, it must immediately follow, that as nothing new, or undetermined, could at any period arise in the divine mind, which had not existed there before; every purpose concerning salvation, must have been formed, in the

eternal, and unchangeable purposes of God in Christ Jesus, before the world began. Hence therefore, a door of the most important nature, is at once thrown open, by the discovery of this leading truth; and all those sweet, and precious doctrines, of the Father's mercy, the Redeemer's love, and the Spirit's grace, are unfolded to view, and brought forward with a strength of testimony, that may indeed astonish the mind, but which nothing can refute. Skeptics may question, and impiously arraign, both God's wisdom, and his goodness. But my province is, not to answer the angry accusations of the ungodly, but to satisfy the humble enquiries of the just. The Apostle hath drawn, a beautiful model for imitation in this particular, which may serve as a guide, for every one, who supposes himself called upon to make reply to the presumptuous reasoning of the unhumbled mind. He borrows a figure from common life, of the Potter, exercising power over the same lump of clay, to make one vessel unto honor and another to dishonor; (Romans 9:21.) and takes occasion therefrom to shew, that He, who hath made all things, and for whose pleasure they are, and were created, hath an unquestionable authority, to do what he will with his own. And to strike dumb in everlasting silence the profane tongue, which might be prompted to go further, and demand a reason; every thing in reference to his will, who hath appointed all, terminates in this; shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?

If I have said enough to answer the first object which I proposed from this subject, I come now to the second. Having I hope fully ascertained the certainty of the doctrine; to this will very properly succeed, the practical effects arising out of it.

Some have thought, that the doctrine is in itself so illcalculated, to induce any effects of godliness, that it throws to the ground, the whole system of religion, and morality. And others have gone so far, as to insist upon it, that an attention to the means of grace, is superseded thereby, and become unnecessary. You will hear men of this complexion, not infrequently demanding, to what use, can be the practice of any religious, or moral obligation? For if a man be chosen in Christ, he is eternally safe, let him do what he may; If he be not, he is sure to be lost, let him do what he can. But these are rather the sayings, of light and inconsiderate persons, than the sober and pious reflections, of the wise and serious. I venture to believe, that of all subjects tending under God's grace, to induce the greatest attainments in piety and virtue; the doctrine of being chosen in Christ to salvation and happiness, is the highest and the best. And I venture moreover to hope, that before I have finished the subject, I shall prove to the clearest demonstration, that no possible argument, is of equal persuasion, like this, to form the mind to the exercise of all those Christian graces, which unquestionably are among the truest evidences of the renewed life. A few observations, on this branch of our subject, will set the matter in a clear point of view. The Apostle Paul, after directing an animated discourse to the church at Philippi, in which he had been insisting, with great earnestness, on some of the leading doctrines of the gospel, makes this as the immediate and unavoidable inference of the whole. Finally brethren whatsoever things are true whatsoever things are honest whatsoever things are just whatsoever things are pure whatsoever things are lovely whatsoever things are of good report if there be any virtue and if there be any praise think on these things (Php 4:8.) From hence nothing can be more evident than that, the apostle considered, a clear apprehension of the great blessings of redemption, and a conscious sense of being personally interested in them, became the most powerful of all arguments, to an holy life and conversation. And indeed, if it can be supposed, that such motives should fail, every lesser consideration must prove ineffectual.

Let us examine this claim, under each of the great branches of duty, which constitute the devout, and social obligations; either as it concerns our deportment towards God, our Neighbour, or ourselves. As it concerns our duty towards God. No appeal to the heart surely can be equal to this. For if a conscious sense, of having become the distinguished object of divine favor, when every thing on our part, justly made us the object of divine vengeance; if amidst the shipwreck of human nature, you my Brother, behold yourself as one, brought to shore, by an Omnipotent arm, while the carcasses of thousands, are floating before you; if, in direct opposition, to all your rebellion, ingratitude, and disobedience, God hath saved you, and called you with an holy calling;—what shall I say? if, while God says, I knew that thou wouldest deal very treacherously and wast called a transgressor from the womb (Isaiah 48:8.) and yet notwithstanding all this, for his great love wherewith he hath loved you even when you were dead in sin hath quickened you together with Christ (Ephesians 2:5.) can the imagination form to itself, any one argument like this, to stimulate to godliness and virtue? And will any one venture to suppose, that the mind, which is dead and insensible to such a claim as this, would be alive to any other?

Consider the subject also in another relation, as it concerns the duty we owe our neighbour. That the Apostle Paul thought the distinguishing mercy of God, to be the strongest persuasive in the mind, to lead to the practice of all the obligations, between man and man is evident; for upon a remarkable occasion, while exhorting the Colossians, to such duties, he enforces their observance from this very cause. Put on (says he) as the elect of God bowels of mercies kindness humbleness of mind meekness longsuffering. As if the consciousness of being so chosen, and so distinguished, by divine mercy, impelled the heart, to the observance of all tenderness and compassion. And the Apostle urges yet further, that in the unavoidable offences of life, which from the frailty of our poor fallen nature, after all endeavours to the contrary, will come; believers of all men are called upon, to forbear one another and to forgive one another even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven them. (Colossians 3:12-13). And who is there, that can arise from before the mercy seat, under a deep sense of being remitted ten thousand talents, and can go forth and take a fellow sinner by the throat, for the payment of an hundred pence? Surely, the unanswerable appeal of the Apostle, can never cease to vibrate in the ear of every one, who hath heard, and knows the joyful sound; beloved if God so loved us how ought we also to love one another! (1 John 4:11.) And in respect to the blessed effects, which a just sense of being chosen in Christ is calculated to produce in the heart in the duty we owe ourselves, it is a well known character, and in face the truest evidence that the work of grace is begun in the soul, that they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts. For if any man be in Christ he is a new creature.

I challenge the whole world therefore, to bring forward such motives as these, and which naturally (or rather I should have said graciously) spring out of this doctrine, for reforming the hearts and regulating the morals of mankind. But though I contend, that these considerations, are superior to every other, to induce such a train of conduct in the heart of man, yet I am free to confess that neither these considerations, or any other, are in themselves, of sufficient influence, to give a new tide, and current to the affections. It must be God who worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure. All our sufficiency is from Him. But herein lieth the excellency of our present doctrine. For it is a circumstance intimately connected with our subject, and which I particularly beg none will overlook, that the exercise of those Christian graces, do not depend upon the fickle purposes in man, but in the unchangeable love of God. Remember the text. He that chooseth his

people, ordaineth them also, to bring forth fruit. And the same grace which appoints, affords power to perform. The charter of grace runs in these words. I will give them one heart and one way that they may fear me for ever. I will make an everlasting covenant with them that I will not turn away from them to do them good but I will put my fear in their heart that they shall not depart from me. (Jeremiah 32:39-40.) Here then lies the security; and which no other source beside can give, neither any motives of moral persuasions enforce. God undertakes for the accomplishment of the whole, in answering both for himself, and for his people. I will not, (saith God) and they shall not. And what is the real matter of fact, as it is found in the experience of mankind. Look I beg of you abroad into the world, and see, whether among those who profess their conviction in this doctrine they are at the same time, less devout towards God, less just, or friendly to their neighbours; or whether, they are immoral in themselves. You know the reverse to be the case. For if they are true to their principles, they are on the contrary, examples to believers in word in conversation in charity in spirit in faith in purity. They know, and their lives bare testimony to that knowledge, that the grace of God which bringeth salvation hath appeared unto all men teaching them that denying ungodliness and worldly lust they should live soberly righteously and godly in this present world looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ. And this is, and must be, the one uniform desire, of their hearts, that he who gave himself for them that he might redeem them from all iniquity might purify them unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works.

(Titus 2:12-14.)

I have only in conclusion to beg of God the Spirit, to make our subject profitable, both to Saint and Sinner, under his blessed influence. To the former, I would say, do not forget my Brother, to seek grace from God upon every occasion in life to accustom yourself to trace all your mercies up to this fountain head. Depend upon it, that you will find a double sweetness therefrom, in every one of them. Even the most common providence, will then appear to you, not without some special commission from Him, whose wisdom is everlastingly employed for you, and whose faithfulness assures you that all things how trifling soever they may seem, or how unpromising soever they may appear, work together for good to them that love God and who are the called according to his purpose. And tell me if you can, what life can be so pleasant, as that life of faith, which is for ever living on the unchangeable purposes of God in Christ, issuing as they are, from an everlasting love, and manifesting themselves in all the multiform methods of his grace. And to the latter, I would very affectionately observe, that however unconcerned you may at present fancy yourself to be, in all the grand interests of this doctrine, do not depart my Brother without taking with you a short observation to correct those ideas. As it is the divine favour, and not our merit, which directs God in the choice of his people, so is it from the same free, and sovereign cause, all mercies flow. It is his grace, and not your worth, which hath fixed the bounds of your habitation. It is from the same grace, that your lot is cast in this blessed land, where God is truly known. It is equally from the same predisposing grace, that you are this day brought under a preached gospel. Is it not then reasonable to infer, that if so much grace hath been displayed, in providing the means, may not the whole be displayed, on purpose to the accomplishment of the end? Ask your own heart a few questions, Do you bless God, that you were born in those highly favored climes, where the pure gospel is preached? Is it a matter of thankfulness with you that you are brought under the sound of it this day? And would it be the joy of your heart, to know the truth that the truth may make you

free? If your heart can truly say yes, to these enquires; depend upon it, though you know it not, you are not far, from the kingdom of God. You see this day around you many, that were once, as you are and who are now, the happy partakers of God's unspeakable gift. You may behold them in the enjoyment of this rich mercy, reading their pardons on their knees, in transports of rejoicing. Beg of God, then to be made receivers of the same grace. Say to the Father of mercies in that sweet scripture the companions hearken to thy voice cause me to hear it. (Song of Solomon 8:13) In a word, let a man of this description, make the same experiment in spiritual things, which is done in natural concerns. Suppose a company of beggars, at the gate of a Prince, waiting for a supply, without which, they must perish for ever; and suppose, that he hath not only bestowed the mercy to thousands, and tens of thousands, yet his bounty is not at all diminished, but remains the same, in an endless profusion; and suppose moreover, that he hath caused it to be proclaimed, that all that come he will in no wise cast out! Would any poor perishing creature depart, while such a proclamation of mercy is sounding? Would he despair, under such encouraging circumstances?

I add no more, but an earnest prayer, that God the Holy Ghost, may awaken many a heart and send home many a humble mind, under the pleasing assurance, of being personally interested, in the words of the Apostle; Ye are a chosen generation a royal priesthood an holy nation a peculiar people that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light which in time past were not a people but are now the people of God which had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy. (1 Peter 2:9-10.)

## S. What Think Ye Of Christ?

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### What Think Ye Of Christ?

Robert Hawker (1753-1827) "What think ye of Christ? Whose Son is he?" Matthew 22:42 The religion of Jesus which we profess, demands our attention by every argument capable of interesting the human heart. The manner of its first introduction, the immense preparation which, through so many ages, preceded its establishment, its descent to us, sealed with the blood of apostles and martyrs, nay, even "God himself confirming the word with signs and wonders, and gifts of the Holy Ghost," (Hebrews 2:4.) are circumstances so very striking, as seem to render it impossible for any man to suppose, that all this mighty apparatus was intended to refer to a matter, trifling in its nature, and of no material consequence whether neglected or despised. "If they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven," (Hebrews 12:25.) But while we feel the full influences and great importance of the gospel, we cannot but be proportionably anxious to know the truth as it is in Jesus: that we may embrace "that faith," and that faith only, "which was once delivered unto the saints," (Jude 1:3.) For, however pure the fountain from whence the word of God first issued, yet if it comes to us through tainted and corrupt channels, how shall we be assured that it hath not imbibed a portion of impurity?

It is a well-known truth, and cannot be dissembled, that, from the very infancy of Christianity, errors crept into the church. The tares of infidelity and scepticism were early sown with the good seed. They sprung up and appeared together, and both (as our blessed Lord himself predicted)" will grow together unto the harvest," (Matthew 13:30.) But let not the faithful despond on this account. Tares are always to be discerned from good seed. The Lord in his providence hath a gracious design in every dispensation. There must be heresies among you," (saith an apostle) "that they which are approved may be made manifest among you," (1 Corinthians 11:19.) Even the errors of opinion, therefore, are not without their use in the present state of discipline, for they serve to ascertain and prove the truth. And from this ordeal the gospel hath been always found to come forth, not only with more clearness, but also bringing with it increasing evidence of its divine authority.

Every age hath been distinguished by some peculiar mode of hostility against the principles of our holy faith. By open attack, and by insidious design, the false friend and the professed foe have alike aimed their blows, to effect the ruin of the church. But we know who it is that hath said, his church is founded on a rock, against which the gates of hell shall not prevail," (Matthew 16:18.) The enemies who have come forward against Christianity, have only broken their arrows against its impenetrable shield, and, tired of the unequal combat, have withdrawn from the field in silence.

It would, however, be in vain to expect that all opposition should cease. The Lord the Spirit permits the existence of error, with a view to accomplish some greater good. By this means the truth, when discovered, is placed on a more firm and sure foundation, and in the mean time it answers the necessary ends of trial to exercise the faith of the true believer.

Besides, while the corrupt passions of the human mind remain unreformed, there will be always some who will find an interest in opposing the pure system of morality contained in the gospel, and while religion is sought for by others, "through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, and not after Christ," (Colossians 2:8.), the pride of reason will not easily bend to the humbleness and docility of little children, which is so necessary to the reception of those doctrines by which the Christian faith is peculiarly known. From both these causes, therefore, the religion of Jesus will always sure to meet with opposition. The controversy of the present hour seems to be particularly of this latter kind. Under the specious pretence that reason alone is competent to determine measure of religious faith, a certain class of men (and in the garb of friends to Christianity too) have presumed to analyze the several parts of revelation by this standard, and have peremptorily rejected every thing beyond the power of reason to account for, as impossible to have proceeded from God. Thus, with a rash and bold hand, they have torn from the gospel all the sacred mysteries of our holy faith, reduced the whole to a mere system of ethics, and degraded the divine Author of our salvation to a character no higher than that of a moral teacher - the equal of Socrates or Confucius. Nay, to such an height hath this doctrine advanced, that he who hath the dangerous honour of preeminence in this opinion hath declared, that the sentiments even of an apostle are invalid, and of no weight with him. When errors of this fatal tendency spring up in the world, and come forth to the public under the sanction of distinguished names, we cannot be too much upon our guard, to repel the seducing influence. The GOD HEAD of CHRIST is the chief cornerstone in the edifice or Christianity. Remove this from the building and the whole fabric immediately totters. The foundation is shaken to the very centre. There appears at once an evident disproportion between the end and the means; the importance of the object proposed, and the person by whom it was accomplished. And then the great doctrine of atonement falls to the ground, and all the rich promises of the gospel are done away. In matters of less moment though we cannot but lament that there should be any dissensions amongst sincere professors of Christianity, yet when these refer to points of mere form or ceremony, and concern not the fundamentals of religion, it were a folly to contend. They arise from the weaknesses and prejudices of human nature, and are the result of that imperfection and frailty, which mark our very best performances. But when so vital a part of the gospel is attacked; the divinity of our blessed Lord palpably denied; himself classed among fallible men; all adoration to him expressly forbidden; and the members of the established Church branded with idolatry: it is impossible to regard such reproches with indifference. How can any true believer hear, with unconcern, that blessed Person, by whose sacred name we are called, thus degraded and traduced? Surely it must be a duty to come forward, and with becoming confidence assert the dignity of that GOD under whose banner we serve, and the purity of worship which we profess! Against assaults of this nature it can be no bigotry to remonstrate; nor will the just defence of our principles be deemed, by any liberal minds an ill-timed zeal. Nay, our silence might rather be construed into a tacit acknowledgment that we thought the charge unanswerable, and therefore meanly took refuge under an establishment which we were unable to defend. But though gratitude, duty, and all the important interests of religion, demand this from us, and to remain supine and indifferent would be unpardonably criminal, yet, in opposing the opinions, we never oppose the persons of men. "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God, to the pulling down of strong holds and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ," (2 Corinthians 10:4-5.) In the investigation of truth, every sincere friend to the gospel must wish, that all enquiries may be pursued, not only

with Christian temper and candour, but with somewhat more than these, with affection and goodwill. It is not for the triumph of opinion we contend, but for truth. Our most earnest desires are, that "all may come to the knowledge of the truth and be saved," (1 Timothy 2:4.) While anxious therefore, in the pursuit of this great point, we condemn no man for his religious principles. "To his own master he standeth or falleth," (Romans 14:4) Too conscious of our own manifold imperfections, we dare not be rigorous and unmerciful to the imperfections of thers. And surrounded as we are with so much darkness in the present state of being, that we can hardly judge of the objects which are near us with any precision or certainly, we are well aware how little the wisest of us know of the nature and dispensations of God. It were to be wished that all parties and persuasions of Christians would duly consider this circumstance, that every one might "learn to think humbly of himself, and as he ought to think." But what a comfortable and encouraging relief to the mind is that gracious promise of scripture; that if we are brought under the blessed direction of the great Spirit of truth, he will guide us into all truth," (John 14:13.) "If we trust in the Lord, and lean not upon our own understanding, but in all our ways acknowledge him, he will direct our paths," (Proverbs 3:5-6.) For "the secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will shew them his covenant," (Psalms 25:13.) With these objects in view, and under an humble hope of divine assistance, it is my intention, in this and a few following discourses, to examine the evidences of our Lord's divinity. The question is exceedingly interesting, and the event important. For if it can be proved that the testimony of scripture is against this doctrine; it will follow, that the faith we profess, and the form of worship we observe, are founded on wrong principles; and all the venerable sanction of names, or the zeal of godly reformers, will be utterly insufficient to justify our continuance in them. But should it appear from the strictest investigation, that this great article of our church arises immediately from the scriptures themselves, and derives its influence wholly from this supreme authority; we have only to pity and pray for the conversion of those who differ from us. Their objections, instead of injuring our cause, will have proved beneficial to it, by enabling us to shew that "our faith does not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God," (1 Corinthians 2:5.) In the prosecution of this design, it will be my duty to bring before you the evidences we are in possession of, to prove the GODHEAD of CHRIST. It will be yours to examine the same with carefulness and impartiality. And as our salvation is blended together, and rests upon the same common cause, you will give credit at least to my integrity, if not to my understanding. I should be utterly unworthy the sacred office I hold among you, were I capable of temporizing upon so awful a concern. I scruple riot therefore to say, I have received myself the belief of this great doctrine with the fullest conviction. It is the faith in which I trust, under the divine grace, always to live, and in which I hope to die. But, while anxious to discharge what appears to be only my duty, in placing this great principle of the gospel before you, upon its proper basis, I desire no one implicitly to follow my opinion. Upon so momentous a concern, every man, as far as he is able, should judge for himself. Like the Bereans, who are mentioned in sacred history with such honourable testimony, I would wish you to "search the scriptures daily whether these things are so," (Acts 17:11.) Happy is that Christian whose experience in divine truths confirms the doctrines there revealed! Who (as the apostle says) from "believing on the Son of God hath the witness in himself," (1 John 5:10.) If religion be at all important, it must be highly important; indifference is unpardonable; inattention somewhat worse than folly. It is certainly the duty of every individual to be able to satisfy his own mind at least, if not to give an answer to others, of the hope that is in him: and that man must be strangely lost to all the great objects of eternity, who can sit

down regardless in a matter of such infinite consequence, and which so highly concerns the salvation of his soul. Bend with me, I beseech you, before the awful throne of God, and let us humbly implore assistance from above, that the attention to this solemn subject, both of him who speaks and those who hear, may be rewarded with his grace. That "God may give, unto us the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: the eyes of our understanding being enlightened, that we may know what is the hope of our calling, (Ephesians 1:18-19,) that we may prove things that are excellent, and that we may be sincere and without offence unto the day of Christ," (Php 1:10.) And here, before I open the evidences in support of our blessed Lord's divinity, I beg once for all to premise, that I shall draw no conclusions in favour of this doctrine, but from Scripture; for on all disputable points in religion, this certainly is the only unerring standard of our judgment. I am free to confess that the whole body or commentators are nothing decisive with me on this important point. Whoever implicitly follows the opinion of men may be deceived. From the pure and uncorrupt word of God, there can be no danger of error or delusion. It is to this authority only I bend: and I trust you will find nothing in the course of these sermons insisted upon with the smallest emphasis, but what can clearly be proved from the testimony of Scripture.

It will be unnecessary to produce any evidence of the authenticity of the sacred books themselves. The hardest champions of fidelity have never yet been able to disprove the marks of genuine truth and purity with which these records are transmitted to us. Were these discourses, indeed, levelled against the controversial writings of deists, it might be needful to take a larger circuit, and to shew the authority on which they rest. But as my present design is of another nature, and intended only to prevent your minds from being led away by an opinion injurious to Christianity, and advanced by

Christians themselves, who acknowledge with us the writings of the New Testament to be genuine, it is not necessary, upon this occasion, to bring forward any evidence in their support. Taking it for granted, therefore, that the sacred volume is admitted to be authentic, I shall immediately proceed to bring before you that great body of evidence with which the Scriptures abound, to prove the deity of the Son of God, and that Jesus is, in the fullest sense of the expression, "one with the Father-over all, God blessed for ever. Amen." The words of the text which I have thought to be most pertinent to the purpose of opening the subject on the divinity of Christ, are not a little demonstrative of the great point in question. Our blessed Lord had been interrogated by the Pharisees and Sadducees, (and it should seem not with the most friendly design,) upon certain matters of opinion peculiar to each sect. After this conference, Jesus himself proposed to them the question in the text: "What think ye of Christ? whose son is he? They say unto him, The son of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord; saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy foot-stool? If David then call him Lord, how is he his son?" Let any man of plain common understanding read this passage as it stands in the New Testament, and then determine for himself; Will it not instantly strike him, that our blessed Lord meant to infer, that somewhat above the nature of an human being was appointed to distinguish the character of the Messiah? That, notwithstanding Christ, according to the flesh, was to spring from the seed of David, yet, at the same time, by his superior nature, he was to be David's Lord. That our Saviour's argument was considered in this light by his hearers, and that it wrought a conviction of this kind upon their minds, seems highly probable; for the Evangelist adds, "They were not able to answer him a word, neither durst any man, from that day forth, ask him any more questions." But passing by this

argument in favour of our cause, I lay no stress upon it. It is the question only in the text which I wish to make use of as the basis of this discourse: "What think ye of Christ? whose son is he?" Is he, according to the opinion of our modern Socinians, simply no other than a man; or, agreeable to the doctrine of the Scriptures, is he the Son of God? This is the great and interesting question to be discussed in the prosecution of this subject. And my sincere prayers to God are, that void of all party persuasion, and unbiassed by the smallest prejudice, our researches may be directed by the influence of that blessed Spirit of truth, "which will guide us into all truth." To a mind perfectly free from prepossession, and open to conviction, the numberless passages we meet with in Scripture, which fully and unequivocally declare Christ to be the Son of God, might, one would think, decidedly prove his Godhead. For such a distinguished and peculiar appellation cannot, with the smallest shadow of reason, be applied to him, unless his pretensions to the relationship it includes be also admitted.

Some, however, who have considered our blessed Lord in a higher degree of dignity than any prophet or messenger of God who preceded him; have yet conceived that nothing valid to the argument can be derived from this phrase of "Son of

God," with which Christ is every where distinguished in the sacred writings. And, among other reasons, they have assigned that this title is sometimes given also in Scripture to angels, to magistrates, and even good Christians. It is wonderful that men of the most penetrating abilities should not immediately perceive the very dissimilar circumstances under which this appellation is used when applied to men, and when spoken of him who is not only said to be "the Son of God;" but declared to be the Son of God "with power;" and also "the express image of his person," (Romans 1:4, Hebrews 1:3.) They who are so ready to class our Lord's pretensions to this title with those of the general mass of eminent persons to whom it is sometimes given, would be at a loss, I believe, to explain, upon the same principles, in what sense we are to understand the term when it is connected with the most expressive phrases, such as "the only begotten Son of God who was in the bosom of the Father;" the "beloved Son of God," and "dear Son of God, the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature," (John 1:14-18, Matthew 3:17; Mark 9:7; Luke 9:35; Colossians 1:13-15.) There must be something surely peculiar in those instances, and different from the common acceptance of the phrase when conferred by way of eminence on particular persons or characters. But, added to these striking particularities, there are other corroborating circumstances, which put the matter beyond all doubt, and which I shall much wonder if the most extravagant latitude of construction can possibly do away.

If I can prove to your satisfaction that this distinguished title, by which Christ is every where, in the New Testament, called the Son of God, was not applied to him merely by his followers, but was the individual character by which his commission and authority were to be made known; that it was first declared by the angel in his address to Mary at the annunciation; afterwards assumed by our Lord himself at his entrance upon his public character; received the testimony, of a voice from heaven, in confirmation of its truth, more than once, during our Lord's exercise of his ministry; and that even the spirits of darkness gave the same evidence to it: in short that this title uniformly characterized his person while he continued upon earth, and is the distinguishing name by which the apostles and inspired writers have revealed his doctrines to all ages of the church; and that these facts do not depend upon a single passage of a questionable sense or meaning, but that one invariable strain of testimony runs through the whole volume of Scripture. If, I say, I can shew

this, I should hope it would be conclusive and satisfactory to every candid person. Permit me, therefore, to bring before you the several testimonies of this kind by which this leading proof of Christ's divinity is confirmed and assured. The first instance is that of the angel in his salutation of Mary The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; THEREFORE that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God," (Luke 1:5, Luke 1:9,) Now here is an express and positive reason assigned why Jesus is called the Son of God: from the Holy Ghost coming upon Mary, and the power of the Highest overshadowing her; by which our blessed Lord, deriving his existence in the flesh from a Divine Power, and without the intervention of an human father, he was truly and properly called the Son of God. A circumstance evidently peculiar to Christ, and by which the title becomes applicable only to him. Had the conception not been miraculous, but the natural consequence of Mary's marriage with her husband, there could have been no reason given for this appellation. There is something also very remarkable in the angel's expression: he does not say in consequence of this overshadowing power of the Highest "the child" shall be called the Son of God, but

"that holy thing;" there by drawing a striking distinction between the Word made flesh and the highest created being whatever. The second proof I shall bring of Christ's exclusive claim to this title, personally considered, is the testimony of a voice from heaven, both at his baptism, and again at his transfiguration: "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased," (Matthew 3:17, Matthew 18:5, &c. Luke 9:35, Mark 9:1-50.) This, also, I conceive to be another very striking discrimination between the ordinary custom observable among men, whereby eminent persons may be distinguished by eminent titles; and the authority of a voice from heaven, giving so extraordinary a demonstration of the dignity of him to whom it was applied. If it can be any where shewn, and in any one instance, that any individual among the sons of men ever received such a testimony from above, then this of Jesus at his baptism and transfiguration will by so much be lessened upon a comparison in its importance: but if not, and it be clearly proved that CHRIST and CHRIST only was so distinguished, it plainly follows, that there must have been something peculiar in his person and character, from his receiving such supernatural attestations of his dignity and consequence. For we may venture to ask, in the words of the apostle, "Unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee?" (Hebrews 1:5.)

But, thirdly, we have other testimony beside that of the angel, and a voice from above, for the spirits of darkness brought their unwilling evidence to the same great truth. Read only the latter part of the fourth chapter of the gospel by St. Luke, and then determine on what ground it is that Christ is called the Son of God. "And in the synagogue there was a man which had a spirit of an unclean devil, and he cried with a loud voice, saying, Let us alone, what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth; art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God. And devils also came out of many, crying out, and saying, Thou art Christ, the Son of God. And he, rebuking them, suffered them not to speak, for they knew that he was Christ," (Luke 6:41. Mark 5:1-43) What overpowering evidences are these collectively considered, that the appellation of this title given to Christ is peculiar and appropriate! How any man can possibly withhold his assent to the GODHEAD of JESUS, when even apostate spirits cannot refrain, is unaccountable and surprising. When we add to these strong testimonies the further evidence, that our blessed Lord assumed this title himself, and founded his mission expressly upon it, because he was the Son of God; this at once determines the whole, by clearly shewing that it is on his own

declarations we are authorized to apply the sacred appellation to him; and from hence we have reason also to infer, that the expression carries with it all the idea that we can entertain of a divine and eternal nature. It would be tedious to particularize every instance we meet with in the history of our blessed Lord of this kind, Let a few passages suffice.

Christ had healed a cripple on the Sabbath-day; for which the Jews sought to slay him; but Jesus answered them, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work;" therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because "he not only had broken the Sabbath, but had said also, that God was his Father, making himself equal with God," (John 5:17-18.) A most positive proof this, that our blessed Lord assumed this title, and that the Jews understood it in the light of a claim and of equality with the Father, for which they were so exceedingly exasperated against him.

Sometime after this, in a conference which Christ held with the Jews, in which he declared his unity with the Father, "I and my Father are one," they took up stones again to stone him; but Jesus demanded the cause for which they did it; they replied, "for blasphemy, because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God," (John 10:30, John 10:33) Can any thing be more in point than this?

Again, upon a similar occasion, when Christ had opened the eyes of one that was born blind, and much altercation and dispute arose between the Jews and the man in consequence of it, which terminated in putting him out of the synagogue, our blessed Lord met his patient, and proposed to him this very question, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God? He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him? And Jesus said, Thou hast both seen him, and he it is that talketh with thee. And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him," (John 9:35-38.) Here is an evidence the most express, plain, and positive that can be, and attended also with the divine adoration of Jesus. Would Christ have assumed this title, and accepted homage and worship by virtue of it, had not both been his just right? Would not this meek and humble Saviour rather have corrected the errors of the man, and availed himself of so good an opportunity of renouncing such a title, and enjoining the worship of God only, had not his divinity been unquestionable, and his relationship to the Father fully clear and indisputable? Judge then on what dangerous ground those men tread, who step forward with so much confidence to rob the Son of God of his due, and endeavour to degrade the eternal Son of the Father to the condition of a poor being like ourselves! What a different opinion the apostle Peter had of his Master's real character, and what sentiments he entertained of our Lord's claim to this title, may easily be gathered from the expressions he made use of in his way to Caesarea Philippi. When Christ, in order to try their faith in him, proposed to his disciples this question, "Whom do men say that I, the Son of man am? They said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist; some Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the Prophets." And when Christ desired to know what they thought of him, Peter, with his usual promptness, immediately cried out, "Thou art Christ the Son of the living God." Can any man suppose that this was said in compliment only? That Peter would say to a man like himself, Thou art Christ the Son of the living God? Is it possible any one can adopt such opinion? and especially when it procured for him that glorious commendation, "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven," (Matthew 16:13.) So far indeed was this from being a common compliment, used in courtesy to distinguish men, that Christ declared it to be a truth of that superlative nature, that human discernment was unequal to the discovery of it, and it could only be revealed by God the Father. The same divine truth, it may justly be said, operates in the present hour. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit

of God, for they are foolishness to him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned," (1 Corinthians 2:14.)

I shall mention only one passage more, in confirmation of our Lord's assumption of this title; and that is the instance at his trial, when the high-priest demanded of Jesus, by a solemn adjuration, to tell him, "whether he were the Christ the Son of God," (Luke 22:70,) or as the equivalent phrase of another Evangelist expresses it, "Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" (Mark 14:61). And on our Lord's declaring that he was, the high-priest rent his clothes, saying, he had spoken blasphemy. Would he have pronounced this blasphemy, if it had been considered as nothing more than a usual complimentary title given to remarkable characters *ex officio*? Much less would he have declared Jesus deserving of death in consequence of it? Is it not self-evident, that the Jews considered the expression in the full sense and acceptation of the word; and which, of consequence, became blasphemy, if improperly assumed? And is it not equally clear that Christ laid down his life in support of his just pretensions to this title?

Such repeated proofs of the point in question, leave no room to doubt in what sense we are to consider Christ's assumption of his character, and what ideas we are to annex to this distinguished appellation. It must be plain to every candid and unprejudiced mind, that the term made use of, when applied to the person of Jesus, differs most essentially when used in compliment to any other among the sons of men. And if we have authority to draw any inference from any one fact in the world, we may with the fullest safety conclude, from those instances, that our blessed Lord is, in the highest and most complete sense of the word, "the Son of God." Here the reasoning of the apostle is strictly applicable; "If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater, and this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son," (John 1:5-9.)

It were unnecessary for me to go further, and enumerate the several passages we meet with in Scripture, in which Christ is particularly distinguished by this title among his apostles and followers. After the review already taken, and especially our Lord's own testimony on this point, it would, I think, be superfluous. Even what hath been now advanced on this subject, I would wish to be considered only as collateral to the main body of evidence which I purpose to bring forward in discussing the important question of our Lord's divinity.

I cannot but think the several circumstances I have laid before you, respecting the phrase itself when applied to our Saviour, are very striking and particular; but they are not so essential to our cause as to oblige us to lay the greatest stress upon them. The argument arising from hence, and much more, I think, we might with safety give up, and yet retain enough to prove the doctrine I am anxious to confirm in your minds. The Godhead of Jesus is so conspicuous a feature in the gospel, and is supported by evidences which press upon us so closely on every side, that, I am sure, there is not any point of Christ's religion more capable of being clearly proved and ascertained, than his claim to a divine nature,

I should proceed immediately to the testimonies contained in Scripture of this great doctrine, but their importance demands a more full and particular discussion than your present attention will permit. I reserve them, therefore, for the subject of our next meeting. In the mean time, consider what hath been said, and may the Lord give you a right understanding in all things.

## S. Zion's Warrior

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Robert Hawker (1753-1827): Zion's Warrior

### Expository gems

Great Christian writers are often remembered more by their commentaries than their other works. This is the case with Matthew Henry, John Gill and Thomas Scott and perhaps reveals the Christian's greater longing to have the Word of God explained to him directly, verse by verse, rather than in essay, biography or story form. Food for the soul which is cut and served for immediate digestion is a delight indeed. Robert Hawker's commentaries provide such a delight. Though Hawker authored numerous theological works, school text books, readers and primers, it is to his commentaries that Christians today still turn. His Poor Man's Commentary and Poor Man's Morning and Evening Portions are still considered gems of exposition. Indeed, modern booksellers have noticed that Hawker is increasing in popularity and second-hand prices are growing with the demand.

Robert studies with a view to becoming a surgeon for his mother's and aunts' sake

Robert Hawker was born on April 13, 1753 in a house near Mary Steps Church, Exeter where his grandfather, an Alderman, had practised as a surgeon and where his father had now taken up that calling. In keeping with the covenant beliefs of his parents, he was baptised at Mary Steps on the following May 14. Hawker never knew his father who was carried off by a disease caught from a patient when his only surviving child was still a baby. This caused his mother and two aunts to take special care of little Robert and they made sure he grew up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, teaching him to recite, read and write Scripture portions at a very early age.

Hawker attended the Free Grammar School, learning Greek, Latin and Hebrew. From his earliest years, he longed to become a clergyman, composed sermons and preached in secret but his mother, who had striven to keep up something of her husband's practice and worked as a midwife, begged Hawker to take up his father's profession. Hawker's aunts also felt that he could do the most good for his fellow creatures in the family profession. Having no heart to disappoint them, young Hawker was placed under the supervision of an Alderman White of Plymouth to be trained as a surgeon. The young surgeon's apprentice developed into a most mischievous imp and did not leave his practical jokes outside of the church. One day, he smuggled himself into a service and set off a firework whilst Henry Tanner, the Evangelical minister, was preaching. Hawker never forgot this silly prank and when Tanner died, he supported his destitute widow and published Tanner's memoirs and works on her behalf. A marriage made in Heaven

Though only nineteen years old, Hawker fell in love with Anne Rains, a girl of seventeen, whom he married at Charles parish church on January 6, 1772. Tongues wagged concerning their youth but the marriage proved of the Lord and the couple enjoyed over forty-five years of married life until Anne died in 1817, ten years before her husband. Robert and Anne had eight children, four boys and four girls. Three of the boys became ministers of the gospel and one a surgeon, three of the

girls married well, Anna, the second eldest daughter, remained single, caring for her father until his death.

Hawker studied at St. Thomas's before obtaining a three-year post as surgeon in the Royal Marines. Stories are told how Hawker later went abroad with the army and was converted but John Williams, one of Hawker's biographers and a convert of his, claims that most of these stories are quite untrue and that Hawker never joined the army. He did become an army chaplain when Vicar of Charles and wrote a book called *The Zion's Warrior, or Christian Soldier's Manual* in which army life was compared to the spiritual life. These facts may have given rise to the supposition. There are no records of Hawker's conversion and it is probable that he entered the ministry without a deep awareness of God's grace in his life.

#### Hawker studies for the ministry

Nevertheless, Hawker's longing to become a minister never left him and, in May, 1778, feeling he had done his duty to his mother and though he had a wife and family, he entered Magdalen Hall, Oxford with a view to be trained for the ministry. His proficiency in the subjects studied was so great that the Bishop of Exeter ordained him as deacon in September that year. A few weeks later, Hawker was called to take over the curacy of his home church in Charles where he stayed forty-nine years until his death in 1827. The first sermon Hawker preached at Charles was on November 22, 1778, his text being 2 Corinthians 5:20, 'Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.'

Hawker kept up his matriculation and occasionally visited Magdalen for lectures and examinations. He received priest's orders in 1779. He now began to publish his sermons but complained later that they contained no more knowledge of the truth than the bats and the moles could have supplied.

#### Becoming the Vicar of Charles

Two years later, Hawker's vicar, John Bedford, died. By one of the strange historical quirks of the Church of England, the living did not rest in the hands of the congregation but was under the patronage of the Mayor and corporation and Hawker, backed by his church, found that a stranger had put in a claim for the living. Mr White, Hawker's former employer was now Mayor and he quickly took Hawker's side so that when it came to the vote, there was only one 'nay' to all the 'ayes' and Hawker received the Bishop's seal to the vicarage of Charles on May 20, 1784. A new note now appears in Hawker's preaching. The fine eloquence and language is still there but it is more suited to the ears of the ordinary man and there is far more Scripture in it. Hawker began to teach the children and, instead of spending his evenings with musical entertainment and card-playing, he visited the sick, the aged, the spiritual needy and the poor. He also set hours aside for social prayer and testimony. His teaching shows that he had obtained a deep understanding of the covenant of works and the covenant of grace. We note, too, that Hawker began to invite such people as William Romaine to preach. At first, Hawker felt he had to correct Romaine's 'unguarded expressions' but gradually came to realise that Romaine's words were pure gospel. In his work *Visits to and from Jesus*, we find Hawker looking back on his previous thoughts concerning free grace and God's sovereign, electing love with dismay, saying:

"How long and how daringly violent did I myself oppose this glorious truth, which now, through thy grace subduing my rebellion, and teaching my soul its blessedness, is become my greatest joy and delight. Lord! thou knowest well, with what bitterness of a fallen nature, I contended against the sovereignty of thy grace, in thy free-will election; while in the very moment audaciously insisting upon my own power in a free-will ability of serving thee! Oh, what mercy hath been shewn me on the recovery of my soul from a delusion so awful!"

#### Opposition from the Establishment and Dissent alike

Hawker was opposed by Presbyterians, Anglicans and Baptists alike. The Presbyterian pastor in Charles was a man of ability who challenged Hawker's credentials as a man of God and his congregation as a true church. He, himself, preached Socinian notions enthusiastically so that in 1790 Hawker began to preach a series on Christ's divinity to protect and instruct his own flock. Hawker discovered that his preaching on the divine nature of Christ also angered many an Anglican minister so he decided to print his sermons for general distribution. So skilled was his reasoning and so successful was the spread of true Trinitarianism through the sales of the book that, two years later, the University of Edinburgh awarded Hawker a diploma as Doctor of Divinity. It is a tribute to the understanding of the university that a work that led to the conversion, edification and education of numerous souls received such formal acclamation. The Dissenting church intensified their efforts to de-throne Christ and, under the leadership of a Mr. Porter, declared themselves to be Arians and published a Defence of Unitarianism complaining that the writers of the New Testament were not inspired by God and had misunderstood Christ. This caused the Evangelical Magazine to write, "While a Porter disseminates the pernicious dogmas of Socinianism and infidelity, a Hawker opposes to him, and with success, the wholesome doctrines of grace and truth, which came by Jesus Christ."

#### Hawker takes on task after task

Next Hawker published a companion volume on the Holy Spirit and a critique of rationalism. He founded several charitable works for the poor and provided for the relief of the families of soldiers who had died in service or from a fever which had spread through the Plymouth area. By 1798, he was busy building an orphanage and a school. He now preached three times on Sundays besides holding numerous weekly teaching, prayer and testimony, meetings. He also preached two or three times a week for the soldiers and visited the military hospitals, never accepting a penny for his services. As the military buildings were miles apart, this witness consumed much of Hawker's time and energy in all weathers. Hawker also started a work amongst destitute women who had chosen a life of sin as a means of income.

Sadly, such evangelistic work drew protests from within the Church of England and a Cornish minister by the name of Polwhele campaigned to discredit Hawker. He felt his chance had come when Hawker journeyed to Falmouth to fetch his daughter home after a visit and accepted preaching invitations from three churches on the return journey. Polwhele complained to the Bishop of Exeter that Hawker was carrying out a 'Quixotic expedition' in his area, teaching blasphemy. Hawker's theme had been the imputation of Christ's righteousness and Polwhele had protested that if what Hawker preached were true, in the eyes of God the believer stood as righteous as Christ Himself because he had been clothed with God's own righteousness! Hawker had expounded Romans 3:22, 'Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ

unto all and upon all them that believe,' so Polwhele had faithfully reproduced Hawker's teaching. Yet Polwhele's knowledge of Scripture was so poor that on hearing this truth, he thought it was blasphemy! Polwhele also accused Hawker of itinerancy and neglecting his own flock. Actually Hawker had been absent from his pulpit only three Sundays in twenty years, twice due to illness and once when he preached for a friend. He was the only minister in the whole diocese with such a record! The good Bishop, the army and marine authorities and their chaplains all took Hawker's side and ignored Polwhele's protests.

Hawker's literary pilgrimage to Zion In 1798 Hawker started writing for the Zion's Trumpet, a periodical founded by himself and Evangelical friends with a keen mission to spread the Word, record the work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of Christians and defend the Thirty-Nine Articles. The word 'Zion' was to be attached to a number of Hawker's works, such as his Zion's Warrior and Zion's Pilgrim. In the latter, a pilgrimage of meditations along the paths taken by John Bunyan's hero, Hawker gives us insight into his own spiritual history, lamenting that he only became a true pilgrim after he had 'passed a very considerable portion of time in the life of man.' On viewing the whirlpool of time that draws many a sinner into its vortex and drags them doomed out of a life which ought to have been lived in repentance, Hawker says, "Can I call to mind the past danger, and the present deliverance, unmoved with pity over the unthinking throng, and untouched with gratitude to thee the sole Author of every mercy? I feel (blessed be the grace that inspires it!) the rising hymn of thankfulness in my heart, while the tear drops from my eye: 'Lord, how is it that thou hast manifested thyself unto me, and not unto the world!'" Hawker loved to muse on the pages of John Bunyan and John Milton. Like John Newton and Thomas Scott, he published notes on the Pilgrim's Progress and, like William Cowper, wrote a commentary on Paradise Lost. If we wish to find the heart of Hawker in his writings, it must be in Zion's Warrior, published in 1801. Here he defines the blessings of what it means to be a soldier of Christ, fighting the good fight with all his might, clothed in the armour of God. We also find him bemoaning the times spent as 'a deserter from the standard of Christ Jesus.' It is inspiring, when reading Hawker, to find him a man of flesh and blood as ourselves, yet one who was greatly used of Christ to proclaim His righteousness.

Hawker on missionary work In 1802, we find Hawker distributing free Christian literature to the poor. He did this under the pompous title of The Great Western Society for Dispersing Religious Tracts Among the Poor, though he was the sum total of committee members, their chairman, treasurer, secretary and editor! During this year Hawker was invited to preach before the London Missionary Society and preached on The Work of the Holy Ghost essential to give success to all missions for the Gospel based on Romans 10:14-15. Hawker emphasised this need because the enormous fund-raising campaigns of the missionary societies were creating the impression that the more money raised, the more souls would be saved. He feared that the work of the Holy Spirit in the soul of a man, equipping him for the Great Commission was being reduced to a commercial enterprise that was doomed to waste money and neglect true soul-winning. Hawker also believed that true missionary work was church planting, each church having its own ministers and not to be ruled by an absentee committee thousands of miles away. Hawker withdrew his L.M.S. subscription but remained a praying and giving friend to a number of church-based missionary enterprises and supported missionaries such as W. B. Johnson at Sierra Leone, privately. Johnson's correspondence with Hawker reveals, contrary to the modern criticism that the doctrines of grace cripple evangelism, that preaching such doctrines is highly successful in

converting sinners.

Hawker goes on his first preaching tour In 1803, after twenty-five years at Charles, Hawker made his first preaching tour which lasted four weeks. Nowadays pastors seem happy to spend a month a year on holiday but Hawker never felt that such luxuries were necessary and preached twenty-five times on invitation during his month's leave of absence. The London ministers were glad to have Hawker at first as he filled all their pews and also the aisles. When, however, the doors were broken down by the sheer weight of the hundreds trying to get in and the masses outside caused a traffic chaos they began to fear Hawker was too much of a crowd-drawer for them. Notwithstanding, this Five-Point man whom many were calling an Antinomian and a Hyper-Calvinist received invitation after invitation to evangelise so that he had to plan a similar tour each year for the rest of his life. Yet modern critics of Hawker's doctrines invariably argue that such doctrines destroy evangelism! This is proof enough that such criticism is merely judgemental, and has no basis in true Christian experience. One tires nowadays of hearing the new, doctrinally wishy-washy, Reformed Establishment tell us that great preachers such as Tobias Crisp, Richard Davis, John Gill, John Ryland, James Hervey, William Romaine, Augustus Toplady, William Huntington, William Gadsby and, of course, Robert Hawker, believed doctrines that drive away the crowds, when history tells us that they were the very doctrines and the very people which drew them in their thousands.

Dealing with the 'righteous over-much'

Now Hawker worked hard on his penny commentaries for the poor. Dr Williams says concerning their teaching, "It was said of two celebrated commentators, Cocceius and Grotius, that the one found Christ everywhere, and the other nowhere. Dr. Hawker is of the former school." One well-bred lawyer, heartily disagreed with Hawker's testimony and in 1808 published an anonymous pamphlet to show that evangelical preaching encourages sin as it makes a man rely fully on Christ so that he does not strive to mend his own unrighteousness. Christian authors should therefore preach man-centred moral reformation. Needless to say, Hawker was soon telling the nameless man that in finding Christ he had also been taught the lesson of "denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, and living soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world." Seeing a man after his own heart in the nameless barrister, Polwhele rejoined the opposition, particularly after he had read Hawker's A Prop Against All Despair which even brings hope to those who feel they have sinned beyond all chance of pardon. It soon became obvious that these men's fight was not against Hawker but Christ Himself as they gradually revealed their Unitarian tendencies. Again, the church authorities and the Christian press stood fully behind the Vicar of Charles and we can thank God for such enlightened times.

Christ, our sole perfection

Now aged sixty-five and a widower, Hawker sent his last volume of his Poor Man's Commentary to the press. He professed that he had written the work "to hold up and hold forth the Lord Jesus Christ as God's Christ, and as the sole perfection of all his people." This endeavour met with mixed feelings in the churches. The perfectionist doctrine of progressive holiness was rampant owing to false teaching concerning the law and gospel. The believer's gaze was taken away from the Christ who had clothed him with righteousness. It was an effort to change fallen Adam into the New Adam by works of holiness. The folly of the view that the old man can become purer as the

days go by, is well illustrated by Paul's testimony after many years serving the Lord, 'I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing,' (Romans 7:18). On the other hand, we read of the new man 'which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.' The believer is created unto good works but even they do not sanctify him progressively, he is wholly such already by God's grace. Good works are the fruits of holiness and not their seed. If fruit occurs, then it is a sign that Christ has made the sinner whole. We are called to mortify the body but this is not progressive holiness but the testimony and effects of the sanctified new man in Christ. The Biblical teaching of the sanctifying work of the Spirit in the soul of man revived

Hawker revived the Biblical teaching of the sanctifying work of the Spirit in the soul of man and spent much of his final years writing on the Person, Godhead and ministry of the Spirit. He wrote several works on the Spirit for the needs of the labouring class but did not neglect their physical needs. He bought bread in bulk and sold it to the poor at half price. The Vicar vainly thought that he could preach to the crowds as they came to buy bread but so great was the rush and commotion that even his powerful voice could not be heard. He thus hit on the idea of giving a tract of his composition with every loaf sold besides a short word of admonition.

Hawker's energies grew with his age as he published one work after another. The more he published, the more opposition grew alongside his great popularity. He had a penetrating effect on ministers who were orthodox on the outside but nurtured some secret error in their hearts. When debating with Hawker, their true selves invariably came out, displaying Socinianism, Sabellianism, Arianism or worse. The Sonship controversy The harshest criticism came from those who seemed doctrinally close to Hawker. He had, for instance, experienced sweet fellowship with the Old School Particular Baptists who were one with him on the doctrines of atonement, election, imputed righteousness, justification and sanctification. Unexpectedly, however, John Stevens of York Street Chapel, London, who had done tremendous work for the gospel, and was currently protecting his churches from the onslaught of Grotianism and New Divinity teaching, attacked Hawker furiously, not only for being a member of the Church of England but for not believing in the pre-existence of Christ before the incarnation. The accusation was ludicrous and the charge rebounded on Stevens who had to give a reason for his bizarre claim. It turned out, under scrutiny, that Stevens believed that Christ already possessed a human soul before His birth and merely took on Himself a human body at the incarnation. This hypothesis, of course, Hawker questioned and asked Stevens for Biblical proof. Stevens, arguing from Revelation 3:14, stepped full-scale into Arianism by stating that Christ was the first of God's creation, mistaking Christ's office as the origin and author of creation for his being a created person. Hawker had no difficulty in demonstrating that the idea that Christ was created as a soul before time and as a body in time was quite unscriptural.

Hastening with joy beyond the boundaries of time

Still writing and preaching powerfully at seventy-three, Hawker was obviously thinking more about leaving this world than the time spent in it. As two of his children and three of his grandchildren died shortly after one another, he longed for the Lord to speed on the chariot. The first signs that the chariot was ready came in 1826. On the first Sunday of the year, Hawker preached on Isaiah 3:10, 'Say ye to the righteous, it shall be well with him'. After the service, Hawker was stricken with inflammation of the lungs and spent twelve weeks as an invalid. He strove to preach on March 25

but realised that his strength was failing and was ill for a further eighteen weeks after which he stood before his congregation again to tell them that his last days were his best days. In his preface to a new work on the Holy Spirit, he confessed that he was "fast hastening towards the boundary of time . . . with more joy than they who watch for the morning.--For I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.' Like the church of old, I can and do say, 'make haste, my beloved, until the day break and the shadows flee away.' Hawker's condition deteriorated and he continually vomited blood, so his daughter took him to Totness for a change of air. Though very weak, Hawker testified, "My soul is overfilled with joy; my spirit hath not room for its enjoyment; I am full of glory." As his condition worsened, Hawker asked to be taken home to die. Immediately on reaching home, he called his family together and gave them his departing blessing, expounding Ephesians 1:6-12. After this, Hawker laid his head on his eldest daughter's shoulder and his other children took his hands in theirs. He seemed to drop soundly to sleep. There were no physical signs of any kind that ushered in the silent hand of death. It took some time before the loving children realised that their father had fallen asleep in Jesus. As John Kent described the scene:

Death was to him as harmless as a dove,

While floods of glory overwhelm'd his soul. A brief look at Hawker's works

Perhaps the reader will not be averse to reading a review I wrote shortly after the publication of the above in New Focus under the title Hawker's Guidebooks to Zion: Genesis 33:12. It was written as I was very conscious of the growing demand for Hawker's works and the fact that they were now available in an inexpensive edition:

Robert Hawker (1753-1827) combined sound Biblical doctrine with intense evangelistic fervour. Wherever he ministered, crowds longing to hear the Word of Life thronged to hear him. Hawker preached with great feeling and compassion because he knew that his labour was not in vain and God's Word never failed in its purpose. Some years ago, longing for more of Hawker's works, I approached an international 'Christian' bookseller who had a complete set for sale. His price would have rigged me out with a complete computer system so my fond idea was dropped. Then I heard from a friend who had actually been given a set. How envious I was! But the circumstances of the gift made me wonder what the Christian world is coming to. A certain denominational library had once treasured their set of Hawker's works but now they felt the books were an embarrassment to them; indeed dangerous for their modern-minded readers so they gave the gospel-bearing books away! The library's action is symptomatic of the present down-grading of sound gospel principles which once led thousands to Christ and were held in honour by eighteenth and nineteenth century Trinitarian denominations.

These thoughts led to my New Focus article on Robert Hawker: Zion's Warrior. When I received issue No. 05, I was overjoyed to see a Gospel Standard advertisement adjacent to my article listing Triangle Press reprints of Hawker at \$2.75--\$3.45 per volume. I immediately sent off my order and the books arrived speedily and what a blessing they proved to be! This article is more a recommendation than a review as twelve volumes have now been published which hardly allows for a detailed analysis. First I delved into Hawker's The Divinity of Christ and the Divinity and Operation of the Holy Ghost, bearing in mind modern erroneous teaching featuring a Godhead halting between two opinions on salvation and the inane idea that the Spirit breathes contradiction

and contention into the Scriptures.[1] In arguing for dissension within the Trinity concerning man's salvation and a breach in the logical harmony of Scripture in bringing this salvation home to the sinner, such writers are tearing the churches apart and actually boasting that such disunity fosters church growth! What has Hawker to say to these modern contenders for forked paths to heaven? His readers will find that his message is a God-given antidote to this modern plague.

Hawker was confronted with the very same heresy in his day. This prompted him to write on the Trinity. His opponents left the field with their tails between their legs, doing the only honest thing they could. They became Unitarians. This is why it is of the utmost importance that Hawker is read once more. As God's watchman and Zion's Warrior, he has proved his value in showing how gospel truths prevail. It will be sad to see modern tension and paradox preachers joining the Unitarians, but as their views of Christ and Scriptures are so low, they will feel more at home there and leave true religion to get on with its true work. Read Hawker on the unity of the Godhead as displayed in the salvation of His people. It will not only thrill your heart and soul but equip you for proclaiming the truth and combating error. If you are a child of God, it will certainly make a convinced Trinitarian of you.

Coefficient to the work of the triune Unity is the operation of the Holy Spirit in rendering the work of salvation effectual in the application of what the Father has wrought out in His Son, regenerating corrupt and fallen sinners. Indeed, Hawker argues that it is through the unity of the Spirit-breathed Word that the sinner sees the unity of God's nature in preparing salvation for him and the unity of the triune action in effectually redeeming him. Hawker argues that if such a work had been referred to in a Bible of irreconcilable, conflicting passages, and had not the unity of action been insisted on in every part of God's Word, then some apology might be made for the incredibility of mankind respecting it. However, as the Scriptures refer to the work of the Father Son and Holy Ghost in their joint and uniting enterprise of saving sinners and as thousands can testify to being born of God through this work, we see how trustworthy is the entire testimony of the revealed Word and the folly of men striving to find disharmony in the word via a reasoning which is in disharmony with God.

Union and Communion with Christ was written to prepare believers for the communion service and deals with the believer's standing in Christ. Christ is the Vine and we are its branches, He is the Head and we the body. Together we form a holy Temple and are members of one with another as the Bride of Christ and the family of God. I have rarely experienced the mysterious union we have with our Lord from eternity to eternity so sublimely taught as in this gem of a book. Hawker's advice on how to be assured of the unity one enjoys in Christ is pastoral care at its very best.

Hawker lays great stress on prayer and in his Prop Against All Despair, the writer coaches the believer lovingly through the most difficult of Christian exercises but perhaps the most rewarding. Hawker shows how prayer in the Spirit opens Heaven's doors. Few books have blessed their readers as Hawker's Zion's Pilgrim, The Sailor Pilgrim and Zion's Warrior. To believe that one is a stranger and pilgrim on earth but marching onwards to Zion is not just the theme of a revival hymn but the teaching of Scripture and the experience of every believer. Hawker shows in these works how the path upwards is strewn with grace, mercy and love from beginning to end. There is much personal testimony given here and I was left with the assurance that God had strengthened my weak faith by my following Hawker's advice on how to keep on Zion's true track. Hawker's

testimony is so strong that, whilst reading, I actually imagined myself going on the way arm in arm with this great saint, feeling all the better for his company. Few books have such an effect on me.

Hawker was not only a parish pastor but a chaplain to the forces stationed at Plymouth and his book *Compassion for the Sick and Sorrowing* is based on a harrowing experience he had. Ship after ship entered the port full of troops dying of the fever and Hawker and his church did all they could to relieve them, converting barns into hospitals, but a thousand men died during the three months run of the epidemic. Though Hawker had a heavy schedule in his parish, he spent hours each day comforting the dying and burying the dead. Anyone terminally ill without knowing whether they are bound for Zion or anyone wishing to help the dying over the threshold of death should read this book as there is not a theoretical word in it but sheer practical experience and genuine comfort from cover to cover. The above works show Hawker at his desk and in his pastoral work, his two volumes of *Village Sermons* and *Sermons on Important Subjects* reveal his faithfulness in the pulpit. The words contained in Hawker's memorial tablet sum up Hawker's prowess as a preacher: 'The elegance yet simplicity of diction, the liveliness and brilliancy of imagination, the perspicuity and vigour of thought, the depth and compass of Christian knowledge and experience, with which he was talented and blest, are still extant in his sermons.'

Hawker was a didactically gifted man and improved the quality of Christian education greatly. As a school text-book author and curriculum writer, I approached Hawker's *Catechism for Children* with what we might call 'professional interest.' Though the Heidelberg Catechism is prescribed in our schools (North-Rhine Westphalia), it is little used because of its ancient language. Hawker's language should be no problem for modern English-speaking children over the age of eleven or so and the book would still make an excellent addition to Scripture lessons and family worship. Some Christians object to 'putting words into children's mouths' in catechetical work but have no objection to their children learning parts in plays and singing songs and hymns learnt off by heart. Hawker's questions and answers are Scriptural throughout and as Scripture is the language that tunes the heart to God, Christians should surely not cavil at this means of evangelising their children. Furthermore, Hawker's catechism provides pupils with a thorough knowledge of the history of the Jews as also a detailed knowledge of the two Testaments and the way of salvation. The Great Commission compels us to make this way known to all mankind, especially to children. I cannot recommend these soul-saving and edifying works enough. The modern equivalent of a widow's mite is sufficient to purchase a single volume, but the spiritual value of each book is so enormous that it stretches from here to Heaven.

Taken from *Mountain Movers ?Champions of the Faith* (pp 347-362), George M. Ella, GO Publications, The Cairn, Hill Top, Eggleston, CO Durham, DL120AU, England 1999

[1] See especially David Gay's *Preaching the Gospel to Sinners: 2, Banner of Truth*, Issue 371-372 and his review of *Iain Murray's Spurgeon v. Hyper-Calvinism*, ET, August, 1996, p. 19. These articles laid bare the tendency to Socinianism in the British evangelical establishment and pioneered the negative re-evaluation of Spurgeon spreading through the churches which is doing nobody any good.

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