

THE  
SAINTS' SEEDTIME & HARVEST  
DESCRIBED,  
AND THE  
EMBLEMS OF THE SPIRIT  
CONSIDERED.

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1823.



THE  
SAINTS' SEED-TIME AND HARVEST;  
OR,  
SOWING AND REAPING CONSIDERED.

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*To the Rev. J. Jenkins, Lewes, Sussex; and the Rev.  
W. J. Brooke, Brighton.*

GAL. VI. 8.

He that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.

**B**ELOVED Brethren in the household of faith, and fellow-labourers in the Lord's vineyard, the above text has often presented itself to my mind as pregnant with the most sublime mysteries; and, if considered in different points of light, as it should be, it takes in the minister of the Spirit; the whole work of the ministry; the willing subjection of the penitent sinner to Christ; the daily exercise of every saint; the hospitality of the children of God to each other; and the liberality of the church in supporting the cause of God.

No minister that I have heard on the subject, nor any commentator that I have as yet read, has fully satisfied me with the definitions that they have given of it. It has remained obscure to me, and I was much in the dark about it till very lately.

Former experience has convinced me, and later experience has confirmed it, that there is no getting at these things but by fervent prayer to God. By this I do not mean prayer in a general way, as asking for more light and knowledge of the whole word of God; but I mean to take any one passage, which appears dark and mysterious, and lay it before the Lord, and plead his promise of the Holy Spirit to lead us into all truth; then others of the like import; and in this way we need not doubt of success.

Whilst the light and life of the gospel continue with us, whilst the door of hope and the gate of life stand displayed, whilst a throne of grace is accessible, it is our seed-time and harvest; and when this season is over and gone we may lament, as others have done, and say, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved," Jer. viii. 20. But I shall now come to the subject in hand, and consider,

First, Sowing to the Holy Spirit, as he was in God's prophets, in the apostles of Christ, and as he still is in every minister of the new testament; for such are ministers of the Spirit, and not of the letter, 2 Cor. iii. 6. All prophecy in old time came by divine inspiration; "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." Nor was it the apostles that spake, but the Spirit of God spake in them; they spake as the Spirit gave them utterance. And all in succeeding ages, who have ever been instrumental in bringing souls to Christ, or any glory to God, have spoken by the same Spirit. The promise of life and the Spirit of life are both secured to Christ and to his seed for ever; for this is God's covenant, both with the head and with the members,

Isa. lix. 21. It is vain for men to talk about preaching the gospel, and delivering their testimony, while destitute of divine inspiration; the gospel, Paul says, is the ministry of the Spirit; and we are informed by an angel from heaven that "the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy," Rev. xix. 10. So that there is no gospel, no testimony of Jesus, where the Spirit of God is not. If we consider the Spirit of God speaking in all God's messengers, such messengers must be a savour of life unto life, or of death unto death; of life unto life to the obedient in faith, and of death unto death to the rebellious infidel. "He that believeth is not condemned [but justified]; but he that believeth not is condemned already," John iii. 18. And, as it is with the husbandman, who must sow before he can expect to reap; so it is with the godly---they must sow to the Spirit before they can reap the harvest of glory.

Sowing to the Spirit, as he is considered in God's messengers, is giving a hearty assent to the truth from conviction, Isa. xliii. 9; submitting to it, hearing it, and following it; which is the first work of faith. The gospel is made known to all nations for the obedience of faith; and Christ prays for all that shall believe on him through the word of the apostles. Sowing is obeying; sowing to the Spirit is obeying the voice of the Spirit. And this appears in God's complaint to the disobedient Jews; "But they refused to hearken, and pulled away the shoulder, and stopped their ears that they should not hear. Yea, they made their hearts as an adamant stone, lest they should hear the law, and the words which the Lord of hosts hath sent in his Spirit by the former

prophets," Zech. vii. 11, 12. These words the Lord of hosts sent by his Spirit in the former prophets, namely, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and others. To this message some were obedient, and are called by God himself wheat, good figs, and precious; while the disobedient are called chaff, naughty figs, and vile. And all that obeyed had their life for a prey; they lived under God's protection in Babylon, and found God a little sanctuary to them there; and many of them returned to their own land, under a fresh supply of the Holy Spirit, which the prophet Ezekiel sets forth as a resurrection.

The gospel, preached by the Spirit, is the judgment of this world; it brings men under their trial for eternity; it is for life or death, for salvation or damnation; and as the gospel leaves them so judgment finds them, either freed by the truth or bound by falsehood; justified by faith or condemned in unbelief.

Noah was a preacher of righteousness. Righteousness at the bar of equity is a good conscience, purged with blood, and renewed by the Spirit. Righteousness at the bar of the law is love to God, springing from God's love to us. Righteousness in the spiritual court of the gospel is the obedience of Christ imputed to faith. And all these come to us by the holy Spirit of promise. Noah did not labour altogether in vain; there were some that sowed to the Spirit. We read of the Lord God of Shem, and of God's enlarging Japhet; yea more, that God blessed Noah and his sons, Gen. ix. 1. And we have reason to conclude that the women which were in the ark with Noah were the fruits of his ministry,

there being nothing said against them, as there is against Ham and Canaan. These few we hope sowed to the Spirit, believed in the Lord, and in the warning given to Noah; they assisted in preparing the ark; were ordered into it, and shut in and preserved in it when the flood came upon the world of the ungodly.

We are informed by Paul that all who came out of Egypt by Moses did not provoke. Joshua, Caleb, and others, obtained a good report through faith. To some the word comes in word only; it reaches the outward ear, and goes no further: but to the elect it comes with power, sooner or later; and, when an alarming and convincing power reaches the conscience, the sinner stands in awe at the alarm; he trembles at the word, bows his will to the divine power, yields his whole soul to the majesty that appears in the voice, confesses God to be in the speaker, and, from a deep conviction by the power, believes the report. Such sow to the Spirit, and such also begin to reap; for he that believes hath everlasting life; it is already begun; for, as faith without works is dead, so faith that has works is alive.

But there are other sorts of seedsmen beside these that sow to the Spirit; for some sow to the flesh, and of the flesh shall reap corruption. Too many are satisfied with the religion of nature, godliness in a dry form, and bodily exercise in the form prescribed, which is after the doctrines and ordinances of men: these despise the power; and such, as well as the openly profane, sow to the flesh, and not to the Spirit, and therefore must reap corruption and death.

Hence the apostolic caution, "Quench not the Spirit, despise not prophesyings," 1 Thess. v. 19, 20. Despisers of the word are those that quench the Spirit. The Holy Spirit is often set forth by the well-known emblem of fire. Hence we read of the spirit of judgment and the spirit of burning, and of men being baptized with the Holy Ghost and with fire. The first of these signifies the illuminating operations of the Spirit; the fire is the love of God shed abroad in the heart by the Spirit; and men thus furnished for the work of the ministry are called, as John was, burning and shining lights, John v. 35; taking their title from their fiery baptism. "He maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flaming fire," Heb. i. 7. And I believe the seraphim, in the sixth chapter of Isaiah, to be nothing else but hieroglyphical of gospel ministers; for the name signifies fiery, burning, or rather inflaming. There is, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, such a burning love as no water can quench, nor flood drown, accompanied with a fiery zeal for God and his cause. And in the light of the Spirit there are such views of Christ's person, loveliness, and fulness, and such beauties in God, his word, and ways, as give heat and fervour to all our devotions; while the promises, which flow into the heart, come as live coals from the altar, and increase the ardour; and the joy that springs from love is, at times, the visible flames which on the altar ascend to God from the hallowed fire within, which is pent up in the heart till the flames of joy give it vent. Under this influence there is a thirst for the salvation of sinners, a watching for their souls, a longing after their welfare, hard labour in



studying and preaching to them, many earnest prayers and tears to God for success in the work, and an earnest desire after them as fellow-sinners and fellow-creatures ; all which are heightened by a true sight of their undone estate, a knowledge of the terrors of the Lord, and the certainty of their endless destruction out of Christ. And such labourers, having felt both the pains of hell and joys of heaven, they alarm and warn them to flee from the wrath to come, and labour to allure and win them to embrace the refuge, and the hope that is set before them. What hard labour and soul travail, what earnest prayers and bitter cries, what holy longings and fervent hopes of success, in this holy calling---I mean that of being fishers of men ---do fall to the lot of those who are called of God to labour in the word and doctrine!

But it falls out with the servants as it did with the Master; they hated him without a cause, Psalm xxxv. 19; and so it is to be with the rulers of his household; they are hated of all men for his name sake. But he that despiseth whomsoever the Lord sends despiseth him; and he that despiseth him despiseth the Father that sent him; and even the Holy Ghost, whom Christ sends, and the word of God itself, which is spoken by the Holy Spirit in the Lord's servants. And this despising of God, his dear Son, the Holy Spirit, and the word of God's grace, fixes the eternal destruction of the despiser. "Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish!" Acts xiii. 41. And again, "Whoso despiseth the word shall be destroyed," Prov. xiii. 13. These render evil for good, and hatred for love. You preach, and they despise; you warn, and they sneer; you weep, and they laugh; you are

in earnest, and they in jest; you charm, and they stop their ears; you invite, and they depart; you entreat, and they mock; you labour to instruct, and they harden their heart against it. Dead formalists and graceless professors rest---one in the form, and the other in the letter; and all that is got of such is the character of a deceiver, a false prophet, a mercenary, an enthusiastic, a fanatic, or a madman; and this despising of prophesyings is to themselves a quenching of the Spirit.

At this treatment the apostles shook their raiment, and even the dust of their cities from their feet; they owned their damnation to be just, left their blood upon their own head, turned to the Gentiles, and declared that the wrath of God was come upon them to the uttermost. Christ also had foretold them that it should be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah, for Tyre and Sidon, yea, for Nineveh, than for the Jews of that generation. This cruel hatred, spite, and malice, that such exhibit; the despite they do to the Spirit of grace; their scorn and derision; their desperation and impenitence; quench the ardour of the Spirit; all love to their souls chills and waxes cold; zeal for their welfare abates; all fervour towards them, in the ministry, damps; all joy, in hope of their conversion, withers; and the Spirit himself rises in judgment against them. They are rooted out of all godly affections; from all care and concern for their welfare; from all soul-travail and earnestness for their salvation; and from any part or lot in the faith, hope, love, and prayers, of the ambassadors of peace. And more than sure I am, that the fraternity of Cain shall see, and enter into,

the kingdom of God as soon as such men, or such despisers of God, or empty professors, as these. They forsake the living vine, the first branches in the vine, and the assembly of the just; and such, being cast forth, soon wither. Your natural affections to them die; the joy that arose in your breast, from a hope of them, withers away; their enmity to the just brings fresh guilt of a gospel kind upon them; envy slays these silly ones, and is sure to take up its eternal abode, and for ever to rest, in the bosom of such fools. And this is the characteristic of the serpent's seed, and the infallible token of perdition. For, after the Spirit is once quenched, there is no more care or concern for them, nor desire after them, or prayer for them; but rather a wish that the foundation of Zion may become a snare, a trap, and a stumbling block, to them; there is a watching over them for evil, a satisfaction at their calamity; and such a zeal for God, for the honour of divine justice and long-abused mercy, as to give them up to vengeance, that the day of judgment and the inquisition of heaven may effect what the labour of love and the lips of truth could not. And both heaven and earth unite and agree in approving and applauding the judgment, for "when the wicked perish there is shouting" among the just; and God himself allows of the triumph, for he laughs at their calamity, and mocks when their fear cometh. Noah shared deeply in this scorning, derision, and sport, till God himself complains of it, and resolves to put a stop to it; "My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh," Gen. vi. 3. He remains still in his sin and sinful course, in the flesh, and in carnal ease; having

no submission to my will, no awe of my word or warning, no reformation of manners, no seeking after God, no calling upon my name, no obedience sowed, no spiritual advantage reaped ; he is still in the flesh, and my spirit shall not always strive with him. The deluge put a final stop to this strife ; the waters pursued them to the tops of the mountains, houses, and trees ; and thus wrath convinced them, when preaching of righteousness and preparing the ark had no effect. However, Noah lost not his labour ; he was a sweet savour unto God, as well as his sacrifice, both in them that were saved and in them that perished ; for “ he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith,” Heb. xi. 7. And those whom Noah condemned God drowned with a flood, and then imprisoned in hell, as Peter asserts ; “ Christ hath suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit. By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison ; which sometimes were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was preparing,” 1 Pet. iii. 18---20. By these imprisoned spirits I understand the souls of the antediluvians ; by the prison I understand hell, Isai. xxiv. 22 ; and by the preacher I understand Christ preaching by his Spirit in the ministry of Noah. The time of this preaching was while the long-suffering of God waited in Noah’s days, while the ark was building.

Israel of old are noted for quenching the Spirit in the ministry of Moses, of whose inspiration we read in the prophet’s lamentation ; “ Where is he that

brought them up out of the sea, with the shepherd of his flock? Where is he that put his holy Spirit within him? that led them by the right hand of Moses with his glorious arm, dividing the water before them, to make himself an everlasting name?" Isai. lxiii. 11, 12. But this inspiration of God, and display of miraculous power, met with no suitable returns; for "they rebelled and vexed his holy Spirit; therefore he was turned to be their enemy, and he fought against them," Isai. lxiii. 10. Their molten calf in Horeb; their mutineering on the banks of Jordan; the conspiracy of Korah, Abiram, and Dathan; their invading the office of mediator, and attempting to seize the priesthood; their murmuring at every turn instead of praying; their tempting God, and their unparalleled infidelity; are notorious enough. It was these things that vexed his holy Spirit; "They envied Moses also in the camp, and Aaron the saint of the Lord. They angered him also at the waters of strife, so that it went ill with Moses for their sakes; because they provoked his spirit, so that he spake unadvisedly with his lips;" Ps. cvi. 16, 32, 33.

Nor did the Holy Spirit fare any better in the ministry of the Apostle and High-priest of our profession; for they vexed him, and blasphemed him in the ministry of Christ and his apostles, as appears by the piercing charge of Stephen; "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost; as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One, of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers," Acts vii. 51, 52.

Having offered a few thoughts upon sowing to the Spirit, as he speaks by God's servants in the ministry of the word ; and also upon quenching the Holy Spirit, by despising both prophets and prophesyings ;

I shall now endeavour to shew that there is such a thing as sowing to the Spirit, as he dwells in ourselves. Our bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost, " as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them," 2 Cor. vi. 16. " Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy ; break up your fallow ground : for it is time to seek the Lord, till he come and rain righteousness upon you." Hosea x. 12. The persons here spoken of are such as seek the Lord, expecting that he will come, and that a shower of righteousness will attend his coming : and they are to sow to themselves in righteousness until this heavenly shower descends, when they are to reap the benefit of it ; though not on the footing of worth, or for their own deservings, but as the fruits of God's sovereign mercy. Sincere seekers of the Lord, such I mean as are enlightened by the Spirit to see the depravity of their own nature, and the evil of their own way, and who come constantly to the light of the word shining in the ministry of the gospel, do sow to the Spirit in themselves : they come to the light, that their deeds may be made manifest that they are wrought in God ; and the influence they are under, and the fruits springing from that influence, are by God's Spirit, and not of themselves. Such also as are convinced and convicted by the Spirit, and by a view of the spirituality of the law ; and who comply with their convictions, acknowledge their offences, and confess their sins ; who commend the justice of God, and

own their just deserts ; who submit to God's will, and implore his mercy ; such sow to the Spirit. " The Lord's voice crieth unto the city, and the man of wisdom shall see thy name : hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it," Micah vi. 9. God's rod is reproof and rebuke by the Spirit. " He shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked," Isai. xi. 4. It is, moreover, the Spirit's work to search and try the heart. God searches Jerusalem as with candles, Zeph. i. 12. Now, when this searching work is going on, and the sinner's conscience is made honest, and honest conscience goes hand in hand with the Holy Spirit, and is willing to know the worst, and to be made sound at heart and sound in faith ; crying out, " Search me, O God, and try me, and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting," Ps. cxxxix. 23, 24 ; such in heart join themselves to the Lord, submit to his will, and coincide with the Spirit's work, which is sowing to the Spirit.

When cutting reproofs are given and applied by the Spirit, the Lord says, " Turn ye at my reproof ;" as Paul did when the Spirit carried the reproofing voice of Christ to his heart, who answered, " Who art thou, Lord ?" And again, " Lord, what wilt thou have me to do ? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do," Acts ix. 5, 6. Christ spake, the Spirit applied the voice, and Paul sowed obedience to it ; he was not disobedient to the heavenly vision.

When the Holy Spirit comes upon a sinner, it is to discriminate him from the world, that he may

be no more of the world ; for between light and darkness, Christ and Belial, a believer and an infidel, there can be no concord, no agreement. “ Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God,” 1 Cor. ii. 12. The Spirit’s voice to such is, “ Come out from among them, and be ye separate.” And he that obeys and comes out sows to the Spirit. “ Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house,” said the Holy Spirit to Abraham: and he obeyed and went out, not knowing whither he went.

Again, it is the Spirit’s work to convince a man of his blindness and ignorance ; for a person that is not convinced of this will never say, “ Who will shew us any good?” And indeed to persons thus convinced is the promise made ; I mean that of giving pastors after God’s own heart, to feed them with knowledge and understanding. And sure I am that the soul which is convinced of this, and yields to the Spirit’s will, “ if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding ; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as hid treasure ; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God,” Prov. ii. 4, 5. Such sow to the Spirit ; for they are actuated by his influence, and acquiesce in his mind and will.

Once more, the Holy Spirit is the spirit of grace and of supplication. He is the life, the power, and the dictator, of all prayer, and our intercessor in prayer, for he makes intercession for us according to the will of God. He it is that quickens the sinner to feel his wants, puts a cry in his heart for relief, and by his earnest cries and bitter groans makes



intercession. "And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him?" Luke xviii. 7. Such breathe their spiritual sensations out to God; and, if they speak, it is as the Spirit gives them utterance: he creates the fruit of the lip, and what he dictates and teaches them to utter they speak. And this is sowing obedience to the Spirit's impulses, operations, and orders.

I might further add, that the Spirit often speaks to the heart, or suggests to the mind, of the man in whom he dwells, his commands respecting going here and there, as may be seen in his orders to Peter, when Cornelius had sent unto him, and Peter had received a previous vision upon it. "And, behold, three men were already come to the house where I was, sent from Cesarea unto me. And the Spirit bade me go with them, nothing doubting," Acts xi. 12. "Now, when they had gone throughout Phrygia, and the regions of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia," Acts xvi. 6. Many footsteps and leadings of Providence, many subsequent workings in the mind, many lookings out and expectations of fresh orders, many doors are opened, many pressing invitations are given, as preludes, to excite the man of God to prepare his stuff for moving, which the prepossessed mind expects, and which none but God and his own conscience know any thing of. "And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left," Isai. xxx. 21.

Once more. A man sows to the Spirit when his pursuits, desires, prayers, and the whole bent of his

soul, are after a fresh supply of grace, and for strengthening the things that are weak; for fresh life or light, fortitude or power; for usefulness or fruitfulness; for an increase of knowledge and understanding, &c. for it is the Spirit that makes us know our wants, our weak parts, our insufficiency and short comings, and the things which are the most excellent. And he who covets what he feels he wants, prays against his most besetting evils, labours to strengthen what is weak, and earnestly craves the best gifts, most assuredly moves in concert with the Holy Spirit, works hand in hand with him, sows his obedience to the Spirit's dictates and motions, and labours hard to fill the vacancies which the Spirit discovers to him.

We are to sow to ourselves in righteousness; not to shun the light, nor to be willingly ignorant, 2 Pet. iii. 5; not to require smooth things, nor prophecies of deceit; but with honesty and sincerity, with fervour and earnestness, with faith and affection; and to reap in mercy, the sure mercies of David, which are now with Christ, and are promised to us in him. These sure mercies are displayed in us by regeneration, as Paul says, "Of his mercy he saved us, with the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost," Titus iii. 5. In regeneration and renewing there is a heavenly crop sowed in the soul, which goes by different names in the scriptures: it is called being born again of incorruptible seed, 1 Pet. i. 23; called also the fruits of the Spirit, Gal. v. 22. It goes by the name of grace; different graces, as faith, hope, love, &c. These fruits of the Spirit are also called mercies, which have God for their father:

hence you read of "the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort," 2 Cor. i. 3. And these fruits are to be received as the free gifts of God in Christ Jesus; "Sow to yourselves in righteousness, and reap in mercy," Hosea, x. 12. And the believer, who gets cold, indifferent, and sluggish; slothful, negligent, careless, and inattentive; worldly and earthly minded; sadly neglects this seed-time and harvest to his own cost and loss, and is often pierced with many sorrows on the account of it: with him I shall leave the apostolic caution, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption," Ephes. iv. 30.

Having shewn that there is such a thing as sowing to the Spirit as he is in the ministers of the word; and, secondly, what it is for a believer to sow to the Spirit as he is in himself; I shall now,

In the third place, shew that there is such a thing as ministers of the gospel sowing to the Spirit as he is in the souls of the just; and this will appear from the following passage; "Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart," Psalm xcvi. 11. From these words we may observe, first, the sower; he must be a child of light, for this is the seed that he sows. Secondly, the soil is described, which shews it to be a part of God's husbandry: they are called, first, righteous; secondly, upright in heart. David himself describes the sower; "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him," Psalm cxxvi. 6. By the sower going forth I understand his going forth from the society of the world, from the prison of sin, from bondage

under the law, from confidence in the flesh, with the tidings of peace, and with authority and commission from Christ. All going forth short of this is no better than the setting out of the foolish virgins, who would have been just as well off if they had staid at home.

The sower's weeping as he goes sets forth the toil and labour attending his work, a deep sense of his insufficiency for the arduous task; the opposition from the world, sin, and Satan, that he meets with; the little success he has in it, and his manifold sufferings, both from the power of enemies and the weakness of friends; nevertheless, he goes forth and sows, though it is with weeping, which shews him to be a real ambassador, for "the ambassadors of peace shall weep bitterly," *Isai. xxxiii. 7.* However, he is not without encouragement; he shall be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and his work is with his God, whether Israel be gathered or not. Yea, he is "unto God a sweet savour of Christ in them that are saved, and in them that perish," *2 Cor. ii. 15.* The heart knows its own bitterness, and the Lord's labourers feel the burden and heat of the day: but these are counterpoised with a joy that the stranger intermeddleth not with; which arises from the pardon of sin, the testimony of conscience, from an imputed righteousness, from believing views of interest in Christ, from a good hope, from the love of God, from the witness of adoption, and from a full persuasion of future glory: and while he sows to others he often reaps these afresh, to encourage him in his work; "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy," *Psalm cxxvi. 5.*

There is another branch of joy; which is peculiar to such seedsmen. There is a family in the world, whom God puts into our hearts to live and die with; and in the consciences of such he makes his sowers manifest: and there is also, and will be, a fourfold presentation of the saints to Christ. Those who are owned and blessed in espousing souls to the Lord do, in faith and prayer, present them "as a chaste virgin to Christ," 2 Cor. xi. 2. But I believe that text has a further and future meaning, being spoken in the future tense. The apostle had espoused the Corinthians to one husband, but the presentation is something yet to take place; "that I may present you," &c. Such are to be our joy, and the crown of our rejoicing, in that day, as appears from what follows; "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?" 1 Thess. ii. 19. The apostle here mentions some souls which are given for our hire; and tells us that they shall be our hope, our joy, and the crown of our rejoicing; and all this in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming; which looks as if there would be something like ministers presenting of souls, espoused by their ministry to the Lord, in that day; perhaps at the day of judgment, and in the thousand years' reign on the new earth. At which time Christ will receive them at their hands, and "present them to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle," Eph. v. 27; neither a spot of sin, or wrinkle of old age. Something like this the psalmist had in view when he said, "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bring-

ing his sheaves with him." He is to return with joy, and to bring his sheaves with him; there is not a doubt of this. And the apostle tells us that such are to be our hope, our joy, and the crown of our rejoicing, in the presence of Christ at his coming, which must be either at the day of judgment, or in the thousand years' reign. Wisdom's handmaids, Prov. ix. 2, present the bride to the bridegroom; and he receives her at their hands, and presents her to himself. With joy and rejoicing shall they be brought to the king's palace; and in ultimate glory she will be presented to his father with a, "Behold I, and the children which God hath given me," Heb. ii. 13.

I come now to describe the seed of this sower; the name given to it is that of precious; he goes forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed.

I. Describe his seed;

II. The name of it, which is light;

III. The persons in whose hearts it is sown; "Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart."

There are four things included in the word *seed*. First, Christ himself; he is called the woman's seed, which bruised the serpent's head. And in his human nature he is called the seed of David, 2 Tim. ii. 8. He is the precious seed in the highest sense, for to them that believe he is precious, 1 Pet. ii. 7. Paul says, God revealed "his Son in me, that I should preach him among the heathen," Gal. i. 16. And, indeed, if Christ be not in us, as a fountain opened, cleansing from sin; as a physician, healing the wounded spirit; as the life, quickening us; as the true light, shining in us; as our righteousness, maintaining our

standing in our justification ; as our prince, causing peace to rule in our hearts ; and as our present help, aiding, refreshing, renewing, furnishing, equipping, and fortifying us by his Spirit, his presence, and his grace ;---without these, and all these, sure I am that the devil will soon compel us to send an ambassage, and desire conditions of peace with the world. Such soldiers must fight till they die, or die for not fighting.

II. By this precious seed I understand the word of God in general ; as appears by the parable of the sower and his seed ; the sower is the son of man, the seed is the word of God. But the doctrines of Christ, and the promises of God in Christ, seem chiefly to be intended, because the seed is called precious. And Peter applies the same phrase to the promises ; “Whereby are given to us exceeding great and precious promises,” 2 Pet. i. 4. Exceeding great, because Christ, his Spirit, his grace, and his great salvation, together with life, light, and glory, are couched in those promises. But a minister of God is not only a minister of the covenant of promise ;

But he is “ a steward of the mysteries of God,” 1 Cor. iv. 1. The mystery of the most holy Trinity, in the experience of it, and in the enjoyment of that experience, seems to be the first and grand mystery ; I mean such as Christ dwelling in the heart by faith, and we enjoying in our own conscience the voice of his atonement, speaking “better things than that of Abel,” Heb. xi. 24. Which voice is that of righteousness, mighty to save ; the voice of pardon, and of access to God by it ; the voice of peace, friendship, and reconciliation with God : and the voice of God in

Christ to us is, "Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love," Jer. xxxi. 3; and therefore with loving-kindness he draws us to Christ, and accepts us in him, where we enjoy his love; for "he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him," 1 John ii. 16.

III. The voice of the Spirit also is in us, crying, "Abba, Father," and bearing his witness with our spirits, that we are the sons of God; and, if sons, then heirs.

The mysteries of the kingdom of God are, those of purging sin by the blood of Christ, of dethroning sin by the grace of Christ, of counteracting its power by the laws of Christ (I mean the law of faith and the law of love); of justification from its condemning and destroying power by the righteousness of Christ, and of its final destruction at the resurrection, when our vile bodies shall be changed, and fashioned like unto the glorious body of Christ, and when grace will terminate in a reign of glory. Then will the works of the devil be completely destroyed out of all the saints, and the devil himself, the prime leader of all the apostasy, left to sink under the weight of all his crimes, and under the guilt and cry of every perishing sinner's blood; in full possession of all his power, and yet chained by Omnipotence; filled with wrath, rage, and revenge, and under the curse and vengeance of the Almighty: and this will be the final and everlasting destruction of "him that had the power of death, that is the devil," Heb. ii. 14.

The fourth and great mystery of godliness is the incarnation of Christ; "Great is the mystery of godliness, God was manifest in the flesh," &c. 1 Tim.



iii. 16. The apostle here asserts the true and real divinity of Christ; that "he took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham," Heb. ii. 16. "The children being partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same," Heb. ii. 14. The apostle then tells us that it was from the royal line of David that our nature was taken; "Remember that Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead, according to my gospel," 2 Tim. ii. 8. Mary, the mother of our Lord, was of the house and lineage of David; hence he calls himself "the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star," Rev. xxii. 16. As God, he was David's root, who gave being to David and to all mankind; and as man he is David's offspring, a branch out of the root of Jesse. Paul says he was made of a woman, and was the seed of the woman; made of the substance of Mary's body; for a woman is a substance, and so is her seed a substance also, as is well expressed in the common prayer book. Here is our elder brother, made like unto his brethren in all things, excepting sin. When we see our own nature thus holy, harmless, undefiled, separated from sin and sinners, and made higher than the heavens; with all the fulness of the Holy Ghost upon him, and all the fulness of grace in him; every promise yea and amen in his heart, and all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hid in him; and this our nature shining in endless glory, with all the fulness of the godhead, every attribute or perfection peculiar to deity dwelling in him bodily, and we blessed with every spiritual blessing in him;---this, this is our glory, to know Jesus Christ and him crucified;

this is "the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world unto our glory; which none of the princes of this world knew," 1 Cor. ii. 7. And this is confirmed by what follows; "The preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is [Christ the wisdom of God, and] the power of God," 1 Cor. i. 18. This is the wisdom that God ordained for our glory. And this is the mystery of godliness, "God was manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory," 1 Tim. iii. 16. And upon this mystery another depends, which is, our union with this mystery of godliness; we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. This is a great mystery; but I speak concerning Christ and the church," Eph. v. 30. 32. And from his fulness the Holy Spirit descends upon us, enters into us as a comforter, and abides with us for ever. He is the power, producer, and promoter of all the real godliness that is in the world. His influence and operations are productive of all good fruits; faith, hope, and love; life, joy, rest, and peace; which are the principles of godliness, and of all real devotion; without which all religion is but bodily exercise, a drawing near to God without the heart.

A seedsman, that goes forth weeping and bearing precious seed, carries the seed of God's word, the precious promises of the covenant; he has the seed of David, the Saviour, formed in his heart; he is a steward of the mysteries of God, and of his manifold grace, which grace is the incorruptible seed, 1 Pet.

i. 23. Such an one, as God enables him, sows to the Spirit as he dwells in the household of faith. "Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart."

The righteous often lose the light of God's countenance; love waxes cold under sharp and long afflictions; and the corruptions of the heart seem to be more predominant than the oil of joy. These things obscure the believer's evidences, eclipse the healing beams of the sun, and bring on the gloomy days of adversity. But these days must not abide for ever; nor shall they ever blot out the saints' title, which is, children of light, and children of the day. The Sun of Righteousness may be eclipsed to our view, but never goes down: when we sit in darkness the Lord is a light unto us; he brings us forth to the light again, and we behold his righteousness. Every son of consolation, every one that is a fellow-helper of our joy, sows light for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart; and those who are so happy as to reap light, joy, or gladness, are sure to proclaim it.

But there is such a thing as sowing to the Spirit in temporal things. God created all the materials of the church at first, and in Christ Jesus we are all created anew. Every lively stone in this temple is God's workmanship, and the whole building is of God's founding and framing; and it is "built for an habitation of God through the Spirit," Eph. ii. 22. The church is not her own, she is bought with a price, and is the Lord's own property, by purchase, by consecration, by dedication, and by inhabitation: hence every thing done to the church is done to the Lord.

The Jewish church at Jerusalem sent forth her ministers to us Gentiles; the law went forth out of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem; and the church of Jerusalem bore their expenses whom she sent; "They went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles," 3 John vii. But many of these saints among the Hebrews were excommunicated; and some of them spoiled of their goods, Heb. x. 34; while others of them, the poorer sort, were set to reaping the harvest of the rich, and, being despised and outlawed for Christ's sake, they were allowed no wages for their work. "Do not rich men oppress you? Behold, the hire of the labourers which have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth," James v. 4. These things brought the mother church to poverty, but the Gentiles sent her relief by the hand of Paul. "I go to Jerusalem, to minister to the saints. For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem. It hath pleased them, verily, and their debtors they are. For, if the Gentiles have been partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister to them in carnal things," Rom. xv. 25---27.

We have a further account of this collecting for the saints' relief at Jerusalem in Paul's epistle to the church at Corinth: "Therefore I thought it necessary to exhort the brethren that they would go before unto you, and make up beforehand your bounty, whereof ye had notice before, that the same might be ready as a matter of bounty, but not as of covetous-

ness. But this I say, he which soweth sparingly shall reap sparingly, and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully," 2 Cor. ix. 5, 6. This sowing or distributing was to the poor saints, that is to those who were sanctified by the Holy Ghost. And the seedsmen were to be persons of the same cast; such, and only such, as had been partakers of the Jews' spiritual things. These spiritual Gentiles ministered to the Lord's people, which is the Lord's household, and they are his own property, and therefore he takes it as done to himself; "I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat; thirsty, and ye gave me drink; a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me," Matt. xxv. 35, 36. And he adds, "Forasmuch as ye have done it to these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." And, as the Holy Spirit of Christ dwells in the church, the Spirit styles it his own temple; as the apostle says, "Know ye not that your bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost? as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them." Therefore this ministering to the saints is called sowing to the Spirit; and it answereth many good purposes: first, God takes notice and approves of it: hence the caution, "not grudgingly, or of necessity," as there is no compulsion, "for God loveth a cheerful giver."

2. They that sow bountifully shall reap bountifully: "God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work; as it is written, He hath dispersed abroad, he hath given to the poor; his righteousness remaineth for ever," 2 Cor. ix. 8, 9. The apostle sets forth the power of

God, as engaged to make all grace abound ; and his providence also, in giving them a sufficiency in all things ; and, being blessed with the abundance of grace in the heart, and with the bounties of providence in their hand, that they might abound to every good work. And he calls this ministering, this dispersing abroad and giving to the poor, a righteousness which remaineth for ever, for love is the fulfilling of the law ; and both love, and the labour of love ; love in its root, and love in its fruit ; will remain for evermore. Hence the apostle charges “ them that are rich in this world not to be high-minded, nor to trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God : that they do good ; that they be rich in good works ; ready to distribute, willing to communicate ; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life,” 1 Tim. vi. 17—19. This is bread cast upon the waters, which is to be found after many days, Eccles. xi. i.

But our apostle goes on, wishing his blessing upon this sowing and reaping. “ Now he that ministereth seed to the sower, both minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness,” 2 Cor. ix. 10. The apostle styles these liberal Gentile sowers. He gives them to understand that it is God who ministers seed to the sower. The incorruptible seed of grace, and the blessings of Providence all come from him. He prays God to minister bread for their food, both the bread of heaven and the staff of life, that they may have a plenty for themselves and others. Another part of his prayer is, that God would put his blessing upon

their liberality, which is multiplying their seed sown ; and that by the blessing of God resting upon them ; and attending their liberality, the fruits of their righteousness might be increased.

The apostle proceeds to shew us that God himself reaps a harvest from this seed sown, for it " causes through us thanksgiving to God," ver. 11. And not only the apostles thanked God for this, but the Jewish church, which experienced the bounty of the Gentiles, joined in the same service ; " For the administration of this service not only supplieth the want of the saints, but is abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God," 2 Cor. ix. 12. And they not only sacrificed thanksgivings, but " they glorify God for your [that is, the Gentiles] professed subjection unto the gospel of Christ, and for your liberal distribution unto them, and to all men," 2 Cor. ix. 13. And then the apostle concludes by shewing us that the Spirit operates in such poor saints, in setting them to pray for their liberal brethren, and to long after the welfare of these their liberal benefactors : " And by their prayer for you, which long after you, for the exceeding grace of God in you. Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift," 2 Cor. ix. 14, 15. But there is no praying for others, nor longing after their souls, nor admiring the grace of God in them, unless they spring from the Holy Spirit and his grace. This is sowing to the Spirit ; and such sowers are spiritual seedsmen : they reap spiritual things first, and under the Spirit's influence sow these their carnal things ; for it is he that teaches the saints to love one another, not in word only, but in deed and in truth ; and such, and only such, are objects of God's love, and

come up to the character of cheerful givers. Others may sow, to imitate the saints, but it is sparingly, having reaped no spiritual things, as may be seen in Ananias and Sapphira, who tried to imitate Barnabas; they sold their land, and brought a part, saying it was the whole price; by which they tempted the Spirit, and then lied unto him, for which he struck them both dead.

The fifth branch of this sowing to the Spirit is supporting the public ministry, endeavouring to spread the gospel, and to maintain them that preach it. The gospel is the ministry of the Spirit, and none but spiritual men can preach it, because it is the power of God unto salvation. Such labourers are worthy of their hire, and such as rule well are to "be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine," 1 Tim. v. 17. And this will be the case when God gives testimony to the word of his grace, and sets the broad seal of heaven upon the message, and upon the soul that receives it, and raises up such an one to be a living witness that the seal of God is upon the messenger. "And strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, and the sons of the alien shall be your plowmen and vine-dressers. But ye shall be named the priests of the Lord; men shall call you the ministers of our God. Ye shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, and in their glory shall ye boast yourselves. For your shame ye shall have double, and for confusion they shall rejoice in their portion: therefore in their land they shall possess the double, everlasting joy shall be unto them," Isai. lxi. 5---7. The Almighty himself fixes our honourable title: "Ye shall be named the priests



of the Lord ; men shall call you the ministers of our God." And he himself appoints our maintenance, " Ye shall eat the riches of the Gentiles ;" and the glorious salvation of their souls is to be our boast. And, although much shame and confusion may attend the ministry, through the malice of enemies, yet superabounding grace is to counteract this ; and joy in God as our portion is promised as a cordial, to embolden and bear us up under this shame and confusion, all of which is to terminate in eternal joy ; " Everlasting joy shall be unto them."

Nor is the glorious salvation of the soul all the benefits which attend the ministers of God. When such are received into a man's house, to preach the word of God to the family, not only the man and his family are under the curse of God, but the curse is upon all the work of his hands, whether he be rich or poor, and upon all that he hath ; the very ground is cursed, Gen. iii. 17. Yea, even the Jewish priests, who lived on the tithes and offerings of Israel, though they called those offerings blessings, and they were blessed with a ceremonial blessing, yet the law made nothing perfect ; it sanctified neither the man nor his property. God tells the Jewish priests that he had cursed their blessings because they laid not their sins to heart, Mal. ii. 2 ; and Paul declares that " unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure ; but even their mind and conscience is defiled," Titus i. 15. Adam by his sin forfeited all, and brought a curse upon his posterity, and upon all the world. The second Adam is now heir of all things ; and all things are now put into the covenant of promise ; we " having promise of the life that now is, and of that

which is to come," 1 Tim. iv. 8. But these blessings are to the heirs of promise; and this heirship is made manifest upon our believing: "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus, and heirs according to the promise," Gal. iii. 26, 29. Whosoever, therefore, receiveth them whom the Lord sends, receiveth Christ in them, Matt. x. 40. And those that thus receive the Lord in faith and love become heirs of God, heirs of promise, and heirs of the grace of life; and such are called to inherit God's blessing, 1 Pet. iii. 9. And this blessing brings a consecration upon the man, upon his house, and upon all that he hath; "Arise and thresh, O daughter of Zion; for I will make thine horns iron, and I will make thy hoofs brass; and thou shalt beat in pieces many people: and I will consecrate their gain unto the Lord, and their substance unto the Lord of the whole earth," Micah iv. 13.

Christ's ministers are here called the daughters of Zion, as they are elsewhere called Wisdom's maidens; "Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars. She hath killed her beasts, she hath mingled her wine, she hath furnished her table, she hath sent forth her maidens," Prov. ix. 1—3. Their horns set forth the power of their anointing; their hoofs shew their firm standing in the Lord by faith; their horns being iron, is to shew the destruction of their enemies, being a savour of death unto death to them; and trampling them with the hoof sets forth their victory over them. They are bid to arise and thresh, which is beating off the chaff from the wheat, or separating the elect from the reprobate. Beating them to pieces is breaking the hearts and spirits of

poor sinners; for God dwells with them that are of a broken spirit; while others are dashed in pieces like a potter's vessel, Rev. ii. 27. So that they are sure to be broken one way or other. Such as are broken and made contrite by the word are constituted temples of the living God; and the Holy Ghost says that he will consecrate their gain unto the Lord, and their substance unto the Lord of the whole earth, Micah iv. 13. Thus God's servants bring God's blessing to these converts, and this blessing rests upon them, and upon their gain and substance, and is the only consecration that rests upon it; and it is to be consecrated to the Lord God of the whole earth, which is Christ; "the God of the whole earth shall he be called," Isai. liv. 5. Now what is given to the Lord's servants as such is given to him, as may be seen in Paul's words to the Philippians; "But I have all, and abound; I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God," Phil. iv. 18. And Christ himself will proclaim this at the general judgment; "I was an hungry, and ye gave me meat; thirsty, and ye gave me drink," Matt. xxv. 35. This gain had been consecrated; and no other property but that of believers has any divine consecration upon it; for God himself gives an awful description of the sinner's substance before his blessing and consecration comes upon it. "And it shall come to pass, after the end of seventy years, that the Lord will visit Tyre, and she shall turn to her hire, and shall commit fornication with all the kingdoms of the world upon the face of the earth. And her merchandize and her hire shall be holiness

to the Lord: it shall not be treasured nor laid up: for her merchandize shall be for them that dwell before the Lord, to eat sufficiently, and for durable clothing," Isai. xxiii. 17, 18.

Tyre was a noted city for idolatry; and her being famous, or rather infamous, for this, brought much trade and wealth to her merchants. Her merchandize and hire are the hire of an harlot; the wages of her fornication, the gains of idolatry, are the hire of a whore; and the stipend of an idolatrous priest is the price of a dog, Deut. xxiii. 18; all of which the ceremonial law forbids. But the merchandize and hire of the Tyrians are to be "holiness to the Lord." They are to be consecrated, and then to be called holiness to the Lord; they are not to be treasured nor laid up. "Her merchandize and her hire shall be for them that dwell before the Lord;" such as stand fast in Christ, who appears in the presence of God for us; and who stand before Christ, and minister in his name to his people. It is to supply them with food and raiment, and so it follows; "for her merchandize shall be for them that dwell before the Lord, to eat sufficiently, and for durable clothing," Isai. xxiii. 18. There is a prophecy that went before upon this head, concerning the conversion of Tyre, and her coming to Zion; "and the daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift; even the rich among the people shall entreat thy favour," Psal. xlv. 12. Nor do I believe that there is one minister of the Spirit in a thousand that reaps, even in this sense, one tenth of what he sows; I mean even in carnal things.

The ark was a lively type of Christ; and "the Lord blessed the house of Obed-edom, and all that per-

tained unto him, because of the ark of God," 2 Sam. vi. 12. But we have no account that he sent any thing away with it. Laban had but little when Jacob went to him; but God blessed him from the time of his first coming, and increased his cattle till it became a multitude; and, had not the God of Isaac been with Jacob, Jacob after all would have been sent empty away. Joseph's master in Egypt experienced the same blessing under the servitude of Joseph; and all that he got for his service was false imprisonment. It is true, Pharaoh promoted Joseph, and made him ride in the second chariot; but then it should be considered that Joseph at last bought up all the land of Egypt for the crown, except the land of the priests, and saved the whole country from perishing by famine. Many were enriched both in spirituals and temporals by Paul, when he suffered hunger, cold, and nakedness himself; and he owns both, even his own poverty, and their wealth; "as poor, yet making many rich," 2 Cor. vi. 10. And there are several families in the world that I myself know, who were so blessed under the smiles of Providence after they had received the gospel, that they themselves saw it, wondered at it, and acknowledged it. In all this God fulfils his promise; "the remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many people, as a dew from the Lord, as the showers upon the grass, that tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the sons of men," Micah v. 7.

God makes his servants both a dew and a shower; and many blessings are distilled upon the people that receive them; "I will make them, and the places round about my hill, a blessing; and I will cause the shower to come down in his season; there shall be

showers of blessings," Ezek. xxxiv. 26. And I believe that, if all God's real children, who are led to confide in his providence, would carefully examine matters, they would set their seal to the truth of Christ's promise, "seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you," Matt. vi. 33; I mean that such souls would confess, that their seeking the kingdom of God went before, and that most of their temporal blessings came upon them afterwards. But I believe none of the Lord's seedsmen reap so bountifully as they sow. Paul complains of this; "Who goeth a warfare at any time at his own charges? Who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? Or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock? Say I these things as a man, or saith not the law the same also? For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen, or saith he it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes no doubt this is written; that he that ploweth should plow in hope, and that he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope. If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great matter if we shall reap your carnal things?" 1 Cor. ix. 7---11.

All professing people must and shall be seedsmen; they shall sow either to the Spirit or to the flesh; and "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap," Gal. vi. 7. Riches and honour come from God; he maketh poor, and maketh rich; and, if they have no heart to further his cause, he will so entangle them, that they shall support his enemies. Paul observes some, to whom Providence had been most bountiful,

who thereupon grew proud, haughty, and covetous; "Charge them that are rich in this world not to be high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches," 1 Tim. vi. 17.

Others were so charmed with Providence, that divine grace grew quite out of favour; they set their whole heart upon their wealth, and supposed that gain was godliness. But in this they erred; "For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows," 1 Tim. vi. 10.

Others used their wealth in making provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof; these "fell into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition," 1 Tim. vi. 9. Paul tells the church at Corinth that they had many instructors, but not many fathers, for he had begotten them; yet they seem to have been illiberal to Paul, but not so to the false apostles. Hence he asks them, "If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things? If others be partakers of this power over you, are not we rather?" 1 Cor. ix. 11---12. Those that used this power over them were the ministers of Satan, who set themselves up to examine Paul; "My answer to them that examine me is this"---Read 1 Cor. ix. 3. The apostle takes notice of this, and enforces the ordinance of God in the support of the ministry; "Even so hath God ordained, that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel," 1 Cor. ix. 14. But Paul, being a single man, and having learned a trade, would not be beholden to them, but made his hands minister to his

necessities, as others have done who are engaged in the same work. And it is observable that many, who have appeared the most illiberal in the cause of God, have been so entangled in Satan's snares as to consume it upon their lusts, James iv. 3.

Others have been entangled with errors; and, in opposition to the truth, have been at great expense in supporting the same. While others, like the Corinthians, have been so zealously affected by wolves, that they have brought themselves low in circumstances by supporting the vilest impostors. But God ever has, and ever will raise up, some who shall be real and hearty friends to his servants, and to his own cause. Paul had his Onesiphorus, who often refreshed him, and was not ashamed of his chain, and in many things ministered to him at Ephesus; 2 Tim. i. 16. The Philippians were so remarkably generous to him, that from the very beginning of the gospel among them they were careful of him; and this their care flourished again and again; for even in Thessalonica they sent once and again unto his necessities, till he was full and abounded, as appears in the fourth chapter of his epistle to that church. Christ will have some that shall receive and abide by his servants. Some shall sow to the Spirit, and some shall sow to the flesh: but, let the seed be whatever it may, the crop and harvest shall be answerable. "Even as I have seen," says Job, chap. iv. 8, "they that plow iniquity and sow wickedness, reap the same." "He that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting," Gal. vi. 8.

Eternal life lies in the purpose of God; we are



ordained to it; it is given to us in Christ, and is hid with Christ in God. It is treasured up in the promise of the gospel, and secured in the covenant of grace. It is manifested in us by the operations of the Spirit quickening us. It is enjoyed by a sense of pardon and justification, which is unto life. The incorruptible seed of life is in faith, in hope and in love; and all are passed from death to life who love the brethren. But the general harvest is to be reaped at the resurrection; for a life of grace is reaped in this world. It is a life of glory that Paul speaks of when he says, "And let us not be weary in well-doing, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not," Gal. vi. 9.

Laying dead bodies in the ground is called sowing; "It is sown in corruption; it is sown in dishonour; it is sown in weakness; it is sown a natural body. And some of these will rise in corruption, in dishonour, and to shame and everlasting contempt, Dan. xii. 2. This our Lord calls "the resurrection unto damnation," John v. 29.

But there are others that shall be "raised in incorruption, in glory, in power, and with a spiritual body." The Holy Ghost, to whom the saints have sowed, shall change our vile bodies, and fashion them like unto Christ's glorious body. In this the saints shall appear before their Judge; when he will own, acknowledge, and approve, all that received him in his members, and all that fed him, clothed him, and visited him, whether sick or in prison.

Christ "is ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things," Ephes. iv. 10. By these things are chiefly meant his children, which, in allusion

to the vessels of the temple, are called vessels, cups, bowls, and flagons, Isai. xxii. 24; Zec. ix. 15. The sanctuary and vessels of the ministry were purged by the blood of beasts; "It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these," Heb. ix. 23. These heavenly things, which are purified by the blood of Christ, and in whom the atonement and the treasure of divine grace are hid, are to be filled. Every grace, though perfect in its kind, is, with respect to degrees, imperfect; something is still wanting; "and that which is wanting cannot be numbered," Eccles. i. 15. But a fulness is promised; "I will cause those that love me to inherit substance; and I will fill their treasures," Prov. viii. 21.

Our light is but the day-dawn or morning-star at most, and is no more than a prelude to perfect day. Our knowledge here is very shallow, far from perfection, and mixed with much darkness and confusion; but above it will be perfected. Our rest is often disturbed, and our peace sadly interrupted, by the things which disquiet the mind. Love often waxes cold when the divine Lover stands aloof, and love-visits are not paid. Our joy is not full, being often counterbalanced by bitterness and days of adversity. In the best saint there is hungering and thirsting, desiring and longing, hoping, watching, and waiting. And this spiritual poverty must remain till the kingdom of heaven takes place; then mourning shall give way to comfort, weeping shall give place to laughter, meekness shall yield to the thousand years' reign in the new earth; and all

patience in waiting for the inheritance shall remain at the foot of the mount, when we ascend into the hill of the Lord, and stand in his holy place.

The Holy Spirit is not only the spirit of grace, but he is the spirit of glory also, 1 Peter iv. 14. When Christ was crucified God laid the foundations of the earth, and at the resurrection of the just he will plant the heavens, Isai. li. 16. The sure mercies of David are, the Holy Spirit and his grace; "Of his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost," Titus iii. 5. By this regenerating and renewing, a spiritual family is raised up for God; and when this family is settled in glory mercy will be built up for ever, and the faithfulness of God will be established in the very heavens, Psalm lxxxix. 2.

The ever blessed and ever adorable Spirit is the planter of all grace; every fruit of his is produced in the soul under his influence and operations; and they are his cheering breezes which animate them, give them all their motion and exercise, and from his power they emit all their fragrance. The Saviour's sacrifice is of no use to us unless the Holy Spirit realizes the atonement to our conscience, and gives us by faith a participation of his saving benefits: "It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life," John vi. 56---63. Hence the Holy Spirit in the church is called "a springing well," "living water springing up," which makes the church "a fountain sealed," Cant. iv. 12. And every grace that appears in exercise, whether faith, hope, or love; joy, meekness, or humility; every confession or peti-

tion; all thanks, praises, or rejoicings; all sympathy with Christ in his sufferings, and pious concern for his honour; all fellowship with him, whether in his death or resurrection; all gratitude to him, zeal for him, or godly valour in his cause; are so many springs rising from this fountain, and playing the enlivening streams through the Mediator into the Father of mercies and God of all comfort. God seeketh such to worship him as shall worship him in spirit and in truth. It is the Holy Spirit that draws the image of God upon the soul; and it is this image that is "the beauty of the Lord our God upon us," Ps. xc. 17. And every soul that is thus renewed and formed for God's praise "worships the Lord in the beauty of holiness," 1 Chron. xvi. 29; and none else.

Thus, my dear friends, have I endeavoured to set before you and others, what little I understand of sowing to the Spirit, and of reaping eternal life from the same. I have also two more branches of the same heavenly mysteries, which I shall be glad to send you when God permits. One is upon the emblems of the Spirit, and the other upon the subject of his divine anointing; till then, farewell. I hear much of your great success; it confirms what I long since have written. God make you both the father and the nurse of thousands of millions, and let your seed possess the gate of those which hate them. Amen.

Ever yours in the best of bonds,

W. HUNTINGTON, S. S.

THE  
EMBLEMS OF THE SPIRIT,  
AND HIS  
ETERNAL UNCTION.

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*To the Rev. J. Jenkins, Lewes, Sussex; and the Rev.  
W. J. Brooke, Brighton.*

BELOVED IN THE LORD,

I HAVE for some time had a desire to send you a few thoughts upon the emblems of the Holy Spirit, with which, to my view, the word of God abounds. For I am fully persuaded that the different metaphors made use of in the scriptures to set forth the Spirit's work in the souls of men are intended to instruct us in his different influences and operations. For, as there are many figures used, all of which are different from each other, so "there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are diversities of operations; but it is the same God which worketh all in all," 1 Cor. xii. 4---6.

The first of these, which I shall consider, is that of *wind*. But, as wind has different effects upon us, according to the point from which it blows, so we read of two to which the Holy Spirit is compared.

“Awake, O north wind, and come, thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out,” Cant. iv. 16. “Cold cometh out of the north,” says Job, chap. xxvii. 9---17, “but our garments are warm when he quieteth the earth with his south wind.” The wind is one and the same element, let it blow from what quarter it may; though the influence upon us is different according to the quarter from whence it blows. So the operations of the Spirit are widely different upon the souls of men. The spouse says, “Awake, O north wind.” This signifies an alarm to a soul at ease: it is intended to awaken the mind when we, like the wise and foolish virgins, are slumbering and sleeping. It calls up our attention, and excites us to watchfulness; it leads to self-examination; and brings a man, like the prodigal, to himself. The Holy Ghost in his first work is set forth by this north wind.

“The word of the Lord came expressly to Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans, by the river Chebar; and the hand of the Lord was there upon him. And I looked, and, behold, a whirlwind came out of the north, a great cloud, and a fire infolding itself, and a brightness was about it.” Ezek. i. 3, 4. The whole vision, which appears in this chapter, is an exhibition of Israel’s deliverance from captivity, which is a type of a greater deliverance, namely, that of subjecting the Gentiles to the obedience of Christ, and delivering them from the yoke of sin and Satan. The whirlwind is the Holy Spirit; the cloud represents the favour of God, Prov. xvi. 15; the cherubims set forth the ministers of the gospel, Rev. v. 9; the wheels, which move in concert with

the cherubims, are the churches, Cant. vi. 12, in the act of worship; the spirit of the living creatures being in the wheels, shews the Spirit of God to be both in the leaders of worship and in the worshippers; the man on the throne above is Christ glorified, Ezek. i. 26, 27; his throne represents him as king of Zion, going forth conquering and to conquer, and so setting up his kingdom in the world. And by Peter we read of a church in Babylon, where this vision appeared. And the Holy Ghost, as a north wind, is set forth as attending the labours of the cherubims, applying the word, alarming and awakening; shaking and unsettling poor sinners who are in carnal security. The fire that attends this divine and majestic scene is represented as infolding itself, or catching itself in; though upon every emission light was diffused, for there was a brightness round about; but the fire was caught in, and not scattered abroad. The longing soul often feels the warmth and catches at it, but it is caught in again. By the fire I understand,

1. The promises of God, called live coals from the altar, Isa. vi. 6; which altar is Christ.

2. The fire of divine love attending the application of the promises; but these were caught in, only a brightness appeared, just to discover sin and our danger, and a north whirlwind to make the sinner shake and tremble at the voice of the cherubims, as the prophet Isaiah did at the cry of the seraphim, when he said, "Wo is me, for I am undone!" The vision seen by Isaiah in the temple was nearly the same as that which appeared to Ezekiel in Chaldea. Isaiah was converted at the appearance of that,

and so are the Gentiles at the appearance of this. And, if the Almighty would open so majestic a scene to convert one person, much more so when the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of Christ. This whirlwind of the north is a display of the Spirit's operations in his convincing and convicting work; when cutting reproofs and rebukes are given; when the Spirit contends with sinners, and appears angry; when God comes near to them in judgment, and appears a swift witness against them, Mal. iii. 5; and when inquisition is made for iniquity, Psalm ix. 12. The awakened sinner trembles and fears at the near approaches of God; he knows that terrible majesty is at hand, which fills him with consternation and dread; his sins rise up in his mind, when guilt and shame fly in his face, and his confusion covers him; which fills him with an army of terrors and dreadful apprehensions, with distress and anguish, having no hope, and sinking, as he imagines, into desperate sorrow and endless ruin.

All these things, as I before observed, are not the quickening operations of the Spirit, for that is set forth by another emblem. This north wind is his convincing and reproving work, as may be seen in another vision, which was opened to Ezekiel; wherein the house of Israel is set forth before the prophet as a multitude of dry bones in a low valley, which is their hopeless and low estate. The prophet is bid to prophesy upon these bones: "So I prophesied as I was commanded: and as I prophesied there was a noise, and behold a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bone. But there



was no breath in them," Ezek. xxxvii. 7, 8. They were awakened and alarmed, but not quickened.

The ministry of John, the harbinger of our Lord, who was to go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, seems to come chiefly with this whirlwind of the north. The strange apparel that he wore; his rural life in the wilderness; his austere appearance, and the coarse fare on which he lived; his strange garment, rough manners, thundering voice, fiery zeal, and terrible tidings of laying the axe to the root, cutting down the fruitless trees, and casting them into the fire; fanning the barn's floor, gathering the wheat into the barn, and burning the chaff with fire unquenchable, &c. Even our Lord himself calls John's ministry a mourning, and tells the Jews that they did not weep to John. But he calls his own a piping, and says they did not dance to him. The operations of the Spirit by the ministry of John will appear more plainly if we consider the prophecy that went before; "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, &c. The voice said, Cry; and he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, because the Spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, but the word of our God shall stand for ever," Isai. xl. 3, 6—8.

Nothing cheering, enlivening, nourishing, strengthening, or comforting, is set forth under this blowing of the Spirit. Withering and fading are the only effects of it; which shews it is the north wind, or the Spirit applying the law. The north wind is a nipping,

chilling, cutting wind ; and by no means pleasant to us, or productive of fruitfulness. So says the prophet, "The people is grass," and "The grass withereth, because the Spirit of God bloweth upon it." Under this dreadful alarm all carnal pleasure and mirth ; all happiness in the pleasures of sin, wealth, or honour ; all delight in worldly company, in a form of godliness, or whatever men rejoice in, or pride themselves upon, wither. "All the trees of the field are withered ; because joy is withered away from the sons of men," Joel i, 12. The innumerable multitude of the human race, their flourishing state, and their frailty, is set forth by grass ; and all the goodness of men is set forth by the flower of the field. But, when the Spirit blows, to awaken, alarm, convince, and convict, this goodness fades in a minute, and, like Daniel's comeliness, it is all turned into corruption, and we retain no strength, Dan. x. 8. Isaiah calls this a preparing the way of the Lord : and we may call it a preparatory work ; for, when such alarming and convincing, reproving and wounding, go before, the good Samaritan is much wanted. The whole-hearted and the sound do not need him, but the broken-hearted and the sick do ; and indeed his chief business lies among these.

I shall now endeavour to set forth the Spirit's operation by a wind which blows from another point, namely, from the south, which is the most pleasant wind of the four : and by this most pleasing wind another operation of the Spirit is intended. John, the Lord's forerunner, had finished his ministry, and was gone ; the Saviour outlived John, and he was gone ; and the followers of Christ were left, en-

compassed with a host of enemies, as a flock of lambs in the midst of wolves, filled with grief and fear, sorrow and sadness; but, behold, another wind goes forth, and an instrument of music attending it, that is, a trumpet; and a weapon of war, namely, an arrow, goes also.

“And the Lord shall be seen over them, and his arrows shall go forth as the lightning: and the Lord God shall blow the trumpet, and shall go with whirlwinds of the south,” Zech. ix. 14. This wind is attended with the sound of a trumpet, which is intended to call perishing sinners to a feast made by the Lord of hosts, Isai. xxvii. 13. The apostles are the persons primarily spoken of, and the Lord God is to be seen, presiding over these cherubims. An arrow was to go forth as lightning, piercing and wounding, being sharp in the hearts of the King’s enemies. This fire is not a fire infolding itself; it goes forth as lightning, to illuminate the minds of men. And the Lord God is to blow the trumpet, and to give it all its music and melody; that is, the apostles were not the persons that were to speak, but the Lord God, according to this prophecy, is the Spirit which is to speak in them, Matt. x. 20. And, on the day that the Lord God was to go forth with the apostles, it was to be, according to this prediction, with a whirlwind of the south. And on the day of pentecost, when the apostles were all with one accord in one place, this wind descended. There came first a sound from heaven. This is the sound of the great trumpet, which Christ foretold, and the apostles are the angels that took it. Matt. xxiv. 31.

Next comes a rushing mighty wind; which is  
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the south whirlwind, that gathered all the apostles and disciples within its vortex; "it filled all the house where they were sitting; and there appeared cloven tongues, like as of fire," (these are the cherubs or seraphims inflamed, to inflame others); "and it sat upon each of them, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance," Acts ii. 2—4. This is the Lord God blowing the trumpet. The fire that attended the whirlwind of the north was always caught in again, nothing was left but a brightness, a ray of light, to attend the reproofs that were given; for "all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light" which doth appear, Eph. v. 13. But the lightning which here attends the arrow, and the fire which accompanied this whirlwind of the south, was diffused; it is not infolded or caught in again; it sat upon each of the apostles, and it filled them; it was their fiery baptism, and abode with them as a comforter for ever. This most sweet and charming operation of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles made their regeneration, or spiritual birth, clear to them. They heard the sound and felt the power, as Christ says to Nicodemus, "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof; but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit," John iii. 8.

The avowed enemies of the Holy Ghost make use of these emblems, by which the Spirit's operations are represented, as arguments against his personality. 'The Spirit a divine person! (say they:) he is nothing but the breath of the Almighty, or wind.' Some

things, they will allow, are spoken of the Spirit, which are personal characters, and even personality is ascribed to the Spirit; but then it is by a *prosopopœia*, by which personification is often ascribed to inanimate things. If the emblem of wind, to which the Spirit's operations are compared, is sufficient to destroy the divine personality of the Holy Ghost; by the same rule, and by the same emblem, the personality of men, yea, and of women too, may be destroyed also. For Israel's prophets are called the same, and so is a contentious woman. "They have belied the Lord, and said, It is not he, neither shall evil come upon us, neither shall we see sword nor famine. The prophets shall become wind, and the word is not in them," Jer. v. 12, 13. Again; "A continual dropping in a very rainy day, and a contentious woman, are alike; whose hideth her hideth the wind," Prov. xxvii. 15, 16.

2. Another emblem, to which the Holy Spirit's influences are compared, is that of *breathing*; hence he is called Breath. And indeed his procession from the Father and the Son, and his quickening operations upon the souls of lifeless sinners, are most beautifully represented by respiration. This appeared very early in the world; for, when God had formed Adam's body out of the earth, he "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul," Gen. ii. 7. The Holy Ghost was thus conveyed; and it was he that formed the soul of Adam, and that drew the image of God upon it, and supported that image in Adam as long as he remained obedient. Adam was made in God's image, after God's likeness, Gen. i. 26; after the

similitude of God, James iii. 9. And this is the same image and likeness which the Spirit now re-instamps upon the soul of a sinner in regeneration. For to talk of two images, two likenesses, two similitudes of God, and these differing the one from the other, is making God to differ; for if the image differs, so must the original; which appears strange to me. Nor is this image of God on the regenerate called new with respect to Adam, but with respect to us; for it is called a renewing, that produces this new man: "Put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him," Col. iii. 10. This new man is so called in opposition to indwelling sin, which is called the old man; and because sin reigned long in us before this grace came. Nor is this change called forming something new; but it is a renewing, a bringing something back to its original standard, or making something new which had been new before. And this creating us anew runs parallel with the first creation, it being a renewing of us after the image of him that created us at first.

The operation of the Spirit, which is represented by breath and by breathing, is that of animating, enlivening, or quickening, a soul that is dead in law, dead in sin, and dead to God: "It is the Spirit that quickeneth," John vi. 63. Hence we read that, although there was, in Ezekiel's vision, a shaking among the dry bones, so that they came together, bone to his bone, yet there was no breath in them; they were alarmed and awakened, but not quickened. This was to be done afterwards, and so it follows: "Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live. So I prophesied as he

commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived." Which is thus explained: "I will put my Spirit in you, and ye shall live," Ezek. xxxvii. 9, 10, 14. Hence it plainly appears that the influences of divine life by the Spirit are represented by respiration; on which account the Spirit is called breath, and quickening the soul is called breathing upon it.

The apostles, when the Saviour was about to be taken from them, had but little light; they knew not the scriptures. No joy; for sorrow had filled their hearts. But the Lord owned that they had faith, as appears in his prayer for them: "These have believed that I came forth from thee, and that thou didst send me: I pray for them," John xvii. 9. And our Lord declares that those who believe in him have everlasting life; and so had the apostles: and this life was increased by a fresh supply of it by the Spirit of God when Jesus "breathed on them, and said unto them; Receive ye the Holy Ghost," John xx. 22. From all which it appears, that by these different metaphors or emblems the different gifts and operations of the Spirit are represented, teaching us heavenly things by things earthly; as appears in our Lord's discourse with Nicodemus, setting forth a new birth by a blowing wind; for he adds, "If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things?" John iii. 12.

Those who are despisers of the Holy Spirit, and of those who enforce and contend for his soul-renewing operations, make use of this emblem also against his divine personality. 'The Holy Ghost (say they) is no more than a quality; he is called the breath of

the Lord.' So he is, and he is that Spirit that formed man, and that breath that gave him life when he was formed. For so saith Elihu, "The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life," Job xxxiii. 4. But, if this emblem destroys the personality of the Spirit, the same emblem must destroy the personality of man also; for man is called the same: "They pursued us upon the mountains, they laid wait for us in the wilderness. The breath of our nostrils, the anointed of the Lord, was taken in their pits; of whom we said, under his shadow we shall live among the heathen," Lam. iv. 19, 20.

The Holy Spirit not only reproveth, convinces, and convicts; but he also stirs up our troubles and enlivens our convictions, and will not suffer them to die away, like those of Cain, Judas, Saul, and Ahab; nor to prove abortive, like those who travelled and "brought forth wind," Isai. xxvi. 18. Every quickening sensation promotes our appetite, and increases our sense of famine and danger of perishing. Crying and praying, hungering and thirsting, watching and waiting, seeking and searching, craving and longing, hoping and desiring, are all kept in motion; and the soul is sick, swoons, and faints, until the desire be accomplished, which is sweet to the soul. Yea, to such a hungry one every bitter thing is sweet; the rod, the furnace, the chains, misery, gall or wormwood, bread of adversity, and waters of affliction; any thing is better than carnal ease, dead sloth, or soul-destroying insensibility.

3. The third emblem that I shall consider is that of *water*. And this is set forth various ways, according to the Spirit's different operations. Sometimes



he is compared to a shower discharged from the clouds, Isai. xxxiv. 3; sometimes to a fountain supplied from its own source, Joel iii. 18; sometimes to a river, a broad river and streams (Isaiah xxxiii. 21), running and refreshing a whole country, Ezek. xlvii. 9; sometimes also to a well of living water, always springing, John iv. 14; and sometimes to dew, gently and almost imperceptibly distilling, Hosea xiv. 5. And the fragrance of the Spirit's grace is compared to "the dew of herbs," Isai. xxvi. 19.

Rain is one of the greatest blessings of divine Providence; without it all creation would be barren; man and beast must perish, and vegetation die; and the whole beauty of the creation would soon fade like a leaf in autumn. By refreshing showers come fruits for man, and herbage for beasts. "Thou visitest the earth, and waterest it: thou greatly enrichest it with the river of God, which is full of water: thou preparest them corn when thou hast so provided for it. Thou waterest the ridges thereof abundantly: thou settlest the furrows thereof; thou makest it soft with showers: thou blessest the springing thereof. Thou crownest the year with thy goodness, and thy paths drop fatness. They drop upon the pastures of the wilderness; and the little hills rejoice on every side. The pastures are clothed with flocks; the valleys are also covered over with corn; they shout for joy, they also sing," Psalm lxxv. 9—13. Now the children of men are by sin as barren to God, without the spirit of his grace, as the earth would be to us without showers. God calls us a wilderness, a desert, a barren heath, that knows not when good cometh; dry ground, parched ground; until the Spirit by conviction plows

it, roots up the thorns, and makes it fallow; while reproofs break the clods, and prepare it for the seed and the shower. Hence the promise, "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground; I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring. And they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water-courses. One shall say, I am the Lord's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel," Isai. xlv. 3---5.

Now this branch of the Spirit's work, or the operation of the Spirit which is here represented by water, is that of cleansing, washing, and renewing: "I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness will I cleanse you," Ezek. xxxvi. 25. "He saved us," says Paul, "by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost," Titus iii. 5. By washing is meant purging away our guilt and filth, by the Spirit's realizing the Saviour's atonement; and by renewing us we are to understand that, under the influences of the Spirit, the powers or faculties of the soul, which are all corrupted and turned out of the ways of God, are renewed and set right; they are turned to God and his ways again, by the grace of the Spirit being implanted in these depraved faculties. And under the powerful operations of the Spirit, in his work of renewing, men are represented as trees or plants, quite changed in their nature from what they were before.—"Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree; and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree; and it shall

be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off," Isai. lv. 13. The fir and the myrtle are not deciduous plants, but evergreens; their sap is always up, and their leaf always green. Hence we read of those who trust and hope in the Lord being always verdant: "Their leaf shall not wither, neither shall they cease from yielding fruit," Jer. xvii. 8; and the reason is, because they are planted by the waters, and send out their roots by the rivers. So, in the foregoing text from Isaiah, they are represented by a willow; not because this plant is an evergreen, for it is not; but because of its quick growth, and because it thrives best in moisture: hence the sanctified soul is compared to the willow by the water-courses. Their springing up shews their growth in grace and in knowledge; particularly in faith, and into a comfortable persuasion of their interest in God's favour: "One shall say, I am the Lord's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob," Isai. xlv. 5; being sure of his adoption, and of being heir to the blessing; for the birthright and the blessing always go together. And a third surnames himself by the name of Israel; which honourable title is that of an overcomer or prevailer with God and man. This springing represents the heavenly-mindedness of a regenerate soul; and how by faith and hope such soar aloft, and find grace drawing their souls upwards to God, where the mind and affections meet with indulgence, with a hearty welcome, and with delightful entertainment; "To be spiritually minded is life and peace," Rom. viii. 6.

Furthermore, the descent of the Spirit upon the broken-hearted sinner is attended with a discharge

of righteousness also: "Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness: let the earth open, and let them bring forth salvation, and let righteousness spring up together; I the Lord have created it," Isai. xlv. 8. The glorious contents of this shower are not discharged from the clouds, but from the skies. Divine justice being satisfied, God's wrath is appeased, and the thick clouds of our transgressions are blotted out, Isai. xlv. 22. The high priest is in the holy of holies, the south wind has dispersed the clouds from our minds, and the Sun of righteousness shines upon the earth; hence this shower comes from the skies. The contents of the shower are said to be righteousness, the first branch of which is taking away our filthy garments, or cleansing us from all unrighteousness, and clothing us with change of raiment: this comes by the Spirit; "Ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God," 1 Cor. vi. 11. The love of God also is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which teaches us to love God and one another. These are the chief contents of this shower from the skies. "Let the earth open, and let them bring forth salvation, and let righteousness spring up together," Isai. xlv. 8. We are not to suppose that, by these orders given for the earth to open, the conscious sinner has power to enlarge or contract, to open or shut his own heart: No, by no means. But, when poor convinced souls have been long in legal bondage, and shut up in unbelief; often in hope and expectation, and as often crossed and disappointed; such slacken and despond; and, finding that all counsel, encouragement, and advice, given by others,

has failed, and is lost upon them, they conclude the die is cast, their doom fixed, and they can muster neither strength nor courage to renew the attack. But, God appearing when our strength is all gone, and sending down this shower when expectation had yielded up the ghost, the sinner puts it away from him, and through unbelief refuses to be comforted, concluding the tidings are too great, and the blessings too good, for such a wretch as he; for he measures God and God's thoughts with himself and his own thoughts, Isai. lv. 8; and, as he loaths himself, he concludes that God hates him; which is his folly and God's dishonour. To such the text speaks. Let him not measure the aboundings of his sin with God's superabounding grace, nor limit the goodness of God to them who have less vileness, and who are more worthy; for it is all of grace that lost and perishing sinners, yea the chiefest of sinners, are sought after. "Let the skies pour down righteousness; let the earth open" and receive it; "and let them bring forth salvation." My Spirit shall bring it forth from me into their hearts; and they, by confession, profession, and uprightness of life, shall bring it forth before the world.

Under this shower from the skies, the sting of death, which is sin, is removed; the balm of Gilead heals the wounded spirit; a lively hope forbids despondency; all soul sickness is banished; eternal life and immortality are brought to light; light breaks forth as the morning, and our health springs forth speedily, Isai. lviii. 8. "For, as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth, so the Lord God

will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations," Isai. lxi. 11.

Having offered a few thoughts upon the descent of the Spirit as a shower from the skies; and what are the contents, the fruits, and effects of that shower; I shall now proceed to the Spirit's work, which is set forth by the emblem of a *river*.

There are seasons in which a child of God is indulged with an uncommon influence of the Spirit, enwrapped in wonderful light, joy, and comfort. Under these heavenly raptures he is quite above himself. As we read in John's Revelation, while he was meditating; "Immediately I was in the Spirit." And again, "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day," Rev. i. 10. At such times every inbred corruption is stilled, the world banished from the mind, and the flesh and its concerns are not in our thoughts. "Whether in the body or out of the body," says Paul, "God knoweth." Or we are like Peter when on the mount, talking, but not knowing what he said. The soul is plunged into its God, and moves in life, in light, in joy, and in heavenly pleasures, which are unspeakable, and full of glory. "Look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities: thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down: not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken. But there the glorious Lord will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams, wherein shall go no galley with oars," &c. Isai. xxxiii. 21. The prophet Ezekiel observes the rising and falling, the swelling and sinking, of these holy waters, after he had been led three times through them. "Again he measured

a thousand, and brought me through; the waters were to the loins. Afterward he measured a thousand, and it was as a river that I could not pass over; for the waters were risen, waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over," Ezek. xlvii. 4, 5.

We have no call to look far to find out the meaning of these waters. The prophet tells us that "every thing that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live," ver. 9. All that are quickened by these waters, and obtain motion to move towards God, shall live for ever. This rising and falling of the waters respects us under the operations of the Spirit. The prophet tells us that they rose upon him every time he went through. And so with the soul in which the Spirit works; he fears, he trembles, he faints, he sinks under his convictions and terrors; but in hope he rises above water, in godly sorrow he melts and meekens, and in faith his mind rises still higher. In the little comforts flowing from hope he begins to soar, so as to tread the waters; in joy and peace he ascends, till, like Peter, he goes on the face of the waters: but, in the comforts of love and the light of glory, he swims, or finds himself borne up above all his troubles and fears; and is convinced, by what he feels, that this is the river of God's pleasure, which flows at his right hand for evermore, and cannot be passed over; for eternity has no brink, no bank, no bound: though it has its banks in this world, with respect to men, so that it runs in its own channel, which is to the elect of God, and to none else. And, with reference to these waters, we read of being planted together in the likeness of Christ's death, and of being "risen with him through the faith of the

operation of God," Col. ii. 12; as also of walking in the Spirit, Gal. v. 16; and we read of rising in love, so as to set our affections on things above. All which is the work of these holy waters, operating upon men as the Holy Spirit pleaseth.

Again, the more gentle, shallow, and imperceptible operations of the Spirit, which attend the word preached by men truly evangelical, are compared to smaller rivers, streams, brooks, &c. "He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water," John vii. 38. This is chiefly spoken to the apostles, who were to evangelize others; but not to the exclusion of those who were to come after them. These rivulets attending the word preached, is what the wise man means when he says, "The words of a man's mouth are as deep waters, and the well-spring of wisdom as a flowing brook," Prov. xviii. 4. The liberty proclaimed to one who has been a legal captive to law terrors, to the power of sin, and the tyranny of Satan, which was typified by Israel's return from Babylon, is set forth by streams: "Turn again our captivity, O Lord, as the streams in the south," Psalm cxxvi. 4. The blessed fruit of the Spirit, which is called the abundance of peace, and the abundant inundation of the Gentile world, flowing into the church under the influence of the Holy Ghost, is called extending peace to Zion "like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream," Isai. lxvi. 12. For, whatever darkness, distress, confusion, or trouble, the soul gets into, when the Spirit operates with the word, all is washed away, and peace and quietude succeed. This river of peace coming in carries all before it, when the



sweetest tranquillity follows, to compose and calm the mind. When the believer has lost sight of the King's countenance, the face of his throne is hid, a cloud is spread upon it, and all evidences are obscured ; and then we see not our signs nor tokens for good ; but faith and hope both stay at home to prop up the heart, and will not venture abroad ; so that prayer seems to have lost all attendance ; no energy to give vent to our grief in prayer, no love to cause it to ascend, no confidence mixt with the petitions, nor hope in exercise to expect returns : and, were it not for the Holy Spirit and his grace, we should soon become like a dreary desert or barren heath. But the ever-blessed Comforter, whose work it is to take of the things that are Christ's, and shew them unto us, often, when least expected, either under the word, in prayer, or in meditation, breaks in, disperses the dismal gloom, and gives us another view of the Lord's enlivening countenance, and a sweet sense of his healing beams ; in which soul-dissolving rays the atonement and its effects are discerned, his righteousness and the fruits of it seen and enjoyed ; and his love makes it manifest that we are in him, and in him complete : then love dissolves all our doubts, and the mountains flow down at his presence, which puts off our sackcloth, and girds us with gladness. " There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High," Psalm xlv. 4.

But there are streams of a lower degree than these, which move to strengthen, animate, and invigorate our grace ; when these get weak and languid, " strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die," Rev.

iii. 2. This order is given to the angel of the church, and is the same as that in Isaiah ; “ Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees ; say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not,” &c. Isai. xxxv. 3, 4. Searching after things new and old, speaking comfortable and encouraging words, and praying for success, is all that a minister can do : the excellency of the power is of God, and not of him. Yet, if we give to each a portion of meat in due season, the Lord will confirm the word of his servants, and perform the counsel of his messengers ; and the Spirit does this by putting forth his power to strengthen and enliven the grace of God in the saints. Paul calls it being strengthened by the Spirit’s might in the inner man ; which is done by an increase of faith, enlivening of it and calling it forth into lively exercise ; helping us against our infirmities in prayer, and enabling us to draw nigh to God in full assurance ; for by a sense of our own frailty, and of our real wants ; by divine fervour in the soul, and by an holy boldness, strong confidence, and unabated importunity, does the Spirit make intercession for us with prevalent groanings, if the fruit of the lip cannot accompany them ; “ And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God,” Rom. viii. 27. Every exercise of faith, of hope, of love, or of patience, is put forth under the strengthening and quickening operations of the Spirit of God : for, as no fruits of the earth can thrive or grow without moisture, no more can the fruits of the Spirit without his animating and refreshing operations. “ A fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and

streams from Lebanon," Song iv. 15. The church is called a fountain of gardens, having many small assemblies in union with her. She is called a well of living water, being the residence of the Spirit and his grace; it streams from Lebanon, which shews that the Spirit has left the temple at Jerusalem, which was built of the wood from that mountain, and communicates his quickening streams to the Gentile world. God leaving the temple and visiting the Gentiles, is called giving us "the glory of Lebanon," Isai. xxxv. 2. That beautiful house was God's dwelling; but now he dwells with the broken and the contrite heart.

Having considered the Spirit's operations as he is represented by the emblem of water; first, as showers from the skies; secondly, as broad rivers; and, thirdly, as brooks and streams; I shall now offer a few thoughts upon his operations, which are set forth by a spring.

"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," John iv. 14. However we may receive the word, and whatever good beginnings may shew forth themselves in us, unless the Spirit of life attend both the word and the apparent good beginnings, sure I am that, when the fiery trial comes on, the heat will parch the soil and wither the crop. The Holy Ghost meekens our spirit, and softens the stony heart; without this it has "no deepness of earth," Matt. xiii. 5. A hard heart is called a rock, where nothing good can grow: "and some fell upon a rock; and as soon as it was sprung up it withered

away, because it lacked moisture," Luke viii. 6. We read of others who received the word; but "the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful," Matt. xiii. 22. This choking and overtopping the word is for the want of a spring at the bottom. The life of faith will counteract the cares of this life, and the love of God will root deeper than the love of money can do, and rise higher, and give more pleasure and delight in the true riches than all worldly riches can afford. I shall offer my thoughts of this spring under a threefold consideration.

1. The Spirit raises up the powers of the soul, and sets them on God and spiritual things. "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above," Col. iii. 1.

2. He plants a crop of choice fruits, which are called "the fruit of the Spirit," Gal. v. 22. These are likewise called the "incorruptible seed, which liveth and abideth for ever," 1 Peter i. 23. Hence we read of faith and hope being in God, and affections at the right hand of God.

3. This spring rises in our devotions or worship also, for we read of "spiritual sacrifices," 1 Peter ii. 5, which ascend to God like the flames, the smoke, and the savour, which went off the Jewish altars: "The sons of the stranger will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer; their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar; for mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people," Isai. lvi. 6, 7. And these please God better than a bullock that has horns and hoofs.

First, the ascension of the soul. Sin and fear, guilt and shame, with the whole mass of inbred corruptions, weigh down the soul ; while a sense of divine anger makes it sculk into darkness, when, like the publican, we dare not lift up our eyes to heaven, much less our souls. But, when the Holy Spirit applies the atonement, and presents the righteousness of Christ to faith, passes the sentence of justification in the court of conscience, fills us with peace, silences all accusers, and bears his witness within, the soul begins to mount and ascend : “ they shall mount up with wings as eagles,” Isai. xl. 31 ; when the powers of the soul are loosed from their chains, yokes, veils, and coverings, with which the god of this world has kept us in his strong hold ; and these are his panoply in which he trusts ; but the Holy Ghost binds him, and spoils his house, both of his armour and of his goods. He destroys the veil ; and then the understanding rises, shines, and contemplates the goodness of its God in Christ Jesus. A divine power displaces the obstinacy, inflexibility, and rebellion, of the will ; the Spirit makes us willing in the day of his power, when Christ becomes the object of our choice ; and to obey his will, and to have his presence and his approbation, is the delight of the soul. The will having chosen the object, the affections adore, admire, and are ravished with the choice. The carnality of the mind, and its infernal enmity, being dethroned by the law of faith written therein, faith assuring us of our sonship and heirship, and it being the substance of things hoped for, a participation of the true riches ; in these the soul solaces itself ; and the more it meditates the more treasure it discovers ; and, while the mind remains

thus spiritual, the more do life and peace abound within; yea, every thought at such seasons is in willing and pleasing captivity to the obedience of Christ. "In the multitude of my thoughts within me thy comforts delight my soul," Ps. xciv. 19. The heart often, in God's word, signifies the whole soul; and Christ says, "Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal; for where your treasure is there will your heart be also," Matt. vi. 20, 21. This is, and will be, the case with a soul that is rich in faith; for, if this world, or sin, or temptations, interrupt such an one in these divine pursuits, he is wretched and miserable; the whole world cannot repair his loss; nor heaven itself, nor earth with all its fulness, fill the vacancy, if his God forsakes him, and no token for good appears; for he knows the pains of hell and the joys of heaven; and this teaches him to put a proper value upon Christ and his salvation, which the dead and the blind know nothing of.

2. Every grace, which is produced in the soul under the renewing operations of the Holy Ghost, is called "the first-fruits of the Spirit," Rom. viii. 23; a heavenly production, springing from a spiritual birth; "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit," John iii. 6; a crop of incorruptible seed that lives and abides for ever, springing under the operations of an incorruptible and ever-living fountain. Every grace in its exercise ascends to God, and through Christ is accepted of him, or God's most gracious presence descends to it. The exercise of grace upon God through Christ is acceptable, and God meets such as

come to him in his own way, Isai. lxiv. 5 ; yea, the feeblest grace of the Holy Spirit is owned and honoured of God the Father. The first quickening of the Spirit gave the prodigal son all his appetite and motion, which terminated in that happy meeting between his father and him. Humility, under a keen sense of sin, which wounds the spirit, and makes it tremble and stand in awe of God's word, the high and lofty One that inhabits eternity takes notice of, for he dwells with the humble and the contrite heart, Isai. lvii. 15. Faith lays hold of God's strength ; by the divine power of the Spirit it is produced ; on God's arm it rests ; in his power it stands, and through faith in that power are we kept ; and God owns and honours it ; for all that exercise it obtain a good report through faith. A filial fear, that has God's goodness for its object, and hope founded on his mercy, meets with God's approbation ; and, as God approves, so the divine pleasure is reflected on the soul that exercises these. "The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy," Ps. cxlvii. 11. Love from Christ is set upon Christ, and upon the Father through him : "Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him ; I will set him on high, because he hath known my name : he shall call upon me, and I will answer him : I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honour him. With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation," Ps. xci. 14—16. Every persuasion of the mind, which leads it in trouble to confide in God, is kept steady by divine support, and furnished with uninterrupted peace : "Thou wilt keep him in perfect

peace whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee," Isai. xxvi. 3.

The feeblest grace that the Spirit plants in the heart God acknowledges and approves. Meekness is a grace that softens the soul under the last stroke of God's rod, and is one ingredient in the sanctification of our afflictions, if they are at all sanctified. Every one, who learns the exercise of this grace from Christ, finds union with him, and rest for his soul by that union; yea, meekness, exercised under a believing view of the Lord's goodness, and our interest in it, makes the yoke easy, and the burden light.

Self-abasement also. God was communing with Job, and shining upon him, when he abhorred himself, and repented "in dust and ashes," Job xlii. 6. The Lord keeps the hair of our head from perishing, while our souls are possessed in patience. Every grace has its work, and acts its part in professing, worshipping, and suffering. We read of patience having her perfect work, James i. 4; and of meekness operating, while we are receiving the ingrafted word, James i. 21; but, if pride accompany our prayers in the room of humility, instead of receiving more grace, we are resisted, James iv. 6. No works but the works of faith, no labour but the labour of love, no patience but the patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, will ever pass current in the sight of God and our Father, 1 Thess. i. 3. Hence it appears that grace is a lively, active principle; it springs in its exercises, and remains with us when its activity is imperceptible; and, whether it be found in a child or in an adult, it always is a good thing toward the Lord God of Israel:



“ When thy feet enter the city the child shall die; and all Israel shall mourn for him, and bury him; for he only of Jeroboam shall come to the grave, because in him there is found some good thing toward the Lord God of Israel in the house of Jeroboam,” 1 Kings xiv. 12, 13. All grace bends, or leans, towards the Lord; upon him it is exercised, and in him it terminates at last; it reigns through righteousness unto eternal life.

3. The spring of grace is in all our profession, devotion, usefulness, and fruitfulness: “ The fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth,” Eph. v. 9. Paul observed this in his ministerial labours, as the living spring which kept him in motion, and made his preaching effectual in others: “ Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily,” Col. i. 29. Yea, grace was the chief labourer or agent, and Paul the instrument: “ I laboured more abundantly than they all; yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me,” 1 Cor. xv. 10. Without the Spirit and grace of God the ministry is no more than the letter that killeth; and the hearer that cannot mix faith with the word is neither fed nor profited, Heb. iv. 2; and all prayer that is not attended with faith meets with no returns: “ Let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord,” James i. 7. Every grace is exercised in turn under the word preached. By faith promises are obtained, and by the same is the soul fed; we live by faith; by faith the atonement is received, and the heart purified with it; the righteousness of Christ is received by faith, and by faith is God glorified. There is no gratitude to God, nor de-

light in him ; no sacrificing to him with the voice of joy ; no offering acceptable praise to him, or sacrifice of thanksgivings ; if the heart be destitute of love to him : it can be nothing but lip labour and bodily exercise, which tend only to penury. Few would be found waiting at Wisdom's gate, and watching at the posts of her doors ; few in the isles would wait for his law ; if there were no hope or expectation of these things coming : but these waiting souls have their promise ; " They shall not be ashamed that wait for me," Isai. xlix. 23. And as long as hope bears up they will look out ; and those that wait upon their master shall be honoured ; and, although such have little faith, yet it is often seen that they have much patience.

The last branch of this emblem of water, which I shall consider, is that of dew : " I will be as the dew unto Israel ; he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon," Hosea xiv. 5. This dew often attends with the word ; as Moses says, " My speech shall distil as the dew." And sometimes it distils without the word, as was the case with Job : " The dew lay all night upon my branch ; my glory was fresh in me, and my bow was renewed in my hand," Job xxix. 19, 20. The first influence of this refreshing dew, which the sincere seeker finds under this distillation, is a most warm and glowing affection to the worshippers of God ; this is generally the first effect ; which union appears wonderful to him, and he cannot account for it. We are taught of God to love one another ; and he feels his soul knit to the family of God, but knows not the cause. " Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell to-

gether in unity ! It is as the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion," Ps. cxxxiii. 1, 3. It is this dew that attaches the soul to the saints, and draws it away from the ungodly, as may be seen in Ruth and Naomi ; in Rahab and Israel's spies. The dew, however profuse when it falls, is soon exhaled, and disappears ; so that these gentle refreshings are but of short continuance : yet seeking souls are sensible enough when they are refreshed with them, and both sad and sorrowful when they feel themselves dry and barren for the want of them.

God, they think, takes no notice of their case ; he does not endear himself to them ; and they are furnished with no thanksgivings, no grateful acknowledgments, to him ; they have been to his house, waited at his doors, and are sent empty away. This tries the weaklings not a little ; however, it serves to make them the more sensible of the favour when it does come ; and after such a cutting disappointment it is often known that the next refreshing is more abundant. The Lord does not despise the day of small things ; the weakest beginnings shall be kept alive ; convictions by God's Spirit, however shallow ; all cares and concerns for the salvation of the soul ; hungerings and thirstings after the bread of life and the righteousness of God ; shall not vanish away. The hungry shall be filled ; " The needy shall not always be forgotten ; the expectation of the poor shall not perish for ever," Ps. ix. 18. God will satiate the weary, and replenish the sorrowful ; Jer. xxxi. 25. He will not break the bruished reed, though it makes no melody ; nor quench the smoking flax, though there

be not the fire of perfect love, nor the flame of joy ; for there are longing desires which do not abate, and Wisdom tells us, “ the desire of a man is his kindness,” Prov. xix. 22. Whether the operations of the Spirit be compared to showers, rivers, fountains, brooks, streams, springs, or dew ; all is water ; and water is of a cleansing, cooling, refreshing nature ; next to the sun it is the greatest blessing in the whole creation ; and there can be no fruit or food without it. And so it is with the new creation, which is the husbandry of God : when the Spirit was poured upon us from on high the Gentiles became a fruitful field ; and, when the Spirit was taken from the Jews, that fruitful field was counted for a forest, Isai. xxxii. 15.

Nor does this emblem of water militate against the personality of the Holy Ghost. If it does, then all the inhabitants of the pope’s dominions are qualities or nonentities also ; “ And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues,” Rev. xvii. 15. The whole Assyrian host, the king of that host, and all his glorious retinue, are called “ the waters of the river, strong and many,” Isai. viii. 7.

The next emblem of the Spirit, that presents itself to me, is that of a *dove*. The shape and form of this creature the Holy Ghost assumed when he descended from heaven upon the Son of God ; by this visible descent of the Spirit was the Saviour distinguished at the river Jordan ; and by this sign was he to be known to the baptist. For thus it is written ; “ The heaven was opened, and the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved

Son, in thee I am well pleased," Luke iii. 21, 22. In this passage a trinity of persons in the Godhead is as clear as the sun at noon-day, and their distinct personality also :—Here is the Son of God standing upon the earth ; the Holy Ghost opening the heavens, and descending in the bodily shape of a dove ; and a voice from heaven proclaiming the Saviour's sonship, which voice must come from God the Father, and from no other. And now was fulfilled that ancient and wonderful prophecy ; " Come ye near unto me ; hear ye this ; I have not spoken in secret from the beginning ; from the time that it was, there am I : and now the Lord God and his Spirit hath sent me," Isai. xlviii. 16. Wherein we may observe, first, that he calls sinners to come to him as to their only saviour and deliverer ; secondly, to attend to his voice as the great prophet of the church ; and, thirdly, that it was him that spake the first promise publicly, and not in secret, from the beginning, when the seed of the woman was promised to bruise the serpent's head : " From the time that it was," that is, from the time that that promise was given out, " there am I : and now the Lord God and his Spirit hath sent me," to perform the work and fulfil the promise.

What colour this bodily shape of a dove appeared in, which the Holy Ghost assumed, whether white or fiery, is no where mentioned.

By this emblem a threefold operation of the Spirit is intended ; the note of the dove is mournful ; " We mourn sore like doves," Isai. lix. 11. There are no mourners in Zion, no mourning over sin, nor over a suffering Saviour, without the Spirit's operations. The

dove is noted for meekness ; evangelical meekness is a fruit of the Spirit, Gal. v. 23 ; and in the exercise of this grace the weakest believer finds access to God, and great freedom and boldness with him. Hence our Lord calls himself meek and lowly ; and he calls all to him who have learned the same. The dove is a harmless creature ; and hence our Lord tells his disciples to be as wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. And I know of none so useful to the bodies, souls, and circumstances of men, as real spiritual preachers, who preach the kingdom of God to sinners, and encourage them to seek it ; for these seekers have all other things added unto them. Nor does this emblem destroy the personality of the Spirit ; for the church of God is called a dove more than once ; read Song ii. 14 ; Ps. lxxiv. 19.

The next emblem of the Holy Ghost, which I shall consider, is that of *fire*. This is the most powerful element of the four, and will destroy all the others ; even the sea shall be dried up by it ; “ Thus hath the Lord God shewed unto me : and, behold, the Lord God called to contend by fire, and it devoured the great deep,” Amos vii. 4. “ Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat,” 2 Pet. iii. 12. “ The earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burned up,” iii. 10. Hence it appears that the heavens, the starry heavens and the ethereal, the great deep, the earth and all her works, shall be burnt up. And I believe that the fuel of Tophet, and all the wicked in it, will find the vengeance of heaven to be

kindled by the hot displeasure of the Holy Ghost ; for it is written, “ the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it,” Isai. xxx. 33.

There is a prophecy going before upon the subject now in hand, namely, upon this fiery work of the Holy Ghost ; for it is written, “ When the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof, by the spirit of judgment and the spirit of burning. And the Lord will create upon every dwelling place of mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night : for upon all the glory shall be a defence,” Isai. iv. 4, 5. The Holy Spirit is here called a spirit of judgment, because it is he that applies the word preached, and gives it all its power ; by which power the sinner is convinced, convicted, and brought in guilty before God : this is the sinner’s judgment. And, when the Spirit applies the Lord’s atonement, and cleanses the sinner by it, and by the washing of regeneration, the sinner is clean. He then presents the righteousness of Christ to us, and by faith it is put on. We are then justified in the name of our Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God. Hence he is called the Spirit of judgment. Another part of our cleansing is by the spirit of burning ; “ From all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you,” saith the Lord, Ezek. xxxvi. 25. We are washed from sin by the blood of Christ, and sanctified by the washing of regeneration. But what is it that cleanseth us from all our idols ? What is that which removes all these from the heart and affections ? I answer, this is done by the spirit of burning ; and

the spirit of burning is the spirit of love, 2 Tim. i. 7. The Spirit, having cleansed and justified us, as a spirit of judgment, then operates as the spirit of love, and sheds abroad the love of God in the heart; and, having much forgiven, we love much; and when God is much loved, idols are lightly esteemed. And, to be plain, this is our spiritual circumcision; "And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live," Deut. xxx. 6. All circumcision in the flesh is no more than a sign, Rom. iv. 11. God himself declares that is not circumcision which is in the flesh, Rom. ii. 28. True circumcision stands in these two things: first, in the forgiveness of sins; "In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ," Col. ii. 11: and the second is, to love and adore a sin-pardoning God.

This circumcision is God's work, and he does it that we may love him with all the heart, and with all the soul, that we may live; live to him in this world, and live with him in the world to come. And it is plain that, when the whole heart and soul love God, no room is left for idols. This is the shining of a flaming fire by night, which rests upon Zion and her assemblies; and the smoke is the perpetual incense of spiritual prayer, attended with the fervour of the Spirit and of his grace. This is our circumcision, typified under the Old Testament; and this is our spiritual baptism, prefigured by water under the New. The sign went before, the substance followed after: "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance;



but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear; he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire," Mat. iii. 11. This text has puzzled many good men, because of the distinction made by the copulative *and*; "he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire." Hence some conclude, that the descent of the Holy Ghost upon us is one baptism; and the fire, signifying fiery trials, is another. But, as this baptism succeeds circumcision, and in the Holy Spirit's sense is one and the same thing, baptism by the Spirit is receiving him as our everlasting comforter: this is baptism by the Holy Ghost. And the baptism by fire is the love of God the Father; "Hope maketh not ashamed," says Paul, "because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us," Rom. v. 5. In which passage the love of God the Father, shed abroad in the heart, is mentioned as distinct from the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us. This I believe to be the true and unstrained sense of that text; nor need this distinction appear strange, since we read of the love of God the Father; "The Father himself loveth you, because you have loved me," John xvi. 27. The love of Christ also; "Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it," Eph. v. 25. And of the love of the Spirit, Rom. xv. 30.

By the emblem of fire is the love of God, Father, Son, and Spirit, represented; all of which come upon us at our spiritual baptism. And, as fire is the most predominant of all the elements, so is love at our baptism; it burns, purifies, and purges, till it makes clear work indeed. All our idols; dross, tin, self-righteousness, and dead formality; are gone with de-

testation and abhorrence, and even ourselves are abhorred as well as those baubles ; love carries all before it ; neither Satan's floods, nor sinners' rage, can do any thing with it ; " Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it. If a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned," Song viii. 7. Love not only purifies us from idols, but it brings us to an existence in God ; for " he that loveth dwelleth in God and God in him," 1 John iv. 16. It makes a minister a flaming fire, Ps. civ. 4. It is the highest branch of divine knowledge ; " He that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God," 1 John iv. 7. It is an alluring, attracting, constraining influence ; " The love of Christ constraineth us," 2 Cor. v. 14. It is attended with a pleasing, becoming, fiery zeal, which is a zeal according to knowledge. It is that grace which establishes and settles the whole building, and in the light of which the glory of God appears ; " When the Lord shall build up Zion he shall appear in his glory," Ps. cii. 16 ; for " charity edifieth," 1 Cor. viii. 1. It builds up and completes the edifice ; and is, and will be, the completing and perfecting of all real and evangelical holiness in us : " According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love," Eph. i. 4. In short, when this fire burns in the heart it heats and inflames the whole soul, and sets the word of God all in a blaze ; " I will make my words in thy mouth fire," Jer. v. 14. " His word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones," Jer. xx. 9. The live coal from the altar, that touched the lips of Isaiah, and purged him from all his sin, was the promise of

life, attended with the spirit of love, Isai. vi. 7. The sacred flame went through him in a moment; "Thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged," Isai. vi. 7.

A minister thus inflamed is often instrumental, in the hand of the Spirit, of inflaming a whole church: "Upon mount Zion shall be deliverance, and there shall be holiness. And the house of Jacob shall be a fire, and the house of Joseph a flame, and the house of Esau for stubble," Obadiah 17, 18. The light that shines forth from love is called the true light; for, let men discover or perceive what they may of divine things, as Balaam did, yet the guilt of sin on the conscience, and the carnal enmity of the mind, stain it, and aggravate the misery of him that sees the light. The light that was in Judas was darkness, and how great was that darkness! Matt. vi. 23; because what he saw he hated; he saw the light, and rebelled against it, Job xxiv. 13. From all which it is plain that this emblem of fire sets forth the operations of the Holy Spirit, when he influences the soul as the spirit of love; this dissolves the stony heart, melts the stubborn soul, and bows the will to the easy yoke. It refines, purges, and purifies us from the love of sin, from the love of self, the love of the world, and all its idols; it furnishes us with a warm and becoming zeal, and is attended with light; and this light has a brightness in it, a lustre which nothing but love can give it, as saith the prophet; "for Zion's sake I will not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth," Isai. lxii. 1. This is salvation from sin, and burning love by the Spirit inflaming the pardoned sinner. The

righteousness of faith comes with brightness, and the forgiveness of sins with a lamp that burns. All light except this is but moon-light, and shines only in the night, and upon the children of the night; but the influence of love, when the Spirit testifies of Christ, applies the atonement, clothes the soul with the garments of salvation, and sheds abroad the love of God in the heart. It is compared to the sun itself; "Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee," Isai. lx. 1. "The Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory; thy sun shall no more go down," Isai. lx. 19, 20.

Nor does this emblem of fire make against the personality of the Holy Ghost, for men are set forth by the same; "He maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire," Heb. i. 7. John was a burning and a shining light. But neither the flaming fire, nor the burning and shining of John, destroyed the personality of ministers; no more does the different operations of the Spirit, set forth by different emblems, destroy the personality of the Spirit.

I now come to consider another emblem of the Spirit, namely that of *oil*, which is intended to set forth another operation of the Holy Ghost, and is not to be applied to every influence which the Spirit produceth in men. This operation, whatever it is, is called the anointing, and was typified by the anointing of the Jewish priests; "And thou shalt anoint them, that they may minister unto me in the priest's office, for their anointing shall surely be an everlasting priesthood," Exod. xl. 15. These priests were Levites, and no other; and they were saints in type; for Levites

in truth continue to this day in their anointing, and still attend the altar, and minister in the priest's office. "And the word of the Lord came unto Jeremiah, saying, thus saith the Lord; if ye can break my covenant of the day, and my covenant of the night, and that there should not be day and night in their seasons; then may also my covenant be broken with David my servant, that he should not have a son to reign upon his throne; and with the Levites, the priests, my ministers. As the host of heaven cannot be numbered, neither the sand of the sea measured; so will I multiply the seed of David my servant, and the Levites that minister unto me," Jer. xxxiii. 19---22. The name Levite, according to the learned, signifies joined, and is significant enough; for he that is anointed with the Spirit is joined to the Lord, and is one spirit with him, 1 Cor. vi. 17. And, to shew the duration of this anointing, and of the office of priesthood, both the name and office are now applied to the Gentiles; "And I will also take of them for priests and for Levites, saith the Lord," Isai. lxvi 21. On this account the whole church is called a royal priesthood; and every saint is called a king and a priest, to offer up spiritual sacrifices.

There were to be four sorts of spices mixt with olive oil in this anointing, Exod. xxx. 23. Two graces, love and joy, are couched in the oil; and faith, life, hope, and patience, are held forth by the spices. Without faith we cannot please God; without life all service is dead works; without hope there can be no expectation of God's presence, or acceptance; and without patience we should soon tire in waiting at the altar. "Upon man's flesh shall it not be poured,

neither shall ye make any like it: whosoever compoundeth any like it, or whosoever putteth any of it upon a stranger, shall even be cut off from his people," Exod. xxx. 32, 33. In this there appears a mystery; "upon man's flesh shall it not be poured," and yet it was poured upon Aaron's head, and went down to his beard, as the psalmist says. Oil was also put upon the head of a leper at his cleansing, Lev. xiv. 17. It was put on the tip of his right ear, which signified obedience to the Spirit's voice; upon the thumb of his right hand, to shew that we receive the promise of the Spirit through faith; and upon the toe of his right foot, to signify that if we walk in the Spirit we shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh. The priests at their consecration, and the lepers at their cleansing, were the persons that were thus anointed under the law; and the divine union remains with gospel ministers and sensible sinners to this day. "Upon man's flesh shall it not be poured;" that is, upon any stranger, Exodus xxx. 33, who is in the flesh, and in no sense dedicated to God. We are not to apply spiritual things to him. "Neither shall ye make any like it; whosoever does shall be cut off," Exod. xxx. 32. The contents of that text will some time or other be found dreadful to those who study oratory in order to move the corrupt passions of carnal professors, which is done to deceive, by trying to counterfeit or imitate the power and operations of the Spirit of grace.

But the question is, what is meant by this anointing? It appears, even in the old law, to be something of a crowning work; indeed a crown, that noble cap of state, is ascribed to it. This crown seems to be the glory of it: "Neither shall the high priest go in to

any dead body, nor defile himself, for his father or for his mother ; neither shall he go out of the sanctuary, nor profane the sanctuary of his God ; for the crown of the anointing oil of his God is upon him : I am the Lord," Levit. xxi. 11, 12. Every operation of the Spirit is not this anointing.

Men may be convinced of sin by the Spirit, as our Lord's weeping audience were when he delivered his first public sermon on the mount, Matthew, chap. v.

Men may receive the grace of faith under the operation of the Holy Ghost, as the apostles and disciples of Christ did, and yet not be anointed, strictly speaking.

Yea, men may be quickened, and have everlasting life, as our Lord's believing followers had ; yet, in my judgment, even this is not that which is meant by this anointing.

And I am of opinion that a soul may be washed in regeneration, and yet not be anointed. Our Lord himself says, to the apostles and disciples, " Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you," John xv. 3. Yea, Jesus saith to Peter, " He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit ; and ye are clean, but not all. For he knew who should betray him, therefore he said, Ye are not all clean," John xiii. 10, 11. All the apostles, excepting Judas, were clean every whit, and needed no more washing, save to wash their feet. By which it appears that the water had done its work, but the oil was yet to come ; which shews that there is a difference between washing and anointing. Mary first

washed the Lord's feet with tears, and then anointed them with ointment, Luke vii. 38.

I might add to all this, and assert that the kingdom of God may be begun where this anointing is not given: "Neither shall they say, Lo here, or lo there; for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you," Luke xvii. 21.

I have gone great lengths in this; and yet I do not believe that the anointing, strictly speaking, is in any of these operations. And my reason for it is this—that where this anointing comes men are wonderfully instructed, as John says, "But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things," 1 John ii. 20. And again: "But the anointing, which ye have received of him, abideth in you; and ye need not that any man teach you; but, as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him," 1 John ii. 27. John informs us that this anointing teaches us to know all things; which will by no means agree with the knowledge of the disciples at the crucifixion of Christ; for, instead of their knowing all things, they knew little or nothing; and this John confesses at the Lord's tomb: "Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre; and he saw and believed. For as yet they knew not the scriptures, that he must rise from the dead," John xx. 8, 9.

Under the oppression of the king of Assyria, the yoke of bondage is set forth by the prophet Isaiah: "And it shall come to pass in that day, that his burden shall be taken away from off thy shoulders, and



his yoke from off thy neck, and the yoke shall be destroyed because of the anointing," Isai. x. 27. But neither the yoke of legal bondage, nor the yoke of the fear of man, were as yet destroyed from the disciples' necks: "Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut, where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus, and stood in the midst," John xx. 19. From these observations it appears, that as yet their eyes were not anointed, because they knew not the scriptures; nor was the yoke destroyed, for they were shut up for fear of the Jews; the yoke abode because they were not as yet anointed.

Our Lord had commanded the apostles that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, Acts i. 4. And upon the promised descent of the Holy Spirit the apostles were to be anointed; and our Lord presses them much upon praying and expecting this oil: "Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name; ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full," John xvi. 24. Christ himself was anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows, Ps. xlv. 7; and he was anointed that he might anoint others, even all the mourners in Zion: "To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion; to give unto them beauty for ashes, and the oil of joy for mourning," Isai. lxi. 3. This blessed and ever adorable anointing with the oil of joy includes these three things.

First, The love of God shed abroad in the heart, and perfected there; for perfect love casteth out all fear; and, if all fear is cast out by perfect love, then the yoke is destroyed because of the anointing.

Secondly, This anointing was to anoint their eyes that they might see, Rev. iii. 18. And this is promised: "But the comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you," John xiv. 26.

Thirdly, Upon the descent of the Holy Ghost the mourners in Zion were to be comforted; the oil of joy was to be given for mourning, and their joy was to be full. And so we read: "And the disciples were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost," Acts xiii. 52.

There is a joy that springs from hope, and joy from a good conscience; but the joy that springs from perfect love is the crown of the anointing oil. David says that God had crowned him "with loving-kindness and tender mercies," Psal. ciii. 4. It is no wonder then that this joy is called the crown, when we read that our Lord went to this, at his ascension: "In thy presence is fulness of joy, and at thy right hand pleasures for evermore," Psal. xvi. 11. Paul calls the Philippians his joy and crown. And in the great day it will appear that this anointing with the oil of joy will be the crowning work; and this crown of anointing oil will be upon the heads of all the saints: "The ransomed of the Lord shall return to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away," Isai. xxxv. 10.

Our Holy of holies is above, where our High-priest is gone. And where should the Levites be but where the High-priest is? Besides, one part of the

priest's work in the sanctuary was to play the music, and to lead the song. And, as there will be no praying, preaching, hearing, and confessing, above; only playing the harp, praising, rejoicing, loving, adoring, and singing; and as nothing tunes the heart for a song like the oil of joy; this crown of anointing oil is to be upon their heads when they return with songs. And, to fit us for this branch of the ministry, sorrow and sighing is to flee away, and the oil of joy and of gladness is to be obtained, in order to carry on the everlasting song; and indeed all divine joys will meet together here, to compose this crown of the anointing oil. We read of the joy of harvest; and this is harvest-home, when he that sows and they that reap shall both rejoice together. We read of the joy of the bridegroom; "As the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee," Isai. lxii. 5. And we read of the joy of the bride; "With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought, and shall enter into the King's palace," Ps. xlv. 15. Again, "Let us be glad and rejoice, for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready," Rev. xix. 7. And all Christ's faithful seedsmen are to come again with rejoicing, bringing their sheaves with them; when they will be blessed as faithful servants, and enter into the joy of their Lord. This is the crowning work, and the crown of the anointing oil; and it will then appear that the anointing of these Levites will surely be the anointing of an everlasting priesthood.

In this glass my dear friends may see the lamp of the foolish virgins, who heard the word, and anon with joy received it, but had no root in themselves;

and, if no rooted love to the Bridegroom, there can be no joy and rejoicing at his coming. Guilt, rising up in the conscience, will fill the mind with shame and fear; and, when vengeance is expected, enmity rises up, and envy will soon wither all joy, and when joy withers, the lamp is out.

Once more: from these different operations of the Spirit are the servants of God differently denominated. We read of sons of thunder alarming; of burning and shining lights illuminating; and of ministers being a flaming fire, which is the seraphim inflaming others. We read of living creatures carrying the word of life; these are the cherubims. We read of sons of peace, and ambassadors of peace; these have got pardon in their mouths, publishing salvation. We read of sons of consolation comforting the mourners; and, according to the learned, we read of sons of oil, Zech. iv. 14, carrying the horn to anoint the sons of David. Blending these things together by the name of anointing, has led some gracious souls to conclude that they have no part nor lot in the matter. But why not? Because, say they, the anointing teacheth us to know all things, and I am so blind and ignorant that I know nothing.

Beloved, farewell; God Almighty bless and keep thee both! So prays thine affectionate father in the bonds of the gospel,

W. HUNTINGTON, S. S.

FINIS.