

ARCHIBALD  
ALEXANDER



PRACTICAL  
TRUTHS

FORTY ARTICLES WRITTEN BY DR. ALEXANDER,  
IN THE LATTER YEARS OF HIS LIFE

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**Practical Truths**

# by Archibald Alexander

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## **"THE POOR HAVE THE GOSPEL PREACHED UNTO THEM"**

THIS must have been a new thing, or it would not have been given to John the Baptist as a proof that Jesus was the Messiah. In our public system of religious instruction in cities and villages, the poor are too much overlooked. They cannot pay a high rent for a place in the house of God. They cannot appear in costly apparel, and they do not love to be stared at on account of the coarseness of their clothes.

Go into the churches of any Protestant denomination, and you will probably find a large, respectable audience of well-dressed people quietly occupying their own pews, and listening with more or less attention to the instructions of the pastor; but where are the miserable poor? In society they form a large proportion of the people, but here we see perhaps a few old women, the beneficiaries of the church.

There must be some more effective measures for conveying the gospel to the destitute poor than our splendid churches furnish. The system of tract distribution by pious men and women, who, as far as they have opportunity, converse with the people on religious subjects, is excellent. This system, in New York, has been the instrument of much good to the poor. But cannot a plan be contrived and carried into effect, by which they can be brought within the sound of the gospel? I think there can. Let every rich church build a meeting-house, plain but commodious, and let them, under the direction of their pastors, employ some zealous, self-denying young minister to go about and collect as many of the poor as he can, and preach to them in a plain, familiar, affectionate style. At first perhaps few would come, but by degrees the number would increase. The preacher must be assisted and encouraged by the occasional presence of the pastor and other officers or members.

In every Christian church there are men and women who wish to do good, but they know not how to go about it. Let each of these go out into the

lanes and dark alleys of the city, and persuade at least one to go with them to the house of prayer: all such exertions are useful to the person himself, whatever may be the effect on others. Let the meeting-house be seated with benches, and every seat be in common; so that the first person who comes shall have the right to occupy it. And let the missionary to these people speak kindly to them, and inquire into their wants and afflictions, and make known cases of extreme suffering to those whose office it is to relieve distress.

In the villages and country places there are often found many poor, miserable families, who are never seen in the church for want of a place to sit, for want of decent clothing, or for want of disposition. Let five or six persons agree to visit these families in turn, and let them provide a room for evening meetings, and let the pastor, as often as he can, preach to them; or let some layman read to them a tract or short sermon. Time is short. Try, try what can be done.

## **DISTRIBUTION OF BOOKS NO NEW THING**

"Another furtherance of my work," says Baxter, "was the 'writings' which I wrote and gave among them [his people.] Some small books I gave each family, one of which went to about eight hundred; and of the bigger I gave fewer. And every family that was poor and had not a Bible, I gave a Bible to. And I had found myself the benefit of reading to be so great, that I could not but think it would be profitable to others.

"Many children did God work upon, at fourteen, fifteen, or sixteen years of age. And this did marvellously reconcile the minds of the parents and elder persons to godliness. They that would not hear me, would hear their own children. They that before would have talked against godliness, would not hear it spoken against when it was their children's case. Many that would not be brought to it themselves, were proud that they had understanding, religious children. We had some old persons, near eighty years of age, who are, I hope, in heaven; and the conversion of their own children was the chief means to overcome their prejudice and old customs and conceits.

"When the grievous plague visited London, I printed a half-sheet, to stick on a wall, for the use of the ignorant and ungodly who were sick or in danger of the sickness. And I rather did it because many well-minded people that are about the sick, that are ignorant and unprepared, and know not what to say to them, may see there in what method such persons should be dealt with in such a case of extremity; and they themselves may enlarge as they see cause.

"Mr. Nathaniel Lane wrote to me to entreat me to write one sheet or two for the use of poor families who will not read or buy any bigger books. Although I knew that brevity would unavoidably cause me to leave out much necessary matter, or else to write in a style so concise and close as will be little moving to any but close, judicious readers, yet I yielded to his persuasion, and thought it might be better than nothing, and might be read by many that would read no larger; and so I wrote two sheets for poor families. The first containing 'The Method and Motives for the Conversion of the Ungodly;' the second, 'The Description or Character of the True Christian, or the Necessary Part of a Christian's Duty, for the Direction of Beginners in a Godly Life.' "

Selected by A. A. from Baxter's Life, etc.

## **VALUE OF A GOOD BOOK**

When we consider how much good has been done by the published works of such men as Baxter, Owen, Doddridge, Alleine, Boston, Edwards, etc., we wonder that men gifted with a talent for writing attractively and powerfully, do not devote more of their time to the preparation of good books. But although, in theory, we acknowledge the all-pervading power of the press, yet the importance of the subject is not practically felt in all its momentous consequences. The man who is enabled to write a truly evangelical and useful book, or even a single tract of first-rate excellence, may convey the saving truth of the gospel to a thousand times more persons than the living preacher can ever instruct by his voice. And hundreds of years after the death of the writer, the production of his pen may be but just commencing its career of usefulness, only to be terminated with the end of the world. Those men, therefore, who are



blessed with the ability of producing one work of evangelical excellence, may be considered among the most highly favored of our race, and must enjoy a rich reward hereafter.

The plan of first publishing important views of evangelical truth from the pulpit, and then from the press, with such changes as may serve to render them more popular, is a wise economy of time; and considering the incalculable power of the press, more of our learned and eloquent preachers should avail themselves of this method of benefiting the public, by diffusing abroad the precious truths of the gospel.

A. A. in Bib. Repertory.

## **THE TENNENTS' VIEWS OF REVIVALS**

The following passages give us the views entertained by the Tennents, Rev. William Tennent and his three sons, Gilbert, William, and John, who in the time of Whitefield and Edwards, about the year 1740, were greatly instrumental in the revival of true religion. It is extracted from a late interesting work by Rev. Dr. Alexander, entitled, "The Log College," which was a school founded by William Tennent, senior, in which his three sons and Rev. Dr. Finley, President Davies, and a few other leading men in the great revival, pursued their theological studies.

"It is shocking to think that any should dare to oppose a work attended with such commanding evidence as has been among us. We would beseech all such solemnly to answer the following paragraph of the Rev. Mr. Robe, minister of the gospel in Kilsyth, Scotland, in his preface to his 'NARRATIVE,' which is as follows:

" 'I seriously beg of any who are prejudiced against this dispensation of God's extraordinary grace, and look upon it as a delusion, that they will show themselves so charitable as to direct me and other ministers what we shall answer distressed persons of all ages, who come to us crying bitterly that they are undone, because of unbelief and other sins—'What shall we do to be saved?' And as a young girl about twelve, who had been in distress for some time, called upon me in the house where I was, and

asked me with great sedateness, 'What shall I do to get CHRIST?' Shall we tell them that they are not Christless, and are not unconverted, when we evidently see many of them to be such? Shall we tell them that their fears of the wrath of God is all but delusion, and that it is no such dreadful thing that they need to be much afraid of it? Shall we tell persons lamenting their cursing and swearing, Sabbath-breaking, and other immoralities, that it is the devil that now makes them see these evils to be offensive to God and destructive to their souls? Shall we tell them who, under the greatest uneasiness, inquire of us what they shall do to get an interest and faith in Christ, that Satan is deluding them when they have or show any concern this way? In fine, shall we pray, and recommend them to pray to God, to deliver them from such delusions? It would be worse than devilish to treat the Lord's sighing and groaning prisoners at this rate.' "

"A few minutes before the Rev. John Tennent expired, holding his brother William by the hand, he broke out into the following raptures: 'Farewell, my brethren; farewell, father and mother; farewell, world with all thy vain delights. Welcome, God and Father; welcome, sweet Lord Jesus! Welcome death; welcome eternity. Amen!' Then with a low voice, he said, 'Lord Jesus, come, Lord Jesus!' And so he fell asleep in Christ, and obtained an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of his God and Saviour."

## **THE FAITHFUL ELDER**

The following sketch is from memory, and relates to the last century.

J. L—was the son of pious parents in humble circumstances. He was brought up to labor on the farm, and was restrained from open vice by his religious education, and by a regard to the authority and feelings of his parents. On a certain Sabbath, there being no preaching in the immediate neighborhood of his father's residence, he had formed the purpose to attend a great meeting at the distance of twelve or fifteen miles. He owned a young horse on which he intended to ride to the place, but on

going to the pasture in the morning to bridle the colt, he eluded all his attempts to catch him, and he was obliged to return to the house foiled, disappointed, and much chagrined. How to spend the wearisome day he knew not.

At length the thought struck him that he would take a book and go out into the woods and amuse himself with reading. He stepped to the bookcase and seized the first book which came to hand, which happened to be "Doddridge's Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul." It being summer, he sought a cool, shady, and sequestered spot, where he lay down and began at the beginning of his author, and there is reason to believe that the Holy Spirit accompanied every truth which engaged his thoughts with a divine influence, for, as he assured the writer, he was deeply convinced of sin on reading the first chapters, and when he came to the expiation of Christ and the method of salvation, the whole plan was opened to his believing mind, and he deliberately embraced the Saviour as offered in the gospel, and was filled with peace and joy. Thus, this young man went out into the woods in an unconverted and condemned state, and in a few hours returned a renewed man, freely justified by the grace which is in Christ Jesus. In due time he entered the communion of the church, and became an active, zealous professor, at a time when great lukewarmness had taken possession of the church. He married an intelligent woman, who by the force of his example and instructions embraced religion, and became as zealous and more communicative than her husband. They lived happily, and were blessed with three sons and two daughters.

About middle age he was elected a ruling elder in the church to which he belonged, and in this office he received grace to be faithful. He held up the hands of his minister, and defended his character from calumnies attempted to be heaped upon him. He visited the poor, and contrived methods of relief; wherever there was sickness, J. L.—was to be found sympathizing with the sufferers, and offering up fervent prayers for the recovery of the sick, and for a blessing on the rod of affliction. By this means prayer was introduced into families where the voice of supplication had never before been heard.

The writer when a boy had an awful dread of this man, and shunned him

for fear he would speak to him about religion, but a little sister being very sick, he was pleased to see this faithful man come to the house. He sympathized and advised with the parents, and spent the night in watching with the sick child; but what affected all most, was his prayer, so fervent, so affectionate, so appropriate. It was felt as if surely the Lord would hear and answer such a prayer.

When few professors kept themselves unspotted from the world, this man and his wife stood firm in their adherence to truth and duty. Worldly amusements were introduced by some influential professors; strict religion was scorned and the liberal professor was lauded; but our elder could not be moved to favor dancing and cards. He set his face resolutely against all such practices as inimical to the spirit of true religion. He faithfully warned professors against the deadening influence of these innocent amusements, as they were called; and when private exhortation and remonstrance failed, he had the fidelity to present the cases of such professors to the session to be dealt with as acting inconsistently with their Christian profession. This exposed him to a load of obloquy; and he was clamored against as an enemy of all cheerfulness and enjoyment. Some ministers also took sides against him, and their opinions and example were published by multitudes who never remembered any of his pious sayings. J. L—, however, went on his course unmoved; and though hated and dreaded by the wicked, whenever any one became serious he was immediately sought out, and his counsel and sympathy and prayers were always cheerfully bestowed. The state of religion in the land seemed to grow worse and worse just after the close of the revolutionary war, until he and his wife and a few others seemed to be left alone. But even in this time, the presence of this tall gray-headed elder would strike an awe into the minds of the most careless. One day he had business with a man who was at a dancing party in a private house, and when he approached the house consternation seized the company, and at once the fiddling and dancing ceased. He, however, administered no reproof to the company, but transacted his business and departed.

It pleased a gracious God, about the year 1789, to revive religion with extraordinary power in all the country around where he lived. It was what he had prayed for night and day, but scarcely hoped to see, for he had

never before witnessed what is called a revival. Almost his whole time was now spent in conversing with the new converts. I have known him often to ride six or seven miles to see persons under religious impressions. And he would labor with them in the most earnest and affectionate manner, and would bring to them suitable books, for he was much conversant with the most spiritual and experimental authors. Many were deeply indebted to his faithful labors, and none more than the author of this article.

Senex.

## **THE ELDER'S ELDEST SON**

Perhaps there never existed since the fall, a family in which there was less to corrupt youth, than in that of the faithful elder noticed in a former number of the Messenger.

In this family there were no servants, but the elder's wife performed all the work of the house, except that, when sick or unwell, some woman of good character from among the neighbors assisted her; and the elder himself did the whole work of the farm, except in the more busy seasons, when a man was hired for a few days. In this house purity, peace, and order prevailed. As soon as the children were capable, their aid was used both in the house and out of doors. The oldest child was a son, a fine healthy boy, large and handsome. This boy was carefully instructed in the principles of religion both by his mother and father, and he appeared remarkably docile, and learned so well that his parents felt a strong desire to devote him to God in the work of the holy ministry, if it should please God to make him early a subject of his grace, for which blessing they ceased not to pray daily.

When the boy had arrived at the age of sixteen or seventeen years, it was thought advisable to send him to an academy at no great distance, to commence a course of liberal education under an approved teacher, a man of piety as well as learning. And it was hoped the young man's morals would be safe, as he would board in the house of an aunt who

lived near the academy.

The youth had scarcely ever lodged out of his father's house in his life, and had never been exposed to any temptations from bad company, and was perhaps as innocent as any of Adam's children in a natural state. He had, however, much natural susceptibility of impressions from without, and a sociable disposition.

At this time there were some young men in the academy who belonged to wealthy irreligious families, and from their parents and the company which frequented their houses, they had imbibed a spirit of hostility to religion, and had picked up some objections to the Bible, and learned to make a jest of sacred things. These young men, as soon as the elder's son entered the school, determined to do what they could to seduce him from the path of morality and innocence. They began by throwing out hints and innuendoes against revealed religion, and expressing pity for such as were held under the restraints of religion, or were conscience-bound, as they expressed it.

These ideas were entirely new to the elder's son, and he drank in the poison greedily; for he had a strong inclination to sinful indulgences, which was only restrained by his religious education. These sceptical opinions were exceedingly agreeable to his corrupt nature, but he wanted more conviction that these objections to Christianity had a solid foundation. He therefore sought for books which would have the effect of confirming him in his infidelity, and the works of Hume, Voltaire, and others, were obtained by means of the young men before mentioned. And being now in a great measure freed from the restraints which had been on him, he rushed forth into a course of dissipation and licentiousness, in emulation of his new comrades. Indeed, it was not long before he went beyond any of them in boldness in sinning. Those who become vicious in opposition to the restraints of a religious education, commonly run to greater lengths than others in transgression, because the strength of passion necessary to overleap this barrier is sufficient to drive them on far in the paths of iniquity.

For some time he was careful to conceal his irregularities from his parents, but ere long this was impracticable, and he began to appear

boldly in the ranks of the greatest transgressors. He was a leader and corrupter of others, and seemed to have lost all sense of religion, and to be confirmed in his infidelity. It is impossible to describe the disappointment and anguish of his pious parents. They could do nothing for him but weep and pray in secret. The young man had gone on in this way for several years, growing worse and worse, until his character was ruined, and all decent people shunned his company.

About this time a young man, a cousin of his, came in from the west, where he had lived for some time, and had recently experienced a great change. He had also been very wild, and having been somewhat suddenly converted, he was full of zeal, and spoke freely to his old acquaintances of the necessity of religion, and did not neglect the elder's son, to whom he addressed himself in a very earnest, but affectionate manner; and it was apparent that his example and solemn exhortation produced some impression. As he was now on his way to college, he asked the elder's son to accompany him and bring back his horse. Indeed, the plan was secretly agreed upon between his cousin and his father to get him to go, for at that time a powerful revival was in progress in the college and vicinity; and the father being acquainted with the president of the college, wrote him a full account of his son's unhappy state of mind, and entreated him to try to bring him off from his infidelity. This letter he did not put into the hand of his son, but of his cousin, with a request that he would not let his son know that he had written. The Rev. President on receiving this letter invited both the young men to his house; and after some general remarks, he commenced a conversation on the subject of the causes of the prevailing infidelity, and took up in order the arguments of deistical writers: he refuted them with a clearness and force which upset the system which the elder's son had long been building up. He never hinted that he had any suspicion that the young man belonged to this unhappy class, and indeed directed his discourse mainly to his cousin. The device answered the purpose intended. The young man not only renounced his infidelity, but fell under deep conviction before he returned home. What a comfort to his pious parents! His mother had always entertained a confident hope of his conversion, and her prayers were about to be answered.

It was some time before the young man could be persuaded to entertain any hope that his sins could be pardoned. He evidently felt that he was the chief of sinners. Never was a change more manifest in outward appearance. He now became deeply serious at all times, and under the impression of his exceeding wickedness, he seemed little disposed to go into company of any kind.

After much prayer and deliberation, he felt constrained to think it a duty to enter the holy ministry. But before he commenced the study of theology, he undertook to teach a classical school for a year. He had scarcely commenced his school when he was seized with a violent bilious fever. His case from the first was considered dangerous. His parents made haste to see him, though he lay at a considerable distance from their residence. While the issue hung in doubt, the father, a man of strong mind and sober principles, suffered one of those hallucinations to which pious persons are sometimes subject. Having been earnestly pleading with God for the life of his son, the text of Scripture, "this sickness is not unto death," was impressed so forcibly on his mind that he was fully persuaded that this was an answer to his prayer, and rejoiced in the prospect of receiving his first-born from the verge of the grave. But alas, the young man in the midst of his days was cut down. Thus, again the hopes of these good people were sadly disappointed; but there was now comfort mingled with their sorrow, for they had hope in his death.

Senex.

## **A GREAT TRUTH—EVE OF GREAT EVENTS**

"In vain do we seek to awaken in our churches zeal for missions as a separate thing. To be genuine, it must flow from love to Christ. It is when a sense of personal communion with the Son of God is highest, that we shall be most fit for missionary work, either to go ourselves or to stir up others. If we allow it to become a business of dollars and cents, we shall see no results. 'Find preachers of David Brainerd's spirit,' said John Wesley, 'and nothing can stand before them; but without this what can gold or silver do?' Let gushing affection to the Lord Jesus Christ become the ruling passion, and it communicates the thrill of evangelical zeal to



every member of the electric chain. A church of such ministers, of such members, would be an apostolic, a heavenly church."

"The impression is general that we are on the eve of great events. A cloud impends—perhaps of mingled evil and good. It is an expectation which is solemn and emboldening. It leads a man to say, 'Away with trifles; I must abandon all that is frivolous. Life is short. A great work is before me. I must gird myself. I must pray more.' It must affect men in their relations as associated. 'We are on the eve of great things; therefore let us be sober, let us be vigilant, let us be active, let us be at peace, let us live for Christ.' "

## **WALKING BY FAITH, NOT BY SIGHT**

Selected from Baxter by A. A.

"Even in worldly matters you will venture upon 'the greatest cost and pains for the things that you see not and never saw. The merchant will sail a thousand miles for a commodity that he never saw. Must the husbandman see his harvest before he plough his land and sow his seed? Must the sick man feel that he has health before he use the means to get it? Must the soldier see that he hath the victory before he fights? Hath God made man for any end? No reason can expect that he should see his end before he begin to travel towards it. When children first go to school, they do not see or enjoy the wisdom and learning which by time and labor they must attain. To look that sight, which is fruition, should go before a holy life, is to expect the end before we will use the necessary means. Shall no man be restrained from felony or murder, but he that sees the assizes or the gallows? It is enough that he foresees them, as made known by the laws.

"Till the light appear to your darkened souls, you cannot see the reasons of a holy, heavenly life; and therefore you think it pride, hypocrisy, fancy, or imagination, or the foolishness of crack-brained, self-conceited men. If you saw a man do reverence to a prince, and the prince himself were invisible to you, would you not take him for a madman, and say that he cringed to the chairs, or bowed to a post, or complimented his shadow? If you saw a man's actions in eating and drinking, and saw not the meat and

drink, would you not think him mad? If you heard men laugh, and hear not so much as the voice of him that gives the jest, would you not imagine them to be brain-sick? If you see men dance, and hear not the music; if you see a laborer threshing, or reaping, or mowing, and see no corn or grass before him; if you see a soldier fighting for his life, and see no enemy that he spends his strokes upon, will you not take all these for men distracted? Why, this is the case between you and the true believer.

"Do you fetch your joys from earth, or heaven? From things unseen, or seen? Things future, or present? Things hoped for, or things possessed? What garden yieldeth you your sweetest flowers? Whence is the food that your hopes and comforts live upon? Whence are the cordials that revive you, when a frowning world doth cast you into a swoon? Where is it that you repose your soul for rest, when sin or sufferings have made you weary? Deal truly; is it in heaven or earth? Which world do you take for your pilgrimage, and which for your home? I do not ask where you are, but where you dwell? Not where are your persons, but where are your hearts? In a word, are you in good earnest when you say you believe a heaven and hell? And do you speak and think, and pray and live, as those that do indeed believe these things? Do you spend your time, and choose your condition of life, and dispose of your affairs, as a man that is serious in his belief? Speak out: do you live the life of faith on things unseen, or the life of sense on the things you behold? Deal truly, for your endless joy or sorrow doth much depend upon it. The life of faith is the certain passage to the life of glory; the life of sense on things here seen, is the certain way to endless misery.

"Can you forget that death is ready to undress you, and tell you that your sport and mirth are done, and that now you have had all the world can do for them that secure it and take it for their portion? How quickly can a fever, or one of a hundred messengers of death, bereave you of all that earth afforded you, and turn your sweetest pleasures into gall, and turn a lord into a lump of clay? It is but as a wink, an inch of time, till you must quit the stage, and speak and breathe, and see the face of man no more. If you foresee this, O live as one that does foresee it.

"I never heard of any that stole his winding-sheet, or fought for a coffin, or went to law for a grave. And if you did but see how near your honors

and wealth and pleasures do stand to eternity, as well as your coffin and winding-sheet, you would then desire and value them as you do these. Oh, what a fading flower is your strength! How will all your gallantry shrink into the shell! 'If these things are yours,' saith Bernard, 'take them with you.' It is awful for persons of renown and honor to change their palaces for graves, and turn to noisome rottenness and dirt; to change their power and authority for impotency, unable to rebuke the poorest worm that feedeth on their hearts or faces.

"Princes and nobles, you are not the rulers of the immovable kingdom, but of a boat that is in a rapid stream, or a ship under sail, that will speed both pilot and passengers to the shore. 'I am a worm, and no man,' said a great king. You are the greater worms, and we the little worms, but we must all say with Job, 'The grave is our house.'

"The greater are your advantages, the wiser and better should you be, and therefore should better perceive the difference between things temporal and eternal. It is always dark where these glowworms shine, and where a rotten post doth seem a fire.

"Write upon your palaces and your goods that sentence, 'Seeing all these things must be dissolved, what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God?' "

## **EVILS OF WAR**

No man in his senses can believe that it is a right thing for men to destroy each others' lives. For a man to shed the blood of his brother, is murder: to shed the blood of hundreds, is murder on a large scale. There is no excuse for war but dire necessity. As long as possible, every nation should avoid war; but a state of warfare may be forced on a nation. Self-defence is the first law of our nature, and is a duty. On the contrary principle, the lawless and violent would have every thing in their own hands, and the virtuous and peaceable would be the prey of the wicked. But still, it is an

evident truth, that every case in which human life is taken in war, is a case of murder; some persons must be accountable for the shedding of all the blood which is spilled. And if this be so, then that nation which, without sufficient reason, commences a war, or provokes a war, has an awful responsibility resting on it; and so also, when a war is in progress, that nation which refuses to make peace, or insist on unreasonable conditions, is guilty of all the blood which may be shed, and all the misery produced. Disguise it as we may, a battle-field exhibits a shocking scene to the moral feelings. Suppose there never had been any account of war in the history of nations, what would be our feelings in reading an account of a bloody battle?

But the loss of human life is not the only evil consequence of war: many families are left destitute of the support and guidance of their natural heads, and are thrown upon an unpitying world in a state of helplessness. See the widowed mother of a family of young children. Were she alone, she might make out to struggle through the world; but when she looks upon her dear babes, her heart sinks, and she is ready to give herself up to despair. Military glory is a poor compensation for her loss; and the honors bestowed on the dead a poor solace for a broken heart. These remarks relate to all wars; they are a horrible evil, wherever the guilt may lie.

The moral effects of war are also most deplorable. Men employed as soldiers commonly become exceedingly profane, and reckless of their conduct.

The writer is old enough to remember the evils brought into a retired village, by the return of a number of disbanded soldiers, after the war of the Revolution. These men, having been habituated to a soldier's life, were averse to labor, and as long as they had any thing to spend, they met in companies to drink and swear and fight, to the annoyance of the neighborhood. And even the return of the officers was not favorable to the cause of sobriety and purity. They now wished for scenes of fashionable amusement, such as they had enjoyed in the army. Cards and dancing were introduced into a society where such amusements had been almost entirely unknown. Teachers of dancing were now in demand, and the attention of the young was much occupied with this fascinating

amusement. Domestic order was frequently interrupted, and family religion rendered odious to the young. Pious parents could not restrain their own children, and many professors were led astray by the opinion that these social meetings were harmless, and tended to rub off the rusticity of the young, and to give a polish to their manners. One consequence of these things was, that the church was brought into a cold and languishing state. The young manifested a great aversion to religion, and for years none of them applied for admission to the communion. Discipline was exercised, but public opinion being strongly against it, it failed in most instances of effecting the desired end. Had matters remained in this village in the state into which they had been brought by the means mentioned, religion would soon have become extinct, for it seemed to be confined to a few aged persons. But it pleased God after a few years to revive religion in that place, and many were converted from the error of their ways, and were added to the church.

The writer expresses no opinion respecting the necessity of the war in which our country is engaged, (1847.) He is no politician, and does not pretend to understand the reasons on which our government acts in the present contest; but of one thing he is fully persuaded, that war is a fearful calamity and a heavy judgment from God on any nation, whether it be entered on for sufficient or insufficient reasons. And as it is much easier to draw the sword than to return it to its scabbard, we may find much trouble and inconvenience before we can bring this contest to a safe and honorable conclusion. As far as we know, our government are solicitous to obtain peace, but our enemies seem not likely to concur in these pacific views.

In these circumstances, the Christian people of this land should unite in earnest prayer that God would remove from our country the pressure of this heavy judgment. God may have seen that we needed chastisement, and therefore permitted this fierce contest to take place, by which so many precious lives have been lost to their country and to their families. As in some churches days of prayer have been appointed, let all who know how to pray, and believe in the efficacy of prayer, join in supplicating the throne of grace for mercy, and for the removal of this heavy judgment. Let them cry, "Spare thy people, O Lord," and restore

peace to our country, which has already expended so much blood and treasure.

Rednax.

## **WILLIAM WIRT AND THE BLIND PREACHER**

The power of religion, in promoting happiness in this life and in disarming death of its terror, has seldom been more beautifully illustrated than in the example of William Wirt, Attorney-general of the United States. When a young man, just commencing his professional career, he was distinguished for his genius, his eloquence, his fascinating powers of conversation, and his polished manners. In every circle his society was courted. Fond of pleasure, and the centre of attraction of every convivial party, he was living for the joys of this short life, and was in great danger of being ingulfed in that vortex of worldliness and fashion where so many thousands have perished.

While thus living, as he was on one of his professional circuits as a lawyer, he passed a Sabbath where the celebrated blind preacher of Virginia, Rev. James Waddell, was to preach. Mr. Wirt having no other way to pass the Sabbath, entered the humble church with the congregation. He has himself described, in his own forcible language, the scene which ensued. The primitive simplicity of the preacher, the subdued pathos of his tones, his unaffected piety and fervid eloquence, all combined, through the influences of the Holy Spirit, to touch the heart of Wirt. He felt the emptiness of his own joys, and the unprofitableness of his own life. He reflected and wept and prayed. "God be merciful to me a sinner" became, for many days and nights, the anxious supplication of his soul. Forsaking his thoughtless companions and his dangerous habits of gayety, he commenced a new life of Christian usefulness. True peace visited his heart, and his benignant countenance proclaimed that he had sought happiness and found it, where alone happiness can be found. He

became the advocate of Christian missions, and to every object/ of philanthropy he consecrated the energies of his noble mind.

Though necessarily called to move in the highest circles of opulence and intellect, and to encounter the temptations with which those circles are ever filled, he humbly, yet fearlessly sustained his character as a disciple of Jesus Christ, and gave his commanding influence, unreservedly and constantly, for the promotion of piety. Revered by the community, and loved almost to devotion by a wide circle of friends, he spent his days in doing good. And when the dying hour came, hope and joy beamed from his eye, brilliant with almost celestial vision, as the glories of his heavenly home were unfolded to his view. His body has long ago mingled with the dust, and his spirit has long dwelt, we trust, with the God who gave it.

Such are the effects of religion. Infidelity can show no such triumphs. Who will not utter the prayer, "Let me die the death of righteous, and let my last end be like his?"

## **WHY WILL YE DIE?**

This question seems strange, as "it is appointed unto men to die," and "in this warfare there is no discharge." But there are different kinds of death. There is what is called the SECOND DEATH; and though we cannot escape that natural dissolution of the body, we may escape that which consists in a state of everlasting sin and misery.

Misery no one ever loved; it is abhorrent to every sentient being. Sin, however, may be loved—is loved by many. They who love sin, may therefore be said to choose death; for sin is the cause of misery. How strange the delusion, that men should cleave to sin for the sake of happiness; for no man ever chose sin for its own sake; there is always some lure held out to entice the sinner. Our first mother sinned because the fruit of the tree of knowledge appeared to her to be "good for food," and to be desired to make one wise. Some prospect of good or pleasure, or relief from present misery, is uniformly the motive to sinning. But in

every case this is a delusion.

This earnest expostulation with sinners implies, that there is no necessity for them to die; yea, that they cannot die, unless they choose the road to death. Life and death are set before every man; and if any one perish eternally, it will be his own fault—his own perverse choice. Oh, what a pitiable case to see so many men turning their backs on heaven, and rushing on in the way that leads inevitably unto death!

But do they know their danger? have they been faithfully warned? Many have been, and yet neglect to turn from iniquity. They do not intend to die; they think of doing all that is necessary to escape from the second death at some more convenient season. Alas, such a season, to most neglecters of the great salvation, never comes. Time bears them along its noiseless, rapid stream; habits of sinning, instead of becoming weaker, become every day stronger by indulgence. And yet the delusion of a future escape is cherished.

O sinner, stop! Pause in your downward course. God calls you to turn. God asks you, why you will die. He solemnly declares that he "has no pleasure in the death of the sinner." Repentance, or a complete turning from sin, and accepting the mercy of God as offered in the gospel, is the only way of escape from the second death. Omit this a little longer, and your case will be hopeless. God commandeth all men now everywhere to repent. "Now is the accepted time, and now is the day of salvation." "O that you were wise, that you would consider your latter end," and speedily flee from the wrath to come.

Rednax.

## **CHRISTIANITY IN ITS NATURE AGGRESSIVE**

In the charter which Christ gave to his disciples, who formed the first church under the new dispensation, the first command is one which



requires action. "Go," says he. Every Christian must be on the alert. He has marching orders from the Captain of his salvation. He cannot sit down in ease and idleness, and yet be a Christian. As the father said to his son in the parable, "Go, work in my vineyard," so Christ says to every disciple; and it will not answer to say, "I go, sir," and yet refuse obedience. We must be doers of the word, and not mere hearers. We must be doers of the word, and not mere professors. The command given by the risen Saviour is still in force, and as it was obligatory on all who heard it at first, so it is binding on all who hear it now. "Go."

But what are we to do? "Proselyte." Make disciples. Convert to Christianity. The very word "proselyte" will frighten some people. No heresy in their view is so great as sectarianism. But Christianity is so intolerant, that it will bear no other religion; it seeks to overthrow every other system. If it would have admitted the claims of other religions, it would have escaped persecution. But no; it denounced every other system and mode of worship as hateful to God, and destructive to the soul. And it made every disciple a proselyter. And every one now, whether male or female, bond or free, Jew or Greek, who professes Christianity, takes upon himself or herself the obligation to convert others to Christianity.

Consider the extent of the field in which we are called to labor. "Go into all the world." "Go, teach," make disciples of, "all nations." And when converted, let the new proselytes not be ashamed to avow their allegiance to the King of Zion, by assuming his badge. Let them be baptized into the name of the HOLY TRINITY. Now they are in the school of Christ, and must be carefully taught all his commandments.

Here is a great work, requiring the coöperation of all who are already initiated. The greatest charity in the world is the communication of divine truth to the ignorant. Must all preach the word? Yes, in a certain sense, and according to their ability, and in observance of due order. All may teach. All Christians are bound to teach—the parent his children, the master his servants, the schoolmaster his scholars, the citizen his more ignorant neighbors, the colporteur the families which he visits with books and tracts, the pastor his flock, and the missionary the unconverted Jew and heathen. Here is work enough for all, and all may labor in their appropriate sphere; but all must labor: the duty is incumbent on them,

and the obligation cannot be evaded.

The time seems to be coming predicted by Daniel, when "many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased." What a change within the last half century! Then there were no Bible societies, no tract societies, no Sunday-schools, no colporteurs, no Protestant missionaries. There is, indeed, another time predicted, when there shall be no need for one to say to his neighbor, "Know the Lord; for all shall know him from the least to the greatest." Then the work will be completed; but O, how much teaching must there be before the hundreds of millions of souls now ignorant, shall be so instructed as that none shall need farther teaching. But perhaps the prophecy does not mean that none shall need farther instruction, but farther admonition—not that all shall have learned enough, but all will be fully disposed to learn. Blessed time! teaching will be then an easy as well as a delightful business.

A. A.

## **THE ALMOST CHRISTIAN**

The almost Christian may have a speculative knowledge of all the leading truths of Christianity, and may be able to defend them. The almost Christian entertains a great respect for religion and its professors and institutions. The almost Christian feels a strong desire to enjoy the benefits of the gospel, and may often have his affections much moved, and may form many good resolutions; he may indeed possess a counterfeit of experimental religion, so like that it may deceive not only the man himself, but the most judicious ministers. The almost Christian may be exceedingly conscientious and exact in attending on all the external duties of religion; as touching these, he may be "blameless;" and in regard to zeal, he may be ardent, so as to put to the blush the real believer.

He may also be liberal, and contribute liberally for the support of the gospel, and to feed the poor. He may become a popular preacher of the

gospel, and be the means of the conversion of others. He may even go to foreign lands, to bear the glad tidings of salvation to the heathen. He may, in short, do every thing which the real Christian does, and feel every thing which the real Christian feels—but one. He fails in one single point, but that is an essential point. He never has given his heart to God. He loves the world better than he loves Christ. That most excellent gift of charity has never been poured into his heart. His religion may be all traced to the mere love of happiness, and the operations of a natural conscience, enlightened and awakened by the doctrinal knowledge of the truth.

The apostle Paul teaches, that if a man without CHARITY, that is, love to God and man, should possess angelic eloquence, prophetic knowledge, and the power of working the greatest miracles; yea, if he should have zeal strong enough to make him a martyr, and liberality great enough to induce him to give away all his goods, it would "profit him nothing." Such a one would, after all, be only an almost Christian.

The deceitful heart of man will turn itself into every conceivable form and shape but that of true holiness; of this it may assume the shadow, but never the reality.

A. A.

## **PRAYER A PRIVILEGE**

Although God is everywhere present, yet he is invisible. He is an all-pervading Spirit, yet is perceived by none of our senses. We behold his glorious works in the heavens and in the earth, and may learn something, by careful observation, of the general laws by which the material universe is governed; but still the great Architect is concealed. As far as reason can lead us, we seem to be shut out from all intercourse with our Maker; and whether prayer is permitted would remain for ever doubtful, were it not for divine revelation. We are not surprised, therefore, that some deists have denied that prayer is a duty, or that it can be available to the Deity.

Indeed, considering man as a sinner, it would seem presumptuous for such a creature to obtrude himself into the presence of a holy God. Natural religion, as it is called, is not at all suited to the wants of sinners, but divine revelation teaches us that God may be acceptably approached by sinners only through the mediation of his Son.

Prayer is everywhere in the Bible recognized as proper, and inculcated as a duty. But it is also a most precious privilege, one of the richest blessings conferred on man. It opens a method of intercourse and communion with our Father in heaven; it furnishes a refuge for the soul oppressed with sin and sorrow; it affords an opportunity to the heart overwhelmed with an intolerable weight of misery to unburden itself, to pour its griefs into the ear of one who can pity and help.

The moral effect of prayer is important. It humbles the soul, and excites veneration for the august and holy character of God. But though prayer brings into exercise the noblest acts and emotions of which our nature is capable, yet it would be a grand mistake to confine the efficacy of prayer to their moral effects. Prayer, when offered in faith, for things agreeable to the will of God, actually obtains for the petitioner the blessings which he needs. It has an efficacy to obtain forgiveness of sins, the gift of the Holy Spirit, and deliverance from a thousand evils. Prayer enters into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth; the prayer of faith is the mightiest engine upon earth. The Lord of heaven has given his word to answer prayer. He will be inquired of by his people, that he may bless them.

God can make any means effectual; and among the instituted means for the government of the world, and the preservation and comfort of his people, prayer holds a high place. The objection that God is immutable, and knows what we need, has no more force against prayer than any other means—no more force than if urged against the necessity of cultivating the ground in order to obtain a crop, or receiving food to nourish the body. The Christian life is sustained by prayer. By it every grace is exercised, every blessing is obtained. Without the sincere desires of the heart, prayer is nothing; it is worse—it is a mockery. He is the best Christian who prays most. As God is ever near to us, "for in him we live, and move, and have our being," we are permitted to hold intercourse with him at all times, and in all places. We are commanded to "pray without

ceasing"—to "be instant in prayer"—to "pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands."

In prayer there is not only an outgoing of the soul to God, in acts of faith, love, and confidence, but there is an actual communication from God to the soul. Prayer is a holy converse—a fellowship with God. One hour spent in prayer, will accomplish more good than many employed in study or labor. Surely, then, it is good to draw nigh to God.

A. A.

## **A GOOD TREE**

Trees are beautiful objects. If we had never seen this part of the creation, we should be filled with admiration at the sight. A stately oak or cedar is really a majestic object. It stands firmly by its own strength. It raises its head towards the heavens, and spreads out its arms on every side; and when verdant, affords a canopy and grateful shade to the weary traveller, and a secure habitation for the birds of the air. Trees are the handsomest ornaments of gardens and pleasure-grounds. Eden itself, without trees, would have been shorn of its glory.

But a tree laden with nutritious fruit is an object still more beautiful and interesting than the trees of the forest. What spectacle is suited to give more pleasure to the contemplative mind than a tree bending under the weight of precious fruit?

Between natural and spiritual objects there is a striking analogy. Of this the sacred writers often avail themselves, to give a lively representation of important truths. The discourses of our Lord are enriched and adorned by the employment of striking emblems. His figures are almost all derived from natural objects.

Among fruit-trees, the VINE is often mentioned in the Scriptures, because everywhere to be seen; and when loaded with fine clusters like

those of Eshcol, the sight is most pleasing. To represent the vital union of believers to himself, our Lord employs the union of the branches to the vine. He is the vine, they are the branches; and the effect of this union is fruitfulness. As a branch severed from the vine cannot bear fruit, neither can believers without Christ. And the cogent motive to induce them to bear much fruit is, that their Father in heaven may be glorified.

"Make the tree good, and his fruit good." "By their fruits shall ye know them." No man, by merely looking at a tree, can tell whether it will bear fruit, or whether the fruit will be good or bad. When we see persons making a good profession in the church, we cannot tell whether their religion is genuine or spurious, until we have an opportunity of seeing the fruits. When John the Baptist called men to repentance, he required them "to bring forth fruits meet for repentance." A good life is the best evidence of sincerity in religion. How beautiful is a consistent Christian character. Such a one "does justice, loves mercy, and walks humbly with his God." To his prayers he joins alms, and he abounds in every good work. As he makes his way through this sinful world, his bright example sheds a light on all around, and others seeing his good works are led to glorify his Father in heaven. He makes no ostentatious display of his religion; and yet his good deeds cannot be hid; they are like the ointment which betrayeth itself. He is not ashamed of Christ and his gospel, but glories in the cross, and esteems all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ.

As the true Christian advances in years, his fruits become more mellow and mature; and he goes on to bring forth fruit, even in old age. And finally, like a fruit fully ripe, he drops into the grave; but his works follow him, and he is blessed in death, as the voice from heaven declared, "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord."

A. A.

## **THE GODLY AND THE UNGODLY**

"The godly man is one that, being formerly in a state of sin and misery, both strange and backward to God and heaven and a holy life, and prone to earthly, fleshly pleasures, is now, by the powerful work of the word and Spirit of God, converted to unfeigned faith and repentance; broken-hearted for his former sin and misery, flying to Christ as the only hope and physician of his soul, and so is made a new creature, having his heart set upon God and everlasting life, and contemning all the pleasures of the flesh and the things of this world, in comparison of his hopes of glory; hating all known sin, and not wilfully living in any, and loving the highest degree of holiness, and willing to use the means that God hath appointed to destroy the remnants of sin, and bring him nearer to perfection. This is a truly godly man.

"And he who is not such is ungodly. He that yet remaineth in his natural, depraved state, and is unacquainted with this great and holy change; that hath any sin that he had rather keep than leave, and any that he wilfully liveth in; and wilfully neglecteth Known duties, as one that had rather be free from them than perform them, and had rather live a fleshly than a spiritual and holy life, and is more in love with the creature than with God—with his life on earth in flesh and sin, than a life with God and his saints in perfect holiness—this man is undoubtedly a wicked and ungodly man, how civilly or religiously soever he seem to live in the world."

A. A. from Baxter's Life, etc.

## **"THOU FOOL"**

"Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee." What harsh language, some will be ready to say. But it is true; and the occasion requires all earnestness. If you see your neighbor's house on fire, while he is sound asleep in his bed, you do not hesitate to alarm him with the most penetrating cry that you can utter. The reason in both cases is of the same nature, but much stronger in the latter, because the loss of the soul is infinitely greater than that of the body; the fires of hell are much more to be dreaded than any material fire, which can only destroy property, or at

most, shorten life.

But why is this man called a fool? Surely he was not such in the world's estimation. He evidently possessed the wisdom of this world. He knew how to manage his farm successfully. If there was any defect in this respect, it was in not building his barns large enough at first. Often enterprising, industrious men run far before their own anticipations. Wealth flows in upon them, so that they have more than heart could wish. This man, no doubt, had labored hard, but now thinks of taking his rest, and entering on the enjoyment of his rich possessions. He said to his soul, "Take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry." No cloud appeared in all his horizon to darken his prospects. His expectation was, not only rest from labor, and ease from trouble, but actual enjoyment in feasting, and unceasing mirth. The course of this farmer and his success are the very objects at which thousands are constantly aiming. They look no higher; they ask no more than he possessed. How then was he a fool? Will not the epithet apply as truly to more than one half the people in the world? If this were our only state of existence, it would be hard to prove the folly of such a course and such sentiments. Then men might with some show of reason say, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." But if this were all of man, and death the end of existence, the scene will so soon be over, and all joys and sorrows so soon buried in eternal oblivion, that it would still be unreasonable to be solicitous about our condition. If there were no hereafter, of what account would it now be, whether the thousands of millions who have inhabited this globe were sad or merry while they lived?

The arrant folly of this worldling, and of thousands like him, consisted in this, that being the creature of a supreme Being, he neglected to serve him, and took no pains to secure his favor, or to arrest his wrath. The folly of this he must have felt when God spoke to him and said, "This night thy soul shall be required of thee." Oh, what a sudden interruption to his plans of future pleasure. What, must he give up all his possessions—his fields loaded with ripe harvests, the fruit of his anxious toil? In a moment his fond dream of feasting and mirth is terminated. God, his Maker, calls for him, and none can resist his command. "And who knoweth the power of his anger?" His soul is required. His account,



whether prepared or unprepared, must be rendered. "Give an account of thy stewardship." Show in what manner you have improved the talents committed to you. What good use have you made of the riches conferred on you?

Poor, wretched man; what can he say for himself? What justification can he offer for a life of disobedience and forgetfulness of God? Whither now can he turn; whither flee for refuge from his angry Judge? Alas, there is no escape. His riches cannot profit him now. The whole world could not redeem his soul from destruction; and while his heirs are striving about his great wealth, his soul is writhing in interminable anguish. Careless reader, take heed lest this be thy case. Thou art in the same condemnation.

A. A.

## **LOOKING UNTO JESUS**

1. A look of inquiry. Who is this Jesus? I see that he is a man, for I behold him a babe in Bethlehem. I see him clothed with a body like other men, and growing in wisdom and stature. He has flesh and bones, and eats, drinks, and sleeps. Yes, I see his body wounded and bleeding, lacerated with the scourge, crowned with thorns, nailed to the cross. See, he bows his head and dies!

But is he no more than man? In this child do we not see rays of divinity encircling his sacred head, and indicating that in union with this child is the mighty God? Divine glory beams forth from his face. This is the only begotten Son of God—God manifest in the flesh, possessed of the power and knowledge of the Most High. I gaze upon this mystery. Angels can do no more. I am lost in wonder—so are they. This union of the infinite and finite I cannot comprehend; but I can adore the incarnate God.

But my anxious spirit still inquires farther, Why such condescension—such humiliation—such unparalleled sufferings? I learn that all this was

to qualify him to be mediator between a just God and the sinner. Being a daysman, he must lay his hand on both, and therefore he must partake of the nature of both. But my inquiry farther is, What work, as mediator, does he perform? What offices does he execute? The ancient prophets, from Moses downwards, have foretold him as a prophet—a priest—a king. Such offices the sinner needs: he is ignorant, and must have a divine Teacher; he is guilty and condemned, and needs a Saviour—a substitute—a great High-priest, to offer an atoning sacrifice sufficient to satisfy divine justice. It was this which required his incarnation, and his accursed death on the cross. And the redeemed sinner needs a King to deliver him from the power of his enemies, and bring him to glory.

2. The look of inquiry leads the soul to the look of confidence. The soul, burdened with its guilt, and with the fearful expectation of coming wrath, finds no rest nor peace, until it gets a glimpse of the cross; beholding the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world, it is assured of pardon and salvation. Nothing is wanting to its peace: justice is satisfied, the law is fulfilled, precept and penalty are satisfied, God is reconciled, and conscience can demand no more. "There is peace and joy in believing."

3. A look of dependence. The poor beggar looks to his benefactor for relief and help, because he is benevolent, and especially because he has promised him all needed supplies. The believing soul, sensible of its own weakness, looks to Jesus for all needed help and strength. It relies simply on his word of promise, knowing that what he hath said he will most certainly perform.

4. "Looking unto Jesus." This is also a longing look—a look of intense desire after conformity to his glorious and perfect character. As the child looks at the copy-plate when he is learning to write, so the Christian looks unto Christ as his perfect model. It is a look of imitation—copying his fair example. His language is, "Be ye holy, for I am holy."

5. It is a look of hope and joyful expectation. Christ is absent from our sight; but we have the promise that he will come again. Saints are looking for his second appearance. This often fills their thoughts. They "love his appearing," "looking for and hasting to the coming of the day of God."

This is the look of constant watchfulness, that they may be found of him with their loins girded and their lamps lighted. All Christians should be in the attitude of watchers, for they know not the day nor the hour when their Lord cometh.

A. A.

## **THE KING OF TERRORS**

His dominion is wide as the world; his subjects, all men except two. His tyranny is inexorable. By no art, by no flight, by no concealment, by no resistance, can we escape. Death is the doom of every man. And whatever we do, wherever we be, his approach is unretarded. Every moment lessens the narrow span between us and death. It is in vain that we shut our eyes to the reality of his nearness; this only serves to make the surprise more terrible when he, at an unexpected hour, pounces on us.

Death is terrible, because he cuts us off from all our possessions. However painfully and unjustly wealth has been accumulated, and however cautiously the soul clings to its treasure, death forces it away. As "naked we came into the world, so naked we must go out." Death severs the strongest, tenderest bands of nature; it takes away the beloved wife at a stroke, or the kind husband; snatches children, tenderly beloved, from the affectionate embrace of their parents—even the only son is not spared; the bond of friendship is rudely sundered, and the affections of the heart are torn and left bleeding with hopeless sorrow. All plans and projects are in a moment frustrated, and anticipated pleasures and honors are left behind.

Death is a terror to men, because it drives them into a world unknown. We look into the grave and inquire anxiously, What is the condition of our departed friend; or does he still exist in a conscious state? We see no sign of life; he gives no token by which we can learn any thing respecting him. We consult the oracle of reason, but there is no satisfactory response; she mutters some ambiguous and uncertain answer, but casts

no light on the darkness of the grave. Oh, how awful, to be obliged to go down into a world of darkness, not knowing whither we are going, or what is our destiny!

This obscurity is not all that terrifies; there is something far worse. This king of terrors comes armed with a tremendous sting. Conscious innocence would inspire us with courage; but guilt, a sense of sin, a feeling of deserved punishment, above all other things, renders death terrible. In the gayety and bustle of life, men may drown the voice of conscience; or by repeated violations of its dictates, men may enjoy temporary ease; but when death comes near, the voice of the monitor within sounds an alarm. The guilty soul would give worlds to be delivered from the stings of conscience. Nothing so corrodes the soul with anguish indescribable as REMORSE.

A celebrated statesman and orator of our own country, when arrested by this king of terrors, wrote on a card this awful word, REMORSE, and nothing more, and then died. THE STING OF DEATH IS SIN. The time of death is commonly an honest hour. When a man is about to appear before his Judge, what need is there of any concealment? Yet sometimes the pride of character and dread of disgrace lead men to dissemble even at the hour of death.

What a transition, from time to eternity—from ignorance and unbelief, to the realities of the judgment!

Thus far, there is nothing in death but terrors. Has he no other aspect? Does no animating light from any quarter shine upon the darkness of the tomb? Yes; I see One rising from the sepulchre with the air of a conqueror. I hear him proclaiming, "I am the resurrection, and the life; and whosoever liveth, and believeth in me, shall never die." I hear a voice from heaven, saying, "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord." I see, through the narrow vista of the grave, a shining light. It brings to view the gates of the celestial city. By faith, I behold many of the dead entering in, clothed in robes of light. I hear them singing a song of gratulation and triumph to their great King, who has by his own death redeemed them from the power of the grave. Death is then no more "the king of terrors." He now appears with the face of an angel. Welcome death! Welcome the

hour of complete deliverance from sin and sorrow, and all the evils to which fallen man is heir. COME, LORD JESUS, COME QUICKLY, and receive a soul ransomed by thy blood into thy bosom.

"There shall I bathe my weary soul

In seas of heavenly rest,

And not a wave of trouble roll

Across my peaceful breast."

A. A.

## HEAVEN

Heaven is a reality, not seen by eyes of flesh, but made known by revelation, and received by faith. Heaven is a rest from toil, trouble, temptation, and sin. Such a rest is very desirable, if it were only a sweet sleep; but heaven is more.

It is a state of delightful activity. Every faculty and every affection will find appropriate exercise; and probably latent powers, not needed here, will there be waked into activity—powers suited to the new condition in which the soul exists.

Heaven is full of light; all darkness and doubt are absent. Knowledge will there be clear, and will possess a transforming efficacy; still, knowledge in heaven will be progressive; the pleasure will partly consist in ever learning something unknown before.

Heaven is a region of perfect love; all the heart and mind and strength will be exerted in love; and if the power of loving should, in the progress of the immortal soul, be increased a thousand-fold, all this increased ability will be kept constantly in full stretch by the loveliness and glory of the objects of affection. CHRIST is the centre of attraction in heaven.

From him radiate the rays of divine glory which enliven, attract, and beautify all the innumerable host of worshippers. Love in heaven is pure, perfect, and reciprocal. He who loves, cannot be satisfied without a return of affection. And the more exalted and excellent the character of the person beloved, the sweeter the sense of his favor. Heavenly joy consists in loving with all the heart, and in being beloved. As heaven is a society, the members are happy not only in loving their King, but in mutual love. There will exist no envy, nor jealousy, nor apathy; every soul will be transparent to every other, and all will see that nothing but pure love exists in every heart.

Heaven is a place of peace—sweet peace and uninterrupted harmony; all disturbing elements will be left behind. In the symbolical heavens of the Revelation, we read of wars; but in the heaven where saints and angels dwell and worship, war can have no place. The atmosphere of heaven is exempt from all malaria; it is purity itself; all sin and impurity are denied admission into that holy place.

Heaven is a place of song: high affections are expressed in celestial music. O how elevating, how delightful the melodies! Heaven is an unchanging state; or all change is advancement in knowledge, in dignity, in happiness.

A. A.

## **THE JUDGMENT**

And is it certain that I must appear at the judgment? Yes. "We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ." And must I there give an account of my actions? Undoubtedly; every one will be judged "according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." And will my most secret

iniquities be revealed in the light of that day? They will. "For God will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."

Must I render an account of my words as well as my actions? Even so. "But I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof, in the day of judgment." Will any account be taken of our thoughts, and of the desires and imaginations of the heart, on that day? Most certainly; for the heart is the source of all wickedness, and God knows and remembers every evil thought which ever passed through the minds of men: these come under the class of "secret things;" and it is written, "God will judge the secrets of men," in that day, "by Jesus Christ." Perhaps this relates to secret actions. Not alone; for it is written, "Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts."

Will all sinners fare alike on that day? All impenitent sinners will be condemned to everlasting misery; but there will be a wide difference between the punishment of those who sinned in ignorance, and those who sinned in the midst of light and against light. It will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah than for Bethsaida and Capernaum. "That servant that knew his Master's will, and committed things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with many stripes; while he that knew not his Master's will, and committed things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes." Every man shall receive according to his work. "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men chose darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil."

Is the judgment day determined? Yes. "For he hath appointed a day, in which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained." Is there reason to think that that day is near at hand? It is nearer now than ever before. It comes on apace; but of that day and that hour knoweth no man, nor the angels in heaven.

Will any man be able to stand in the judgment? None but such as are clothed in the righteousness of Christ: these shall not only be acquitted, but their imperfect works of faith and labors of love shall be richly

rewarded. All others shall be condemned. No man's morality or good works can stand the scrutiny of that day. All not interested in Christ will be cast into outer darkness; they will hear the Judge's sentence, "Depart, accursed, into everlasting fire."

A. A.

## **A DISTANT VIEW OF NEW YORK**

Within that small space nearly half a million of souls are congregated. There are the rich and luxurious, living in splendid palaces, and faring sumptuously every day; and there are the wretched, suffering poor, crowded together in dark alleys, and lying sick in garrets and obscure corners, destitute of every comfort. And yet these and all the intermediate classes are of one blood, and are all hastening to a similar end.

If we could bring into one view the countless variety of feeling which at this moment agitates the breasts of this great multitude, what a strange spectacle would be exhibited. While some are rejoicing in scenes of mirth and revelry, others are groaning under the pressure of excruciating disease. While the rich and gay are indulging in the highest exhilaration, forgetful of the future, a far greater number are oppressed with want, and bowed down with incurable disease, or with the burden of increasing years.

As the contrast, on such a view, would be great between the joys and sorrows of the inhabitants of a large city, the difference of moral character is no less marked. How many are employed in works of shame, which shun the light of day. How many minds teem with schemes of wickedness, a large part of which they are never able to execute. Providence often places a barrier in the way of those who enterprise schemes of villainy and murder. How should we rejoice, and be thankful, that in this emporium of America, where the practisers of enormous vice so abound, God has provided a conservative body, by whose influence the wickedness of the multitude of evil-doers is restrained. We speak not of



the efforts of the magistracy, and the watchfulness and energy of the numerous police, the benefits of which, however, are inestimable; but our reference is to a class of men and women, found in every Christian denomination, who are not conspicuous in society, but who labor incessantly to check the progress of abounding iniquity. These true friends of man are found operating with inextinguishable zeal and indefatigable industry in disseminating gospel truth, in admonishing and exhorting transgressors, and in unceasing supplications to the God of all grace, to send down, in copious effusions, the influences of the Holy Spirit, for the conviction and conversion of sinners.

Those tall spires, which first meet the traveller's eye, and attract his attention in approaching the city, furnish interesting associations. As these point to heaven, they give us the delightful assurance that the fear of God is not banished from the place. There is here a worshipping people. Numerous assemblies flow into the spacious churches, whose doors are open to all on the Christian Sabbath. In these hallowed temples the preacher of the gospel dispenses "the word of life;" thousands and tens of thousands drink in the precious truth, and are enlightened, strengthened, and encouraged to go forward in their contest with the powers of darkness. The pulpit is God's device for the destruction of the works of the devil; no wonder, then, that Satan's greatest malice is directed against the pulpit. The influence of a sound, able, evangelical ministry on such a city is unspeakably great, not only in the positive good accomplished, but in the unknown evils which are prevented by the power of the truth on the consciences of men. It is only by the preaching of the gospel that a healthy tone of morals is preserved. By means of the sentiments often advanced in the public periodical prints, and by the influence of the theatre, and even of legislative and judicial bodies, the standard of Christian morals is lowered. The conservative power against this tendency is the gospel. Take this away, and the deterioration of morals would be appalling.

We cannot omit also those obscure, but truly benevolent and useful persons, who are seen penetrating into the darkest recesses of vice and infamy, bearing in their hands precious tracts, and whose lips are ever ready to pour forth from a benevolent heart words of exhortation,

admonition, and encouragement. The Lord prosper the self-denying company of tract distributors; they are more efficient, and no less necessary than the city watch.

A. A.

## WHAT THE DISCIPLES SAW

"Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see," said our Saviour; "for I tell you that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them, and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them."

What things did the disciples see and hear which prophets and kings desired to see and were not gratified? They saw the SEED of the woman, predicted in paradise to bruise the old serpent's head. They saw the person who was to descend from Abraham, in whom all the families of the earth should be blessed. They saw the Lamb of God, whom Isaac so strikingly typified, when he was laid upon the altar to be sacrificed. God did not suffer the stroke to fall upon Isaac, but he did not withhold the sword of justice when his own Son stood in the room of sinners; but said, "Awake, O sword, against the man that is my fellow—smite the shepherd."

They saw SHILOH, to whom was to be the gathering of the people. They saw Messiah, the prophet whom God promised to raise up, like unto Moses—the King Messiah, whom God promised to sit upon his holy hill of power. They saw the Priest whom God swore that he would raise, not after the order of Aaron, but after the order of Melchizedek.

They saw IMMANUEL, the wonderful child, who had the government on his shoulders. The branch from the root of Jesse and stem of David, whose kingdom was to be everlasting. They saw the "Word made flesh." "God manifest in the flesh." The eternal Son of God, the brightness of his glory, and express image of his person. They saw the stupendous and

beneficent miracles wrought by Jesus, in the healing of all manner of diseases by a word or a touch, and even at a distance. They saw him give sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, and life to the dead. They were witnesses of his power over the elements in commanding the winds and the sea to be still, and these boisterous elements obeyed him. Also when he multiplied a few loaves and fishes, so as to feed thousands of hungry people, they were the dispensers of his bounty to the multitude, and gathered up of fragments, after the feast was over, vastly more bread than was originally possessed.

They saw the "Man of sorrows," whose visage was marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men. They saw the Lord of glory, to whom belonged the world and the fulness thereof, so poor, that while the foxes had holes, and the birds of the air nests, he had nowhere to lay his head. And soon after these words were spoken, they saw the Prince of life dying between two thieves, as though he had been a chief malefactor. Yes, they saw the author of life expire in death, and laid in the grave a pale and lifeless corpse. But soon they saw that tomb empty, and were permitted to see the Saviour risen to life, in the selfsame body. They inspected the wounds in his hands, his feet, and his side. They saw him transformed, so that he ascended to heaven before their eyes, in like manner as he will be seen when he makes his second appearance. All these were sights which prophets and kings desired to see, but saw them not.

And their ears were also blessed. The ear is an organ expressly blessed of God, for "faith cometh by hearing." The word of God commonly goes into the heart through the ear, rather than through the eye. The apostles heard Jesus preach, who spoke as never man spoke. They heard the gracious words which proceeded from his mouth. They heard the sermon on the mount. They heard all his striking and beautiful parables, and their lucid explanation. They heard his kind inculcations and gracious promises, his prayers and his predictions. They heard what made their hearts burn within them.

But men may be blessed who have not seen, but have believed. As our Lord said to Thomas, "Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."

A. A..

## DECEITFULNESS OF SIN

All sin takes its origin from false views of things. Our first parents had never sinned, had they not been deceived by the tempter. Eve saw that the forbidden fruit was beautiful, and she was persuaded also good for food, that is, pleasant to the taste and nutritious. Here was a deception. This fruit was never intended for nourishment, whatever might have been its flavor. It was intended for trial, and not for food. But the greatest deception practised on our first mother by the arch beguiler was, that the eating of this food would make her wise to know good and evil, even as it is known to God. The deceitful words of the tempter wrought this unfounded persuasion in her mind. The desire of knowledge is natural, a part of man's original constitution, as well as the appetite for food; but these natural propensities are not to be indulged by every means, and gratified on all occasions, but should be kept under the government of reason and conscience. The brutes were made to be governed by appetite and instinct; but man is the subject of law, and he cannot but feel the binding obligation of law. He is a moral agent, and may properly be subjected to a trial whether he will obey the law of his Creator.

How widely different does sin appear after it is committed from what it did before. Passion or craving appetite creates a false medium by which the unwary soul is deceived, and led into transgression. After our first parents sinned, "their eyes were opened." A sense of guilt unknown before now seized them, and this was like a new vision—not of beauty, but odious deformity. Innocence was lost. Shame and confusion take the place of peace and purity. Unhappy change! The guilty pair are now sensible of their great mistake, of their guilty act, of their disgraceful condition, of their ruined state. Their Whole race is ruined. What will they do when their Creator shall make his usual visit—heretofore so delightful and instructive? Hark, he comes—his voice is heard in the garden. The wretched culprits are seized with terror and consternation.

Guilt causes them to flee from the presence of the best and kindest of fathers. They try to hide themselves. They run into the densest thickets of the trees of the garden. But they cannot conceal themselves from the eye of Omniscience. They cannot escape from the arm of the Almighty, much less resist his power.

Behold, the Creator not finding his creature man in his proper place, sends forth a voice, which must have been like the most terrible thunder, when the awful sound penetrated his ear, and resounded through his whole soul: "Adam, where art thou?" Trembling, the guilty pair come forth to meet the frowns of a displeased and righteous Judge. We need pursue the interesting history no farther at present.

From this first transgression, by which sin entered into the world, we may form some idea of its deceitful nature. This first sin is a sort of exemplar of all other sins. As they flow from this as streams from a fountain, they all partake of the poison of their origin. In all sin there is some bait—some apparent good—some expectation of pleasure or profit from unlawful indulgence. In all sin the mind is under a delusive influence. Right thoughts and motives are for the moment forgotten or overborne; the attention, like the eye of a fascinated bird, is fixed on a point from which it cannot be withdrawn. The enticement prevails, and guilt is contracted.

A. A.

## WELLS OF SALVATION

"With joy," says Isaiah, "shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation." Pure water is often employed by the sacred writers as the emblem of grace. The figure is used in several different senses. Water represents purity; and the washing with water, the purification of the soul. "In that day," says Zechariah, "shall a fountain be opened for sin and uncleanness." "Wash ye, make you clean," says Isaiah; and in the New Testament, we read of "the washing of regeneration," of being "born of

water," and of having our "bodies washed with pure water." The ordinance of baptism evidently implies, among other things, this, as was said by Ananias to Paul, "Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins."

But as water is necessary to the comfort of life, yea, to its very existence, we find it often used as an emblem of life and refreshment. "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters." "On the last, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." And Christ said to the Samaritan woman whom he met at Jacob's well, "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith, give me to drink, thou wouldst have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water." And again, "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." And in the book of Revelation we have one of the sweetest, richest texts on this subject: "The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

Another use of certain waters among men is, for healing diseases. Medicinal springs are sought after and resorted to all over the world; but I do not find that, except in case of miraculous healing, any mention is made of water as medicinal in the Bible. The pool of Bethesda was famous, in the time of our Saviour, for the healing virtue of its waters; but this, we are told, was owing to a miraculous cause: "An angel descended into the pool, at certain seasons, and troubled the water; and whosoever first, after the troubling of the water, stepped in, was made whole of whatsoever disease he had." So, also, we read in the Old Testament, that Naaman the Syrian, by the direction of Elisha, was healed of an inveterate leprosy by dipping himself seven times in the river Jordan. And the blind man whom our Saviour healed by placing clay on his eyes, was directed to go and wash in the pool of Siloam; and "he went, and washed, and came seeing."

If there should be a miraculous fountain opened in some part of the world, which had the virtue of curing all sorts of bodily diseases, what an amazing rush would there be to reach it by the rich and the poor. The ways leading to it would be constantly crowded with pilgrims seeking a

cure of their various diseases. The sick and decrepid, as when our Lord was on earth, would be borne by their friends and bathed in the fountain of life. The superstitious heathen travel hundreds and thousands of miles to visit some fountain supposed to possess a healing virtue; and in some popish countries, sacred wells are visited at certain seasons by a poor deluded people, who expect healing from waters which possess no healing quality but what imagination gives them.

But when it is announced that a WELL OF SALVATION is opened for the healing of the maladies of the soul, very little interest is felt by most in the tidings. Men are not sensible of their spiritual diseases, and therefore do not seek a cure. Yea, they are under such a direful delusion, that they are unwilling to be healed: they fondly cherish their mortal maladies, and are often offended when urged to come to the wells of salvation to be healed.

A few, however, are thirsting for salvation, and they rejoice to hear that a fountain is actually springing up in this wilderness, to which they are freely invited. Such come with joy to the wells of salvation. And Oh, how sweet are the repeated draughts of the water of life which they drink in! Others are deeply affected with the conviction of their moral defilement. They ardently desire cleansing. To all such we bring glad tidings, when we announce that "a fountain is opened for sin and uncleanness." Do you ask where? In the gospel—in CHRIST, who is the centre and substance of the gospel.

A. A.

## **CHRIST THE BELIEVER'S LIFE**

He is the believer's life, because he has redeemed him from death. The sentence of death, eternal death, has gone forth against every sinner. "The wages of sin is death." "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them." From this curse all believers are delivered by Christ, who endured the curse for them. To such "there is no condemnation;" and they are adopted into the family of God, and made heirs of eternal life. They stand completely justified on account of the perfect righteousness of their Surety. This exemption from death, and title to life, could in no other way be obtained than by Christ's making a sacrifice of his own precious life. Christ is held forth as a Redeemer, and his great work as a redemption. The persons redeemed are condemned criminals, who can be released in no other way than by the payment of a ransom. This Christ has paid, satisfying, by his "obedience unto death," both law and justice. Thus the believer has life, not by virtue of his own obedience, but only through Christ. His union with Christ gives him a title to the life which he has procured.

Again, Christ is the source of spiritual life to the believer. By nature all men are dead in trespasses and sins. Spiritual life was lost to the whole human race by the transgression of Adam. If there were only a spark of life in the human soul, it might be cherished, and by assiduous culture, might grow to maturity. But in man's corrupt nature there dwelleth no good thing. All the thoughts and imaginations of his heart are "only evil continually." To introduce life into the depraved soul, as much requires the exertion of omnipotence as to create man at first. God, who caused light to shine out of darkness, must shine into the heart. By the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, which Christ sends forth, the soul is united to Christ, and from him derives life. Just as the branch derives nutriment from the vine, so the believer receives from Christ, his spiritual head, vital influences, by which he lives. This communication of life is called regeneration, or the new birth. Persons who experience this change are "born of the Spirit," "born from above."

And as Christ is the author of this life in its commencement, so he is the



cause of its preservation and growth. Every kind of life requires nourishment; and this spiritual principle, called by the apostle "the new man," must be fed. Christians are compared to "new-born babes," who naturally thirst for the pure milk of the word, that they may grow thereby. Their growth depends very much on their increase in knowledge; the word of God, therefore, is the means of the believer's advancement in the divine life. By the Spirit of Christ the word is made effectual; and Christ himself is the sum and substance of the word. The word testifies of him. The word exhibits Christ as "the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." As the body is supported and made to grow by bread, which is called "the staff of life," so Christ is "the bread that came down from heaven." The believer eats his flesh and drinks his blood, "not after a corporeal and carnal manner, but by faith." "The flesh profiteth nothing." Christ guards against any gross interpretation of his words by saying, "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." Spiritual life cannot be nourished by flesh.

Another respect in which Christ is the life of the believer, is the resurrection of the body. "I am," says he, "the resurrection and the life." "He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." The bodies of believers are united to Christ as well as their souls. The saints do therefore wait and hope for "the redemption of the body," and they shall not be disappointed. For we "look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself."

Finally, Christ will be the source of the believer's life through eternity. The union between Christ and his members shall never be dissolved. He will for ever be the fountain from which their happiness flows. "He that hath the Son, hath life." "The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." "And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son." How emphatically may it then be said, that **CHRIST IS THE BELIEVER'S LIFE**. He is indeed "all in all." And they who have received the Lord Jesus, possess every thing which

they can really need. They are complete in him; for "of God, he is made unto them wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." "All things are theirs, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are theirs: and they are Christ's, and Christ is God's."

A. A.

## **ANSWER TO PRAYER LONG DEFERRED**

Half a century past, the writer was accustomed to frequent places of worship where the houses were situated in a grove, or rather in the midst of the trees of a dense forest, and far from any human habitation. Although the meeting-houses, as they were then called, were frequently unfurnished—a mere shell without ceiling—yet there was a solemnity in these places of worship which was better adapted to promote devotion, than all the most splendid achievements of architecture. No sombre light let in through painted windows ever affected my mind like the solemn shade and stillness of the natural growth of the forest.

On a certain occasion, when the Lord's supper was about to be solemnized in one of these humble churches, I went early, that I might avoid the conversation and dust of the multitude on the road, and might have an opportunity of solitary meditation under the venerable trees which encompassed the house of prayer. I thought surely that I should be first on the ground; but I was mistaken. I saw an elderly gentleman, who had just secured his horse to a bough of a tree, coming towards the house to meet me; and upon his nearing me, I recognized an old acquaintance, at whose house I had lodged in my journeyings more than once. He had formerly been an elder in a Presbyterian church of some note, but had removed into a neighborhood where there were then scarcely any Presbyterians. Travelling ministers, however, often called upon him and preached in his house, or at some place in his vicinity. As I believed him to be a very pious man, well informed and zealous for the truth, I was pleased to meet with him and hold communion with him.

After some general remarks, we got upon the subject of the efficacy of prayer; and as I was young, and he was aged and experienced, I was glad to throw the burden of the conversation on him, and he was not unwilling to speak on a subject which seemed to lie near his heart. In the course of conversation, he related to me a piece of his own experience. He said that his oldest son, who was a lawyer of some eminence, had as unblemished a moral character as any man in the land; and yet, though respectful to religion, he never had manifested any serious concern about his own salvation. "But," said he, "I have had such nearness to God, and such liberty in prayer for his conversion, that I believe those prayers will be answered in due time, whether I live to see it or not. Indeed" said he, "on one occasion I am persuaded that God gave me an assurance that my prayer in his behalf would be answered."

This, I confess, appeared to me somewhat like enthusiasm, but I made no reply; and soon our conversation was terminated by the gathering of the people. I thought, however, that I would remember this matter, and from time to time make inquiry respecting the person whose conversion was so confidently expected by his father. Soon after this, the old elder was gathered to his fathers, and died in faith and peace. But residing far from his abode, I know not the particular exercises of his mind as he approached the borders of the other world. For some years I forgot the conversation, and made no inquiry; but some person who was acquainted with the family, informed me that after his father's death, this son fell into habits of intemperance; that, in fact, he became a mere sot, remaining at home and stupefying himself with alcoholic drinks every day. Such a case appeared to me nearly hopeless. I had seldom known a man thus brought under the power of strong drink to recover himself. I now thought that the good old father had been deluded by a lively imagination. And for many years every report respecting the son seemed to render the case more hopeless.

But behold the truth and faithfulness of a prayer-hearing God. See an example of the efficacy of fervent and importunate prayer, though the answer was long deferred. This man, after continuing in intemperate habits until the age of seventy or more, has recently been completely reclaimed, and not only delivered from that vice, but soundly converted

to God. He not only gives evidence of a change, but appears to be eminent in the practice of piety. If now living, and I have not heard of his decease, he must be about eighty years of age. How wonderful are the ways of God. His faithfulness never faileth; it reacheth unto the clouds. "Thy faithfulness is unto all generations." "O that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men." "For the vision is yet for an appointed time; but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it, because it will surely come, it will not tarry." Hab. 2:3.

Let pious parents learn never to give over praying for their unconverted children, however hopeless the case may seem to be, for God will in faithfulness hear their supplications, and answer them sooner or later in one way or another.

A. A.

## **WHY HALT BETWEEN TWO OPINIONS?**

Between truth and error, light and darkness, there is a perpetual conflict. Every human soul experiences something of this. Evidence is always on the side of truth; but by the mind blinded by prejudice and passion the evidence of truth is not seen, or not perceived with sufficient clearness to give it efficacy. A mind under the influence of depraved dispositions is incapable of judging impartially of the nature and evidence of truth; it is strongly biassed by inclination to sinful indulgence; and by a fixed aversion to every thing which tends to restrain the evil desires of the corrupt heart. Yet some rays of light will at times dart into such a soul, and awaken serious reflection; and conscience cannot be easy when the obligation of duty is felt, and the course pursued is seen to be a series of transgressions of God's holy law. Conscience asserts the rightful authority of God, and testifies against known sin.

The sinner is brought to a pause. The thoughts of death, judgment, and eternity, are awful. He begins to think of a reformation, the necessity of

which he cannot doubt; but some darling lust puts in its plea and solicits indulgence. The deceitful heart promises, that if now indulged, it will consent to forsake the beloved sin at some future time—perhaps it promises never to solicit for indulgence again. "This once only" has been the plea which has often decided the eternal destiny of an immortal soul.

When the truth is heard from the pulpit, the sinner is often brought to a stand. He is convinced that his course of life is wrong, and that if persisted in, it must end in ruin. For a moment he hesitates—halts between two opinions—between truth and error, between duty and transgression, between the choice of life or death; but too often the pause is momentary, the hesitation which is painful is brought abruptly to a close.

The young man just entering on the path of sinful indulgence, whose conscience is not yet seared, and who has some knowledge of the truth, has to pass through many a tremendous struggle with his own conscience before he can go on in his sinful course without opposition. Often is he brought to halt between two opinions. Often does he resolve to break the chains of iniquity which begin to entwine around him; but these resolutions are like the cords on Samson's arms—under the power of the next temptation, they are like tow before the fire. Repeated efforts proving ineffectual, the vanquished soul gives itself up a willing captive to Satan. All serious opposition ceases. And now the sinner begins to justify his course by error and infidelity. He becomes ingenious in finding out arguments in favor of his licentious course. Hereafter there is no more halting between two opinions; he is carried down the strong current, until he plunges into the abyss of perdition.

The prophet addressed the idolatrous Israelites with the question, "How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him." The object of Elijah was to bring them to a decision, one way or the other. Nothing is more unreasonable than hesitation in a matter so important, and where the duty and interest of those addressed were so manifest. But still they are left to choose. If they are willing to serve God, well; if not, choose whom ye will serve. Only halt no longer. God hates this perpetual vacillation. "I would thou wert cold or hot," says Christ. "So then, because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold

nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth."

Sinner, make up your mind. You are left at perfect liberty. There is no constraint, no coercion. God will have none but willing servants. But know, that if you make a wrong choice, if your mind adopt a wrong purpose, and determine to follow an evil course, you will have no one to blame but yourself.

A. A.

## **PREPARATION FOR DEATH**

You are placed in solemn circumstances. Eternity rolls its boundless waves just before you. Every year, every month, every week, every day, every hour lessens the distance between you and the unchangeable state to which you are hastening. The precise moment of your entrance into this untried, unknown world is hidden from you. Death often comes and knocks at the door at a time when least expected. At a time when men think not they receive the awful summons. And often they are hurried away, little time being allowed for preparation. Many, while they know they must die at some time, never in their lives think seriously of the matter. When the summons reaches them, they are taken by surprise. It is practically a new subject; they are alarmed, and filled with consternation. They cling to hope as long as there is a ray of hope that they may be spared a little longer. But when it is announced to the unhappy sufferer that there is no hope of recovery—that the physician has given him up, O what a poignant anguish pierces the soul! Who can describe the horror by which the guilty sinner is overwhelmed?

Are you prepared for death? Some one is perhaps ready to say, "I am no worse than my neighbors. I have never done any thing very bad. I have tried to live a good life; I hope that I shall find favor of the Lord when I come to die." And is this all the ground of hope you have? Are you willing to appear before the judgment-seat with no better righteousness than this? Though you may have lived a decent moral life, yet you have failed

to love God with all your heart. His service you have habitually neglected. The offers of mercy made in the gospel you have rejected. Unless you obtain a better preparation, your soul will be lost, and your misery will be great. And though you may be in no worse a condition than many of your neighbors, yet it will be small alleviation, when enduring the torments of the damned, that many others are in the same condemnation. No doubt they that perish will have company enough, but this will be no alleviation, but perhaps an aggravation of their misery. "Wide is the gate and broad is the way which leadeth to destruction, and many there be that go in thereat." The Judge is at the door. Be ye therefore ready.

A. A.

## **THE CROSS**

Whence came the tree from which the cross was made? What has become of the particles of which it was composed? What hands were employed in preparing this instrument of a cruel death? To such questions no answer can be given, and none is needed. The cross was a common mode of punishment among several nations, and among the Romans was reserved for the punishment of slaves and the vilest malefactors. It was never made use of by the Jews. If they had had the power of life and death in their hands when Christ suffered, the punishment for the offence alleged against him would have been stoning. But by the ordering of divine Providence, our Lord was put to death in that way which was accursed, according to the Jewish law; for it was written, "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree."

The death of Christ on the cross may well be reckoned mysterious, for it was at the same time a cursed and a blessed death. Christ was "made a curse for us," that he might deliver us from the curse of the law. And yet Christ's death on the cross is the most blessed event which ever occurred in the world; for on the cross the price of our redemption was paid. Christ "bore our sins in his own body on the tree." He died, "the just for the unjust," to bring us unto God. This led Paul to say, "God forbid that I

should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." The cross is a centre in which many lines of truth meet. The cross is an incomprehensible mystery. That God should be manifest in the flesh, is the great "mystery of godliness." That the Prince of life should be crucified, was an event which caused the angels to stoop from their celestial thrones, that they might gaze upon it. The prophets who predicted these events were perplexed at their own prophecies, "searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ."

The truths which are exhibited in a clear and strong light by the crucifixion of Christ, are such as these:

1. The infinite evil of sin, which in order to its pardon required such a sacrifice.
2. The holiness and justice of God, which would not suffer sin to pass without full evidence of the divine disapprobation, and his inflexible purpose to visit it with condign punishment.
3. The wisdom of God, in contriving a method of salvation by which his own glory would be promoted in the eternal salvation of hell-deserving sinners; and this wisdom is chiefly manifest in the incarnation of the Son of God, by which the divine and human natures are united in one person.
4. But the most wonderful exhibition of the cross is the mercy of God, the love of God to sinners—such love as never could have been conceived of, had it not been manifest by the gift of his own Son: "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life."

A. A.

## **THE GOSPEL NO FAILURE**



The first sermon preached after the institution of the Christian church was the means of converting three thousand souls, and some of these stained with the crimson guilt of having participated in the crucifixion of Christ. Surely there was no failure here. Soon afterwards five thousand more were added to the church in Jerusalem. And not long afterwards a large number of the priests became obedient to the faith.

The power of the gospel was manifest in the conversion of the people of Samaria, under the preaching of Philip the evangelist. And at Antioch a glorious work of grace was wrought through the preaching of the gospel. So also at Corinth, at Ephesus, at Philippi, at Thessalonica, and even at Rome. Glorious indeed was the success of the gospel when first promulgated. It was to the world as "life from the dead." It shed a marvellous light over those who had all their lives been walking in darkness, and dwelling in the region and shadow of death.

We behold the triumph of the gospel in the conversion of the man who was its most bitter and determined opposer. Saul of Tarsus, who had wasted the church by a cruel persecution, dragging both men and women to prison and death, and whose burning zeal led him to extend the persecution to a foreign city, was arrested by the persecuted Saviour, and made a chosen vessel to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ to many heathen nations, and was the honored instrument of founding many famous churches. He did not find the gospel a failure. No; he found it to be the power of God unto salvation to both Jews and Gentiles. And in his days the joyful sound had gone out through all the world.

Some good people are dreaming of a new dispensation, as though the present were ineffectual for the conversion of the world. To such we would say, Do you expect another gospel to be revealed? Can you conceive of any better means for the conviction and conversion of sinners than the truths which we already have in the gospel? And can you conceive of a more powerful efficiency than that of the HOLY SPIRIT? If not, then discourage not the hearts and the hopes of God's people, but preach the gospel to every creature, and pray incessantly for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

A. A.

## CHRIST STANDING AND KNOCKING AT THE DOOR

We add a well-known signature to this beautiful and striking testimony.—  
EDS.

An aged professor was gratified to see that the American Tract Society had resolved to bring out from their press another of the precious works of dear Mr. Flavel. The volumes of this excellent author already published are a rich treasure in many houses; they are replete with evangelical doctrine and spiritual instruction. But the writer has special reasons for esteeming the work now published.

When a young man, he resided for some time in a part of the country where the gospel was seldom preached, and we were doomed for the most part to silent Sabbaths. Once a month, it is true, there was preaching at the distance of five miles; but the minister, though zealous, was very illiterate, and very little benefit we thought could be derived from his ranting vociferation; therefore we seldom attended. Indeed the family, with one exception, were little sensible of their need of religion. The writer confesses, to his shame, that he was ignorant of the nature of religion, and consequently did not feel its necessity. He thought that religion consisted in becoming good; and this, he was persuaded, he could do whenever he should so determine. And he therefore felt no concern about the matter.

But there was an old, infirm lady who, though she had once lived in affluence, was now, through the profligacy of a bad husband, reduced to poverty and dependence, and occupied the situation of a superintendent of the nursery in the family in which the writer was a teacher. This old lady possessed a large folio, containing all the published works of Flavel, and greatly delighted in reading his writings; but having weak eyes, she was able to read but little at a time, and would often request other members of the family to read to her. Sometimes this favor was asked of

the writer, who through courtesy complied, though the subjects were in no wise congenial to his taste.

One of these vacant Sabbaths, when we were at a loss how to dispose of the lingering hours, she brought her book into the parlor, and requested me to read to the family, and pointed out the part which she wished read. It was a part of the discourse on the text, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock," etc. I took the book with reluctance, and read until I came to the word "stand," on which the author expatiates on the long-suffering and patience of Christ in waiting so long on sinners, while they pay no attention to his calls. This discourse impressed my mind in a manner it never had been before; and I was so affected with the truth that I was unable to proceed, but making an apology, closed the book and sought a place of retirement, where I wept profusely. And this was the commencement of impressions which were never entirely effaced. From this time secret prayer, before neglected, was frequently engaged in; and although I had no idea that I was converted until months after these first impressions, yet from this time my views in regard to religion were entirely changed. I now found a pleasure in reading out of Flavel to the good old lady, and even borrowed the book to peruse it alone; so that my first practical knowledge of the nature and evidences of true religion were derived from this excellent author. This pious woman, who had a fine understanding, and had received a good education, often spoke to me on the subject, and related her own experience, yet I never disclosed any thing of my feelings to her. But before she died, she had the opportunity of learning that I had made a public profession of religion, in which I understood she greatly rejoiced.

You may well suppose, therefore, Messrs. Editors, that I was gratified in observing that you had published a book from which I received my first religious impressions, which have continued for no less than threescore years. No doubt this attachment to an author, and esteem for his writings, may be accounted for without the supposition of any extraordinary intrinsic excellence; but now, when I impartially judge of Flavel's writings, I cannot help coming to the conclusion that they are among the very best of the many valuable writings of the Puritans.

A. A.

## **FIXEDNESS OF PURPOSE**

"My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed." Men are often the subject of strong impressions, and have their feelings strongly excited, when they are far from a fixed and deliberate purpose to devote themselves unreservedly to the service of God. Whatever vicissitudes of feeling and fluctuation of hope the real Christian may experience, his purpose never wavers. He may be strongly tempted, and carnal desires may plead against his course, and his self-denial may be painful, like plucking out a right eye, or cutting off a right hand; but still his determination is fixed that he will serve the Lord. Yea, when by some powerful temptation he is overcome, and is betrayed into sin, though he may for a season be in despair, yet his purpose is, that if he perish, he will perish seeking mercy and trying to serve the Lord. Fixedness of purpose is a much better evidence of genuine piety than the most elevated feelings of joy; and this is an evidence which the Christian possesses in his darkest hours of discouragement. Our sensible feelings are much more connected with the state of the nervous system than is commonly supposed; but the steady, fixed purpose of the will is a good evidence that the heart has been renewed. Our purpose may be stronger at one time than another, but it is always fixed.

The following case occurs to the writer. A careless and profane young man was awakened, and professed to be converted. His zeal was ardent, and his confidence strong. He relinquished a lucrative business that he might commence a course of education for the holy ministry. After a while his zeal began to cool, and his prospect of success in preparing for the ministry being somewhat uncertain, he began to regret that he had commenced such a course. And worse than this, he began to repent that he had left the world, and had relinquished a profitable business for the sake of religion. In a conversation which the writer had with him, he acknowledged that he often hesitated whether he should continue to seek God, or go back to the world. This confession struck the writer with surprise, as he had before entertained a very favorable opinion of this

man, and he could not reconcile such wavering with sincerity. After some time, the young man suddenly relinquished his studies, gave up his religious profession, and plunged into more than his former dissipation. He became openly profane, and it is believed avowed his disbelief in the reality of religion. The change in his course affected the pious with grief, and furnished occasion of triumph to the enemies of vital piety. But his course was short. Though possessed of a strong and healthy constitution, he was seized with an inflammatory fever, and died in horror and despair.

A. A.

## LOVE OF THE TRUTH

I think it is John Newton who somewhere says that he never knew any person who appeared to be actuated by a sincere love of the truth, who did not come right after a while, however far off he might be when he began to feel this motive operating. The case of the Rev. Thomas Scott is a remarkable illustration of this remark. When he commenced his correspondence with Mr. Newton, he was a Socinian, and was solicitous to engage his correspondent in a controversy on the points of difference. Mr. Newton, however, while he avoided controversy, still entertained and expressed the hope that Mr. Scott would come to a right belief, because he thought he perceived in him a sincere desire to know the truth.

It seems to me that this is one of the first lessons which they learn who are taught of God. The Holy Spirit, when he would lead any one to the saving knowledge of the truth, produces in him a spirit of humble docility. The soul led by the Spirit thirsts for the knowledge of the truth. This is a very different thing from ardent attachment to particular opinions which have been imbibed from education, or from the connection with a particular sect. Such attachment cleaves to error as tenaciously as to truth. A man may be willing to lay down his life in defence of his opinions, and yet may be destitute of the love of truth. The genuine love of truth makes its possessor willing to relinquish his most cherished opinions as soon as it shall be satisfactorily demonstrated that

they are not true. The love of the truth renders a man not only earnest in the pursuit of the beloved object, but impartial in his judgment of evidence. He fears deception, and admits new opinions only after the evidence has been thoroughly sifted and weighed.

This disposition is commonly accompanied with a deep sense of our ignorance and liability to error. The lover of truth cannot be satisfied with mere plausible appearances, he must have solid ground to rest upon; he therefore digs deep until he comes to a rock. And as the Holy Bible is the treasure of divine truth, he searches the Scriptures daily to find out what God has revealed. But conscious of his liability to be misled by ignorance or prejudice in interpreting the oracles of God, he is incessant in his prayers for divine illumination. Such a one trusts little to his own reason or human authority; he wants to hear what saith the Lord. And they who search for truth as for hid treasure shall not be disappointed. There is a gracious promise that if we seek, we shall find. "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him."

A. A.

## **THE PEACE OF GOD**

There are three words, pregnant with precious and important meaning, commonly used by the apostles in their salutations and benedictions, GRACE, MERCY, and PEACE. These words include every thing which man needs or can desire. Peace is the legacy which Christ gave to his disciples: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you." And after his resurrection, the first time he met with his disciples when assembled together, he said, "Peace be unto you."

He gives peace not as the world giveth. He is the PRINCE OF PEACE, and his gospel is the "gospel of peace." It is called "the peace of God," because he is its author. It is a sweet and gentle stream which flows from the fountain of life beneath his throne. Happy is he who has received this

heavenly gift; it will, in the midst of external storms and troubles, preserve his mind in a tranquil state. It is independent of external circumstances. It is most exquisitely enjoyed in times of affliction and persecution. "In the world ye shall have tribulation; but these things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace." It is a fruit of the Spirit: "love, joy, peace." It includes reconciliation with God. "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Peace of conscience is a fruit of reconciliation with God. The blood which reconciles, when sprinkled on the conscience, produces a sweet peace which can be obtained in no other way. If the atonement of Christ satisfies the law which condemned us, and we are assured that this atonement is accepted for us, conscience, which before condemned, as being the echo of the law, is now pacified. The peace of God also includes freedom from jarring, discordant passions of the mind. The wicked, however prosperous externally, can have no true peace within. Their ambition and pride and avarice, and love of ease and carnal indulgence, can never be harmonized. One may be the master-passion, but the others will arise and create disturbance and turmoil within.

The only passion which effectually harmonizes the discordant passions of human nature, is the love of God. Wherever this is introduced, it will not only be predominant, but bring all other desires into willing subjection. The peace of God is not a mere negative blessing, consisting in exemption from the misery of discord; it is a positive enjoyment of the purest, sweetest kind. It is a foretaste of the bliss of heaven. Nothing on earth is so delightful. It is therefore said to "pass understanding." No one could have thought man's miserable soul could possess such enjoyment in this world. But why is so little known of it in the experience of professing Christians? I leave every one to answer for himself.

A. A.

## **UNSEARCHABLE RICHES OF CHRIST**

## Ephesians 3:8

It is recorded of Christ, that "though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor." But this poverty related only to external condition and earthly goods. He was indeed poor in the riches of this world. He was born in the most abject poverty. He lived poor; for he said to one who expressed a desire to be his follower, probably from a hope of worldly benefit, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." He had neither house nor home; and sometimes was a hungered for want of food, while laboring in Jerusalem, from morning to night. No one in that city seems to have invited him to a night's lodging; for when he had spent the day in preaching in the temple, and healing the sick who resorted to him, it was his custom in the evening to retire to the mount of Olives. And when journeying—which was always on foot—he was sometimes refused the privilege of lodging in a village by the way. When a prophecy respecting him as king was to be fulfilled by his riding on the foal of an ass, the animal must be borrowed; and when tribute was demanded of him, he was not in possession of so much money as half a shekel, and therefore sent Peter to the sea to catch a fish, which he knew had the sum necessary for the two in its mouth. Indeed, the owner of heaven and earth, in his voluntary humiliation, was content to live upon the charitable contributions of the pious women who accompanied him from Galilee. And when dying, he had nothing to leave for the sustenance of his bereaved mother, but committed her to the care of his beloved disciple, who did possess a home, to which he immediately took her. And when dead, he had no sepulchre of his own where his body might rest, but his lifeless corpse was laid in the tomb of another—a rich man, who graciously gave up for its use a new tomb prepared for himself. But though poor in this world's goods, he was even then rich—rich in divine power, for whenever it was necessary, he could provide food for thousands of hungry people. He was rich in the possession of every divine perfection, for the fulness of the Godhead "dwelt in him bodily;" his riches, as being infinite, were indeed unsearchable.

But the RICHES OF CHRIST which Paul preached among the Gentiles, were the RICHES OF GRACE. Who can fathom the depth of the love of



Christ? Surely it "passeth knowledge;" it hath a depth, and height, and length, and breadth, which an angel's mind cannot compass. If we would trace this stream to its source, we must go back before the foundation of the world. This fountain of divine mercy is hidden in the depths of eternity; yea, more, in the unsearchable depths of the infinite mind of God. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God; how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out."

Christ is not only rich in his divine attributes and love, but in his mediatorial character and possessions. The richest creature ever formed was the human nature of Christ, which he has assumed into intimate personal union with his divine nature. This human nature is enriched with knowledge and sublime properties, which, though finite, as every creature must be, yet far surpass all the richest endowments of the highest angel or archangel who stands in the immediate presence of God. Here is an object to call forth the wonder and adoration of the innumerable hosts who encircle the throne of the great I AM.

This divine mediatorial Person is the foundation of the whole plan of redemption. As GOD-MAN, he was born, and lived, and taught, and died, and rose again; and now "ever liveth to make intercession" for all who have by faith committed their souls into his hands. And in this character of Mediator he has become heir to a glorious inheritance; and of this inestimable riches he has made every true believer a co-heir, "heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." There are unsearchable riches for the Gentiles, and also for the Jew; for he makes no difference. All genuine disciples will have their allotment in the celestial Canaan. "It is a broad land of wealth unknown." And these inestimable, inexhaustible riches are freely offered to all. O who will consent to make known these glad tidings to the hundreds of millions of Gentiles now on the earth, and spend their lives in preaching to them the unsearchable riches of Christ?

A. A.

## **WHAT I DESIRE**

Spiritual knowledge, that view of divine truth which arises from the illumination of the Holy Spirit. With this, a lively exercise of faith, not merely in the way of assenting to the truth, but confiding in the promises; a holy susceptibility of heart, so that every thought of Christ may be a warm emotion of love and delight; godly fear—a profound veneration, yea, adoration of the divine majesty; deep humility, not only a feeling of littleness and weakness and ignorance, but of unworthiness and ill desert, together with contrition of spirit, a godly sorrow that works repentance; a devotional spirit, a constant breathing after God, the living God; fervent ejaculations in the midst of business and company; good-will to all men; brotherly love; tender compassion for the afflicted, and "charity, which is the bond of perfectness;" inward peace—peace with God, peace of conscience, tranquillity of mind, a peaceable temper; courage in opposing spiritual foes, and in aggressive assaults on the kingdom of darkness; a spirit of wise enterprise in doing good; promptitude in seizing on opportunities of being useful; constancy and perseverance in well-doing—bringing forth much fruit, and continuing to bear fruit even in old age; assurance of pardon and acceptance, with a good hope, entering into that within the veil; patience under suffering, and the salutary benefits of sanctified affliction; a grateful temper, ever disposed to give thanks, and to praise the Father of lights, from whom cometh down every good and perfect gift; contentment with an obscure and humble condition in the world, without envy of the rich and great.

Let these things be in me and abound, and I ask no more. Let the worldlings have the world, and make the most of it. I will never envy their prosperity, for it is but for a moment, and then, like a passing scene in a drama, disappears for ever. Their feet stand on slippery places, and in due time their steps will slide, and all their music, their mirth, and their wine will cease for ever. And when they sink, they will rise no more. They plunge into a horrible abyss, where no ray of hope ever enters. Oh, their end, their dreadful end!

Give me my place and portion with the humble poor; lift upon me, O God, the light of thy reconciled face, and scatter the dismal gloom with which guilt and unbelief envelops the soul. Speak to my troubled conscience the word "peace," and darkness shall be light, the weeping of the night

converted into the joy of the morning.

Lights and shades alternate during our earthly pilgrimage. But often the nights are long and wintry; we long for the genial, reviving warmth of spring. Our spirits seek to be regaled by the sweet odors of the fragrant flowers, and with the joyful singing of birds. Oh for a serene, unclouded sky. But see that dark, deep valley. See how many descend into the sides of the pit, but none ever return. Most are driven away—they are suddenly cast down. They were not aware of their nearness to the brink—they were not prepared for this sudden, awful change. O the blindness of man! How deep his sleep of carnal security! Will nothing awaken him?

My desire is to meditate on my latter end until I become wise unto salvation; to stand ready with my lamp trimmed and my loins girded, and thus to wait for the coming of my Lord. Soon I shall need earthly blessings, and even means of grace, no more. O what scenes will soon burst on my astonished vision! Lord Jesus, come quickly.

A. A.

## **A SHORT CONVERSATION ON FASTING AND PRAYER**

Yesterday a pious young minister of the Baptist denomination called upon me, and said he wished I would write a short article for the Messenger on the duty of fasting. He observed, that among Christians of our day he feared this duty was much neglected.

I referred him to a valuable discourse of the late venerable Doctor Miller on that subject, published some years since in the National Preacher, which he said he had not seen. I told him that I was not in favor of periodical fasts once a week or once a month; that there were times when we ought not to fast: as our blessed Saviour said to the disciples of John, in answer to their question, "Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but thy disciples fast not? Can the children of the bridechamber mourn as

long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the Bridegroom shall be taken away from them, then shall they fast."

To this my young friend assented, and observed, that soon after his conversion he determined to fast one day in the week; but after practising this for some time, he found that it was degenerating into a formal observance, and he gave up the practice. He remarked that it was evident from one declaration of our Lord, that there were cases of obstinate evils from which deliverance was not obtained without adding fasting to our prayers. The reference was to Matt. 17:21: "Howbeit, this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting."

Fasting has made a part of all religions, true and false, and is much practised among the heathen, the Jews, the Mohammedans, the Romanists, and the oriental Christians. And because the practice has been turned to superstition, Protestants have too much neglected this duty. But eminently devout men in all ages have found fasting an auxiliary to devotion and to the mortification of sin.

Some professors neglect it altogether, under the false notion that literal fasting is not enjoined, but only penitence and abstaining from sin. There are, however, degrees of fasting, both as to the time of abstinence from food, and whether the abstinence be total or partial. The Ninevites, when brought to repentance by the preaching of Jonah, tasted neither bread nor water for three whole days. This was a severe fast. Daniel fasted for three full weeks; but this was not a total abstinence, for he says, "I ate no pleasant bread, neither came flesh nor wine in my mouth." And Peter's fast, when he saw the vision of the sheet let down, was only until the ninth hour, that is, three o'clock of our day.

External fasting, without corresponding internal penitence and humiliation, is hypocrisy, and such fasting is severely reprov'd by the prophet. See Isaiah 63. And God says, "Therefore also now, saith the Lord, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning; and rend your heart, and not your garments." And our Lord warns us against ostentation in our fasting: "Moreover, when ye fast, be not as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance; for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast.

Verily, I say unto you, they have their reward. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thy head, and wash thy face; that thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father who is in secret; and thy Father, who seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly."

One special occasion on which the apostles and their companions were accustomed to fast, was when ministers were to be ordained and sent forth. Thus we read in Acts 13:2, "As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away." And again, chap. 14:23, "And when they had ordained elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord." Is this practice now followed by those who ordain? As fasting renders some persons sick, so that it hinders their devotion, such should adopt partial abstinence; for the Lord will have mercy, and not sacrifice. But its causing pain is one end of fasting, that we may "afflict our souls."

A. A.

## **A DISCIPLE**

A disciple is a learner, but a learner supposes a teacher. The church is properly a universal school, where Christ is the great teacher. The word of God contains all the lessons which are inculcated in this school. But as Christ is the sum and substance of the word, he is not only the teacher, but the subject of the lesson taught; according to that saying of his, "This is eternal life, to know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." Or that of Paul, "Ye have not so learned Christ, if so be ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus." Do you ask how we can gain access to Christ, to become his disciples? "Say not in thy heart, who shall ascend into heaven? that is, to bring Christ from above. Or who shall descend into the deep? that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead. But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart; that is, the word of faith which we

preach."

A genuine disciple is not only taught out of the word, but by the Spirit also. External teaching, however correct, is not sufficient; man needs internal illumination by the Spirit. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." Not that this divine instructor teaches any thing different from the word. No; He takes of the things of Christ and shows them unto us. He is the Spirit of truth, and will guide the disciples into all truth. He "reproves the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment."

But what are some of the lessons learned by the disciple in this school? 1. The worth of his soul, and the value of time. 2. Veneration for the holy Scriptures as the infallible rule to guide our faith and practice. 3. Our ruined and condemned state—"children of wrath, even as others," "dead in trespasses and sins," "without hope and without God in the world." 4. He convinces the human heart, or rather, gives the soul a glimpse of the indwelling sin, by which it is convinced of total depravity. Oh, what a host of evils; what a fountain of impurity; what a mass of corruption! The heart is found to be deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. There is found nothing in it truly good.

What can be done? Where shall the sinner fly for relief? Whither, but to the house of mercy—to the city of refuge? There stands One with wounded hands widely extended, who invites the perishing sinner to come to him for safety. The guilty soul hesitates—fears this invitation cannot be for one so unworthy. But no other door is open, and the kind, entreating voice is still heard, Come—"and him that cometh, I will in no wise cast out." It ventures—trembling, it advances—it throws itself into the arms of divine mercy, and is graciously received, without merit, without upbraiding; becomes a son or daughter by adoption, and if a son, then an heir of God and a joint-heir with Christ. It learns to prize Christ above all persons and above all treasures. "To you who believe, he is precious." It values him above all price as a teacher and as a ruler, as well as an atoning priest. It learns to roll all its burdens on the Lord, and learns to live out of itself, by desiring vital supplies from Christ, day by day, as says a disciple, "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life which I now live, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

Again, the disciple is taught the BEAUTY OF HOLINESS. Moral or spiritual beauty is the glory of heaven. External glory is nothing; but moral, divine excellence is the GLORY OF GOD, comprehending all his divine perfections. To view this excellence, is the beatific vision in which the happiness of heaven consists. Oh, glorious state! Oh, blessed abode!

Finally, the disciple learns to know the reality and sweetness of communion with God. While many are contented to worship in the outward court, he desires to penetrate into the holy of holies, where he can hear the words of the divine oracle, and see the resplendent face of Immanuel. The apostle teaches that the most holy place is a type of heaven; and surely nothing on earth is more like heaven than intimate communion with God.

A. A.

## **A WORD TO THE YOUNG**

The ravages of death in the removal of the venerated Rev. Dr. Archibald Alexander, as noticed in another column, make it proper that we should say that the spiritual articles with the signature "A. A.," and some others, which for some years have adorned the columns of the Messenger, were from his pen. He knew the Messenger visits nearly two hundred thousand families, and almost every month he sent those families his message of love in reference to their salvation. We have a melancholy pleasure in now inserting the last appeal written by him for our columns. It is the affectionate counsel of a Christian of fourscore years to those entering upon life.

Eds.

Beloved youth, when I, who am old, look upon your condition, I cannot but pity you. I do not envy your gayety and pleasure. The cup which you hold in your hand is inebriating, it is poisoned. The pleasures which you

are seeking are "the pleasures of sin," which are short-lived, unsatisfactory, and leave a sting behind. Many are cut down like the flower of the field in the midst of their earthly career. Oh how many are hurried away in an unprepared state. Many others, when the season of youthful gayety and thoughtlessness is past, are visited with sore afflictions, in the suffering of which all their former pleasures are forgotten, and often embittered by the reflection that they were sinful pleasures, or were mixed with sin. Remorse for the sins of youth is an unwelcome visitant, but one which cannot easily be shaken off. When afflictions are sanctified they become real blessings. But many suffer who, instead of being made better, are made worse by all their sufferings. They become impatient, and murmur at the dispensations of God towards them, as though they were punished more than their sins deserved.

Oh, young man, permit me to call your attention to your soul's salvation. This you cannot but know is your great, your highest interest. And why do you neglect it? Why do you put far off the evil day? Your continuance on earth is altogether uncertain. Prepare, I beseech you, to meet your God. "Behold, now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation." You will lose nothing, but be great gainers, by giving your hearts to God in the days of your youth. "Wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace."

A good conscience, and a lively hope of everlasting life, are the purest sources of joy upon earth. When affliction falls on the pious—and they are not exempt—there is a gracious promise that it will be for their good; yea, that it will work out for them an "exceeding and eternal weight of glory." Let the summons of death come when it will, they are ready. The day of death to such is far better than the day of their birth.

Young man, as you have but one short life to live upon earth, have you no desire that it should be occupied in doing good? Are you willing, at the last account, which all must give, to be in the class of those who have lived to no good purpose, who have done nothing for the benefit of their race? You say that you intend to be religious hereafter. What a delusion! Evil habits will grow with your age, sinful desires will not be lessened but increased by indulgence. Old age, if you are permitted to reach it, will find you a hardened sinner; your conscience seared, and all your habits of



iniquity confirmed. Oh, could you hear the wailings of a multitude of souls now in hell, methinks their lamentation would be that they procrastinated attention to the salvation of their souls. Why will you run the dangerous risk? Consider that eternal life and eternal death are now set before you; and God calls on you to choose which you will have.

A. A.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF SALVATION

IN comparison with salvation, all other subjects are trivial. To waste time in the pursuit of wealth, or in the chase of sensual pleasure, while our salvation is not secure, is more than folly—it is madness. What, would you agree to dwell in the dark dungeon of despair for ever and ever, for the sake of living a few years upon earth in a sumptuous house? Would you consent to endure the sting of the never-dying worm, and the torment of unquenchable fire, to all eternity, for the sake of gratifying your appetites and senses for a moment? No man would deliberately make such a determination; yet such is the language which many speak by their conduct. The world is pursued daily, at the risk of salvation.

The resolution of attending to the concerns of the soul hereafter, answers no other purpose than to lull the conscience asleep. Where have we known a person, by virtue of these flattering resolutions, change his conduct? The next day is like the one that preceded it. Every succeeding year passes by like those that went before. No convenient time for repentance and reformation ever comes. Youth soon runs out in the giddy circle of pleasure and amusement. Middle age is completely occupied with cares and business; and old age, if it ever arrives, finds the heart hardened, the habits fixed, and the conscience seared. Death overtakes the unfortunate wretch. He dies as he lived, either goaded by guilt, or benumbed with stupidity. He dies, and sinks to hell, where there are no amusements to entertain, no business to engage, no error to becloud the mind. To fall into the hands of the living God, as an avenging Judge, is dreadful beyond conception: to be eternally miserable, overwhelms the thoughts, and we turn away from it with instinctive horror.

Can you reconcile yourself to such sufferings? Can you dwell with everlasting burnings? Only try the torment of fire for a moment, and you will soon be convinced that the pains of hell are not to be supported with patience, if they are comparable to fire; but they are worse. Remorse and despair are worse than Nebuchadnezzar's furnace, heated seven times. No flames are equal to the raging of unrepented sin; no strokes of any enemy like the taunts of infernal spirits. If you had to endure this

punishment only for a limited time, the hope of deliverance might help you to bear up under the dreadful weight of sorrow; but although many support themselves by such a hope here, the miserable in hell have no such alleviation. The darkness which surrounds them is thick and horrible. No ray of light ever penetrates it. No gleam of hope ever mitigates the raging anguish of the lost soul. Consider also, that although your sins may not be openly flagrant, yet, as you have heard the gospel, and enjoyed many calls and warnings, and also many strivings of the Spirit, these will exceedingly aggravate your misery, and make your hell hotter than that of the miserable inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah. The more comfortable you are in your worldly circumstances, the more miserable will your condition be. To be cast out from among affectionate friends, to keep company with monsters of depravity: from fine houses, pleasant gardens, fertile farms, and downy beds, to be cast into a lake of fire! from well-furnished tables, and generous wines and cordials, to be eternally famished with burning thirst, and no gratification ever obtained —no, not so much as a drop of water to cool the tongue; this is hell indeed! Suppose you were doomed to suffer the torment which a sinner in hell must eternally endure, for one hour in this world, would not the prospect of this doleful hour mar all your pleasures? In the midst of mirth, would it not make your heart sad; and would it not be ever present in your thoughts? You would be unable to compose yourself to sleep, or to betake yourself to your necessary business. You would consider yourself as an unfortunate wretch, and would perhaps regret that you had ever been born. Your friends would sympathize with you, and all around would look upon you with compassion.

But if, from an hour, the term of your punishment should be enlarged to a year, what would you do; how would you feel? Suppose you could endure the pain of a fiery furnace for a year without dying or losing your sensibility, and you knew that this was your certain doom, could you be at ease; could you contain yourself? Would you not disregard all pursuits and enjoyments which the world could propose; and would you not take up a continual lamentation over your unhappy case? Would you not call upon all to pity you, as the most miserable wretch that ever was born? And would you consider the wealth of a prince, the honor of a conqueror, or the pleasure of an epicure, any compensation for such dreadful

sufferings? Would you not despise all these things, and say, "The more I enjoy these earthly delights, and the more I forget the misery which is coming upon me, the more intolerable will be my anguish when it arrives?" Should we be thus affected with an hour's or year's continuation of such sufferings as must be endured in hell, and shall we be indifferent to these same torments when their duration will be WITHOUT END? O God, what kind of infatuated beings are we? Surely man, of all creatures, is the most stupid in those things which relate to his salvation. ETERNAL PUNISHMENT! ETERNAL FIRE! EVERLASTING DESTRUCTION! What awful sounds are these! Who can fully understand their import?

I extend my views forward to the day of judgment; but this great day, instead of bringing these sufferings to an end, is the date of their beginning in all their terror. What shall be endured before, is nothing to what comes after. The fire will then be kindled around both soul and body, which will never cease to burn. The sufferings of the soul in a separate state, will be like the anticipations of a criminal who is conscious of guilt, while confined in a prison before the day of trial. They shall then go away into everlasting punishment. Only put yourself for a moment in the place of one of those who are commanded by the Judge to depart, under the vengeance of an everlasting curse. The feeling mind recoils from such suppositions with such repulsive violence, that it is almost impossible to induce men to fix their thoughts steadily on such subjects. But try, for once, the experiment. Overcome your natural reluctance, and imagine yourself to be in the company that will be driven off, by the command of the Judge, from the awful tribunal, into outer darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. May I venture to suggest a few reflections which would probably arise in your mind in such a situation.

"Well, the scene is ended—I now know, I feel the misery of my situation! Hope, my last comforter, is eternally fled. Despair has full possession; all is lost, eternally lost! All that I now have is a miserable, accursed existence! O that I could sink into nothing, and thus escape the wrath of my avenging enemy! But I wish in vain; exist I must. Hell is my portion! I already feel its overwhelming horrors! I am tortured with agonies, and rent with pangs which no words can describe. All passions assist in

increasing my misery. I see others glorious and happy, but the sight greatly enhances my woe. I feel my envy and malice raging against them, and against their God and Saviour; but my wrath is impotent; it recoils upon myself, and inflicts new wounds on my tormented soul. Was this the price at which I purchased the world and its pleasures? O wretch and fool that I was! We are commanded to go away. Ah, whither can we go? Is there any secure or even obscure retreat for us? No, no. We sink in flames. We go into everlasting misery! We go to be companions of devils! We plunge into the dark abyss, never to rise again! And these bodies, our old companions in sin, must be also tormented. They are made strong and incorruptible, to bear their part in the unquenchable fire!"

But we cannot describe the anguish and despair of a lost sinner. The mere possibility of falling into such a state of indescribable anguish ought to fill us with trembling; and so it would, were not our minds blinded by the god of this world. Now, reader, do you feel no concern about your salvation; or have you some method of easing your mind under these thoughts? I beseech you to consider well what the nature of that resource is.

The first thought which occurs, by way of relief to your mind, is, perhaps, that these things cannot be so—that such torments will never be inflicted by a good and merciful God. This ground appears to many very plausible, and they rest upon it with the greater confidence, because it has the appearance of honoring the character of God, at the same time that it promises safety to themselves. But before you lean on this prop, look well, I beseech you, to its foundation. Consider, that before you can derive any rational comfort from this consideration, you must be able to demonstrate that the tremendous denunciations of God's word against sinners are false, or that he will forfeit his veracity, and never execute his own threatenings. Wretched indeed is that subterfuge, the safety of which depends on proving the God of truth a liar. No, sinner, God will not deny himself for the sake of your ease; he will not suffer his word to fall to the ground to enable you to realize your vain and impious hopes. "He will by no means clear the guilty. Surely, O God, thou wilt slay the wicked. The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God. Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone; this shall be the

portion of their cup."

If you have imbibed the pernicious heresy of those false teachers who tell you that there is no future punishment for transgressors, even if they should die in the commission of the most atrocious crimes; if you believe these men who dare contradict the plain declarations of God's word, your delusion will afford you only a temporary relief. It will be like shutting your eyes when borne by an irresistible torrent towards a frightful cataract. Your own conscience, if it has not lost all sensibility, will intimate to you, too plainly to be misunderstood, that there is punishment reserved for the wicked in the world to come. Lean not, then, I beseech you, on this broken reed, which will not only fail to support you, but will pierce you to the heart.

But it is more probable that you seek relief from the apprehension of the wrath to come, in a vague hope of the mercy of God, of which so much is said in Scripture. The mercy of God is indeed a sure refuge for sinners, but it is never extended to the impenitent, who refuse to forsake their evil ways. If you will repent and believe the gospel, then will the Lord most graciously and freely forgive all your sins; but if you depend on the mercy of God to save you from hell, without being saved from sin, you trust to that which has no existence. God will not show mercy to obstinate rebels. The whole tenor of his word assures us of the certainty of this truth.

But perhaps you expect and intend to turn from your sinful ways hereafter, and thus bring yourself within the influence of God's pardoning mercy. Well, if you should become a true penitent, and humble believer in Jesus, you will be saved; but before you cry peace to yourself from this expectation, I beg you to consider that your continuance on earth is uncertain. What is your life? It is a vapor. We have ocular demonstration that death comes upon many very unexpectedly; and although they had entertained the same hope of future repentance, we have awful reason to fear that it was never realized. They died as they lived, and went to meet their Judge with the guilt of all their heinous sins upon their heads. And very often men are taken suddenly away, and have not a moment allowed for that last hope of the sinner, a death-bed repentance. And in other cases, reason is bewildered, and the feelings are stupefied; so that the person who lived carelessly has no bands in his death. And when it is

otherwise, and alarm seizes the guilty person, no help or comfort can be obtained, and he dies in fearful horror and despair.

But if you should live for scores of years, you will never see the day when there will not be as many obstructions to your turning to God as there are now, and as many inducements to cleave to the present world. Do you see men commonly forsaking the courses to which they have long been habituated? Or do you observe that disinclination to piety becomes less by increase of years? You may live to be old and gray-headed, and yet remain unconverted, and go down to hell with a double curse on your head. There is no greater nor more dangerous delusion among men, than the procrastination of their conversion. While thousands lose their souls in consequence of it, not one ever puts his resolution into practice, unless some other influence than his own former purposes operates on him. Reader, awake! Eternity is just before you; heaven or hell will soon be your abode. For the first, you know you are not prepared. If you were admitted to that holy place, the exercises and employments of the inhabitants would be no way in accordance with the state of your heart. You love not the service and worship of God here, and death will make no reformation in the sinner's heart. Then you must be excluded from heaven by the necessity of the case, unless you acquire new principles and a new taste. "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord."

What you intend to do, do quickly, for the time is short. While you are halting between two opinions, the door of mercy may be shut for ever. Seize the present moment; break off your sins by repentance; renounce all confidence in your own good deeds or righteousness, and trust alone in the atoning sacrifice of Christ. "Whosoever believeth in him shall not be ashamed." Cry mightily to him for mercy, and for the Holy Spirit to sanctify you and aid you in every duty.

Search the Scriptures daily. Attend on the preaching of the word. Make one among the company who surround the throne of grace in social prayer. Avoid ensnaring company and dissipating amusements. Forsake all known sin, and see that you perform those external duties which have hitherto been neglected. If you have wronged or injured any, make restitution, or give satisfaction, as far as is in your power. Abandon all

quarrels and strife with your neighbors, and promote piety and good order in your own house, by reading the Scriptures, and calling upon God, and requiring all within your gates to observe with reverence the Lord's day.

But never think that external duties, or attendance on means and ordinances, however exact, is an evidence that your soul is saved. Never rest satisfied with your spiritual state, until you have evidence in a heart-felt sense of the burden of your sins, that you have in truth fled for refuge to the hope set before you in the gospel. The Lord Jesus Christ, apprehended and received by faith, is the only safe sanctuary for a soul pursued by the demands of a broken law.

O man, flee to this dear refuge, before the storm, which is black and lowering, overtake you. "LAY HOLD ON ETERNAL LIFE." "NOW IS THE ACCEPTED TIME; BEHOLD, NOW IS THE DAY OF SALVATION." See, the door of reconciliation is open. Jesus invites you to come to him for rest, and promises that he will not cast you out; yea, complains that you will not come unto him, that you may have life. Others are entering in at the strait gate—why do you delay? Instead of losing by the change, even in this world, you will gain a hundred-fold. Godliness with contentment is great gain.

## **AN AMIABLE YOUTH FALLING SHORT OF HEAVEN**

"One thing thou lackest." Mark 10:21.

THE history of this young man is given by three of the evangelists, Matt.



19, Mark 10, Luke 18, in nearly the same words. It is therefore doubtless worthy of our marked attention.

This youth possessed many things, and yet was deficient in one. He was rich; he was possessed of power, for Luke calls him "a ruler;" he was remarkable for his morality. Few young men in our day could compare with him in this respect. When our Saviour, to try him, mentioned several of the commandments of the second table, in which our duty to our fellow-men is enjoined, this young man was able to say, "All these have I kept from my youth up." And our Lord did not deny the truth of his assertion; yea, he admitted it, for Mark says, "Then Jesus beholding him, loved him." He was pleased with the purity and blamelessness of his external conduct.

Yet this youth had no proper knowledge of the state of his own heart. His obedience was only like that of Paul when a Pharisee, "touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless."

This young ruler, however, was not ashamed to accost Christ in the most respectful manner. He came, regardless of the sneers of his compeers, and kneeling, said, "Good Master." He came to him as a serious inquirer. The question which he asked was the most important that he could ask, or that any man ever asked: "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" He was convinced that something was still needful, but he knew not what. He had heard of the teachings of Christ, and he was impelled by the serious impressions on his mind to break through every difficulty, and to inquire of the Master, believing that he could tell him what to do to secure this object of infinite value.

And evidently, he was confident that he was willing to do whatever should be prescribed. Oh, deceitful heart; how little did he know of its true state! But Jesus knew, and in a moment brought him to a fair test. He knew that, notwithstanding all his fair professions, amiable character, and courteous demeanor, he was an idolater in his heart, and worshipped mammon with supreme affection. He therefore said, Go, sell all that thou hast, and distribute to the poor; and come, follow me; and thou shalt have treasure in heaven.

O what a test for a lover of riches! See, the young man's countenance changes; he remains silent. His heart is undergoing an evident conflict. Heaven and earth, with all their charms, are before him. For a moment, perhaps, he hesitates; for he sincerely wishes to possess eternal life—but, O hard condition! to give away all his riches, to which his heart was wedded! No, no; he cannot do it.

See, he turns his back on the Saviour; he turns his back on all the treasures of heaven. He goes away sorrowful indeed, very sorrowful to lose the opportunity of securing eternal happiness, but deliberately resolved not to relinquish his hold of this world. He will have his "good things" in this life, whatever may become of him in the next. Here is a picture of the true state of thousands—of thousands of well-instructed, moral, and amiable youth.

But was not this a hard test? Was it not more than is required of others? Not at all. All may not, in fact, be put to this test; but every true disciple has already passed this ordeal, and has renounced the world as a portion—as an object of supreme affection. And every true Christian, however much of this world he may possess, would instantly resign it all at the command of Christ. It is the characteristic of every genuine disciple, that, for the sake of Christ, he has been made willing to forsake father, mother, wife and children, house and lands, yea, life itself.

It is true, this test, if made practical in our churches, would detect the hypocrisy of a multitude of professors; or rather, their want of supreme love to Christ is already but too evident, from the ardor with which they pursue the world, and from their unwillingness to part with even a small portion of their wealth to promote the cause of Christ.

This young man possessed many excellent qualities and advantages, and lacked but ONE THING; yet that was the main thing—the one thing needful: a heart to love God supremely—a heart to prefer heavenly treasures to earthly riches. Though his character and conduct were so correct and amiable, yet his heart was not right in the sight of God. He went away sorrowful.

But did he ever come back with a better mind? We do not read that he

ever did. His sorrow was not that of true repentance, repentance unto life, but "the sorrow of the world, which worketh death;" a sorrow which probably he has bitterly felt for eighteen centuries, and which will never cease.

What good can his riches do him now? They only furnish fuel to the flame in which he is tormented. Let young men look at this. Let the lovers of riches look at this.

Although neither the future course of this rich young man in this world, nor his final destiny, is given in the Scriptures, the probability is, that having turned his back on the Saviour and on the heavenly inheritance, he relinquished all thought about his salvation from this time, and abandoned himself to the enjoyment of his idolized riches. Men who have for a time been under serious concern about the salvation of their souls, and afterwards turn back to the world, because they find the terms of salvation too difficult, commonly become more careless and more hardened than others. "Their last state is worse than the first."

But though we have no record of the end of this rich young man, we have, from the lips of the Saviour himself, an affecting account of the end of another rich man, who lived in splendor and pleasure on earth, but neglected piety and charity. The transition, in his case, from a sumptuous table, and from being clothed in purple and fine linen, to the torments of hell, is as great as the imagination can conceive. When he began to experience the keen anguish of future misery, O how bitter was his cry! "Send Lazarus to dip his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame." But it was too late to pray. He had enjoyed his good things here, and torment awaited him in the world of woe.

## THE DAY OF JUDGMENT

THAT a just God will render to every man according to his character and works, is a dictate of reason. Conscience also intimates to every man, when he sins, that he deserves to be punished; and when we see or hear of great crimes committed by others, such as murders, perjuries, robbery, or treachery, we feel something within us demanding that such should receive condign punishment. But we see that the wicked are not always punished in this world according to their evil deeds; it seems reasonable, therefore, to expect that there will be a judgment after death.

We are not left, however, to the mere dictates of reason on this subject: God, in his word, has revealed in the clearest manner that there will be a day of reckoning at the end of the world. This day is appointed, and will certainly come. It is not so certain that we shall ever see the sun rise again, as it is that we shall see the day of judgment. The Lord Jesus Christ is also appointed to act as Judge on that day: "because he hath appointed a day, in which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained." Acts 17:31. "For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." 2 Cor. 5:10.

When this awful day will arrive is a profound secret, not revealed to any creature in the universe. But we know that it will come suddenly and unexpectedly on those who shall then be on the earth. As it was in the days of Noah and of Lot, so will it be in the day of judgment. Men will be pursuing their common worldly business and amusements, without apprehension of danger, when the sound of the last trump shall be heard—for the trumpet shall sound—and the Son of man shall be seen coming in the clouds of heaven.

The race of man shall not cease from the earth until that day comes. There will then be a generation of living inhabitants, probably very numerous, in the world. These will never die as other men, but they will undergo a change equivalent to death and a resurrection; in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, they shall be changed. But all they that are in

their graves shall hear the voice of God, and shall come forth, great and small. No sooner shall the trumpet sound, than the scattered dust of unnumbered millions shall resume its proper place in every man. No matter where it lies, or how widely it may have been scattered, one word of the Almighty God is sufficient to bring it to its place, and animate it with new life. The multitude which will then start up into life cannot be conceived, it will be so great. There will stand Adam and all his posterity; there will stand those who lived before the flood, and those who have lived since; there will be seen the ancient patriarchs, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and the inspired prophets and apostles; there will appear kings, emperors, nobles, and their subjects; the learned philosopher and the ignorant multitude; ministers and their congregations, parents and their children, masters and their servants—all, all coming forward to the grand tribunal. Not one of our whole race will be absent from this great assembly. There, reader, shall you and I stand, trembling or rejoicing.

It is useless to inquire where room can be found for so great a multitude to stand, for this will be a day of miracles. All the wonders ever exhibited before will be nothing to the wonders of that day. Indeed, all that is natural will end on that day, and every thing will be miraculous. The sun will no longer rise and set, the moon no longer give her light, and the stars shall no longer appear in the firmament. Heaven will appear to have come down to earth, for the King of kings and Lord of heaven will be visible to all, with all his own glory and that of his Father. And all the holy angels will appear in attendance, standing round his throne, ready to execute his orders, whether of justice or of mercy.

When all things are prepared—when the Judge has taken his seat on the tribunal, and all men are brought before him, the judicial process will begin; "and the books will be opened." What books these are, except one, which is "the book of life," we are not informed; but we may be sure that one is the book of God's law, and another the record of human actions which is in the "book of" God's "remembrance." It is not necessary to think of more. These contain all that is necessary for conducting the trial of every man. The one contains the law, and the other the testimony. But every thing will be conducted with the most perfect equity. Every man

will be judged for his own deeds, and according to that knowledge of the law which he had opportunity of acquiring. The omniscience of the Judge will enable him to estimate with perfect exactness all the circumstances of every action; every thing which aggravates guilt, and every thing which palliates it, will have due consideration. They who lived under the patriarchal dispensation, will be judged according to the light and advantages then enjoyed; they who lived under the Mosaical economy, will be judged by the law of Moses; and they who enjoyed the clear light of the gospel, will be dealt with in a manner accordant to their advantages; while they who enjoyed no external revelation, will be judged by that law written on the hearts of all men.

The things which shall be brought under the eye of the Judge, and exhibited to the view of the universe, are, all deeds done in the body—whatsoever a man hath done, whether good or bad. Every secret thing. "For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." Eccl. 12:14. Every idle word. "I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment." Matt. 12:36. The thoughts of the heart shall also be made manifest. Every unholy desire; every proud, envious, or malicious thought; every secret purpose of iniquity; every unhallowed temper; every rebellious and discontented and ungrateful feeling towards God and his government, will be brought into judgment.

And the inquiry will extend not only to positive acts, but also to omissions of duty. Great as is the number of the acts of wickedness, the catalogue of omissions will be greater, and not less criminal. The first sin of this sort which will claim the attention of the Judge, will be the omission to entertain and cherish right sentiments towards God. No more heavy charge will be brought against any individual on that day, than that he neglected to love the Lord his God with all his heart, and soul, and mind, and strength. This is the total violation of the first and greatest command, and the fountain of all other iniquities. The neglect to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ when he was offered to us a complete Saviour in the gospel, will, to the unfruitful hearers of the word, be an accusation of the highest kind. The heinousness and enormity of unbelief which now affects the consciences of men so little, will on that day appear in a glaring light. It

will not be strange if it should call forth reproaches upon the unhappy culprit, from devils who never had a Saviour provided, and from heathen who never had a Saviour offered to them. In that account which our Lord has given of the process of the judgment, in the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew, the neglect of kindness to the saints, by visiting, comforting, and aiding them, is the only thing mentioned. Whatever else, then, may be noticed, we are sure this will not be forgotten. The whole passage is so solemn and interesting, that it deserves our deepest attention: "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was a hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee a hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily, I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was a hungered, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee a hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily, I say unto you, inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal." Matt. 25:31–46.

And let it be well considered, that most of the sins which are mentioned in the discourses of Christ as the ground of condemnation, are sins of

omission. The slothful servant, who prepares not himself, is the wicked servant, who will be cast into outer darkness. The man who wrapped his talent in a napkin and buried it, is condemned out of his own mouth. For "to him that knoweth to do good," of any kind, "and doeth it not, to him it is sin." James 4:17.

Many who prided themselves in their inoffensive lives and harmless behavior, will find, when the books are opened, a catalogue of omissions which will startle them with horror, and overwhelm them with confusion. And as actions externally good will then be examined by One who has a full view of the motives from which they proceeded, and the end which the agent had in view, is it not certain that many religious actions will then appear to have been mere hypocrisy? that many actions, apparently just and benevolent, were mere efforts of pride and selfishness? and that a life civil and blameless in the eyes of men, was a mere cloak which covered a heart full of unclean lusts? Our most intimate friends here will be astonished when they see our secret iniquities and wicked motives exposed to view. Crimes the most detestable will be found in the skirts of those who passed through life without suspicion. O how many secret murders, perjuries, thefts, blasphemies, and adulteries, will then be brought to light! How much injustice, fraud, cruelty, oppression, pride, malice, revenge! The cries of the injured, the widow, and the orphan, always enter into the ears of the Lord, and he now comes to avenge them. Cruel persecutors of God's church and people, though clothed in purple, and almost adored when living in the world, will now be brought to a severe account. The blood of the martyred saints from beneath the altar has been long crying out, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" Rev. 6:10. And now the day of retribution has arrived.

What will be the length of time occupied with the judgment we know not. It is called a day, but it will differ exceedingly from all other days; and in its duration, probably, as well as in other respects. Our wisdom is to attend to what is revealed, and to repress a vain curiosity in regard to other matters. We may rest assured that the whole process will be wisely conducted, and that complete justice will be done. The Judge of all the earth will do right. He will not condemn the innocent, nor clear the guilty.



And his judgment will be most impartial. There will be no respecting of persons. The king and the beggar will stand upon equal ground, and will be judged by the same rule. Those who in this world were reviled and slandered, and had no opportunity of clearing up their character, will then be vindicated, and lies and reproaches will have effect no more.

But here a serious difficulty occurs. It may be said, "If the law of God is the rule of judgment, and if all sins are brought into judgment, then certainly every human being must be condemned; 'for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.'" According to this view, none can be saved." To remove this difficulty, let it be remembered, that besides the book of the law, there is another book which will be produced there, written from the foundation of the world. This is called THE BOOK OF LIFE. This contains the names—and they shall never be blotted out—of all those who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. These he has undertaken to present to God without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing. They will appear on that day clothed with the righteousness of the Redeemer. The Judge on the throne is their covenanted Surety. He answers to every accusation made against them. But notwithstanding "there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus;" notwithstanding none can "lay any thing to the charge of God's elect;" yet they also shall be brought into judgment. When all things are prepared, and the whole assembly is collected before the august tribunal, a separation will be made of the great congregation into two parts, the righteous, and the wicked. The former will be placed on the right hand of the Judge, and with them he will commence. But no sooner shall their numerous sins be brought to view, than it will be made to appear that they are pardoned through the blood of Christ. When the books are opened, a long account will appear against them; but on the other hand, it will be seen that the whole is freely forgiven through the riches of grace in Christ Jesus. But a most exact account will be taken of all their good works; and they will be mentioned to their honor, and rewarded as though no imperfection had cleaved to them. The least act of kindness done to any of Christ's followers will be magnified and rewarded as if done to Christ himself. Even the giving a cup of cold water to a disciple, in the name of a disciple, shall not lose its reward. Persons in the lowest state, servants and slaves, who performed their duty faithfully, shall not

be forgotten in that day, for "whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free." Eph. 6:8. But they who suffered persecution and death for righteousness' sake, will be most highly distinguished, and most signally rewarded. "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven." Matt. 5:11, 12. They also who have labored much in promoting the Redeemer's kingdom, will receive a reward proportioned to their works of faith and labors of love. But none who have done good shall fail of their reward. Every one shall receive according to what he hath done; and every one will be satisfied; for the lowest place in glory is a situation too dazzling for our present conceptions, and the whole is a matter of pure grace. These works, considered in themselves, deserve no reward. But it is the will of God that every holy desire, every good word and work, in the members of Christ's body, should receive a mark of his favor, to the honor and glory of him who is their Head, and who died for their salvation.

When the gracious sentence, "Come, ye blessed, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world," is pronounced, the righteous shall be caught up to the Lord, and shall be seated by his side, and be united with him in the remaining transactions of that great day; for it is written, "The saints shall judge the world," and, "Know ye not that ye shall judge angels?"

The case of the righteous being disposed of, then will come the awful transaction of pronouncing sentence on the wicked. They will, indeed, have anticipated the sentence. By this time they will be certain of their doom; but the scene itself will far exceed all apprehensions before entertained. To behold the face of inflexible justice turned towards them—to hear the irreversible sentence of condemnation, and that too from the mouth of the benevolent Son of God—to feel in the inmost soul the justice of the sentence—to be as certain of everlasting damnation as they are of existence—are things concerning which we can speak now, but of which we can form but very feeble conceptions, compared with the dreadful reality. In all his existence there will probably be no moment in which the sinner's anguish will be so poignant as in this, when the Judge

shall say, "DEPART, YE CURSED, INTO EVERLASTING FIRE, PREPARED FOR THE DEVIL AND HIS ANGELS." Matt. 25:41. Every word in this tremendous denunciation will pierce through the soul with more insufferable pain than ten thousand daggers. It is reasonable to think that every person against whom it is pronounced, will endure as much misery at that moment as in the nature of things is possible. And if this were all, the prospect would be appalling; but to be doomed to endless misery in fire, with the devil and his angels!—who can bear the thought without horror and dismay? Yet, as sure as God is true, will this sentence be executed on every impenitent sinner. Men may reason and cavil now, but then every mouth shall be stopped. That the cry of despair and horror will be heard through the great multitude, is certain—such a great and bitter cry as was never heard before. But it is all in vain; repentance comes too late. The day of grace is for ever past. The gospel dispensation is ended. This is the consummation of all things. No change in condition can ever be expected. They that are saved, have their salvation secured by the oath and promise of God; and they who are lost, have their damnation sealed for ever and ever by a judicial sentence which can never be revoked. And from this sentence there is no appeal. There is no higher tribunal to which the cause may be transferred. Neither can any resistance be made to the execution of the sentence. They who are now bold and daring in their blasphemies and rebellion, will then find that they are in the hands of a sin-avenging God. It will belong to the holy angels, who are mighty in power, to execute the sentence of the Judge. "So shall it be," said our blessed Saviour, "at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth." Matt. 13:49, 50. And it will be as impossible to escape as to resist. The rocks and mountains will not cover them. They cannot cease to exist. Go where they will, God is there to execute deserved wrath upon them. They will therefore be obliged "to go away into everlasting punishment." Matt. 25:46.

The devil and his angels will also be judged on that day; but of the particular nature of the trial we are not informed. All that we know is, that "the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto

the judgment of the great day." Jude, ver. 6. They are now miserable, but their cup is not full; therefore they cried out when they saw Jesus, "Art thou come to torment us before the time?" Matt. 8:29, At the breaking up of this great assembly, the present system of the world will be destroyed. For "the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men." 2 Pet. 3:7.

Reader, deeply fix in your mind the certainty and importance of the transactions of this last, great day. Meditate upon it as a reality in which you have a momentous interest. Let every other day, as it passes, put you in mind of this in which all others will end. Consider also that it draws near. Every moment bears us on towards the great tribunal. Mockers may say, Where is the promise of his coming? "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also, and the works therein, shall be burned up." 2 Pet. 3:10.

O reader, whoever thou art, let me entreat you to inquire without delay, whether you are prepared for the scrutiny and judgment of this coming day. Have you made your peace with God? Have you repented of all your sins? Are you in union with Christ by faith? Have you any clear scriptural evidence that your sins are pardoned? What says conscience to these inquiries? Be assured, if your own heart condemns you, God, who is greater than your heart, and knoweth all things, will much more condemn you. But your situation is not like that of them whose day of grace is ended. You are yet in the place of reconciliation. You have yet a little time before you—God only knows how much. Now, then, hear the voice of warning—hear the voice of mercy. Now "strive to enter in at the strait gate". Now forsake your sins, and live. Accept the offered grace—"lay hold on eternal life."

Let no consideration induce you to delay your conversion. The importance of salvation—the uncertainty of life—the danger of provoking the Holy Spirit to abandon you—the example of thousands who have perished by procrastination—should urge you to lose no time, but to fall in with the gracious invitation of the gospel. But if you will refuse, then prepare to meet an angry God. Harden yourself against the terrors of the

Almighty; summon all your fortitude to hear your dreadful doom from the Judge of quick and dead. But I forbear—there is no fortitude or patience in hell.

Reader, art thou advanced in years? Let thy gray hairs and pains and wrinkles admonish thee that thou art near to judgment; for what if death intervene, yet after death all preparation is impossible. Just as death finds us, so will judgment. "In the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be." Eccl. 11:3. Consider also that the number of your sins is in proportion to the number of your days. Long life will prove a dreadful curse to those who die in their sins.

But if thou art in youth, or in the vigor of manhood, remember that thy life is a vapor; that most men do not live out half their days; and that of those who shall appear before the judgment-seat, comparatively few will have finished their course of threescore years and ten. "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth." Eccl. 12:1. "Behold, the Judge standeth before the door." James 5:9. Others have been suddenly taken away from your side. They also intended to make preparation hereafter; but while they were pleasing themselves with the prospect of many years, and were saying, "Soul, take thine ease, thou hast much goods laid up for many years," God said, "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee. Be ye therefore ready also, for at such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh." "Behold, the axe is laid at the root of the tree" and now perhaps thou art spared, on account of the prayer of some kind intercessor, for one year. This, for aught thou knowest, may be thy last year. If so, it behooves you to make good use of your time and privileges. Let the idea of the judgment be ever before your mind. There you must appear—there you must stand and render up your account—there you must be filled with overwhelming shame and terror—there you must hear the awful final sentence, which will fix your doom irreversibly, unless by a speedy repentance, and by faith in Jesus Christ, you flee from the wrath to come.

May God, of his infinite mercy, cause the truths which you have read in this tract to sink deeply into your mind; and by the light of his Holy Spirit lead you to just views of your own condition, and to saving views of the Lord Jesus Christ, the only Redeemer of lost sinners. Amen.

## **THE MISERY OF THE LOST**

THE soul of man is susceptible of an intense degree of unhappiness. Even in this world much misery is endured; but in the world to come, hope is a stranger, and there are no alleviating circumstances.

The misery of the damned has by theologians been divided into that of loss and that of sense: the one produced by the loss of good possessed or once attainable, the other arising from the positive infliction of punishment. But though this distinction has a foundation as it relates to the cause of the sinner's misery, yet, as it regards the feeling itself, there is no reason for making any distinction. All misery is felt according to its nature and intensity, and therefore is pain of sense, or sensible pain, whatever may be its cause. So the question whether the fire of hell is a material fire, is of no importance; for if I feel a pang of misery at any moment, it matters nothing whether it is produced by a material or immaterial, by a privative or positive cause.

Under the general name of misery, many species of suffering are included; all, however, agreeing in this, that the sensation is painful. The feeling of fear is a very painful emotion, but in its nature very different from remorse. Excessive pain, in our present state, may be experienced through the nerves of sensation; but even here these sufferings differ, not only in degree, but in kind. The headache, toothache, and lumbago, are all severe pains, but they are not the same; and these bodily pains differ exceedingly from the feelings of remorse, or despair.

Our capacity of pain seems to bear an exact proportion to our

susceptibility of pleasure. Indeed, the same faculties and affections which are the sources of our happiness when the objects suited to them are possessed, become the causes of our misery when deprived of those objects. By the same faculty we perceive the beauties and the deformities of objects; the same moral sense is the instrument of the most exalted and soul-satisfying pleasure, and of the most intolerable anguish of which the soul is capable. Every affection and appetite affords pleasure when duly exercised on its proper object; but deprived of this, becomes a source of intense pain.

Though the nature of future misery to all lost souls is the same, yet the degree may differ to an extent which no man can estimate. Some divines have maintained that the future happiness of the righteous will be equal, as eternal life is the free gift of God; but none, I believe, have ever held that the punishment of the lost will be equal. The Scriptures abundantly teach that every man will be judged according to the deeds done in the body; and as the sins of different individuals are immensely different in guilt, justice demands that their punishment should be proportioned to the demerit of the sinner. Our Saviour most explicitly teaches this doctrine when he says, "That servant who knew his master's will, and prepared not himself, shall be beaten with many stripes; but he who knew not his master's will, and yet committed things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes."

The guilt of sin is not measured merely or principally by the external act, but by the light and advantages enjoyed by some above others. The difference between sins against light and sins of ignorance, is a matter concerning which common-sense gives a judgment consonant with the rule laid down by our Lord. It does not appear that the cities of Galilee, where Christ spent most of his time, and where he wrought most of his beneficent miracles, were remarkable for external acts of immorality; and yet their sins were greater than those of cities proverbial for their wickedness, and consequently their punishment would be greater. His words should never be forgotten: "Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works which have been done in thee had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven,

shall be thrust down to hell; for if the mighty works which had been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained unto this day: therefore I say unto thee, it shall be more tolerable for Sodom in the day of judgment than for this city."

These are words of awful import, and are as applicable to neglecters of the gospel and impenitent sinners now, as to those devoted cities. Many, because their external conduct is decent and moral, persuade themselves that their punishment will be light; but in view of the words cited above, it will be far more tolerable for the vilest of the heathen than for them, if they continue in their impenitence and neglect of the great salvation. Certainly gospel-neglecters, however decent in their external behavior, will sink very deep into the abyss of misery. Among these, however, there will be a great difference. Some, alas, who sinned malignantly against light, will sink to the lowest gulf in hell.

To describe the extreme misery of lost souls is painful, both to the writer and the reader. If we should give way to our sympathies and compassionate feelings, we should not only exclude this awful subject from our discourses, but from our creed. Indeed, it must be acknowledged that it occasions a conflict to reconcile our reason to the reality of such intense and interminable sufferings as are described in the word of God; and plausible arguments, derived from the goodness of God, might be constructed against the doctrine of so great future misery; but all such arguments would operate equally against the existence of sin and misery in this world, which, alas, are known too well to be facts which none can deny, and of which every individual is a witness.

When God speaks, reason and feeling should be silent. He knows what justice demands, and what can be done consistently with his attributes; but man is of yesterday, and knows nothing. Suppose a child five or six years old should undertake to sit in judgment on the acts of government, and to decide whether its penal laws were just or unjust, and whether capital punishments ought to be inflicted on murderers, or whether a war was just and necessary, who would expect a correct judgment from an infant? But such a child is better qualified to decide on the most complicated schemes of human policy, than man to judge of the propriety of the divine administration.



Impenitent men are apt to harden themselves against the awful denunciations of divine wrath contained in the Bible, and to cherish unkind feelings towards the ministers who bring out plainly and authoritatively the doctrine of the New Testament on this subject. And it cannot be denied, that some preachers denounce the terrors of the law against transgressors in a style and manner adapted rather to irritate than to convince. They speak almost as if they took pleasure in these awful threatenings, and as if they had nothing to fear for themselves. No doubt many a zealous preacher has passed sentence on himself, and has actually suffered those torments which he denounced against others.

I am therefore disposed to present this subject in a light which cannot give offence. Instead of representing the danger to which others are exposed, I will make the case my own. It behooves me to "tremble at the word of the Lord," as much as others; and as I am a sinner, and therefore naturally subject to the penalty of the law, and liable to be misled by the deceitfulness of my heart to cherish false hopes, I will endeavor to realize to myself the feelings which I shall experience, if it should be my unhappy lot to die out of the favor of God.

It would seem that **THE FIRST MOMENT AFTER DEATH** must be one of unparalleled misery. My first reflection would be,

"I am lost for ever—all hope of happiness or relief is gone from my miserable soul. The blackness of darkness is round about me; no ray of light dawns on my wretched soul. Despair, fell despair has now seized upon me, and must blacken every prospect to all eternity. While in the world, I could contrive to turn away my thoughts from the disagreeable subject; but now, my misery, like a heavy burden, presses on me, and is ever present—go where I will, do what I will.

"While in the body, and engaged in secular pursuits, I entertained a secret hope that there might be some mistake respecting the extreme misery of the damned, or that there might possibly be some way of escape not revealed; but now all these idle notions have fled like a dream when one awakes. I find hell to be no fable, but an awful reality. I find that the preachers, so far from exaggerating the misery of the lost, had no

adequate conception of the wretchedness of a soul cast off from God for ever, and doomed to dwell in everlasting burnings. Oh horrible, horrible! I am then undone—for ever undone! In all former distresses I could cry for mercy; but now I have passed beyond the reach of mercy!

"For the sake of momentary enjoyments, and worthless riches and honors, I have bartered away my soul. Accursed folly! What benefit can I now derive from those earthly pleasures and possessions? they only serve as fuel to the flames which consume me. O for one drop of water to cool my tongue. But for this I beg in vain. The time for prayer and for mercy has gone by, and my soul is lost, lost, lost! and through eternity I must expect no deliverance, no relief, nor even the slightest mitigation of my misery. Woe, woe, woe is me! It had been infinitely better for me never to have been born!

"If I had not enjoyed the offers of the gospel, if pardon and reconciliation had not been within my reach, and often urged upon me, my anguish would not be so excruciating. But this it is which wrings my heart with unspeakable anguish, that I might have escaped all this misery. Had it not been for my own sin and folly, I might ere now have been in heaven. Others who heard the same sermons, and belonged to the same family, are now in Abraham's bosom, while I am tormented in this flame. Oh that I could cease to be; but to fly from existence is impossible.

"Here I am surrounded by wretches as miserable as myself, but their company rather aggravates than mitigates my soul's anguish. I am reproached and cursed by all who were ever led by my counsel or example into the ways of iniquity. They dreadfully scowl upon me.

"And the fiends of the pit, who were my seducers, now combine to taunt me with my folly. They never had the offers of mercy. The merits of a dying Saviour were never offered to them. They seem to entertain a malignant pleasure—if pleasure it can be called—in witnessing my extreme misery. O wretched man, whither can I flee? Is there no possible escape from this prison of despair? Can no one ever pass the gulf which separates this dismal abode from the regions of the blessed? None—none!

"Oh, if there could be a suicide of the soul, how happy should I be to

escape from existence, and to plunge into the gulf of annihilation, which once seemed horrible to my apprehension, but now desirable. This would be an oblivion of all my misery. But in vain do I seek to die. Death flies from me. And here I see those deluded souls who, by doing violence to their own lives, vainly dreamed that they were escaping from misery; but alas, from a burden which with faith and patience might have been borne, they have leaped into a fiery furnace. They are now convinced of the dreadful sin and folly of suicide, but they cannot repeat the act here.

"May I hope that time will lessen the horrors and anguish of my wretched soul? Will my heart, so susceptible of the emotions of bitter anguish, by degrees become less sensible to these piercing pains, and be more able to bear up under this overwhelming weight of misery? This question can only be solved by experience: let me ask some one who has been suffering for thousands of years.

"Here comes Cain the first murderer, who is known still by having upon him the stain of a brother's blood. Suppose I speak to him. Tell me, fellow-prisoner, who hast long endured the pains of this infernal prison, whether by long continuance these miseries become more tolerable? But why do I ask? the wretched fratricide is evidently writhing in keenest anguish. He is too miserable to speak, and too full of malignity to gratify any one. His guilty stain—the blood-spot—has not been burnt out by the fiercest fires of hell. No; see, he defies the Almighty. He blasphemes the God of heaven. He asks for no mitigation of his punishment now. His malignant, fiery spirit feeds on despair, and challenges his Avenger to do his worst.

"Oh, then, I see there is a progression in wickedness even in hell. This is the most appalling prospect of all—an endless progression in sin, and consequently an increase, instead of a diminution of misery, through the endless ages of eternity."

Another awful point in the existence of the damned, will be THE DAY OF JUDGMENT. Great as is the misery of a lost soul when separated from the body, this is probably small when compared with the exceeding weight of misery which shall overtake it at the day of judgment. I must then endeavor to imagine what will be my feelings if I should be found on

the left hand on that dreadful day.

As here a large portion of our pleasures and pains are experienced through the body, I know no reason why it should not be so in the future world. Certainly the disembodied spirit is capable of none of these pains or pleasures. It seems reasonable to conclude, therefore, that the bodies of the damned will be so constructed as to be inlets to excruciating pains, as the bodies of the saints will be instruments of refined, celestial pleasures. The person of the man is not complete without the body, and therefore the final sentence of condemnation will not be denounced until the body—the selfsame body—is raised from the dead, and reunited to the soul; that having been partners in transgression, they may be associated in enduring the condign punishment of the deeds done in the body.

The state of the lost soul before the judgment, may be compared to that of a criminal confined in prison waiting for his trial. Let me then imagine myself to have died unreconciled and impenitent. At an unexpected time the sound of the last trumpet will be heard; and as it is the last trumpet, so it will be the loudest. The departed spirits confined in prison shall hear it, and their bodies, long crumbled to dust, shall hear it; and I shall certainly hear that awful, deeply penetrating sound, and I shall come forth, coerced by an irresistible power, I shall again be clothed with a body; but O, what sort of a body!

Among millions of millions I am forced to appear. O what terrible majesty in the Judge, now coming with all his holy angels—now seated on his great white throne. Awful moment! The books are opened. There all my crimes of thought, word, and deed, are recorded—sins of omission as well as commission. O for a hiding-place under the rocks or caves! But no; I must appear—I must hear my sentence of condemnation and banishment. The misery of an age seems condensed into this moment. The tremendous sentence comes forth, "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." Imagination fails—I can write no more; experience must teach the rest.

The misery of the eternally lost cannot be adequately conceived, much less expressed. It cannot be exaggerated by any description; and this will be manifest if we consider **WHAT THEY KNOW THEY HAVE LOST.**

All the good things which they enjoyed in this life they must leave behind. All their riches, honors, and sensual pleasures are left at death; and for these there will be no substitute in eternity. The vicious cravings of the immortal soul will continue, but there will be no longer any objects to gratify them; for want of which, like some venomous creatures when wounded, they will turn and prey upon themselves.

A soul with its active powers and passions, must be miserable if deprived of all objects suited to its gratification. We know scarcely any misery on earth more intolerable than a human being perishing for lack of bread or water. Hunger and thirst, if not seasonably gratified, are the sources of most excruciating pain. Now the soul can never lose its desire of happiness; how miserable, then, must it be when this insatiable desire meets with nothing to gratify it. It is strongly represented by our Saviour in the case of the rich man in hell, who cried for one drop of water, and said, "I am tormented in this flame." The soul of the sinner will be its own chief tormentor. It is possible that all the torment experienced in hell will be the natural consequence of sin.

Malignant passions are in their very nature attended with misery; for as benevolent affections are beatific, so malevolent feelings are accompanied with misery. Here these malignant passions are held under restraint; and while we are in the body, there are instinctive natural affections which counteract the malevolent feelings which exist in the depraved heart; but in eternity all restraint will be removed, and the native wickedness of the heart will act itself out: there are no natural affections there—all will be unmixed malice, envy, and wickedness. Let any moral agent who is totally depraved be abandoned to himself, and he must be miserable. His own passions will become his everlasting tormentors. He will carry a hell in his own bosom.

But of all feelings of misery, none is so intolerable as remorse. The conscience, or moral faculty, as it is the principal source of the most pure and sublime enjoyment to the righteous; so it is, to the lost, the scorpion which will for ever sting the soul with inexpressible anguish. The consciousness of having done wrong, of having sinned against God, and of being the cause of our own destruction, is a kind of hell as dreadful as any of which we can conceive. The lost soul will for ever have the

conviction clearly impressed that it is its own destroyer, and that heaven with all its joys has been lost by its own sinful folly and neglect.

And the bitterest ingredient of all in the cup of misery is despair—black despair. Oh, if there was the most distant hope of release at some future period, it would mitigate the anguish of the suffering sinner. But despair admits of no alleviation.

Men may here dream of a deliverance from hell after a long time of suffering, but the delusion will vanish as soon as they enter eternity. They will then find that the word of God, which denounced eternal destruction on impenitent sinners, was not a vain threat; that God will not spare the guilty, but will punish them with everlasting destruction.

O my soul, consider now how you will be able to endure such misery as must be experienced by all the lost, but especially by those who enjoyed the light of the gospel. Canst thou fortify thyself against all this misery? Wilt thou be able to endure it with patience? Only imagine your condition millions of ages hence. Still writhing in anguish—still belching out horrid blasphemies—still covered with the blackness of darkness—still without a ray of hope. Not a moment's ease during this long period. O my soul, will you not make one vigorous effort to escape so great misery? Will you not strive to flee from the wrath to come? Life, eternal life, is still within your reach. Lay hold on the prize. Press on to the kingdom. Take refuge in the cross, and you will be safe.

## **JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH**

WITH A SUMMARY VIEW OF THE DOCTRINE, AND ITS

## MOMENTOUS IMPORT

IT shall be our endeavor to set before our readers a plain exposition of this great Christian doctrine as taught in the holy Scriptures, and as generally held by sound Protestants.

We commence with some remarks on the scriptural meaning of the word "justification," as a mistake here may spread darkness over the whole discussion.

The common acceptation of the word "to justify," in the Bible, is, to acquit from all charge, to declare the person to stand right in the eye of the law. It is the very opposite of "condemnation." And in this sense is the word commonly used among us. To "justify" is not, therefore, to infuse a principle of justice into the soul. It does not produce an inherent change of moral character. The import of this word is entirely distinct from that of "sanctification;" and this distinction must be carefully kept in view, if we would avoid error and confusion in the investigation of the subject.

That the word is commonly used in this declarative or forensic sense in the holy Scriptures, might be evinced by an induction of numerous passages; let a few, however, suffice. God is said to be "justified" when he speaks; that is, he appears to be just. Christ is declared to be "justified in the Spirit;" his true character was manifested and vindicated. "If there be a controversy between men, and they come unto judgment, that the judges may judge them, then they shall justify the righteous, and condemn the wicked." Deut. 25:1. Here we have the true import of the word as a forensic term, and standing in direct opposition to condemnation. And in Exodus 23:7, it is said, "For I will not justify the wicked;" that is, I will not pronounce the wicked to be just. And in Proverbs 17:15, "He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the Lord." But to render a wicked man inherently righteous, is so far from being an abomination to the Lord, that even to be the instrument of such a change is followed by a great reward.

In the same sense is the word employed, Isaiah 5:23, where transgressors are characterized as those who "justify the wicked for reward." Solomon,

in his dedicatory prayer, 1 Kings. 8:32, says, "Then hear thou in heaven, and do, and judge thy servants, condemning the wicked, to bring his way upon his head; and justifying the righteous, to give him according to his righteousness." Thus also is the word used by Paul: "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth?" "By the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight." "Being justified by faith—freely by his grace." And in Romans 4:5, God is said to "justify the ungodly."

Let it be distinctly borne in mind, that a state of justification is the very opposite of a state of condemnation, and there can be no material mistake respecting the true import of the word. He who is condemned is considered as a transgressor of the law, whose sins are still imputed to him; he who is justified is viewed as having, though not of his own, that which satisfies the law—he has the blessedness of the man to whom the Lord imputeth not sin, but to whom he "imputes righteousness without works."

The only method of obtaining the favor of God which reason and conscience dictate, is doing the will of God. Moral agents, put on probation, if they persevere in obedience during the period of their trial, are "justified," and confirmed in a state of integrity and happiness.

When an accountable creature, or a race of accountable creatures, fails in obedience, the penalty of the law, whatever it may be, is incurred, and must be endured. Both justice and truth require the infliction of the punishment deserved, and threatened to transgressors. The justification of a sinner appears, therefore, at first sight, to be a thing impossible, in consistence with the divine attributes. To devise a plan by which sinners may be saved, and yet the law be maintained and justice satisfied, was beyond the wisdom of any creature; but what finite wisdom could not accomplish, the wisdom of God has found out; and to reveal this plan of salvation, and the terms on which the condemned creature may be made a partaker of it, is the great design of divine revelation. This is the mystery into which angels desire to look. It is the "good news" which the gospel announces. It will be a theme of adoration and grateful praise in heaven through eternal ages; and all who shall arrive at heaven by this method of salvation, will sing a song peculiar to themselves, in which no



others of the heavenly host can join, "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood."

To understand how God can be just, and justify the ungodly, let us contemplate the acknowledged circumstances of the case. God is a holy being, and his law is like himself, "holy, just, and good." This law cannot be set aside or changed, in mercy to the offender, without reflecting dishonor on the Lawgiver. Better there were no law, than that its claims should be disregarded. Better that all creatures should cease to exist, than that any dishonor should be cast on the truth or justice of God. If the infliction of the penalty incurred was not a righteous act, such a penalty never would have been annexed to the law. All hope of escape founded on the idea that the law of God may be set aside, or its demands relaxed, must be vain; and all such hopes are impious, as they are founded on the supposition that God will "deny himself." Does not every transgressor, then, appear to be shut up to death?

Some may be ready to reply, that God is merciful as well as just, and the sinner may hope in his mercy; and that to insist upon the rigid execution of law in all cases, would expunge mercy from the divine attributes. It will also be alleged, that to represent the supreme Ruler as inflexible in his justice, and requiring the utmost farthing of what is due from his frail creatures, is to exhibit him in an unamiable light.

This view of the subject seems plausible, and falls in with the prevalent opinions and feelings of men. But it ought to be considered, that if mercy be so essential to God that he cannot but exercise it unless he show himself severe and unamiable, then there is an end of justice. There can be no place for it in the dispensations of a merciful God. But "a God all mercy is a God unjust."

And let it be considered again, that upon these principles there was no need of a Mediator to expiate our sins, and propitiate an offended God. To the sinner God may indeed appear lovely, as divested of his righteousness, and equally good to the transgressor and the obedient subject; just as the criminal condemned by human laws would esteem that judge amiable who pardoned his crimes, while upright citizens might view it to be inconsistent with his character as a righteous judge. But the

inquiry should be, how would the divine character appear to intelligent and impartial spectators, if sin should go unpunished; how would this be viewed by the "holy angels?" And surely, with the word of God in our hands, we cannot hesitate to believe that God is just and holy, and that he "will by no means clear the guilty."

But do not the Scriptures represent God as a merciful being; and are not all invited to take refuge under the wings of his mercy? Yes; this is undoubtedly true. No attribute is more frequently and emphatically ascribed to God than mercy, and by no other is his infinite and divine perfection more gloriously manifested. Throughout the holy Scriptures we have set before us a God both just and merciful. Those attributes, therefore, as they exist in God, must be harmonious, and the exercise of the one must somehow be consistent with that of the other. Let us, therefore, endeavor to discover how they may be harmonized, how the great Creator can be at the same time both "a just God and a Saviour."

One remark, before we proceed farther, seems necessary to prevent mistakes. There exists not the same necessity for the exercise of mercy as of justice. God is obliged by the rectitude of his nature to be always and in all cases just; but he is not bound in all cases where there are miserable sinners to exercise mercy. The example of the fallen angels settles this question. Such an idea of mercy would destroy every idea of justice. There could remain no place for its exercise. Mercy, from its very nature, is free. To suppose any binding obligation to show mercy destroys its nature; it would then be confounded with justice. The true ground of distinction between justice and mercy is, that while the first is obligatory, the last is free, and may be bestowed or withheld at the pleasure of him who exercises it.

The true principle on which justice and mercy may be reconciled is, that the claims of justice must be satisfied in order to make way for the exercise of mercy. If no plan could have been devised by which the demands of the law—which are the same as the claims of justice—could be satisfied, then had the exercise of mercy been impossible in the government of a righteous God. But herein has the infinite wisdom of God been gloriously displayed by the plan of redemption: "Mercy and truth have met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each

other." According to this glorious plan, justice and mercy are both manifested in the most conspicuous manner in the obedience of Christ unto death. In the cross these divine attributes not only harmonize, but shine forth with brighter rays than anywhere else. Let it not be forgotten, that the difficulty in the way of the exercise of mercy to sinners required to be overcome, was nothing else than the demands of inflexible justice, and the truth of God pledged in annexing the penalty of death to the law. No plan of reconciliation or justification which does not provide for the removal of this difficulty is admissible or possible. I wish this point to be clearly understood, and indelibly fixed in the memory of the reader, for otherwise he will be in danger of being misled by false theories.

Let us then take an accurate survey of THE CONDITION OF A SINFUL MAN under the righteous government of God. We take for granted that the demands of the law of God are neither annihilated nor diminished in consequence of his transgression. Fallen man is as much under obligation to love God with all the heart, mind, and strength, as innocent man. It is a dictate of reason, that the obligation of no law is removed by transgressing it. Neither does the fact that the sinner has fallen under the condemnation of the law, free him from the obligation to obey it. Although some have held this opinion to prop up a rotten system, nothing can be conceived more absurd. This supposes the enduring the penalty of the law to be a full equivalent for perfect obedience. According to this, the man who had stood in the pillory for perjury as long as the penalty of the law required, would be as deserving of esteem and of a reward as the man who had completely obeyed the laws of his country. Then let it be distinctly kept in mind, that on a transgressor the law has a double demand: first, the original requisition of perfect obedience; and secondly, a demand that the penalty, according to the demerit of the offence, be endured. And before he can be justified according to this law, both these demands must be met and satisfied.

A mistake on this point has led many astray in regard to the nature of a sinner's justification. They have maintained that nothing else was necessary but that the Surety endure the penalty of the law, or make atonement for sin; and that nothing more is included in justification than the forgiveness of our sins. But if this were all, justification would leave

the person in the same relation to the law in which Adam stood when created; that is, he would be free from the penalty, but would have no title to the reward of a righteous person. But the very word "justify" expresses much more. Strictly speaking, and excluding the merits of Christ, pardon and justification are incompatible; for the first supposes the person to have been a transgressor, the last that he has a righteousness fully answering the demands of the law; but when a sinner is justified by faith in Christ, while he receives remission of sins through his blood, he is accounted righteous by reason of the perfect obedience unto death of his Surety rendered in his behalf.

Those who deny the necessity of the active obedience of Christ as included in the meritorious ground of a sinner's justification, are driven to the necessity of maintaining that the person must acquire a title to eternal life by his own obedience; and they suppose that this doctrine is inculcated in all those texts which speak of believers being rewarded "according to their works;" whereas, if eternal life was granted only in consequence of Christ's obedience, they allege all would share alike, and there would not be different degrees of glory among the saints in heaven. But this is to confound the title to eternal life with the degree of happiness to be enjoyed. As to the title, all do stand upon a perfect equality. Heaven is as sure to the weakest believer as to the strongest; to the man who lived only to perform one good work, as to him that abounded in good works through a long life. But it does not follow from this that the happiness and glory of all believers shall be equal. All, it is reasonable to believe, will not have the same capacity of heavenly happiness; and it is meet that they who have labored most and suffered most, should enjoy most hereafter. This furnishes a good reason for what we find clearly taught by our Lord and his apostles, that in the day of judgment the good works of the righteous will be brought into public view, as well that they may furnish a measure of their respective rewards, as that they may furnish conclusive evidence of the sincerity of their profession.

Although the active obedience of Christ, as well as his sufferings and death, are necessary to a justifying righteousness, yet there is no necessity nor propriety in curiously endeavoring to separate the parts of our

Saviour's finished work. As has been well remarked by a profound theologian, "In his sufferings he obeyed, and in his obedience he suffered." His mediatorial work, like his robe, cannot be divided into separate parts. Still, we can conceive of a distinction between that which was necessary to satisfy the precept, and that which was required to satisfy the penalty of the law. And if there were any uncertainty whether all the acts of Christ's obedience were strictly vicarious, yet it would be our safe course to exclude nothing which God has not excluded. When the apostle says, "by his OBEDIENCE many are constituted righteous," no man has a right to limit the word, which is left in the holy Scriptures without limitation.

Having seen that in order to a sinner's justification, the law demands a righteousness which shall answer both its precept and its penalty, let us next inquire, HAS JESUS CHRIST THE MEDIATOR PROVIDED SUCH A RIGHTEOUSNESS? And here it is comfortable to the convinced sinner to learn that "He is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." That "He of God is made unto us righteousness," and is called "THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS." And that "there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." That "He who knew no sin, was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

But why may not a sinner be justified by his own righteousness? For the best reason in the world: because he has none which will answer the law's demand. All will admit that the external obedience of an unrenewed man, whether to the moral or ceremonial law, cannot be a righteousness that a holy God can accept as the ground of his justification. Such a righteousness is indeed well described by the prophet as "filthy rags." That which has no particle of real holiness in it surely cannot answer the demands of that holy law which requires "truth in the inward parts," and perfect rectitude in every thought and desire. It is therefore universally agreed among Protestants that "dead works," or mere external obedience, can justify no one.

Still it is contended by some that the "new obedience" of a sanctified soul may, by a gracious God, be received as a justifying righteousness. Others, to be more conformable to the language of Scripture, ascribe our

justification to the single grace of faith or act of believing. But we will now show that no works of ours, nor any holiness wrought in us, is the ground of our justification.

The arguments from which it is evident that our justification is not on account of inherent holiness, or good works proceeding from faith, are these:

Justification is a sentence according to law; but the law demands a perfect righteousness: the imperfect, though sincere obedience of the believer, is not a ground on which God, as a righteous Judge, can pronounce the sinner justified. Even if the believer could attain to perfection in this life—which none ever did—this would not answer for a perfect righteousness; for when a man stands in judgment before God, he must answer for the whole of his life, and not a part only. The believer cannot be justified by his evangelical obedience, because this follows his acceptance with God, and cannot therefore be its cause. The ungodly are the persons whom God justifies; therefore they are not justified by their own obedience, for they remain ungodly up to the very moment when they are justified.

The justification of the sinner, according to the apostle Paul, excludes boasting; but if a man is justified by his own works, of whatever kind, he has a ground of glorying; therefore justification is not by "works of righteousness which we have done."

Again, justification is entirely gratuitous, and therefore not by works of any kind. "Being justified freely by his grace." Now between works and grace there is, according to Paul, an irreconcilable opposition as it relates to the ground of a sinner's acceptance. "And if by grace, it is then no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace; otherwise work is no more work."

It detracts from the honor of Christ and the merit of his mediatorial work to ascribe justification, in whole or in part, to man's obedience. If it had been consistent with God's perfections to accept of an imperfect obedience from the creature, where was the need of a divine Mediator? Did Christ the Son of God come into the world and die on the cross

merely to render the imperfect obedience of the sinner acceptable? This supposition is not honorable to the divine Redeemer, neither is it in accordance with holy Scripture. There all is ascribed to Christ's redemption—to his blood—to his righteousness—to his obedience. Christ is the foundation—the corner-stone—the way, the truth, and the life—the alpha and omega—the beginning and end of our salvation. He that glories, must glory in the Lord. The everlasting song of the redeemed will be, "Not unto us, but unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood."

And what says the experience of the children of God? Are they willing to trust for salvation to such a broken reed as their own obedience; and are they disposed to detract any thing from the glory of the Redeemer in their salvation? Is there one among them who would wish to put in a claim for any part of the honor of this work?

But what need is there to argue a point which is so explicitly and positively decided by the pen of inspiration? "Therefore," says Paul, "by the deeds of the law, there shall no flesh be justified in his sight." And as if to cut off all pretence that he meant the ceremonial law of Moses, he immediately adds, "for by the law is the knowledge of sin." Now Paul tells us in another place what law produced in him the knowledge of sin, namely, the law contained in the ten commandments; "for," says he, "I had not known sin, unless the law had said, Thou shalt not covet." And this is given as a reason by the apostle why there could be no justification by the law; for if a man was only convicted of one sin by the law, it is evident that justification to him by that law is as impossible as if he had violated every precept. As justification and condemnation are opposite states in relation to the law, he who is condemned, if it were only for one sin, and that the smallest, never can be justified by a broken law. For one sin incurs the penalty; as it is written, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them."

Some dream of a new and milder law under the gospel by which believers are justified; but there is none such—there can be none such. The Scriptures never mention any other moral law than the law requiring perfect love, and which is summarily comprehended in the ten commandments. To this our Saviour continually appeals as universally

binding—as intended originally to give life to those who obeyed it, and as the perfect rule which all should follow. The apostles refer to no other law, as might be proved by numerous testimonies. Indeed, the very supposition of a change in the moral law is monstrous; it would imply a change in the Lawgiver, which is nothing less than blasphemy.

God does, it is true, accept from his people an obedience mingled with defects and imperfections, but not as their justifying righteousness; it is for Christ's sake, and because they are already "accepted in the Beloved." "Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus," they are adopted into the number of sons and daughters; and having his righteousness imputed to them, or set down to their account, there is no condemnation to them. "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth?" It is said of believers, that "they are passed from death unto life, and shall never come into condemnation."

But we are said to be JUSTIFIED BY FAITH: how is this to be understood? This doctrine stands out prominently in the New Testament, and the Reformers considered it the cardinal point, or the centre of the Christian religion. Luther, as far as doctrine was concerned, commenced the Reformation by restoring this doctrine to its proper place; and all true reformers ever since have placed justification by faith at the foundation of their system, and made it the burden of their preaching; and the neglect of this doctrine, or a disposition to explain it away, or not to maintain it in its simple and obvious meaning, is an evidence of a corrupt system of theology, and marks a deviation from the truth in other particulars. This doctrine is as essential in the system of divine truth, as the centre of gravity in bodies; in both cases these points must be firmly supported, or the system falls.

But we return to the important question, How does faith justify a sinner? Certainly not on account of any merit in the act of faith. They who maintain this, fall into no less an error than substituting an act of our minds for Christ and his righteousness. Faith may, in a certain sense, be called a work; but it is not as a work that it justifies, or it would never have been, as it is, placed in strong contrast with works. Though faith be an act of obedience to the law of God, it is not as such that it justifies.



Hear what Paul teaches on this point: "Therefore we conclude, that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." "Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." To interpret this last phrase as though Paul intended to teach that the act of believing was the righteousness by which the ungodly are justified, would be to make him most palpably contradict himself; for that construction would not only make faith a work in the affair of justification, but a substitute for all other works; whereas the apostle, in this passage, says, "But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly;" that is, who performs no works as a righteousness by which he expects to obtain the favor of God; but in regard to works, is considered, when justified, as an ungodly person—one who has no goodness of his own to plead, "but believeth." Here faith must be considered as a mere instrument, or organ, by which Christ is received.

But why is it said to be "counted for righteousness?" For no other reason but because it is that act of the soul by which Christ, who is THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS, is apprehended, appreciated, and appropriated. A reprieve is obtained by a great price from the king; the benevolent person who procured it offers it to the condemned criminal, who eagerly stretches out his hand to receive it. If his acceptance were made the condition of his deliverance, the case would be a striking parallel to the offer of pardon and the divine favor to a sinner. The blessings of the gospel are suspended on the act of believing. This is, in fact, the cordial reception of the blessing. But who would think of ascribing merit to the mere act of receiving a pardon by a condemned criminal? As little reason is there for considering the act of faith by which we receive Christ's righteousness as either meritorious, or as standing in the place of a perfect righteousness, and accepted as such, though manifestly very far short of being all that the law demands.

But how can the righteousness of the Redeemer be available to the justification of the sinner? To this I reply, that from eternity Christ undertook, in the covenant of redemption, to satisfy law and justice for all who were given to him by the Father in that covenant—all who should

believe on him. When incarnate, he bore their sins, and for them fulfilled all righteousness—did all that was required as a satisfaction to law and justice. "As by the disobedience of one many were made sinners, so by the obedience of One shall many be made," constituted, "righteous." "He is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." Now if the union, by covenant between the first Adam and his posterity, was so close that by his fatal transgression they all died, why may there not be formed a union as intimate between Christ and his people? This is the very principle on which the apostle argues in the fifth of Romans. But the children of God are, "by nature, children of wrath, even as others." They, in their natural condition, are under the curse of the law; for we read that "Christ was made a curse for us, to redeem us from the curse of the law." They continue aliens from the commonwealth of Israel until, by the gracious intercession of their Redeemer, the Holy Spirit is sent to bring them to Christ. On their part, faith is the act by which they receive Christ. This consummates the spiritual union between him as the head, and them as the members. This union is of such a nature that, in law, whatever the Surety has done or suffered, can be set down to their account; or, as the apostle's phrase is, "righteousness is imputed to them." By having this perfect righteousness reckoned to them, they are instantly and completely justified. God is now reconciled to them through the death of his Son. All their sins are freely pardoned, and they are adopted as sons, and immediately made heirs of eternal life. Here then we see how faith justifies as an instrument of union and reception, and in what sense it is "counted for righteousness." We also see how a contrast can be set up between faith and works—between grace and debt.

But although faith alone justifies, and justifies not as a work, yet it is a working faith which justifies. It is the fruitful principle of sanctification, and of all evangelical obedience or good works. And as there is a "dead" as well as a living faith, and many have been deceived by glorying in the former, while they were destitute of the latter, we should guard this point with especial care. The doctrine of justification by faith without works, is very liable to be perverted and abused by carnal men, who vainly dream of being saved in, not from their sins. This corrupt leaven began to ferment in the church in the days of the apostles. James wrote his epistle with a view to detect and expose this dangerous error. He seems, at first

view, expressly to contradict what the apostle Paul had taught; for he says, "Ye see then, how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only." But when the context is impartially considered, the appearance of contradiction vanishes, and we find his doctrine harmonious with that of Paul; for he is speaking of a mere nominal "dead faith," which manifested itself by no good works. No man was ever justified by such a faith. He is not speaking of that justification which takes place when a sinner first believes—the only foundation of which is the merit of Christ—but he is speaking of that justification arising from the evangelical works of believers, by which their faith is proved to be genuine, and their profession is evidenced to be sincere; and with which acts of obedience God is also well pleased, for he will not "forget the works of faith and labors of love" of his own dear children. The instances which he gives, especially that of Abraham, show his meaning plainly enough. "Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?" But Abraham was in covenant with God, and of course justified, a long time before he performed this act; but this proved his sincerity and the strength of his faith. By that extraordinary act of obedience in which Abraham, without hesitation or reluctance, offered up his only and well-beloved son at the command of God, he met the approbation of his Maker; and this approbation was publicly expressed, which expression of divine favor is, by James, without much departure from the usual signification of the word, termed "justification," and is of the same kind with that public approbation of the good works of the righteous which will take place at the day of judgment, which is also called justification by our Lord. "For," says he, "by thy words thou shalt be justified." Matt. 12:37. Many, however, in reconciling James with Paul, choose to interpret the word justify, as used by James, to signify the manifestation of the sincerity of our profession of faith in the sight of men; to which I make no objection, as this interpretation doubtless accords with truth, but I consider what I before stated as the precise meaning of this apostle.

As the word justification is borrowed from the proceedings of courts of justice, and is therefore said to be a forensic term, I will, by way of illustration and practical application of the subject, suppose the case of a convinced sinner arraigned before the tribunal of God, to be tried for the

actions of his whole life. The Judge being omniscient and infinitely just, can neither be deceived nor biassed. The rule of judgment must be his own perfect law: no other standard of right can be admitted or conceived of in this court. The demands of this law are perfect obedience in heart and life: all deviations from the law, even in thought and desire, as well as in word and deed, are marked as sins. If any man had uniformly done all that the law required, he might be adjudged to the possession of eternal life on account of his own obedience; that is, he would be justified by his own works. The language of the law is, "He that doeth these things, shall live in them." "This do, and thou shalt live." "The law was given unto life."

But the person arraigned is conscious that he is a sinner, and therefore cannot possibly be justified in this way. While his conviction is partial, and his knowledge of sin indistinct, he very naturally makes efforts at amendment and reformation. His ignorance of the extent and spirituality of the law leads him to hope that he can make, by future obedience, a compensation for the past. But increasing light convinces him that these hopes are utterly fallacious, for he finds that no future obedience, however perfect, would have any effect to cancel the debt already contracted; and he now finds, by sad experience, that he cannot keep the law perfectly for one moment.

Under this conviction we suppose him to stand arraigned before the heart-searching Judge, and when confronted with the law and a list of his sins—of omission as well as commission—of thought, word, and deed, with all their aggravations—what plea can he offer, what defence can he make? Alas, he attempts nothing of the kind. His mouth is stopped. He stands speechless before his Judge. Or rather, he acknowledges every thing. He admits every charge to be true. He joins in his own condemnation, and justifies God for the sentence which he is convinced that justice requires him to pronounce. He sees no way of escape, for all his vain refuges in which he once trusted are now swept away. And he expects nothing else but that he shall be sent away into everlasting punishment. But under this awful conviction he brings no complaint against the law which condemns him, nor against his righteous Judge. He takes all the blame and guilt to himself, and fully "accepts the punishment of his sins," as a just award. His language is like that of

David, "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight; that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest."

He has, indeed, heard of a proclamation of mercy; but though it excites a vague, trembling hope that relief is possible, yet he sees not how it is possible for him to escape from the grasp of inflexible justice in which he is held, for now he dares not even ask that the law which condemns him should be either set aside, suspended, or relaxed. Any thing of this kind his enlightened conscience correctly judges to be altogether out of the question. No doubt this is an awful moment in the existence of the sinner, and he is ready to give himself up for lost.

But behold, AN ADVOCATE rises in the court, and offers to undertake his cause. And it is ONE who has the ear of the Judge, and who appears in the sinner's own nature. It is the incarnate Son of God, who says to the convicted sinner, "Commit your cause to me with confidence, and I will bring you off victorious. However deep your guilt, however multiplied your transgressions, a full and free pardon will be sure the moment you trust yourself into my hands." And then, to encourage confidence in his ability, he shows that he has rendered an infinitely meritorious obedience to this very law, and has in his own body endured the curse which it denounces upon transgressors; and that he has acquired the right to obtain the redemption of all to whom this righteousness shall be applied.

The convinced sinner sees, with joy and astonishment, that there is a way in which all his grievous sins can be pardoned, and he be restored to the favor of a justly offended God. Now he believes with all his heart. Now he accepts the kind offer of the Saviour to be his advocate. Now he commits himself, and all his soul's concerns, into the hands of a faithful Redeemer. Now his burden of grief is removed, and he rejoices in the riches of grace in Christ Jesus; and his heart, hitherto so insensible, melts into love and gratitude. And now, though he may have confidence that his sins are all blotted out, and shall never rise in remembrance against him, yet his heart breaks with ingenuous relentings, and godly sorrow gushes out in a flood.

He can now look up with humble confidence to his Judge, and plead the

perfect righteousness of his SURETY. He sees that God is propitiated by the meritorious sacrifice of his own Son, and feels that a blessed reconciliation has taken place between him and his God. For, on the part of God, his anger is appeased. He is well pleased with his own dear Son, and with all who stand robed in his perfect righteousness: and as to his own enmity against God and his government, he finds that it is slain by a view of the cross; and already he begins to experience something of the sweet spirit of adoption, and the hope which maketh not ashamed springs up in his breast never more to leave him, but to be, in all temptations, troubles, and storms, as "an anchor to his soul, sure and steadfast, entering into that within the veil."

Thus is the sinner actually JUSTIFIED BY FAITH in Christ Jesus. There is no longer any legal condemnation to him, for though he sin—and there is no man that liveth, and sinneth not—his ADVOCATE ever lives to intercede for him, and to plead, for his pardon, the complete atonement which he has made. And a soul once justified never can fall again under the condemnation of the law, unless Christ should cease to intercede, or should no longer apply to his benefit his own perfect righteousness. Clouds and darkness may often obscure his evidences of sonship, and his comfort may be greatly interrupted through his own remaining unbelief, and the temptations of the adversary; but none shall be able to pluck him out of the hands of his heavenly Father, nor out of the hands of his ever-faithful Shepherd.

After this account of the gospel method of a sinner's gratuitous justification, will any still bring forward the old stale objection, that by this plan we are overthrowing the obligation of the moral law, and undermining the foundations of morality and good works? If there be any such objectors, let Paul answer them: "Do we make void the law through faith? God forbid; nay, we establish the law." "Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid; how shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" Some did, indeed, slanderously report of the apostle and his fellow-teachers, that they said, "Let us do evil, that good may come." Concerning all who would say this, Paul declares that "their damnation is just."

And what does uniform experience testify in regard to the lives of those

who maintain this doctrine? Are they more loose in their lives than others? Have they not, in all ages, rather been the humble, self denying, faithful imitators of Christ? So far are they from pleading any exemption from the law as a rule of life, or taking occasion to indulge in sin because grace abounds, that they "delight in the law of God after the inner man"—hunger and thirst after righteousness—and feel the remainder of sin dwelling in them to be their greatest burden and sorest affliction, which causes them to groan, and to exclaim with Paul, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death?" Justifying faith works by love, and love is the very spring and essence of all holy obedience. Gratitude impels the reconciled sinner to be zealous for good works. "The love of Christ canstraineth him." He feels that being "bought with a price," he is "not his own," and should "glorify God in his body and spirit, which are God's."

#### SUMMARY OF THE DOCTRINE OF JUSTIFICATION

The Scripture doctrine of justification may be briefly summed up in the following particulars.

1. It is God that justifies.
2. Justification is wholly gratuitous, without merit and without any works of our own as its ground.
3. The merit of Christ, as Mediator, expressed in Scripture by his righteousness, his obedience, his blood, his death, his life, his sacrifice, is the true and only meritorious ground of a sinner's pardon and acceptance.
4. The justification of the ungodly includes the remission of sins, by which often it is expressed in Scripture; but it also includes their acceptance as righteous, for the sake of Christ's perfect righteousness reckoned to their account.
5. Justification is by faith, as the instrument of union to Christ, and the reception of his righteousness.

6. The faith which justifies is always a living, operative, fruitful faith. No one is justified by a faith which is alone, or unattended with good works.

7. Justification and sanctification, though inseparably connected, and equally necessary to salvation, are nevertheless distinct blessings of the new covenant; and the latter is the only certain evidence of the possession of the former.

8. Justification takes place at the moment of believing, and is as perfect at once as it can ever be, and there can be no place for a second justification in the sight of God, and in relation to his law; but there is a manifestation of the genuineness of our faith and sincerity of our profession, both in this world and at the day of judgment, which is also sometimes called justification.

9. No plan of justification which does not make a complete provision for the satisfaction of all the demands of law and justice, is honorable to God or agreeable to Scripture. By this single test may all erroneous theories of justification be tried and condemned.

The importance of the doctrine of a sinner's justification before God, is not exceeded by that of any other in the whole circle of divine truth. Without justification it is evident that no man can be saved. It is then a vital subject. Eternal life is involved in it. For let it be considered, that there is here no middle ground. He that is not in a state of justification must be in a state of condemnation; and if he continues in that state, he must perish for ever. One unpardoned sin will sink the soul to hell. What then must be the condition of sinners who are pressed down with the guilt of innumerable transgressions?

O reader, let me entreat you to apply this truth to your own case. You are, at this moment, either in a state of condemnation or justification. You are now either reconciled to God, and his adopted child, or his wrath abideth on you. If the latter, how can you be at ease? How can you sleep quietly in your bed? How can you partake, with any pleasure, of your daily food? Alas, your condition is far more dangerous, far more deplorable, than any words are capable of describing. And now, while the moments pass, you are approaching nearer and nearer to the lake of fire.



And are you determined to take no warning, to listen to no advice? Will you shut your eyes against a danger so imminent and so dreadful? How will you regret this carelessness, when perhaps the day of mercy is ended. Those words of our Saviour to Jerusalem are most touching: "O that thou hadst known, even thou, in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace; but now they are hid from thine eyes." In a little time your eternal destiny will be immutably fixed. There is a limit beyond which the call of mercy and the strivings of the Spirit do not reach. When once the sinner has passed that awful boundary, his soul is completely lost; his hopes are extinguished; the blackness of darkness for ever lies before him. His sins will cluster round him like so many ghosts, to torment him. The fire which can never be quenched already is enkindled, and the worm which never dies begins to gnaw his vitals. O wretched creature! how dearly didst thou buy a little mirth and ease in the world; how little profit hast thou now in all thy worldly riches and honors! They cannot purchase for thee one moment's relief, one drop of water for thy scorched tongue.

"Knowing the terrors of the Lord, we would persuade men." If you were now actually beyond the reach of mercy, it would be no kindness to disturb you; but while there is life, there is hope. The sound of mercy is still heard, the door of hope is open, salvation is yet attainable. But there is no time to be lost. The least delay may be ruinous. Escape for your life. Flee from the coming wrath; seek safety in the house of refuge; press into the ark; flee to the altar, and seize on its blood-sprinkled horns. This very day may be the accepted time, and the day of your salvation.

**SINNERS WELCOME TO COME TO JESUS  
CHRIST**

OUR blessed Lord knew how prone convinced sinners are to unbelief as it regards the reception which he is disposed to give them if they come to him, and therefore he graciously uttered, and has left on record this precious encouragement, "HIM THAT COMETH UNTO ME I WILL IN NO WISE CAST OUT." No, though your sins are very great, the kind Redeemer will not cast you out; even if that were true which you sometimes think, that you are the greatest sinner who ever lived upon earth, he will not cast you out. "His blood cleanseth from all sin." It is as easy for him to save a great as a small sinner. No one was ever saved because his sins were small; no one was ever rejected on account of the greatness of his sins. Where sin abounded, grace shall much more abound. If your guilt is very enormous, the greater honor will redound to that Deliverer who plucks such a brand from the burning. "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

But is there not one sin which never has pardon, neither in this world nor in that which is to come? There is; but no one who has committed that sin ever desires to come to Christ; and even that sin would not be unpardonable, if the sinner who is burdened with its guilt should come to him. It is not unpardonable because the blood of Christ has not adequate efficacy to remove it, but because the miserable blasphemer is abandoned by the Spirit of God to his own malignity, and therefore never does nor can desire to believe on Christ.

Christ will not cast you off because you have long continued to sin against God, though it be even to gray hairs and the decrepitude of old age. It is indeed a wicked thing to continue one day in rebellion against the King of heaven; and no one can calculate the debt of guilt incurred by spending a long life in continued acts of transgression. But however long you may have continued in rebellion, and however black and long the catalogue of your sins, yet if you will now turn to God by a sincere repentance, and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, you shall not be cast out. He that cannot lie hath declared, "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." I heard a preacher declare from the pulpit that there was no example in the Bible of any one being converted in old age; but he was undoubtedly under a mistake. Was not Manasseh, one of the wickedest men who ever

lived, brought to repentance in old age? The ages of those converted on the day of Pentecost and at other times are not given. It is enough for us to know that the aged no more than the young are excluded from the free invitations of the blessed Saviour. He invites all the laboring and heavy-laden, and of course those who are burdened with the infirmities of declining years as well as of unnumbered sins.

Aged sinner, you are not excluded from mercy by any word of God in the whole book of divine revelation. God has set before you an open door which no man has a right or power to shut. If you should be shut out, it will be by your own unbelief, and not for want of a warrant to come. Enter, then, without delay or hesitation. None can less afford to delay than the aged sinner. Now is the time. Now or never. You have, as it were, one foot already in the grave. Your opportunities will soon be over. Strive, then, I entreat you, to enter in at the strait gate.

But do you ask whether a man may not outlive his day of grace, and be given over to judicial blindness before life is ended? Undoubtedly he may; but as I said before, such a one, I believe, is never found inquiring what he must do to be saved. The devil often tempts aged sinners, and others too, to believe that it is now too late for them to repent; that the time of their visitation is gone by, and that there is no hope for them. And many miserable souls are long held entangled in this snare. He may even quote Scripture to prove that there is a boundary which, when passed, all hope of salvation is to be relinquished. But as long as we are in the body we have the overtures of mercy made to us by the authority of God, and whether we be young or old, "he that cometh," Christ has declared, shall not be cast out. Take him at his word. Venture on him. If you stay away you must perish, and you can but perish if you go. But see, the golden sceptre is held out. This affords full assurance that if you draw near and touch it you shall live.

Some are convinced that there is salvation in no other but Christ the Lord, yet they hesitate to come because they feel themselves to be so vile and unworthy. They cannot be persuaded that so great and holy a being as the Son of God will look with favor on creatures so abominably polluted and stained with iniquity. Such feelings as these very naturally arise in the minds of persons made sensible of the sinful defilement of

their nature; but they are most unreasonable when we take into view the character of Jesus Christ, and the errand on which he came into the world. If he had become incarnate and had died on the cross only for the benefit of the pure and righteous, then this excuse for not coming to him would have some validity; but when we know that he bears the character of a Saviour of sinners, and that his name was called JESUS by the angel who announced his birth, because he should save his people from their sins; when we consider his repeated declaration, that he came to seek and save the lost—not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance, and that he exhibits himself as the Physician, not of the whole, but the sick, we must pronounce this objection most unreasonable.

If you were not a sinful, polluted, helpless, and miserable creature, this Saviour would not be suited to you, and you would not be comprehended in his gracious invitations to the children of men. But the deeper you are sunk in sin and misery, the greater reason you have for coming to one who is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him. If you were covered with leprosy, and a fountain was opened for washing away every sort of uncleanness, would you stay away because you were so polluted? Or if deadly sick, would you refuse to apply to the physician? The awakened, convinced sinner is the very one to whom Jesus especially directs his attention. And it is a preposterous thing for such to delay coming, under the delusive hope of making themselves fit. This they never can do, and if they could they would not need a Saviour. What, will you wash yourselves in a muddy pool to prepare for being cleansed in a pure fountain?

But some one may be ready to say, "All admit that none ever come to Christ until they experience conviction of sin, but I have no conviction, or none worth mentioning. My mind is so blind that I can perceive nothing clearly, and my heart is so hard that what I do see to be true I cannot feel. O if I could experience some tender relenting—if I could get this adamant heart broken into contrition—if I could even feel pungent pain or alarm on account of my sins, my case would not appear so hopeless. But how can I come to Christ with this blind and stupid heart?"

Now, my friend, I beg you to consider that this blindness and unyielding hardness is the very core of your iniquity, and to be convinced that you

are thus blind and stupid is true conviction of sin. If you had those feelings which you so much covet, they would not answer the end of conviction, which is, to show you how sinful and helpless your condition is. But if you felt as you wish to feel, you would not think your heart so wicked as you now see it to be. And the truth is, that you are now in a better situation to come to Christ than you would be if you had less conviction of the hardness and stubbornness of your heart. The use of conviction is to show your need of a Saviour, and to set clearly before your mind your utterly helpless and hopeless condition in yourself, and that a holy God would be perfectly just in leaving you to your own fruitless efforts, and in punishing you for ever for your sins.

"Let not conscience make you linger,

Nor of fitness fondly dream;

All the fitness he requireth

Is to feel your need of him."

Take words, therefore, and go immediately and fall down before him, and say, "Against thee, thee only have I sinned and done this evil in thy sight, that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest." Confess the righteousness of the sentence which condemns you, and accept the punishment of your sins as just. Cry with Peter, when sinking in the sea, "Lord, save; I perish." Or with the blind man, "O thou Son of David, have mercy on me!" Or with the Syrophenician woman, "Lord, help me." Or with the penitent publican, "God be merciful to me a sinner." Say, like the royal penitent,

"My lips with shame my sins confess

Against thy law, against thy grace.

Lord, should thy judgment grow severe,

I am condemned, but thou art clear.

Yet save a trembling sinner, Lord,

Whose hope, still hovering round thy word,  
Would light on some sweet promise there,  
Some sure support against despair."

But here is another poor soul, more bowed down than any which we have considered. It is an awakened backslider. This man verily thought that he was a true Christian, and under that impression applied for admittance into the church, and was received, and for a season seemed to run well; but by the snares and baits of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and insidious lusts of the flesh, and the pride of life, was by degrees seduced from the paths of piety. After a while the profession of religion was laid aside as an inconvenient thing; since which time, until lately, he has been sinking deeper and deeper into the spirit of the world which lies in wickedness. But recently, by a sore visitation of affliction, his conscience has been awakened to a consideration of his woful state, and he inquires with the most earnest solicitude whether there is any ground of hope for such a backslider, who has sinned much more egregiously since he made a profession of religion than he ever did before. Now to such a one I feel authorized to say, Christ invites even backsliders like you to come and be saved. I find no clause excluding the returning backslider, guilty as he is in the sight of God. He says in regard to this man as well as others, "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out."

There is indeed mention made in Scripture of some backsliders who turn back unto perdition, and never can be renewed again unto repentance; these never come to Christ, and never truly desire to come. For them nothing remains "but a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation to devour the adversaries."

But we read in Jeremiah of the Lord calling upon his backsliding Israel to return, Jer. 3:12; and in Hosea, God says, "I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely." Hos. 14:4. This is a most gracious and encouraging promise, and we find in fact that God has received great backsliders upon their repentance, and has freely pardoned their enormous sins. I believe that the deplorable backslidings of David, and his subsequent pardon and restoration, were left on record that convinced backsliders might not

despair of mercy. And our Lord intimates that Peter, when recovered from his shameful fall, should make it his business "to strengthen his brethren." Some of this class may perhaps allege that they are afraid that they never were truly of the number of the Israel of God. That perhaps is a question which you will never be able to solve in this life. But as to the point in hand it matters not; if you will now come to Christ, you will be received. Come, and he will in no wise cast you out.

It is commonly said that men are forward to believe whatever is connected with their own interest. This in common cases is true; but it is also true, that when some very great and unexpected good news is brought to us, we find it very difficult to credit it. It seems too good to be true. When Jacob's sons returned to their father after Joseph had made himself known to them, and informed him that his son Joseph was alive and governor of all Egypt, the old man could not believe the report until he lifted up his eyes and saw the wagons which had been sent to convey him to Egypt. So the convinced sinner finds it very hard to believe that a free and full salvation is offered to him, and that Christ stands ready to receive him, and not only to pardon all his sins, but give him a sure title to the heavenly inheritance. It seems a thing almost impossible that he should be thus highly favored, and therefore, when he should with humble confidence lay hold on eternal life, he stands parleying, hesitating, and demurring. He is prone to think that there must be some mistake in the business, and that this good news cannot be true, at least in relation to himself. But when the truth stands out clearly revealed, he begins to understand what he never did before, the absolute and perfect freeness of salvation, and how it is that Christ receives the coming sinner just as he is, in all his guilt and vileness. Then, indeed, he cannot but rejoice and wonder at the suitableness of the plan of salvation to his character and necessities; that it comes down to his wretched and helpless circumstances, and takes him out of the horrible pit and the miry clay, and sets his feet on a rock, establishes his goings, and puts a new song into his mouth, even praise unto God.

Since awakened, convicted sinners are so prone to unbelief on this point, it will not be a superfluous labor to offer **SOME COGENT REASONS** to convince such that Christ will not cast off any who come to him, whatever

may have been their former character or sins.

And I would first mention, that all who come are drawn by the Father. "No man," says Christ, "can come unto me except the Father which sent me draw him." Those who do truly come are such as were given to him by the Father. "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me." Now this drawing of the Father is the fruit of his everlasting love. "We love him, because he first loved us." And surely Christ will not cast out those whom the Father has loved and given to him, and effectually drawn by his grace.

But you may be ready to reply, "How shall I know that I am of the number given by the Father to the Son?" I answer, that you need no other or better evidence of it than your being willing to come. Surely you know that you did not make yourself willing. If you have come to Christ, or are willing to come, I am sure that you will ascribe it entirely to the grace of God. Others, as good by nature and practice as you, remain in love with the world and under the power of sin. Why is this? You must say with Paul, "By the grace of God I am what I am." The choice did not commence with you, but with him. "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you." And as Christ concurs with the Father in this drawing, for he says, "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me," he surely will not cast out the poor penitent whom he has drawn to his feet. No, no; never. "Him that cometh he will in no wise cast out."

Again, Christ redeemed, by the shedding of his precious blood, every soul that comes to him, and the impelling motive which induced him to die for sinners was love, unspeakable love: "who loved us, and gave himself for us." Can any one then think or suspect that when Christ sees the travail of his soul coming to him, he will cast them out? It would be like blasphemy to say that he would. No; he delights to see the fruit of his painful sufferings even unto death. It was predicted, in connection with the impressive description of his sufferings and death, that he should "see the travail of his soul, and be satisfied."

Again, the Holy Spirit is the agent in convincing men of sin and bringing them to Christ; and this Holy Spirit is sent by the Son as well as the Father to accomplish this work; and when it is effected, when the soul is made willing to bow his neck to the easy yoke of Christ, will he cast him



out? Impossible.

But the honor and glory of the Redeemer is concerned in this matter. God is not glorified in any transaction upon earth so much as in the conversion of a sinner. There is joy in heaven at the repentance of one sinner, more than over ninety and nine just persons who need no repentance. And every redeemed and renewed soul is a jewel in the mediatorial crown.

We may learn the willingness of Jesus Christ to receive sinners, not only by his frequent gracious declarations, but by his conduct in regard to such as applied to him. Christ's personal ministry was confined to the people of Israel, and when he sent out the twelve, and afterwards the seventy, their commission was restricted within the same limits. Yet when a woman of Canaan came to implore his aid, he did not reject her, though she was descended from an accursed race. At first, indeed, he seemed to give her a repulse, but it was intended only to bring more clearly to view the strength of her faith. And his address to her in the end is truly remarkable: "O woman, great is thy faith; be it unto thee as thou wilt." And when the centurion, another pagan, applied to him to come and heal his child, he did not reject his suit because he was a heathen, but said of him, "Verily, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel."

When the vilest sinners, as publicans and harlots, came penitently to his feet, he rejected none of them, although his gracious attention to such greatly injured his reputation in the view of the scribes and Pharisees. His condescending behavior towards that woman who was notorious as a sinner, is in the highest degree touching. He was dining in the house of a Pharisee, and this infamous but penitent woman, urged by the strength of her feelings, found her way into the house, and while he was reclining on a couch at dinner, she came up behind him and wept such a flood of tears on his feet, that she is said to have washed his feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. This led the Pharisee to entertain a suspicion that Christ could not be a teacher sent from God, or he would have known the infamous character of this woman. Jesus knowing his thoughts, uttered the beautiful parable of the two debtors, and then making the application to the case of the penitent woman, said, "Wherefore I say unto you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven."

When our blessed Lord was hanging on the cross, he was applied to by one of the malefactors crucified with him. This man being one of the two selected from all the prisoners in Jerusalem for public execution on this occasion, was no doubt deeply stained with the guilt of enormous crimes; but was his suit denied? O no; the response was full of mercy: "This day shalt thou be with me in paradise." Who can fathom the freeness and riches of the grace of Christ? It is indeed "unsearchable riches."

Paul may with propriety be here introduced. According to his own acknowledgment, he was a murderer and a blasphemer, but he obtained mercy, and was made an apostle, a chief instrument in propagating that gospel which he once attempted to destroy, among the Gentiles. Many of the first converts from among the heathen were notorious for the foulest and vilest crimes, for the apostle in writing to the Corinthians, after giving a black list of crimes which exclude the persons guilty of them from the kingdom of heaven, says, "And such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."

But perhaps no example of the extent of divine mercy and its sovereign freedom can equal the pardon extended to the very persons who had imbrued their hands in Christ's own blood. The blood which they shed procured their salvation. And Christ seems to have had special compassion for the bloody city of Jerusalem. Before his death he wept over it and lamented its doom; and after his resurrection, when he met his disciples in a body, he gave direction that "repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." Accordingly, on the day of Pentecost, Peter charges the sin of crucifying the Lord Jesus upon the consciences of those whom he addressed, saying, "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard this they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Did Peter tell them that as they had committed this enormous crime, Christ would not pardon them? By no means. He calls upon them to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins. And these greatest of sinners were that very day received into the church, and

continued steadfast in their attachment to Christ and profession of his name.

Innumerable instances since that day have occurred of the repentance of the greatest sinners, and no true penitent has ever been rejected. If one instance could be produced of any sinner being rejected who ever came to Christ, this might create some doubt in the soul agonized with a sense of guilt. But as there is no such example, the trembling sinner, feeling that he is justly exposed to the wrath of God, need not hesitate nor delay to come at once to Christ, with the assurance that however vile and guilty he may be, he shall meet a welcome reception. O sinner, you are welcome to come to Jesus Christ.

All difficulty as to Christ's willingness to receive returning sinners being, as it is hoped, removed, the only thing which remains to be considered is, **WHAT IS TO BE UNDERSTOOD BY COMING TO CHRIST**, and what are the steps which the sinner must take to come. It is too obvious to need any remark, that a mere bodily approach is not the thing intended. Many of Christ's bitterest enemies were often near his person, as Judas when he betrayed him with a kiss, the soldiers that bound him, that smote him, that scourged him, that nailed him to the cross; but this kind of approach to Christ did those who came near him no good. The coming to Christ of which we have been treating, is the act of the anxious mind which seeks salvation from the burden of sin, and apprehending that Christ is the only Redeemer, **TRUSTS IN HIM**. Christ is exhibited in the gospel as the only Mediator by whom we can be reconciled to God, and offers to do for the sinner whatever is requisite to save him from the curse of the law, and from the blindness and pollution of sin itself; and coming to him is the same as receiving him in that character, or as sustaining those offices which relate to salvation.

There is but one step to be taken, strictly speaking, in coming to Christ, and that is believing in him with all the heart. We are not required to repent and do good works before we come, but to come to him to give us repentance unto life, and to create us anew to good works. But though the act of coming is a single act, yet there are some things which are experienced before this act can be rationally performed. No unawakened, careless sinner, remaining in that state, will come; for the "whole need

not a physician, but they that are sick." The sinner who knows nothing of Christ as he is revealed in the Scriptures, cannot come until he is instructed in regard to the character of Christ. Faith therefore comes by hearing the word. A soul perverted by erroneous opinions respecting the fundamental doctrines of religion, cannot come until he is delivered from these errors. That man who believes Christ to be the promised Messiah, but thinks that he is no more than a good man and a prophet, cannot come to Christ until this fundamental error be removed. The soul that truly comes to Christ must be persuaded that he is indeed the Son of God, and possessed of divine perfections.

The soul convinced of its sins first seeks Christ as he is an atoning Priest. That which it wants is the pardon of sin, and reconciliation with an offended God. Christ, as the great High-priest, has offered up himself as an atoning sacrifice for sin; and as a priest he has entered into the holy place made without hands, there to sprinkle, as it were, his life-giving blood, and to intercede for all who come unto him. When in this character he is apprehended by the seeking sinner, confidence in him is produced. It is seen now how God can be just, and yet the justifier of the ungodly who believes in Christ. It is seen that God having accepted Christ's atoning sacrifice, can receive the guilty sinner into favor and adopt the rebel as a child. These views, accompanied by this trust in the Lord Jesus as having made a complete atonement for our sins, is the act of coming to Christ. But as the soul that is regenerated feels sin itself to be a burden, it looks to Christ for a deliverance from all the disorders of the depraved mind. He is therefore received and trusted, to deliver the soul from the deep stains of iniquity, and by the light of his truth to guide it in the right way.

Let it be remembered that this coming to Christ is not a solitary act of the believing soul; it is one which must be continually repeated. The justified sinner is every moment dependent on his Saviour, without whom he can do nothing. As he is at first justified by faith, so he lives by faith, walks by faith, and by faith overcomes all his enemies, and brings forth the fruits of holiness and peace.

But some will be ready to say, "There is no coming to Christ unless we are drawn, and why then are we blamed for not coming?"

This is not the language of the truly convinced sinner, for he sees and feels that he is guilty of the damning sin of unbelief, and that he deserves to be punished for this sin above all others; for it is this which seals the guilt of all others upon his soul. Dead in sin, it is certain that he will perform no holy action, but he is still a rational and accountable being. The law of God does not lose its authority to command because we have become sinful. It will never do to plead sin as an excuse for sin, or to attempt to justify sinful acts by pleading that we have an evil heart. This instead of being a valid apology, is the very ground of our condemnation. If you feel that your heart is thus blinded and depraved, this conviction of your miserable, sinful state should humble you deeply in the dust, and induce you to cry more earnestly to God for his life-giving Spirit. Often, however, when Christ sends forth his gracious invitation to believe, he enables the soul by the energy of his Spirit accompanying the call to come and receive his grace. He accompanies his word with a quickening efficacy, and "the dead hear the voice of the Son of God and live." Our whole dependence is on the influence of the Holy Spirit. "Paul may plant and Apollos water, but God giveth the increase."

Let us now review the truths which have been inculcated.

1. Christ is an able and willing Saviour, who will in no wise cast out any soul that comes to him.
2. The grace of God, through Christ, is perfectly free; that is, he requires no qualification or merit in those who come. They are invited to apply to him in all their guilt and pollution, that they may from his gracious hands receive pardon and renovation.
3. There is no obstacle in the way of any sinner's coming but what exists in himself. The door of mercy cannot be set wider open than it is; the invitations of Christ could not be more kind and full.
4. The whole blame of the sinner's ruin who refuses to come to Christ, will lie at his own door. The only obstacle is his own perverseness and unwillingness. Christ was willing to give life to his greatest enemies if they would come to him; for he complains, "Ye will not come unto me,

that ye may have life."

5. The conversion of a single soul is the work of God only. The same power which caused light to shine out of darkness, must shine into our hearts. Creation is a work proper to God only, but conversion is a "new creation," and requires power as really divine as that by which the worlds were formed.

6. God has directed the gospel to be preached to every creature without discrimination; and every one who hears it has a divine warrant to receive it; and if he does, he has the faithfulness of God pledged for his everlasting salvation.

7. As the efficacy of the word depends on the energy of the Holy Spirit, all Christians should be incessant and fervent in their supplications for this Spirit of grace to be poured out, that sinners may be converted.

8. We have encouragement to hope that the time is coming, and perhaps drawing near, when conversions will be multiplied far beyond the experience of former ages; when the Jews shall, as a nation, obtain mercy of the Lord, and when all the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ. "EVEN SO, COME, LORD JESUS." Amen.

## **FUTURE PUNISHMENT; OR, THE UNIVERSALIST REFUTED**

No benevolent being delights in the suffering of others, for its own sake; but it is one of the clearest dictates of reason, that sin should be visited with punishment. Men may differ widely in opinion as to what sin is, in regard to many particulars, but every one sees and feels the propriety of

punishing crimes, which he acknowledges to be such, in proportion to their evil. Indeed, it would be difficult to give a definition of sin which does not involve this idea; and a better definition of moral evil could not easily be given, than that it is that which deserves punishment. None are found, therefore, who, while they acknowledge a difference between virtue and vice, deny that the latter deserves punishment. And as all sinful acts are not of equal malignity or turpitude, it will be agreed by all, that, in justice, every one ought to receive according to his deeds; and that he whose sins are less, should not suffer equally with him whose sins are greater.

Whether the end of punishment is always the good of the sufferer, is disputed. On this point it may here be observed, that that intuitive perception, which exists in every mind, of the connection between sin and punishment, has no respect whatever to the good of the guilty person. Punishment, according to the clearest and simplest idea of its nature, is some pain or loss to the person who endures it. Suffering which brings no injury to the sufferer, can scarcely be called punishment in a strict sense. In our intuitive, original judgment of the connection between sin and punishment, we regard nothing but the nature of the crime, the demerit of the act. No man needs to know more, or think of more, in determining that punishment is deserved, than that a crime has been committed. We may conclude, or rather conjecture, that the reason why we are so constituted as to be under the necessity of forming such a judgment, is because sin obstructs the general good, or is injurious to others, as we see that this is its tendency; but this enters not into our original conception. It is a clear dictate of the human mind, that if there be a crime, some punishment is due to it; and when the sin contemplated is atrocious, there is not merely a dispassionate judgment that it ought to be punished, but an earnest demand, an indignant feeling, a vehement desire that the guilty perpetrator of the act should suffer condign punishment. These are the genuine feelings of nature, experienced by all men, in all countries, and in all ages; and no one is conscious that when they rise in his breast, they are excited by a regard to the welfare of the guilty person. The truth is, his welfare is so far from being regarded, that as far as he is considered as deserving of punishment, we do not consult his felicity; but on the contrary, our judgment is, that his happiness ought to be lessened, or

taken away, to the extent of his guilt.

Although we are so constituted as to perceive and feel that sin deserves punishment according to its evil, yet we have no precise standard of the degree of punishment which any sin deserves. Reason cannot tell how much pain is due to any particular offence: its clear perception goes no further than to the general proposition that it ought to be punished according to its desert, whatever that may be. Yet it has appeared exceedingly evident to most men, that although some degree of punishment follows sinful actions in this life, men do not receive here a full retribution for their crimes; since very often great transgressors are prosperous, and some of them die in the commission of atrocious sins. This has furnished the strongest of all the arguments which reason can discover, for a future state of existence. Indeed, admitting the fact that men are not rewarded and punished here according to their respective deserts, the conclusion is inevitable, if God be just. But some moral deists who could not deny the difference between virtue and vice, and that the former ought to be rewarded and the latter punished, held that virtue is its own reward, and vice its own punishment: that is, that good men, in the performance of good actions, and in the consequences which naturally follow them, have their reward; and that wicked men, in the remorse which attends the commission of sin and in its effects, suffer all the punishment which they deserve. Therefore they maintained that there is no future existence to be expected or feared. This theory, however grateful it may be to the wishes of wicked men, as freeing them from all apprehension of a future judgment, has found but few abettors. The reason is, that the evidence against its truth is obvious. All men must see that crimes are not punished in this life according to their demerit.

But in our times and in our country, a new phenomenon has appeared in the religious world. A sect has risen up calling themselves UNIVERSALISTS, who profess to receive the Bible as the word of God, and yet utterly deny all future punishment. From early times there have been a few persons, among whom were some men of learning, who entertained the opinion that the punishment of the wicked in a future world would not be strictly eternal, or without end; but they all held that the impenitent would certainly suffer condign punishment after death.



This scheme was defended on various principles, by different persons; and the arguments of the same persons were not commonly consistent with one another. At one time, they asserted that it would be unjust in the Ruler of the universe to make his creatures eternally miserable on account of the sins committed here in the course of a short life. But again, not satisfied with this ground, they resorted to the mercy and goodness of God as revealed in the gospel, and endeavored to prove that as God loved all his creatures equally, and that as Christ died equally for all, all would certainly be saved—if not here, yet, without doubt, hereafter. These topics of argument were popular, and many would have been the converts to this system, had it not been for a number of plain and stubborn texts of Scripture, which these men, with all their critical efforts, found to be rather intractable. Most people, too, feared to trust their eternal salvation on the criticisms of fallible men. They did not know but that at last it might be found, that the words everlasting and eternal might mean endless punishment. Moreover, it was demonstrated by the defenders of the orthodox doctrine, that the two grand topics of argument used by the Universalists, were perfectly incompatible with each other; for if, in the nature of things, it was unjust to punish men with eternal misery, there was no need for a Saviour to come into the world and die to prevent the Almighty from doing an act of flagrant injustice. Upon this principle, universal salvation would have occurred in due time as a matter of course; and therefore the death of Christ was unnecessary, and there was no occasion for mercy or pardon. But if they built their argument on the principle of God's mercy and Christ's death, and ascribe the salvation of all men to free grace, then it was manifest that had not this mediatorial scheme intervened, men must have, perished for ever; for there is no mercy or grace in redeeming from misery to which men were never exposed. This therefore, which was the principal argument, could not be employed without recognizing the justice of condemning men to endless punishment for their sins. But if that was the punishment to which men were condemned by the law, no reason could be assigned why rejecters of the gospel might not be left to suffer what was before due to them. Upon this ground, there was no presumption against the plain, literal interpretation of those texts which seem to represent future punishment to be eternal. And that which perplexed the subject still more, was the fact that no punishment mentioned in the Scriptures was so great as that

threatened against those who refused to believe the gospel; whereas, according to this theory, the penalty of the law ought to be endless punishment, and the misery actually inflicted on those redeemed from the curse of the law ought to be something very different. Indeed, it was difficult to explain why they should suffer in the future world at all, if Christ died for them so as to free them from the curse of the law; especially, it was almost incredible that they should suffer so long as the phrases used in Scripture, limit them as they would, must import. It was also a perplexing point to determine whether those severe sufferings for ages of ages, were penal, expiatory, or merely castigatory. If they maintained the first, how could they reconcile it with their cardinal position, that Christ redeemed all men from the curse of the law? If, after all, sinners might be left to suffer part of the penalty, why not all? But if the sufferings of the wicked in a future world are held to be expiatory, then they are saved independently of Christ, or their expiation must be added to his; both of which suppositions are derogatory to the Saviour, and inconsistent with the radical principle of their system, that all are saved by grace, through the merit of Christ. And finally, if the punishment which sinners endure in hell is merely castigatory, why is it so long and so tremendously severe? This idea, however, is manifestly repugnant to the whole tenor of Scripture, which uniformly represents the sufferings of the damned as destructive, and never as salutary.

But even on the supposition that the punishment due to each sin was limited, and as short as any one might choose to make it; yet the punishment of the sinner might be justly without end, because, being a moral agent still, and under obligations to obey his Creator, from which he never can be released, he may be continually contracting new guilt; so that if one should suppose that the punishment of one sin was momentary, yet if the sinner in hell is every moment committing fresh sin, it does not appear how he can ever be released. There is no way by which this conclusion can be evaded but by supposing that men and devils in hell are incapable of sinning, or that the sins which they commit there do not incur any additional punishment. But neither of these positions can be maintained. That men whose nature is sinful, and who by long custom have formed inveterate habits of sinning, when removed to another world should cease to commit sin, is an unreasonable

supposition; and to suppose that sin, in a future state, does not incur the curse of the law, or the displeasure of God, is equally unreasonable. God, from the holiness of his nature, must hate sin wherever it appears, and he always acts agreeably to his nature. To suppose men in hell to be divested of their moral agency, would be to suppose them in such a condition as scarcely to be capable of suffering for their sins. No doubt the devil sinned when he tempted our first parents, and in all his other temptations; otherwise he could not be called a murderer from the beginning, and a liar, and the father of lies. Indeed, no one who believes that there is a devil, doubts that he is continually sinning and rebelling against God; and I think it can scarcely be doubted that he will suffer punishment for these sins. Then what reason can be assigned why the reprobate from among men will not continue to sin in another world, and to heap up fresh wrath upon their guilty souls?

Other formidable difficulties encumber this scheme of universal salvation. It was not easy to understand how the inmates of this prison were to be released: whether by a due course of law they should come out after having suffered the full demand of justice, and after having paid the last farthing, as the Scriptures speak; or whether the offers of the gospel should follow them there, and they should not be delivered until they cordially embrace the terms of salvation. Each of these plans has its peculiar difficulties. According to the first, Christ and his merits are completely set aside, and the sinner gets to heaven upon the strict principles of retributive justice; just as, among us, the convict comes out of the penitentiary and enjoys his liberty and the rights of a citizen when he has served out his time, in pursuance of the sentence of the law. But if the sinner comes out of hell by believing the gospel, then the gospel must be preached in hell—but by whom does not appear. And its efficacy there must depend on the Holy Spirit, or on the freewill of the creature. If the former, the Holy Spirit—I tremble to write it—must be poured out in hell—if the latter, it remains to be shown that severe pain will make men willing to believe. But if it depend on our freewill, and this may resist for ages of ages, why not for ever? It may happen then, after all, according to this theory, that some sinners, by their obstinacy, will never be saved. And if efficacious grace rescues them, what reason can be assigned why that grace did not operate effectually in this world to prevent them from

going to that infernal prison.

But the difficulties do not end here. Suppose the prison doors thrown open, and the law to make no further demands, how is the miserable sinner to be fitted for the pure and blessed society of heaven? Whatever hell may be in other respects, surely it is no school of virtue—no place to acquire holy habits, and relish for the praises of the heavenly hosts; unless ages of blasphemy should be thought to prepare a sinner for the exalted hallelujahs of heaven, or the society of devils to qualify for the society of angels and the spirits of just men made perfect; since it is true for ever, that without holiness no man shall see the Lord, and it is demonstrable that there can be no enjoyment in that pure and blessed place for those whose minds are full of malignant passions. Universalists must therefore make it a part of their system to have the soul purified by regeneration and sanctification by the Holy Spirit. Or will they cast indignity on the office and work of the Holy Spirit, as before on that of the Redeemer, by maintaining that his peculiar work can be performed by the fire of hell? It is very remarkable that the holy Scriptures shed a clear light on the path which leads to future misery, but not a solitary ray on the way of escape from that dismal place. Yet, if this is a doctrine of the Scriptures, it is marvellous that they have never mentioned the case of any one saved from hell, nor left us a single hint respecting the method of passing the wide gulf which separates the two places. When the rich man in torment begged Abraham for a drop of water, we surely might have expected some word of encouragement to the poor sufferer, if that venerable patriarch had known any thing of a passage from hell to heaven. But no; he seems to preclude all hope of the kind. "Between us and you," says he, "there is a great gulf fixed: so that they who would pass from hence to you, cannot; neither can they pass to us that would come from thence." Call this discourse a parable, or what you will, it matters not: no word is spoken respecting a way of escape from torment. Nor is there, from the beginning to the end of the Bible, one word to inform us of the method of being delivered from hell and prepared for heaven for those who once go away into everlasting punishment.

There was still another defect in this scheme which, I doubt not, has had practically more efficacy in exploding it than all the rest. It cannot be

concealed, and perhaps will not be denied, that the primary motive which has led men to Universalism, is the desire of removing from the minds of worldly and wicked men the dreadful apprehension of endless torments. I say worldly and wicked men, for the true Christian does not need this doctrine for his consolation. He is safe without it. Therefore the humble and devoted Christian is not commonly, if ever, the advocate of this system. It was a doctrine invented for the lawless and disobedient—a doctrine to bring comfort, not to penitent believers, but to impenitent sinners, who are not willing to forsake their sins. Now, it is manifest that the old scheme of Universalism, which admitted not only of future punishment, but of a duration of punishment which might, in some sense, be called everlasting, did but half answer the purpose contemplated. When the abandoned profligate, the murderer, the robber, the debauchee, the defrauder of the orphan and widow, and every description of ungodly men, saw eternity approaching, supposing that they firmly believed their own tenets, the prospect before them was appalling. What, to lie for ages of ages in fire; or in torment comparable to fire! The thought was intolerable. This subject brings to recollection a fact which occurred more than thirty years ago. A popular preacher of universal salvation thought it necessary to guard his doctrine against the common objection that its tendency was to encourage wicked men to continue in sin, whereupon he undertook to represent to his hearers how long future punishment might possibly last. And he took the illustration so often used by preachers who wish to give some faint idea of eternity, of a bird taking one grain of sand from the earth every thousand or million years until the whole was taken away, and bringing it back, grain by grain, after the same intervals: "so long," said he, "may some atrocious and obstinate sinners have to suffer in hell." A young man who had become a convert to this flesh-pleasing doctrine, upon hearing this representation, was struck with horror. No idea of a duration so long had ever before entered his mind, and he began to be seriously concerned how he should escape from sufferings so tremendous. And it is said that his conviction of danger was only removed by a believing application to the Lord Jesus Christ. But, as might be expected, he was no longer an advocate for the salvation of impenitent sinners.

The reader, I think, will now be able to understand why Universalists in

this country—or at least some of them—have forsaken their old ground, and are now endeavoring to build on an entirely new foundation. They certainly avoid the last-mentioned difficulty of their predecessors. They now have made their doctrine palatable enough to the worst of sinners. There is no danger that the new doctrine, by its terrors, will drive any poor sinner to seek refuge in a crucified Saviour. They preach no appalling doctrine of burning torments in hell for ages of ages. According to the new theory, ALL THAT THE MOST ENORMOUS SINNER HAS TO FEAR OR SUFFER IS CONFINED TO THIS WORLD. Even if he should die blaspheming; by his own hand, as Judas; or in the act of giving command to commit complicated murder, as Herod, it matters not, all is safe: there is no judgment after death, no casting of soul and body into hell, except what takes place here; for as to hell itself, what is it, they ask, when critically explained, but the valley of Hinnom, outside of Jerusalem? Sinners, if this doctrine be true, may dismiss all their foreboding apprehensions. They may, indeed, "eat, drink, and be merry;" and if they will only make up their minds to bear the inconvenience which sin may bring upon them here—and few are restrained from the indulgence of revenge, ambition, avarice, and lust by this consideration—they may give full swing to their corrupt inclinations, and be just as wicked as they please. And indeed, if there be no future reckoning, the principal source of uneasiness to the sinner here will be removed, namely, the fear of judgment to come. This is indeed a glorious doctrine for impenitent sinners. They may even set their Maker at defiance, for they have nothing to fear from him after this life. Nothing which they can do will either retard or hinder their eternal happiness.

I was perhaps wrong in calling this a new doctrine. It is as old as the fall of man, and was distinctly preached in the garden of Eden, when the tempter said to the woman, Thou shalt not surely die; and it has had a willing reception in the minds of many abandoned profligates and hardened apostates from the truth; but I do suppose they never anticipated the time when it should be gravely preached to them from the Bible, as the very essence of the gospel. In this respect, then, it may be called new; for surely no sect before our times, who professed to receive the Scripture in whole or in part, whether in the church or among heretics, ever held and taught such a doctrine as this.

What I propose further in this tract is, to show that THIS DOCTRINE HAS NOT THE SHADOW OF EVIDENCE FROM THE WORD OF GOD TO SUPPORT IT.

But here, I confess, I feel a difficulty in the very commencement. What, am I called upon to prove that doctrine false, which maintains that the New Testament teaches that the impenitent sinner will not be punished for his crimes after death? Why, it would be almost as reasonable to be required to refute the assertion that there were neither words nor letters in the Bible, or to demonstrate that he spoke falsely who should declare that there was no such book in existence. Some things are so manifest, that it would be ridiculous to attempt their proof by reasoning. In fact, reasoning and argument are not intended for truths so plain that he that runs may read them. Who would undertake to refute the fool who should insist upon it that the sun did not shine at noonday? Much like this, it seems to me, is the task I have taken upon myself. When I first heard of men who professed to believe the Scriptures, and at the same time denied all future punishment, I knew not how to believe it. But since that time I have had evidence enough of their existence, and have had the humiliation to be convinced that many follow their pernicious ways. But it may be asked, Why do these deceivers connect their doctrine with the BIBLE? Would it not be much easier to take the ground of infidelity at once, and depend upon reason for support, instead of Scripture? It would seem so at first view, but this ground has been heretofore occupied without success. Infidelity is out of fashion, and as most people have a veneration for the Bible, they wish to avail themselves of these common sentiments in favor of the Scriptures; and by this means they get a handle for working on the credulity and prejudice of unstable souls, who are ever gaping after something new and strange in religion; "ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." By the perversion of the sacred Scriptures, also, they are able to promise their followers not only exemption from future misery, but positive felicity in heaven, which they could not do on the principles of infidelity.

Let us see, then, in what way the advocates of the complete and unconditional salvation of impenitent sinners attempt to defend their doctrine. The texts relied on are such as these:

1. "All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn unto the Lord; and all the kindreds of the nations shall come and worship before him"—"all nations whom he hath made shall come and worship before him, and glorify his name." Now, this text has nothing to do with the subject, more or less. It is obviously a prophecy of the universal spread of the gospel in the millennium, or glorious latter days of the church. This is a kind of universalism in which we rejoice to believe; for it is predicted by Him who cannot lie, that the earth shall in those latter days be full of the glory of God. Then, indeed, shall "the ends of the earth turn unto the Lord, and all the kindreds of the nations come and worship before him." But I ask, What has this to do with the future salvation of those who never turn unto the Lord, nor render him any worship, but die in their sins? Whether the language of this prophecy is to be taken in its most unlimited signification, is a matter of no consequence. If not one unconverted sinner should, in those blessed times of gospel grace, be found upon earth, that will have no effect on the condition of those who continue in their obstinate rebellion until death. The text asserts nothing respecting past times, nor any times that may intervene before the blessed era of universal grace shall commence.

2. "The righteous shall be recompensed in the earth; much more the wicked and the sinner." This, I find, is a favorite text with the advocates of the doctrine under consideration. They have caught at the words recompensed in the earth, as if they furnished a proof that the sinner received in this world a full retribution for his crimes. But they must be very short-sighted critics, or must be confident that their followers have no discernment at all, or they would never have selected this passage of Scripture as the corner-stone of their fabric. The plain meaning of the wise man in this text is, that in the righteous dispensations of divine Providence, the righteous man shall receive some recompense for his good deeds, and much more will the wicked and the sinner be visited, even here, more or less, with divine judgments, by which a holy God testifies his displeasure against their evil ways. But does the text assert that their whole recompense shall be received in this world? It does not. And if it did, it would contradict the whole tenor of Scripture. But these pretended critics, in their haste to prove that the wicked sinners receive their whole recompense in the earth, forget to notice that the words are



spoken primarily of the righteous, and therefore if the bare use of the word recompense proves that the wicked receive all their punishment here, then the righteous, as they receive their full recompense here, must expect no felicity hereafter. And so we have got round to the conclusion of the atheist or moral deist, that there is neither good nor evil beyond the grave. And let them escape from this conclusion if they can. But this is not all. Their interpretation of this text utterly sets aside the gospel of Jesus Christ. There is, according to this, no manner of need that Christ should die to atone for sin, or rescue the sinner from its punishment, for he bears the whole himself in the earth. He has his full recompense, and what need of a Saviour to interfere in his behalf?

3. A third text alleged in proof of the non-existence of future punishment is, "The Lord is good unto all, and his tender mercies are over all his works." Now it is plain, if this text furnishes conclusive proof that there will be no punishment of sin in the future world, it is equally as strong to prove that there is no punishment of sin in this world; and so it overthrows their fundamental principle, that sin is recompensed here. If sin deserves punishment, it is no how inconsistent with God's goodness to inflict it; and it is as little incompatible with this amiable attribute to inflict deserved punishment in the future world as in the present. All that it is requisite to be assured of is, that the pain inflicted is just. Manifestly, then, nothing can be inferred from this and similar texts unless we will draw conclusions in direct opposition to plain facts, and also to principles acknowledged by those who use the argument. Declamation concerning the goodness and tender mercy of God may beguile the simple, but will have no effect on those who know that the name of Jehovah, as given by himself, is, "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abundant in goodness and truth—but will by no means clear the guilty." Exod. 34:6, 7.

4. Another text adduced in favor of the salvation of all without future punishment is, that Christ "must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet; the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." But what has this to do with the question, whether the impenitent sinner shall be punished in a future state? And who before ever thought that in order to subdue an enemy, and put him under one's feet, it was requisite that he

must be made completely and everlastingly happy? The apostle Paul, in this chapter, is treating of the resurrection of the bodies of believers to immortality and glory, and says nothing of the unbelieving and impenitent. But even if we should admit that by the all made alive in Christ the whole of mankind should be understood, the only consequence that can legitimately be derived from the words is, that all men will be raised from the dead by the power of Christ; a doctrine clearly taught in other parts of Scripture. But because all men shall be raised from the dead, that they may be judged according to the deeds done in the body, it does by no means follow that they shall all be received into heaven; for some will rise, as our Saviour declares, unto the resurrection of damnation.

5. The only other text which I shall now consider, is, that "all things shall be reconciled to God." There are many texts in the Bible in which general expressions of this sort are used; but it is very evident that they are not always intended to embrace every individual of the human family. If we should interpret them without limitation or qualification, wherever they are found, we should inevitably be involved in contradictions and absurdities. According to this mode of interpretation, it might be proved as easily that all men will be lost, as that all will be saved. Every good interpreter of the Bible feels the necessity of comparing Scripture with Scripture, and deducing such a meaning from each passage as shall not be repugnant to the plain dictates of the Spirit in other places. Because it is said that the whole world lieth in wickedness, we do not so understand the apostle as if he meant to teach that every man in the world was lying in wickedness, and that there was no Christian sanctified in part; but this is spoken of the greater number of men, or rather, of the heathen nations, who are commonly called the world in the New Testament.

But we will now adduce TEXTS OF SCRIPTURE SUFFICIENT TO CONVINCING ALL CANDID INQUIRERS, THAT THE DOCTRINE OF UNIVERSALISTS IS IN UTTER CONTRADICTION TO THE WORD OF GOD.

1. Our blessed Saviour says, "Fear not them that kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." The same awful truth is repeated in Luke: "But I will

forewarn you whom ye shall fear: fear him, which, after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell." Matt. 10:28; Luke 12:5. Here the casting into hell comes after the death of the body, and must therefore mean future punishment beyond the grave. The truth is so plain, that argument or comment seems to be superfluous: it cannot be made more evident. Feeling, however, a curiosity to know what gloss these deniers of all future punishment could put on a text so plain, we turned to a pamphlet written by one of their most popular preachers, and found that by being cast into hell, he understands, being thrown into the valley of Hinnom, near Jerusalem. The body, indeed, after being killed, might have been cast into this valley, but how the soul could be punished in this valley he has not explained; nor has he assigned any reason why being cast into this valley is so much more fearful than having the body killed by men. Such an interpretation is too absurd to require refutation.

2. "The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall come forth: they that have done good, to the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, to the resurrection of damnation." John 5:29. These are also the words of Him who is TRUTH itself, and they teach as clearly as words can teach, that after the bodies of the wicked have lain for a time in the grave, they will come forth unto the resurrection of damnation. Is not this future punishment? What evasion can the most perverse ingenuity find here? They tell us that by graves we are not to understand literal graves, and that the death here spoken of is a moral, not a natural death. Well, then, what is the import of the passage? What, according to this interpretation, is the meaning of the resurrection to damnation?

3. "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." "These shall go away into everlasting punishment, and the righteous into life eternal." Matt., chap. 25. Is there no reference to future punishment in these solemn declarations of our Lord? If not, then there is no reference to the future blessedness of the righteous. If ten thousand persons were set to read this portion of Scripture, and each to declare what he believed to be the plain import of the words, can it be believed that there would be found one individual who would doubt whether or not future punishment was

threatened here? Certainly not, unless he had been perverted by the false glosses of Universalist teachers. One of them, whose words are now before me, calls this a parable: "It is supposed," says he, "to furnish an argument in favor of endless happiness on the one hand, and ceaseless perdition on the other. But is there any thing said in the parable about either endless happiness or ceaseless misery? No; there is not." What unblushing assurance must the man possess, who could allow himself to utter and print such a declaration. With such all reasoning is useless; and if Scripture testimony of the clearest and most solemn kind can be set aside by a positive denial of the plain, common meaning of the words, surely it is vain to cite Scripture in proof of any position. But these opposers of the truth, when a text is too evidently against their doctrine, and when they are not satisfied with their own attempts at perverting its meaning, do not scruple to call its authenticity in question. Thus, in regard to this text, the writer already referred to, after denominating the whole passage a parable, and denying that it contains the doctrine of endless happiness and ceaseless misery, apparently dissatisfied with his own exposition, says, "If Mark, Luke, and John believed that Christ taught the awful doctrine of endless woe and misery to any part of the human race, why did none of them record the parable? But neither the parable of the tares, nor any part of the 30th chapter of Matthew is to be found in either of the other evangelists. If they had known any thing about these parables, and believed that they contained proof of so awful a doctrine as that of ceaseless perdition, would they have passed them over in silence?" Here the disregard to the authority of Scripture is manifest. Is not the clear testimony of one inspired apostle sufficient to establish a doctrine? A great part of what is read in the gospel of John is not recorded by any of the other evangelists; must it on this account be rejected? And if the passage does not teach the doctrine of future punishment, why are they so solicitous to get rid of it?

4. Our Lord, in the explanation of the parable of the tares, says, "As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so shall it be in the end of the world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth." Matt. 13:40–43. And in the parable of the net cast

into the sea, in the same chapter, our Lord, in the application, says, "So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth." Matt. 13:47–50. In these passages the punishment threatened is to be inflicted by the ministry of angels at the end of the world, and must, of course, be future punishment. And as this tremendous punishment of being cast into a furnace of fire is threatened to all workers of iniquity, it must be endured after the resurrection. There is here no need of exposition. Every word is as plain as it is terrible. There is no room for plausible evasion. The Universalist may say, as in the former case, that there is no account of this in the other evangelists. If that was an argument of any force, we might as well lay aside the Bible; but one "thus saith the Lord" is enough: the testimony of one inspired apostle will satisfy every one who believes in the inspiration of the sacred Scriptures. But although these parables are not repeated by the other evangelists, the same doctrine of future punishment is inculcated with equal clearness by them all, as will appear by the following testimonies.

5. Mark, chapter 9, records a discourse of Christ, in which the certainty and perpetuity of future punishment are taught as explicitly and strongly as they can be in words. "And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched; where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." And to give emphasis to this awful declaration, our Lord repeats it three several times. Surely it becomes us to tremble at the word of the Lord, and to obey his voice, by denying ourselves and repenting of our sins, rather than to invent such glosses as would make him speak in a way totally unworthy of a divine teacher.

6. Our next testimony for future punishment shall be taken from the gospel of Luke, chapter 16:19–31. Here we have set before us the different conditions of men in the state after death, in the case of two persons—the rich man and Lazarus. It matters not whether this be considered the history of real personages, or a parable; the doctrine inculcated is the same. If the plainest words can teach any thing, we are here taught that to some the state after death is a state of misery—hopeless, excruciating

misery. The man here spoken of is expressly said to be dead and buried; and what our Lord testifies that he suffered, was after his death and burial. "The rich man also died, and was buried; and in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments." The dreadful nature of his suffering is strongly described in the words which he is represented as employing in his address to Abraham: "Send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame." And the hopelessness of his miserable condition may be learned from Abraham's answer: "Besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you, cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence." If this discourse of our Lord does not teach that there is misery to some men after death, then we may give up all hope of learning any thing from his plainest and most pointed discourses.

7. The evangelist John also records clear and frequent testimonies of this doctrine. We have already cited one testimony from him. We give another: "He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." John 3:36. Here there is no room for any doubt on account of the import of particular terms. That the life here spoken of is life in a future state, cannot be denied, for it is expressly called everlasting life; and it is expressly asserted that unbelievers shall not partake of this life. Now if they are deprived of life in the future world, they are deprived of happiness; there is no medium between life and death, happiness and misery. Unbelievers must therefore be miserable in the future world. And this seems to be asserted strongly in the last words quoted: "And the wrath of God abideth on him." These words do not merely signify that the final unbeliever is under wrath while in this world, but that this is an abiding state. It is the contrast to the possession of eternal life. While the wicked are in this world, they are indeed under a sentence of wrath, but the execution of this wrath is reserved for a future state. The greatest sinners and most obstinate unbelievers live in ease and pleasure here, and do not suffer the wrath under the sentence of which they lie. But it will abide upon them, and the vials of this divine wrath will be poured out upon them to all eternity.

8. "I said, therefore, that ye shall die in your sins; and whither I go, ye cannot come." John 8:21. With this may be connected several other testimonies in which it is clearly implied that the wicked cannot escape future punishment: "Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able." "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" "For what is a man profited, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" Luke 13:24; Heb. 2:3; Matt. 16:26.

9. "But the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. Whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come." "There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it." Matt. 12:31, 32; 1 John. 5:16. But if there is no future punishment, then this sin must be forgiven; or forgiveness is of no consequence to obtain future happiness.

10. "But woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed; it had been good for that man if he had not been born." Matt. 26:24. But if there will be no future punishment, Judas will fare as well as the greatest saint. Indeed, his case was more eligible than that of any of the apostles; for they lived in the midst of persecution, while he was enjoying pleasure. How, then, could it have been good for him never to have been born? According to Universalists, he has an eternity of bliss before him, and therefore, if he had suffered a thousand ages of years, it would be an infinite benefit to be born.

11. Let us now attend to a few testimonies from the apostle Paul. "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord." Rom. 6:23. Here the just rules of interpretation require us to consider death, as it stands in contrast with eternal life, to be eternal death.

"For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ; whose end is destruction." Phil. 3:18, 19. This destruction, which comes at the end of the sinner's course, cannot be natural death; for to this all are subject, the friends as well as the enemies of the cross. It is certainly a destruction which is peculiar to the wicked, and as it is their end, must be future punishment, or the second death.

"And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God? Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long suffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? but after thy hardness and impenitent heart, treasurest up wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will render to every man according to his deeds: to them who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, and honor, and immortality, eternal life; but unto them that are contentious, and obey not the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil; of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile: but glory, honor, and peace to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek; for there is no respect of persons with God. For as many as have sinned without law, shall also perish without law; and as many as have sinned in the law, shall be judged by the law." Rom. 2:3–12. The apostle is here laying down the principles on which the whole world will be judged at the last day; and can there be a doubt in any mind that the wicked are here threatened with future punishment? "When the Lord shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power, when he shall come to be glorified in his saints." 2 Thess. 1:7–10. The punishment here threatened is of the nature of vengeance—taking vengeance: it is to be inflicted on all who obey not the gospel when the Lord shall come; that is, at the day of judgment. The duration of the punishment is everlasting. In whatever sense this word is understood, the argument is equally conclusive in favor of future punishment. No testimony can be made more direct and explicit to prove future punishment than these words of Paul. We should be at a loss, if required to frame a declaration which should fully express the doctrine of the future punishment of the wicked, to invent one more clear and positive.

"For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. For we know Him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto



me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." Heb. 10:26, 27, 30, 31. Perhaps we have adduced more texts than are necessary; for if one were to rise from the dead and testify that there was a dreadful hell, these Universalists would not believe him. They will not believe Moses and the prophets; yea, they refuse to give credit to the repeated declarations of Christ himself and his inspired apostles. It is to be feared that some of them are of the number whom God hath given up "to believe a lie" in just judgment, because they were unwilling to obey the truth. In regard to such our labor will be altogether in vain; but there are many others who have been induced to lend a favorable ear to this flesh-pleasing doctrine, who have yet some respect for the holy Scriptures, and whose consciences are not yet seared as with a hot iron. To pluck some of these as brands from the burning, may be practicable. But our chief hope is to secure those from falling into the snare of the devil who are exposed to this soul-destroying heresy.

THE LEGITIMATE AND PRACTICAL CONSEQUENCES OF THIS DOCTRINE are of such an appalling nature, that if the propagators of it were not reckless of consequences, they would pause in their course, and hesitate about casting around them firebrands, arrows, and death. Greater mischief cannot be done to men, than by disseminating among them such erroneous opinions as remove from their minds those salutary restraints which preserve them from giving indulgence to sin, or such as lull them into a false security, and persuade them to neglect attention to that preparation which is necessary to fit them for death and judgment. And if any opinion is dangerous above all others to the best interests of men, it is the one which I have refuted in this tract. Among the many evil consequences of this doctrine I would mention the following.

1. It does violence to the holy Scriptures, and perverts the plain and obvious meaning of numerous passages which speak of the future punishment of impenitent sinners. And if in one case we may thus set aside the express and repeated declarations of God, to accommodate the doctrine to our own reason and inclinations, the volume of inspiration is dishonored and rendered useless; for upon these principles we may reject every fundamental truth of the Bible. If the doctrine of future punishment is not taught in the Bible, neither is the doctrine of future happiness; for

they are commonly inculcated in the same passages, and in similar language.

2. If it be true that sin is not punished in the future world, then it would follow that God exercises no moral government over the world; for in the present life the wicked often live at ease and are prosperous, while the virtuous are afflicted. This doctrine goes far to annihilate all difference between virtue and vice, for we must judge of these according to the treatment which they respectively receive from the supreme Ruler; but if there be no future punishment, there is no strong mark of disapprobation set on vice. A doctrine which involves such a consequence as this, must be false and dangerous.

3. If this doctrine should become general, human society could not exist. Like atheism, to which it is near akin, its malignant tendency is not fully seen while society at large is under the influence of a contrary belief. But take away from the minds of all men the fear of judgment and eternity, and this world becomes a scene of violence—an aceldama. All confidence among men would be destroyed; all the bonds of civil society would be severed. Do not say that vice might be coerced by the civil law—a vain hope. Where the whole mass is corrupt, laws are useless. What means of ascertaining the truth in courts of justice will remain, without which justice cannot be administered, if no man fears the consequences of perjury? Suppose a man who has no fear of judgment, to be solemnly called upon to declare the truth in a case where his own honor and interest, or that of some friend, is at stake; what is there to prevent him from perjuring himself? Or if he can gratify secret malice by swearing against the life of an enemy, what shall restrain him? He may reason with himself thus: "I know this is a wicked act, but it will serve my purpose, it will enable me to gratify my revenge; I have nothing to fear. Detection here is impossible, and hereafter I am sure of heaven, do as I will." What security should we have that our food and medicine would not be mingled with poison in every house? The men who propagate such doctrines, are manifestly pursuing a course destructive to the peace and good order of society. I would fully as soon have an atheist to bear witness against me on oath, or to sit in judgment as a juror, as one of these new-fangled Universalists.

4. If there is no future punishment, the wicked, who are driven away in their wickedness, are happier than the righteous who are preserved to suffer. The wicked antediluvians who perished in the flood, had a better portion and a richer reward than Noah; for they all escaped the troubles of life and went to heaven, while Noah and his family were subjected to innumerable hardships for some hundreds of years. The inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah were better off, though they were destroyed by fire from heaven, than righteous Lot, who escaped; for they were released at once from all pain and sorrow, but his afflictions were many. The wicked Canaanites were too bad to live upon earth, and therefore God enjoined it on Joshua to extirpate them; but not too bad to be admitted at once to heaven without any repentance or sanctification! Their lot was, therefore, greatly preferable to that of the Israelites, who endured many toils and sufferings. Upon this theory, Judas was rather benefited than injured by his base and ungrateful crime of betraying his Lord, and by his suicide. Indeed, if there be no future punishment, and the next world be better than this, not only will suicide be innocent and beneficial, but there can be no great harm in murder. It only ushers a fellow-creature into superior bliss a little earlier than if he were left to die a natural death.

5. Upon the supposition that this doctrine is true, repentance is useless; neither is there any need of sanctification. Heaven is the sinner's right, without any condition or preparation. How the ungodly will be pleased with the place and its exercises, is another question. Whether dying will take away their disrelish for devotional exercises, is not explained. But there is no need of undergoing the sorrows of repentance for sin. This the Universalist acknowledges. A writer before referred to declares, that "there is not the least occasion for solicitude about salvation, neither is it in our power to promote or hinder it." We did suppose that the advocates of this doctrine would have pleaded for repentance, which is nothing else but a turning from sin to God, as useful to prevent evil in this life; but we find that in this we mistook their views, for the same writer asserts, concerning the evils which sin produce here, that "these consequences are inevitable, and cannot be escaped, even by repentance." What these men can preach, or why they should preach at all, we do not see.

6. Upon this theory there is no need of religion of any kind; no connection

exists between religion and salvation—between the man who loves and serves God, and him who hates him and despises his service. Atheism is as good as piety; idolatry and heresy as safe as a way to heaven as truth and righteousness. The one thing needful is, to be fully persuaded that nothing is needful. If men are only informed that there will be no future reckoning, no condemnation of the wicked, no future punishment, they need know nothing else; and whether they believe it or not, all are in the safe way to heaven! We presume that the principal preaching of Universalists is on the single point, that the wicked have nothing to fear on account of their sins; for why should they disturb their hearers about believing or doing other things? But the benefits of this system will, in the future world, be as fully enjoyed by those who oppose the doctrine, as by those who believe and preach it.

7. This doctrine encourages men to continue in sin, by removing all fear of future judgment and punishment. In this respect its tendency is as bad as atheism itself, for the most impious denial of a divine Being cannot promise more to its foolish votaries than exemption from judgment and future punishment. This species of Universalism is fraught with the very worst poison of atheism. It tells the sinner, that, let him act as wickedly as he will, or as he can, there is no fear of future misery. Indeed, it is in some respects worse than atheism, for it not only promises exemption from punishment, but the reward of eternal happiness to the impenitent sinner. It says to the atrocious murderer and cruel assassin, "You need fear no evil hereafter; though you should die in the commission of the foulest deeds, heaven, with all its glory and happiness, is yours." Is not this shocking to every honest mind? And what must the effect be on profane, cruel, and abandoned profligates? How pernicious its influence in the hour of temptation! Suppose an inexperienced youth in a place of trust to have imbibed this doctrine. An opportunity occurs of defrauding his employer of a vast sum of money, with the prospect of escaping detection. Well, what shall hinder him from enriching himself at once? If the belief of a future judgment were now to rise in his mind, he would be ready, like Joseph, to say, "How can I do this great evil, and sin against God?" But having no apprehension of any judgment to come, and sure of heaven, let him do what he will, he is led into temptation, and is deprived of every consideration which would lead him to resist it. Even the faint

hope that there is no future punishment, has a powerful effect in leading corrupt men to commit atrocious crimes, although this hope is contrary to all that they have ever been taught; but who can calculate the influence of a persuasion that there is no future punishment for the greatest crimes, derived from men who pretend to be preachers of the gospel? Doubtless a large portion of the most abominable crimes that ever were perpetrated, owe their existence to a secret belief or hope of the truth of the very doctrine which Universalists preach.

8. It is a horrible consequence of this doctrine, that it puts it in the power of the sinner to set God himself at defiance with impunity. The malignant, ungrateful wretch, instead of praising, may blaspheme the great Jehovah every day of his life, and may die with horrid blasphemies on his lips, and yet he shall be rewarded with everlasting happiness! Indeed, as all the punishment of sin is supposed to be in this life, when a sinner commits some horrible crime in the last moments of his life, as in a late case where a man first shot an innocent person, and then blew out his own brains, where or how will he receive his due punishment? His death is but the pang of a moment, and if there be no retribution for such crimes in the government of God, it cannot be believed that he is a righteous moral Governor.

9. But how are sinners prepared for the enjoyment of the pure and elevated pleasures of heaven? The Scriptures everywhere teach the necessity of a change of heart, before sinners can enjoy the kingdom of God; and this is not an arbitrary appointment, but arises from the nature of the case. Reason and experience assure us that there must be a congruity between the state of the mind and those objects from which it derives its pleasure. Where no such suitability exists, there is a natural incapacity for that particular species of pleasure. This is a fact so evident and so well understood, that it stands in no need of illustration. How then, we ask, can men of depraved habits, all whose moral sensibilities have been blunted by a long course of sinning, relish the pure and sublime joys of heaven without a change? Such men cannot endure the mention, much less the participation of holy exercises while here; nothing is so much the object of their detestation as spiritual religion. And there is no ground for the opinion, that death can make any radical change in the

moral character and feelings. The wicked, therefore, who die in impenitence, never can go to heaven; and if admitted, they could have no real enjoyment themselves, while they would disturb the harmony and interrupt the felicity of that high and holy place.

10. This doctrine renders totally unnecessary the mediation and atonement of Jesus Christ. For if the sinner be fully recompensed for his sin here, what need of a Saviour to die for those sins, the punishment of which he himself endures in this world?

But if the Universalist should choose to rest his doctrine on the ground that sinners would have suffered hereafter if Christ had not atoned for their sins, I would ask how long they would have suffered? Or in other words, what is the original penalty of the law of God? Now, if it can be shown that any future punishment in the Scriptures is threatened, it will be easy to show that the rejecters of the gospel, or impenitent sinners, will suffer that punishment; for what can be plainer than that the heaviest penalties, and those most clearly and repeatedly expressed in the word of God, are those denounced by Christ against them who refuse to believe his doctrine? If, then, men were exposed to any future punishment before Christ came, it is most evident that the impenitent are still exposed to the same, and greater. Therefore the Universalist doctrine cannot rest on this ground. And it is clear as any thing can be, that, according to this system, there was no need of a Saviour. Christ came without an errand, and shed his blood for no purpose, which is blasphemy.

In conclusion, I would solemnly warn all who may cast their eyes on these pages, to beware of this pernicious doctrine, and not to encourage those who go about the country preaching this soul-destroying error. Only suppose for a moment that their doctrine is false, and in what a deplorable condition are their disciples! How dreadful their mistake! These deceivers endeavor to seduce men from the doctrine of Christ by a great show of philanthropy and benevolence. They call the doctrine of endless punishment cruel and unmerciful, and rail against pious and orthodox ministers who hold it and preach it, as monsters of cruelty. This is a cheap way of showing benevolence. It is just that sort of philanthropy which an unfaithful watchman would exhibit, who should pertinaciously insist that there was no danger near, even when the enemy was in sight,

and boast of his kindness because he would not suffer the citizens to be awakened from their sleep. The belief that many millions of our race are living in misery, and that all of the hundreds of millions now on earth will, in a short time, be cut off by death, is no evidence of a want of philanthropy. Benevolence does not consist in holding and teaching that men are liable to little or no misery, but in active exertions to relieve them from that evil which they suffer, and to arouse them to flee from the misery which impends. Which then, I ask, are the friends of men; they who endeavor to lull them into a fatal security in regard to the future, or those who faithfully warn them of their danger? Are they to be reckoned the truly benevolent, whose doctrine tends to encourage men in sin, and to induce them to think that repentance and reformation are useless; or they who labor to bring their fellow-creatures to forsake sin, and live piously and justly? Suppose the latter even to be mistaken, their error is on the safe side, and will hurt nobody; but if the Universalist should be in error, what imagination can conceive the dreadful consequences of his mistake? They say that the doctrine of endless punishment is "cruel and unmerciful;" but this is not true, unless it is unjust—and this they cannot prove. It is customary with them to appeal to the tender feelings and sympathies of their hearers, and to conclude that if a parent would not inflict such a punishment on his children, much less will God on his creatures. But this is a false method of reasoning. An amiable child shudders at seeing a criminal suffer the just punishment of the law, but this is no argument against the punishment of the guilty.

It would be easy to persuade a set of convicted felons that the law which condemned them was cruel and unmerciful, because they are deeply interested persons, and do not take into consideration the important ends to be answered to the public by their punishment. Thus wicked men are easily brought to believe that the penalties threatened in the Scriptures are cruel and unmerciful; but such opinions ought to have no weight with the candid and impartial inquirer after truth. All comparisons on this subject fail; for neither parents nor civil rulers, nor any other beings in the universe, except the supreme Ruler, are under obligations to punish sin according to its merit. "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord." No other is capable of estimating the evil of sin, and of inflicting punishment in exact proportion to its evil. If reasoning from the

sympathies of our nature, and especially from the tender feelings of parents, were of real force, it would be as conclusive against the judgments of God on individuals and communities in this world, as against future punishment. For what benevolent parent would subject his children to the innumerable forms of evil and suffering which are everywhere witnessed in our world? How many perish by shipwreck, by pestilence, by earthquakes, by oppression, by war, and by persecution! But because a kind earthly father could not endure to see his children suffer such things, must we conclude that it is an unrighteous thing in the Governor of the universe to recompense the wicked by such judgments? Or will these men deny that God has any thing to do in bringing these evils upon men?

How is it possible that reasonable men, with the Bible in their hands, can believe in the doctrine of Universalists? If they would only listen to the dictates of conscience, they never could think that there was no future punishment for sinners of the deepest dye. The very heathen, as many of them as believe in a future state, hold the doctrine of future punishment for the crimes of a wicked life. There never before was a sect of heretics who altogether denied the doctrine of future punishment. Even the Mohammedans maintain the doctrine of eternal punishment. Most Unitarians, however they may hesitate about everlasting punishment, teach the doctrine of future punishment. The maintenance of a tenet so absurd and dangerous seems to have been reserved for these last times, and is even now almost entirely confined to these United States. It seems to be the most desperate effort of the father of lies. As we said before, this doctrine had its origin in paradise, and was the very doctrine by which the grand adversary murdered our whole race; but never, until recently, could any number of men be found of sufficient hardihood to avow it as the main article of their creed. It contains within itself the virulent poison of all other errors and heresies; yea, it leaves in the distance every form of infidelity. Atheism, black and blasphemous as it is, is not so dangerous as this doctrine; for it as completely removes all restraint from the sinner as atheism, assuring the vilest sinners that they have nothing to fear hereafter; and not only so, but promising them the rich reward of eternal life. The prevalence of this soul-destroying error, in some parts of our land, is truly alarming. Every patriot, as well as every Christian, is bound



to use his best endeavors to check the progress of an error fraught with so many dreadful consequences.

## **THE POOR MAN'S GUIDE AND FRIEND**

WRITTEN FOR A SERIES OF TRACTS IN LARGE TYPE AND SIMPLE STYLE

MY little book I make for the poor rather than the rich, first, because our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ preached the gospel especially to the poor. Matt. 11:5. Secondly, because God commonly chooses his people from among the poor of this world, to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom. James 2:5. And thirdly, because the poor have less time and opportunity to learn those things which belong to their peace than others.

In some parts of the country, the people have pastors to watch over them and visit them; and if their teachers are faithful, they will, as often as they can, come to the dwellings of the poor with such lessons of instruction as they need. But there are other places, in which the people are as sheep without a shepherd. They have no one to guide them in religion, and perhaps seldom have the opportunity of hearing a gospel sermon. Now for the sake of such I write, especially for the poor. Let no man be ashamed of honest poverty. Our blessed Lord, though he was rich, yet for our sakes became poor. None are poorer in this world's goods than he was; for he was born in a stable, and had a manger or trough for his cradle. And when grown up to be a man, he could say, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head."

When I say that this little book is for the poor man, I do not mean to pass by the woman: no; I consider her as perhaps more likely to profit by what I may write than the other sex. "In Christ there is neither male nor female." All partake of the same sinful nature, and all are children of wrath. All need the atoning blood of Christ, and no other foundation can be laid than that which is laid, which is Christ Jesus the Lord.

Let, I pray you, this little book come into your house, and be read, and taken care of. Let it be considered a friend, for the feelings of the writer, be assured, are of a friendly kind; and though he cannot go with his book, he will accompany it with his prayers. And he wishes to speak to every one into whose hands it may fall, as if he were present. By this he desires to converse with the reader. And if it should happen to fall into the hands of some who cannot read, let them get the aid of their neighbors to read it to them. Join me in this short prayer for the blessing of God on the truth it contains.

#### A PRAYER

O Lord, our Almighty Creator, kind Preserver, bountiful Benefactor, and merciful Redeemer, be graciously pleased to send light into our dark minds by the reading of this little book. So far as it contains a correct statement of truth, may it be made the means of leading our poor souls in the way of duty and of salvation, which we humbly ask, not on account of any worthiness in ourselves, but only for the sake of Christ, thy beloved Son and our Mediator. Amen.

#### FIRST VISIT

Friends, I perceive that you are poor, and have many troubles and difficulties to distress and disturb you. While others have more than heart can wish, and spend their days in ease and pleasure, your lot is to labor hard, and to eat your bread with the sweat of your brow. And often, with all your toil, you are scarcely able to obtain food and raiment. In the day of calamity, when sickness comes upon you, or on the mother of your children, you are brought into great trouble. The children cry for bread when, alas, there is none in the house, and no money to buy a single loaf. At the same time, the very dogs of your rich neighbor have more food

than they can devour. The thought of your poverty, and the abounding wealth of others, is apt to stir up a feeling of discontent and envy in your hearts. But this is wrong. God gives to whom he will, and withholds from whom he will. Besides, though the rich man has his good things in this world, he is in great danger of having nothing but evil in the world to come. I assure you, the rich man is not to be envied. He also has his vexatious cares and troubles in this life, as well as the poor; yea, often, while the laboring poor enjoy robust health, he is pining with disease. And while the poor man's sleep is sweet after his labor, the rich man is prevented from sleeping by care and anxiety for fear of losing his wealth. While the poor man has a keen relish for his coarse and homely fare, the rich man turns away in disgust from a table loaded with dainties; so that the rich man has not so much the advantage of the poor man as he seems to have. And the poor man has this in his favor, that there are fewer hinderances in his way to heaven than stand in the path of the rich man. Our Lord has told us that riches so stop the way to heaven, to those who possess them, that "it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven." This single consideration should make you contented with your condition. Not that it is a matter of course for a poor man to get to heaven. Alas, no; "strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it;" but "wide is the gate and broad is the way which leadeth to destruction, and many there be that go in thereat."

I have not found a more alarming text than this within the lids of the Bible. Those words, FEW THERE BE THAT FIND IT, should continue to sound in our ears until we have clean escaped from the "wrath to come," and have found refuge in the house of God's mercy. The poor man can no more enter heaven, without becoming a new creature, than the rich. Our Lord's words are, "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of heaven." Some poor people who are great sufferers in this world, think that their many troubles here will somehow be an atonement for the sins which they have committed, so that they hope to escape punishment in the world to come.

When I was itinerating in the mountains of Virginia, I spent a few days at the house of an aged widow. She was not poor, but she seemed to have

more trouble than the poorest people I met with. From morning to night she was bustling and running hither and thither, and calling to the servants, and scolding at such a rate that I wondered that she did not weary herself to death. And this was not the course of one day only, but of every day. But let me say to her credit that I was never treated more kindly by any body, and she was particularly kind to ministers of the gospel.

I took the liberty one day of saying to her mildly, "Why do you trouble yourself so much about the things of this world? You are now aged, and must very soon leave all these concerns; better turn your attention to the necessary preparation for another world."

She burst out a crying, and said, "I cannot help it. I am a lone widow, and no man on the place to take the management; and if I did not scuffle as you see me doing, every thing would soon go to wreck and ruin."

"Madam," said I, "I approve of your industry and energy in managing your affairs; but I think that some portion of your time and attention should be given to the concerns of your soul, which is undoubtedly 'the one thing needful.' "

Upon this her feelings became more violent, and in a crying tone she said, "I do not think that any poor creature ever suffered more than I have done. My husband died, and left me to take care of seven young children; and ever since I have been toiling and striving to keep things together, and to bring up my family in a Christian way; but I have had one trouble after another, so that my poor heart has often been almost broke. And I hope," said she, "that my Maker will consider what I have suffered in this world, and that he will not be so hard as to make me miserable in the world to come. I am sure I have suffered enough already."

"Dear madam," said I, "your worldly sorrows will never atone for one of your sins. The Bible teaches that godly sorrow worketh repentance unto life, but the sorrow of the world worketh death." She now became more composed, and listened with apparent seriousness to what I judged it proper to say.

This brings to my recollection a scene which I witnessed a few days afterwards, in the most out-of-the-way place I ever was in. It was at the foot of the Blue Ridge, on the head of Smith's river, a branch of the Roanoke. This settlement is completely shut out from the rest of the world by high and steep mountains, and there was only one road by which a horse or wagon could go in or come out. The women rarely or never come out, and retain all the fashions of dress which were customary in the time of their grandmothers. Here I found a man who had been eighteen years an elder in the Presbyterian church, but had never had any true religion until within a few months of the time I visited the place. Two zealous ministers had found their way into this cove, and spent a week in preaching to the people. Among other fruits of their labors was the conversion of this elder, now nearly threescore years of age; and I do not know that I ever met with a young convert who seemed to have such a flow of tender feeling. He could not speak of his own wonderful conversion, after having been a professor in the church for nearly forty years, and an elder for eighteen years, without a flood of tears. He went about from house to house, and warned the people of their danger; and he seemed to feel that it was especially his duty to go to professors, many of whom he feared were asleep in their sins, shielded from conviction by the profession which they had made.

But to come to the point. This old man, but young Christian, had got hold of a Tract, which in those days was a rare thing in that country. Having read it himself, he could not rest until all his neighbors had heard it. It was, I think, on Saturday afternoon, a number of persons, by his invitation, assembled in the log-house in which he dwelt. Though I was present, he did not ask me to read the Tract, but chose to do this himself. And seldom have I anywhere seen so many tears shed by the same number of persons. When he came to any thing of an affecting nature, he would stop to weep, and in the midst of his tears would give a fervent exhortation to the young people present. And what do you think this Tract was? Why, "Gregory's Legacy to a Daughter," which thousands have read without a tear.

I have related the foregoing anecdote for two reasons. First, to show the importance of faithful ministers occasionally leaving their flocks and

going into the dark corners, where the gospel is seldom heard. I could relate many facts to prove the benefit of such a course. In a single fortnight they may do more good than in the whole year besides. The other reason is, to show the value of Tracts in the distant and dark settlements of our country. Because those little messengers are often undervalued near great cities and in old settlements, we must not suppose that they will not be valued where books are scarce, and where the gospel is seldom heard.

And now, my friends, it is time that you and I should rest for a while. Let this pass for my first visit. You see that I am a plain-spoken man, and do not stick very close to any one subject. Put the little book on the shelf till another opportunity, which I hope will be soon.

## SECOND VISIT

I see, friends, that you have hard work to make out to live in the world. This has been a hard winter, and your children have suffered for want of good shoes and warm clothing. But now the spring comes on apace, and the grass begins to spring, and the early flowers to peep out of the ground. Now the sun rises high in the heavens, the days begin sensibly to lengthen, and the warm breezes to blow.

I always rejoice in the return of spring, on account of the poor; for though it is a time of labor, to the industrious poor it is a time of enjoyment. The ploughman relishes his homely fare, when in the evening he returns to his cottage; and the sleep of the laboring man is sweet. In the morning he rises with the first appearance of dawn, and is soon seen following his plough, or sowing his grain, or clearing up his new ground. If peace and temperance are guests there, the cottager has as much contentment as the rich: he relishes his food as well, he enjoys his sleep as sweetly, and experiences as much pleasure from the cheerfulness and affection and innocent prattle of his little ones. The rich man often is obliged, on account of diseases contracted by idleness and luxury, to live on brown bread and lie on a hard bed; his physician forbids him the use of the dainties with which his table is loaded, and he must undergo voluntary labor to exercise his diseased frame; while the poor man, who is industrious, enjoys robust health, and has no experience of those

miserable feelings which arise from a diseased stomach and deranged nerves. He scarcely ever reflects that he has a stomach, except when he is hungry; and as to nerves, he is happily innocent of any knowledge of those sensitive chords.

The great curse of poverty is vice. Brutal anger and rudeness, sullen discontent, and rankling envy and hatred, are sufficient to bring misery into a paradise. And when you add to bad passions, which naturally spring up in the human bosom, the complicated evils of intemperance, you have some idea of the real miseries which are found in many cottages of the poor. Filth, disorder, and want, render them the seats of almost uninterrupted wretchedness. And soon disease will follow in the train of the evils mentioned—often chronic disease, painful and loathsome, and remediless. The whole mass has become corrupt; and the malady is often aggravated instead of being cured by quack medicines.

The poetical idea of a cottage can seldom be realized; yet sometimes there is an approximation to it.

When settled first as a pastor, I observed coming regularly to church a tall, neat, but plainly dressed young woman, whose manners were exceedingly retiring and reserved. She seemed to shun every opportunity of acquaintance; for as soon as the service was over she would be off, and on her way home. I learned, however, from a female friend of hers, that she was a girl of uncommon intelligence, and very considerable reading, and above all, that she was in reality what she appeared to be, eminently pious.

I was told that one reason of her shyness was continual mortification on account of the foolish and eccentric conduct of her father, who was a talkative and opinionated old man. In early life he had appeared very zealous in religion, and began study with his pastor, with a view to the ministry; but he had not steadiness to persevere, and having got a little smattering of learning, he became exceedingly vain and boastful. He had, indeed, an extraordinary memory for words, and would repeat whole chapters of the Bible verbatim. But he was not contented with the common creed, and adopted many strange notions, which he brought out and defended on all occasions. Sometimes, indeed, he would hold forth in

public, and professed to have a divine call to make known the truths which he said had been made known to him; and the only thing which prevented him from often speaking in public was, that he could get no audience to remain to hear him. Besides this amiable and accomplished daughter, he had one son, who, though industrious in cultivating the farm, had much of his father's vain-glorious disposition. In all religious excitements this young man became very conspicuous, and by his ostentatious display produced disgust in almost every mind. The mother of this young woman was also still living, but being infirm and somewhat melancholy, she seldom left the house even to attend church.

On account of these circumstances, Eusebia generally appeared alone, and seldom was any one invited to the house, which stood in a recluse spot.

It was evident, however, that disease was secretly undermining her constitution, and after a while she was no longer able to come to church; her seat became vacant. As the pastor of the church, I felt it to be my duty to visit her; but knowing the extreme sensibility of her feelings, I thought it prudent to use the mediation of her female friend before mentioned. After a considerable struggle, she consented to see me in company with her friend.

I was struck, on entering the cottage, with the perfect neatness and cleanliness of every article of furniture. Every curtain and bed-cover was purely white, and wove and spun with her own hands. She was unable to sit up, but lay reclined on a low bed in a small room adjoining the one which we first entered. Though distant always before, she now expressed strong satisfaction in seeing me, and said she had often derived much comfort from my preaching, but could never, until now, summon confidence enough to speak to me.

"I have," said she, "been kept back by foolish feelings of diffidence, with which I now find much pride has been mingled. But I am persuaded that I am soon to leave the world. I am desirous of availing myself of the instruction and advice of one who is invested with the office of a teacher."

I asked her respecting her spiritual condition, and her views of death and



eternity.

She said, that "during the few years which she had been a member of the church, darkness and doubt had hung over her mind in an almost perpetual cloud; that she had been looking for something in her own heart which she could never find. She heard others speak of their ardent love to Christ, and of their overflowing joys; but her heart remained cold and insensible. At some rare times," said she, "I experienced a little reviving, and felt a degree of tenderness, being able to weep freely, which gave me some relief. But on cool reflection, I attributed those melting frames to the peculiar state of my body; for on examination I could not find that my views of divine truth were at all brighter than before. And," said she, "thus I continued until I heard you preach from the text, 'By grace are ye saved,' etc., when you told us, if we wanted solid comfort, we must look out of ourselves, and away from ourselves, to Christ and his perfect work.

"At that moment I seemed first fully to apprehend the freeness of divine grace. My crushed heart was encouraged and comforted. Christ appeared to me in a new light; and though some dark clouds have passed over my mind since, and some doubts have occasionally risen, they have been transient. And through the blessing of divine grace, I remain from day to day in a state of sweet composure. My sense of unworthiness and sinfulness is as great as before, but I have learned no longer to look for comfort to any thing in myself, but only to Christ. I see a sufficiency in him for every want, and I am enabled to confide in him. He is my all and in all; my Prophet, Priest, and King. He of God is made unto me wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption; and what more do I want?

"Considering how naturally timid I am, I feel astonished at my own confidence and composure of mind. I hope, my dear pastor, there is no mistake in this matter; I hope that I am not embracing a delusion for the reality of God's faithfulness in his promises."

I told her that there could be no mistake in trusting every thing into the hands of Christ; that the stronger our confidence in him the better, and the less danger of deception.

Though her frame was emaciated, there was a heavenly calmness and sweet serenity in her countenance. Not having been accustomed to such scenes, my own feelings were unusual. I could think of little else when absent from her, than the sweet and heavenly appearance of her countenance; and being urged to come often, I did not fail to avail myself of the privilege of sitting by her bedside and receiving edification from the gracious words which proceeded from her lips. Often have I wished, while beholding her countenance lighted up with pure and spiritual hope and joy, and beaming with the feelings of benevolence, that some infidels whom I know could have witnessed this scene; it would have been more effectual to convince them of the blessed reality of religion than a thousand logical arguments.

She continued in the same calm and comfortable state unto her death. A few days before her end, I visited her, and on my taking leave, anticipating her departure, she clasped my hand in hers and said,

"My dear pastor, before I see you again, I shall be gone from this world of sorrow and sin. I thank you for all your kind attention to an unworthy creature. I go to meet my Saviour—my best friend—Him who shed his blood for my salvation—I go to dwell with saints and angels in heaven for ever. Farewell—I shall see your face no more in this world."

Being a young pastor, the scene made a deep and lasting impression on my mind.

As I expected, the next tidings which I heard from Eusebia was a summons to attend her funeral. "Oh let me die the death of the righteous," for they have hope in their end. They are blessed, "and their works do follow them."

The foregoing narrative will furnish us with some profitable reflections.

1. We see that no situation in life is exempt from trouble. Piety in a cottage, with almost perfect seclusion from the world, with books, a few select friends, and access to the means of grace, would seem to furnish as complete an idea of happiness as we can readily conceive. All these advantages were fully enjoyed by this pious female, but still there was a

worm gnawing at the root. Every rose has its thorn. Her affliction arose from a too exquisite sensibility, and too anxious a solicitude for the reputation of a parent. A corroding feeling of mortification depressed her spirits and undermined her health, and brought her to an untimely grave.

2. Some of the most perfect specimens of genuine piety are to be found far from the view of the gay and busy world, and often little noticed even by the majority of the members of the church. It flourishes and brings forth its precious fruit in the shade of retirement, observed only by a few select friends, and by that august Being who, though his throne be in the heavens, and eternity his dwelling-place, yet looks down with complacency on every humble, contrite spirit; yea, condescends to dwell with them.

"The humble spirit and contrite,

Is an abode of his delight:

The humble souls my words revive,

I bid the mourning sinner live."

3. We learn from the facts related above the superlative excellence of true religion. What else could produce such a dying scene as this? The deathbed was undoubtedly rendered the happiest on which this pious woman ever lay. There was here no sting, no terror, no pain; all was peace and joyful hope, and sweet and heavenly serenity. Could a fiction, a cunningly devised fable, produce such effects? Who can believe it?

If the mere prospect of heaven can afford such happiness, what must heaven itself be? If one drop, a mere foretaste, can so disarm pain, and fill the soul with divine consolations, who can conceive of the views of never-ending bliss which flow from the throne of God?

And to whom do we owe these high hopes and brilliant prospects? Not to ourselves, not to man, not to any creature; but to the eternal Son of God, to the beloved Redeemer, to Jesus, who knows by experience the miseries of death as a curse. He bore the curse, that his people might be exempt—

the sting pierced his inmost soul, and henceforth lost its venom. He drank the bitter cup which sin had mingled, that it might for ever pass from us.

"Jesus can make a dying bed

Feel soft as downy pillows are,

While on his breast I lean my head,

And breathe my life out sweetly there."

# THE NEW SETTLEMENT

## A TRUE STORY

ABOUT a hundred years ago, four young married men left Pennsylvania to seek their fortune in New Virginia, then the most distant frontier, and still exposed to the invasion of the savages. But the country was inviting, the land fertile and well watered. They took up land in the same neighborhood. They did not consider the evil of bringing up families where there was no gospel preached, no public worship on the Sabbath, and no school for their children.

Indeed, there is some reason to think that one of them, at least, sought a dwelling in the wilderness to get far away from the sound of faithful preaching; for the great revival which occurred a little before, had prevailed in that part of Pennsylvania where he lived, and probably he had for a while been under serious impressions, but had shaken them all off. This man cherished a hatred to vital piety, which is seldom found so strong in any as in those who have once been somewhat concerned for their salvation. The last state of apostates is worse than the first.

One day a shoemaker came directly from this aged man's house to my father's to make winter shoes for the children; for in those days, and in that new country, both shoemakers and tailors were itinerant. This man was piously disposed, and very fond of reading pious books and sermons, and commonly had some in his wallet with his tools, which he was accustomed to read to the family where he was at work. On coming into the house he appeared somewhat agitated, and immediately told what had occurred at the house of this aged man. Being well acquainted, as he was passing through his yard, he stepped in to say "how do ye" to the family, and to warm himself; and while sitting by the fire he said to the old gentleman, "I have with me one of the most delightful books I ever saw." The old gentleman, who was fond of reading, asked him what it was. He answered, "Whitefield's Sermons," which had been recently published. In a moment the wrath of the master of the house was kindled to fury. His eyes flashed, and his countenance was inflamed. He rose to

his feet, and with a threatening gesture said, "You're a liar, so you are; you're a liar." The shoemaker, alarmed lest he should receive a stroke, stepped out of the house, and pursued his way through the fields; but the old farmer went out after him, and stood in the yard, and hallooed at the top of his voice, as long as he could hear him, "You're a liar, you're a liar."

This event, which occurred long after the settlement of these four men, is here related to show the violent antipathy which one of them cherished towards good men and evangelical preachers.

But to return. Each of these men secured land of the very best quality, and as the country around became settled, their land every year increased in value. But they had no preaching for their families, nor schools for their children. The boys of each of them were taught to work, but as they grew up to manhood, they spent much of their time in hunting deer; and in the autumn a whole company would go out into the neighboring mountains to hunt bears, where they would remain encamped in the woods until they had taken as many as they wanted.

As these young men had received no religious instruction, they were under no restraint, except from the presence of their fathers, which was thrown off as soon as they got out of their sight.

In a new country there are many occasions on which the people come together to help one another, such as house-raising, corn-huskings, log-rolling, etc. These, to the young men, were seasons of athletic sports, which frequently ended in bloody battles. Or, if prevented from seeking revenge at the time by the presence of superiors, they would harbor vindictive feelings until a fit occasion for venting them would occur. Thus the worst passions were generated and cherished. And as to religion, they knew nothing of it, except that it was intended to be a restraint on them, and therefore they hated it, and every one who professed it.

At length, when the country became more thickly settled, itinerant preachers visited these destitute settlements. The first who visited this new country was the celebrated evangelist William Robinson, who penetrated into every part of the country where little knots of Presbyterians were settled, that he might preach the gospel where Christ

had not been yet named. This being then the remotest settlement of white people towards the west, he here ended his journey in that direction, and crossing the Blue Ridge, pursued his course to North Carolina. In every other place where this devoted servant of Christ preached, I have found seals of his ministry, except in this neighborhood. Whether these men attended his ministry, is not certain. One of them, whose temper has already been described, in all probability did not; but the writer recollects hearing another of them speak of Mr. Robinson's visit as though he had heard him. And it is probable that some of the female members of these families derived saving benefit from the gospel at this time, for it is known that some of them were pious and exemplary even to extreme old age.

These merciful visits of evangelical preachers to new settlements are generally attended with a blessing to some precious souls. The writer, when young, was employed in preaching to people in such a situation, and he has never seen anywhere congregations which so interested him, and which appeared to be so much interested themselves. On the morning of the Sabbath, long before the time of meeting, you might see companies coming out of the woods by narrow paths, some on horseback, and not unfrequently two or three on one horse, and more on foot, all eagerly pressing on to the place of preaching, which was commonly a tent, as it was called, in a grove or forest. When the preacher appeared, all eyes would be fixed upon him, and the congregation, old and young, would seem to catch every thought, and drink in the word as a thirsty man drinks from a cool spring. Every word of divine truth, in such circumstances, seemed to take effect. Old Christians, long deprived of the public means of grace, would weep for joy, and hardly know how to contain themselves; and often the younger part of the assembly, who had scarcely ever heard a sermon before, would be affected to tears at hearing of the love of God, of the sufferings of Christ, of heaven, and of hell. Sometimes, under an impressive discourse, the whole congregation would be moved like the trees of the forest under a mighty wind, and would, as though all partook of one feeling, be melted into tears. Preaching to people in such circumstances is truly delightful. The pleasure, to a benevolent mind, is far greater than feeding a famished multitude with the bread that perishes. True, these impressions are, in

many cases, transient; but they are salutary, and leave on the mind an impression favorable to religion, and lodge convictions of the necessity of a change deep in the conscience. But, as was said, preaching to those who are not gospel-hardened, is commonly attended with a saving effect on some hearers; an arrow is made to transfix the mind of some careless sinner, and the wound is not healed until application is made of the balm of Gilead.

But whosoever else might be benefited, our four farmers and their sons received no profit. They continued as irreligious and worldly-minded as before, after all these evangelical visits. When it was proposed to erect a meeting-house, they were, though the wealthiest in the neighborhood, the most lukewarm and backward in promoting the object, and their contributions, grudgingly given, were smaller than those of some poor men. They were, however, very forward in getting up a dancing-school, and setting on foot balls for the young people. They, it is true, had never been taught this fascinating art, but they said they felt the want of it, and were determined that their children should have the opportunity of rubbing off that rusticity and awkwardness which they would be sure to contract, unless they had some means of this kind to polish their manners, and give them ease in company. These arguments prevailed with some not very consistent professors of religion, and especially with such as were well off in the world.

When the new settlement became more populous, the want of regular preaching on the Sabbath began to be felt by serious people who had once enjoyed gospel privileges, and some measures were taken to get ministers from the north to come and preach for them; and these efforts were not unsuccessful, for one and another were sent by some northern presbytery; but the people were solicitous to get a minister to abide with them constantly, and several attempts were made which proved unsuccessful, either because they could not raise a sufficient salary, or because these itinerant preachers were unwilling to settle in a country so new and so little improved.

But preachers make a great mistake when they wait for society to be formed, before they will cast in their lot among a people; for it is exceedingly important that there should be a good seasoning of religion



in the mass while it is assuming a fixed form. Pious and able ministers are, therefore, more needed while society is in a forming state, than at any other period.

For the want of regular worship on the Sabbath, the young people could not be controlled; they would run about, and spend the day unprofitably. In one neighborhood, where there was a cluster of warmhearted, pious people, they met at each others' houses on the Sabbath, and sung and prayed; and if any of them had met with a good evangelical sermon, it was read at these meetings. But the young men could not be persuaded to attend these prayer-meetings. They said, "Get a good preacher, and we shall be pleased to attend." But in the neighborhood of the four families which had settled together, there was no kind of worship attempted; and their young men were noted through the country for their profanity and for their ferocity. Wherever they went, they picked quarrels with other young men; which disputes were commonly decided by bloody battles with the fist.

Affairs went on thus until, at length, a young man from the north, who had come on as a teacher, obtained license to preach, and agreed to give one half his time to this settlement. These four families, however, which were the wealthiest in the neighborhood, manifested no anxiety to have a minister; and when he came, they soon pretended to take offence at something which he said, or which they had heard that he had said, and in consequence absented themselves from his ministry. Their families, however, attended, and they paid a moderate sum to aid in supporting the preacher. A great exertion was now made to put up a meeting-house; and by getting the members of the congregation to furnish the materials, and to do much of the work, a shell of a frame building sufficient to hold several hundred people, was erected and covered, and the floor laid down. These dissipated young men were sure to be at meeting, but they seldom came into the house; but would sit at a distance under some large trees, and spend the time in cursing and abusing the minister and all good people. They were accustomed also to carry a flask of whiskey in their pockets, and sometimes would carry it in large reeds used as walking-canes, and while the minister was preaching, they would be drinking at the spring.

One day, while they were amusing themselves outside the house, a stone, thrown by one of them, hit the side of the house, and made a startling noise. On which one of the elders came out and reproved them sharply, and directed his discourse especially to one who was the least wicked of them all, in the public opinion. This young man had not thrown the stone, and being exasperated that he should be thus reproved, as soon as the congregation was dismissed, he went into the house and in great anger swore that the thing was not done by him, and that he would not suffer himself to be thus falsely accused. He then, in the presence of the minister and elders, and of such of the people as had not left the house, swore by his Maker that he would never enter that house while he lived. Everybody was shocked at the daring impiety of this young man, and great surprise was expressed too, as he had been considered of a more quiet, sober turn than any of the others. The minister was indeed horror-struck.

It was a custom, brought by the Scotch-Irish people from the north of Ireland, that when any person died they held a wake; that is, all the neighbors, and especially the young people, sat up all night with the corpse. The house would commonly be crowded with people, who sat on boards or benches placed for the purpose. This custom was intended, doubtless, to prevent the sad feeling of loneliness in the family of the deceased, and to express sympathy with them in their affliction. But many evils attended such meetings. One was, that it became customary to carry about several times during the night stewed whiskey or hot punch, made very sweet, and many drank to excess. Other evil consequences, any one may see, would naturally be produced by such promiscuous meetings of both sexes. No religious exercises were ever permitted at these wakes, and the wildest and most irreligious were fond of attending them.

Another evil custom brought from Ireland, now obsolete, it is to be hoped, was the presenting strong drink to every man, woman, and child who came to a funeral. A person would stand without and meet the people as they arrived, and urge them to drink out of a bottle or jug which he held in his hand, and to refuse was counted disrespectful to the family.

But to return to the thread of my story. The young man who had behaved so impiously in the meeting-house, a few weeks after was about to go to a

wake, where the wife of one of the four farmers lay a corpse; and his family understood that he was going directly to the place, not a mile off. But next morning one of his cousins, who had been sitting up at the wake, called to learn why he had not been there; and was informed that he had set out to go soon after dark. The young man, fearing some accident had happened, stepped to the barn, and there, on the barn floor, lay the unhappy man weltering in his blood, and stiff in death. He had gone up to the hay-loft to throw down some hay for his horses; his foot had slipped, and being a heavy man, he fell head foremost on the hard floor, and his brains were dashed out. The wretched young man's oath was verified, that "while he lived he would never enter that church again." For, the next time he came, it was a corpse, to be laid in the silent grave. The minister preached on the occasion an alarming discourse, which for a time made an awful impression on the young man's companions. But this soon wore off, and they became, if possible, worse than before.

One of the three concerned in disturbing the worship of God, was a handsome young man of robust health, who had just brought home a beautiful woman for his wife. Being fond of sporting, and being invited by a man who had recently come to the settlement, to go out with him a hunting, he went; but never returned alive. The gun of this man, while they were passing through a thick wood, went off, and shot him through the body. Whether the act was accidental or designed, will never be known till the judgment-day. There were suspicious circumstances attending the case. The man, after his companion was shot, instead of coming and declaring what had happened, went and shut himself up in his own house, and would suffer no one to come in for some time. A court of inquiry was held, but nothing positive could be proved. One man, however, swore, that riding with this man at a certain time, in a certain lane, he declared that he would be revenged on the deceased for some offence received.

A circumstance which renders this testimony remarkable, is, that this man whose gun had killed the deceased, a few months afterwards, riding along the public way, in this same lane, was thrown from his horse, and fell across a sharp rock, and broke his spine about the middle. He was a man of giant size and strength. His lower parts remained immovable, and

his agony was great for a number of weeks, when he died miserably.

The third of these young men came to an early, but not a violent death, yet more shocking than either of the others; for he not only died impenitent, but with every expression of hardened impiety. When the minister came to see him, he would have nothing to say to him. And when he asked him whether he should pray for him, he said that he might pray if he chose, but he wanted none of his prayers.

Verily there is a God that ruleth upon the earth, and though he often forbears to punish impious conduct in this life, yet sometimes he does seem to follow the open contempt of his worship with a signal manifestation of his displeasure. This has been a matter of observation in all ages of the world.

Other people have now come in the place of those four wealthy families. Scarcely a descendant of any of them is now to be found in the fertile region which their fathers possessed. "I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay-tree: yet he passed away, and lo, he was not; yea, I sought him, but he could not be found." "For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be; yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be." "The wicked is driven away in his wickedness."

## **THE COLPORTEUR AND COTTAGER**

### **A DIALOGUE**

COLPORTEUR. Well, friends, I am glad to meet so many of you together, as I have some choice books: shall I have the pleasure of showing them to

you?

COTTAGER. You need not trouble yourself to unpack your books, as we have other use for our money than to buy such things as we can well do without.

COLP. I have read in a very old and very good book, that for "the soul to be without knowledge is not good." If we labor so hard to get bread to support the body, we ought not to grudge some little expense to feed the mind, which is our better part.

COTT. I never had any learning, and yet I have got along as well as my neighbors who can read; and more than that, I think that learning makes some people do things which they never could do, if they had never learned to read and write. There is Billy Hinds, who was reckoned the best scholar in all these parts, and now he is in the state prison for forgery, and his poor wife and children are near starvation.

COLP. You ought to consider that a good thing may be abused. It would never do to throw away every thing which has by some been put to a bad use. It is true, Billy Hinds never could have committed the crime for which he is suffering in prison, if he had not been able to write; but neither could he have committed the crime if he had been destitute of eyes or hands. Would you say, then, that it would be better if men were without eyes and hands?

COTT. Well, I will agree that learning is needful for some persons: but I cannot see that it would be of any service to me, or my children. We are poor people, and must make our living by hard labor; and we have no time to spend in reading books if we knew how to read, which no one in my family does except my wife, and her learning is of no use to her; for the good woman has not the leaf of a book to read, ever since the children tore up her Testament.

COLP. I am glad to find that you have one reader in your house, and I hope that your wife will not be suffered to be without a book to read after this day. Here is a cheap Bible; and here is a New Testament with fine large print. Come, gratify your wife with a present this morning.

COTT. Well, I believe I may as well take one; but do both these books contain the same reading?

COLP. The Bible contains all that is in the New Testament, word for word, and much more which, every man ought to know. It contains an account of the creation of the world and of man, and an account of his sin and fall, by which death came into the world and all our woes; and many other interesting histories.

COTT. I think, then, I will take the Bible; for though I cannot read myself, I have a cousin who often spends Sunday at my house, who is a very good reader. He often brings a book or a newspaper in his pocket; and my boys are fond of listening to him.

COLP. And do you intend to bring up your boys without schooling? I hope not. If you deprive them of this advantage, I do not know how you will be able to answer for it. Learning is more valuable than all riches, for a man's property often, as we say, makes to itself wings; but whatever knowledge any one acquires, nobody can deprive him of it. A while ago you said that poor laborers had no time for reading; but they all have one day in the week which ought not to be spent at work or in any amusement, nor in idleness, but in the service of our Creator; for when he made man he gave him only six days for his own work, and set apart the seventh for himself. You know the commandments, I presume, which God gave for the regulation of our conduct?

COTT. I told you that I had no learning. I know what is right and what wrong. I see that we ought not to murder, rob, or steal, nor do any thing to hurt our fellow-creature, but I never saw there was any harm in working on Sunday; yet as people say this is wrong, we commonly spend the day in hunting or fishing, or in visiting our neighbors.

COLP. If our Creator has set apart one day of the week for his own worship and service, we ought certainly to obey his commandments.

COTT. But I should like to know how any man can be sure that he ever made such a law. Doctor Hilder says "we may do what we please on Sunday, and 'the better the day the better the deed.' " And as for religion,

he says it is all priestcraft or kingcraft, brought in to keep ignorant people in subjection, and to draw money out of their pockets.

COLP. I am truly sorry that you have among you men who utter such irreligious sentiments, and unsettle the minds of ignorant people; but this shows how necessary it is that every man should be able to read the Bible, that he may learn from the book of God what he requires of man. You cannot deny that the Almighty ought to be obeyed, and if he has forbidden working and sporting on the Sabbath, these things ought not to be done. Our own conscience tells us, that whatever God commands should be obeyed; and nothing is more reasonable than that a certain portion of our time should be devoted to reading the word of God, and to his worship, both in public and private. What, have we received our very being from God, with all our faculties, together with food and raiment, and light and air, and other innumerable blessings, and shall we be so ungrateful as to refuse to acknowledge the goodness of God in these things? Shall we refuse to spend one seventh part of our time in his service, and in praising and worshipping his holy name? Besides, we are all sinners—we cannot deny it—"we have done many things which we ought not to have done, and have left undone many things which we ought to have done." Now it is all-important that we understand in what way we may hope for the pardon of our sins. Permit me, friend, to ask you on what ground you look for forgiveness?

COTT. Why, sir, you seem to take me for a very bad man. I believe that I can appeal to all who know me, that I am not worse than most of my neighbors—I defy my worst enemy to charge me with any dishonesty. I shall fare as well as others, and that's enough.

COLP. Pardon me, friend, that is not enough; if your neighbors were all sick with a mortal disease, such as the plague or cholera, would it satisfy you to think you were in no worse condition than others; and especially, if there was found out a method of cure, which you might use? You make entirely too light of this matter. It is the most important subject in the world: and this shows how necessary it is that men should become acquainted with what God has said in his holy word, for there we find the only method of obtaining pardon; and without pardon there can be no salvation for a sinner; he has nothing before him but fiery indignation.

Old as you are, it would be well worth your while to learn to read.

Lately one of our colporteurs met with a man in Western Virginia who could not read, and he gave him a Tract, entitled "The Dairyman's Daughter," and he read a part of it to him, and the man would not rest until he heard the whole, and immediately applied himself to learn to read; and when after some months the colporteur came that way, this poor man cordially embraced him, and thanked him for the Tract which he had given him, and said that but for that he never should have learned to read, and better than all, he said that by means of that Tract he hoped he had found peace with God.

COTT. I feel that I am too old to attempt any thing of this sort—but I begin to feel some concern about my boys, who are growing up without learning. But what can I do? we have no schools near us.

COLP. I know that families living in this sparsely settled region are badly off for schools; but I will tell you of a plan that some benevolent persons have formed for the benefit of such destitute parts of the country: it is to send a teacher to instruct the children for a few hours for two or three days in the week, and then to pass on to another settlement similarly situated. Is there any house here where the children could meet, and any place where the teacher could board and lodge, while in the neighborhood?

COTT. Widow Oakland has the largest house of any among us, and she has a small family, only a son and daughter, neither of whom have been to school; and I think it probable that she would receive the teacher as a boarder, and could thus pay for the schooling of her children.

COLP. Very well—no more need be said at present. I will consult our friends, and see what can be done.

But here are several of your neighbors; shall I not have the pleasure of selling them some of my books? Come, old gentleman, I guess you can read. Look at these excellent works and select such as you like.

OLD MAN. I have heard what you just now said in praise of the Bible, and



I like your sentiments very well. I have never been without that blessed book in my house since I was a housekeeper; and I don't care if I never have another book, for I think if we pay attention to that, it will guide us in the right way, and if we do not listen to the word of God, we shall not be likely to attend to the words of man.

COLP. I agree with you, that the Bible does contain all that is necessary for faith and practice; and if we diligently follow its directions, we shall be guided in the way in which we ought to go; but I think you a little misapprehend our object in circulating the writings of good men. It is not to teach any thing different from what we read in the Bible; it is to explain and enforce the truths there inculcated. To the Bible we always appeal for the truth of every thing taught in our books: "To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to these, it is because there is no light in them." For want of such helps, many persons never come to a clear understanding of what the Bible teaches. Even ministers, who make the Bible their constant study, need commentaries, which explain the sacred text; and much more do common people need some helps of this kind; and they need "line upon line" to stir them up to the diligent performance of their known duties. As you have had the Bible in your house for many years, and I suppose have read it often, permit me to ask you, what in your opinion is the method of salvation which it teaches?

OLD MAN. Why, sir, I would have you to know that I am not the ignoramus you take me to be. The Bible tells us that the way to be saved is to keep the commandments. It says, "Do this and live." "Not every one that saith, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."

COLP. I see that you are somewhat acquainted with the Bible, and have learnt correctly what is required of us by our Maker; but I wish to know whether you have so kept the commandments that you can depend on your own obedience for acceptance with a holy God? As for myself, if I had no other dependence but my own obedience, I should entertain no hope of salvation—I should be in black despair. And if I read the Scriptures right, "by the deeds of the law, no flesh shall be justified in his sight; for by the law is the knowledge of sin."

If men could be saved by their own obedience, then I do not see why the Son of God came into the world; or why it was necessary for Christ to die on the cross. You seem to me to have fallen into the very error of the Jews, in the time of Paul, who, "being ignorant of God's righteousness, went about to establish their own righteousness, not submitting themselves to the righteousness of God." But as I have not time to argue this point with you now, I will give you a Tract on the subject of a sinner's justification. Read it carefully, and I think you will be convinced that you have been in a dangerous error hitherto. Not but that we must love and obey God still, but our pardon and justification is entirely of free grace. And at any rate, I think that you need some help to enable you to come to a saving knowledge of what the Bible teaches.

Permit me, my friend, again to ask you what your opinion is of regeneration?

COTT. Regeneration? I don't exactly know what you mean.

COLP. Conversion, or the new birth.

COTT. Oh, yes—yes. I believe you are something of a Methodist. I would have you to know that I don't hold to any such nonsensical doctrine. I believe that if we do as well as we can, a merciful God will not require impossibilities of us. We are poor, frail creatures—but God is merciful.

As to this new birth of which you speak, I know nothing about it, and do not wish to know. Two of my neighbors—no better than they should be—went last summer to a great meeting, and they both professed, as I have heard, to be converted, as they call it; and it produced a great talk through the neighborhood. And when they came home, to be sure, they put on a very demure, long face, and sighed and groaned and exhorted their old companions; and we were all glad to see a reformation, if it would only last. Well, to make a long story short, the boldest of the two held out a month, and then he swore a great oath and said he neither could nor would play the hypocrite any longer; and he is now more profane than ever. The other, a sly kind of man, still wore the mask, and was very devout and zealous; but within a week he has been clearly detected in stealing a quantity of yarn from a poor woman, and in several

other disgraceful acts. If such conversions as these are what you speak of, I want to know no more about them, for I hate hypocrisy.

COLP. My good sir, you seem to have read your Bible to little purpose, if you have not learned from that holy book, that "except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God;" and "except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."

COTT. I don't believe that such things apply to us in this Christian country. In the beginning, when the people were Jews or pagans, they were required to undergo a change, but not so with those who have been born and baptized in a Christian land.

COLP. Men are now born in sin as much as they ever were; and unless this sinful nature be removed, they never can be admitted into heaven; and if they could be admitted to that holy place, they could have no enjoyment in the presence of a God of infinite holiness, and in the society of holy angels who stand around the throne of God. Common-sense teaches you that you cannot be happy in exercises and employments for which you have neither taste nor relish. Men who do not love to think of God now, and take no pleasure in praying to him and praising him, would be entirely out of their element in heaven. Well, we know that most men do take no delight in these religious exercises, and it is evident therefore that they have no fitness for heaven. There must be an inward change in us before we can enter into the kingdom of heaven. I have here several small books which clearly prove from the word of God the necessity of being born again. Do take one of them and read it with care, and if you do not like it, when I return this way I will take it back, and return you your money.

COTT. That indeed is fair. I will take one; for if I do not read I know my wife will be glad to see it, for she is for ever borrowing old books, and spends much. But what can you say respecting the two men of whom I spoke to you, who professed to be converted, and are now worse than before?

COLP. I would say, that they never experienced the new birth. They

probably got alarmed at the great meeting, and some injudicious guides persuaded them that they were converted; or rather, I would say that the devil put this into their minds, for every instance of counterfeit conversion helps him to maintain his power over the souls of men. You know that men who make counterfeit money are very injurious to society, for they impose upon the people a worthless currency for the genuine, and destroy their confidence in the true currency; just so spurious religion, like counterfeit coin, imposes on the people and destroys their confidence in true religion. But because we discover some money to be counterfeit, it would not do to infer that there was no genuine money in the country. No; if there was not some good money, we may be sure there would be no counterfeits.

I wonder that you should judge of all professors of religion by those two deceived men. You certainly know some men who have for years maintained a consistent Christian character; these ought not to be put in the same class with those whose conduct shows that they never had any religious principle, but were for a few days and weeks under a violent excitement, and when this wore off they were the same as before; or rather, they were worse, for nothing hardens the heart and sears the conscience more than a spurious conversion. You profess to be an honest man, and nobody doubts it; but the two men who were condemned for robbing McGruder's store were thought to be honest men before their villany was discovered. Would it be a fair inference, because these men professed honesty, that all others who made that profession, or maintained that character, were also dishonest? Now, if this conclusion would not be correct in regard to honesty, neither is it in regard to religion.

COTT. If your doctrine be true, then a man has nothing to do to obtain salvation. He cannot change his own heart, he is therefore not to be blamed.

COLP. Man is not excusable for not having a new heart and a right spirit. This is the essence of what the holy law of God requires of us all; and just so far as we fall short of it, just so far are we counted sinners in the sight of God. If a man is not to be blamed for a hard, a proud, a selfish, and impenitent heart, what can he be blamed for? This is the very core of his

iniquity. This is the "evil heart of unbelief" of which the Scriptures speak. Why cannot a sinner change his own heart? Only because it is so entirely wicked, so entirely destitute of all love to God and holiness. And can this be any excuse? Why, it is the main thing for which he is now condemned, and for which he will be publicly condemned at the judgment, unless God give him forgiveness and repentance unto life. I do therefore beseech you all, my dear friends, to lay aside excuses and seriously engage in seeking God while he may be found, and calling upon him while he is near.

The colporteur was now about to return his books into his pack and proceed on his journey, when a collier, who had stood listening to the conversation, came forward and said,

COLLIER. Friend, I hope you will not go yet awhile. I wish to hear more about these matters. You have touched upon a subject which has been on my mind for months. I have been a very thoughtless, and if I must tell the whole truth, a very wicked man. I never had any education, and fell into bad company, and soon was equal to the worst of them in sin and folly. But of late the thought of the sins of my youth troubles me much; often I am so troubled when I lie down at night, that I cannot sleep. And often I ask myself the question, What will become of me when I die? A few nights ago, while I was tending my coal-pit, I looked up and beheld the moon and stars shining very bright, and the thought came into my mind, Above all these, and beyond the sky, there is a brighter world than this. That is the place they call heaven; but how can such a sinful creature as I am ever get to heaven? Well, I thought I must try hereafter to please God, and quit sinning. I determined that I would begin to amend my ways and lead a new life.

But after a while the thought came into my mind that I was going to judgment, and if I could live without sinning all the rest of my life, how should I be able to answer for the ten thousand sins already committed? these would sink me to hell. I thought there could be no mercy for me. Ever since, all has looked dark before me, and I would have given the world for some one to tell me what I should do; and when I heard you talk to my neighbors, I thought you were the man I wanted to see; and now, my dear friend, do tell me if there is any salvation for such a sinner as I am.

COLP. I feel thankful that Providence has brought me this way; if for no other reason, that I might give some counsel to one who seems to be groping in darkness, and yet anxiously desires to know the way of life. And I do not think, friend, that I can answer your question better than by telling you a bit of my own experience. I was once as wicked as ever you were, and worse, because I ran counter to the instructions of a pious mother, who often took me into a private place, when a child, and kneeled down and prayed for me.

I followed the sea, and there I had all sorts of bad examples, which I too readily imitated. But when I was leaving home on a long voyage, my mother, when she put up my clothes, slipped a small volume into the bottom of my trunk. When I opened the book I found that it was on religion, and I shut it up and laid it by, resolved never to read a page in it. But our vessel was wrecked, and by and by I returned to the book, and before I had proceeded half through it I became deeply interested. I found that it described my case exactly, and showed it to be very bad; and convinced me that I was a wretched sinner against God, and was now lying under his wrath and curse. I could think of nothing else. My comrades saw that I was growing serious, and tried their best to laugh me out of my religious whims, as they called them. They swore they would take the book and burn it, if I did not give over reading it. But their opposition had no effect to remove my concern. I felt myself to be a lost and perishing sinner, and I cared nothing for the ridicule of them or of the whole world. I was like a man sinking in deep water, who needed some one to throw him a rope.

As I proceeded in reading, I found that the author not only pointed out the mortal disease which had seized upon me, but also described an all-sufficient remedy. He showed me that no righteousness of mine could be of any avail; that God, viewing the wretched condition of the world, had so loved it as to give his well-beloved Son to be our Redeemer, to die in our place, to make an atonement for our sins, and to bring in everlasting righteousness. The glorious gospel the author opened up, and what surprised me above measure, he showed that the greatest sinner might, on this plan, obtain salvation as readily as the least. I had often heard the word grace, but never before did I know its meaning. I had, until now,

supposed that I must bring some price in my hand, or undergo some preparation, before I could come to Christ; but now I found that I was warranted by the word of God to come at once, and receive salvation as a free gift, without money and without price. When the light of this truth broke in first on my mind, I was so full of joy that I seemed as one that dreamed. It seemed to be too good and too favorable to be true. I asked myself, Do I understand the author; or may not he be mistaken? I turned again to the book, and found that the meaning could not be mistaken, for the same doctrine was taught over and over again; and that the author was correct, I clearly saw from the many plain passages of Scripture which he brought to prove his doctrine. Indeed, the whole scheme of salvation inculcated was precisely what is found in the Bible.

COLLIER. And do you still enjoy the same comfortable assurance which you had at first?

COLP. No, I cannot say that my joy is as full as it was when I first believed, but I think I understand the gospel plan better. At first I was too much disposed to live upon joyful frames, but now I live more by faith.

COLLIER. And do you think that there is mercy for such a poor, miserable, ignorant sinner as I am? I am afraid that glorious Saviour would drive me from his presence if he should see me coming. Oh yes, I am too vile, too ignorant to be saved.

COLP. Do not talk in this strain. Would you make God a liar? Has he said, and will he not make it good? Has he not invited the weary and heavy-laden to come to him? Has he not declared that he came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance? To seek and save the lost?

COLLIER. What you tell me is indeed good news. I had pretty much given up all hope of salvation; but now I begin to see that it is possible, and even this is a relief. But how shall I obtain a part in this salvation?

COLP. Only believe. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." "All things are possible to him that believeth." Christ stands with open arms ready to receive you. Cast your soul confidingly on his almighty arm. Trust in him.

COLLIER. I do not clearly know what you would have me to do. I desire to be saved, and I am willing to be saved by Christ; is that the thing?

COLP. Suppose you owed ten thousand pounds and had nothing to pay, and some prince should offer to pay the debt for you if you would rely upon him. The favor is so great that at first you might hesitate. You might doubt his ability or his sincerity in making the offer, but this would be very base and ungrateful; yet this is the way in which Christ is dishonored, even by those who are seeking salvation.

COLLIER. I understand what is required, but I am afraid that I have it not in me to comply. Do tell me how to believe.

COLP. Faith is the gift of God, and unless the Holy Spirit enlightens your mind and renews your heart, you will for ever remain in unbelief. To believe in Christ is most reasonable, and is the duty of all who hear the gospel; but such is the blindness and perverseness which sin has brought on the heart, that no man ever cometh to Christ unless the Father draw him. The Holy Spirit is now evidently striving with you. It is he that has opened your eyes to see your sins; cherish his influences, and in answer to your prayer, humbly trusting in the merits of Christ, he will enable you to believe to the saving of your soul. The man with the withered hand might have cavilled as sinners do now; but he hesitated not, he made the effort, and in making it found the vigor of his arm restored; so in thousands of cases, while men have renounced their sins and cried for mercy, they have been enabled by the divine Spirit to believe, and receive Christ as he is offered in the gospel.

COLLIER. Oh that I could believe. Lord, help me.

COLP. You seem to be in the very case of the man mentioned in the gospel who brought his lunatic son to Christ to be healed, and said, "If thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us and help us. And Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth. And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief."

COLLIER. Yes, that is my case. Lord, help me to believe. Lord, give me



faith. If thou wilt thou canst make me whole.

COLP. Friend, let me ask you a few plain questions, that it may appear whether or not you believe. And first, do you feel and acknowledge that you are a great sinner, and unable to help yourself?

COLLIER. I do. I am a great sinner—a vile, ungrateful wretch—the worst perhaps out of hell.

COLP. Do you see that sin, your own sin, is hateful, and deserving of God's wrath and curse?

COLLIER. I am as much convinced that I deserve to be sent to hell, as that I am now a living man. Indeed, I do not see how a holy God can do otherwise than send me to hell.

COLP. Here you go too far. Were it not for the atonement of Christ, God could not do otherwise, consistently with justice, than send every sinner to hell. Do you believe that the death of Christ is a sufficient atonement for your sins?

COLLIER. I cannot deny it. O yes, it is a glorious sacrifice—it is of infinite value—that precious blood which he shed cleanseth from all sin. Oh, if I had an interest in this blood I should be safe.

COLP. Well, you have it—it is yours—you do believe, and therefore your sins are pardoned.

COLLIER. I am not satisfied of that. I am afraid something is wanting. I heard you speak of the great joy which you felt when you believed; should not I experience the same, if my faith were of the right kind?

COLP. There are degrees of faith. There is faith as a grain of mustard-seed, and a strong faith like Abraham's, "who against hope believed in hope." Now, most commonly, in our day, the first exercises of faith are feeble and obscure; but by proper culture, it becomes stronger every day. Let me ask you whether you do not approve the gospel method of salvation by grace, and whether you do not renounce all dependence on your own works and merits?

COLLIER. As to my works, I have none—none good, and I see no fault in the plan of redemption. It is a glorious plan. My soul rejoices in it. It brings glory to God, and salvation to the sinner. And I want no other Saviour than Christ; O give me Christ, and I want no more.

COLP. And what think you of the people of God, the true disciples of Christ?

COLLIER. It is my misfortune to know very few true Christians, but I am sure, if I should become acquainted with such, I should esteem them the excellent of the earth. And I do feel at this moment a tender compassion for sinners. O that I could take them in my arms and bring them to Christ! I desire the salvation of the whole world.

COLP. Friend, my time is out; I have an appointment for a prayer-meeting this evening many miles off. Here's a New Testament, which I give to you.

COLLIER. Why, sir, I do not know a letter in the book.

COLP. I want that you should learn. Begin with the first chapter of John. Your wife can aid you, and you will soon be able to read for yourself the wonderful works of God, and the unsearchable riches of Christ. Farewell.

## **THE COLPORTEUR AND FARMER**

A DIALOGUE

FARMER. Well, friend, you seem to be weary; will you step into the house

and rest yourself?

COLPORTEUR. I will, and would thank you for a drink of cold water.

FAR. Will you not take a little something with it? I have some good old whiskey.

COLP. No, my friend, I have seen so much evil from drinking whiskey and such like liquors, that I have resolved never to take any intoxicating drink.

FAR. I guess you belong to a Temperance Society.

COLP. I profess to be a Christian, and I feel myself bound to prevent evil and do good to the utmost of my power; and I am of opinion that few things have occasioned more vice and misery than strong drink. It has rendered thousands of families wretched, and brought many a promising man to a drunkard's grave. Besides, it has burdened the country with taxes to support prisons, poor-houses, and hospitals, which are principally filled by persons brought there by strong drink.

FAR. To drink to excess is bad, but a little will hurt nobody. I have taken a little every day for twenty years, and am nothing the worse for it. I think it does me good, and I cannot do without it now any more than I can do without my tobacco.

COLP. How old may you be, friend?

FAR. If I live I shall be four and forty the tenth day of next June.

COLP. Well, sir, I will tell you what I know and have seen. Many moderate drinkers continue to be sober men until they reach the age of fifty or fifty-five, and then become sots the remainder of their days.

FAR. How can that be accounted for?

COLP. I will tell you. While the vigor of their constitution remains, the spirit which they are accustomed to take every day does not affect them; but at the turn of life, when their strength is weakened, they cannot bear

the same quantity which they took before, and they become drunkards by taking just the same quantity they had been used to take for twenty years. But I believe moderate drinkers never lessen the quantity of whiskey or rum which they put into their grog. Do you not find, friend, that you require that your daily drink should be somewhat stronger the longer you continue at it?

FAR. Well, I must confess that what you say is true; and it accounts for what appeared strange to me here in our neighborhood. Two men that were thought to be very religious—now I don't pretend to any religion myself—but we all did believe that J. M—— and W. B—— were good men, if there were any in the land: one of them was an elder in the Presbyterian church, and the other a deacon in the Baptist church, and no one ever suspected that they drank too much; but about the same time they were both had under dealings for intoxication, and both are now suspended from their societies. And as you say, this came upon them just at the turn of life, when, as we may say, old age begins.

COLP. Is there any appearance of a reformation since they have been dealt with by their churches?

FAR. Far from it. They drink harder since than before, and though they both helped to turn many a one out for drunkenness, they are both greatly offended that the same measure has been dealt to them which they measured to others.

COLP. Mark me now. There is scarcely the shadow of hope for such. Men who drink by spells may sometimes be reclaimed; but when did you ever see a sot who takes too much every day in the year, turn to be a sober man? What you say of these two neighbors is true of many thousands in our land; they drink, without being intoxicated, for ten, fifteen, or twenty years, and then, to the grief and astonishment of all their friends, become sots. But I will tell you another reason why some men and some whole families become drunkards about the turn of life. About that time the spirits are apt to flag, and men commonly leave off active business. Now these two things go together. Men who have lived an active, bustling life, when they retire from business and expect to enjoy themselves at home, are almost sure to become low-spirited, and feeling restless and uneasy

they take to the bottle and find a temporary relief; and so they go on, from bad to worse, until they are drunk all the time.

FAR. Really, friend, you alarm me by what you say. I have never before felt that I was in any danger of becoming a drunkard; but I must think my two neighbors had as good a right and better to feel sure than I have. And so much of what you say I know to be true, that I really begin to fear for myself. Now, suppose I should wish to quit drinking whiskey, would you advise me to taper off by degrees, or to break off at once?

COLP. By all means at once. I believe no one ever was successful on the other plan. Be resolute, keep in view your danger and the ruin which you would bring on your family if you should become a drunkard, and determine never to taste another drop unless as a medicine; and there is danger in taking spirits even as a medicine, to those who have been much addicted to its use.

FAR. Did you not say that some whole families are more in danger of falling under the influence of this evil habit than others? How do you account for that?

COLP. Upon the principle already stated, that some whole families are at a certain age very apt to become somewhat melancholy, hypped as we say, and then they are very apt to take to drink. It is a sad remedy, but it answers for the moment. I recollect a case of this kind: a very respectable and apparently religious man, who had served in the legislature of the state, and was a magistrate, and as well informed as any man who had not received a liberal education. He was in easy, or rather affluent circumstances, had a large family around him, sons and daughters, the oldest of whom were well educated and very promising. This gentleman had, as was common with almost every body, been accustomed to take one or two drinks of grog before dinner, but was never suspected of intoxication, until at about the age of fifty or fifty-five he became almost at once a drunkard of the worst kind; that is, he was when in liquor as raving a madman as ever was in bedlam. I need not tell you of the mortification and distress of his wife and children. The former did not live long to suffer the overwhelming calamity which had come on the family. Whether this was the cause of her disease and death is what I do

not know. Many said it was. The family being among the first in the society where they lived, and possessing wealth and uncommon talents, were struck down to the dust; for perhaps they had been accustomed, as we say, to carry their heads a little too high. The church also in which he was an officer felt the stroke most keenly. He had been a leading man in all religious concerns, and was liberal in the support and propagation of the gospel. None were pleased but the enemies of religion, and even some of them seemed to feel badly about it; but the confirmed infidel scoffed louder than ever, and said, "Here is one of your saints: they are all alike; and all their religion is nothing but hypocrisy." The calamity had, I think, a good effect on the children. Not one of them would taste ardent spirits, at a time when it was commonly used by all classes, and their pride was evidently brought down.

FAR. Well, was he ever reclaimed?

COLP. If he was, it was on his death-bed. I have heard that he was truly penitent; but of the reality of such repentance there must always be great reason to doubt.

FAR. Did all his children continue to be temperate?

COLP. I was going to tell about his oldest son, to show the truth of what I said about families having sometimes a something that led to drunkenness. I was conversing one day with a sensible old gentleman who had been long the friend and companion of the person described above. I asked him how he could account for his falling so suddenly into the open practice of this vice. He said it was "owing to a kind of melancholy or miserable depression to which at a certain age the family are subject; and you'll see," said he, "that the oldest son, when he arrives at that age, will become a drunkard too."

I was, I confess, shocked at the very supposition, as he was a pattern of sobriety, and from his youth had drunk nothing stronger than water or household beer. I said it was impossible that this man should take to drink, especially as he appeared to be a consistent Christian, and devout and pious in all his conduct at home and abroad.

"Very true, very true," said the shrewd old gentleman, "but not more so than his father, and you'll see that he will go the same way."

Some years afterwards, when I had forgotten this conversation, the gentleman of whom he spoke, having retired from active business to enjoy the repose which he supposed he needed, fell into a state of depression which alarmed his friends. A more miserable man I never saw; and then I began to fear that the word of the old gentleman would come true. He had every thing about him that heart could wish, but still he was miserable. He was so restless that he could not contain himself many minutes in any position.

FAR. Well, did he take to the bottle at last?

COLP. No; blessed be God, he had grace given him to resist the most powerful temptations. His physician prescribed old Madeira as the best remedy. He tried it, but it increased his malady. Some recommended brown stout; some, old whiskey; and some, a gill of French brandy every morning in a quart of new milk. But his aversion to the use of spirits prevented him from trying any of these remedies. The only thing which he did find any relief from was the pipe. It was curious to see a man who had detested the use of tobacco in every form all his life before, now sitting and puffing at the pipe by the hour. Indeed, he became so attached to it that he smoked as he rode on horseback, lighting his pipe from a tinder-box.

FAR. And did he ever get well again?

COLP. Yes; but not until he returned to an active life. He engaged in a business which required him to be much on horseback, and was himself again, except that a tinge of melancholy remained.

FAR. One thing I would ask, as you seem to have studied much on this subject, why is it that strong drink kills many stout young men in a few years; while others who drink hard, and are scarcely ever sober, live as long as other men?

COLP. The same question I once asked a very wise man on the following

occasion. I had gone to a public meeting of the people, I think on a court-day, and while conversing with this man, there came up one of the tallest men I ever saw, and he was as straight as an Indian. I recollected as soon as he came near that I had known him some years before, but I soon saw that he had lost all recollection of me. He spoke to the gentleman who was talking with me, but his speech was so thick that I could scarcely understand a word he said. His face was pale and much bloated, and the black under his eyes looked as if he had been bruised. But what surprised me most, not only his hands but his whole flesh trembled in a remarkable manner. When he had passed by us, the sage with whom I was conversing said, "There is one of our finest young men destroyed with accursed alcohol."

"With what?" said I, not knowing then the meaning of the word.

"With ardent spirits," said he. "A more promising young man we had not in this community, and now you see he has the premonitory symptoms of a most horrible death by delirium tremens."

"What?" said I, being again at a loss for his meaning.

"It may," said he, "be called in English the trembling madness. Of all horrible scenes that ever I witnessed," added he, "the worst was the death of a near relation of mine with this dreadful disease, brought on by drinking. I hope I shall never have my feelings so harrowed again; and the awful and terrific impressions made on my imagination I am afraid will never be removed. He was a stout, strong man, a little turned of thirty years of age. It took four men to hold him, and after seeming to sleep a few moments, he would start up, his eyes staring like fire-balls, and would scream with a voice of such agony as I had never conceived; and throwing himself back he would exclaim with horror, 'Hell-fire, hell-fire; keep them off; keep them off me; they have come to drag me down to the lake of fire.' Then he broke forth in the most horrid blasphemies which the tongue could utter; soon after which he fell into one convulsion fit after another until he expired, with the most frightful contortions of countenance I ever beheld.

"And," said he, "the man who passed us just now, though walking abroad,



is very near a death of the same kind. I have observed this fell disease in all its stages, and know all its symptoms. That large, strong man who spoke to me is the son of an old friend who himself came to the drunkard's grave. His sons were early initiated into the practice of dram-drinking in the morning, and grog-drinking at noon, and toddy-drinking at dinner. This is the youngest and the last of the family. The others have already finished their mad career, and you will hear that this one has followed them in a few weeks."

I asked if he had a family.

"Yes," said he, "as amiable and affectionate a wife as any man in the land, a lady of the first family in the county; but her heart is already broken. She is never seen abroad; and when her nearest friends visit her she makes a great exertion to assume an air of cheerfulness, and never alludes in the most distant manner to the intemperate habits of her husband. But when left alone with her four sweet little children about her knee, she weeps almost perpetually. One of her two little daughters the other day, looking up into her mother's face, said in the most tender, affecting tone, 'Dear mother, what ails you? why do you cry so?' She made no answer; but clasped the dear little girl to her bosom, foreseeing that in a little time she would be fatherless."

But, said I, how comes it that this hale young man is killed so soon by this poison, and here is old John Tarry, who has been a hard drinker for forty years, and yet seems likely to live a long time yet?

"O," said he, "that is easily explained. The human constitution can by slow degrees be accommodated to almost any poison, so that the dose which would produce certain death in another will not destroy it. For example, there is a lady in my immediate vicinity who swallows as much morphine every day, and several times in the day, as would kill you or me without a doubt. And you have heard of a certain queen of England who fortified herself against poison by gradually increasing the dose until it had little effect on her constitution. So it is with alcohol; taken by degrees, the constitution becomes hardened against its deleterious effects."

I begged him to tell me what the poison was which he mentioned as being taken by the lady in his neighborhood. He smiled, and said he thought that every body knew that morphine was a purified extract of opium.

FAR. Well, friend, I must confess that what you have said brings me to a pause. I never saw the danger of moderate drinking as I do now. And were it not for one thing, I think I could muster up resolution to leave off the practice. But I have some neighbors with whom I am in the habit of spending a social hour. Now if I should quit drinking altogether these men would ridicule me beyond measure, and I can bear any thing better than to be laughed at.

COLP. Never mind the jeers and scoffs of such men. I dare say many that have joined your club have already become drunkards, and the rest, if they continue to drink, will probably go the same way. Act the part of a reasonable man. The wise man says, "The prudent man foreseeth the evil and hideth himself, but the foolish pass on and are punished." These very men, in their serious moments, will secretly approve your course, however in self-defence they may ridicule you. And who knows but your example, when you explain the reasons of it, may have a happy influence on them, to induce them to leave off a practice which leads so many to ruin. And rest assured, that the trial which you fear will soon be over. Your old companions, if they cannot be persuaded to follow your example, will soon cut your society and trouble you no more.

FAR. Well, a thought has come into my mind that I will not break off abruptly, but will taper off by degrees, and thus the thing will scarcely be noticed.

COLP. I tell you, friend, this will not do. I never yet knew any one weaned from the use of strong drink in this way. I have known fond mothers attempt to wean their children in this gradual way: it never succeeded. The difficulty was as great at the last as the first. There is no safety or certainty here but in total abstinence. All that is wanted is a strong resolution to deny yourself, and moral courage to meet the jeers of your old comrades.

FAR. I feel much inclined to follow your advice, but I cannot conveniently

begin just now, for I have an appointment to meet some persons on public business, and it has ever been our custom at these meetings to treat each other in turn, and it so happens that this will be expected of me at our next meeting; and I never can endure to have it said that I was too niggardly to do my part, and be as free with my money as another. But after this meeting is over I am resolved to begin a new course.

COLP. Now, my dear sir, if you will listen to the advice of a stranger who sincerely desires your welfare, you will not postpone putting your resolution into practice at once. Delays are dangerous, and in nothing more dangerous than reforming what is amiss in our own conduct, especially where inveterate habit is to be overcome. No, sir, if instead of treating your friends whom you expect to meet, you frankly inform them of your change of view, and of your purpose to relinquish all use of intoxicating liquors, you will have no difficulty; and that they may have no reason to attribute your course to stinginess, you can propose to them to spend the money commonly given for drink, in the purchase of useful books for the poor, or in schooling some poor child.

FAR. What you say has weight. I will think of it; and I know nothing would better please my wife, for she has a mortal hatred of drunkards, and often wishes that there was not a drop of whiskey in the land; for two of her brothers have already gone down to the drunkard's grave, as you call it.

But come, friend, let us go into the house; it must be near our dinner-time; and you seem to have travelled far this morning with that heavy pack. But what do you carry? What notions to suit the women? they are always glad to see the pedlar coming, and are sure to have a little cash laid up to buy some trifles.

COLP. I carry nothing but books and tracts.

FAR. Very good. We often buy cheap books to amuse us in the long winter nights. Have you any novels or funny stories in your collection?

COLP. No, friend; my books are of a very different kind; they are all religious books, calculated to make men wise unto salvation. We have

certain evidence that many have been savingly benefited by the books and tracts we circulate. Come, make a trial of one or two, and if you become interested in them you will not care for fictitious narratives and funny stories any more. Here is "Doddridge's Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul;" also "Alleine's Alarm to the Unconverted," "Baxter's Call to the Unconverted," and this one with cuts is "Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress." Now, if you will take the whole of these, you shall have them for one dollar and eight cents.

FAR. I am afraid we shall not be amused by these religious books, and that they will lie on the shelf unopened, and we shall have nothing for our money.

COLP. Well, I will tell you what I will do. You may keep these books until I return in the winter; when if, on examination, you do not think proper to buy them, I will take them back; but I beg that you will not neglect to peruse them. On the Lord's day, when you have no preaching near, you might read a portion out of one of them to your family, in the place of a sermon.

FAR. Your proposal is not only fair, but generous. I will keep the books until you return, and will read so much as to find whether they suit me; and if you should never return, I suppose the books will be mine.

COLP. Yes, if you will promise to lend them to any of your neighbors who may wish to peruse them.

FAR. Well, that is fair enough; and if I should not want to read them, my wife will, for she often borrows religious books.

# THE COLPORTEUR AND AGED MAN

## A DIALOGUE

COLPORTEUR. You seem, friend, to have lived long in the world, and must have had much experience of the trials incident to mortals in this vale of sorrow.

AGED MAN. Yes, yes; I have been spared long upon earth; most of my early friends and acquaintances are gone, and most of my own family also. I have buried two wives, and have lost five children out of seven, so that I seem to be left almost alone in the world. I am become a stranger in the place where I have always lived. The former generation to which I belonged have gone and left me alone, like an old dead tree in the midst of a field; and a new generation have sprung up, who appear as strangers to me, though they are the children of my old neighbors; and often when my own grandchildren come to see me, I am under the necessity of asking their names, so forgetful have I become.

COLP. I hope, sir, that you enjoy comfortable health in your advanced age. You seem not to be afflicted with any painful disease, if one may judge from your healthy appearance.

AGED MAN. Appearances in my case are deceitful. I am at this moment free from distressing illness, but no day of my life passes in which I do not experience the growing infirmities of age; and I have seasons of excruciating pain, which if it should continue long, would bring me to my end; but, thank God, these spells are commonly of short continuance.

COLP. It does not seem desirable, from what I have observed, for persons to live to extreme old age: very few pass the age of seventy-five without experiencing manifold infirmities of body, and in most cases a great decay of the mental faculties; and this often happens when there is no decline in the health. Where the aged are prepared for death, I see no reason why they should be solicitous to have their days protracted.

AGED MAN. Very true, very true: after a certain age, there is very little

pleasure to be enjoyed, and there are many troubles to be endured; but how long a man shall live is not left to his option. He must patiently wait until his change cometh. But in regard to preparation for death, I do not know any thing which deserves to be so called, but an upright, well-spent life; at any rate, that is all my dependence.

COLP. That must indeed be a good life to embolden a man to be willing to meet his almighty Judge. For my part, when I look back upon my past life, I see so many glaring defects, so many sinful acts, so many omissions of what ought to have been done, and especially such a want of purity in my motives, even when my actions were externally correct, that I should dread the scrutiny of the omniscient eye of God; knowing from his own word that "He is of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look upon iniquity." If, therefore, my own good works were my only ground of hope, I should utterly despair.

AGED MAN. Really, sir, I do not understand you. To my reason, nothing can be more evident, than that our beneficent Creator will deal with men according to their behavior. And if we do as well as we can, and act honestly, uprightly, and charitably, He is not so unjust as to require more of us than we, poor frail creatures, are able to perform. I do not see, therefore, why you, or any other honest man, should be afraid to meet your Judge. I should be very unwilling to entertain an opinion so derogatory to his character, as that he would not be satisfied with such obedience as his creatures are able to render to him?

COLP. I find that we agree in the general principle that God will deal with men according to their real character and conduct; and if these are in exact conformity with his law and will, undoubtedly we have nothing to fear, "The Judge of all the earth will do right." He will never condemn the innocent—but he has declared that he will not clear the guilty. The only question before us is, whether, indeed, we have complied with the will of God. You seem to have low ideas of what the law of God requires of man. Let us understand one another on this point, and we shall not be likely to differ in other things. Now, I know of no other way to determine this point but to have recourse to the word of God, where the requisitions of his law are clearly expressed, and where the duties of man, in all the relations of life, are plainly inculcated. Here I find it written, "Thou shalt

love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself." Now if any man has perfectly complied with this requisition, I admit that he may appear with confidence before his Judge, and claim justification on the footing of his own obedience. But if a man seeks justification by his own obedience, he should see to it that there is no flaw in it; for it is written, "Cursed is every one who continueth not in all things written in the law of God." And, "he who offendeth in one point, is guilty of all." Now this is a judgment which I cannot stand; for I am conscious of guilt. I have often done the things which I ought not to have done, and left undone those which I ought to have done. And instead of loving God with all my heart from the earliest dawn of reason, much of my life has been spent in almost total forgetfulness of God. My youthful prime was devoted to pleasure, and I may say, to sin and folly; so that, even now, I am often constrained to cry out, "Remember not against me the sins of my youth and my transgressions." Yet I cannot say that I ran to greater excesses than the majority of my companions, and at the time I thought little of the evil of my ways; but since it pleased God to open my eyes to understand the extent of his law and the exceeding sinfulness of sin, I have mourned over my misspent life. Even now I dare not plead any work which I have ever performed as a ground of acceptance before God; for I know that if he should enter into judgment with me, there is imperfection enough in my very best performances to subject me to condemnation.

AGED MAN. I must confess that you astonish me with your doctrine. I am sure there are very few who think as you do. I know, indeed, that Methodists, and some others of an enthusiastic turn, insist on what they call the new birth, but I thought all sensible men rejected such notions with scorn. I sat for years under the ministry of old Mr. Sadler, who was reckoned by all to be a learned and able divine, and he never preached any of these new-fangled doctrines, but always insisted on moral honesty, and charity to the poor. His favorite text, which he often quoted, was, "What, O man, does the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" I have often heard him say, that if a good life was not the way to heaven, he knew not what was. And as to our slips and defects, he said that our Maker was not so severe as to mark every fault, and that Christ would make up for all our deficiencies.

COLP. I am not surprised to hear these sentiments. I believe they are held by many nominal Christians, and some reputable ministers know no other method of salvation. In fact it is the system of nature. Every man, without instruction, naturally adopts such opinions; but though I once knew no better, and foolishly rested on my own good works when in reality I had none, yet now I am as well persuaded as I can be of any thing, that this is a false and sandy foundation, and whoever builds upon it will experience a fatal overthrow. This scheme goes on the supposition that man is not in a fallen, ruined state; it supposes also that God will not be strict in requiring obedience to his own law, but that men may fail of their duty in the most essential respect, and never serve God at all from pure motives, and yet incur no penalty. His threatening against all and every transgression, according to these sentiments, is a mere empty sound at which nobody need be alarmed, as there is no danger that it will ever be executed, Besides, if men may be saved by their own imperfect works, the whole Christian system is superfluous, and Christ has died in vain; for as to calling upon him to eke out the defects of our own righteousness, it is so derogatory to the Saviour that I wonder that any one should defend the opinion. The truth is, if our imperfect works can be, in any degree, a safe foundation for our hopes of acceptance with God, they can accomplish the whole work as well as a part. The Deist has as good a religion as this; indeed, he has the very same: it is a system which supersedes all necessity of the mediatorial scheme, and derives no hope nor comfort from the atonement and intercession of the Lord Jesus Christ. However well satisfied men may remain while they rely on their own works, if ever their consciences are awakened and their minds enlightened to apprehend their real condition under the law, every vestige of hope will be swept from under them. It is a religion which can never heal a wounded spirit, or give solid peace to the soul troubled with a deep conviction of sin. Nor will it be likely to remove our fears when death approaches; and certainly at the judgment it will be found utterly to fail all those who have no better righteousness than their own.

AGED MAN. You seem to me to forget that God is merciful as well as just, and that he has promised freely to pardon all our sins, provided we sincerely repent of them. His merit covers all our defects, and his intercession recommends us unto God. You see that I do not exclude



Christ from my religion, as you seem to suggest, but find an important place for the blessed Redeemer, as the ground of all my hopes of pardon.

COLP. I am gratified to learn that you make so much of the Saviour, and at last find so much need of his merit; but these sentiments which you have now uttered never can be made to harmonize with those which you expressed a while ago. If the former theory of salvation be true, there is no room for a Mediator, no room for his expiatory work. Either then you must renounce the expectation of being accepted on account of your honest and upright life; or if you cleave to this as the foundation of your hope, then you have no place for the Saviour and his righteousness. The two plans are perfectly incompatible. "If by grace, then it is no more of works, otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more of grace, otherwise work is no more work." The Scriptures, however, positively and repeatedly declare, that salvation is by grace, through faith, and that not of ourselves, but the gift of God. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost."

AGED MAN. As you admit that God is merciful, why may not I hope to be accepted as well as you? Will his mercy be confined, as some teach, to a few favorites, while all the rest of mankind, do what they can, must be reprobated? That is a doctrine which my soul abhors. I never will believe that God is partial. I am persuaded that he loves all his creatures, and never created any body to be damned. His mercy is free to all, and the door of hope is open to all.

COLP. My aged friend, I do not hold any of the opinions which you so strongly disapprove, as you have expressed them. But I have often observed, that precious truth, by a little misrepresentation, may be made to appear exceeding odious and repulsive. I never in my life heard an opposer of the gospel give a fair and impartial statement of the truth which he endeavored to overthrow. And often truth is so intermingled with error in the statements which men make of their opinions, that it is very difficult to oppose the one without seeming to reject the truth implicated with it. This, I must be permitted to say, is the case in regard to the sentiments just now uttered. But I have found religious controversy

so very unprofitable, that I have resolved as far as possible to avoid it. In all cases, however, I feel it to be my duty to give my humble testimony in favor of plain, important, scriptural truth. There are many deep things in religion which I do not pretend to explain, and some things in God's dealings with men which are to me inscrutable: I leave all such things to wiser heads. I find that my best course is, to speculate but little, and to receive with humility and simplicity of heart whatever God has revealed, whether I can explain it or not. Objections may be offered to demonstrated truths, which no man can answer. But do we reject such truths on this account? By no means. We attribute the difficulty to the weakness of the human understanding. There are things relating to the purposes of God, the fall of man, the doctrine of atonement, and supernatural grace, which are beyond my comprehension; but finding things as incomprehensible and inexplicable in my own nature, and in every thing around me, I am prepared to expect profound mysteries in religion. And when, on account of these, men find fault and cavil, I always think of the words of Paul, "Nay, but O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him who formed it, why hast thou made me thus?" Nothing, I am persuaded, is more requisite to the study of divine truth than a humble, docile disposition. To enter the kingdom of heaven, we must be converted, and become as little children. There are many truths which the proud, self-confident disputer of this world never can receive. They are repugnant to all his feelings; and when this is the fact, the voice of reason and Scripture is lost, and the force of argument is unfelt. I have long observed that the creed of many is dictated by their feelings rather than their judgment. If any doctrine be advanced which is repugnant to their feelings, they instantly, I was going to say instinctively, reject it without any impartial inquiry into its authority and evidence. Even the plain and repeated declarations of God's word will not overcome their opposition to such truths.

As, then, I do not mean to enter into any abstruse disquisitions of theological points, for which indeed I am incompetent, I will simply state the clear doctrine of Scripture on two essential questions. First, How is sinful man to find acceptance with God? Secondly, How can man be cleansed from the pollution of sin? It seems to me that an answer to these two questions will embrace all that is essential in religion; for, as far as I

can see, there are only two obstacles in the way of any sinner's getting to heaven. The first is, the condemnation under which by nature he lies; for we are all by nature children of wrath, and the whole world is guilty before God. The second obstacle is man's corrupt nature, which disqualifies him for the enjoyment of the holy happiness of heaven. The great object of the holy Scriptures is to teach sinful man a way by which these two grand obstacles may be removed. And we are there taught over and over again, and in almost every possible form, that no man can obtain justification or salvation by the deeds of the law, or by any works of righteousness which he can perform; but that salvation from beginning to end is by grace, that is, of mere favor, on the ground, not of our own merit, but the merit of Christ. And as justification is the commencement of salvation, the doctrine of justification by faith is the prominent doctrine of the New Testament; and it is evident that it is not from any merit in the act of faith which is the ground of acceptance, but it is the object which faith apprehends, and on which it relies, even the merit and perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ. And it must never be forgotten, that the faith which justifies is never a dead, but always a living, operative faith, which "works by love, and purifies the heart."

The second great hinderance to salvation, our depravity of nature, is removed by regeneration and sanctification. This is a real, spiritual renovation of man's corrupt nature, inculcated in Scripture by many striking metaphors, and its necessity insisted on in the most decisive and peremptory manner: "Except a man be born again"—"Except ye be converted"—"Except ye repent"—"Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." The efficient agent in this change is the Holy Spirit; the instrument, the word. These are truths so plainly taught in the Scriptures, that respecting them there should be no dispute.

AGED MAN. What you say may be very true, for what I know; but if so, there are few that will be saved. The people around here know nothing of the great change which you speak of, except a small number of weak enthusiasts, who are trying to be "righteous overmuch." Now, friend, I will change the conversation. I am too old to think of making an entire change in my way of living; and I am contented to take my chance for future happiness with the majority of my neighbors: and so, good

morning to you, sir.

COLP. Before you go, I beg you to hear one word more from one who has no other motive for addressing you but love to your soul. You have here a comfortable house and a good farm, which you have obtained by your own industry. Suppose, now, that some friend should come to you and say, "I have been examining the recorded deed which you received when you bought this land, and I find it to be defective; and there are persons interested who begin to suspect the existence of a flaw." What would you do? Would you say, I am too old to trouble myself about this matter; I will take my chance with many others whose titles to their lands may be as defective as mine? No, sir; you would not sleep until you had carefully examined your deed, and not trusting to your own judgment, you would consult some one learned in the law, and would not rest until the flaw was rectified, and every ground of suspicion of the validity of your title removed. This would be acting like a reasonable man, who, when he had a great interest at stake, would not be reluctant to give himself some trouble to have every thing made safe.

But is your farm of more value to you than your soul? Would the loss of your farm be greater and more irreparable than the loss of your soul for ever? The Saviour said, "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Now, my dear sir, I do not ask you to adopt my sentiments. I wish you honestly and earnestly to examine for yourself. Your age furnishes an argument in favor of an immediate attention to this concern, for two reasons: first, because you cannot expect in the course of nature to remain long here; therefore, whatever is done must be done quickly. The young and robust may hope for a life of many years to come, but you are certainly near your journey's end. And another reason is, that the loss of the soul to an aged man is greater and more terrible than to a young person, because he has committed so many more sins, and lived so much longer in impenitence and the rejection of the gospel. If your state is good, it cannot hurt you to examine into it, but must afford great consolation in the near prospect of death; but if it should be found, on impartial examination, not to be safe, it would be of infinite importance to know it before the day of grace is past. Such a discovery would, indeed,

give you some pain and anxiety, but this would be salutary, and might lead to an application to Christ, the Saviour of lost sinners, for pardon and grace.

Do consider, friend, I beseech you, whether it would be wise for you to suffer now the pangs of conviction of sin and of the new birth, or to be tormented in hell for ever. Now is the accepted time, and now is the day of salvation. The door of mercy is still open. The gracious invitations of the gospel are still addressed to you. God commandeth all men everywhere to repent, and says, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." Christ says, "Ye will not come unto me, that you may have life." "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." Though you are far advanced in years, it may not be too late. The laborers that entered the vineyard at the eleventh hour were employed, and received the same reward as the others. Turn not your thoughts away from this subject, I entreat you. Let not the example of your careless neighbors influence you to neglect your salvation. They, for aught you know, may experience true religion when your head is laid under the clods of the valley. Let there be no delay in attending to this great concern.

AGED MAN. I own that what you say is reasonable, and I begin to feel that I have too long neglected to attend to religion; but if I should wish to become religious, I know not where to begin.

COLP. I hope, sir, you have a Bible. This is the guide-book to heaven.

AGED MAN. I must confess that I have not. When I began housekeeping my wife brought a Bible with her, but the children used it as a reading-book at school, and it got used up.

COLP. Here, sir, is a Bible which you can have at a very cheap rate; and here are some other small books and tracts, which have been the means of guiding many inquiring souls in the way of life. "Alleine's Alarm," "Baxter's Call," and "Doddridge's Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul." And here for a few cents you may have "James' Anxious Inquirer." And here are some tracts well suited to your case. I will leave these books with you, and as I expect in a few weeks to return this way, if after perusing them you should not wish to retain them, I will take them back

again.

AGED MAN. What you propose is reasonable; but at all events I must have the Bible. I am ashamed not to have one in the house. But I wish to ask you one question. Do you get any profit from the sale of these books, or do the Society who publish them make any thing by them?

COLP. I have no profit whatever on the sale of these books. I receive so much a year for my services, and that is all, though I could make much more at my trade, but I have a desire to be useful to my fellow-creatures. And the American Tract Society do not make a cent by their millions of publications. Their agents and secretaries, who devote their whole time to the work, receive a bare support; and the books are sold at what they cost, and thousands are given away every year.

# THE COLPORTEUR AND ROMAN-CATHOLIC

## DIALOGUE I

COLPORTEUR. Can I sell you a Bible or Testament this morning? they are very cheap.

ROMAN-CATHOLIC. We do not approve of your Bibles. They are not correct; and our priests warn us against them.

COLP. Do they furnish you with such as are correct? Have you a Bible in the house?

ROM. NO; our priest says the common people have no need of the Bible; they do not know how to interpret it; and reading it would do them more harm than good. He says that whatever is necessary he will teach us; and if we believe as the church believes it is enough.

COLP. But may not a priest be a bad man? Is it not possible that he may not know the truth, and therefore cannot lead you in the right way? Is it wise to venture your salvation upon the fidelity of a fallible man?

ROM. The thing which you suppose is possible; priests are but men, and some of them frail men; but we can do no better than commit our souls to their keeping. If we should offend them they might refuse to give us absolution.

COLP. We never read that Christ or his apostles ever forbade the people to read the Scriptures; on the contrary, they exhorted men to search the Scriptures, and blamed them for not knowing what was written in them. "All Scripture" is said to be "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." The law, under the old dispensation, was read in the hearing of all the people every seventh year; and in the synagogues the law and the prophets were read every

Sabbath-day. Timothy is said to have known the Scriptures from his childhood, and the Bible contains instructions and exhortations addressed to all sorts of men. If the priest should be ignorant, or negligent, the people must perish for lack of knowledge, if they are not permitted to read the Scriptures. You speak of absolution. You do not really believe that any sinful man has power to forgive sin. The thing is incredible. Man can only declare the terms on which God will grant forgiveness; but he cannot tell when those conditions are complied with. Suppose a man to confess his sins to the priest in hypocrisy, still regarding iniquity in his heart, can the priest forgive him? certainly not. He can only pronounce the true penitent forgiven. The priest's absolution of an impenitent sinner cannot avail. But, friend, you have now arrived at mature age, and have from your infancy been under the instruction of your priests, do tell me what you have learned about the way of salvation? How shall a sinful man obtain the favor of God; and what is necessary to prepare him for heaven?

ROM. Why, sir, we must lead a good life, and when we commit sin—and what man is there that sinneth not?—we must confess our sins to the priest and obtain absolution, and then submit to the penances which he lays upon us; and as to preparation for heaven, we must make satisfaction for our venial offences while we live; or if that is not done, we must suffer the fires of purgatory until we are prepared for heaven. Besides, when we are near to death, we have a sacrament intended for the express purpose of preparing the soul for death. This sacrament is called extreme unction, and consists in anointing the sick with consecrated oil, by which grace is communicated to the departing soul. Thus you see our religion contains all that is needful to gain the favor of God and preparation for heaven.

COLP. Now, my friend, be not offended at my plainness, when I tell you that this is not the religion of the Bible. If your priest has taught you this system as the way of salvation revealed in the Bible, he has deceived you; and as your salvation is at stake, you ought, like the Bereans, to examine for yourself, "whether these things are so." Acts 17:11. The religion inculcated in the Bible is essentially different from this. It is a method of saving sinners by grace, without the merit of good works. Pardon is freely granted to every penitent believer, only for the sake of the obedience of



Christ unto death. His blood is the only sacrifice which atones for sin. We never read in the New Testament of sinners being directed to make satisfaction for their own sins. Justification is declared to be by faith, and not by the works of the law; so that God is said to justify, not the righteous, but the ungodly who believeth in Jesus. Our works and merit have no part in the business. Indeed, the sinner is justified before he begins to perform any works that are truly good; and even these could never be the ground of justification, because they are all imperfect. I know that your Douay Bible has the phrase do penance—unless you do penance—but unless by penance you understand sincere repentance, the translation is evidently wrong, as every scholar must confess. Where in all the New Testament do you find any such thing commanded, or ever once spoken of, as is now called penance? But as to repentance, the best preachers in your church allow, that repentance of the heart is the essence of all true penance. And the Scriptures speak of nothing else, except the evidence which we must give of our sincerity, namely, "works meet for repentance."

And this leads me to remark, that according to the teaching of the New Testament, a thorough change of heart is necessary to our entering the kingdom of heaven. Your priest, no doubt, has taught you that you were regenerated in infant baptism, and that no other conversion is needed. But in the Bible there is no such doctrine. If all who have received infant baptism were truly regenerated, they would show the evidence of the change in their conduct and conversation. They would lead holy lives. But in many such persons we see no such thing. They give no evidence of a holy nature. But "without holiness no man shall see the Lord." Your outward ceremonies, and sacraments as you call them, cannot prepare you for heaven. The Jews gloried in their circumcision; but the apostle Paul in many places teaches, that this and other ceremonies profited nothing. "Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision availeth any thing but faith which worketh by love—the new creature." True religion is spiritual, has its seat in the heart, and does not consist in meats or drinks, that is, in outward ceremonies, but in righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. What Paul says about the real Jew is equally true in regard to the Christian, for true religion has ever been the same. He says, "He is not a Jew, who is one outwardly," that is, only by complying with external

ceremonies; "but he is a Jew, who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, and not of the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God."

And as to purgatory, it is entirely a human invention. There is not one word in the whole Bible that makes the least mention of any such place. Besides, the whole doctrine of making satisfaction for our own sins is unscriptural, and is highly derogatory to the sacrifice of Christ, as though that was insufficient. This doctrine too has introduced the most shameful abuses, through the cunning and avarice of the priests, who have found it to be a gold-mine, certainly a most successful device for drawing money from the people, by working on their tender feelings of compassion. Ask your priest to put his finger on a single text in the Bible which speaks of purgatory, and if I cannot show that it is misinterpreted I will give up the point.

And again, you say that by the sacrament of "extreme unction," as you call it, the dying are prepared for their change. But if the dying person be impenitent, will anointing him with oil save him? But the Scriptures speaks of no such sacrament. The custom of anointing with oil was anciently a very common remedy in sickness; and when the disciples were sent forth to heal the sick, they were commanded by the Lord to anoint them with oil, as a sign of healing. And James directs the sick to send for the elders of the church, who should pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord. But this ceremony or remedy was not used to prepare the dying for death; it was used to preserve them from death, by the miraculous healing power which attended it.

And here I think we have the true reason why the priests do not encourage the people to read the Bible. It is, that they fear lest they should discover that the religion which they teach is not taken from the Bible. And if you go to tradition, you will find nothing like a prohibition of reading the holy Scriptures in all the writings of the Christian fathers for many centuries. It was always the undisputed privilege of men, women, and children, of every rank, who could read, to read the sacred Scriptures. Nay, it was always considered an incumbent duty, which no Christian was at liberty to neglect. I must think, therefore, that in taking away the holy Scriptures from the people, the priests are guilty of an enormous crime.

They have taken away the key of knowledge. They have shut up the fountain of life, which God had opened for all mankind. There is nothing in the whole Romish system which strikes me as more impious, or more unreasonable. This single thing is enough to convince any unprejudiced man that their religion is not true Christianity: if it were, they would be glad to appeal to the Bible for proof of all their doctrines and all their practices; whereas, if a person acquainted with the Scriptures should be brought into a Romish chapel, and should carefully attend to all the ceremonies in celebrating mass, he would be ready to think that he had been introduced into a heathen temple, rather than a Christian church.

ROM. You have your way of thinking, and I have mine, and we are not likely to convince one another. We live in a free country, where every man has an equal right with others to form his own opinions, and be of what religion he pleases. Yet, though I believe firmly in the old mother church, as being the only true church, and the only safe way to heaven, yet I must confess I never could see the reason why the Scriptures are kept from us.

## DIALOGUE II

ROM. I do not like any of your novelties in religion. I am for following the good old way. Yours is a new religion, only about three hundred years old; but ours is more than eighteen hundred years old. Ours has come down in a right line from Christ and his apostles; yours began with Luther and Calvin.

COLP. Did you never hear, friend, that Paul predicted that there would be a great falling away before the end of the world? Suppose now that apostasy to have taken place; and suppose some pious men, by reading the Scriptures, to have discovered that the church was become corrupt, and should endeavor to bring the people back to the religion inculcated by Christ and his apostles; which ought to be called the good old way, the errors and corruptions of an apostate church, or the doctrines and worship of the New Testament restored? Certainly the latter. Now this is precisely the case. Your church has evidently departed from the Scriptures; and we are endeavoring to bring the people back to the true religion, which by degrees was forsaken by the whole Roman-catholic church. Popery then is the novelty, and Protestantism the old religion of

the Bible. I have here a book with this very title, "Popery a Novelty;" and the thing is proved by undoubted testimonies, that a large part of the Romish religion has sprung up long since the times of the apostles.

ROM. I never can believe that Christ would leave his church to apostatize; for he has promised that the "gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

COLP. Certainly the church of God will never become extinct. If it becomes corrupt, it will be reformed and restored to its primitive purity; and God is accomplishing something of this kind now. He has put it into the hearts of many to search the Scriptures; and they have found that the Romish church, and also the Oriental churches, have become very degenerate. Still, there has been a seed to serve Him. In the midst of corruption, a few faithful souls have been found who have testified against the errors and sins of the times. And in sequestered valleys a people have lived who continued to profess the true doctrines of Christianity. These have been long and cruelly persecuted, but not exterminated. These held the same doctrines as the Reformers whom God raised up in these latter ages. The Jewish church fell away to idolatry in the time of Elijah, so that he thought that he alone was left of the worshippers of the true God; but God informed him that there were seven thousand who had not bowed the knee to Baal.

A similar defection took place in the time of Manasseh and Amon; in which time the Scriptures were unknown among the people, as we learn from the fact, that the book of Moses was found among the rubbish, and the pious young king Josiah, when he heard it read, rent his clothes, and expressed the utmost grief, because the prescriptions of the divine law had not been obeyed for a long time. As it was then, so it is now with the Romish church. The Scriptures, though not lost, are kept back from the people by their priests and prelates. They are kept in ignorance, and have no opportunity of judging whether what their friends teach them is agreeable to Scripture or not. Now certainly this is not a safe condition to rest in.

But my object in seeking this conversation was not to enter into any dispute, but to have a serious discourse about vital piety. If your religion is right, it brings those who receive it to love God supremely, and to love

their fellow-men. The question then which I would propose for your consideration is a personal one. It is simply the question which our Saviour, after his resurrection, propounded to Peter, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?" I put it to your conscience, do you feel a sincere love to the Lord Jesus Christ?

ROM. To be sure I do. Do you take me for a heathen or a reprobate, that you ask me, a Christian man, such a question?

COLP. I mean no offence. But a mere profession of love with the lips is easily made. Christ said of some that had a high opinion of themselves, "I know you, that you have not the love of God in you." And he also said to his disciples, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me." Do you then obey from the heart all the commandments of God? One of these commandments is, "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or in the waters under the earth; thou shalt not bow down to them, nor serve them." Now, it is a notorious fact, that in all your churches you have images, and that you bow down to them and worship them.

ROM. I have the ten commandments in my catechism at home, but there is no command forbidding us to worship images. You Protestants must have invented this to impose on the ignorant.

COLP. Here is a plain evidence of the craft and dishonesty of your priests. They have left out almost the whole of the second commandment of the Decalogue, and have made one commandment out of the first two; and that they might make out the number ten, they have divided the tenth into two.

ROM. I never can believe that any of our priests would change the word of God, or leave out any of the commandments of God. If you could convince me of the truth of what you say, it would go further to shake my faith in their honesty than all that you have yet said. But it cannot be. Here is a catechism which has the ten commandments, and there is no prohibition of worshipping images. The first is, "Thou shalt not have any other gods before me." And the second commandment is, "Thou shalt not

take the name of the Lord thy God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain." I wonder at the effrontery of men, that in the face of day will make so heinous a charge against our priests. They certainly break the commandment that says, "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor."

COLP. I admit that the charge is a grievous one, and if it is not true, I will consent to be considered a false accuser. You admit that the Douay translation of the Bible is correct; it was made by Romish priests, and is the version in use among you, as far as you have liberty to read the Bible. Then, friend, I have a copy in my leather bag, and you shall read for yourself, and compare what is there written with the commandments which you have in your manual; for though they have omitted the second commandment in the catechisms and manuals, which are put into the hands of the people, they have not had the impious audacity to strike it out of the Bible.

ROM. [Reads the commandments out of the Douay Bible.] This, I confess, surprises me not a little. This is a thing I never heard of before. I must get my confessor to explain how this comes. Surely there must be some good reason for this, or it would never have been done.

COLP. My dear sir, the thing admits of no explanation, and needs none. You see with your own eyes that one of the commandments has been omitted, or so mutilated, that you never knew till this moment that God had given such a commandment, and this furnishes the strongest reason why the people should have the Bible in their own hands, and not trust implicitly to the priest. And it shows clearly enough why the priests are so reluctant to let the people have the Bible to read. It is a fear lest they should see the contrast between the Romish religion and that of the Bible. Remember the words of our Saviour, "He that breaketh one of the least of these commandments and teacheth men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven."

But what I wish, as I said, is not to dispute, but to come to the vitals of religion. A man may profess the true religion, and yet have no experience of its vital power. The essence of all true piety is in the affections and purposes of the heart. God looketh on the heart, while man can only look

on the outward appearance. You and I must soon stand before the judgment-seat of Christ; and if we are then found to have built our hopes on a false foundation, it will be too late to remedy the evil. Our Saviour expressly and solemnly declares, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of heaven." Let me ask you, friend, have you good reason to think that you have ever been truly converted? You talk of your penances, and of the priest's absolution, but believe me, no human priest ever had power on earth to forgive sins; and be assured, that without repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, you must perish. "He that believeth not is condemned already, and the wrath of God abideth on him."

ROM. You preach very well, but I am not going to forsake mother church, and Mary the mother of God, and all the saints, for the heresy of Luther, Zuingle, and such like.

COLP. I do not wish you to have any thing to do with Luther and Calvin: what I bring before you is not taken from them, nor from any other man; it is from the holy Scriptures—from the words of Christ himself, and from Paul and the other apostles. They all agree in this, that "without holiness no man shall see the Lord;" and this holiness does not belong to our nature, for we are "by nature, children of wrath," and "dead in sin." We must come to Christ by faith, that we may have life. And as to the Virgin Mary, I admit that she was a blessed saint; but no mere creature should be worshipped. Show me one text of Scripture which commands us to worship her or any other saint or angel, and I will join your church; but there is none such. Almost all your religion is the invention of men—mere will-worship. Even your adoration of the cross, and making the sign of the cross so often, is superstitious. There is not one word in the Bible, from beginning to end, which gives the least encouragement to any such thing. Your religious ceremonies were for the most part borrowed from the Pagans, as some writers have clearly demonstrated.

### DIALOGUE III

ROM. Well, friend, I see you are still travelling about with your pack of books. I have been thinking much about our last conversation respecting the love of Christ, and what you call the new birth, and have come to the

conclusion that the religion of Protestants is mere enthusiasm. Who would give any credit to a man who should profess to have experienced a new or heavenly birth? The thing is foolish and absurd, and this shows how dangerous it is to leave every one to interpret the Scriptures for himself. Ignorant and conceited people catch up certain words of Scripture by the mere sound, and put a meaning upon them which they were never intended to bear by the inspired writer.

COLP. Then you do not believe any change of heart necessary to fit a man to enter into the kingdom of heaven. I thought your authors did hold that the sinful heart must be renewed before it can go to heaven, but insisted that all who were properly baptized were regenerated, or received grace at the moment of their infant baptism. This you before acknowledged. And what is there more foolish or absurd in supposing the Spirit of God to renew the soul of an adult under the preaching of the word, than the regeneration of a child by infant baptism? If the Spirit of God operates at all on the minds of men in these latter days, there is no reason why he may not operate on the minds of poor lost sinners, to bring them to repentance. If it were not so, there would be no hope of salvation for any sinner; for even if the priest could give him absolution, as you think, an unholy soul never could be received into heaven; and if admitted there, never could enjoy the holy pleasures of the place. Verily there must be a new birth, by which is meant nothing else but a sincere conversion, or a true repentance, by which a sinner obtains new views, experiences new affections, forms new purposes, enjoys new hopes and pleasures, and immediately begins to live a new life. And as you acknowledge that many of your people lead a profane and wicked life, these, even if they were regenerated in their baptism, have lost the grace then received, and need to be renewed again to repentance. You recollect that in a former conversation, you said that the reason why all baptized persons did not give evidence of a renewed heart was, that they through negligence and sin lost the grace then received; and if they needed regeneration in infancy, when they had no sin but original sin to be removed, how much more do they need renovation now, when they have added to their original sin so many actual transgressions, and have formed evil habits and dispositions of the most inveterate kind? As to enthusiasm, I am no friend to it. But you have no right to charge it upon Protestants, and



especially for professing a change of heart, which you cannot deny to be necessary.

But if you are disposed to cavil, I think we had better close the conversation and say no more. My earnest wish has been to quit disputing, and to converse about the vital parts of true religion; and therefore I proposed the subject of the love of God, concerning which there can be no dispute, as all must allow that this is necessary; and I asked you what you believed to be the evidence that a man did love Christ, and whether you possessed such evidence. But you seem unwilling to come to the point; and I have no right to compel you to answer. But, my dear sir, it is your own concern. Your eternal interests are at stake, and time is fast rolling away. Soon, both you and I must appear at the judgment-seat of Christ, to answer for the deeds done in the body, whether they have been good or bad. And I am persuaded that no absolution by a priest will avail any thing to the impenitent sinner on that day. Whether he be called Papist or Protestant will then be of no account; but the point of great, yea, of infinite importance will be, whether he is robed in the justifying righteousness of Jesus Christ, and whether he has become a new creature, and has exercised that faith which works by love and purifies the heart.

As I may possibly not see you again, I solemnly warn you of the danger which, in my opinion, hangs over you; for though it is not my place to judge any man, yet when we think a fellow-creature is exposed to misery, charity requires that we should warn them, whether they will hear or forbear. I cannot be uncharitable in supposing that you are an unconverted man, as you do not profess to have experienced any such change, and, indeed, do not believe in its reality. But as I feel a real love for your soul, I would affectionately entreat you to look well into this matter, and do not trust so implicitly to the teaching of your priests. They may mislead you to your ruin. Christ said of the scribes and Pharisees, "In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." Do, friend, take this New Testament and compare it with your own, and you will find that they agree in all important points. You will find that a change of heart is no enthusiastic notion, but clearly taught in your own Bible.

ROM. You are mistaken, sir, in supposing I possess a Testament. I wish I had one which our priest will approve.

COLP. I am sorry to part with you; but do take this book. You need say nothing about it to the priest, lest he take it from you and burn it. But lest he should extort the secret from you at confession, I only lend you the book till I come again. And may God bless the reading of it to your soul.

#### DIALOGUE IV

COLP. Well, friend, have you read any in the Bible which I left with you when I was last here, and will you let me know what you think of the book?

ROM. To be sure, we all agree that the Bible is a good book—the best of all books, and was given by inspiration of God. No good Catholic disputes that; and I must confess that I have taken much interest in reading many things both in the Old and New Testaments.

COLP. What right then has the priest to deprive you of the benefit of reading the word of God, which St. Paul says "is able to make you wise unto salvation, through faith that is in Christ Jesus?" And from this same passage we learn that children were allowed in old times to read the holy Scriptures, for the apostle says, "from a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures." And in all the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, there is not one word forbidding or discouraging any one from reading the word of God, but frequent exhortations to "search the Scriptures;" and the errors of some are attributed to their ignorance of the Scriptures. Of all the errors of Romanism, this practical one of denying the Scriptures to the people is the most unreasonable and the most injurious. In this free country, I wonder that any man who has the spirit of independence in him can submit to such tyranny, attended with effects so disastrous. That must be a fearful superstition which binds a man's conscience to relinquish such a privilege, when his own judgment is convinced that the thing is right and good.

ROM. You have now touched upon the key which will explain what at first sight seems to be a paradox. The truth is, that we must not be governed

by our own private judgment, but by the decisions of the church. No scripture is of private interpretation. No man has a right to judge for himself in matters of religion. And here is the true ground why the Bible is not put into the hands of the people. They are not competent to judge of its doctrines and precepts, and their reading the Scriptures can therefore be of no use to the common people, and might fill their minds with notions contrary to the established doctrines of the church. See among Protestants the sad effects of leaving people to form their own opinions from reading the Scriptures. You are cut up into innumerable sects and parties, all professing to take their tenets from the Bible.

COLP. I see how the matter stands. You are under an intolerable yoke of slavery; for no slavery on earth is so dreadful as that which binds fast the understanding and conscience of men. Why did our Creator endow us with rational minds, if we are not permitted to exercise them in searching for and judging of truth? And how deplorable the condition of those who are secretly convinced that certain things would be both right and beneficial, but dare not follow the dictates of their own reason and conscience, because a set of domineering priests have undertaken to judge for them. This is a bondage to which I never could submit. I never will pin my faith to another man's sleeve. Suppose he is mistaken or designedly misleads you, will he be answerable for the loss of your soul, or for the injury which your spiritual interests may sustain? No; every man must bear his own burden. Every man must account for the improvement of his own talents and opportunities of knowing the truth. Christ addressed himself to the understandings and consciences of the people, and called upon them to judge of the truth of what he said. Paul addressed the Corinthians as rational men, saying, "I speak as unto wise men, judge ye what I say." Upon this principle it is perfectly useless for me to endeavor to convince you of the truth; for if you should see the truth ever so clearly, you dare not profess it, or act in accordance with it. You must believe what the church tells you to believe, however absurd or impossible the thing may be; and you can only know what the church requires you to believe from the priest. And if he should happen to be an ignorant or hypocritical man, you will of course be led astray, perhaps to your eternal undoing. It would be just as reasonable to shut your own eyes, and blindly follow the lead of others, when you have the right and

the ability to see and choose your own path. And the only text that can be adduced which has the semblance of proving that all men may not read the Scriptures, is the one referred to by you, that "no prophecy is of any private interpretation." But this text is, in my opinion, altogether perverted when thus applied. I am confident that that is not its true meaning. It implies nothing contrary to the right of private judgment or interpretation; but warns every one not to pervert an obscure prophecy by interpreting it according to his own pleasure or fancy, contrary to the design of God in uttering it. The prophecy, we are told in the next verse, was spoken by "holy men, as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" and God will fulfil it, not according to our false glosses, but in its real import. What could be more absurd than for the apostles to address long epistles to the people, if they were not allowed to judge of the meaning of those epistles? I am sure you must admit that you are abused by your spiritual guides, and deprived of most important rights and privileges.

But, my friend, I have no desire to dispute with you, or any other man. I am not fond of controversy. It seldom does any good, and often increases the prejudices of those whom we wish to convince. All I aim at in what I have said is, what you will acknowledge to be right, namely, to give the subject a fair examination; and I do not see how you can do this, without the Scriptures as your guide; for if you are inclined to give implicit credit to every thing your priest tells you, then there is an end of all inquiry. But if you wish to be sure that what he teaches you is right, or if not, that you may know in what he errs, then you must refer to the Bible, as you believe that to be the word of God.

One thing, the importance of which you cannot deny, I would earnestly request of you, which is, that you accompany your examination with earnest prayer for divine direction. I have the opinion that no one ever sincerely sought divine direction who was not directed essentially in the right way. Indeed, it is a divine promise, "Seek, and ye shall find." "If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him." And seek not merely to have your understanding convinced, but pray that the truth may, by the power of the Spirit, have its due effect on your heart. I should think it a small matter to be able to persuade you to become a Protestant; my heart's

desire is that you become a true Christian, whether you become a Protestant or not. If your heart is truly renewed, and your faith fixed on the blessed Redeemer, whom your creed holds to be both God and man in one person—if your trust for salvation shall be in his atoning sacrifice and prevalent intercession, I shall be satisfied. My chief aim is to bring my fellow-sinners to that Saviour in whom I trust I have found redemption for my own soul. I would rather by far see you an humble Christian in the Catholic church than a zealous Protestant of any denomination, without giving evidence of being actuated by the Spirit of Christ; for "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ," says Paul, "he is none of his." I am far from thinking that all Protestants are in a safe state, or that all Roman-catholics will be lost. I believe that every one, of whatever nation or religious denomination, who truly repents of his sins, and sincerely believes in Christ, will be saved; and that all who are destitute of cordial faith and repentance must be lost.

The point then which above all others I wish to press upon your attention is, the religion of the heart, a saving interest in the blessings of the covenant of grace. If your heart be right in the sight of God, then you will be led in the right way in your external conduct. Without vital piety, consisting in supreme love to God and love to our neighbor, it matters little what profession we make, or in what connection we stand. My dear fellow-sinner, I exhort and beseech you, by the love of God, and by the tender compassions of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you turn not away from the consideration of this subject. Look back on your past life, from your infancy up to this day, and consider how many sins you have committed. Deceive not yourself, I entreat you, with the notion that the priest has forgiven them. No, no; he has no such power. If you have not sincerely repented of them all, and been washed in the blood of Jesus, applied by faith, the guilt of all these sins lies heavy on your soul. Listen then to the word of friendly exhortation. Look not unto man, but unto God for pardon. He is able and willing "to take away all iniquity, and to receive you graciously," if you will come unto him in the new and living way which he has ordained. Christ stands and knocks for admittance into your heart. Christ, as suspended on the cross, cries unto sinners, "Look unto me, all ye ends of the earth, and be ye saved." Christ invites the weary and heavy-laden to come unto him and find rest. He says, "If any

man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." Behold, the fountain of life is open, and the water of life is freely offered. "The Spirit and the bride say, Come; and let him that heareth say, Come; and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." "Seek," therefore, "the Lord, while he may be found, and call upon him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy on him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." Lay to heart these solemn, tender exhortations from the word of God, and let your heart bend in humble submission to the will of God. Behold, he waits to be gracious.

## DIALOGUE V

ROM. I find that you are disposed to refer to the Bible for the proof of all your doctrines; but we maintain that many things which Christ and his apostles ordered in the church can be learned only by tradition. It is a matter of no consequence whether a law is written or not, provided we know it emanates from the proper authority. And we know that the Christian church existed before any book of the New Testament was published. It is certain, then, that the primitive churches were first instructed by oral communication, and not by the Scriptures; and what they thus received, they handed down to their successors. And our learned men say that the church might have existed, flourished, and continued unto this time, without any of the books of the New Testament. For it was easy for one generation to teach the next generation what had been communicated to them by the apostles, and thus the original revelations and institutions would be handed down from age to age.

COLP. What you say is true, that an oral, or spoken law, if it can be proved to have been uttered by the lawgiver, is as binding as a written law; but such is the uncertainty of oral tradition, that it is impossible to know what is true and what false which comes down to us along this muddy stream, especially as it had to pass through many dark periods, when the learning and information of the people were at a very low ebb. It is impossible for doctrines and rules of conduct to be transmitted through a period of eighteen hundred years, without being grievously corrupted. In the beginning of the world, the revelations made to the first

man were soon entirely lost or corrupted. Whatever knowledge existed after the flood, was preserved by frequent divine communications.

I would ask any of your most learned priests to furnish a single discourse of Christ, or any one of the apostles, not recorded in the New Testament; yea, let them produce one single sentence from any inspired man which we can be sure was uttered by him. Now, if they cannot furnish the very words spoken by Christ or his apostles, they ought not to pretend that they are in possession of a portion of the word of God which was never committed to writing. And if we go up near to the times of the apostles, when it might be thought that many things would have come down by tradition to men living in the second and third centuries, yet we find by the writings of that age which remain, that the most learned doctors of the church knew nothing of the sayings and doings of Christ and his apostles, but what they read in the New Testament; or if some real facts did float down this stream, they were mingled with so much that was false, that it was impossible to distinguish the true facts from the lying legends.

When the early fathers, as Iræneus, Tertullian, etc., appeal to tradition to prove the doctrine and usages of the church, they did not refer to doctrines and facts not in the New Testament, but to those which were commonly known and believed by all Christians; for when these fathers mention the things handed down by tradition, they are found to be the articles of the early creeds which were drawn up for the use of the new converts.

ROM. But if they had these things recorded in Scripture, why appeal to tradition?

COLP. Because they were contending with heretics who denied the fundamental doctrines of Christianity, and did not receive the Scriptures as a true account of the Christian religion. Against such they appealed to the universal tradition of all the churches, all of which, in every part of the world, had received the same leading facts and doctrines.

ROM. In regard to the books of the New Testament, you are, after all, obliged to resort to tradition; for how do you know that the gospels and

the epistles were really written by the evangelists and apostles, but by tradition?

COLP. This, I know, is an argument greatly boasted of by your writers; but if it were granted, that it is by the testimony of the early church that we know what books are canonical, it would go but a very little way to establish the Romish doctrine of tradition as a rule of faith. The fact that certain books were received as inspired by the universal church, is one of so public a nature, that it could easily be transmitted by written testimony of the successive ages; but this does not prove that a revelation distinct from that in the New Testament could be safely handed down in this way.

We know by tradition that Cicero delivered many orations, which were committed to writing, and have reached our times; and that Livy wrote a history of Roman affairs, a part of which has come down to us. That these authors did write these books has come down by an uncontradicted tradition, and on this ground is credible. But suppose some one should pretend that other orations of Cicero, which were never committed to writing, and other histories which Livy recited, but never wrote, had come down to us by tradition, every man of sense would laugh at such a pretension. You see, friend, the vast difference between receiving by tradition a single fact in relation to the author of a book, and receiving a revelation—an unwritten word of God. It may be admitted that a ceremonial institution, such as baptism or the Lord's supper, might be handed down by tradition; but so prone are men to add to and alter such institutions, and to invent others, that if we had no written record we should be at a loss to know what had been instituted. Just so is it now with respect to the sacraments.

In the New Testament we read of no more than two ordinances of this kind, but in the Romish church there are seven; and such changes have been made in the two which were instituted by Christ, that they can scarcely be recognized as the same. The existence of these seven sacraments, as they are called, in the Roman-catholic church, shows how uncertain is tradition; and in regard to a multitude of other ceremonies, they may be traced up, not to the apostles, but to a heathen origin. The holy water, the incense, the altar, the sacerdotal vestments, the holy days,



and dedication of churches to saints and angels, are all borrowed manifestly from the pagan ritual, as has been demonstrated by learned men.

ROM. You are now going off in a strain in which my limited information does not permit me to follow you. Whether what you say is true or not I cannot judge. I only wish that our learned bishop, or even father Benedict were here—they would soon put an end to your boasting. But one thing I must say, that our church is infallible; it cannot err in matters of faith. The decision of popes and councils is sufficient to satisfy the mind of any reasonable man.

COLP. If you could prove what you now say, all your other arguments are superfluous. Even tradition is of no use. All that is necessary is to hear the pope; for if he is infallible, he can decide every question of doctrine. An inspired man needs to bring no far-fetched arguments, or to resort to tradition for proof of any thing. All you have to do is to get the pope to open his mouth and utter his decree, or to send his bull to the whole church. But how is it possible that you can believe the pope to be infallible, when it is notorious that some of the popes have been among the wickedest of men. They have, in a number of instances, acknowledged themselves to be in error. They have, in numerous instances, contradicted one another, and reversed each other's decrees. They have contradicted the plain declarations of Scripture; and as to councils, we are sure that any number of fallible men met together, cannot by merely assembling become infallible. The acts or canons of the councils have often been contradictory to one another; so that we are sure infallibility does not reside in them. The truth is, the claim to infallibility is ridiculous. There is no infallible tribunal upon earth, but the word of God. This is infallible, for "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God." "Holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

## DIALOGUE VI

ROM. I never wished for learning so much as I do now. I find that a man may have the right side, and yet not be able to maintain his cause for want of learning. There is one point, however, on which a child may confute a Protestant, because the Scriptures are plain and express on the

subject. I lately heard our priest lecture on it, and he made it to my mind clear as the light at noon.

COLP. Pray let me know to what you refer?

ROM. Why, that Peter was the prince of the apostles, and had the whole church built on him, and the popes of Rome are the regular successors of Peter, and inherit his authority. Now, according to this, which can be clearly established, all the churches in the world should be subject to the pope; for he has the keys—he has the power of binding and loosing—and the church founded on this rock, Peter, can never fail, and therefore can never fall into fatal error; for if that was possible, then would the promise of Christ fail, who declared that the gates of hell should never prevail against the church. The whole passage is found in Matt. 16:18, 19: "And I say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." Our doctor says, as long as this text stands in the Bible the Catholic church cannot be overthrown; yea, he went so far as to say, that no Protestant had been able, even plausibly, to interpret this text to suit their scheme. He told us of several weak attempts to rescue the text from the hands of the Catholics, the mention of which caused a smile in his audience. He said that the name Peter, in Greek, signified a rock, and that our Saviour gave him this name when he called him to be an apostle, because he knew that he would make him the foundation-stone of the church which he was about to establish in the world.

COLP. I wonder that any one should presume to maintain that one of the apostles was set up as a superior to the rest, who has ever read the reproof which Christ gave to the disciples for contending which should be the greatest. "And there was also a strife among them which of them should be the greatest. And he said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. BUT YE SHALL NOT BE SO: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve." Luke 22:24–26. Christ says nothing about any

superiority of Peter over the other apostles. Indeed, as Peter spoke in the name of his brethren, in the noble confession which he made, what Christ addresses to him in reply should be understood as applying to them all. And this is found to be correct from consulting the parallel passage in John 20:21, where the same power is expressly given to them all which is here given to Peter. "And Jesus said unto them, As my Father hath sent me, so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and said, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained." Here the power granted by the risen Saviour is the same to all. If Peter was to have a preëminence over the rest, now was the time to declare it, that all might understand that he was chief. But such a superiority is neither given here nor anywhere else. Neither did Peter ever claim such superiority, nor was it ever in fact conceded to him, as the whole history of the apostles shows.

But if Peter had been constituted the pope over the other apostles, that does not prove that the same preëminence belongs to those falsely called his successors. The bishops of Rome were no successors of Peter. We never read in the New Testament that he had even visited Rome. He was the apostle of the circumcision, and Antioch seems to have been his headquarters, and Asia Minor the field of his labors. But let us admit, in accordance with ancient tradition, that Peter visited Rome toward the close of his life, and that he governed the church there while he lived, and that he suffered martyrdom in that famous city; what does this prove in regard to the men who have been placed as bishops in that see ever since? Surely nothing. The bishops of Rome acquired their authority, not from being successors of Peter, but because this was the metropolis of the empire. We find that bishops, after ambition began to work, assumed authority from the dignity of the city where they resided. But why should the bishop of Rome, now when the glory of the city has departed for ever, claim not only a superiority, but an arbitrary authority over all other bishops? The claim is full of arrogance. If any church had a right to preëminence it was Jerusalem, the mother church; and if the bishops of any church had any peculiar claims as successors of Peter, the bishops of Antioch ought to have the preëminence.

## DIALOGUE VII

ROM. There is one point where we Catholics have a great advantage over you Protestants, and that is in regard to the holy sacrament. In the eucharist you profess to have nothing but the naked bread and wine, whereas we have the real body and blood of Christ, which we take into our mouths for the nourishment of our souls; and when the priest celebrates mass, the body and blood of Christ are as truly present and offered as a present sacrifice for our sins, as when he was crucified on Golgotha.

COLP. On this point I admit that there is a great difference between us; and if all that you say was the truth, we should be in great error; but on the other hand, if your doctrine of transubstantiation is false and unscriptural, you will be convicted of the grossest idolatry in worshipping a wafer for a god; and if this doctrine is false, your mass, which your priests offer up with so much solemnity, is a vain offering, and is calculated to bring dishonor on the real sacrifice of Christ on the cross—"the one offering" by which the sins of his people are purged.

ROM. How can you, a Bible man, and so great a stickler for going according to the very letter of the Scriptures, pretend that the doctrine of transubstantiation is unscriptural? Does not our Lord say expressly, when he held the bread in his hand, "This is my body?" Now, every one knows that the bread could not be his body without being changed into his body. We insist on the literal interpretation of the words. No doubt this is a great mystery, and so is the Trinity, and the incarnation of the Son of God; but a true faith embraces all mysteries, and the greater the mystery the greater the miracle, and the more worthy of God, with whom all things are possible.

COLP. Surely you will not say that every thing in the Bible must be taken literally. When it is said that God is a rock, a shield, a sun, a tower, or a consuming fire, we cannot take these words in any other than a metaphorical or figurative sense. So when Christ says, "I am the vine," would any one be so insane as to say that the phrase must be taken literally? In this very passage it is said, "This cup is the new testament," or covenant, "in my blood;" but taken literally it would make no sense, for a cup is not a covenant. The question to be decided is, whether the words "this is my body" should be taken literally or metaphorically. And I will

assign such reasons against the literal interpretation as I think sufficient to convince any impartial man. They are these.

First, there is no apparent change in the bread, or wafer, after the priest's benediction. To the eyes of every one it is still the same; to the feeling, to the smell, to the taste, it is bread, and nothing but bread. Take a piece of the same loaf not consecrated, compare them together, there is no difference perceptible by any of the senses. Now, in all miracles the appeal is made to our senses. The water is changed visibly into blood in Egypt. The water at the marriage feast in Cana is changed into wine, which the master of the feast judged to be good, better than what they had drunk before. When the loaves and fishes were multiplied, the abundance produced is visible to all, and is eaten by the whole multitude. When the dead were raised, the person no longer appeared to be dead, but came forth and spoke and acted; and so of all miracles. If the bread in the Lord's supper were changed into flesh, and the wine into blood, instead of seeing the bread and wine remaining the same, we should see a piece of flesh dripping with blood. We have no conception of any substance but by its qualities. When these remain evidently the same, according to the testimony of all our senses, there can be no change in the substance. Besides, if we are to disbelieve our senses in this case, which is never required in any other case, the doctrine will overthrow itself; for how do we know that there is any such word in the New Testament? You may say, Here it is in plain letters. But how am I to know that those letters are written there? I see them, it is true, and I can run my hand over them, and they seem to be such as you say they are; but I see this consecrated wafer as plainly as I see the letters in the book, and I can examine it by more of my senses; and it is precisely, after consecration, what it was before.

ROM. I think there is something profane in your reasoning on such a sacred subject. There is no room for reasoning. What God says must be true, though all our senses and our reason should judge the contrary. Christ positively said, "This is my body," and it is our duty to believe his declaration. God is omnipotent, and can change any substance into another; and he can do this while to all appearance it remains the same. All we need is an implicit faith in the word of God.

COLP. You evidently take for granted what should be proved, namely, that those words must be taken literally. Surely this is not self-evident. Of a thousand intelligent readers who had never seen a New Testament, I doubt whether one would ever dream that Christ, when he held up the bread, meant that that piece of bread was his body literally. No; he would naturally suppose that the words were used figuratively, and signified that the bread resembled his broken body, or represented his broken body.

But this brings me to my second reason against a literal interpretation, and that is, that unless Christ had two bodies, it was literally impossible that the piece of bread which he held in his hand was his body; for there was his real, living body present to the view. There was his whole body, and no part had been severed from it; therefore it was impossible for this bread to be his real body. According to this monstrous doctrine, one living body of Christ, visible and palpable, yet living, held another body in its hand, and distributed it to be eaten, while this real, living body remained entire and undivided. Can you believe this? or how do you explain it?

ROM. It is an awful mystery; I do not pretend to explain it.

COLP. It is much more than a mystery; it is an evident impossibility. But I am not done: I will now offer a third conclusive argument against the literal interpretation, which is this. Christ says, "This is my body, which is broken for you." If we take these words literally, then we must believe that Christ was already crucified, before he was crucified. If we take one part of the declaration literally, we must take the whole literally. And can you believe that the body of Christ was already broken for us? Then he must not only have had two bodies, but was twice crucified; for all admit that by his body broken is meant crucified for us. But when was this crucifixion? It must have been while the bread was broken in his hands. Then the living Christ crucified or broke the body, made out of the bread. But no one can believe that Christ was already crucified, or that his body was already broken; therefore the whole sentence must be interpreted metaphorically; and the meaning is, this bread broken is a lively representation of that death which I am shortly to endure. Here is evidently the true meaning. And I believe this with all my heart; and the

charge of profaneness and infidelity may be rolled back on yourself, for making Christ declare what was in the first place impossible, and in the next place what was false, namely, that his body was already broken while he sat with his disciples at the sacred supper. What do you say to this?

ROM. I have told you that I receive the whole as an awful mystery; not a fit subject for reasoning, but only for faith. The more wonderful it is, the more readily I assent to it.

COLP. If this be the state of your mind, I do not see that any benefit can arise from continuing the conversation. But I intended to offer one other reason against the doctrine of transubstantiation, which I will briefly mention, and then quit the subject. It is this. The flesh of Christ being a natural substance, in its physical qualities like other human flesh, except that it never had the least stain of impurity, cannot be considered to be adapted to the nourishment of the divine life in the soul. No corporeal substance entering the mouth, and going thence into the stomach, can have any effect on the spiritual life—all that it can do is to nourish the body; and we cannot understand that any benefit could be spiritually derived from such eating of the body of our Lord, but by the internal operation of the Holy Spirit on the mind itself; and this divine efficacy would be as beneficial to the soul, if it accompanied sacramental bread, as if it accompanied the flesh of Christ.

Besides, we are at a loss to understand what becomes of the sacred body of Christ, after it is eaten and digested. Does it become, like other nutritious food, a part of our bodies? The idea is abhorrent; and more so the alternative, that it is rejected with that part of our food which is not incorporated with the human body. But indeed, sir, there are so many repulsive consequences flowing from this doctrine, that it becomes distressing to pursue the subject into all the legitimate conclusions which may be deduced from the literal interpretation. And the rule universally admitted is, that when taking a word or sentence literally leads to absurdity, impossibility, or falsehood, it should be understood figuratively. Indeed, the very idea of devouring the flesh and blood of Christ has something exceedingly repulsive to our feelings.

ROM. You seem to forget that Christ himself, in the sixth chapter of the

gospel of John, speaks repeatedly of eating his flesh and drinking his blood; yea, makes such eating and drinking absolutely necessary to eternal life.

COLP. No, friend, the forgetfulness is on your side. Christ explains his own words, and already shows that they were misapprehended by the Jews, who understood them literally; for at the close he says, "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." Now these words do most clearly teach, that the eating his flesh, if it were possible, would profit nothing; that all vivifying energy was not from carnal and corporeal eating and drinking, but from the Spirit; and that all which he had spoken was to be understood in a spiritual sense. What other interpretation can be put on his declaration, "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life?"

#### DIALOGUE VIII

ROM. You went away the other day before I had time to say all that was in my mind. But I do not care to go back to the subject we were on, about fasting on Friday. I know that you Protestants are not fond of fasting. Our priest called here since you passed, and I told him something of our conversation. He laughed heartily, and observed that a dislike of fasting and other restraints of religion was the true secret of Protestantism. He said there was more of appetite and the love of ease, than of conscience, in what was falsely called a reformation. Luther, he said, being a priest and not being permitted to marry, broke his vow, and tempted a nun to break hers, and so they struck up an impious match. A reformation founded on perjury, he said, was a thing abhorrent to every honest man. He moreover said, Protestantism was downright heresy, no religion at all; or if it might be called religion, it was a system of the devil, to lead men to destruction. They have, said he, no priests rightly consecrated, none who have derived their commission by an uninterrupted succession from the apostles. They therefore have no power to remit the sins of any, and they do not pretend to it. But what is more important than all, they have not the body of Christ to give; but our Lord says, "Except ye eat my flesh and drink my blood, ye have no life in you." And above all, the sacrifice of the mass they utterly reject, and it is by this offering that God is propitiated



for the living and the dead. What, said he, would become of your unhappy friends now suffering the torment of fire in purgatory, were it not for the masses which are said for them?

I told him, that from not knowing the Scriptures I was unable to dispute with you, and on that account I wished to obtain a Bible.

He answered, that I had no business to enter into any controversy with these men. "Turn away from them," said he, "or turn them over to me. I will soon dispose of half a dozen of these vagrants, who go about the country deceiving the simple-hearted people."

I confess, however, that I am not perfectly satisfied with this kind of implicit faith; I do want to be able to give a reason for my religious belief. Friend, what is your opinion of the mass?

COLP. My dear sir, it is the most barefaced idolatry that was ever practised. It not only has no foundation in the holy Scriptures, but it is an institution of the most abominable idolatrous worship. It is nothing else than the worship of a piece of bread, under the notion that this bit of bread, by the priest's words, has been changed into the real body of Jesus Christ. The whole superstition of the mass is founded on the absurd doctrine of transubstantiation. When they have converted the sacred elements of bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ, then the priest offers it up as a sacrifice, a real sacrifice of the broken body and shed blood of Christ. This is the sacrifice of the mass, which the priests offer for the living and the dead. Well, if Christ be there visibly present, he ought to be worshipped; accordingly they elevate the host, that is, Christ, just formed out of the bread and wine, and that the object of divine worship may be fairly present, they maintain not only the presence of Christ's flesh and blood, but of his soul and divinity; and yet the worshipper sees nothing but the outward appearance of a wafer and some wine in a vial, and this celebration of the mass forms now a principal part of the worship of the priests. And many are hired to say a multitude of masses for the deceased, which they celebrate in private. Now the very wafer which they pretend is the real body of Christ, may be kept until it is corrupted like any other bread: or it may be eaten by mice, or other vermin.

This whole service of the mass, celebrated with so much pomp and ceremony, has no manner of support from the holy Scriptures. Indeed, if a person well acquainted with the New Testament, should be introduced into a popish chapel while the priests were celebrating high mass, he would never suspect that he was in a Christian church. He would be ready to suppose that he was witnessing the worship of some heathen temple.

ROM. What you said about the doctrine of transubstantiation has made a considerable impression on my mind, and I told my father confessor that I could not disbelieve my own senses. I told him that I would not hesitate to believe that it was the real body and blood of Christ, if I could see any appearance of, or change of the bread into flesh. Upon this he solemnly assured me that in more instances than one blood had actually been seen dripping from the host when laid up in the sacred vessel where it was kept. But this rather makes the matter worse; for where there is no appearance of flesh or blood, we must think that no change has taken place. And then a want of right intention in the priest nullifies the sacrament; and who can ever know when the real body is present, since the appearance is the same, whether the change takes place or not?

COLP. Upon speaking of the errors of the Romanists respecting the sacraments, I neglected one, which all must admit to be in direct opposition to the plain words of our Lord; and this is so manifest, that even the most zealous advocates of the church of Rome do not pretend to deny the fact, that there has been a departure from what Christ ordained and practised when he instituted the sacred supper. You will understand me to refer to the universal practice in the Romish church of administering the bread only to the people, and withholding the wine, which is partaken of by the priests alone. Now, our Lord took the cup, and having blessed it, he gave it to his disciples, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, shed for the remission of the sins of many; take, and "drink ye all of it." Matt. 26:27. And Paul, who received his instructions for administering this ordinance immediately from the Lord Jesus Christ, makes mention of the wine equally with the bread; for he says, "After the same manner also, he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood. This do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as oft as ye eat this bread, and drink

this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come." Now we would ask, what human being has a right to change the ordinances of the Lord? Who has authority to break one of Christ's commandments, and teach men to do the same? Here is an evident usurpation of divine authority. If the pope or a council can do this, then they may change the religion of Christ into something entirely different from the original institution—which in fact they have done. Neither prophets nor apostles ever pretended, without divine direction, to change the ordinances of the Almighty.

ROM. No doubt there was some weighty reason for this change. I have understood that it was found impracticable to administer the cup, without the risk of spilling some drops when the cup was placed in the hands of aged and paralytic persons. And when the wine was changed into the blood of Christ, it would have been a horrible profanity for a single drop of this precious blood to be suffered to be lost.

COLP. This impious mutilation of a divine ordinance, I find, is closely connected with the monstrous doctrine of transubstantiation, the unreasonableness of which has already been demonstrated. But I would ask, whether the danger of profaning the blood of Christ was not as great when the supper was first instituted as at present? Why did not the omniscient Saviour foresee this danger and provide against it? The apology for the change is really too ridiculous to deserve a serious consideration.

ROM. Our priests assure us, that by having the cup withheld, we suffer the loss of no real privilege; for the whole body and blood of Christ is contained in every particle of the bread; so that he who partakes of what appears to be bread, receives a whole Christ, just as much as if he partook of the cup also.

COLP. If this were true, it would furnish no apology for violating the plain command of our Lord, and mutilating a sacrament instituted by him. But if the use of the cup is altogether superfluous, why do the priests partake of the wine? Christ never appointed the bread to be a sign of the pouring out of his blood; and there is nothing in the breaking and eating of bread which is suited to represent the shedding of blood, which is strikingly represented by the use of the cup. I would appeal to your own good sense,

whether this mutilation of the ordinance of the Lord can be justified. You have brought forward what your priests have told you; but do their apologies satisfy your own mind? Do you not see, that if they may do this, they may, on one pretext or another, set aside all the commandments of God, and pretend to bind the consciences of men by devices and institutions of their own? To them may be applied, in all its force, the rebuke of our Saviour to the Jews, "In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." I am sure that no mind which is not blinded by prejudice can believe that the priests can be justified in this thing. Now, friend, speak plainly the convictions of your conscience. Do you in your heart believe that they are right in thus violating the command, and going contrary to the example of the Lord Jesus? Come, speak.

ROM. Well, if I must tell the truth, I do not think that there is any warrant for this change; but I do not know what light father Benedict may be able to cast on the subject.

There is another point I would mention. I cannot understand what you Protestants have to bring against our clergy for not marrying. Certainly your own Bible, which you put into my hands, clearly teaches that unmarried men can serve the Lord with less distraction and obstruction than those who have wives. No doubt you remember the passage. Surely then, priests, who should be entirely devoted to the sacred duties of their calling, ought not to encumber themselves with the cares of a family.

COLP. Let him who is able to act on this principle do so, according to that of our Lord, "He that is able to receive it, let him receive it." And Paul, in the epistle to which you have referred, speaks of some who had not the gift of continence, and he advises such to marry; for he says, "It is better to marry than to burn." But your system makes no provision for such cases; and yet these are so common, that Paul advises, on a consideration of the whole case, that "every-man should have his own wife, and every woman her own husband."

Besides, what the apostle says about the inconvenience of married persons, has special relation to the times of distress in which they lived. Therefore he prefaces his discourse respecting marriage with these

words: "I suppose therefore that this is good for the present distress; I say, that it is good for a man so to be. Art thou bound to a wife, seek not to be loosed," etc. 1 Cor. 7.

We do not maintain that it is the duty of all men to marry, but we believe with Paul, that "marriage is honorable in all." And we believe that any law or canon forbidding a whole class of men to marry, is contrary to the law of God, and is one of the signs given by the apostle Paul to Timothy of those evil times which at a future period would certainly come: "Forbidding," says he, "to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath given to be received with thanksgiving."

ROM. I have always understood that celibacy was a holier state than marriage, and on this principle we encourage young virgins to devote themselves to God, that they may give their hearts entirely to the Lord, and be free from every pollution.

COLP. I am aware that such is the doctrine inculcated in the Romish church; but it is one of the marks of an apostate church, which by its traditions sets aside the laws of God, and counteracts the principles of our nature. If marriage was an unholy state, it would have been forbidden to all men as well as the clergy. And it should not be overlooked, that in the passage where Paul seems to prefer a state of celibacy to a state of marriage, he has no special reference to the clergy. And Paul asserts his own liberty to "lead about a wife," 1 Cor. 9:5, as well as the other apostles. Evidently then, marriage was not forbidden to the apostles, and in giving the characteristics of those who should be put into the ministry, he seems to take it for granted that the pastors would be married men; for he also gives the character of their wives, and rules for the government of their families. The only restriction he lays upon the bishop in regard to marriage is, that he should be "the husband of one wife," which some interpret to mean, that every bishop must have a wife; but the better interpretation is, that he must not have more than one.

ROM. I think that in one respect an unmarried clergy has a great advantage; the church is not required to support their families, which I believe is felt to be a heavy burden among Protestants.

COLP. This disadvantage is greatly overbalanced by the fact, that marriage connects the clergy by intimate bonds with the rest of society; whereas celibacy cuts off the priesthood from all common interest in the affairs of men, and leads ecclesiastics to form a society entirely distinct from others, whose interests are opposed to those of society in general. The church is thus a separate concern, and the priests use every art and influence to draw into their hallowed circle all the wealth which they possibly can. And when once gained it never can be distributed for the benefit of society, but remains perpetually the property of the church in mortmain, as the lawyers say; and by this means, before the Reformation, a large part of the best landed property in England and Scotland belonged to the church.

But it would require a volume to reveal all the secret licentiousness and unnatural crimes which have been produced by this single cause. And these facts can be established by the testimony of Popish writers, and these witnesses not few but many. But I wish not to enter on this disgusting subject.

## DIALOGUE IX

ROM. I see, friend, that you continue, like one of old, to walk up and down through the earth—but observe, I do not say that your object is the same, though our father confessor thinks you are not a whit better than the person referred to. He says you are a troubler of the church, an emissary of the devil, and that the books you circulate are full of deadly poison, calculated to be ruinous to souls, and that already you have seduced some unwary souls by good words and fair pretences. I told him plainly that I could not entirely agree with him. I assured him that you had been a number of times in my house, and that I had never observed any thing in your conduct and conversation but what was becoming a Christian man. And as to your books, I told him that here was one, the Douay Bible, which I was sure he could not say was full of poison. And here, said I, is another, which the colporteur gave to my wife, written, as he says, by a good Catholic. Look at it; it is entitled, "The Imitation of Christ." And what objection, said I, can you have to this, "A Call to the Unconverted?" I have been perusing it, and find nothing but what every good man must approve. Often, reverend father, you have warned us

against sinful practices, and told us to forsake our evil ways. Yes, yes, said he, all this is true; but, John, do you not know that of all the sins which you can commit heresy is the worst, for it shuts the door of mercy, and cuts you off from forgiveness, by separating you from the true and only church, and from the holy sacraments, without which there can be no absolution? He then got very warm, and chided me sharply for having any thing to say to you, and warned me most solemnly never to look into any of your books again, and took his leave rather abruptly.

COLP. I do suppose that the man is conscientious in opposition to me and to the truths which I endeavor to circulate. Paul said, "I verily thought that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus." And while dragging men and women to prison, and while assisting in the murder of unoffending Christians, he acted agreeably to the dictates of an erring conscience. I have learned to pity and pray for such as are thus misled by their education, and by the errors which they have drunk in as it were with their mother's milk. The power of prejudice, especially when it has become inveterate, can hardly ever be removed but by the special operations of the Holy Spirit. I know it by experience. I was as much opposed to evangelical truth as any one I ever met with. I was a self-righteous moralist, and when I heard men preach the necessity of the new birth, and of justification by the righteousness of another, I was often provoked to anger, and felt as if I would be glad to have it in my power to stop the mouths of all who preached such doctrines; and if I had been left to myself, I should have continued under the same delusion. But it pleased God to lead me to see something of the wickedness of my heart and life, and to show me that I was in the broad way to ruin. And my distress increased at such a rate, that if I had not found relief it must have driven me to distraction or despair.

ROM. I should like to know, friend, how you found relief; and my anxiety to know this is not a matter of vain curiosity, but ever since I read that little book, "A Call to the Unconverted," I have had a strange sound in my ears, and many fearful thoughts starting in my mind. I have striven to banish these unpleasant thoughts, but my efforts are ineffectual. It is continually running in my mind, "You must be born again"—you must repent, or perish. I would have opened my mind to our priest, but I knew

what he would say; and I had no thought of revealing the state of my mind to you until I found, by what you said just now, that you have once experienced distress of the same kind and found relief. Now, dear sir, do tell me how I am to get deliverance from this trouble of mind which has come upon me.

COLP. Yes, friend, I can point you to the effectual and only remedy for a soul wounded with a conviction of its sin and danger. The remedy is most simple, it is only to "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ" with all your heart. It is to look to a crucified Redeemer, who invites all laboring and heavy-laden sinners to come to him and learn of him, and they shall find rest. "Look unto me," says he, "all ye ends of the earth, and be saved." If you are enabled to trust in the righteousness of Christ alone, and to renounce all dependence on your own works and on the absolution of your priests, you will find relief.

ROM. But I cannot think he will receive such a sinner as I am. I once thought that I was in a fair way for heaven, but all my former hopes are fled, and I know not what to do; for I am so vile and unworthy that if I should come to Christ, I am afraid he would cast me off and spurn me from his presence.

COLP. Never, never. He has said, "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." Hear what Paul says: "It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief." Christ says that he came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance; to seek and save the lost. But here, take this little treatise of John Bunyan, "Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners."

## DIALOGUE X

COLP. I am glad to meet with you. When I last was this way I left you in great trouble of mind. I do not believe you have been out of my thoughts a single day since; and to say the truth, I should not be here now, but for my anxiety to know what issue God had given to your concern of mind.

ROM. Friend, I thank you for the interest you take in my salvation. My trouble of mind continued for some weeks without abatement. I read over



the little book which you were so kind as to lend me, but it did not seem to suit my case. Indeed, I was fully persuaded that no one had ever been in my sad condition. I fully believed that I was given over to a reprobate mind. I heard that God had mercy on whom he would have mercy, and whom he would he hardened. I said, Surely I am one whom God has hardened; for my heart felt as hard as any rock—as hard as the nether millstone. If my salvation had depended on it, I could not have shed a tear. And when I attempted to pray I was shut up—I could scarcely speak a word. I spent much time in reading the Bible; but every thing was dark and mysterious except one, and that was that I was a lost sinner—a castaway—a reprobate. Sleep departed from my eyes, or I was frightened with dreams. I almost forgot to eat my daily food, and my business was much neglected.

My wife, a good woman and conscientious Catholic, observed the change in me, and was much concerned about me. I had not revealed to her the cause of my trouble, but she suspected that it was connected with my talking with you and reading your books. And one day she said to me, "John, what ails you? Why are you melancholy, and so restless? We never see a smile on your face, and you seem to take pleasure in nothing. This has come from your acquaintance with that pedler and his vile books. I never wanted the man to come to the house, for I observed that he had an oily tongue which might easily mislead such simple folks as we are; and as to his tracts and books, I wish they were all this moment in the fire. Oh, John, go to father Benedict; he will give you comfort. Often have I gone to confession with a troubled mind, but father Benedict always had a kind word for me; and if you will go and confess your fault in meddling with those heretical books, you will find relief."

I said, "Mary, I believe you are very sincere in your advice; but I tell you that I will never confess to a priest again as long as I live: I am sure he cannot pardon my sins. How can a poor sinful worm of the dust like ourselves pardon our sins? No, Mary, if I ever find rest it must come in a different way from that."

"Well, John," said she, "if you will not go to confession, throw away those heretical books which have already well-nigh turned your brain."

"Why, my dear wife," said I, "I read scarcely any thing now but the Bible, and do you call God's holy word a heretical book?"

She replied, "It may be good for them to read it who are capable of understanding it; but it is not for such poor simple folks as we are to undertake to interpret the sacred Scriptures; let those who have learning do this, and we will hear what they say."

"But," said I, "what if they tell us wrong? What if they are ignorant of the truth themselves? How can we find out whether what they tell us is true, but by searching the Scriptures to see whether these things are so?"

"Well, John, I can't dispute, but I can believe every thing which father Benedict tells me. And, John, I wish to let you know, that when the father was here he said it was full time that our daughter Susan should come to confession; that in the spring the bishop would come round to administer the sacrament of confirmation, and he wished to have all the young people in his parish ready." I told her to do as she pleased; that I would not advise the girl to go, neither would I hinder her. Accordingly, she talked with Susan, who is distressingly diffident, and the girl was thrown into an agony.

After a severe conflict with her feelings, she agreed to go. But when they came to the priest's residence, they found that he was confined to his room with a severe attack of the sciatica. But calling my wife into the room, he said that there was a young priest in the house just from Ireland, from Maynooth college, a fine, discreet, and learned young man. Let your daughter confess to him. Susan at first refused, but after much coaxing, and some threatening, she went into the confessional, and the mother remained in an adjoining room. In less than a quarter of an hour Susan ran to her mother and burst into tears, and seemed at the same time full of indignation. "What's the matter, Susan?" said the mother. "Oh," said the girl, "I will never go to confession again. The priest asked such questions as I am ashamed to mention to you. I'll never go again." My wife went immediately to father Benedict, who seemed much concerned, and sent for the young priest, and asked him what sort of questions he had asked the young woman. No others, said the young priest, than we are taught by our text-book to ask. What text-book? said

father Benedict. "Dens' Theology," answered the young man. The old priest seemed to be confounded, but said, "Young man, that book will not answer for this country; the people here are wide awake on that subject, and an enemy of the Catholics has extracted many things from that book which greatly shock the feelings of the people. That book has done us much harm already. Several persons brought up in the true church have lately forbidden their wives and daughters to go any more to confession. I know that Dens' Theology is in high repute at Maynooth, and is studied there; but we must denounce it here, or it will throw a mighty obstacle in our way."

COLP. All this is very interesting, but I wish to learn from you how you obtained deliverance from the burden of sin which oppressed you.

ROM. I was about to tell you. One day I was sitting musing on my deplorable state. It was Sunday, and I was alone in a retired spot. The sun was near the horizon, and every thing was still. I opened my Bible and read, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief." 1 Tim. 1:15. The thought struck me, If Jesus Christ can save the chief of sinners, why cannot he save me? Casting my eyes on the book, as I turned over the leaves, they fastened on these words: "For he is able to save to the uttermost all that come to God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for us." The thought again occurred with more force than before, If he is able to save to the uttermost, why is he not able to save even me? At that moment a ray of hope gleamed on my dark and desolate mind. It seemed to me as if a voice said within me, He is able, he is able to save to the uttermost. My heart was filled with joy; its hardness was melted into tenderness. I fell upon my knees and thanked God that I was out of hell, and that salvation for my soul was possible. If a world had been given me, it could not have produced a joy so great; and yet I perceived nothing but that my case was not desperate, as for a long time I had supposed. Oh, how precious did Christ appear! I felt my heart overflowing with gratitude to him as my Saviour, and I beheld a divine glory in his person: his love in dying for poor sinners affected me beyond expression. I said, Lord Jesus, I will follow thee whithersoever thou leadest me. Though I did not dream that I was a believer, yet I felt happy

beyond any thing I ever experienced; and I cannot but believe that at that moment God gave me a new heart. All my views were from this time greatly changed, and my heart went out not only in strong affection to my Saviour, but I felt a wonderful affection for all that I believed to be real Christians, and an unspeakable compassion for poor perishing sinners. I could have gone on my knees to entreat them to forsake their sins and come to Christ, who was "able to save to the uttermost." I could have taken my worst enemy in my arms; my heart was so full of love that it embraced the whole world.

COLP. How long did these joyful feelings last?

ROM. Not long. I turned away my thoughts too much from the blessed Saviour, and began to think what a happy change I had experienced, and some proud thoughts arose in my mind. Soon after this, thick darkness came over me. I thought that all I had experienced was a delusion. My old feelings in some measure returned, and I was sunk very low; but still there seemed to be a voice within me saying, "He is able, he is able." Then thought I, Oh, if he were as willing as he is able, then I should still have hope. And after laboring in the dark a few days, light broke in on my mind clearer than before. I now seemed to see clearly why it was necessary for Christ to die, and that salvation would have been impossible without the shedding of his blood. It was now clearly revealed to my mind that God could be just, and justify my soul on account of Christ's merit. The plan of redemption appeared more glorious than any thing I had ever contemplated, and ever since I enjoy a settled peace, and entertain a good hope through grace.

COLP. Have you spoken to your wife respecting your new views and comforts?

ROM. I have, and she appears to be brought to a stand. She is dreadfully afraid of incurring the anathema of the priests; and though she now reads the Bible, she seems afraid of being seen with the Scriptures in her hand. But I hope the Spirit of God is at work with her conscience.

And poor Susan receives the truths of the gospel with an astonishing readiness. She spends all her spare time in reading, and she tells me that

she prays every day for a new heart. May the Lord hear her supplications, and grant her requests.

COLP. But what will the priest say, when he comes to visit you? Will he not be filled with wrath?

ROM. I care not for his anger. I mean to tell him all my mind, and to declare my intention of leaving the Roman-catholic church. I am now convinced, that though there may be a few pious souls in that communion, the church is in an awful state of apostasy. May God have mercy on the people.

## DIALOGUE XI

ROM. My good friend, I never wanted to see any body in my life so much as I have wished to see you these many weeks. I have had sore conflicts since I saw you last. "Without were fightings, and within were fears." But, my dear friend, I must tell you all. I have dishonored my Saviour, and betrayed him, like Judas, to his enemies. My soul has been worse burdened with a load of guilt than ever before. Oh, what a wretch am I! What a heinous sin I have committed! Do pray for me, if peradventure the Lord may give me repentance and forgiveness.

COLP. I beg you to tell me what's the matter? What crime have you committed that has cast you down into such depths of distress?

ROM. I will tell you all. And may the Lord enable you to speak a comfortable word to my poor, wretched soul.

As I expected, the old priest, as soon as he was able to go about, came round to our house, to make an apology for the imprudence of the young priest in the shameful questions which he put to Susan at the confessional. He said the young man, who had but just arrived from Ireland, was deeply mortified at what had happened, and solemnly declared that he had no other motive in proposing the objectionable questions than to do his duty, as he had been instructed at Maynooth. And he went and brought the book and showed the very questions which he had proposed to the young woman. I believe that he is a very pious

young man. And, said he, in the old country they have very different notions about these things from what you have here in America. There they think it very necessary to search the secret sins of such as come to confession; and especially to bring young and bashful females to a free confession of their secret sins, who would otherwise be guilty of the dreadful sin of covering over their transgressions, and thus, as it were, lying unto the Lord. And, said he, John, I tell you these squeamish notions which are lately getting into the heads of our young females are all borrowed from the heretics. Formerly, John, I asked such questions and worse of some of the finest ladies in the land, and received their candid and penitent confession. Yes, John, I would have you to know, that your own wife has often been questioned in this manner, and it never offended her.

Upon this I could no longer restrain my wrath: said I, "It's a lie, you old hypocrite, you vile old lecher; I believe that your whole religion is a vile system of hypocrisy and iniquity; and I will now call Mary, and see whether she will confirm what you say."

Said father Benedict, "You need not do that, for no good Catholic dare tell what is said in confession. If your wife were to affirm or deny what I have told you, she would incur the heaviest excommunication of the church, a crime so flagrant that in other days it would have brought her to the stake." My passion upon this rose higher, and I became very abusive, and, alas, was tempted to use profane language. O Lord, forgive my sin! My conscience is burdened. And I have not told you all. When Mary came in, I asked her whether any such questions had ever been put to her at confession, and she promptly answered, "Never." Upon finding that the old priest had deliberately told a shameful falsehood, to the dishonor of as virtuous a woman as ever lived, I was so incensed that I took him by the shoulders and pushed him out of the house. As soon as my passion cooled I regretted what I had said and done. I went out, like Peter, and wept bitterly. Lately I was one of the happiest men living. All day my heart seemed full of joy and peace, and even in the night, when I awoke, I would be singing the praises of my divine Saviour. But now, for three weeks, no sinner out of hell, I think, had suffered more. Oh, do you think it possible that I can be forgiven?

COLP. Yes; "the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin." Peter cursed and swore, and three times denied his Master, even in his presence, and he obtained forgiveness; and so may you, if you are penitent as he was.

ROM. But Judas repented, and yet found no forgiveness, though he restored the money which he had taken as the price of betraying his Lord. And often, often it has come powerfully into my mind, "Go and do as he did. There is no pardon for those who have sinned as you have done. The sooner you know the worst of your case the better. Go and hang yourself." If I had not believed that this was a temptation of the devil, I know not what desperate act I might have committed against my own life. Do tell me, my dear friend, what you think. Let me know the worst of my case.

COLP. As I think you have truly repented, I cannot doubt that God hath pardoned your sin, and Christ seems to say to you as he did thrice to Peter, after his sin and repentance, "Lovest thou me?" What answer can you give to this?

ROM. Oh, if my heart does not deceive me, I can say with Peter, "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee."

COLP. Then set your heart at rest. "My little children," says the apostle John, "sin not: but if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world."

ROM. Thank God, thank God, for this visit. My heart is relieved. Oh, what a dear Saviour! Christ is more precious to my soul than ever.

## DIALOGUE XII

ROM. I am truly glad to see you at this time. I am like to be brought into trouble for my change of religion. My landlord, who has heretofore been very favorable, has sent me word that when the year is out I must remove. I know that he has been influenced by father Benedict to adopt this measure. Now, friend, I want your advice what course to pursue. I have been able to lay up but little, and I do not see where I shall find another home for myself and little family.

COLP. You need not disturb yourself about what you shall eat, and what you shall drink. Has not our blessed Lord pledged his word, that if we seek first the kingdom of God, all these things shall be added? "Consider," said he, "the lilies, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin; yet Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith?" The world is wide, and there are thousands of better places than this from which you are so reluctant to part. Next month I expect to go to the west as far as Iowa, and I will look out a place for you; and there you will soon be able to procure a farm for yourself, and not be any longer dependent for a home on the will of another. But let me hear how your soul prospers, and how it is with your wife and daughter. Have the rulers of the synagogue excommunicated you, or do they still hope to gain you back?

Rom. I have no doubt that we shall all be excommunicated by "bell, book, and candle," but this requires some time. The bishop must be consulted, and he will not be round here for six months. As to myself I have but little to say that is favorable. I begin to find that I carry about with me a heart "deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." I compare my inner man to a chamber in which filth has been accumulating for years, and into which the light has begun gradually to shine, revealing a degree of loathsome defilement which was never suspected to exist. I am sometimes greatly cast down, and much troubled; but then I speak to myself in the language of David, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God, who is the health of my countenance, and my God."

Mary finds it very hard to give up the mother church, and her prayers to the blessed Virgin; but has at length come to the conclusion that she will study the Bible, and go by that, for she has lost all confidence in man. Father Benedict, she thought, was free from fault, and she was willing to trust her soul in his hands; but since he told a deliberate falsehood, and stuck to it, she thinks no man can be trusted, but God only. Had it not been for this detection of her father confessor in a known falsehood, I am of opinion that she never could have been induced to leave the old church. But this has broken the strongest tie that held her; and she says,



If father Benedict is a false man, what must I think of the herd of priests and Jesuits who go about the country? Still, she makes this excuse for father Benedict, that he was brought up among the Jesuits, and belonged to that society, and I have heard that their doctrine is, that we may tell a lie to answer a good end; as, for example, to save the Catholic church from reproach, or to prevent its being known what secret doctrines are held and taught among them. This no doubt is the true secret of the old priest's conduct. He was afraid that the imprudence of the young priest, in asking a young woman such indelicate questions from Dens' Theology, would get abroad, and he wished to hush the matter up, and so pretended that such questions had been always common, and proposed by himself to the most virtuous matrons in the country. And he calculated that my wife would be afraid to say whether or not such questions had been propounded to her. But she is now on the right track, studying the Bible night and day. Sometimes she reads in the common English Bible, and then she will turn to the Douay Bible and compare them, and I am persuaded that she is incessant in her prayers at a throne of grace.

And as for Susan, she is as happy as the day is long. One of our neighbors lent her a hymn-book, and taught her to sing some of the hymns; and while at her wheel is either singing hymns, or has her New Testament spread out before her, on which she fixes her eye long enough to catch a verse, which she soon has committed to memory. She rejoices in her deliverance from the confessional and from the priests, and says CHRIST IS HER PRIEST, to whom she will confess; that she wants no other, and she reads of no other in the New Testament. Dear girl, she has greatly outstripped her father in the gospel race.

## **COUNSELS, ENCOURAGEMENT, AND AID IN THE WORK OF THE AMERICAN TRACT**

## SOCIETY

THE following letter was written just after the Society's formation.

"PRINCETON, August 31, 1825."

"DEAR SIR—... I have no other object in writing but to acknowledge the receipt of your favor, and to express my warm attachment to your institution, and my ardent wishes that it may prosper to the utmost hopes of its founders and friends; and also to express my willingness to aid the Society in any way in my power. If my pen could be serviceable on any subject within the range of my studies, I will not decline the attempt, with the full understanding that nothing which I may write may be circulated as a tract unless it meets the entire approbation of the committee of publication. I would therefore prefer that any thing which I may write may be communicated as anonymous. To some the production of good tracts seems easy, to me it appears the most difficult kind of composition to execute well; but I am so convinced of the efficacy of this mode of diffusing the knowledge of truth, that if I thought myself capable of writing good tracts, I should be willing to spend the remainder of my days in that service. But when I have made some small efforts in that way, I have not succeeded in gaining my own approbation."

"Yours very respectfully,"

"A. ALEXANDER."

"Rev. WM. A HALLOCK,"

"Cor. Sec. Amer. Tract Soc."

"PRINCETON, February 25, 1826.

"DEAR SIR—I hardly know what to say respecting the tract on universal salvation which I have been requested to furnish. I could, I believe, write a volume on that interesting subject, but how to discuss the important matter which it embraces within the limits of a tract, I know not. I wish that such a work might fall into some abler hands, for I am sensible that I

possess not the qualifications to produce such a luminous, condensed view of the subject as would answer the purpose of the Tract Society. I will, however, return to the consideration of the subject, and if I can write any thing which shall in any measure satisfy myself, I will transmit the manuscript to you in a few weeks. If you should receive nothing, you may conclude that I have failed in my attempt. If such a communication should be made, it is my sincere and earnest request that, unless it meets the views of the Committee satisfactorily, it may not be published, but returned to me. I have no feelings that need be in the least consulted in such a case."

"I am with great regard,"

"Your brother and fellow-laborer,"

"A. ALEXANDER."

"PRINCETON, August 24, 1829."

"REV. AND DEAR SIR—I take this method of expressing to your Committee my hearty thanks for the seven volumes of the Society's tracts, which through you they were pleased to present me. I did not recollect that I had ever spoken to Mr. R. Brown on the subject of obtaining a set for me. I presume that his purpose of obtaining them for me was suggested by the generosity of his own heart. But I assure you, my dear sir, they are not the less welcome for being unexpected."

"You know the opinion which I entertain of the value of tracts. And I shall now feel myself laid under an additional obligation to promote their circulation; and more than that, if Providence spares my health and life through the ensuing winter, I will make an exertion to add to their number. If I could persuade myself that I was able to write in that peculiar style of point, simplicity, and spirituality, in which tracts should be penned, I would even rob sleep of some of its hours to furnish a greater variety of subjects to the American Tract Society. I have, however, since the reading of the last report of the Society, felt some degree of guilt for my negligence, when I observed, with humble gratitude to God, that the tract on The Day of Judgment had been made a special blessing to so

many immortal souls during the last year. I observe in the list of tracts stereotyped the last year, one on The Importance of Salvation. I know not whether it is the same as that published by Professor Maclean in his series; if so, it was written by me many years ago, and was taken out from some old papers, and sent to him, perhaps without any notice of its origin. Of this, however, I am uncertain."

"I feel so much indebted to the Committee for the treasure which they have presented to me, that I intend to volunteer in the service, and write one or two tracts as soon as I can find leisure from my almost incessant occupations."

"In Christian love, I am your brother, etc.,"

"A. ALEXANDER."

"PRINCETON, June 22, 1832."

"REV. AND DEAR SIR—In answer to yours, received this morning, I would remark, that in this age of excitement, people more than ever need treatises calculated to draw the line of distinction clearly between those exercises of religion which are true, and such as are spurious. It will do professors no harm to have their hope shaken by reading such a book as Edwards on the Affections. The marks of genuine piety laid down in that work are, in my judgment, altogether scriptural; so that those who do not find in themselves what he requires, have no right to esteem themselves converted persons. The great difficulty, I confess, is to apply the tests which he has given: some of them, though perfectly correct, furnish little aid in practice, to the sincere soul engaged in the examination of its own state; but it is useful for Christians to be well acquainted with the true theory of experimental religion, and I am acquainted with no book in which this is given so fully and so clearly as in the work under consideration. In reading it, I have been so struck with the correctness of the sentiments, and the judicious sobriety and spirituality of the author's remarks, that I have felt ready to determine to introduce it as a class-book in our seminary... The truth is, that Edwards speaks in Ellerby's abridgment as really as in the original work; the language and structure of the sentences are still his own, and Ellerby has done little else than

omit repetitions of the same idea. I am free to acknowledge, however, that my only reason for preferring the abridgment is, that it is by one half Shorter than the original, for I am pleased with President Edwards' repetitions."

"It cannot be denied that this work is not adapted to all sincere Christians, and perhaps ought not immediately to be put into the hands of young converts, unless they have had their minds disciplined by a good education; but your object should be, not only to provide milk for babes, but meat for strong men. Books adapted to every stage and period of the Christian life are needed. Other books will be more read, but few books, in my opinion, will be more useful to those who are capable of understanding and applying what is contained in this treatise; and one Christian who has his mind exercised to nice discrimination on this subject, will probably be useful to a whole society of common professors."

"When I recommend this work, I speak from some experience of its value. I have known private Christians who studied the treatise with untiring assiduity and with undoubted profit. I speak of the original work, from which the abridgment only differs by being shorter. I am with true regard, yours, etc."

"A. ALEXANDER."

"PRINCETON, April 26, 1833."

"REV. AND DEAR SIR—Agreeably to your request, I have written the following on the subject of circulating bound books. It contains nothing which is not familiar to your thought, but if you are of opinion that it can in any degree subserve the good work in which you labor, you may make what use of it your discretion and that of the Committee may direct."

"I rejoice to learn that the Committee of the American Tract Society are turning their attention specially to the preparation and circulation of small bound volumes. These are as really tracts (treatises) as any of the pamphlets or sheets which are sent forth from the institution. I would be very sorry to say a word which would have the effect of diminishing the zeal and activity of the Committee in the distribution of tracts in the usual

form. Let this good work, by which the knowledge of the truth is extended to so many thousands of needy souls, be prosecuted with increasing ardor. The circulation of tracts is clearly marked out as one of God's appointed means for the conversion of the world. The facts from heathen lands, now before the public, are of the most animating description, and are calculated to inspire all the friends of the Society with lively hope and zeal."

"But as the same truths may be circulated in different forms, so the laborers in this field ought wisely to adapt their modes of operation to the circumstances, tastes, and exigencies of the people. And I am persuaded that there are some peculiar advantages in the distribution of small, well-selected treatises in the form of bound volumes. Some are disposed to think lightly of every thing in the shape of tracts, from the circumstance of their commonness, and from the importunity which has sometimes attended their distribution. I do not mention this as a thing which can be unknown to the Committee, nor do I mean to connect with it the least insinuation that the business of distribution has been unwisely conducted. The feeling to which I have referred, as existing to a considerable extent, is indeed most unreasonable; but if it exists, we should as far as possible contrive means to counteract it. This undervaluing of the cheapest of all vehicles for divine truth, very much resembles the conduct of the Israelites in regard to the manna with which they were so constantly and abundantly supplied. They said, "Our soul loatheth this light bread." But the same prejudice does not exist against bound books. These the people are willing to buy at a fair price."

"There can be no doubt that it is right to avail ourselves of this preference, and to provide, for those who wish it, cheap volumes of important religious instruction. It is also a fact, that small tracts in sheets are but in few cases preserved with care. They often perish almost as soon as read, and I know of no method of preventing this waste so effectual as to substitute small bound books. The Society's tracts are now bound in this manner for such as prefer them in that form. And let other treatises be selected for publication, for which purpose there are many excellently adapted."

"I have attentively read over the list of books which the Committee have

already put into circulation, and the selection meets with my cordial approbation. Works of a more evangelical and spiritual kind do not exist, and I am gratified to see that they are printed and bound in a neat and handsome style. I am deeply persuaded that great public benefit will arise from the appropriation of a portion of your funds in this way; and that the event will prove, that however expensive it may be in the commencement, it will be wise economy in the end. When I consider how many copies of 'Doddridge's Rise and Progress,' 'Baxter's Call to the Unconverted,' 'Alleine's Alarm,' 'Edwards on the Affections,' and such like works, will be circulated through the whole length and breadth of this land, I am filled with pleasing anticipations of the good which your Society will be the means of accomplishing."

"I do sincerely hope that the Committee will persevere in the prosecution of this object, and as their circumstances may permit, increase the number of their publications of this description. I did think it important that a society for the circulation of religious books should be formed, but I do not see why the American Tract Society may not manage this whole concern more economically and successfully than any new society. The success which has already attended your efforts in this way is calculated to inspire you with confidence to go on in the name of the Lord."

"With sincere regard, yours truly,"

"A. ALEXANDER."

In October, 1833, the Committee of the American Tract Society, having invited a meeting of gentlemen, with a special view to raising funds for foreign and Pagan lands, requested Dr. Alexander to be present. To their request he replied:

"PRINCETON, Oct. 10, 1833."

"REV. AND DEAR SIR—As my bodily infirmities will prevent my meeting with you, I beg that you will express to the Committee of the American Tract Society my regret at not being able to afford them any effectual aid in the accomplishment of the important object which they have in view, and also assure them of my cordial good wishes and prayers for the

success of their noble enterprise. I am deeply convinced that the time has arrived when the friends of the Redeemer are called upon to make more vigorous exertions than ever before in extending the knowledge of salvation to the ends of the earth. There never was a time when God in his providence had so opened the door of effectual operation among the heathen, in all quarters of the world, as at this time; and they are happy to whom God has committed many talents, and to whom he has given a heart to occupy them for the advancement of his cause and glory."

"Every person who loves the Lord Jesus should strive, by all lawful means, to acquire something to expend in this holy cause; and no Christian ought, in this day, to think of accumulating property for any other purpose, than for the promotion of Christ's kingdom. The Master needs now all that his disciples have it in their power to give. The hundreds of millions of the heathen who are perishing for lack of knowledge, call for our exertions and our liberal charities."

"I was greatly struck with Dr. Morrison's letter. It appears that at least one-third of the population of the globe read the Chinese character, and that the same books are understood by those whose spoken language is quite different. If we allow two hundred millions of inhabitants to China Proper, we may safely reckon another hundred millions beyond these limits, who are able to read the Chinese language. Hitherto Christians seemed to be shut out from this immense field. This vast empire seemed indeed to be surrounded by an insurmountable barrier. But the brazen wall, it is found, may be passed. Tracts have already found their way into the heart of China, possibly into the very palace of the august emperor. And let it be remembered, that in this conquest tracts must be the pioneers. These can find their way, and accomplish much, where the living preacher cannot go, and where the Bible would not be received. Let no one suppose that the missionary and the Bible supersede the necessity of tracts. The way for the introduction of these appointed means of salvation is often prepared by the circulation of tracts. And these contain the very same truths which are revealed in the Bible, and the same matter which the living preacher proclaims. The truth is God's instrument for the conversion and sanctification of men, and it matters little how this is conveyed to the mind; if attended by the Holy Spirit, it is able to make



men wise unto salvation, whether heard from the lips of a preacher, or read in an evangelical tract. And even where the Bible is possessed, and the gospel constantly preached, tracts may be eminently useful. This daily experience teaches. And surely it is of all methods of communicating religious knowledge the most economical. In thousands of cases you may freely scatter tracts where it would not be expedient to give a Bible."

"It ought not to be objected that a large portion of the tracts which are circulated are never read, and consequently produce no effect. If one in a thousand is read with profit, there is a rich compensation for all the expense incurred. The husbandman is not discouraged from liberally casting his precious seed into the prepared ground because he knows that much of it will be devoured by the birds, or fall where it cannot be fruitful; neither does he withhold his hand because it is possible that the greater part of it may perish by unpropitious seasons. In the morning he sows his seed, and in the evening he withholds not his hand; not knowing whether this or that will prosper, or whether both may be alike good. Neither should he be deterred from sowing his seed by the threatening appearance of the clouds; but with tears he goeth forth, and with humble trust in Providence, he casts his precious seed into the earth. Let us imitate his diligence, and also his confidence and patience."

"I sincerely hope and pray that the great Master of assemblies may be remarkably in the midst of your meeting, and that he may graciously grant to all present hearts which will prompt them to devise liberal things. 'Work,' says our Lord, 'while it is called today.' The door which is now so widely opened, may soon be closed if Christians neglect to improve the opportunity."

"I am, with sincere regard,"

"Your brother and fellow-laborer,"

"A. ALEXANDER."

"PRINCETON, October 26, 1833."

"REV. AND DEAR SIR—Upon the reception of your note yesterday,

informing me of the postponement of the Tract meeting until this evening, I determined to make an effort and be with you; but I had an uncomfortable night, and feel my system so much disordered this morning, that I think it would be imprudent to venture abroad, especially when I should be liable to the excitement of speaking at a public meeting."

"As I wish to manifest my zeal and good will in the Tract cause, to which you have so unreservedly devoted yourself, I would, in addition to what I have before said, respectfully propose the following queries, which probably include the substance of what I would have said, if I had been present."

"1. Ought not the love of Christ and his kingdom to be the governing motive with every Christian?"

"2. Will not this motive, in proportion as it is felt, induce every one to make exertions to advance his kingdom, and thus promote the glory of God in the world?"

"3. Is there any way by which this object can so effectually be accomplished, as by extending the knowledge of the truth throughout the whole earth?"

"4. Is there not a crisis in things of this kind, when much may be done by seasonable and energetic exertions, which, if it be suffered to pass without improvement, may not return for ages; just as if the seasons of seed-time and harvest be neglected, we labor in vain during the remainder of the year?"

"5. Is there not good reason to think that the age in which we live is such a time; that Providence has now furnished the church with such facilities for operation, and opened such a door of usefulness, especially among the heathen nations, that we shall be greatly wanting in duty to our Master, if we do not endeavor to avail ourselves of these opportunities of doing good, which were never so abundantly afforded to any other age?"

"6. Is it not evident that the distribution of evangelical Tracts is one of the

most effectual methods of disseminating THE TRUTH OF GOD; and has not the blessing which has hitherto attended this enterprise, both in Christian and heathen lands, warranted the conclusion that it is one of God's chosen means for the accomplishment of his purposes and predictions relating to the conversion of the world?"

"7. The prosecution of this object obstructs no other benevolent operation, but is a necessary auxiliary to all others; while then other Societies, as particularly Bible Societies and Missionary Societies, are engaged in making extraordinary exertions, ought not the Tract Society also to move forward with renewed zeal and enlarged plans of operation?"

"8. Can the genuine disciples of Christ who possess the means of promoting this cause, hold back when so loud a call is addressed to them from almost every quarter of the globe for the bread of life?"

"9. Ought not mercantile enterprises now to be entered on for the very purpose of making gain to be applied to the promotion of the Redeemer's kingdom? And should not those whose efforts to increase their property God has signally blessed, make a free-will offering of a portion of their profits to his service?"

"10. Would not the consecration of first-fruits, redemption for the first-born, and tenths laid upon the altar of God, probably bring down a blessing on all their possessions?"

"11. When a contest is going on in our minds between selfishness and benevolence, is it not the part of wisdom to lean to the side of benevolence?"

"12. When was it known that any man was impoverished by giving to the Lord? And if the time should come when men shall become poor by giving all their goods to promote the cause of Christ, will they not become infinitely rich by such a blessed poverty?"

"13. Is not the time for doing any thing in this cause short? Ought we not therefore to work while it is called to-day? Is it not certain that we shall

never have another life upon earth? Ought we not, therefore, to do the best we can with the talents committed to us, that when our Lord shall come to reckon with us, he may say, 'Well done, good and faithful servants?'"

"PRINCETON, May 14, 1834."

"REV. AND DEAR SIR—I am much gratified to learn from the published abstract, that you have resolved to prosecute effectually the plan of circulating the stereotyped bound volumes of the Society. I greatly rejoice in the prospect of the incalculable good which you will effect in this way, and I only wish you to increase your means by adding such other works to your publications as have stood the test of time and thorough examination. I have several to propose, but at present I confine myself to 'Halyburton's Great Concern.'"

"A. ALEXANDER."

"PRINCETON, March 18, 1835."

"To S. V. S. Wilder, Esq., Rev. James Milnor, D. D., Rev. Mr. Hallock, and Rev. Mr. Eastman."

"GENTLEMEN—I have perused your circular, addressed to me, with heartfelt satisfaction. I rejoice sincerely in the success with which you are enabled to prosecute the benevolent plan of supplying every family, in several of the southern states, with a copy of one or more of your bound volumes. I have no doubt but the light of eternity will discover that this enterprise has been the means of bringing, through Christ, many sons and daughters to glory. As the destitute cannot be everywhere supplied with living preachers, let the pious dead be sent to speak to them "all the words of this life." Send Baxter, and Flavel, and Alleine, and Edwards, and Bunyan, etc., to preach to them that gospel by which they have long since been guided to heaven. And if every village and remote settlement had a faithful pastor, what better aid could they have than one of these precious volumes in every family of their respective charges? The truth is, that such books do more good where the gospel is preached than where its sound is seldom heard, because there a taste for such reading has been

generated. In every part of the country, therefore, these books will be found exceedingly useful; and there is no room to doubt that the effort should be extended to every state and territory in the Union. I do not, I confess, know of any means in our power by which so much good may immediately be effected; and as human life is short, and men are perishing for lack of knowledge, there should be no delay nor procrastination of this work. Let it be urged forward with a zeal and energy proportioned to the magnitude of the interests at stake. Let agents be found running in all directions bearing in their hands these books, which explain the true and only method of salvation."

"That the general circulation of these books would be desirable, there can be no doubt in the mind of any one who believes in the Christian religion."

"In this region I think most would prefer purchasing them, to receiving them as a gratuity. All ministers and members of evangelical churches, I should hope, would help forward the object. If God send down his Holy Spirit, the interest will be excited."

"The work which you propose is great, and no one can tell how long it may take to accomplish it. Exert all your energy, but guard against a collapse of zeal. Determine to do all that you can, but promise not definitely what you will do. Still, the object must be definitely proposed, and all proper motives presented to induce a vigorous coöperation. It is a gratifying consideration that, in all such enterprises, whatever is effected is so much gained for the cause of Christ. One book has often been the means of much good. More than forty years ago I visited a neighborhood shut up by mountains on all sides. The females never left the place. Here an elderly man, who had recently been converted by the labors of a missionary, had received a tract or pamphlet containing the dying advice of a parent to his children. The neighbors came in to hear it read, and during the time of its being read there was scarcely a dry eye in the house, and the man who read it shed abundance of tears, so that frequently his voice was obstructed. At another time, I saw a whole congregation melted into tears by the preacher, whose text was, 'It is a faithful saying,' etc., telling them that he had lately read a tract called 'Poor Joseph' which a woman had put into his hands, and relating its contents."

"I have only two or three suggestions to make. The first is, that if you could find persons that would go about and read your books to the people, the end which you propose would be accomplished; but the truth is, that while many cannot read at all, a large part of those who have been to school are so little accustomed to read, that they can derive but small benefit from a book read by themselves. I have noticed how difficult a work reading is to those unaccustomed to the exercise and they are so much occupied in spelling out the word, that the meaning of the sentence is lost in the painful effort which they are obliged to make. If you suppose there are few readers who would meet with these obstructions, I am persuaded that you misjudge respecting a great multitude in the state of New Jersey. It is a solemn truth, that many of your tracts and books are entirely too elevated for more than one half of the population of this land. You need instructions for such in the simplest language of colloquial intercourse. If pious men and women, that can read well, would spend a few hours every week in reading to these people, the effect would be great: all such persons are quick in understanding what comes in by the ear. 'Faith comes by hearing.' "

"Another suggestion is, that your agents propose to every congregation to purchase a set of your books and bound tracts, to be lent out by the minister. A borrowed book is more commonly read speedily than one which is purchased; a borrowed book, if read at all, must be read soon, as it must be returned. Such a circulating library would do more good than can be calculated, and there is no congregation so poor as not to be able to provide it. In many cases the minister would procure it at his own expense—the pious females of his congregation would quickly defray the expense—often a liberal individual would contribute a sufficient sum. This does not fall in precisely with your plan of giving a volume to every family, but I am sure it would promote that plan. If a person became deeply interested in a book, he or she would not rest until a book of the same kind was constantly at hand."

"My only other suggestion is, that you should send forth more books on the 'evidences of revelation.' Deists and infidels would probably not read them, but young people would be prevented from becoming such. There is often a leaven of infidelity at work in the midst of the most orderly and

retired congregations. Unless you can counteract this, the effect of your other tracts will be limited. The British Tract Society are bending their attention strongly to this point. Again, you must have a greater variety in your collection; something to suit different tastes; but all must be spiritual and good."

"I am, with great respect, your friend, etc.,"

"A. ALEXANDER."

"PRINCETON, March 22, 1837."

"DEAR SIR—I have now finished the Life of Buchanan, but in a different way from that first contemplated. After mature deliberation, after learning that you wished a volume of about four hundred pages, I resolved to throw aside my own manuscript abridgment, and form a volume from Pearson; omitting only such parts as are little adapted to our institutions, and are of no permanent importance; and also the extended extracts from his sermons. But as much of the volume of Pearson as is retained remains unaltered, except where an introductory or connecting sentence was required. But besides the work of Pearson, I have introduced the most interesting part of Dr. Buchanan's 'Christian Researches,' which has been done at your suggestion, and will render this volume much more valuable for your purpose than the original. The division into parts I have omitted, and arranged the materials into consecutive chapters from one to seventeen."

"The transactions of Dr. Buchanan's life from the time of his arrival in England to his death, I have condensed into a single chapter, and I have subjoined some concluding remarks on the character of Dr. Buchanan, as it appeared to me that Mr. Pearson, for some reason, was not as full on this head as he might have been. This conclusion, however, may be omitted, if it should appear to the Committee superfluous, or if the volume should appear to swell to an inconvenient size."

"I will again request, that in all future editions of the tract on Universalism, my name on the cover may be omitted. I have already seen an abusive article from the Universalist press. I care not for their censure,

but I think it will be best that it should be anonymous."

"I am continually gratified with the intelligence of your great success in the volume enterprise. For this I bless God. It is doing good upon a very large scale, and without any drawback. I hope that you will be able to increase the number of your volumes. If I can be of any service to the cause, please to command me."

"Yours truly and respectfully,"

"A. ALEXANDER."

"PRINCETON, April 26, 1836."

"DEAR SIR—Since you were here I have been looking over Baxter's 'Treatise on Conversion,' in the seventh volume of his Practical Works. It has in it much that is excellent, written with amazing power and pungency, and ought to accompany his 'Call.' I marked with my pencil such parts as might advantageously be omitted, and upon comparison find that the parts marked out are equal to one-fourth of the work. I think it would be well to get some judicious member of the Publishing Committee to examine this treatise, and if it should be judged expedient to add it to your library, it will give me pleasure to transfer the marks which I have made on the volume here, to another which you may forward for the purpose."

"I intend to pay some attention to this subject, as I have time and opportunity, and when I meet with any work which strikes me favorably will communicate my opinion."

"I am respectfully and truly yours, etc.,"

"A. ALEXANDER."

"December 14, 1837."

"... The success of the volume enterprise gladdens my heart every time I think of it, and I sincerely wish that instead of a dozen volumes you had a hundred in circulation. A compendious history of modern Protestant



missions would, at this time, be an acceptable present to the public."

"PRINCETON, February 24, 1838."

"REV. AND DEAR SIR—Your favor of the 19th inst. is received. I am willing to bestow all the little remainder of my days in that way which will most effectually advance the cause of our blessed Redeemer."

"I will take into consideration your suggestions. Certainly, if I could believe that I should be able to produce a volume fit to be added to those which you have in such extensive circulation, I would without delay address myself to the work; but without any affectation of modesty, my common conviction is, that there are already in print much better books than I could write, and that there are other persons much more competent to supply what is wanted than myself. Almost every thing which I have ever published has been drawn from me by some peculiar circumstances; otherwise I never should have appeared before the public as an author. My 'Letters,' to which you kindly allude, were commenced at the earnest request of some of my old friends in Virginia, and were not expected by me to circulate farther than they would be conveyed by 'The Watchman of the South.' I have now brought them to a close, principally because it is painful to me to be so long before the Christian public. I have therefore no plan for the republication of them in a volume. What Rev. Mr. Plumer may be disposed to do in relation to them I know not. He has earnestly solicited from me a series of letters on experimental religion, but I have not thought that I could execute such a work as it ought to be done. I consider it one of the most delicate, as well as difficult of all subjects to treat; and I have not been sufficiently abroad in the world to observe all the indications of spurious religion which have been exhibited in our country within the last twenty years; but since I received your letter suggesting that I should think of writing something of a practical nature, the thought has occurred that possibly these objects might be advantageously united; that is, I might write a series of letters or essays, which might be published in a weekly paper, and afterwards, if approved, might be collected into a duodecimo volume for your Society. This plan would have the advantage of subjecting to the impartial examination of your Committee every letter or essay as it came from the press, and suggested improvements and alterations might be made before the book

was adopted. But I do not mean to intimate that I have deliberately adopted any purpose of this kind. I merely throw out the idea, that if it should seem to you worthy of any remarks, you may communicate your thoughts when you shall enjoy leisure, which, by the way, I suspect seldom falls to your lot."

"I reflect on no part of my life with more satisfaction than any little agency which I have had in encouraging and promoting the volume circulation by your Society. I do consider the success of this enterprise as intimately connected with the prosperity of vital, scriptural piety in our land; not in any one church, but in all evangelical churches, and beyond them all, by conveying a sound and practical knowledge of the gospel to multitudes who enjoy no public means of grace, or have not attended on them. If I could do any thing more to urge on this blessed work, which has been so auspiciously commenced, I would cordially lend my aid."

"Neither am I indifferent to your more recent enterprise of furnishing tracts in various languages for the instruction and conversion of the heathen. It is a noble enterprise. It is doubtless one important link in the chain of means intended for the conversion of the world. Go on, and prosper. Fear not the want of means. God will supply them as they are needed."

"I am, respectfully and affectionately,"

"Your brother, etc.,"

"A. ALEXANDER."

To a circular letter issued by the Rev. Dr. Milnor, and Rev. Messrs. Hallock, Eastman, and Cook, Secretaries, requesting an opinion on the desirableness of the Society's introducing a Christian library into schools, families, etc., Dr. Alexander replied, January 23, 1840, in substance as follows:

"As the principles of all sound morality are contained in a sincere belief in the fundamental truths of religion, if the prevalence of good morals be essential to the welfare and prosperity of the republic, then the minds of

children should be imbued with the essential doctrines of religion in their earliest years. And as parents are often incapable of instructing their children, or neglect to afford them religious instruction, it is exceedingly important, even in a political view, that primary schools should possess such a library as is proposed."

"As far as I am acquainted with the character and contents of the books in the list, I think that the selection is judicious, and will meet with the approbation of all denominations of evangelical Christians; there are, however, several books in the proposed library which I have never read, and concerning which, of course, I can with propriety express no opinion."

"In many of these authors there is an excellence of spirit and sentiment, which has the effect of causing the attentive reader to forget the mere circumstance of the external dress in which they are exhibited; yet the style is eminently suited to the subject treated, and certainly possesses all the most important characteristics which a cultivated taste would wish for in writings of this description. The style of most of these works is, though not elegant and ornamented, simple, chaste, vigorous, perspicuous, and animated."

"As these books contain the marrow of the gospel, without inculcating the peculiarities of any particular sect, they cannot but extend the knowledge of gospel truth wherever they are introduced; and where other means of religious instruction are not plentifully enjoyed, they would be a treasure of inestimable value, not only to the rising generation, but to the adult population."

"It would undoubtedly be the duty of every good man to encourage and promote this enterprise by all the influence which he could exert; and from what I have observed respecting the reception of your volumes, I am persuaded that a ready and cordial coöperation might be calculated on from the pious of all denominations."

"I am, respectfully and truly,"

"Your brother in Christ,"

"A. ALEXANDER."

"PRINCETON, July 4, 1842."

"REV. AND DEAR SIR—... The country between the Blue Ridge and the Ohio river is one of great extent, and contains as many utterly destitute settlements as any equal territory in the United States. Part of this field, however, (the great valley,) is one of the finest farming countries in the Union, and is settled by Presbyterians and German Protestants. An agent suited to the latter class, who are almost entirely without books, would be exceedingly important. The Presbyterians are of the Scotch-Irish class, and are steady in their adherence to the confession of faith, and accustomed to read the works of Boston, Flavel, Owen, Baxter, etc. Among these your volumes would sell well, if the people are not already supplied. Between the North mountain, which bounds the great valley on the north-west, and the Ohio, is a mountainous region of nearly two hundred miles in extent, comprehending some rich and compact settlements; but in general the people are strung along narrow intervals hemmed in by inaccessible mountains, where they seldom hear the gospel, and where the stated ministry can never be supported, the inhabitants are so widely separated from each other."

"Now, my plan would be to assign all west of the Blue Ridge to Mr. —, and if you could place under his supervision three or four colporteurs—there is no country where the services of this class of men are more needed—he could spend the whole year most profitably."

"I have freely thrown out my thoughts; consider them as mere hints, and then do the best you can."

"I am truly yours,"

A. ALEXANDER."

October 25, 26, and 27, 1842, a public deliberative meeting of the Board and friends of the American Tract Society was held in the Broadway Tabernacle, New York, and the Rev. Dr. Alexander, who was providentially detained, sent in the following communication, which was

read with deep interest:

"After a full survey of all the plans of doing good to the souls of men which are now in operation, it is my deliberate opinion, that with the exception of the preaching of the gospel and circulating the holy Scriptures, there is none which promises to be more efficient, and more extensively useful, in promoting the spiritual and eternal interests of men, than the publication and wide circulation of sound evangelical books and tracts. And if I were to undertake to select a set of volumes which in my judgment it would be most beneficial to circulate, I should undoubtedly make choice of a large proportion of the volumes which have been published by the American Tract Society. No books that were ever written by uninspired men are better adapted to promote true religion among the people, and none were ever more successful in the conversion of sinners and the edification of the people of God, than many of those on your list, and which are now in the course of rapid circulation. Many of these authors have received the approbation and sanction of the judicious and pious for two hundred years, and their value is as highly appreciated now as it ever was. When I reflect on the number of these pious and excellent works which within a few years have been scattered through the length and breadth of this land, I cannot but rejoice and give thanks to God that so much precious seed has been sown, which there is every reason to hope will in due time spring up and bring forth a rich harvest, when the present generation shall have passed away."

"Two millions of volumes and sixty millions of smaller treatises have been put into the hands of our reading population. And the bound volumes possess this advantage over even the preaching of the gospel, that they furnish permanent lessons of instruction. The book may be perused again and again by the same person, and the same book may be read, before it perishes by the lapse of time, by some hundreds of individuals; for many of these precious volumes will be preserved for centuries, and will descend as a valued legacy from father to son, and from the mother to the daughter. There are now, in good preservation, many books which have been in common use for more than two hundred years, and which have been read by some half dozen successive generations, and by many others besides the owners. The writer can well recollect when such books as

Alleine's Alarm, Baxter's Saints' Rest and Call to the Unconverted, and the excellent treatises of Owen and Flavel, passed through the hands of most families in the neighborhood. He has known more instances than one, in which aged men of piety made it a practice to borrow such books, and carry them to persons who stood in particular need of them. Let the person who contributes enough to pay the expense of publishing a single volume, reflect that he is providing spiritual nutriment not only for the present generation, but for generations yet to be born. And if, instead of giving circulation to one, he contributes funds sufficient for a hundred or a thousand volumes, who can calculate the amount of good which a Christian in moderate circumstances may accomplish?"

"PRINCETON, April 10, 1843."

"REV. AND DEAR SIR—In answer to yours received some time since I would say, that as you suppose, I am well pleased to learn that you are about to add to your volumes 'Owen on the One Hundred and Thirtieth Psalm.' It is a work which expresses fairly and strongly the desires and exercises of a truly pious and devout heart. It was that very psalm, as we learn from Orme's life of the author, which first afforded him consolation after a long season of darkness. I wish it were consistent with the views of all concerned to publish the work entitled 'Spiritual Mindedness,' by the same author; and also his treatise on 'Indwelling Sin' and 'On Temptation.' His work 'On the Spirit,' also, is the best on the whole subject that I am acquainted with. The entangled and exuberant style of the author, in all these pieces, has been pruned and rendered more perspicuous by one and another."

"The tracts which you forwarded to me I read, and found nothing to censure. But I wish to make a single remark on the subject of increasing your number of tracts. It is, that it would be good policy to diminish rather than increase the number, unless such are offered as possess superior excellence. Mere commonplace exhortations need not be multiplied, but when you get a tract of first-rate excellence, it is of more value than can be estimated in gold."

"I remain, very sincerely, yours, etc.,"

"A. ALEXANDER."

"PRINCETON, January 1, 1844."

... "The Society's twofold agency, by books and colporteurs, is perhaps better calculated to reach the destitutions of our country than any thing which has ever been put into operation. Often in thinking of the condition of multitudes of people, it has appeared to me their case never could be reached, unless proper teachers were sent to visit them in their houses. I thought of a plan of itinerant readers, as in Ireland; but the colporteur system is the very thing needed, and if you can only procure the right kind of men, the work will go on prosperously."

"July 1, 1847."

"DEAR SIR—I was from home when your letter arrived, or you might have had an earlier answer. But since I came home, though in the midst of company and bustle, I have scribbled something for the 'American Messenger.' "

"Instruction is the main thing to render a periodical most permanently useful. I know you cannot furnish such a variety as is requisite without the friendly aid of some coadjutors; and as you have been pleased to honor me with the preparation of articles, I intend, Deo volente, to give short biographical sketches of Bible characters. At my time of life I should promise nothing. But I seem to hear the Master say, 'Work while it is day, for the night cometh.' If, however, you should prefer short practical, hortatory essays, they will be easier to be composed. Please to send me a bundle of tracts, and any new publications which you have made."

"Yours truly,"

"A. ALEXANDER."

"PRINCETON, December 11, 1849."

"REV. AND DEAR SIR—I am glad to learn that the circulation of the American Messenger has reached the amazing number of one hundred and fifty thousand. This devolves a vast weight of responsibility upon the

publishers. I do not know that they could render it more effective than they have done, but it has appeared to me, that as it reaches thousands who are ignorant of the true method of salvation, it should more frequently bring into view the fundamental points of Christianity. I am aware that what is not read will not profit, and articles doctrinal and instructive would probably not be read. But as the 'Messenger' is the only paper which thousands of families take, it may be supposed that these read every article it contains."

"I would certainly have furnished more articles than I have done, if I had not believed that your numerous correspondents could supply you with articles better suited to the taste of the publishers than any which could proceed from my pen. Vivacity and originality are not to be expected from aged men. And they have less relish for such composition as pleases the young, and by its point and striking thought engages the attention of most men, than they once had. As, however, I take a pleasure in scribbling when the fit comes upon me, I shall probably, from time to time, give you the offer of some of my lucubrations, and if they should not suit the views of the publishers, no offence will be given to the writer by their not being inserted. All I ask in that case is, that they be sent back, as I may find that I can make some other use of them. Never publish an article of mine unless you really approve it."

"What I do I must do quickly, for I am admonished that my time of working is coming to a close. My sun will soon go down, and then all my earthly labors must terminate."

"My prayer is, that the next year may be more prosperous to the cause of truth and piety than any which has preceded it. In God is our help. From God is all our hope. He will do all his pleasure."

"I am very truly yours, etc.,"

"Rev. R. S. COOK, Sec." "A. ALEXANDER."



## DEATH OF DR. ALEXANDER

From the Twenty-seventh Annual Report of the American Tract Society.

"The venerable Rev. Dr. Archibald Alexander, a Vice-president of this Society, and for three years from 1842 a member of the Publishing Committee, and who was ever a firm friend and counsellor, has rested from his labors. Almost forty years he was professor in the Theological Seminary at Princeton, sixty years he labored in the ministry, and he died peacefully in his eightieth year, October 22, 1851."

"While the Secretary in the publishing department was reading with him portions of 'Flavel's Method of Grace,' he said, with a glowing, tender spirit, 'All this carries me back to past scenes as if they were but yesterday. When I was a thoughtless youth, I passed some time in a family where was a venerable, pious lady, whose sight was dim, but who was greatly attached to Flavel's works, and often requested me to read them to her. I read to her this very work. I would read till the truths pierced my own heart, and affected me so that I was obliged to stop, when I would excuse myself till the next day. I would then read again, and again be obliged to stop; and those impressions never left me till I found peace in Christ.' A communication in the Messenger of February, 1851, refers to the sermon on the word 'Stand' in Flavel's Knocking at the Door, as specially blessed to him. In these works of Flavel was the type of the great practical views of theology from which he never swerved till, on his dying bed, he uttered to his family these memorable words: 'All my theology is reduced to this narrow compass, JESUS CHRIST came into the world to save sinners.' "

"Fired with this glorious theme, he went out, at the age of twenty, as a missionary, through the mountainous regions of Central and Western Virginia, his native state, and preached to the ignorant and perishing, with great power and success, 'the glorious gospel of the blessed God.' In prosecuting these labors, two great principles became fixed in his mind: the value of sound practical books and evangelical writings, and the necessity of going to the destitute and tendering the gospel to them at their homes. He saw both in this Society and its colporteur system, and

cheerfully gave his cordial love, counsel, coöperation, and support to the close of his useful life."

"He was the author of seven tracts of the Society's principal series: No. 32, 'The Day of Judgment;' 51, 'Misery of the Lost;' 65, 'The Amiable Youth falling short of Heaven;' 215, 'Importance of Salvation;' 350, 'Future Punishment Endless;' 393, 'Justification by Faith;' and 462, 'Sinners Welcome to Come to Christ.' A few years since, he suggested the desirableness of issuing a series in a very simple style, in large type, and in the form of a little book, for which series he himself wrote the six following: Dialogues with a Farmer, with an Aged Man, and with a Cottager; The Poor Man's Guide and Friend; The New Settlement; and a Dialogue with a Roman-Catholic, eighty-four pages, which is one of the Society's best practical volumes. When he observed how wide a circulation the American Messenger was gaining, he availed himself of the opportunity afforded to speak to multitudes for Christ, most of his articles for the last five years bearing his well-known signature, 'A. A.' "

"But his counsel and encouragement in the issuing of the Society's volumes, exerted a preëminent influence in giving direction and success to its extended operations. As early as 1832, when the Society had issued but about half a dozen of its larger works, he suggested adding Edwards on the Affections, and in May, 1833, cheered the Society by communicating the following views of this enterprise:"

" 'I rejoice to learn that the Committee of the American Tract Society are turning their attention specially to the preparation and circulation of small bound volumes. These are as really tracts (treatises) as any of the pamphlets or sheets which are sent forth from the institution. The Society's tracts are now bound for such as prefer them in that form. And let other treatises be selected for publication, for which purpose there are many excellently adapted. I have attentively read over the list of books which the Committee have already put into circulation, and the selection meets with my cordial approbation. Works of a more evangelical and spiritual kind do not exist; and I am gratified to see that they are printed and bound in a neat and handsome style. I am deeply persuaded that great public benefit will arise from the appropriation of a portion of your funds in this way; and that the event will prove, that however expensive it

may be in the commencement, it will be wise economy in the end. When I consider how many copies of 'Doddridge's Rise and Progress,' 'Baxter's Call to the Unconverted,' 'Alleine's Alarm,' 'Edwards on the Affections,' and such like works, will be circulated through the whole length and breadth of this land, I am filled with pleasing anticipations of the good which your Society will be the means of accomplishing."

" 'I do sincerely hope that the Committee will persevere in the prosecution of this object, and as their circumstances may permit, increase the number of their publications of this description. The success which has already attended your efforts in this way, is calculated to inspire you with confidence to go on in the name of the Lord.' "

"Again he says, five years afterwards, 'I reflect on no part of my life with more satisfaction than any little agency I have had in encouraging and promoting the Society's volume circulation. I do consider the success of this enterprise as intimately connected with the prosperity of vital scriptural piety in our land—not in any one church, but in all evangelical churches, and beyond them all, by conveying a sound and practical knowledge of the gospel to multitudes who enjoy no public means of grace, or have not attended on them. If I could do any thing more to urge on this blessed work which has been so auspiciously commenced, I would cordially lend my aid.' "

"Again he says, under a later date, 'The success of the volume circulation gladdens my heart every time I think of it; and I sincerely wish that, instead of twenty volumes, you had a hundred in circulation.' "

"A valuable work, stereotyped by the Society since his death, 'Baxter on Conversion,' was suggested to the Committee by him; and on his dying bed, calling to mind a wish which had been expressed by a destitute pastor for more good books, he requested his family to find the pastor's address, and gave ten dollars to procure for him the Society's Religious (or Pastor's) Library of twenty-four volumes."

From the American Messenger of December, 1851, in addition to facts above given from the Annual Report.

"REV. DR. ARCHIBALD ALEXANDER

"WE shall doubtless gratify our readers by some memorial of this distinguished servant of Christ, whom we loved as a father, and whose coöperation we enjoyed to the very close of his long and useful life."

"He was born April 17, 1772, in Rockbridge county, in the valley of Virginia, between the Blue Ridge and the Alleghanies; and was of Scotch descent, both his parents having emigrated first to the north of Ireland, and then to this country. He received a classical education at Liberty Hall, near the residence of his parents, under the charge of the Rev. William Graham, with whom he studied theology two years, when, at the age of about twenty, October 1, 1791, he was commissioned to preach the gospel."

"Before professing Christ he was led through severe spiritual conflicts, that he might know how to sympathize with others, and guide them in the right way; and when Christ was revealed to him in his fulness, and he was commissioned as a herald of the cross, he went out immediately as a missionary preacher through the mountainous and destitute regions of his native state, with a glowing heart 'proclaiming the way of life to the ignorant and destitute, and gathering the lost into the fold of Christ. Preaching without notes, with strange discrimination for one so young, and with an energy of thought and pathos of delivery rare in the young or aged, he spread the doctrines of divine truth wherever he went.' These arduous evangelical labors doubtless exerted an influence in training his mind to that clearness and simplicity, as well as richness of thought and expression, which characterized his preaching, his instructions, his conversation, and his extensive writings through life. He regarded it as a high compliment, when told of a plain woman who had heard him in a destitute place, and said, 'I guess he aint a very larned man.' "

"At twenty-five, he was elected president of Hampden Sydney college in his native state, and became also pastor of three adjacent churches. He married a daughter of Rev. James Waddell, the eloquent blind preacher, celebrated in the sketches by William Wirt. At his death she survived him, as did all their children, an only daughter and six sons, three of whom are clergymen, one a distinguished professor at Princeton, and another, Rev.

Dr. James W. Alexander, pastor in New York city."

"From the age of thirty-four to forty, he was an able and beloved pastor in Philadelphia, till 1812, when he was called to lay the foundations of the Theological Seminary in Princeton. He was then the only professor, but was soon joined by his loved colleague, the Rev. Dr. Miller, whose funeral-sermon, after thirty-seven years of harmonious labor, he preached in January, 1850. For the whole term of his connection with that seminary, almost forty years, he labored incessantly, till his last illness of a few weeks: fulfilling the duties of his professorship; watching over the students as a father, and guiding in an eminent degree by his affectionate advice their future course; constantly appealed to for counsel in all the varied interests of the churches and of the cause of benevolence; and with a discernment of character, a sound, practical judgment, a modesty and humility, and a singleness of purpose for the welfare of the Redeemer's kingdom, that gained universal confidence. It was kindly ordered that the Synod of New Jersey, of which he was a member, and out of which he named on his bed of weakness, one hundred and fifteen who had been his pupils, were in session at Princeton when he died, and were permitted, with a great concourse of clergymen and citizens, to unite in the solemnities of his funeral."

" 'Death never appeared to me so delightful as now when it is near,' he said to those around his sickbed; and often, as strength allowed, he spoke of the peace that dwelt in his soul. The records of his last hours will be precious to the church, and they will be found to illustrate and confirm the experience he has written in his sermons and letters as the fitting close of a life of faith. His great work on the Evidences and the Canon of Scripture, several other excellent treatises, and all the productions of his active and able pen, bear the impress of his singleness of purpose to honor Christ."

"H."

From the American Messenger for February, 1852.

"IMPRESSIONS OF DR. ALEXANDER"

"This Christian patriarch of fourscore years is one of the few whose fame and usefulness are immortal. Having given a long life of wise and constant devotion to the Redeemer's kingdom, he has bequeathed to the church a name redolent with piety and honor. We would gratefully cherish the bequest, and contribute our humble influence to embalm it in every Christian heart. Perhaps we cannot better subserve the purpose than by a brief record of our impressions of the person, character, and influence of the venerable man who has so recently passed to his heavenly rest."

"Dr. Alexander was of medium height, rotund, slightly stooping form, broad and high forehead, and piercing eye. His head was slightly inclined to one side, like Wilberforce's. His manners were simple, frank, and dignified, eminently suited to inspire confidence and respect. A single interview would impress the visitor with his affability as a man, his maturity as a scholar, and his ripeness as a Christian."

"The simplicity of character which marked Dr. Alexander is worthy of notice. True greatness is always simple. In Dr. Alexander it pervaded his tastes, language, manners, piety, every thing. In his writings, as our readers know, his thoughts were not only readily apprehended, but he could not well be misunderstood. So of his sermons and public appeals."

"Modesty was a related trait. He seemed to know nothing of his own greatness. One who had been on terms of the closest intimacy for a generation, stated in our hearing, that he had never heard Dr. Alexander allude to his own influence."

"Symmetry of character distinguished Dr. Alexander from most men. He was not so remarkable for logic, or rhetoric, or judgment, or zeal, or learning, singly, as for an admirable combination, which left nothing to be desired in the completeness of the man, the divine, and the Christian."

"Penetration of mind, and an intuitive apprehension of the character and motives of those he met, were peculiarly characteristic of Dr. Alexander. He saw through a subject or a person apparently at a glance."

"Candor and firmness were finely combined. He had not a jot of that

pertinacity of opinion and purpose which too often characterizes even good men in their declining years. To the last, he seemed as ready for new projects of usefulness, if they were well planned and had obvious bearings on the Redeemer's cause, as he could have been in the days of his youth. Witness his attachment to colportage, his seminary plans, and the readiness with which, in his eightieth year, he undertook elaborate preparation for an entirely new department assigned to his professorship, and innumerable other illustrations. At the same time, he was firm as a rock in resisting what he deemed false principles of reform, or religious action. A hot-headed reformer once spent hours in endeavoring to enlist the influence of Dr. Alexander for his movement, plying him with argument, entreaty, and other means less gentle. After magnifying sufficiently his own zeal in the reform, he turned tauntingly to Dr. Alexander and inquired if he thought he (Dr. A.) had any piety. "None to BOAST of," was the searching reply of Dr. Alexander, sent home to the conscience with one of those glances of his speaking eye, which none will ever forget who have had occasion to remember its lightning-like power."

"A noble-hearted catholicity could not but be a characteristic of such a man. No man loved his own honored church more sincerely and ardently than Dr. Alexander. But his love and preference for his own communion was not so exclusive as to reject all who worshipped God in other forms, or who had a like attachment to the church of their fathers. Nor did it deter him from an intelligent and whole-souled coöperation with evangelical Christians in heaven-blessed enterprises for spreading abroad the knowledge of Christ. Perhaps no better illustration can be found of the true combination of denominational and catholic affinities, in just proportions. He was none the less a Presbyterian, that he gave a quarter of a century and more of counsel and aid, in a thousand effective ways, to the Bible and Tract and other kindred organizations. He loved and confided in them to the last; indeed, almost the last act of his life, as before stated in the Messenger, was to provide a destitute minister at his own cost with the Tract Society's 'Religious or Pastor's Library,' as if he would leave at once a legacy of attachment to the ministry of his own church he had so long labored to rear, and a legacy of confidence and approbation to the institution he had so highly appreciated, and to whose usefulness he had so largely contributed."

"Unceasing usefulness marked Dr. Alexander's career. The measure and amount of his labors for Christ's kingdom can never be fully known till the last day. But some sixty years of uninterrupted toil in the pulpit, in the professor's chair, and with the pen, have made a broad mark on this country and the world. A whole communion of Christians owe more to him than to any other man, perhaps, for the eminent scholarship and earnest zeal of their honored ministry. The cause of sacred learning is largely indebted to Dr. Alexander for his patient toil. And Oh, how much do the Tract Society, and the related Board of his own church and sister institutions, owe to his unwearied efforts with his pen! His early training and associations gave him a lively sympathy with the mass of plain, poor people scattered abroad over our land. For them he loved to write. He knew their heart, and could afford to write simply enough to be understood in his teachings. His earnest desire for the salvation of these masses inspired his zeal for the system of colportage and other enterprises which took the direction downward with gospel influences. He wrote, and planned, and counselled, and inspired the zeal of others, with unflinching steadfastness; and he still lives, and will live while the world stands, in his practical writings, which are loved and treasured by tens of thousands beyond the pale of his own communion as well as within its bounds. May the Holy Spirit own them for the spiritual good of untold thousands of dying immortals."