

THE WALK OF FAITH

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THE WALK OF FAITH, CHAPTER I.

WHOEVER WALKS WITH GOD MUST BE FIRST ACQUAINTED WITH THE WAY OF PEACE.

IT is the constant usage of Scripture to represent spiritual things by material, and to speak of the faculties and actions of the soul by terms borrowed from those of the body. Walking is a bodily action, and consists in moving and going from one place to another; hence it is applied to the spiritual walk. The soul, reconciled to God and at peace with him, has an appointed way in which it is to walk, in order to enjoy the grace promised to them who are in Christ Jesus. This is enjoyed by faith; and therefore, the Scripture calls the believer's going on in his walk with God from strength to strength, the walk of faith. "We walk by faith," says the apostle, "not by sight."

When man fell from God, he lost his way, and had neither will nor power to return. The Old Testament Church makes this confession,—"All we, like sheep, have gone astray, we have turned EVERY ONE to his own way." (Isaiah.53: 6.)

The apostle Peter reminds believers of this,—"Ye were as sheep going astray, but are now returned to the shepherd and bishop of your souls." (1 Peter 2: 25.) To which agree the words of his brother Paul: "There is none righteous, no, not one: there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God: they are ALL gone out of the way." (Romans. 3: 10, 11, 12.) The whole human race, say the oracles of truth, is gone astray, ALL of them are gone out of the way; they have left the way of God, and turned everyone to his own way; they are unable, like a poor lost sheep, the most unable of all creatures, to return; yea, they are unwilling also; for they walk not after the spirit, but after the flesh,—carnally minded, and in their carnal mind, enmity itself against God and his ways.

It pleased God, in the exceeding riches of his grace, to reveal to those wanderers the way of salvation, He made it known to them upon the fall; and believers, from that time forward, saw it plainly, and went on in it comfortably. Enoch, Noah, Abraham, &c. are said to have walked with God, in the very same way afterwards marked out by the written word; which was a directory to the Jews, showing them how they should walk in the steps of

the faith of their father Abraham. Age after age, God raised up the prophets to bring his people into the king's highway, and to put them upon praying, that they might be kept in it. By the mouth of his servant David, he gave them this promise,— "Good and upright is the Lord; therefore will he teach sinners in the way: the meek will he guide in judgment, and the meek will he teach his way."

Encouraged by this warrant from the word of God, sinners, feeling their wants, were led to pray, —"Show me thy ways, O Lord! teach me thy paths; lead me in thy truth, and teach me." (Psalm 25: 4, 5.) It is written in the Prophets, "They shall be all taught of God—they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord." If rely of his children lack wisdom, and ask it of God, he giveth to all his liberally, and upbraideth not. He brings them by his word and by his Holy Spirit to the knowledge of themselves and to the knowledge of the true God.

Divine teaching is necessary to make men acquainted with themselves. They know not their state, nor fear their danger, until the Holy Spirit, according to his office, proceed from the Father and the Son; then he convinces them of sin, of the exceeding sinfulness of it, of the guilt thereby incurred, and of the wrath deserved. He enlightens the understanding with a clear sight of those truths, and be fastens the conviction of them upon the conscience. Then they find that they had been blind and ignorant, rebels in their wills, and apostates in their hearts from God. He makes them feel the corruption of their nature and the error of their ways, in which, if they had gone on, they must inevitably have perished; for they were without will and without power to return to God. When they were made to see it right, that they ought to return and to repent, yet it was not their choice to come to him in the way of believing. They found they could not believe, unless it was given them from above. Faith is the gift of God, and cannot be received but by the mighty operation of God. He must put forth his divine power, or else the convinced sinner will remain utterly helpless and hopeless, shut up in unbelief.

Thus the Lord teaches all his children; he makes them acquainted with their fallen state, and sensible of their guilt and of their misery. He brings them to the right knowledge of the corruption of every faculty of soul and body, which are always inclined to evil, and incapable of doing anything truly good. A corrupt tree can bring forth nothing but evil fruit. The judgment is enlightened to see this, the conscience is awakened to feel this, and. thereby the convinced sinner is made willing to be taught the way of salvation. The Holy Spirit fulfils his office, by teaching him the knowledge of God.

Our blessed Saviour declares, no man knoweth the Son but the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him; and this he does by the Holy Spirit of wisdom and revelation, who is therefore given to the children of God. that they may know him and believe in him as their reconciled Father in Christ Jesus. This saving knowledge is hid from the worldly wise and prudent, but is revealed unto the unlearned, whom the Holy Spirit has made simple and teachable people. To them he reveals the things of God; he makes them acquainted with the Nature of the Godhead, which is one. There is one Jehovah, and there is none other. And also with the Personality in the Godhead, Father, Son, and Spirit. These three exist in the one Jehovah. They took those names, not to describe their manner of existing, but their manner of acting; not what they are in themselves, but how they stand related to us in the economy of redemption; for the Eternal Three entered into covenant before all worlds, and agreed to sustain certain covenant offices, and assume names, or characters, descriptive of their offices. Father is the title of that divine person, who, out of his infinite grace, gave an innumerable company of sinners to his Son, upon condition that he would be manifested in the flesh, and would become their surety, to work out for them a righteousness in his life, and to make an atonement for them by his death, and then he would be his Father and their Father. .

A co-equal and co-eternal person accepted the condition, and covenanted to be made man, and to live and die for the many sons whom he was to bring to glory; therefore he took the name of Son, Son of God, Son of Man, &c. Another co-equal and co-eternal person covenanted to breathe life into them, to be to them the Spirit or breath of life, that they might be regenerate from a death in trespasses and sins, and be made the children of God, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; therefore he is called throughout the Scriptures, the Spirit, or the breath of life. He makes them acquainted with the covenant, as he has promised: –"The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will show them his covenant." (Psalm 25: 14.) He will open to them the nature and certainty of all covenant engagements for the establishment and growth of their faith. "The covenant was ordered in all things and sure." It was ORDERED by the counsel and purpose of the Eternal Three, concerning the heirs of promise, whose salvation was settled by two, immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, –his counsel, his oath. His counsel, the result of his infinite wisdom, confirmed by that sacred oath which cannot possibly be broken.

All his perfections stand engaged to see the sovereign decree, thus solemnly ratified, carried into execution; for what was ordered is sure—sure as the throne of Jehovah, unchangeable as his nature, durable as his being. Though it be but a man's covenant, yet, when it has been signed and sealed according to law, none disannulleth or addeth thereto. None can disannul God's covenant, and he himself will not. "My covenant will I not break," says he, "nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips," (Psalm 189: 34.) I will not add thereto, nor diminish from it; for I have ordered it in ALL things: I have not left one single thing out, not the least circumstance: I have settled the whole plan by mine unerring wisdom, and I will fulfil every tittle of it by mine almighty power. According to my will, the course of nature and grace is infallibly directed, even the most minute events. Every hair is numbered. Not a sparrow falls but by my divine decree. How safely then may the heirs of promise depend upon a covenant God? And whenever they flee to Jesus for refuge, what strong consolation may they draw from hence, that their salvation is fixed by the immutable counsel and inviolable oath of the blessed Trinity?

The same divine teacher who enabled them to believe those truths for the farther establishment of their faith, led them to discover the FREENESS of all covenant mercies. They are promised as free gifts; they are bestowed to the praise of the glory of free grace; they are not conferred upon the worthy, but upon enemies, upon the ungodly, upon sinners as sinners. No conditions are required, no pre-requisites are expected. The motives which determine God to show mercy to sinners, are not taken from any good in them, or foreseen to be in them. Not for works of righteousness which they have done, or can do; but according to his mercy he sayeth them. He does all to the magnifying of the honors of his own mercy. His covenant was so contrived, carried into execution by the life and death of Jesus, applied by the Holy Spirit, that, according as it is written, he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord. No flesh shall glory in his presence. Boasting is forever excluded; because all as of grace. Wisdom to teach the sinner saving knowledge, righteousness to justify him, strength to keep him, comforts to bless him, heaven to receive him,—these are the free gifts of covenant love; for by grace is he saved through faith, and that not of himself, it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast. Thus would the Lord hide pride from man, and would teach him practically such Scriptures as this,—"Not for your sakes do I this, saith the Lord, be it known unto you, but for mine holy name's sake." (Ezekiel.26.)

Closely connected with this divine lesson is the FULNESS of covenant mercies. Everything needful for the salvation of the sinner is fully as well as

freely provided by the exceeding riches of grace, and is treasured up by the Father's love in the fulness of the Son. To this the Spirit bears witness in the word of truth, and seals his witness upon the believer's heart. It pleased the Father that in the Word made flesh should ALL fulness dwell, and that out of his fulness his people should receive grace for grace. This is the infinite ocean. There is not a stream, not a drop of grace to be had, but from hence. Jesus Christ, as God-man, has it all in himself, and for the same end, as the head has the senses in itself, He has it to communicate to his members, a fulness of light and life, of sense and understanding, of love and joy, yea, of every spiritual blessing. On him, as the head of the body the church, every believing member is directed to live. On him must he depend at all times; and to him must he go for all things. If he seek pardon and peace, righteousness and holiness, a supply of his wants, strength for his warfare, comforts under his miseries, if he expect life in death, and life eternal, he must make continual use of the fulness of Jesus; for in him dwelleth ALL the fulness of the Godhead bodily. It dwelleth in him as in an overflowing fountain.

The Father's love to his adopted children, the experience of it by the grace of the Spirit, are entirely in and from the salvation of Jesus Christ. Out of his fulness comes every covenant mercy of the Godhead, and in a rich abundant stream, always flowing with some blessing or other into the believer's soul. The enjoyment of it on his part may not be always alike comfortable, but it is always alike sure on God's part. Nothing can stop it; nothing can turn its course. Unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again. The river of the water of life proceeds out of the throne of God and of the Lamb, and it will be running on till it comes back into its own ocean. "The water that I will give him," says Jesus, speaking of the believer, "shall be in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life, and bringing with it the fulness of joy and pleasures for evermore."

No man will see any reason to set out in the way to heaven, until he be made acquainted with those truths. His judgment must be enlightened with the knowledge of them. He will never think of changing his course, until he be made sensible of his own sinful and helpless state; and when this is brought home to his conscience, and he has nothing in himself left to trust in, then he will be led to look abroad for help. The Spirit of God will teach him the doctrines of grace, the nature of the Godhead, the persons in the Godhead, the covenant of the divine persons, by which every grace and blessing was freely and fully provided, given by the Father to the Son, in whose fulness they were all laid up for the use of his body the church, and communicated to every

member of it, through the influence of the Holy Spirit. Thus, he is taught, that all is of grace from first to last. Whatever good a sinner receives on earth, or enjoys in heaven, is so given, as to exclude all boasting, and to lay every proud and self-righteous principle in the dust, that grace alone may wear the crown, and may have all the glory.

Here, then, O my soul, is matter of close examination Dost thou know thyself, thy state and condition, and hast thou fled from the wrath to come? Has the light of God's word shone into thy understanding, and made thee to see that thou art indeed set out in the way to heaven? How was this discovered to thee? Did the Holy Spirit ever convince thee of sin, and that thou has lost the image and forfeited the favor of God? Didst thou ever see thyself fallen in Adam, in him a child of wrath, a ruined miserable sinner? Hast thou felt how utterly unable thou art to atone for thy sins or to make thyself holy? And was thou brought to this after many legal trials and self-righteous efforts? At last forced to give up all hope in thyself, and to look to the Lord who made heaven and earth, from whom alone thy help could come?

And hast thou been taught the true knowledge of the unity of the Godhead, and of the persons in it, Father, Son, and Spirit, the covenant of the ever-blessed Three, and the absolute security of all covenant mercies, promised by the Father, and engaged to be given to the Son, as the head of his body the church, who is now actually as God-man in possession of them, and by his Spirit he freely and fully bestows them upon his members: for they will never cease to be receiving out of his fulness grace for grace, until they receive out of the same fulness glory for glory.

O my soul, examine closely, and prove thyself by the standard of the divine word. Search and try what the conviction of thy lost estate has been. Was it deep and practical? Is it an abiding truth with thee, that there is no help, or hope in thyself? And hast thou fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before thee in the Lord Jesus? Is thy knowledge of the Godhead mere theory, or is it brought into practice? Dost, thou enjoy the Father's love, through faith in the finished salvation of the Son, by the influence of the Holy Spirit? This is the saving knowledge of the Godhead. And is this thine? Dost, thou honor the divine persons, by acknowledging their immutable counsel, and immutable oath, entered into for the security of the heirs of promise, that they might trust, and not be afraid? Dost, thou see with any clearness the absolute safety of relying upon the promises of God, and dost thou expect to draw from hence comfort to thy conscience, and joy to thy heart?

If thou art indeed set out of the way to heaven, art thou settled in the knowledge of thy fallen state? Hast thou found thyself unable to do anything, but to hasten on thy ruin? And from the sight and sense of this, hast thou been led to see all undertaken for thee, and secured to thee, for time and eternity, in the covenant of the ever-blessed Trinity? These truths lie at the very foundation of all comfortable walking with God. See that thou be well grounded in them. The knowledge of thyself is to bring thee to God; the knowledge of God is to lead thee to walk with him. The one is to teach thee to renounce all trust in thyself; the other is to show thee that thou mayest safely place the confidence of thy heart on thy reconciled Father, thy Saviour, and thy guide. Look up to him then, O my soul, and be often praying to him, and saying—O Lord God, that which I see not, teach thou me. Keep me an humble disciple in the school of Christ. Let me be daily learning there, what I am in myself, a fallen, sinful creature, justly deserving everlasting destruction from thy presence. O let me never lose sight of my want of a Saviour, nor ever be without the sense of what he said—"Without me ye can do nothing." Teach me this, thou eternal Spirit. Open thou mine understanding to understand the Scriptures. What thou hast revealed in them concerning the Godhead, and concerning the counsels and works of the ever-blessed Trinity, that reveal to my soul. Thou hast declared, that no man can say Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost; O shine then into my dark mind, and lead me into the saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus. Make me acquainted with his covenant undertakings, and his perfect fulfilling of them, that by resting on his finished salvation, I may find the Father's love in the Son, his Father my Father, and may be brought, through thy blessed influence, to have fellowship with the Father and the Son. O lead me into all truth, thou Spirit of wisdom and revelation, that I may know the things which belong to my peace, and may, through thee, be made wise unto salvation. Amen.

THE WALK OF FAITH CHAPTER II.

THE BELIEVER IS RECONCILED TO GOD, AND HAS THE PEACE OF GOD RULING IN HIS CONSCIENCE, AND THEY TWO WALK TOGETHER. BECAUSE THEY ARE NOW AGREED.

IT is written in the prophets—"They shall be all taught of God"—every one of his children shall be brought to the knowledge of the truth, and what they have

been taught in the understanding shall be made practical, that it may have its proper effect upon the conscience. And this is answered when it comes under the authority and power of the word of God, and faithfully accuses or condemns according to that unerring rule.

Conscience supposes the knowledge of some rule, and it consists in comparing a man's state or actions with that rule, in order to discover whether they agree with it, or not.

The rule is the Scripture, the whole revealed will of God, which is the unerring, and the only standard of right and wrong; for all Scripture is given by the inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, to teach the man of God what is truth, and to make him wise in it unto salvation. Fallen man has no means of discovering the will of God, but as it is revealed to him. He has no innate knowledge. He has no implanted principles. He is born as ignorant of God, and of the things of God, as a wild ass's colt. His understanding is darkened, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in him because of the blindness of his heart. And he has no means in his own power of attaining any divine knowledge: for he cannot, by searching, find out God. The world by its wisdom never did find him out. The Hottentots know as much of him as the Greeks and Romans did; indeed, the natural man, let him be ever so wise, knoweth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them; because they are spiritually discerned.

The Scripture, then, is the only rule of right and wrong. Conscience has no direction but this rule. Neither ethics, nor metaphysics, no fancied light of dark nature, no lawless law of rebel nature, no human science, whether pretended to be implanted, or by the use of reason to be acquired, have any right to guide the conscience. These are blind leaders of the blind: they undertake what they are not only unfit, but what they have no warrant for. A parcel of felons in jail may think what they will of their state. They may take it upon them to form a mock court, and to try one another. They may acquit or condemn, as they please: but the judge and the jury will pay no regard to their foolish proceedings. There is a word which is to try us at the last day, and by that we should try ourselves at present. It was revealed for this purpose. And when the revealed truth is clearly understood, then conscience is acting aright; if it finds a true verdict for God, either accusing, or else excusing, according to the direction of his unerring word. And this is the work of the Holy Spirit. He enlightened the judgment with the knowledge of the truth, in order to make it practical: which he effects by bringing the conscience to

submit to the sovereignty of God in the law, and to submit to the righteousness of God in the gospel. Herein he displays the omnipotent power of his grace, according to the promise, (John 16: 8). He carries with demonstration the conviction of guilt, and the conviction of righteousness, to the conscience. By the former he gives the sinner a real heart-felt sense of his sin and misery, and he acknowledges himself a convict of the law, justly deserving all its penalties, in time and in eternity. By the latter he sets open a door of hope, showing him the perfect righteousness of the God-man, wrought out for such guilty creatures as he is: he enables him to plead it before the throne, and to trust in it for his acceptance; by which means he finds relief in his conscience, and comfort in his heart. Being justified by faith, he has peace with God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

What the Holy Spirit teaches, has life as well as light in it. He accompanies his doctrine with the power of God. What he has revealed concerning the state of mankind under the fall, he applies with divine evidence to the conscience. Under his influence, the sinner reads those scriptures, and feels the truth of them. "As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: through the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation: for it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one; there is none that understandeth; there is none that seeketh after God: they are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Now we know that what things so ever the law saith, it commands them who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God." His mouth is stopped, He has no plea to make: no excuse left. What the law saith, he subscribes to. The law brings him in guilty before God, and in his conscience, he bears his testimony to the law. He acknowledges it to be holy, just, and good, even in its penalties, which he deserves to suffer. Formerly he tried in his own strength, and took great pains to escape them, but now he gives over all those self-righteous attempts, He found, that he labored in vain to atone for his sins, or to make himself holy. He groans, being burdened under the ruins of the fall. His ignorance, rebellion, apostasy, his corruption in every faculty of soul and body, render him unable to take one step in his return to God. He owns it, and confesses, that without Christ he can do nothing.

O my soul, consider whether God has taught thee this knowledge of thyself. It is absolutely necessary to reconcile thee to him and to his ways. Thou wilt never heartily agree to walk with him by faith, so long as thou hast anything

of thine own to trust in, or to draw comfort from. Examine then; art thou sensible of thy fall, and dost thou feel the sad effects of it? Dost, thou know what it is to be alienated from the life of God? What! dost thou find to this day the Opposition of thy sinful nature to the holy law, the flesh lusting in thee against the spirit? Has God thus convinced thee of sin? If he has, then in thy conscience thou submittest to what the law says of thy state. Thy mouth is stopped, and thou art guilty before God. Thou hast nothing of thine own to urge in arrest of judgment. This is an enlightened conscience: so far it speaks for God, and is guided by his unerring word. O pray to the Lord the Spirit, and beg of him to guide thee into all truth, that he may bring thy conscience to submit to the righteousness of Jesus, and to be a faithful witness for him.

This is his proper work in the soul, and what he undertook in the everlasting covenant. "When he is come," says Christ, "he shall convince the world of righteousness: he shall testify of me, that I am made of God righteousness to believers: and he shall glorify me as Jehovah their righteousness; thus he shall teach them my righteousness, with which the Father is satisfied; and he shall through faith apply it effectually to their consciences, and they shall also be satisfied with it." Being justified by faith, they shall have peace with God, through their Lord Jesus Christ.

Righteousness is a perfect conformity to the law; if it be tried by the balance of the sanctuary, it is full weight; if by the standard, it is full measure: if judgment be laid to the line and righteousness to the plummet, it is quite upright. There is no defect in it of any kind. This is the righteousness of the law—it must be perfect and continual, failing in no one point; for the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God. And it is an adjudged case, that there is none righteous, no, not one. It is left upon record, that ALL have sinned, and come short of the glory of God: therefore, by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight.

When the Holy Spirit has convinced a sinner of his being in this unrighteous state, then it becomes an important inquiry—how can the Judge of all the earth ever look upon and treat a sinner as if he was a righteous person? To which the gospel answers directly—"God hath made Christ to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God IN him."

This was agreed upon in the covenant of the eternal Three. The Father undertook to maintain the honor and dignity of his law and justice. His co-equal Son undertook for his people to come in their nature, and to stand in

their place and stead; to act for them, and to suffer for them. As their surety, he made himself answerable for their debt of obedience, and for their debt of suffering. Accordingly, when the great law-fulfiller cometh into the world, He saith—"Lo, I COME TO DO THY WILL, O GOD." He did it in his infinitely holy life, in which he magnified the precepts of the law, and made them everlastingly honorable. He suffered it in his infinitely holy passion, bearing the sins and sorrows of his people, their curse and wrath, in his body and soul upon the tree, until the immense debt being paid, he cried out in the triumph of a conquering though a dying Jesus—"IT IS FINISHED;" for through death he conquered death, and him that had the power of death, that is, the devil: he finished the transgression, and made an end of sins, and made reconciliation for iniquity, and brought in everlasting righteousness.

This is the great leading truth of the gospel, in which the peace of conscience is principally concerned. The justly offended God is here revealed under the character of a reconciled Father. He gave his Son to be a covenant of the people; who was to fulfil all covenant engagements for them; and he has fulfilled them all. The end of his living and dying for them is answered. He has finished the transgression, and has made peace by the blood of his cross, He has brought in everlasting righteousness by his divine, obedience, and the Lord is well pleased with him for his righteousness' sake; yea, he is well pleased also with his body the church. He looks upon all the members, as he looks upon the head. He accepts them in the beloved. He beholds them in him with perfect delight, and rests in his love. He is his Father, and their Father. He is related to his whole family in heaven and earth in the closest bonds of fatherly affection, and He makes his love known to them, and sheds it abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost.

He would have all his children to address him under his dear name—OUR FATHER which art in heaven: and to expect from his fatherly love all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus.

When this comfortable doctrine is received into the conscience, it silences guilt, and produces peace with God. The gospel comes with full authority to establish it in the conscience: for it is therein revealed and proposed to our belief under the character of a divine RECORD, made authentic, and properly enrolled in the court of heaven. The witnesses are, the eternal Three. Their record is in the nature of a covenant, confirmed by their joint counsel, and ratified by their joint oath—the two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie. He graciously vouchsafed to give the heirs of promise this

perfect security for their salvation, that after they had fled to Jesus for refuge, there might be an end of all strife in their consciences, and they might have strong consolation. Accordingly, we read—"There are three that bear record in heaven; the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are ONE."

A record among men is an authentic testimony in writing, entered by authority in one of the king's courts, in order to preserve the proceedings had upon any suit. This record contains the final determination of the judges in that cause, and is their memorial of it, and therefore imports in itself such uncontrollable evidence, as to admit of no proof to the contrary. The matter of the record is never allowed to be tried by a jury, but is of such credit as not to be questioned in any instance. This is the nature of a record in law. And if we receive the witness of men, certainly the witness of God is greater; for this is the witness of God, which he hath witnessed of his Son; namely, "He hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son." To which the Spirit beareth witness: because the Spirit is truth.

He has revealed the covenant of life and peace which was between the Father and the Son: he has entered it upon record, and every word of the record may be pleaded: for it is allowed to be good and valid in the court of heaven. As a powerful advocate, he pleads the perfect fulfilling of all righteousness in the life and death of the God-man; and the Father's perfect acceptance of what he did and suffered, as the full redemption price for all his people; and he carries his cause in the court of conscience. The awakened sinner is convinced, that the work of Jesus is a finished salvation, and that the divine record is a sufficient warrant for him to believe in it. Accordingly, he gives it credit, and is enabled to plead it against guilt and fear. Upon which he finds peace with God. Trusting to the blood of sprinkling for pardon, and to the righteousness of Jesus for acceptance, he then sees God reconciled to him, and that reconciles him to God, and by the spirit of adoption he cries—"Abba, Father."

But, perhaps, it may be said,—"I believe this, but I do not find peace in my conscience." Nay, but you do not believe it; if you did, it would certainly bring present relief; for guilt comes from the broken law, and from the apprehension of punishment deserved: but the law has been restored to its dignity, and made infinitely honorable by the righteousness of Jesus; how can you believe this, and yet be under guilt? The punishment was laid upon Jesus, and he suffered all that was due to his people, as their atoning sacrifice; how can you believe this, and yet fear that justice will punish you? A debtor would not fear to be arrested if his surety had paid the sum, and got him a full discharge. A felon

with the king's pardon in his pocket, would dishonor it greatly, if he was to live in continual dread and terror of suffering for his crime. Examine carefully, and pray for the right understanding of your case; and depend upon it, you will find, that either you do not believe the matter of fact, or the record concerning it.

The matter of fact is the method provided for quieting the guilty conscience—a provision of exceeding rich grace, and of everlasting efficacy. The Father gave the Son to be the surety for his people, and to live and to die for them, and in their stead. The Son has finished the work which the Father gave him to do, and is become the author of their eternal salvation.

The record of this fact is in the Scripture. Father, Son, and Spirit, the three witnesses in heaven, have by covenant and oath attested, that there is life for everyone who believeth in Jesus. "God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Now, consider of what do you doubt. Has Jesus made full atonement for sin, and brought in everlasting righteousness? Has the Father demonstrated, again and again, his perfect delight in his person, and his infinite satisfaction in his work? Certainly, you cannot question this doctrine, if you believe the Scripture to be a divine revelation. Do you doubt then of God's free promise, or of his faithfulness to fulfil it? What! Can his word be broken? Can his promise fail? His word and promise ratified in the immutable covenant, and sealed with the immutable oath of the eternal Three? This is your warrant to believe. And do you question the veracity of it? "He that believeth not God, hath made him a liar."

O what a dreadful sin to give the lie to the Holy Trinity! The Father says, Whosoever cometh; the Son says, All that come unto me shall be saved; the Spirit says, Come, whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely, and be saved. Are not these faithful sayings worthy of all credit; especially as they are delivered with divine authority, under the great seal of heaven? If doubts still remain, pray against them, and meditate upon the unreasonableness as well as the wickedness of them, and continue to hear and to read the word (for faith cometh, and groweth too, by hearing), that you may be enabled to put honor upon it, by venturing your soul upon the divine faithfulness, to make it good to you.

Perhaps you may believe the record, which God hath given of his Son, but you cannot do it with steadfastness: you can, at times, stay your mind upon God with sweet peace, but you are not able to maintain it: yea, you lose it when you want it most. How, in this case, shall the believer keep the peace of God ruling always in his conscience?

It is to be maintained in the same way by which it was first received. It came by believing, and is thereby strengthened. By the shedding of the blood of Jesus Christ, peace was made between God and man; by the sprinkling of his blood, peace is made between man and God. When this is applied to the conscience by the Holy Spirit, and received by faith, there is a continual preservative against guilt, –"For the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin." Here is the witness of God: and it is always the same. This believed will always bring the same cleansing virtue, and keep the conscience purged from dead works. If at any time guilt defile, it, then unbelief has entered, and has been denying, either that the blood of Christ does cleanse from all sin, or that the divine testimony concerning it does deserve credit. Guilt cannot easily enter into the eon-science but by one of those two ways. Examine, and see which it is. Do you doubt of the virtue of Christ's blood, or of the truth of God's record concerning it?

You reply, I dare not question either of them; yet nevertheless I cannot, with any settled comfort, main-rain peace with God. But it is your privilege to maintain it, confirmed to you by the royal charter of grace, and ratified in it by many express promises. Jesus has made peace by the blood of his cross; and if you believe what the God of truth says of it, peace should rule in your heart always: for all things are well ordered for you, and sure in the everlasting covenant. On the part of God, all is unalterably fixed and settled. What is it, then, which unsettles you? Is it something you find in yourself? Is it from indwelling sin, remaining corruption, a body of sin and death, or from the weakness of our faith, and of your other graces? What! have you forgotten, that from all these the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth? Is it from a suspicion, that our peace is. not right, because it ebbs and flows? This should humble, but not discourage you: because there is a gracious provision made to remove your suspicion. God has taken the charge both of you and of your peace; he keeps both by his mighty power, as it is written, The peace of God which surpasseth all understanding, shall. keep with a safeguard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. You are as safe in the hand of God, at the lowest ebb, as at the highest springtide of sensible comfort: because your safeguard is almighty, and he is equally concerned about your peace, whether you feel it

or not. Your sense of it may vary, but he varies not. There is-in him no variableness, nor shadow of turning. How should the belief of this stay your mind upon your God, and keep guilt out of the conscience, even when you are walking in darkness, and have no light!

O my soul! meditate upon those precious truths. Give thyself wholly to them. Consider how deeply they enter into the very being of thy peace. Unless they be under-stood, thou canst not know the way of peace; and unless they be received by faith; thy conscience will not be purged from guilt and unbelief. And while these deft? it, thou canst not look upon God as reconciled, or delight thyself in him or in his ways. Can two walk together except they be agreed? But when they are agreed, and of one mind, then Walking with God becomes pleasant, and all his paths are peace.

Search, then, and examine thyself, O my soul, and that not lightly, and after the manner of dissemblers with God, but closely and thoroughly by the light of the divine word, and under the teaching of the divine Spirit. Dost, thou understand what is revealed concerning the way of peace—what was covenant in the counsel of the eternal Three—and what has been done in consequence of it! Jesus Christ is the great peacemaker. He has made peace through the blood of his cross. The Father sent him, gave him to be a covenant of the people; to fulfil for them all righteousness, and to be their atoning sacrifice. The Father has seen the work which he gave him to do, and has accepted it; is perfectly satisfied with it, and therefore is infinitely delighted with him, and with all his. He would now be known by the high style and title of the GOD OF PEACE. Fury is not in him to those whom he sees in the beloved, He is a Father, fully, forever reconciled to all his children in Christ Jesus. He loves them, as he loves him, with every kind feeling of the most tender parent. And he will bring every one of them to partake with their glorified head of the blessings of his everlasting love.

If thine understanding be enlightened with this knowledge of God, is it effectual in thy conscience? Canst thou plead it there? This is the principal thing. Hast thou a good conscience, freed from guilt and condemnation, by believing the record which God hath given of his Son? He is well pleased with him for his righteousness' sake. His soul delighted in the sweet-smelling savour of his Son's sacrifice. Because he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, therefore the Father hath highly exalted him. This is the witness of God. Dost, thou yield to it, and give it full credit? What! canst thou set to thy seal that God is true, and that what

satisfied him has perfectly satisfied thee, and therefore the peace of God rules in thy conscience always, and by all means?

Remember, this is thy privilege. Thou art called to the enjoyment of it. The evidence is as full as could be desired, for the ending of all strife in thy conscience. The greatest honor thou canst put upon the divine witnesses is so to end it, as to suffer no appeal to be made from their decree. Thy conscience should join issue. It should say the same that God does. It should plead thy discharge from guilt, under the broad seal of heaven; and should stop the mouth of unbelief, with those words written in golden letters in the royal charter of grace—"There is NO condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus—they are freely forgiven ALL trespasses. They are justified from all things." "Thy sins and iniquities," says God himself, "will I remember NO MORE." These are the immutable words of truth. They cannot be broken. O my soul! put honor upon them. Believe them without doubt or wavering. Why dost thou draw back thy confidence? Trust, and be not afraid. Thou mayest safely venture to believe all that the Lord hath spoken. He will make it good; and the more thou believest, the more will be made good. More faith will bring thee in a richer revenue of peace. The Lord increase thy faith! May it entirely influence thy conscience, that it may agree with God: neither questioning the infinite value of the righteousness and atonement of Immanuel, nor yet the faithfulness of his promise, under which thou claimest them—"WHOSOEVER WILL may take them freely."

Let thy faith be ever so well established, yet thou wilt meet with something every day to try it; but remember, the foundation on which thou standest cannot fail, and none, —nothing shall remove thee from it. The Lord brought thee to build upon this foundation. He hath begun the good work, and he will not leave his work unfinished. The top stone shall certainly be brought forth with shouting GRACE—GRACE; his love is like himself. His purposes, his word, his works change not. What if thou feel many things wrong in thyself? Thou art sometimes low in spirits; thou canst not be pleased with thy corruption; and thou art not pleased with thy duties: thy graces are weak, thy love not as it should be, thy best services unprofitable; yet these very things, rightly understood, and improved by the teaching of the Holy Spirit, will be the means of establishing thy conscience in the peace of God. They will lead thee every day to a greater dependence upon sovereign grace: for they will leave thee nothing to trust in, but the righteousness and the atonement of Immanuel; nothing to keep thee, but his faithfulness to his word and work; and nothing to bless thee, but his free covenant mercy. Thus, they will work

together for thy good. Trials will settle thee. Enemies will confirm thee in peace. Troubles will bring thee nearer to God. Amidst all discouragements thou wilt have this promise to stay thy soul upon—"I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." His friendship is fixed. It springs from the purpose and love of his own breast, and therefore was and is always unchangeably the same in him. Whom he loveth he loveth unto the end.

Well, then, O my soul, thou hast examined thyself. How is it with thee? Dost thou know the way of peace? Art thou at peace with God, being justified by faith? Canst thou plead this peace and maintain it in 'thy conscience? Is it a good conscience? Does it witness for God? Is it a pure conscience, cleansed from guilt and condemnation? Is it satisfied that the Father is perfectly reconciled through the life and death of his Son? And is it satisfied with the divine record, giving thee a free grant of the benefits of his life and death, and putting thee into possession by believing? Art thou of one heart and of one mind in this matter with the Father, and now being at peace with him, agreed to walk in his way? It indeed he has been thus gracious unto thee, bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me praise him for the exceeding riches of his love. What a mercy is it, that he has brought thee into the way of peace! O go on; fear not. Set out daily with a holy humble boldness to walk with thy God. And for the guiding of thy feet in his way, and that thy steps may not decline from it, be diligent in hearing and reading the word of God. Study it. Pray over it. Mind what encouragement it gives thee.—"Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; and having an High Priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water." (Hebrews.10: 19, 20, &c.)

What perfect peace is here proclaimed to fire children of God! Sin had separated them from him, but there is access through Jesus. He is the way to the Father. He is a new way, in opposition to the old way of works, which upon the fate was shut forever. He is a living way; all that are alive to God live by the faith of the Son of God. He is a consecrated way, everything needful for their holy walk being provided in him. And they are required to walk in this way with boldness; trusting to the blood of Jesus, and depending on the intercession of the high priest over the house of God, they have access with confidence into the holiest. It is their undoubted privilege to draw near with a true heart, not like a double-minded man, wavering and unstable; but

with full assurance of faith, entirely satisfied that God in Christ has nothing in his breast but love towards them; therefore they should believe in him, and serve him without fear, having their hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, maintaining peace with God through the continual application of the blood of Jesus, and having their bodies washed with pure water, body and soul being cleansed from the guilt and filth of sin by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost.

O may this be my happy experience! May I ever have grace to draw near to my reconciled Father with a good conscience. Yea, Lord, this is my heart's desire. I would walk with thee day by day in perfect peace. O deny me not the request of my lips. Glory be to thy free love, that through Jesus I am suffered to have access into thy presence, and am commanded to come with boldness into the holiest of all. Lo, I come before thee, holy Father, to plead the blood shedding and the righteousness of thy dear Son; and I hope my plea will be admitted, through the intercession of the high priest of the house of God. O look, thou God of peace, upon the face of thy beloved. See me in him, I desire to be found in him; and for his sake let the faithful witness for thy love in Jesus abide with me, that in hearing and reading thy word, in prayer and meditation, he may increase my faith in thee, and love to thee.

O God the Holy Ghost, I beseech thee to make practical upon my heart what thou hast revealed in Scripture of the Father's love. Deliver me from guilt and condemnation by the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus. Apply it effectually. Apply it continually. Help me to believe with more comfort in my conscience, and with more steadfastness in my walk, that his blood cleanseth from all sin. O blessed Spirit carry on thy work in my soul. Lead me from faith to faith, that I may at all times have freedom to enter within the veil to a reconciled God and Father, and may be able to maintain peace with him against doubts and fears, against corruptions and enemies. O teach me to draw near to him with a true heart, steadfastly persuaded of his love, and in full assurance of faith. This is thy gracious office: O fulfil it in me, that my heart may be sprinkled from an evil conscience, and my body washed with pure water. Let me find grace sufficient for me, for Jesus' sake; to whom, with thee, O Father, and the eternal Spirit, three Persons in one Jehovah, be equal honor and glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

THE WALK OF FAITH CHAPTER III.

THE BELIEVER IN HIS HEART CLEAVES TO GOD, AND WALKS WITH HIM IN LOVE.

THIS depends entirely upon a good conscience. There can be no love of God unless there be first peace with God. No convinced sinner can love him until he believes him to be reconciled. While guilt remains in the conscience, enmity will keep its place in the heart: for so long as he looks upon his sins unpardoned, and God, the just avenger of them, he must consider him as a jealous God, and a consuming fire. In this view there is everything that can increase his guilty fears. And while these defiles the conscience, instead of walking with God, he would run away from him, and, like the first offenders, he would foolishly try to hide himself from the presence of God.

But when the Holy Spirit has discovered the way of peace, and has enabled the sinner to find peace, being pardoned and justified through faith in Christ Jesus, then he looks upon God in another light. He can view him, according as he has proclaimed himself—the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth: keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin. Under this endearing character, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is revealed in Scripture. Thus, would he be considered in the covenant of grace—related in the nearest bond of affection to all his children. Ho is their Father, the Father of mercies, freely loving, freely forgiving, freely accepting them in the beloved. The Holy Spirit convinces them of it, and sheds the Father's love to them abroad in their hearts; the sense of which sweetly 'inclines them to love him again. Love begets love. God has put on the tender bowels of an ever-loving parent, and he gives them the affection of dutiful children. They love him because he first loved them. Then it is the delight of their souls to cultivate and improve this love on their part, and it becomes their heaven upon earth to walk with their God in the ways wherein he has appointed to meet them, to love them, and to bless them.

The main point, then, in the Christian walk is to know how to maintain peace in the conscience; because this is the powerful motive upon which the believer first sets out, and it is the great spring which keeps him going on. While his conscience continues pure and undefiled, and the peace of God rules in it, all is well. He does not stop; he does not halt in the way. But when guilt enters,

unbelief certainly follows close after it, and then there is a fresh controversy in the court of conscience, Many doubts arise, and afford matter for strife and debate. The sense of peace is not only disturbed, but is also for a time destroyed, by such suspicions as these: "Am I freely pardoned? –Is God fully reconciled to me? –Is he still my loving Father? I fear not. I have done so and so. He is certainly displeased with me, and therefore I dare not approach him, as I used to do, with love and confidence." This is an evil conscience. It is not purged from dead works, because guilt is still in it, and this keeps the soul at a distance from God. It begets a coldness and a shyness to him, and by shutting out the comfortable sense of his love, makes way for fear of wrath. Then the motives to walk with God lose their influence and an evil heart of unbelief tempts the man to depart from the living God.

Look well, then, O my soul, to this leading truth, which has such universal influence over the Christian walk. Attend to the peace of thy conscience. See it be true peace, and mind it be well settled. Learn to maintain it upon gospel motives. The heart follows the determination of the conscience, and cleaves to the Lord, or departs from him, according as the conscience excuses or accuses. It is therefore absolutely necessary for our peace, that we should know how God has shown himself reconciled in Christ Jesus. This character of him in the Scriptures should be studied. Whoever has been enabled to call him Abba, Father, should implore the assistance of the Holy Spirit for an increase of faith, and should make use of all appointed means for his growth in the knowledge of the love of his heavenly Father. The apostle is upon this subject in (Romans 5.), a chapter abounding with powerful arguments to establish the peace of God in the conscience, in order that the love of God may rule in the heart. He gives us this account of the privileges of a justified man. He has peace with God through Jesus Christ, by whom he has a free access to God—is in a state of grace—stands in it by the power of God—has reason to rejoice (come what will) in hope of the glory to be revealed—and whatever he meets with in the way to glory should increase the rejoicing of his hope, and confirm his heart in the love of God to him. Observe how divinely the apostle speaks: "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope; and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us."

What privileges! how many, how free, how blessed, are here declared to be the portion of the justified man, which he is to enjoy in his reconciled God! Each of them tending to establish peace in his conscience, and love in his heart, that he may delight himself in God and in his ways.

The first and chief blessing in experience, which draws after it all the rest, is the Spirit. The Holy Ghost is given unto him to be a witness for Jesus, and to shed abroad the Father's love through him. He comes as the Spirit of life to quicken the soul, which had been dead in trespasses and sins, and to bring it to the knowledge of salvation; which he does,

Secondly, –By the gift of faith—being justified by faith. He enables the sinner to believe in the finished work of the God-man, and to trust to the free grant of it in the word of God; whereby he sees himself fully justified: through the atonement of Jesus freed from sin and guilt; through the righteousness of Jesus entitled to lift and glory; and therefore,

Thirdly, –He has peace with God through Jesus Christ his Lord. He sees God is at peace with him—perfectly and continually reconciled. The peace is everlasting, which was made through the blood of the everlasting covenant. The belief of this quiets and satisfies the sinner's conscience; which being purged by the blood, and justified by the righteousness of Jesus Christ his Lord, is at peace, is freed from guilty fears, and is reconciled to God, yea, to the justice of God, who can now be just, and yet the justifier of the ungodly. To what high honor is he then called? He is admitted into friendship with God, and has,

Fourthly, –Access by faith into this grace, wherein he stands; access to a mercy-seat, to which he is invited to come freely, as a beloved child to an affectionate parent. Boldness and access with confidence are required and commanded. "Let us come boldly to the throne of grace: having boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus," let us by faith make use of that new and living way which he hath opened for us. O what a mercy is it thus to have access to a gracious Father; how much is the mercy increased by his settling his children in it! "We STAND in it," says the apostle, denoting the being fixed in a state of perfect acceptance, conferred by sovereign grace; brought into it by unchangeable love, and kept in it by the power of a faithful God:—how strengthening to faith, how encouraging to hope!—for, Fifthly,—We rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Faith relies upon the truth of what God hath promised, and hope waits for the enjoyment of the good in the promise,

but more especially for the glory which is to be revealed. This hope of glory is full of rejoicing: because everything which hope looks at and draws its joy from, depends on the truth and faithfulness of a covenant God: there can be no failing on his part, and therefore on the believer's there can be no disappointment. On this ground hope casts its anchor, both sure and steadfast, and finds all safe during the storms of life, yea, has many a sweet foretaste of the promised glory, brought into the soul by these very storms: for,

Sixthly, –We rejoice in tribulations also. These are so far from taking away the joy of the justified man, that they tend greatly to increase it, and to make it more holy, as well as more happy. Tribulations produce a plentiful harvest of blessings; they bring forth Patience, giving occasion to exercise the graces of the Spirit, to find the truth and the power of them, and thereby working submission under the cross to the will of God. "It is good for me," says David, "that I have been afflicted:" his troubles brought him to God. –"Before I was afflicted, I went astray." His troubles kept him near to God, dependent on the divine strength to bear them, with patience; and for a happy issue out of them. Whereby he learnt

Experience, which follows suffering and patience. Tribulations teach us what we are as sinners; and what God is to his reconciled children. They make us sensible of our weakness; and of our being strong only in the Lord—of our misery, and of his comforts—of what we deserve, and of what he saves us from; they bring us to give up of ourselves, upon the sure mercies of a covenant God: whereby our hope in him being tried, and by trials confirmed, we discover his love to us in suffering; and by daily experience become quite satisfied, that our Hope is the grace of the Holy Spirit: for it answers the scripture character; it rejoices in tribulation. It has good reason so to do. It experiences God's faithfulness. Everything promised being made good to us in time, we thereby grow up into the full assurance of hope, that we shall not fail of receiving the promised glory. And this Hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, who is given unto us. He is given to satisfy our hearts of the love of God to us, and to lead us to study the nature and the perfections of his love. Behold! what manner of love, what a free, full, sovereign, and everlasting love the Father hath bestowed upon us. It is actually bestowed and enjoyed by the power of the Holy Ghost. He shows us how the Father loved us, even when we were without strength: yea, herein God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were sinners and enemies, he gave his Son to live and die for us, much more then, being now justified, we shall be saved from wrath, and

brought to glory through him. How does this commend and set off the love of God! It is the first cause of all the graces here mentioned, and bestows them upon the most unworthy. Faith, justification by faith, access to God, standing in a justified state, rejoicing in hope of glory, and rejoicing in the way to it, even in tribulations, because they exercise and improve patience, and put our graces to such trials, as convince us that they are the true graces of the Holy Spirit, and that we shall never be ashamed of our hops in God. In this golden chain of experience, love is the uppermost link. It was the first, and draws after it all the rest. The free love of the Father gave his Son for us, and with him gave ns all things. The same love has now given his Spirit to us, and he has enabled us to know and to believe, that we are justified, have access to a reconciled God, stand accepted before him, &c.; and that he is our loving God and Father in Jesus. The sense of this warms the heart, and sweetly and powerfully influences the affections to delight in, and to walk in love with such an exceedingly gracious and merciful God.

In this delightful portion of Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches ns how he brings sinners to know that God loves them. It is by believing in the righteousness and atonement of the Son of God. Hence spring peace and love—peace with God in the conscience, and love to God in the heart. There is an inseparable connection between those two graces. The one cannot exist without the other. Whoever knows the God of peace, will find that God is love; for being justified by faith, he will thereby see that God is at peace with him, and himself in a state of free acceptance before him: in which he shall stand and be kept safe, until he receive the promised glory. The hope of which will be confirmed by his daily experience of God's faithfulness, making all things, even tribulations, work together for his good in the way to glory: thus will the Holy Spirit satisfy him of the love of God to his soul. And the persuasion of his love begets love. It softens the hard heart. It warms the cold heart. It works kindly upon all the affections; and by setting before them every possible good to be enjoyed in their reconciled God, it mightily disposes them to seek their supreme happiness in walking humbly and closely with him.

Attend then, O my soul, to this scripture. Meditate upon the experience of which it treats. Pray for it. Pray for more of it. And above all, observe the great truth here taught thee by the Holy Ghost; namely, that thou canst not have any true love of God but what arises from the sense of his being at peace with thee in Jesus. O beware of false teachers: for there is great reason, Many talk big of their loving God for his own inherent loveliness. A fundamental mistake. Mystics, Quakers, natural-religion men, dreaming metaphysicians, and the

motley tribe of moralists and deists, pretend to love an absolute God, without viewing him in the covenant of grace, or as he has revealed himself in the incarnation of his Son. There has been no love of this kind in any heart upon earth for near six thousand years. Adam in paradise might love him thus. But when driven out of paradise for sin, he could love him so no more. The promised seed of the woman, the Word made flesh, became then the object of his faith, and the only ground of his love. The Scripture has clearly determined this—"We love him, because he first loved us. And in this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him."

When the Holy Ghost has taught us love of God to sinners, and by believing has manifested it to their hearts; then they love him upon Christian principles; and sinners cannot love him upon any other. They love him for that infinite mercy which led him to send his only-begotten Son into the world to finish the salvation of his people. They love him for sending the Holy Ghost to enable them to see the everlasting sufficiency of this salvation, and to believe the record of God concerning it; whereby they come to experience how much the Father loved them.

This is heaven begun. The Father's love shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost is the foretaste of glory. Whoever enjoys it, has found what is more to be desired than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. O, it is indeed heaven upon earth. To preserve it, to improve it, is become the one study of the happy believer. The panting of his soul is after more of this love. The prayer of his faith is, "O thou eternal Spirit, help me so to walk with my most loving Father, as that I may maintain peace with him in my conscience, and a growing love to him in my heart, until thou bring me to the enjoyment of everlasting peace and love."

The prayer of a righteous man prevaileth much, being offered with energy. By the love of the Spirit it is answered. He not only preserves, but also increases his own graces; he leads the believer to fresh discoveries of the Father's love, and puts him into possession of the exceeding rich treasures of it. He helps him to draw very strong arguments for the comfort of his heart from the perfect FREENESS of divine love. Thus, he reasons—

Although I am beset with temptations, and assaulted with corruptions, and in a world of troubles, yet I need not fear but God will bring me safe through all, for I know he loves me. It is plain he does. I could never have loved him,

unless he had first freely loved me. My love is only the reflection of his. I have been convinced of sin, but it was not from myself; the conviction was of God. I have been convinced of righteousness, and I put my whole trust in the righteousness of Jesus. He is the only ground of my hope. I now rest my soul upon the sure foundation which he hath laid. And this faith is not of myself: it is the gift of God. I ascribe it to his sovereign grace, that I have been enabled to look upon the Father as reconciled to me, pardoning me through the bloodshedding of his Son, accounting me righteous through the obedience of his Son, and in him accepting, loving, and blessing me.

How could I experience these things but by the power of the Holy Ghost? And for what did I deserve to experience them? The reason must be found in the riches of his own free grace. Did the Father foresee anything good in me for which he chose me in his Son? Was it for any worthiness of mine that the Son vouchsafed to take flesh, and to live and to die for me? Was it for any foreseen works, faithfulness, or diligence in means, that the Holy Ghost called me to know, to believe, and to enjoy the Father's love through the Son's salvation? O, no! Away with such thoughts. I dare claim nothing for mine own but sin and shame. Not unto me, Lord, not unto me, but unto thee be all the glory. It was the good pleasure of thine own will, which chose me before the foundation of the world, and accepted me in the beloved; and now I know that thy counsels of old are faithfulness and truth. I experience the happy fruit and effect of them. I am brought to believe in thee, and to love my God and Father, which I am satisfied I could never have done, if thy free love had not first purposed to save me, and now carried thy purposes into execution. To the praise of the glory of thy distinguishing grace, I am in possession of the things which accompany salvation. O give me more grace, that I may daily make a better use of them, and may return thee better praise for thy free gifts of free grace.

It is free, and it is also COVENANT love. This is another of its divine properties. God commendeth his love towards the heirs of promise, by giving them full security for its unchangeableness. And this view the Holy Spirit opens to them for the support of their faith in times of trial. When they are walking in darkness and have no light, troubled on every side, without are fighting's, within are fears; when in great heaviness through failings in duty, through risings of corruption, or through manifold temptations, then he discovers to them the treasures of covenant love, and enables them to draw rich consolation from that heavenly storehouse.

An heir of promise under his teaching is often supported in this way—It is true, I am in trouble, but not forsaken. What if everything I have and am in myself makes against me, yet God is on my side, a covenant God; for I believe the eternal Three entered into covenant before all worlds, and with manifold wisdom ordered all things relating to the heirs of promise. For their sakes, and to end all strife in their consciences about the certainty of their salvation, it pleased the blessed Trinity to enter into covenant, and to confirm their covenant by oath, thus giving them two immutable things to trust in, in which it is impossible for God to lie. O how strengthening to faith is this view of the unchangeableness of covenant love! If it be but a man's covenant, being properly signed and sealed, no one disannulleth or addeth thereto. And who shall disannul or add to the covenant of the Trinity? The creature cannot. God will not. His purpose of bringing many sons to glory is unalterably fixed in his own mind, and in order to make it a sure ground for their faith, he confirmed his immutable covenant by his immutable oath. On this security. I rest my soul. A covenant God has enabled me to trust in his covenant engagements. Hence, I see everything relating to my salvation absolutely certain in the counsel and covenant of God; and I look upon my faith to be one of the effects of my being in the covenant. And faith as a covenant gift is an immutable gift.

What a blessing is it, that the gifts and calling of God are without repentance! It has been given me on the behalf of Christ to believe. And is not this from covenant love? What else could bring me to trust in covenant faithfulness? Therefore, by believing, I have immutable things to depend upon for the certainty of my salvation. Upon them would I stay my soul, as well I may, and fix my heart upon them. O that I could bring more glory to my covenant God, by trusting him with unshaken confidence! His love to me demands it at my hands. His love contrived the plan of salvation. Love provided everything needful to carry it into execution. The evidence which he has given of this was from the overflowing's of love. His word of promise, ratified by covenant, confirmed by oath, the oath of the holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity, made to satisfy the heirs of promise of the immutability of the divine will concerning them—O what miracles of love are these! And all to assure them that the heart of Jehovah is invariably towards them for good! Yes, Lord, this is the great love wherewith thou lovest me. And this is the evidence of thy love. Thou hast brought me to believe it, and to put some honor upon it. I desire to trust to thy covenant engagements without wavering. Establish, strengthen, settle my faith. Increase it from day to day, that I may grow in the knowledge and experience of that love which passeth knowledge. For,

It is a free, a covenant, and also an EVERLASTING love. This is another of its most glorious properties. His love knows neither beginning nor end. It is without variableness or shadow of turning. The heart of God is always one and the same towards his chosen people; for he loveth them freely: the motives to it were all in and from his own breast. The covenant was distinguishing love, secured to the heirs of promise by the most solemn engagements. And this crowns all. His love is of the same date with the covenant—not only before all worlds, but also from eternity. Therefore it is frequently called in Scripture an everlasting covenant, and covenant love is said to be according to the eternal purpose which he had purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord; whereby, before the foundations of the world were laid, He hath constantly decreed by his counsel, secret to us, to deliver from curse and damnation those whom he hath chosen in Christ out of mankind, and to bring them by Christ to everlasting salvation, as vessels made to honor.

Here is a never-failing source of comfort to a believing heart. Mediate, O my soul, upon it. Consider what God hath done for thee, and give him the glory of his precious love. Has he not called thee, by his Spirit working in thee, in due season? Hast thou not obeyed the call? Dost thou not depend upon the finished work of God thy Saviour? Art thou not justified freely by faith in him. Art thou not seeking daily to mortify the works of the flesh, and thy earthly members, and that thy mind may be drawn up to high and heavenly things? Certainly, these are good proofs of the purposes of the Father's love towards thee, because these are the happy effects of his purposes now fairing place in thy soul. O how greatly should this consideration establish and confirm thy faith of eternal salvation to be enjoyed by Christ, and thereby kindle thy love towards God. He has, indeed, drawn thee by the sweet attraction of his Spirit unto himself, and he has explained to thee the motive for his so doings" Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee."

His love, discovered to thee in time, is the fruit of his love before time; for the one is the effect of the other. If love had not been always in his heart towards thee, thy heart could never have been drawn in love to him: but he has drawn it. And thou art seeking to have it drawn more closely to him. Is it not thy daily wish? O for more love to my gracious Father—what a love has he shown to me—what a free, covenant, everlasting love! And yet, alas! what poor returns do I make him? Holy Spirit of love, raise and exalt my affections, and let the consideration of the wonderful love of my heavenly Father to me

increase mine to him, and let mine abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all sensible experience.

The Holy Spirit, who is the great teacher and maul-fester of the Father's love, has revealed these properties of it in Scripture, for the establishment of the faith of the children of God. He would have them believe assuredly that God is their Father, not in name only, but indeed and in truth; that he has the bowels of the tenderest parent, and that he freely, fully, everlastingly loves them in his dear Son. As he loves him, so he loves them. He embraces the head and the members with the same affection. And because they can hardly believe this in times of trial and trouble, the Holy Spirit would therefore satisfy their hearts of it, by discovering to them the unchangeableness of their Father's love, as it has been manifested in the divine covenant, and confirmed with the divine oath. In both which the witness of the [Father to his children is given in this manner: I have freely loved you, I have engaged to love you, and I will ever be mindful of my covenant engagements—as I live, saith the Lord, I will love you unto the end—yea, I will bless you with all spiritual and eternal blessings in Christ Jesus—what he, your elder brother, is now in glory, that will my love make you—the mountains shall depart, and the hills shall be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from you, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord, that hath mercy on you. These are faithful sayings, and worthy of all acceptance. O evil heart of unbelief, what pretense hast thou to reason against the truth of them? O ye of little faith, wherefore do ye doubt of receiving the goodness of them? Your Father is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should alter his purpose. Hath he said, and shall he not do it! Or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good? Yes—the purpose of his heart, spoken with his mouth, shall be made good with his arm; all his perfections stand engaged to establish his faithful word, and therefore it is a safe ground to build and rest upon. Trusting to it, the believer may boldly claim the promised blessings of his father's love; and with a hope that will never make him ashamed, he may expect a growing enjoyment of its free covenant and eternal blessings.

Well then, O my soul, thou hast considered the subject. What are thy sentiments of the love of the Father? Are they such as the Scripture teaches? Take heed of error. A little mistake here will have dreadful effects upon thy walk. Dost thou believe that thou, coming to the Father, through faith in the life and death of his co-equal Son, art pardoned and justified before him, and that this thy coming to the Father, through the Son, is from the grace of the Spirit? Therefore, the Three that bear record in heaven, do witness to thy being

an object of covenant love. Does this witness keep thy conscience quiet, and thy heart happy? Canst thou plead it against guilt and fear, and maintain the influence of it in dark and trying times? The love of thy heavenly Father is immutable: –Dost thou experience it to be so? It is everlasting: –Canst thou depend upon it as such? It has provided all blessings for thee in Jesus: –Art thou receiving them out of his fulness, grace for grace? It is proposed to thy faith in John xvii. and in Eph. iii. as a never-failing spring of consolation: 'Read' and try, whether thou art practically acquainted with what is there written. Examine the character of the Father's love; and be assured what is not agreeable to it, is not the teaching of the Holy Spirit. His office in thy soul is to witness to what he has revealed in the Scripture, to explain it to thine understanding, to make it the ground of thy faith, and the enjoyment of thy heart. Dost thou then understand, and believe, and enjoy the Father's love, according to what the Holy Spirit has testified of it? Perhaps thou art clear in thine understanding, but through the weakness of thy faith, hast but little enjoyment of the love of God. Why is thy faith weak? Search into the cause (depend upon it, God is not the cause), and having discovered it, inquire into the remedy. There is provision made in the covenant for all the infirmities of thy faith; for it was well ordered in all things and sure, and thy faith was well ordered and sure –infallible securities were provided in the covenant to make it sure. That thou shouldst have it, that thou shouldst keep it, and keep it, too unto the end, the blessed Trinity have engaged, by their immutable counsel, and their immutable oath. Therefore, Christ now kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation. The power of God, which is thy keeper, has given thee faith; and keeps thy faith, that it fail not. Thou and it are well kept. A covenant God has the charge of both. Almighty love watches over thee, and underneath are the everlasting arms. Till these fail, thy faith cannot fail. O what powerful motives are these to induce thee to believe without wavering! Consider them carefully: and may the Lord render them the means of strengthening thy faith, and of thereby enabling thee to cleave more closely in love to thy heavenly Father. It may be thou art hindered from living by unshaken faith, because thou hast so little love to God—he ought, to have all thy heart and soul, ad mind, and strength; but it grieves thee to observe what small part he has of them. This view is always humbling. Our love, at best, is not what it ought to be. It is not constant; it ebbs and flows, It is not perfect; the flesh lusteth always contrary to the Spirit. It is not what God deserves as payment for love received: Who will compute the full value of his love to one redeemed sinner? On earth it surpasseth knowledge. In heaven it surpasseth all returns of praise. The highest love of glorified saints is only acknowledgment, but not payment. They are perfectly humble, and therefore

willing that God should have all the glory of their salvation. To him they ascribe it. The same mind in thee would refine thy love, and make it something like theirs. When thou are considering thy love to God, and ashamed at the sight of it, then look at his. Look especially at his when thine is little. Believing views of his will increase thine. Thine has nothing else to excite it, or to nourish it. Thou art not called upon to warm thyself with the sparks of thy love to God, but with the pure constant flame of his love to thee. His is to keep up thine. His is the first cause, and thine is but the effect. The experience of his will heal all the infirmities of thine. When thy love is little, unsettled, cold, and dull, then study the divine properties of his: these rightly understood, will increase, settle, warm, and actuate thine affections. By believing meditation thou wilt find a pardon provided for thy little love; the sense of it will comfort thy conscience. Thy heart will grow hot within thee; while thou art musing, the fire will kindle it will break out. Thou wilt speak with thy tongue praise and thanksgiving to thy loving God and Father. Thou art willing then, O my soul, and ready to set out to follow thy God. Under the influence of the Holy Spirit, thou hast chosen him for thy portion, and in a constant dependence upon his grace, thou hast taken his way for thy daily walk. How great is the love wherewith he loveth thee! Survey it. Measure, if thou canst, the dimensions of it in thine own particular ease. The more thou art acquainted with it, the readier wilt thou be to give him all the glory of it, and to make such acknowledgments as these: –

I speak the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience, bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that; being justified by faith, I have found peace, and free access to a reconciled God. We are agreed, and now I desire to walk with him. He is my Father in Jesus, and I know he has bowels of the tenderest affection for me. I ought not, it would be base in me, to question it, since he has shed his love abroad in my heart by the Holy Ghost; who has made me of one mind, of one heart; and of one way with himself. His way is become mine: for he has reconciled me to it, by causing me to see that he chose me freely, as an object of his electing love; that he gave his Son to finish salvation work for me; and that he has now given his Spirit to me, who has called me, and given me ears to hear; who has bestowed on me faith and hope, and has enabled me to look upon these as fruits of the Father's covenant grace and everlasting favor.

O what; exceeding riches of love are these! If I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered. What am I, that I should be accepted in the beloved? His Father loves me. He sees me, loves me, yea, blesses

me in him. My title is clear to all spiritual blessings, because God, being my God in Jesus, all things are mine. He will make them all work together for my good. He that withheld not his own Son, but gave him for me, how shall he not with him freely give me all things? Having his free grant of them in the word of promise, and trusting to his faithfulness, I have set out to walk with my divine Friend and Father, hoping to enjoy his loving presence all the way to heaven. I would not aim at getting any new title to his love, but to have new enjoyment. Every day I am seeking for more knowledge, and for more experience of his abundant love to me in His beloved Son. And for this end, I would walk close with him in his way—not to buy his love, it is inestimable—not to merit it, free grace and merit cannot stand together—not that I may deserve it for my walk, but may freely receive it of him in my walk—not that he may give it me for walking with him, but that in walking with him, I may enjoy what he has already given me. His love is a free gift. I would by faith enjoy it in time, as I hope by sense to enjoy it in eternity.

Whatever blessing, strength, victory, or comfort, I stand in need of, I look to the fulness which he has laid up in Jesus, and from thence I receive it. I read my title to it, and I take possession of it, for nothing done in me or by me, now or at any other time, but only in or for the free grace of his Father and my Father. While I can live thus by simple faith, I find I am enabled to go on well. The sense of his free, covenant, everlasting love, keeps my heart happy, and makes walking with him my delight. O that he may enable me to press forward, that I may hold my confidence, and the rejoicing of my hope, steadfast unto the end! And why need I doubt of it, since he has me in his keeping? His love has bound itself to me by covenant engagements, which are my full, security for what he has declared—"I will never leave thee nor forsake thee."

These desires, I am persuaded, art, from thee, O rather of mercies. I could never have sought my happiness in thy love, unless thou hadst first loved me. O grant me then the desires of my heart. What thy good Spirit has put me upon seeking, let me by his grace find continually. He has manifested to me thy perfect reconciliation to thy people, through the life and death of Jesus. It has been given me on his behalf to believe this. I have therefore taken thee for my God and my portion, and I would so walk with thee as to obtain a growing knowledge and experience of thy love. For this cause I bow my knees unto thee, Holy Father. O hear and answer the prayer of faith. Give me grace to walk with thee in love, all the way to glory. I ask it in the name of Jesus: for thou art the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family, in

heaven and earth, is named. One rather, one family, one love. Thou receivest all thy children, whether in heaven or earth, into the stone near relation, and embracest them with the same dear affection in thy beloved Son.

O what a mercy is this! Blessed, forever blessed, be thy fatherly love, which chose me to be of thy family, and which has brought me to know that I am a child of God, by faith in Christ Jesus. I thank thee for giving me the desire to live as such, and to walk worthy of my high calling. O grant me then, according to the riches of thy glory (out of thine infinite treasury of grace, and to the praise of the glory of thy grace), to be strengthened with might by thy Spirit in the inner man. He is the promise of the Father. All thy children have their new birth, and every faculty of the new man from him, and by the working of his mighty power they are kept, as well as renewed, day by day; for without him they can do nothing. Of this he has thoroughly convinced me. I know I cannot call thee rather, nor believe in thee, nor love thee, but by thy Spirit.

O my God strengthen me effectually by his grace in the inner man, for every purpose of spiritual life. Whatever he has engaged to do in thy children, let him do it in me, that through his presence and power Christ may dwell in my heart by faith. O let him continually discover to me mine interest in Christ, and open to me the exceeding riches of thy love in him. Holy Father, let thy good Spirit; abide with me, that I may know for certain Christ is one with me, and I am one with him, and may thereby be able to maintain constant fellowship with him—he dwelling in me, and I in him.

O may I thus live continually by the faith of the Son of God, depending always for acceptance with thee upon his atonement and his righteousness, and so may find the happy fruit of his prayer to thee—"O righteous Father, I have declared to my disciples thy name, and will declare it, that the love wherewith thou lovest me, may be in them, and I in them." Thou didst hear, thou hast; answered times out of number, the request of thy beloved Son. Lord God answer it to me. Let me rejoice in thy love, and find it to be the same to me, as to him. Let thy good Spirit; root; me and ground me in the knowledge of thy love to me in Jesus. O grant me to be deeply rooted in the experience of it, that my faith working by love, may bring forth much fruit to thy glory, and I may become so grounded in love as to stand unshaken, like a house built upon a rock, against every attack made upon my love to thee.

O my God and Father, my heart is naked and open to thee. Thou knowest the secrets of it; thou seest how fervently I pray for the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit. My prayer comes from a feeling sense of my want of him, and from a dependence on thy promise to give the Spirit to them that ask him. Lord, I ask. Grant me to be strengthened by him, with every needful gift and grace in the inner man. Send him to manifest plainer and plainer my union with Jesus, in order to my keeping up communion with him; that having him dwelling in my heart by faith, I may be so established in the experience of thy love to me in him, as to be able to comprehend with all saints, what is that breadth, and length and depth, and height of thy love. All the saints comprehend it; but the saints below less than they above: and some of them below comprehend more than others. I know but little: O my God, increase my knowledge of thy love in Jesus. Whereunto I have attained, establish me; and keep me pressing forward for clearer discoveries of it. Help me to survey it, so far as faith is able, in its most glorious dimensions, and to praise thee for mine experience of its rich mercies.

Holy Father teach me still more by thy Spirit of the boundless freeness, and of the endless fulness of thy love let me know thy love in Christ, which passeth knowledge. Although I cannot know it as it is, my limited understanding being incapable of measuring the infinity of thy love, yet for this very reason let me be daily studying to know more of it—growing up into Christ Jesus by faith—abounding in hope by the power of the Holy Ghost—and increasing in the love of God. Holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity, let me thus partake of the fulness of grace below, grace for grace, till I partake of the fulness of glory above—that I may be filled with all the fulness which is of God, with which thou hast promised to fill thy children in earth and heaven. O magnify thy love towards me according to its greatness, and not according to my deserts, or to my prayers. I know thou canst do exceeding abundantly above all that I can ask or think, according to the power that worketh effectually in me. Thy power engaged to act for me is the support of my faith, and mine encouragement in my prayer. It is an infinite and almighty power, which has graciously begun, and has hitherto prosperously carried on the good work in my soul. To it all things are possible. Lord forbid I should doubt of thy granting the petitions which I have been offering up unto thee in thy Son's name. That which thou hast promised, thou art able to perform. O my God and Father set thy power to work more effectually in me. Let the Spirit of might enlarge my thoughts of, and my faith in, thy precious love. Let me experience daily, how much more thou art able to do, than I have yet obtained; to give, than I have yet asked; to increase, than I have yet thought. And whatever increase thou givest,

may it draw out mine affections in greater love to thee, and to thy ways, and so be the meant of bringing more glory to thee. For thy love in Jesus, the whole family in heaven and earth is ascribing honor and praise. Accept my thanks, holy Father, together with theirs. To thee be glory in the church by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

THE WALK OF FAITH CHAPTER IV.

THE BELIEVER GOES ON SUCCESSFULLY, WHILE HE WALKS BY FAITH IN A CONSTANT DEPENDENCE UPON HIS RECONCILED GOD AND LOVING FATHER.

THE leading principle upon which he sets out is this: God is my God and Father. He is perfectly reconciled unto me, and my conscience is at peace with him, through faith in his beloved Son. He loves me in him. He has manifested it plainly to me, and now my heart would cleave to him as my most tender parent. I would rest in my love to him, as he rests in his love to me. It is entirely through the grace of the eternal Spirit that I have been enabled thus to believe in the finished work of Jesus, and to experience the Father's love in him. By which means I have been satisfied of the love of the ever-blessed Trinity to my soul. Father, Son, and Spirit have covenanted to make me an heir of God, and a joint heir with Christ. From my belief and experience of these truths, I have been enabled to choose God for my portion. His will is become mine;—his appointed way is my course; and now I desire so to walk with him as to maintain in my conscience the peace of God, and in my heart the love of God.

I do not expect any new title to these inestimable braces. My claim is good and valid under Christ. I would not disparage it by supposing that my close

walk with God was to make any atonement for my sins, or to be the least part of my justifying righteousness. I have these already, and perfectly, too, in Jesus. The enjoyment of them is the thing I want. I am seeking for more of that peace with, and love to, the Father, to which I am entitled in his Son. His fulness, the fulness of him that filleth all in all, is mine. A free grant of it has passed in the court of heaven, has been revealed in the record of truth, and I, by believing, have accepted the grant. I am in possession of its privileges, and am enjoying its blessings. On the fulness of Jesus I live this day. Out of it I hope to be receiving every grace which I shall want for my safe and happy walk with his Father, and my Father.

Bless the Lord, O my soul, for what thou knowest and hast experienced of his abundant grace; which has enabled thee thus to resolve to walk with thy reconciled God, and loving Father. This day thou art called upon to maintain peace with him in thy conscience, and love to him in thy heart: peace like his, flowing from the sense of being perfectly reconciled to thee—love like his, the happy fruit of his unchangeable love to thee. Whatever thou meetest with in thy work or warfare, ought not to lessen, but ought to exercise and to improve those graces. Never forget that he is thy God—the God of peace. He stands related to thee in the dearest and most indissoluble bond of love. He is thy Father in Jesus. Keep the sense of this always fresh upon thy mind, and thy steps will be ordered aright. Nothing will be able to stop thee in the way to heaven, or to seduce thee out of it; but everything will bring thee forward. Whilst thou canest maintain peace and love, thou wilt go on prosperously against guilt and self-righteousness, against the wiles and assaults of thy spiritual foes, against the world which lieth in wickedness, and against every inward and outward trial. The Lord being on thy side, all these shall work together under him for thy good, and they shall be the means of making thee walk safely in the way, and of bringing thee happily to the end of it.

The apostle has given us the whole plan in a few words: "WE WALK," says he, "BY FAITH, and not by sight." We direct our Christian course by believing, and not by seeing. Faith is to us the evidence of things not seen, and the ground of our hoping to enjoy them. We believe, upon the authority of God's word, that they are what he describes them to be; for faith, as a grace of the Spirit, consists in giving credit to what God says. If it be a truth proposed to the understanding, faith relies upon the infallible word; if it be a promise, faith depends upon the arm of God to make it good. And whatever he has promised, faith (when it is as it should be) does not stagger at difficulties, but rests fully persuaded that what God hath promised he is able also to perform.

Faith looks at the word spoken, and overlooks seeming impossibilities. Thus, SAITH THE, LORD that is enough for faith—full of satisfying evidence: for it knows that to speak and to do are the same thing with an unchangeable God. How many errors in judgment, and consequent mistakes in practice, prevail at this day, chiefly arising from confounding faith with its fruits, and from not distinguishing between the word of God believed, and what will follow upon believing it aright. Thus, some make assurance to be of the essence of faith, others make appropriation; and many make it consist in an impression upon the mind that Christ loved me and gave himself for me. These are fruits—what faith should produce, but not what it is. These are effects of faith working, and not definitions of the nature of faith. A believer should be exhorted to make his calling and election sure: for it is his privilege, He ought to give all diligence to attain assurance, to appropriate Christ with all his blessings to himself, and to be clearly persuaded that Christ loved him, and gave himself for him. These are blessed fruits of believing. May God give his people more of them.

But then the tree must be before the fruits, and the fruits grow upon the tree. Faith is first, and faith derives its being from believing the word of God, and all its fruits are continued acts of believing. And when you hear of believing, do you not always think of something spoken? You cannot separate these two in your mind. Something has been said and proposed to you before your belief can be called for. If nothing has been said, belief has no exercise. Faith and the word of God, therefore, are related, as the effect and the cause: because faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. What God hath spoken in his woeful, demands belief from all that hear it. When faith cometh by hearing it, then we assent to the truth of what God has said, and we rely upon his faithfulness to make good what he has promised. Assurance is this faith grown to its full stature: but we are not born six feet high. Appropriation is a very comfortable acting of faith when a man is persuaded of his interest in covenant mercies; and from what he then feels can say, Christ loved me, and gave himself for me. But he has not this comfort; in times of heaviness; he may be walking in darkness and having no light; yea, in the hidings of the Lord's countenance, and yet even then he may trust simply to what God hath spoken; which is true faith, and more exalted faith than that which draws its evidence from its appropriating acts and its present experience.

The more a man trusts to sense, the less he lives by faith: for sensible feelings are not faith. Impressions are not believing. I see the sun; I hear a sound; I feel an object: faith has no place in these instances. Its essence is believing and

trusting what God hath spoken. If his word be believed, and by believing the conscience find peace, and the heart joy, these are joy and peace in believing. They come from believing, are its effects, and no more enter into the essence of faith than comfortable feelings do into the essence of man. He is as truly a man when miserable as he is when comfortable.

These mistakes should be carefully guarded against, because they are chiefly pernicious to the children of God, who are kept by them from growing up into assurance, into appropriation, and into the sensible experience of God's love to them in Christ Jesus. They are puzzled, they are misled, by being told they have no faith if they have not assurance, &c. They examine themselves, but cannot find any such faith. This discourages them. They are tempted to think they have no true faith, because they have not what certain persons talk of. But if they would adhere strictly to the word of God, and would take their ideas from it, they would see how simple and plain a thing believing is, and would soon be satisfied that they were true believers; which conviction would have many blessed effects, especially these: it would put them upon seeking for an increase of faith, and upon expecting the proper fruits of faith. What nourishes faith ripens them: for they cannot be produced so long as persons are doubting whether they have any faith at all. They would see how desirable it is to believe without doubt or wavering, what honor it puts upon God's word, what comfort it brings to them. And they would be waiting in the appointed means for grace to maintain, for grace to improve their While, that they may be going on from/kith to faith. While this was their end and aim, faith in act and exercise, main-rained and improved, would bring in daily growing evidence of their being indeed partakers of the faith of God's elect. Living by faith, walking by faith, would demonstrate to them their spiritual life and walk, as plainly as natural life and walk can be demonstrated by any outward actions. Here is great need, O my soul, to read the Scripture, and to pray for the Spirit of Wisdom. Read, pray much, lest thou shouldst err concerning the faith. Every error will be a stumbling-block in the way of thy holy walk and make thee tired of it, or seduce thee out of it. Let it be one of thy daily petitions, Lord, save me from all mistakes concerning the faith of the gospel; and let the word of God, by which faith cometh and groweth, be thy daily study. This is thy present business. Now set out trusting to what God hath spoken, and relying on what he hath promised. On this principle proceed, as it is laid down by the apostle, (Colossians. 2: 6): "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him." He is expressing his joy at his beholding their order, and the steadfastness of their faith in Christ, and he would teach them how to maintain their faith throughout their Christian

course. How did you receive Christ at first? Was it not by believing? Receiving Christ and believing in him are, in (John 1: 12), supposed to mean the same thing. And in (John 17: 20, 21), our Lord says, that they who believe in him through the word are one with him.

Christ then is received by faith, and by the same faith, by the belief of the same word of God, we walk in him, so as to be rooted, and grounded, and established in the faith. Our walk is in him, not anything distinct from him; but is the effect of union with him. By him we live, in him we walk,—rooted in him, we grow as a branch in the vine; built up in him, we are fixed as a building on a sure foundation, and thereby we become established and strengthened in the faith. Every step we take is by faith, by the same faith wherewith Christ was received.

He must be received always as he was received once. There is no change of object, and there must be no change of faith, but the same continued trust on his word, and the same dependence on his promised strength. We never set out to walk with a reconciled God, till we are one with Christ by faith, and know our union with him, and our walk is in consequence of this. If we go on at all, it is by communion with him. We can receive only out of his fulness, grace for grace, to make us willing and able to go forward. Our fellowship with him is in every part and in every moment of our walk, and this is as necessary as our fellowship with the air and elements of this world is to everything that concerns our natural walk. Our wisdom to guide our steps, our progress in the way, our courage and strength, our warfare and victory, every grace and every blessing is received by faith, and is the effect of our communion with Jehovah Jesus. We trust in his word, we rely on his arm, we wait on his faithfulness, and so go forward; for he makes good what he hath promised to give us in our walk, which confirms the peace of God, establishes our hearts in the love of God, increases our faith, and thereby makes our daily walk more comfortable to us, and more glorious to him.

But if faith consists in believing and trusting the word of God, it may be inquired, how shall we know the difference between true and false, between dead and living faith? It may be known from the cause. The fruit of the Spirit is thine. He produces it. It is his gift bestowed by his operation, continued by his power, increased by his blessing, and carried on to the end by his never leaving nor forsaking his own work. And he makes it known to be his. He gives eyes to see it, and hearts to acknowledge it. Therefore the apostle says of them who have received the Spirit of God, that they KNOW the things

which are freely given to them of God; by faith, they both know the reality and also taste the sweetness of those free gifts of free grace.

It may be known from the effects. Dead faith brings forth nothing; living faith is fruitful: it produces a hearty trust in the truth of what God hath spoken, and a quiet reliance on the faithfulness of what God hath promised. It gives him credit for the finished salvation of his Son, and puts honor upon his record concerning it; whereby peace is received into the conscience, and love into the heart. Upon which there follows a settled dependence upon this reconciled God and loving Father, for the fulfilling, of every promise; and this is improved by daily experience. He that trusteth in the Lord is never eon-founded. God is faithful: his promises, cannot fail. Blessed is the man that trusteth in him: The Lord God will be a sun and shield unto him; the Lord will give him grace and glory.

As for the hypocrites, it is not so with them; the Holy Spirit was not the author of their faith: it was a fancy of their own, formed in their heads, without any warrant from God. There was no life in it, and no living effects from it: there was the form, and nothing more. They made a profession, but never came to any enjoyment. They had no vital union, and therefore they could not have any real communion with Christ. They could not, as the apostle expresses it, walk IN him, and therefore, in the hour of temptation, they fell away and came to nothing. Take heed, then, O my soul, of mistakes. Examine carefully of what sort thy faith is; bring it to the standard of Scripture, and see what went before believing: –see whether thou dost now from thy heart believe what God hath spoken; –wait for the effects. Dost thou so trust his word, as to take him for thy God and thy portion? Art, thou walking with him. And art thou depending on him to bestow the promised graces and blessings on thee in thy walk? If this be thine experience, thou art set out well, –go on. Remember where everything relating to thy walk is to be had. The Father's love has laid it all up in the Son's fulness, and it is the office of the Holy Spirit to teach thee how to receive out of it grace for grace.

He teaches by his word. With this in thy hand, and his light in thine understanding, read and study what he has promised thee for thy sate, happy, and holy walk. Take no step without the direction of his word, and expect at every step that he will make good to thee what he has promised. Thou wilt very soon find the necessity of this dependence upon him; for ere thou hast well begun thy walk, thou wilt be called upon to exercise thy faith and put it to trial. Thou wilt meet with many things in thee averse to this holy walk, and

many more to distress thee in it. The body of sin, the old man, the flesh, with its affections and lusts, are still in thee. It is of their nature to be lusting, and to be always putting forth some of their filthy motions, in order to draw thee to walk after the flesh, and not after the Spirit. The tempter helps them all he can; he knows how to improve them to his own interest; and if from what is passing within thee, there be a sight and sense of sin, then if he can get thee to look at it in his view, he will act upon thy legal and self-righteous tempers, and will inject such vile insinuations as these, against the Lord and against his Christ:—

How is it that I am yet the subject of sin? It is still in me. It cleaves to me as the flesh to my bones, and it, mixes so with my duties that I cannot perform them without it. I sometimes fear I am nothing but sin. When I attempt to walk with God, ere I set out, something evil arises within me, and stops me. Some proud, unbelieving thought, some sensual affection, some worldly disposition, some corruption or other is ever at hand to hinder my course. What then must I think of myself? I scarce know what. Things, I see, do not grow better, I have been long hoping for it; but I find there still dwelleth no good thing in me; so that I am almost ready to question the truth of my grace, and it is with great difficulty I can keep up any peace in my conscience.

When the believer is attacked in this manner (and who is not, at some time or other?), how is he to defend himself? Will his skillfulness in the word of righteousness, and his faith in the word of reconciliation, keep him safe in the hour of temptation? Yes: by the grace of the Holy Spirit, the lessons before learnt will be enforced and brought into use. This is the time to maintain faith in the atonement, and in the righteousness of the God-man. Now it is to be tried in the fire, and it is put to the trial, that it may come out of it like gold—proved to be sterling metal, and refined from its dross, better in every respect for having gone through the fire. The trial of faith is far more precious than that of gold which perisheth. It is therefore put into the furnace, that the believer may know the truth of it, and may experience the blessings of it.

Faith conflicting with unbelief, is a good fight, —sometimes sharp, but always profitable. The flesh may be weak and ready to yield, faith may be hard put to it, but victory is certain. During the battle, the warrior is invincible in the whole armour of God. He takes to him the shield of faith, and holds it up against the fiery darts of Satan; he draws out the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, and with it he defeats Satan;—he consults or remembers a scripture suitable to his present case, and this being set home by the Holy

Spirit, puts an end to the engagement, and restores and settles sweet peace in the conscience. How often has he applied the following passage, which the Lord speaks concerning his true Israelites (Jeremiah.32: 38–41):—"They SHALL be my people, and I WILL be their God; and I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me FOREVER, for the good of them, and of their children after them; and I will make an everlasting covenant for them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good; but, I will put my fear into their hearts, that they shall not depart from me; yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good."

What strong consolation is there in this scripture! Every sentence has an argument in it tending to establish peace with God, and to maintain it in the midst of war. How quieting and satisfying to the troubled conscience is his covenant purpose! "They SHALL be my people, and I WILL be their God." They shall, because I will; my will shall make them willing. And in the day of my power, when my purpose takes place, I will give them one heart, turned to myself; and one way, to walk with me by faith, as obedient children with their loving Father. This I will do for them, that they may fear me FOR EVER, that the fear of offending me may rule always and by all means in their hearts.

O what promises are these! What can weak faith require farther to silence its doubts? How great is the goodness of God to his children, who, knowing their frame and whereof they are made, for the good of them, and of their children after them, has laid such a foundation for their faith, that they may build on it and not be afraid, yea, standing on it, they may fight the good fight of faith, assured of victory.

I will make, says their God, an everlasting covenant for them, a covenant ordered in all things and sure by the counsel and oath of the blessed Trinity, the two immutable things, in which it is impossible God should lie: The mountains shall depart and the hills shall be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from them, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord, that hath mercy on them. My covenant; was made for them, and shall be made good to them. As I live, saith the Lord, I will not turn away from them to do them good; I will never change my purpose, nor alter the word that is gone out of my mouth. I mean nothing but good to them; my heart is fixed upon it, and I will not leave the event to them; they shall not have the management of my purposes, nor have any power to defeat them. My will to do them good shall not depend on their will or on their faithfulness, or on anything in themselves. I have taken all their concerns into mine own hands,

and I will conduct them all to the praise of the glory of mine own grace. I will put my fear into their hearts, that they shall not depart from me, —they SHALL not depart from me. They are not the cause of their not departing, but I am. I have taken it upon myself. I will give them grace to walk close with me, and to fear me always. I have covenanted for all, the means as well as the end, and I will keep them by my almighty power, till they receive the cud of their faith, even the salvation of their souls; "yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good."

This confirms all the rest. His purpose of doing them good, his executing it, his continuing it, his increasing it through time and through eternity, is a matter of rejoicing to the Lord God. He delights in it. It always was, and always will be, the joy of his heart, his crown and glory. He will not, he cannot, be deprived of his joy. Consider tiffs, thou poor distressed soul, who art in heaviness through manifold temptations, and ready to faint through the weakness of thy faith. Take courage. Thy salvation is safe. Thy Father, who is in heaven, rejoices in it; he will save; he will rejoice over thee with joy, he will rest in his love; he will joy over thee with singing: and his joy too shall be thine. As sure as God is in Zion, thou shalt return and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon thy head; thou shalt obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away forever.

O what a discovery is here of the ever-loving heart of our heavenly Father! What more could tie promise in order to put an end to all strife in the consciences of his afflicted children! He has engaged in a covenant of peace to do good, nothing but-good, to them. He has undertaken the whole of the covenant—what was to be done in them, as well as for them—to work out, to apply, and to secure their salvation. It is his unchangeable purpose, not to depart from them, and not to suffer them to depart from him, but he will rejoice in doing them good, and that forever. This scripture, when understood and applied by the Holy Spirit, is received as full evidence of the unchangeable love of God to his children, and then it quiets their troubled minds. They can believe God to be their God still in an unchangeable covenant, and they become satisfied that he has made them, and will keep them his people forever.

When they can thus mix faith with the promise, it then becomes the means of their resting on the faithful arm of God in the hour of temptation, and of their finding him still a God of peace: whereby peace is established in their consciences, and multiplied in their hearts. They learn to put more trust in

him, as their perfectly reconciled Father, and to approach him with more holy filial confidence. The trial of their faith, sharp as it was, yet has done them great good. It has proved their peace, and has confirmed it. They know now well that it is the peace of God; and they have been taught how to maintain it. War makes good soldiers. The trials of their grace are for their improvement of grace. Their peace has been therefore shaken, like a new-planted tree, that it may take deeper and faster root. Being thus strengthened in the faith, and having the peace of God ruling in their hearts, they can meditate upon this scripture and turn it into a subject of prayer and praise— O gracious God and Father, pardon my thoughts of thy love to me in Jesus. I was tempted, and ready to give way to unbelief: but the gracious provision made in thy word was the means of keeping me in the hour of temptation. O my God make the word, in which thou hast caused me to put my trust, more precious to my soul. Open still more to me the fullness of it, and put me into happier possession of its promised blessings. I praise thee, I worship thee, for revealing this promise by thy Spirit, and for applying it by his grace with comfort to my heart. I now set to my seal that it is true. It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation. Glory be to thee that I accept it, and enjoy the good promised in it. O Father of mercies, what am I that I should be made one of thy people, and should have thee for my God? This love passeth knowledge. O help me to understand more, give me to find more, of thy covenant love. Make my heart one with thee. Lead me in thy one way, that I may fear thee forever. And when temptations come, such as I have been in, grant they may bring me nearer to thee, and may be the means of my making use of what thou hast provided for me in thy Son's fulness. O let; thy good Spirit abide with me to establish my faith in thine everlasting covenant, that I may believe thou wilt never turn from me to do me good. Merciful God grant me this grace in every hour of need. Thou hast given me thy word for it, and therein thou hast enabled me to put my trust. On thy faithful promise I would depend, and on nothing in myself. Thou hast showed me something of my heart, and I feel it is revolting and ready always to rebel against God; but thou hast undertaken to put thy fear into it, that it shall not depart from thee: therefore, into thy faithful hands I commit it. Keep me, my God, by thy mighty power, through faith unto salvation. Amen. Amen. Happy trials! which have so good an issue, and bring forth such peaceable fruits. My brethren, account it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations, if they lead to the exercise of grace, and occasion fervent effectual prayer. The believer, thus tried, learns by practice the necessity of being at peace with God, and of maintaining it in order to walk with God. He is put upon studying the nature of this peace. He reads and meditates upon the revealed account of it. He sees it is a perfect, unchangeable peace, secured to

him by the everlasting covenant of the blessed Trinity, who have engaged to save him from all his sins and miseries, and never to turn away from doing him good. To this he trusts. He commits himself to the care of this covenant God; and he finds the promise true. In temptation he believes, and is delivered. In his warfare, out of weakness he is made strong, He fights the good fight of faith, and he conquers all his enemies, He learns from trials to trust with more confidence. He not only maintains; but also improves peace with God. He depends on what God has promised to them who walk with him, and the praise is made good, and he learns to go on more comfortably, and daily walks closer with His heavenly Father.

The enemy looks on him with malice. He envies his state. He once knew the heaven of communion with God, but he was lifted up with pride, and fell. It stirs up every infernal temper in him to see the happy believer, who had fallen like him, restored to what he can never expect. Hence, either as a sly serpent, or as a roaring lion, he never ceases to tempt. As soon as one wile fails, he has another ready. He is night and day plotting and scheming, waiting for an opportunity to make a seasonable attack. While conscience is at peace with God, and lives under the protection of the blood of sprinkling, he tempts in vain. But he does not despair of success, He knows he has an ally within us in fast league with sin, and therefore he still hopes to draw him into sin by surprise or assault. In which he is indefatigable, He is never tired. He is always tempting the believer, not so much to gross offences, as to spiritual wickedness. Sly injections, legal insinuations, and self-righteous thoughts are his most common temptations. With these he tries to shake the peace of conscience, and he forms his attack generally in this manner: –

How can you be a child of God, and yet be as you are? There is nothing in you for which God should look upon you and love you. What have you? What ceasing from evil, what learning to do well, to recommend you to him? How can God love anything, unless it be agreeable to his will; and what can he delight in, unless it be conformable to his image? But do you live up to his will, and is his image perfectly renewed in you? Have you grace, and do you live up to it? Are you a Christian, and are you like Christ? How are your duties? just as they should be? You know they are not; and how can God be pleased with them when you are not pleased with them yourself? How is your walk? Is it such as becometh your high calling—close with God, and at a vast distance from sin and the world? How is your warfare? Is the whole armour of God kept buckled on? And are you always in the strength of the Lord, a conqueror? Examine and try yourself. Bring forth that one good thing for

which God should love you, and bestow his blessing upon you. You have no such thing. You have nothing to merit, yea, nothing to recommend you to the divine favor: and therefore is it not great presumption to fancy that God will love such a one as you, whose just desert is wrath and everlasting destruction? These are some of the depths of Satan. He knows how strongly we are by nature attached to the covenant of works, and that if he can get the believer to look off from Jesus, expecting to see something in himself for which God should love him, he shall then weaken his faith and shake his peace. In this snare he has caught many a child of God. The temptation is suitable to the workings of our legal minds; it flatters our self-righteous hopes, and is vastly pleasing to the pride of our carnal hearts. No wonder, then, so long as there is flesh in us as well as spirit, this artful suggestion should be sometimes received in this manner: –Have I anything for which God should esteem me and bless me? I wish I could discover some amiable temper, or some praiseworthy deed, which might recommend me to the particular regard of God. Indeed, at present, I have not any such; but I hope to attain it sometime or other. If I do but use more diligence and watchfulness, and wait more constantly in the means of grace, perhaps I may attain it soon. However, there can be no harm in trying. I will exert myself; and I hope the day will come when I shall be some way deserving of the divine favor.

Here the temptation has taken place. As the serpent beguiled Eve, through his subtlety, so is this man's mind corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. The subtle serpent has attacked the liberty of the child of God, and has darkened his understanding, and obscured his view of gospel grace. His eye is not now single: his heart is not now simple in the finished salvation. He has been deceived into a legal dependence, and is giving way to a spirit, of bondage. If he was left to himself; the enemy would lead him captive at his will. Satan desires to have him, that he may sift him as wheat; but he is not suffered to blow anything away, except a little chaff: for the Holy Spirit, in whose keeping he is, discovers and defeats the attempts of Satan. He brings to his mind and enables him to make use of what he before knew of the doctrine of grace. The present trial requires the practice, and affords occasion for the improvement of his former lessons, He had learned from Scripture truths very different from the suggestions to which he was ready to yield, He was therein taught that the Father's love to his children does not suppose merit in them.

Grace does not follow works: for then grace would be no more grace. Election is not of him that; willeth, or of him that runneth, but of God who showeth

mercy. For we are saved freely by grace through faith, and that not of ourselves; it is the gift of God. The election of grace is from mere love and sovereign favor, and has no motives to influence it but the good pleasure of the Divine will. The objects of it are not the worthy, but the unworthy; not innocent, but fallen man: sinners—as such, no way conditioned or qualified; the lost, the hopeless, the ungodly—yea, the chief of sinners—open enemies and rebels against God. They are not saved by works of righteousness which they have done, or can do, lest any of them should boast for boasting is absolutely excluded. Salvation was so contrived, was so wrought out, and is so applied, that he who glorieth shall have nothing left him to glory in but the Lord. No flesh can glory in his presence: for of him, and through him, and to him, are all things; to whom be glory forever. AMEN.

So soon as the Spirit of God opens this view of the exceeding riches of divine grace, the believer sees his mistake. He finds that he was departing from the simplicity of the gospel, by supposing that the love of God followed merit, and that he should be loved more according as his walk recommended him. His eyes are opened. The delusion vanishes. The perfect freeness, and the absolute sovereignty of the Father's love, as revealed in Scripture, is manifested to him. He reads, and mixes faith with what he reads, and so recovers himself out of the snare of the devil. Some such passage as this is made the means of his deliverance (Psalm. 103: 17):—"The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him." Precious words! full of rich consolation to those who have been tempted to seek some qualifications in themselves, on account of which they might be entitled to the love of God, and who have been distressed upon their not finding it. The Holy Spirit teaches such persons to look out of themselves, to an object exactly suitable to their case. He directs them to the divine mercy—a never-failing springs of comfort—to that mercy which reacheth from eternity to eternity—and which confers its richest favors, not for the worthiness of the receiver, but to the praise of the grace of the giver. Here he would have them fix their eyes, and expect relief to their hearts. Out of the fulness of mercy they may always receive grace for grace; for the mercy of the Lord is 'from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him. Every word is weighty.. Meditate upon it, O my soul, and may the consideration of each, lead thee to exalt that mercy of God, which is over all his works.

JEHOVAH is the word here rendered Lord. It is the incommunicable name, expressive of the incommunicable nature of the Godhead. It signifies the peculiar manner of the divine existence, which is in and of itself; underived

and independent. O how happy is it for thee, that there is mercy in the self-existent Godhead, and that every perfection in it will be forever exalted, even justice self, for the exercise of mercy. May the Holy Spirit teach thee more of its nature, and make thee daily more acquainted in thine experience with its free grace and free gifts.

MERCY is that perfection in Jehovah, which disposes him to save miserable sinners: not a blind mercy, such as infidels dream of—but consistent with the honor of his law, and exercised to the glory of its holy precepts and of its just sanctions; therefore mercy and truth are so often mentioned together in Scripture. God will not show any mercy to sinners, but such as tends to establish his truth. Not one of his words can be broken, nor can one tittle of them ever fail. He will be justified in all his sayings, and clear when he is judged. He will be true and just, whenever he is merciful; his mercies being all covenant mercies, and all given in and through Christ Jesus. All men are by nature children of wrath, and only they who are chosen and called in Christ Jesus are saved from wrath. These are vessels of mercy. His mercy is to them the love of a tender parent to his miserable children, He pities them, and determines to save them from their sins; in due time he quickens them, gives them eyes to see, and hearts to believe his love to them in Jesus, as the apostle witnesses—"God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love, wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ."

But for what reason, and upon what account, is he merciful to them? His mercy has no motive but his own will. The objects of his mercy are corrupt, fallen creatures, deserving his wrath, even as others; and therefore, he does not deal with them upon the footing of desert. If he showed them mercy for any foreseen works of theirs, because he knew they would repent and believe the gospel, and walk worthy of it, mercy would then be turned into justice, and would lose both its name and its nature. Whereas he saith unto Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. It is from mine own freedom and sovereignty, that I have mercy on any sinners. The cause is in myself, and not in them. I have compassion on whom I will. It is from mine own mere love that I have determined to be gracious to them; and my love has determined to save them, and the way also in which I will save them. I have appointed the end, and the means, at the same time. Of mine own motion and good will I have resolved to give my Son for them, and my Spirit to them, that they may repent and believe the gospel, and walk worthy of it, and so I may bring them, through my tender mercies, to eternal salvation.

If this was not the case, how could the description be true, that mercy is FROM EVERLASTING TO EVERLASTING? The mercy of God knows no variableness, nor shadow of turning. It is always the same. His fatherly heart ever entertained thoughts of mercy towards them: for when he shows them mercy, it is said to be according to the eternal purpose, which he had purposed in Christ Jesus—not for their merits, but for his mercies' sake—not for what they have any claim to, but for his own name's sake. He gives all from mercy, and he would have all the glory returned to the mercy of the giver. What he gives, that he continues, and according to covenant engagements. Covenant mercies are sure mercies. "I will make an everlasting covenant for you," says he, "even the sure mercies of the beloved." They have already been made sure to him. He is now in full possession of every promised mercy. And he has received them, not as a private person, but as the head of the body the church, He keeps them for the use of his church-members. And as sure as the crown is upon his head, so surely will it be upon every one of their heads: for they are in the same covenant with him, whose sure mercies reach from eternity to eternity.

O what a view is here open to the eye of faith! Mercy always purposing, and in due time bestowing its free blessings upon stoners—mercy, without beginning, and without ending. The Holy Spirit often calls upon us to behold it in this light; for he has not celebrated any of its divine properties, so much as this. It is frequently the noble subject of thanksgiving in the Psalmist's hymns. He has dedicated the 186th entirely to the praise of mercy; and, going through the works of nature, providence, and grace, he ascribes them one by one to that mercy, which endureth forever. O happy, thrice happy objects of it! What was in the heart of the Father of mercies towards you from everlasting, will be so to everlasting. His sure mercies are yours. His compassions towards you fail not. Whatever you want for your successful walk, he has promised to give you. Be not discouraged, then. He will supply all your wants, not for your sakes, but for his mercies' sake. Are you sensible of your unworthiness? That's well, mercy is for such. It can have no glory, but from such as you. Trust it, and be assured you will find that it endureth for ever and ever,

If a doubt should arise in your mind—It is true, mercy in God cannot fail, but the exercise of it towards me may fail I may so walk as to deprive myself of all claim and title to it. The Psalmist has given a direct answer to this ill-grounded suspicion. He says the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting—UPON THEM THAT FEAR HIM. This is their character: they fear their God. Once there was no fear of God before their eyes; but now they

know him to be their Father. The Spirit of adoption has given them joy and peace in believing it. Hence a holy filial fear rules in their hearts, and influences their walk. While it operates thus, and, as obedient children, they fear to offend their loving Father, and desire to please him in all things, what ground have they to suspect that his mercy towards them should fail?

But may they not cease to fear him, and then he will cease to be merciful to them? No, blessed be God. He has made ample provision in this case. "I will put my fear," says he, "into their hearts, and they SHALL NOT depart from me." This fear is one of the fruits of the Spirit, which he produces in all the children of God. And they have it from him as a covenant blessing, which is full security for its continuance. It is one of the graces provided for them in Jesus, by the Father's immutable love. "I will give them," says he, "one heart and one way; that they may fear me FOR EVER!" The Holy Spirit is the guardian of this never-failing fear. It is his office to put it, and then to keep it in their hearts, He has the whole charge of it, and therefore he has promised to abide with them forever, that they may fear the Lord all the days of their lives.

How exactly suited is this scripture to the case of the tempted Christian! What a full provision is there made in it for his safety and peace! God has mercy for him and plenteous redemption—mercy reaching from ever-lasting to everlasting—always kind to the miserable. Mercy and misery are related as sin and salvation. There is not anything which a sinner can want, but mercy has a supply for him—a promised, a covenant, a never-falling supply. It is a Father's mercy, which will never leave his children, and the same mercy will not suffer them to leave him. His mind is fixed upon showing them mercy for ever and ever; and therefore, he gives them his Spirit to abide with them, and to dwell in them. He abides with them, and they live: he dwells in them, and they walk in the fear of God. And by the supply of the Spirit, they go on, till they finish their course with joy.

By meditating upon this scripture, the believer is set at liberty. Though his faith staggered a little, yet the trial of it has done him good. He has learned a useful lesson, and gained much experience by it. His reflections upon what has passed in his mind are such as these—

O how foolish was I to forget the atonement and righteousness of my dearest Immanuel, in whom alone I have pardon and acceptance! How base was I, and ungrateful! I was tempted to expect that in myself, which I can have only

in him. Vile legal creature that I am! I abhor myself for behaving so ill to my best friend. What good can I have, but what I first receive from him? I agree with the apostle, that in me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing. I am a very sink of sin, and of all uncleanness. I deserve mercy no more than the devil does. And yet I was looking out for some good quality in myself, on account of which God might be merciful to me. Whereas I am now satisfied he has no mercy, but in Jesus.

All his mercies are covenant mercies, given from mere grace, and given to miserable sinners—not to make them self-admirers, but to humble them—not to lead them to think that they can bring God in debt to them for his own gifts, or for the right use of them, which is a fresh gift; but he gives all to the praise of the glory of his grace, He delighteth in mercy; and my case required mercy. It was such as his mercy could get all the honor of relieving. Therefore, I ought, in the hour of temptation, to have trusted in his mercy, to have hoped in his mercy in time of trouble, and to have loved him for his mercy in time of misery. Here should my faith have directed its eye, and not to any good which I have done or can do. I should have remembered how it was with the election of grace, and with the vessels of mercy. God has one way of dealing with them all. Not by works of righteousness which they have done, but, according to his mercy he sayeth them freely, fully, eternally. All is from his own good will from first to last. Every motive, which inclines him to do good to any sinner, is not excited by what the sinner does or is, but arises from himself. And when he bestows any good, it never is deserved, but is entirely an act of sovereign grace, flowing from the Father's love out of the Son's fulness, by the influence of the Holy Spirit; and is given and continued to magnify and exalt the mercy of the eternal Three.

O how did I dishonor the divine perfections by giving way to legal hopes, and by supposing that the divine will would be governed by my more or less deserving's? Where should I be, if I had my deserving's? God forgive me. I see mine error. I am humbled for it, and I repent with shame and sorrow. I hope my past misconduct will prove a blessing to me; for it has certainly taught me to trust less to myself, and more to the word of God; to depend less upon my own doings, and more upon free grace promises. To the word which cannot be broken, I would trust in time of need. Whoever trusts in it shall never be confounded. This I know to be true by happy experience. I will therefore read, and hear, and study it, night and day. By means of it the Lord wrought a great deliverance for me. My feet were almost gone, my treading's had well-nigh slipped; but he sent out his word and saved me.

I read and believed, that the Father was not reconciled to me for the goodness of my walk, but that reconciliation was planned in the great covenant before all worlds, and was carried into execution by the life and death of Immanuel; it was his peculiar, his glorious, his incommunicable work: it was his sole prerogative to make peace by the blood of his cross. O that I may be enabled to maintain it the next time my faith is tried, and to put honor and glory upon the divine record concerning it.

I read and believed, that the Father does not love me upon account of my walk, but for his mercies' sake. His mercy was towards me from everlasting. He loved me in his Son—chose me—accepted me in the beloved—and all his dealings with me, since he called me by his grace, have come from the tender mercies of a covenant God and Father. I would not henceforth have one doubt of his being reconciled to me, and of his loving me perfectly in Jesus. My faith herein has been eon-firmed by my late trials. I have learned by experience to rely upon what God has spoken, for preserving his peace in my conscience, and his love in my heart Depending on his faithful word, and mighty arm, I would walk with him this day for the strengthening and increasing of those graces. This is the desire and prayer of my soul,

O Father of mercies hear me for Jesus' sake. I acknowledge my sinfulness and unworthiness, even in my closest walk with thee. I am less than the least of thy mercies: yea, deserving the heaviest of thy vengeance. It is of the Lord's mercy, that it has not fallen upon me long ago; and I trust in his word, that it will never fall upon me. Who is a God like unto thee, thug pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of thine heritage? Thou retainest not thine anger against them forever, because thou delightest in mercy. Glory be to thee for thine unspeakable mercies: for thou hast given me faith in the atonement of Jesus, by whom I have peace with thee, my reconciled God, and by whom I have experienced thy great love to me.

On thee, O my God, is still my hope. I look up to thee, the giver of those graces, for strength to maintain them in my daily walk. I do believe in the sacrifice and righteousness of Immanuel. Lord, help mine unbelief. I find it hard to preserve in my practice, what! believe to be true in doctrine; and, therefore, on thy present help I must continually depend. Lord, strengthen me mightily by thy Spirit in the inner man against temptations. I am daily and hourly called upon to exercise my faith; and when thy grace does not hold me up, I fall. The fiery darts of Satan easily inflame me, when they are thrown at nay legal hopes, false dependencies, or self-righteous tempers, My shield,

which should quench them, is ready to drop out of mine hand. I should fall a prey to the enemy, and the fire would consume me, if thy mercy was not over me for good.

O my God and Father strengthen my faith against the wiles and assaults of Satan, and against the workings of mine own unbelief. When these trials come, keep me sensible of my weakness, and dependent on thy promised strength, that I may meet them strong in the Lord, and in the power of thy might. O let every trial teach me more of thy peace in my conscience, and more of thy love in my heart, that I may keep on in a steady course, walking humbly with my God. This is the work of thy good Spirit. I cannot preserve nor improve his graces, unless he be every moment present with me. He is the giver, the continuer, the increaser of them all. O God the Holy Ghost, I therefore beseech thee to water thy graces every moment. Lest any hurt them, keep them night and day. Never leave me nor forsake me, but what thou hast graciously begun, that mightily carry on, in my soul.

Temptations are strong, and I am weak; stand by me in the hour of need. And if my faith be tried with fiery temptations, let it come out of them, like gold out of the fire. O thou Almighty Spirit, confirm by trials, improve by experience, my trust in thy promised help. Let me go on from faith to faith. Keep up the confidence of my rejoicing in my reconciled God and loving Father, that I may walk humbly with him in sweet communion and holy fellowship, in the way everlasting. Grant me these mercies, gracious Father, for thy dear Son's sake, by the influence of the eternal Spirit, three persons is one Jehovah, to whom be equal praise for ever and ever.

Amen.

THE WALK OF FAITH CHAPTER V.

THE BELIEVER ORDERS HIS STEPS ACCORDING TO THE WORD,
WALKING WITH A FREE HEART IN THE KING'S HIGHWAY OF
OBEDIENCE.

MEDITATE, O my soul, upon the wonders which Divine love hath wrought for thee and for thy salvation. Review the many, many mercies of thy past life; and consider that thou art called upon to walk this day with THY GOD. What a privilege is this! He is thy God, and thou art his adopted son. O what a high honour has he conferred upon thee! He has taken thee into the most noble family, yea, into the divine household of faith, he has permitted thee to walk with him as thy Father. He has appointed the way, promised to be with thee in it, and every moment, and at every step, to be doing thee good. There can be no happiness superior to this on earth. Prize it: for it is inestimable. Enjoy it: for it is heaven begun. Walking with God by faith, is present enjoyment of him, and will infallibly bring thee to the end of thy journey, to full and everlasting enjoyment.

Hold fast then the confidence of thy rejoicing. What; thou hast been taught by the Holy Spirit, depend upon him for confirming and establishing, he has enabled thee to see the glory of the finished salvation of Jesus, and to believe the divine record concerning it. They hast renounced everything for the pardon of thy sins, but the blood-shedding of the Lamb; and everything for acceptance, but the Lord our righteousness. Thy faith herein has been tried, and the trial ended well. Thy temptations were manifold and violent, but they have done thee good. They have shown thee the necessity of depending upon the perfect work of the God-man-of rejoicing wholly in Christ Jesus, and of having no confidence in the flesh. They have also been the means of convincing thee, that thou standest by faith. Be not high-minded, then, but fear. And let thy fear of thyself lead thee to trust more in God. Rely on his faithful arm to maintain and to carry on his own work in thy soul. Remember he has promised it. Thy sufficiency is of God, and he has engaged to give thee grace sufficient for thee. He has undertaken as a father to supply all thy wants, to deliver thee from all miseries, and to withhold from thee no manner of thing that is good. Thy salvation is safe. It rests upon a sure foundation, as sure as the covenant of the day and the covenant of the night. These succeed each other by the will of their Creator, and have not been out of course not one single moment. The ordinances of day and night are regular and certain. So certain is thy salvation by the same unerring will.

While the belief of this rules in thy conscience, and in thy heart, thou wilt be able to resist temptations. None of them will overcome thee, unless they separate between thee and thy God. Nay, they will work for thy good, if guilty fears do not wrest the shield of faith out of thine hand. O beg of God to keep thee and thy faith in the hour of trial, that thou mayest experience his

faithfulness to his word. If thou put honor upon it, according to thy faith, so shall it be done unto thee. Give it credit, and thy steps will be ordered aright. Thou wilt walk in, love this day, as God hath loved thee. He will be thy portion, and the way in which he is to be enjoyed will be thy delight.

Set out then in this faith, with peace in thy conscience, and love in thy heart—trusting to thy God and Father. Look up to him for strength to maintain and to increase these graces; and hope to receive it from his faithfulness. Now he has put a new song in thy mouth, even praise unto thy God, go on thy way believing and rejoicing. Jesus is thine with all his fulness; and he has promised thee a constant supply of the Spirit, that thou mayest have grace for grace to enable thee to walk humbly with thy God.

Mind, then, thy walk is to be ordered according to his revealed will, and in his appointed way of obedience to it; for all rational creatures are bound to obey God. As soon as he makes known his will to them, it becomes their indispensable duty. His will is one, like himself, unchangeably the same yesterday, to-day, and forever: for, when revealed by the sovereign Creator, it becomes to mankind a law, which altereth not. It binds angels and men every moment, in every point and circumstance. And its obligation will never cease. For all his commandments are sure; they stand fast for ever and ever. What he has commanded is as fixed as the sun before him. It shall be established for ever, as the moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven.

It pleased the sovereign Creator to enforce thru holy, just, and good law, by proper sanctions. Out of his mere grace he has promised life to obedience, which man engaged to perform; and he threatened death to disobedience, to which penalty man submitted. Thereby this law became a covenant of works. The promise was to him who should continue obedient in all things; for Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, that the man who fulfilleth those things shall live by them. But if he does not fulfil them perfectly, without one failing, he then comes under the penalty which God had threatened to disobedience—"Cursed is he who continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law, to do them." This curse draws after it all the pains and penalties of the broken law in earth and in hell. Under this law of works, Adam was placed, and under it all his descendants are born. He and they are bound to keep the law in their own persons, if they would receive the promise, or liable to suffer the penalty, if they transgress. Adam broke the law of works, and we all in him; for in him all have sinned. We were all in his loins, when he fell, and forfeited in his attainder. By the offence of that one, judgment

came upon all men to condemnation. The righteous judge passed the sentence, and decreed that by the law of works no flesh living should be saved: for he has proved in his word both Jews and Gentiles to be under the law and under sin, which is the transgression of it. Whereby every mouth is stopped, and all the world is become guilty before God. Therefore, by the deeds of the law, there shall no flesh be justified in his sight.

In the law of works there was no provision made for a surety; but it did not absolutely exclude one: therefore it left room for the covenant of grace, in which a provision was made in the person of Jesus Christ for securing the divine honor of this holy law. He undertook to stand up in man's place and stead, to magnify the precepts of the law in his life, and to glorify the penalties of the law in his death, that not one jot or tittle of it might fail till all was fulfilled. And as he was God over all, blessed forever, his life and death put everlasting honor upon the divine law. His obedience was of inestimable value, and his sufferings were infinitely sufficient to take away sin. Christ is now the cud of the law for righteousness. He answered the end of the law for his people by obeying and suffering for them: and every one of them can now plead by faith a perfect fulfilling of all the precepts, a perfect suffering of all the penalties in the person of their divine surety. God the Father is faithful and just to his word and engagements with his Son: he has made known his will in the immutable record of his grace, "that whosoever believeth in Jesus should not perish, but should have everlasting life." How can he perish? Jesus died for him. He shall live with God in everlasting life; because Jesus lived for him. And this is the declared will of the Father concerning all that believe in his only-begotten Son.

Remember then, O my soul, that thou art not under the law, but under grace. Thou art saved from the law, under the form of a covenant of works. Thou art not bound to keep its precepts, in order to have life for thy obedience, nor yet to suffer its penalties for thy disobedience. Thy surety undertook to act and suffer for thee. He was to answer the law in its commands and demands, to every jot and tittle. And he did. Whatever it required, whatever it threatened, was perfectly fulfilled in the person of thy God and Saviour: and he has absolutely discharged thee from it, as a law of works. Thou art to have nothing to do with it in that view; nay, he has forbidden thee to keep it in hopes that thou mayest live thereby. The irreversible decree entered in the records of heaven has enacted—**BY THE WORKS OF THE LAW SHALL NO FLESH BE JUSTIFIED.** Thou art now to look upon the law in the matter of justifying and giving life, as a woman looks upon her dead husband. She is freed from

the marriage contract with him, and may now give her heart and hand to another; so art thou freed from the bond of the legal covenant. Thou art become dead to the law by the body of Christ, who has espoused and betrothed thee to himself, that serving him in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter, thou mayest bring forth fruit unto God. This is thy high privilege. Thy first husband is dead; happy for thee, thou art lawfully married to another—thy husband is thy Maker; Jehovah of hosts is his name. The Word made flesh has paid all thy debts, suffered thy punishment, wrought out a perfect righteousness, and won a crown of perfect glory for thee.

O what a divine honor has he put upon thee! Thou art now one with Immanuel in a bond of everlasting love. He has given himself to thee, with all he has and all he is; and it is thy happiness now, not to be thine own, but the Lord's—not to follow thine own will, but his. The law of thy Lord is liberty. As taught by his spirit and performed by faith, it is perfect freedom. Whilst thou walkest with him in obedience to it, and leanest on thy beloved every step, thou wilt find deliverance from all spiritual tyranny and bondage, and wilt enjoy the light of his countenance, and the love of his heart. When the Son has thus made thee free, thou art free indeed—free, now thy heart is set at liberty to run with Jesus in the way of his commandments.

In this view, O my soul, thou canst look with delight at the most holy law. Attend to it closely, and study it carefully. In order to obey, as a Christian, these following considerations should be well understood and digested; because under the influence of them every step of thy walk is to be ordered. O pray then for the spirit of wisdom to teach thee practically,

First,—That thy walk with God in the way of obedience is not to fulfil the law, as a covenant of works. Thou art not required to do this. Thou canst not do it. Immanuel, thy divine surety, took it upon himself. Because it was impossible for thee, a fallen creature, to keep the law, so as to be justified by it, he therefore came in person to fulfil it. He honored its precepts by his infinite obedience. He magnified its penalties by his inestimable sacrifice. And this is thy justifying righteousness. Through faith in the life and death of the God-man thou art not only freed from guilt and condemnation, from curse and hell, but art also entitled life and glory. The law is now for thy side, and is become thy friend. It acquits thee. It justifies thee. It will give thee the reward promised to obedience. The law in the hand of thy Saviour has nothing but blessings to bestow upon thee. Thou art to receive it at his mouth and to obey Mm: but not from any legal hopes of heaven, or from any slavish fears of hell:

for then thou wouldst come under the covenant of works again. Whereas thou art not under the law, but under grace; mind thy privilege, and pray for grace to live up to it. Thou art not under the law, bound to keep it perfectly in thine own person, or in case of failing, condemned by it, and under its fearful curse; but thou art under grace, a state of grace through faith in the obedience and sufferings of thy blessed surety, and under the power of grace, sweetly inclining thee to love, and mightily enabling thee to keep the law of the Lord thy God. Live thus by grace, and sin shall not have dominion over thee. Under the reign of grace, the tyrant sin is always dethroned. Obey under grace, as freely and fully saved by faith in Jesus, and this will make thy walk easy and evangelical: thou wilt go on with a free spirit, and will delight thyself in the ways of God, walking with him,

Secondly, –By faith, and not by sight. This is the great spring of all gospel obedience. Faith has a universal efficacy; for thus it is written–"Without faith it is impossible to please God." He is not pleased with the thing done, but with the principle on which it is done. He looks at the heart. Hearing the word, or saying prayers, or giving alms, or doing anything commanded, are not pleasing in themselves, but they must be performed upon a right motive, and to a right end. And both these come from faith. The apostle mentions the motive, which had influenced every step of his Christian course: "We walk by faith, and not by sight." We judge of our state by what God says of it, and we order our walk accordingly. We give credit to his witness of our being pardoned and justified freely by grace through faith, and we depend for the truth of this, not on what we see, but on what we believe. We trust not on our good frames, or warm feelings, or sensible comforts, or to any of the genuine fruits and effects of faith; but we trust what God says simply, as his record; and therefore we walk in a constant dependence on the truth of God in his word, and upon the faithfulness of God to his word. Some promised grace we stand in need of every step, and we rely upon his word, which cannot be broken, and upon his faithfulness, which cannot fail. Thus, we go on, and we find the promise made good, according to our faith.

Such was the apostle's walk. And in thine directed by the same motive? Search, O my soul, and examine upon what principle thou goest to duty. Is it in the obedience of faith? Dost, thou take no step without the warrant of the word of God. Dost, thou give full credit to what God says in it of thy state as a justified person? And does this appear from thy dependence upon his faithfulness to make good everything promised to them who are in that state? Blessed art thou of the Lord, if thou art walking by this faith. O praise his holy

name, who has thus highly favored thee, and ascribe to him all the glory. So will thy end be right, as well as thy motive. True faith takes no honor to itself: it is an emptying, humbling grace. Its springhead is in covenant love, and it is given from distinguishing favor and sovereign mercy. It has no foundation when given but the word of God; nothing to rest on but the divine truth; no support but the divine power, and no growth but from the divine influence. What, then, does it leave a man to glory in? Whoever has it, has it all from God, and while he is in his right mind, living by it, he will be disposed to give God all the glory of it; even for common mercies, as well as spiritual, he will live by the faith of the Son of God. Whether he eats or drinks, or whatever he does, he does all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him. And thus, he will go on sweetly and happily, obeying, not from slavish fears or legal hopes, but,

Thirdly, –From holy love, which is the fruit and consequence of walking by faith. Faith worketh love, and then worketh by love. The faith of the gospel, as a grace of the Spirit, worketh chiefly by love to God, and to man, for God's sake; for the gospel discovers the way of salvation, contrived by the eternal Three, fulfilled in the life and death of Immanuel, and applied to the sinner's heart by the eternal Spirit. Whoever is enabled to believe the gospel, will see himself an object of the covenant love of the blessed Trinity, and will therefore love Father, Son, and Spirit; for we love him, says the apostle, because he first loved us. And faith in his love to us will make us that we shall neither be barren nor unfruitful. Love is very active. Obeying from love is very sweet. How active! How sweet is obedience, when the love of God is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost who is given unto us! He is an almighty agent, he overcomes the power of legal unbelieving workings, and puts a new spring to duty into the heart, he manifests the love of God in Christ, his free, distinguishing love, the exceeding riches of it, and the numerous blessings flowing from it through time and eternity. In the sense of these mercies, he excites gratitude, and puts it upon acting. This grace has a wonderful influence. "What return shall I make unto the Lord?" is the devout breathing of the grateful heart. While the love of Christ constraineth it, all the affections follow him, and the soul delights itself in his ways. Then none of his commandments will be grievous. Nay, his yoke itself becomes easy, and his burden light. O triumphant love! How active, how sweet did he find it, who cried out—"I can do ALL things. I can suffer ALL things, I am more than conqueror, through him that loveth me."

And is not this, O my soul, thy happy case? O prize thy privilege, and adorn it in thy life. Walk in love with thy reconciled God, and out of love to him perform all duties, and bear all crosses, Remember, thou art not required to obey, in order to be saved for thine obedience, but thou art already saved; and therefore, out of graft-rude to thy dearest Saviour, thou art bound to love him and to obey him. Thou canst not love his person, and yet hate his will.

"If ye love me," says he, "keep my commandments;" give this proof of it, keep in my way, doing my commandments. But whatever ye do, let it come from the heart. Obey me, but see it be with a willing mind, and with a free spirit. When all springs from love, then my service will be perfect freedom. I would have you to do my will, but. without fear; not for life, but from life; not that ye may live, but because ye live. Do it, as sons, and not as slaves: the slave abideth not in the house for ever, but the son abideth forever. In this free spirit of adoption serve me, as sons of God, heirs of God, and joint heirs with me. Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty wherewith I have made you free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

To obey from life and salvation received and enjoyed, is sweet, liberty; to obey as the condition of life and salvation, is bitter slavery; it is an intolerable yoke, because it is not possible any fallen man should so keep the law as to live thereby. But the believer freed from this condition by Christ's keeping the law for him, is in liberty; he is saved from the penalty annexed to the transgression; he is entitled to the life promised to obedience; and thereby he is delivered from legal hopes and from guilty fears. In this faith he walks on delightfully in the ways of obedience, for he is reconciled to the law through the grace that is in Christ Jesus; he loves it. O what love, says he, have I unto thy law! Because now I find it according to the promise written upon my heart. And this is a—

Fourthly, —Motive to gospel obedience. The new covenant runs thus: "I will put, says God, my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people: and they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest of them." The heart is by nature as hard as adamant. It is enmity itself against the holy law. But the Lord here engages to take away the stony heart, and to give a heart of flesh, upon which he will write the ten commandments, not in tables of stone, but in the fleshy tables of the heart. The Spirit of the living God will teach all his children to know their Father; he will manifest to them their adoption; he

will reveal to them their Father's love in Jesus, and he will make their hearts happy in the enjoyment of it. Then the holy fruits of this love will appear towards man. It will work sweetly in benevolence, and effectually in beneficence. The love of God will open the contracted heart, enlarge the selfish, warm the cold, and bring liberality out of the covetous.

When the Holy Spirit teaches brotherly love, he overcomes all opposition to it. He says to his disciples: "Be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." And he makes them kind one to another: they show it by every good word and work. Thus, by resting to them the Father reconciled in Jesus, and by enabling them to love man for his sake, he writes upon their hearts the two great commandments, on which hang all the law and the prophets. The love of God, says the apostle to the Romans, is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost; and to the Thessalonians, Ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another. Thus, he engages the affections of the soul to the holy law, and inclines the inner man to love obedience. It ceaseth to be a yoke and a burden. How easy is it to do what one loves? If you dearly love any person, what a pleasure is it to serve him? What will not love put you upon doing or suffering to oblige him? Let love rule in the heart to God and to man, his law will then become delightful, and obedience to it will be pleasantness. The soul will run, yea, inspired by love, it will mount up with wings as eagles, in the way of God's commandments.

Happy are the people that are in such a case! And is it not, O my soul, in sonic measure thine? Hast thou not been taught to love God and his ways? Since thou hast been acquainted with him as thy loving Father in Jesus, has not thy faith been working by love to him; and to his will, and to his whole household and family? Remember, this is promised. All the children of God are to be taught to know and to love their heavenly Father. This is the very tenor of the covenant of grace, which the almighty Spirit has undertaken to fulfil. And he cannot fail in his office. It is his crown and glory to make good his covenant engagements. O trust him then, and put honor upon his faithfulness. He has promised to guide thee with his counsel, and to strengthen thee with his might, in the way of obedience to thy reconciled God.

What is within thee, or without thee, to oppose thy walking in love with him, he will incline thee to resist, and he will enable thee to overcome. O what mayest thou not expect from such a divine friend, who is to abide with thee on purpose to keep thy heart right with God! What can he not do! What will

he not do for thee! Such as is the love of the Father, and of the Son, such is the love of the Holy Ghost, the same free, perfect, everlasting love. Read his promises of it. Meditate on them. Pray to him for increasing faith to mix with them; that he, dwelling in the temple of thy heart, thou mayest have fellowship there with the Father and with the Son. Whatever in thee is pardoned through the Son's atonement, pray the Holy Spirit to subdue, that it may not interrupt communion with thy God. And whatever grace is to be received out of the fulness of Jesus, in order to keep up and to promote that communion, entreat the Holy Spirit to give it thee with growing strength. But pray in faith, nothing wavering. So shall the love of God rule in thy heart. And then thou shalt be like the sun, when it goeth forth in its might, shining clearer and dearer to the perfect day. O may thy course be like his, as free, as regular, and as communicative of good, that thy daily petition may be answered, and that the will of thy Father may be done in earth as it is done in heaven.

When all these things concur, what can be wanting to make the way of obedience easy and pleasant? It is not now a hard burden, impossible to be borne. The Spirit of life which is in Christ Jesus hath made it easy. He has reconciled the believer to the law: for he shows it to him in his surety, magnified and made honorable—magnified infinitely in his life—made everlastingly honorable in his death: so that the Father can get the fullest glory to every divine perfection, even to his justice, by saving sinners through faith in the righteousness of his Son; he can be just, and yet the justifier of the ungodly. The believer, persuaded of this, is reconciled to God. Being no longer under the law, as a covenant of works, but under grace, he loves the law, and walks with God, in sweet obedience to it. He sets out, and goes on every step—in faith—trusting to the acceptance of his person, and of his services in the beloved. He does not work now, in order to be saved, but he works because he is saved. And he ascribes all he does to the praise of the glory of free grace. He works from gratitude; and the faith of God's elect always does. It never fails to show itself by love. The Holy Spirit wins the heart by revealing to it the love of God, and thereby draws out the affections after him. When the commandment comes, "My son, give me thy heart," the son is ready: "Lord, take it, and seal it thine forever." And whatever inbred enmity may remain against giving it to the Lord, the Holy Spirit has undertaken to subdue it. It is his office to take away the stony heart, and to create a heart of flesh, soft and willing to receive the impression of his grace. With the same finger, which once wrote the holy law upon tables of stone, it is now written upon the fleshly tables of the heart. And then the love of God and the love of man are clearly taught, and effectually enforced. What a change does this make in obedience!

Hard things are now done with ease. Rough ways are made smooth. Painful things become delightful. The labor of love is sweet labor; because the heart is in it. The feet run: the bands work: all the faculties are ready to exert themselves, when love commands.

O my God let it be thus with me. Thou hast given me an earnest desire to walk with thee in thy ways, guide me in them by thine almighty Spirit. Let him abide with me, holy Father, as the Spirit of adoption, that I may always serve thee, as thy reconciled child, not under the law, but under grace. I would gladly walk with thee every step by faith, and that faith working by love to thee and to thy whole will. O God give me grace sufficient for my holy walk. Let thy faithful promise be daily fulfilled: write thy law still plainer in mine inward parts, and let it be more fairly copied out in my life. I want to love thee more, as thou knowest. O my God keep my heart sensible of the exceeding riches of thy love to me, and let the growing sense of this increase mine to thee. In the strength of thy good Spirit, enable me to overcome inward and outward opposition to my walking with thee in love. Let him strengthen me mightily in the inner man for every labor of love. From him cometh power to embrace and to cleave with full purpose of heart unto the ways of God—to love what he yes—and to hate what he hates. O thou blessed Spirit of the Father and of the Son, make me willing, keep me able, to enjoy the Father's love in his Son; and let it be a growing love, abounding yet more and more in knowledge, and in all sensible feeling, that I may run and not be weary, may be going on to the end, and not be faint. Even so, let it be done unto thy servant according to thy word, wherein thou hast caused me to put my trust. Let me have fellowship with the Father in his love, through the salvation of his Son, by thine influence upon my heart, now, henceforth, and forever. Amen.

THE WALK OF FAITH CHAPTER VI.

THE WALK OF THE BELIEVER IN THE WAY OF DUTY.

IT is very hard to go on in a straight course and for any length of time. The hinderances are many. To understand the nature and obligations of duty; to enter upon it with right motives; to perform it in a proper temper; to go through it without backwardness or weariness, not by constraint, but willingly, and to find the true end of doing it answered, these are great difficulties: but they will be removed in some measure out of the believer's walk, if he attend to what

was said before of obedience in general, and if he be enabled to bring it into practice.

It cannot be too often repeated, that the true believer is not under the law as a covenant of works—bound to keep the precept for life, or liable to the penalty of death. He is not under the law in this respect, but under grace. He is one with Christ, who kept the precept, and suffered the penalty for him, as his surety, and in his stead. He has put in his plea, and taken the benefit of Christ's suretyship. His plea has been admitted; and therefore, he is in a state of perfect acceptance, He stands in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made him free. Grace reigns in him, and over him, and renders his obedience perfect freedom. He obeys, but it is all in faith. He works, but it is from a sense of the Father's love to him in his Son. Gratitude taught by the Holy Spirit influences his heart and life. His heart has the love of God written upon it, and his life manifests it. He serves God with a thankful mind and without fear, and cheerfully does all the good he can to man for God's sake.

The believer will never get on in the way of duty, unless he learns to obey upon these gospel principles. He will stand in need of their assistance at every step; for he will meet with constant opposition to them. The flesh will not come under grace. The carnal mind is always legal. The old man of sin knows nothing but working for life, and will not submit to any other way. Our sinful nature is altogether for the covenant of works. Jews, Turks, Heathens, and nominal Christians are all upon one plan; they expect God will be merciful to them for their doings. And the children of God are exercised with this self-righteous spirit more or less all their days. Is it not, O my soul, thy grief and burden? Art thou not daily plagued with it in thy duties. And though thy principles be very evangelical, yet they too often fail thee in practice. O beg of God then, earnestly and often, that thou mayest be east into the mould of the gospel, quite evangelized in thy mind, and mayest perform all duties upon such motives as he himself requires and approves.

Duty is a debt owing to God—due from the creature to the Creator. The obligation to it arises from the absolute dependence of the one upon the other; and it consists in acknowledging this in the appointed way, by a perfect and continual service of every faculty—the creature being entirely subject to the will of the Creator, and living in never-failing conformity to it: for the will of God doth bind all men on earth, and angels and glorified spirits in heaven. It is an unchangeable law, obliging forever all creatures to obedience, not only on account of the matter contained in it, but also with respect to the sovereign

authority of the almighty law-giver. And this obligation Christ in the gospel has not in the least dissolved, but on all occasions has confirmed and strengthened. How decisive are these words! "Think not that I am come to destroy the law and the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil," to fulfil the law in mine own person, as the surety for my people, and to put the love of it into their hearts, and to engage them, and to enable them to practice it in their lives; though not for the same end for which I fulfilled it.

Duty is always one and the same—a debt always due to God. But the debt of obedience being withheld, and the death of suffering being incurred, the believer is taught to plead his discharge from suffering under Christ, and his fulfilling of obedience in the righteousness of Christ. With this faith he has a delightful prospect of duty. God is now at peace with him. God loves him in his Son. It is his high privilege to enjoy the sense of those distinguishing favors. For this end he is admitted to walk with his God. What an honor is this! Having received the adoption of sons, he is blessed with his Father's love, and is taken into near fellowship with him. What a happiness is this! "Son, all that I have is thine, it is freely given to thee in Jesus, and thou art now called upon to enjoy me and mine in thy holy walk." Here duty becomes his privilege. It is exalted and spiritualized into a gospel grace. He is bound to it, but it is by the cords of love. The pleasing bonds of gratitude bind his heart to obedience; to a free, holy, evangelical obedience, He obeys, not as a slave but as a son—not for fear, but because Christ has not him at liberty—not that God may accept, pardon, and justify him, but because God has done all for him, and will do all in him—not that he may have heaven for his obedience, but because heaven is reserved for him, and he for it. He therefore looks at duty, as greatly refined by the gospel. Every act of it, done in faith, is an act of fellowship with the Father and with the Son; and by the grace of the Spirit every act brings the Father's love through the Son's salvation into experience. He has communion with his God in all he does. This ennobles duty. It is hereby raised to a divine honor: for it is hereby made, to them who are in Christ, the highest privilege they can have on this side of heaven.

When the Holy Spirit writes the law upon the heart, he then teaches this obedience of faith. He does not abolish duty, but he enforces it upon right motives, and directs it to a right end. The same duties remain in the gospel, but not upon the same obligation. Law duties as conditions of life cannot be fulfilled. The Judge himself has decreed, that by the works of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight. Therefore, the law as a covenant of works, does not enter into the believer's obedience. He obeys because he is

freed from this covenant—not freed from doing the same duties which this covenant required, but freed from doing them upon law motives, neither expecting the promised life on account of keeping the precepts, nor fearing the threatened penalty on account of not keeping them. It is his privilege to obey, because he is saved, he works from a free spirit, and with a thankful heart. He does all his duties in faith. He is spiritual in them, acting upon the endearing motive of God's love to him in Christ, as it has been revealed to his heart by the Holy Spirit. He hopes for the acceptance of them only through the intercession of Christ: and after he has done them ever so well, he desires grace from Christ to return him all his glory. Thus, in every duty he aims at fellowship with God in Christ through the Spirit, and seeks to present an odor of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable and well pleasing to God.

Whatever thou art required to do, remember, O my soul, that thou art under grace, and it is thy privilege to do it in faith. View the two tables in the hand of thy Saviour, and receive the ten commandments from his mouth. Happy for thee, Jesus is thy lawgiver. His spirit will gospelize thine obedience. He will bring thine heart into it. He will set thee in the chariot of love, and thou shalt ride on prosperously. He will oil the wheels of duty, and they shall run easy and pleasant. Thou shalt be carried sweetly through duty, thy beloved being present and conversing with thee in it; yea, thy faith working by love to him will render fellowship with God, in all thou doest, the joy of thy heart and the glory of thy life.

O beg of thy divine teacher thus to spiritualize thine obedience. From him only canst thou learn the two great commandments, which are the sum and substance of the will of thy God. In the first his nature is revealed, and then his worship, he is the Lord thy God, Jehovah thy Elohim: Jehovah means the self-existent Godhead; and Elohim, the persons in covenant, Father, Son, and Spirit, partakers of the same self-existence and divine glory, without any difference or inequality. There can be no true religion without the true object of worship, and he cannot be worshipped unless he be known; therefore, it is an indispensable duty to know the Lord God. But how shall fallen man attain to this knowledge? He lost it by sin, and he cannot by any reasoning faculty or power of his own recover it. It is a matter of fact, that no man did ever, by searching, find out God; and attested by infallible authority, that the world by its wisdom knew not God.

There is no true description of the Godhead, but what is revealed in Scripture; and it is altogether from the teaching of the Holy Spirit, that any one savingly

understands what is revealed, He the Spirit of wisdom and revelation opens the eyes of the mind, sets the object before them, and gives a clear idea of it. He takes of the things of God, and shows them to his disciples, he does not lead them into abstracted reasonings about the divine nature, or what the absolute Godhead is, but his lessons are useful and practical, He teaches the knowledge of the persons in Jehovah, as they are related to sinners in the covenant of grace. Through him the Father is made known: "Ye have received the Spirit of adoption, by whom we cry, Abba, Father." (Romans. 8: 15.) Through him the Son is believed in for no man can say, that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost. He discovers the Father's love in the Son, with its rich graces and abundant blessings, as it is written, We have "received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God." He makes known the giver and the gifts, and he is received for that very purpose. He shines into the heart, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the person of Jesus Christ. And this is saving acquaintance with the Father and with the Son; for hereby the understanding is restored to the image of God; and the new man is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him. O what a mercy is this! What can call for greater praise! And this mercy, O my soul, is thine. Unspeakably gracious has the Lord been to thee. He has given thee the knowledge of himself. His image is upon thine understanding, His light is shining upon it. Certainly, it is as great an act, as when he first commanded the light to shine out of darkness; for hereby I believe in him, I know him to be my FATHER. O precious name! The love of his heart, and it is infinite the blessings of his love, and they are numberless, he has called me to enjoy, freely, of mere grace, of his own sovereign good-will—called me to the adoption of sons, to the noblest dignity, yea, to, everlasting honor, to be a son of the most high God—God is my Father—my new birth is from him—that which is born of the Spirit is spirit, and has fellowship with the Father of spirits. Behold! what manner of love this is! No parent ever loved, or can love, a child as my Father which is in heaven loves me. And I desire in the sense of this to love him, to cleave to him with full purpose of heart, and gratefully to devote all I have and am to his service, and to his glory. O thou divine revealer of this love, enlighten mine understanding and influence my affections, that I may grow in the knowledge of my Father in Jesus: For

In him the Father only is to be known. He is his Father, as our covenant head; and therefore, ours in him. God is not a Father to any, but in Christ. The name Father respects Christ, as the first-begotten, and then all his seed. He is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth

is named, and depends for its adoption on the Father of their Lord Jesus Christ. He undertook to be made man, to live and to die for the many sons, whom he was to bring to glory: and in consequence of his undertakings, it pleased the Father to lay up all fulness of grace for them in the God-man, their covenant head. And it pleases the Spirit to witness of this fulness, and to enable believers to receive out of it grace for grace. Thus, he reveals Immanuel to them. They know him, and are one with him. He is their Lord and their God, and by faith they live in him and upon him. Trusting to his atonement and righteousness, they have peace with their reconciled Father, and they enjoy his love shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost.

Waiting in the appointed ways, they grow in the knowledge of the wonderful person God-Jesus. They see more of the divine glory of his salvation-work, and by depending on it daily, they enjoy more of the things which accompany salvation. Thrice happy are they, whose acquaintance with Jesus is thus increasing. Their happiness has a boundless subject. They may study on, and they will find in him new worlds of delight to eternity. O ye highly favored, read and adore the wonders already wrought for you; among which, these are not the least: "We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding to know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ, who is the true God and eternal life." Blessed knowledge! they have an understanding given them, and they are savingly acquainted with the Father and with the Son, by the teaching of the Holy Ghost. Jehovah is their Elohim. Thus, they learn the first part of their duty, which leads them to the

Second; namely, to love the persons in the Godhead, because they stand in this most endearing relation to them. They love the Father, who is their Father in Jesus. They have not only heard of, and believed in, but have also enjoyed his precious love. It has been shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost, who has overcome all resistance to his love; yea, has made enmity itself yield to it. Having purified the conscience by faith, he then purifies the heart: he pours into it a sense of that love which gave his co-equal Son for them, and all the blessings in earth and in heaven with him. Thereby he draws out the affections in holy desires to be more united to the Father of mercies. It is the property of love to desire to be united to the beloved object. The Holy Spirit has discovered the object, and has given the desire; and he fulfils all the desires of his own creating, He teaches all the children of God to know their Father, and to experience his love to them in his Son; and then they cannot but love him. He creates the new heart for this very purpose, and makes it sensible

that the Father's love is all received through the Son; and therefore, the Father and the Son are beloved with an undivided affection.

The Son is his office name. It should never be heard without putting us in mind of the wonderful love of our God in his undertakings. He covenanted to be made flesh. What a miracle of love is that! He engaged with his Father to be the surety for his people, to do their work, to suffer their punishment, and then God and man, one Christ forever, was to have all fulness of covenant blessings to give his people. The Father lids no love, the Spirit bestows no grace, but what comes through Christ. A believer is therefore taught in everything he does to have fellowship with Christ. His safety, his happiness, his hopes of happiness to-day and forever, are blessings to be received out of Immanuel's? fulness; for he is the head over all things to the church which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all. And while the member is receiving life, and sense, and happiness, from the fulness of the head, he will have fresh motives to love his divine Saviour. What can fix his affections, if gratitude to Jesus cannot? He has everything in him that can win the heart, he has beauty to engage love, blessings to increase love, glories to increase love to him for evermore. He is beauty without a rival. Whatever is charming in any earthly object is but a ray from him, and should lead to him; it is but a beam to point out the matchless graces of Immanuel. And so is the loveliness of heavenly objects; saints and angels have nothing beautiful, but what the love of Jesus has put upon them. He is the Lord and giver of all their glory.

How glorious then must he be? He is mine, says the believer, and my property in him makes him indeed glorious in mine eyes. Once I saw no beauty in him, that I should desire him; but now he is my beloved and my friend. I can see everything truly lovely in my Lord and my God. Whatever else courts my heart, appears to be but a shadow: the substance is my Jesus. He endears himself daily to me by his numberless favors. I am always receiving out of his fulness some blessing, which makes him the center of my happiness. Every look of faith discovers in him some new excellency, and brings from him some fresh kindness, and thereby engages my heart still more to its precious Saviour. And when I look forward to the glory to be revealed, when I shall see my dearest Jesus face to face, and shall be like him, and shall enjoy him, and in him all the blessings of the eternal Three forever, O this is too big for present thought: yet it constrains me to give up my whole soul to this heavenly lover. Glorify him daily in me, thou faithful witness for Jesus, and give me continual reason to love thee with the same undivided affection wherewith thou hast enabled me to love the Father and the Son.

The Holy Spirit is Jehovah, a person in the self-existent Godhead, equal with the Father in every attribute. His office name is Spirit; the idea is taken from air, such as we breathe, to denote his being the breather or inspirer of spiritual life. Everything done by him in this character tends to holiness, and therefore he is called the Holy Spirit. His office in the covenant, as well as his co-equality with the Father and the Son, entitle him to equal worship and to equal love. For he undertook to carry into execution the purposes of the Father's love in Jesus. Their fulfilment depends entirely upon his grace. The Son has been incarnate; he has brought in everlasting righteousness, and made the atonement for sin: the Father is satisfied with his finished work, and has demonstrated his acceptance of it. The God-man is now upon the throne of glory with all power in heaven and earth.

To this the Holy Spirit bears witness. It is his divine office to apply the salvation of Jesus, and to make it; effectual, He does all in the heirs of promise. The Father gave them to the Son, the Son redeemed them, but they are in the common mass of corruption, dead in trespasses and sins, till the Spirit of life enter into them. They feel not their guilt nor their danger, till he convince them. They are quite ignorant of God and of the things of God, till he make them wise unto salvation. They cannot believe in Jesus, till the Spirit of faith enable them. They cannot rejoice in the Father's love, till the Comforter makes them sensible of it. They are without strength, until they be strengthened with might by the Spirit in the inner man. They cannot go in their Christian course, but by a constant supply of the Spirit. They cannot hold out to the end, but from his abiding with them forever. So that he is the Lord and giver of life. He begins the good work, and he confirms it, until the day of Jesus Christ. Every motion of spiritual life is from him; and all those whom he makes alive, he makes sensible of the debt which they owe him. He manifests his love to them, and thereby he engages their love to him. They experience how great the love of the Spirit is. They are sensible of their obligations to him, and desire to be thankful for them. Thus, their affections return to the proper object of love and worship. They receive daily the blessings of the Father's love through faith in the Son's salvation, by the applying power of the Holy Spirit: and hereby they are reconciled to the first and great commandment; it is become the delight of their souls to love the Lord God.

Here consider, O my soul, whether thou art acting upon the principle of gratitude to thy God. If thou art, then his yoke will be easy and his burden light. Thou wilt not go to duty in bondage, hoping to gain his love by the desert of what thou doest; or fearing to be beaten with many stripes for not doing it

well. Thy God whom thou servest, is thy most loving friend and tenderest father. He loved thee in Jesus freely by grace; not by works done by thee, or to be done. Immanuel is thy Saviour: his love to thee is made up of miracles. No understanding of angels, or of glorified spirits, can conceive how great it is: for it passeth knowledge. Nevertheless, the Holy Spirit has revealed it unto thee. He loves thee, as the Father and the Son do, with the same divine affection. Thy debt is equal, thy gratitude should be the same to the blessed Trinity. In the sense of thine infinite obligations thou art called upon to walk in the way of duty. Love to the person whom thou art to serve, wilt make service pleasant. And thou dost love thy God. He has given himself with every covenant blessing to be thine, and these blessings are to be enjoyed in thy walk with him.

With this faith look at duty. It is the expression of gratitude to thy dearest friend, and it is the way to enjoy his divine friendship, He requires it out of love to thee; and would have thee to do it out of love to him. O! how exalted is duty, when communion with God is carried on by it! He would have thee to keep close to him, in order to maintain a sense of his gracious presence in thy heart, and so to walk with him as to have his love to thee confirmed at every step; and, therefore, thou shouldst seek to preserve a constant nearness and holy fellowship with him in everything thou doest. This is the will of thy God. May it be thine, O my soul! Study this glorious way of gospel duty. Pray to be taught it better, and to go on in it more spiritually every day. Bring it into all thy affairs. In thy calling, as well as in the means of grace, in temporal as well as in heavenly matters, set the Lord always before thee, and so live and act in everything as to keep up communion with thy God and Father in Jesus by the grace of the Holy Spirit.

When God is thus become the dear object of thy happy heart, then every way wherein his love is to be enjoyed will become delightful. The time, the place, the means of meeting with him, will be greatly desired and much longed for. Thy heart cannot but be where thy treasure is. Thou wilt want no spur to duty, no whip to drive thee to ordinances: it will be enough that the Lord is there. As when he said to David, "Seek ye my face," his heart replied, "Thy face, Lord, will I seek." His heart said it. His affections were set upon God, and he was ready to seek wherever God was to be found. No hunted hart ever punted more after the water-brooks, than his soul did after God. His hope in doing anything was to have God's gracious presence with him. And his happiness in it was to have communion with God.

This is gospel duty. And what a glorious privilege is it! O that it may be my happy experience thus to meet God in all his ways, and to enjoy him in my daily walk. That thou mayest grow in this divine fellowship, consider, O my soul, some of the duties of the first table, and learn to practice them upon gospel principles. The first and chief is PRAYER, which consists in keeping up daily converse with thy God upon all occasions. This is the breathing of the new-born soul. It wants to draw the air of heaven, and to live in its own proper element. There is a way opened for it unto the throne of glory, and the children of God may approach it with boldness: for it is a throne of grace, and he that sitteth upon it loves to hear and to answer their petitions, He is their Father: "I go," says Jesus, "to my Father, and to your Father; my Father himself loveth you; ask what ye will of him in my name, he will do it." This is the beloved object of prayer, a reconciled Father in Jesus, whose heart is full of tenderness to the complaints and miseries of his family; his promises are the declarations of his pure love—a dependence upon his fulfilling them does honor to his truth and faithfulness, and always brings down the blessing.

The Holy Spirit abides with the children of God, to teach them thus to pray in faith. He helps their infirmities in prayer, strengthens their graces, and bestows on them their comforts. He enables them to come with boldness, and have access with confidence. Whatever their Father has freely promised to give them in Jesus, they can ask in faith, nothing wavering for they know his promises cannot fail. They find them daily fulfilled, whereby their holy familiarity with their Father increases. He draws nearer to them, and they draw nearer to him. This their mutual intercourse may be interrupted, but it cannot be entirely broken off. God is always disposed to hear, although the believer be not always able to pray rejoicing. It is still his privilege, although he may not find any great delight in it; but if he continue to make constant use of his privilege, his delight will return, and God will fulfil to him the gracious promise,—I will make them joyful in my house of prayer.

Thus, the child of God learns to love prayer, yea, to pray without ceasing. He lives under his Father's eye, and in a dependence on his Father's care for him night and day. And he has hereby as true and lasting fellowship with the things of God in his soul, as he has with the things of this world in his body.

O what an exalted privilege is this! How highly is prayer hereby ennobled! It is not a law duty to an absolute God, but a gracious intercourse with a covenant God; not practiced that he may love us, but because he loves us; not to make us his children, but because we are his children. It should be performed always

in this faith. If there be infirmities in it, such as wandering, coldness, or the like, we are to remember that we are not heard for the goodness of our prayers, nor answered for the fervency of them. That which makes our persons accepted, obtains acceptance for our services also. We and all we do are only accepted in the beloved: "For through Jesus Christ we have an access by one Spirit unto the Father." (Ephesians.2: 18.) Our access is through Jesus Christ. Trusting to his finished salvation, we enter into the presence of the Father, and, guided by the Holy Spirit, we pray in faith. Whatever we ask in the Son's name, we know that we have the petitions which we desired of him. This spiritualizes prayer, and puts glory upon it: because there is heavenly fellowship with God in it, with the Father through the Son, by the one Spirit.

These are some of the privileges of Christian prayer. Thou goest, O my soul, to meet thy God in it—to converse with thy Father—to call on him for the fulfilling of his promises made in Jesus—to wait on him for his answers—and to give him his glory. O what blessed seasons hast thou enjoyed in this communion with thy God! How has he manifested his nearness to thee, and bounty towards thee! Hast thou not found his heart open, his ears open, and his hands open to grant thee the request of thy lips? And when thou hast; not found such sweet fellowship with thy God in prayer, yet thy dependence on his faithful word has been exercised and improved. Thou hast left; thy petitions with thy friend and advocate, trusting to that most glorious description of him in Revelation.8: 3, 4: "And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer, and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar, which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense which came with the prayers of the saints ascended up before God out of the angel's hand." O thou great angel of the covenant! thus present my prayers: they are nothing worth but as perfumed with thy divine odors. Let; them ever ascend before God out of thy hand, with the smoke of the incense of thy sacrifice and intercession. Blessed Spirit of Prayer increase my faith, that I may trust more to a prayer-hearing God and Father, who is always ready to grant every good thing promised to his children in Christ Jesus. Amen.

PRAISE and prayer go together. The prayer of faith will afford continual matter for praise. The one is a dependence on God for every promised blessing, the other is the acknowledgment of his having bestowed it. Innocent man had his heart in tiffs sweet work. It was his happiness. Every breath in Paradise was praise. The redeemed man has more reason. His obligations are far greater than Adam was under to his God: raised from his fall—saved from

the guilt and misery of it—chosen and called to this salvation by mere grace—through faith a partaker of it—an heir of God, and a joint; heir with Christ. O what; motives are these to continual thankfulness! And these motives are effectual when the Holy Spirit discovers the things that are freely given to us of God. He makes us sensible of them and thankful for them, for he preserves in the soul a blessed poverty of spirit, at humble abiding sense of wants and unworthiness, and thus he lays a sure foundation for thankfulness.

Every blessing is then received with a—Why me? What am I, and what is my father's house, that God should deal thus bountifully with me? I must refer it all to the praise of the glory of his own grace: blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed me with all spiritual blessings in heavenly things in Christ. All these blessings flow from the Father's love in his Son, and the Holy Spirit has discovered to me that boundless ocean of love, and has often refreshed me with its life-giving streams, He has made known to me the good pleasure of the Father's will, which he had purposed in himself to choose me by his distinguishing grace to be one of his children, and through faith in Jesus Christ I read my adoption, and take possession of the inheritance of children. Mine experience of these blessings cannot be questioned while I am receiving out of the fulness of Jesus grace for grace. O how great is my debt! It is equal to the eternal Three; so should my gratitude be. It is very meet, right, and my bounden duty, that I should at all times, mad in all places, give thanks unto thee, O Lord, holy Father, almighty, everlasting God!—therefore with angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven, I laud and magnify thy glorious name evermore, praising thee and saying—Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of hosts: heaven and earth are full of thy glory! Glory be to thee, O Lord most high. Amen.

May such as this, O my soul, be thy daily tribute of thanks. Consider what thou owest, to thy God—how great are his favors, how many, how endless, and bestowed on the most unworthy, review his goodness in giving thee being, and in preserving it. Remember from how many dangers and pains He has delivered thee; what health and creature comforts he has vouchsafed of his mere bounty; and what a monument of his long-suffering thou art. O what a miracle, that one like thee shall be out of hell. Then put to the account spiritual favors, what blessings thou hast received from the Father's love in Jesus; what blessings thou art entitled to in him, not only in time, but also in eternity. Cast up the mighty sum, and say, How much it is! Canst thou tell the numbers thereof? No. It is beyond the power of the greatest arithmetician. If thou couldst write a figure upon every atom in the creation, thou wouldst want a

new world whereon to sum up the vast account; for thy mercies reach to the heaven of heavens, and they are also everlasting.

Then consider to whom thou art thus indebted. Is it not to a justly offended God, who might have glorified all his perfections in punishing thee for thy sins? Whereas in wonderful grace he has chosen and called thee to the adoption of sons. He is thy Father. This is the spring of all thy mercies. In love he gave his Son to finish thy salvation. And his Spirit has brought thee to believe in it, and to enjoy it. This is the source of all thy praise. The object of thanksgiving is thy covenant God, who is related to thee in such a bond of love as will bring thee under eternal obligations. Thou art therefore in all thy praise to remember thy relation to Father, Son, and Spirit; thy debt to them for that most blessed relation, thy growing, ever-growing debt. Praise will pay none of it. The saints in glory do but acknowledge it. While they are praising more, the sum is increasing. O my soul, beg of thy God to give thee grace, that thine acknowledgments may be in some measure like theirs. They are crying Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God; giving glory for the Father's love in Jesus, and for their experience of it by the eternal Spirit. May this subject be thine, more spiritual, more holy every day, till it be what theirs is, perfect and without intermission. Since it is thy privilege, O my soul, to pray to thy covenant God, and to praise him for covenant mercies, then thou wilt highly prize the holy Scriptures, because without them thou canst not know what to pray for, nor what is indeed a mercy. Thy faith has nothing to stand upon but the word of God, and nothing to praise him for but mercies therein promised, and by believing received. O how dear then should his word be to thee; how greatly studied, how diligently heard, that by it thou mayest grow in every grace which is needful for thy holy walk with God. It is the appointed means by which the Holy Spirit acts. It is his great instrument in beginning and carrying on spiritual life. He opens the understanding to know the Scriptures; he inclines the will and the affections to receive them in the love of the truth, and he influences the whole man to submit to live under the obedience of faith. Whatever strength, victory, comfort, or blessing of any kind he bestows, it comes by obeying the truth through the Spirit. So that thou canst not go on in thy walk with God but by constant and believing use of the Scriptures. They should be thy study night and day, heard and read carefully, mixed with faith, treasured up in thy memory, received into thy heart, and brought into thy life, and all by the teaching of the Holy Ghost, in order to thine enjoyment of the promised blessings of the Father's love through the Son's salvation. Thus the word will be the means of thy maintaining fellowship with the blessed Trinity. By mixing faith with it, thou wilt be constantly receiving from them covenant

mercies; and so thou wilt go forward. Thy steps will be ordered aright according to the word, and thy way will be prosperous.

Consider then, O my soul, whether thou art making this use of the Scriptures. Dost, thou find the means of thy growth in divine knowledge, in faith and love? Do they really promote thy communion with God, and, on that account, are they daily more thy study and thy delight? Never think of hearing or reading them without praying for the teaching of the Holy Spirit, that they may be the means of keeping up fellowship with thy Father in Jesus. For this end they were revealed, and if this end be not answered, they profit thee nothing. Make it then thy constant practice—before hearing, to pray for a spiritual appetite, that, as new-born babes desire milk, so thou mayest hunger and thirst for the good word of life—in hearing, beg of God, that thou mayest feed upon the word and digest it, and thine inward man may be nourished up in the words of faith, and of good doctrine—after hearing, pray for a sanctified memory to treasure up for use, what thou hast learnt, that, as occasion shall serve, it may be realized, and brought into practice, thy life and conversation being cast into the mold of the word. With the same dependence on thy divine teacher, read as well as hear the Scriptures. Meditate on them. Converse about them, expecting to find them able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith, which is in Christ Jesus, and as thy faith in him increases, able to bring in richer experience of thy Father's love in him.

How sweet is prayer, how delightful is praise, how blessed is hearing and reading the word, when these are the means of meeting and conversing with God! His presence puts the highest honor upon them, and exalts duty into a royal privilege; for he is present as a Father with his children. O what a dignity is it to have God for our Father! What a happiness to have free fellowship with him in this dearest relation! In thy daily hearing and reading his word, observe, O my soul, what is spoken of this holy fellowship, and seek to maintain it, and to improve it in every appointed way, particularly in keeping the command of thy dying friend:

Do this in remembrance of me. When his disciples meet together for this purpose, then place the whole dependence of thy heart upon thy crucified Saviour. Considering the infinite and everlasting efficacy of the sacrifice of his body and soul to take away sin, draw near in faith to feast upon it, for his flesh is meat indeed, and his blood is drink indeed. Look well to the end of the institution. It was not only to remind thee of, but also to convey to thee, all the blessings of that one offering, which perfects forever. It was to teach thee, that

thy spiritual life, and every grace and comfort of it, are as dependent upon Christ crucified, as the life of thy body is upon the meat and drink of this world. Thy life comes from his death. Thy life is nourished by feeding upon Christ thy Passover, who was sacrificed for thee. He intended by the bread to point out unto thee his body, and by the wine his blood—by eating and drinking them, thy taking and living upon him—by thy bodily support received from them, the nourishment of thy soul, by eating his flesh, and drinking his blood. He would have thee to look through the signs to the things signified. Thou art not to rest in the outward act, but to rest in the promise in the word of God. Thy faith is not to be exercised about the Lord's supper as a duty; but it is to be exercised upon his word; and what he has therein promised to make it, that thou art to expect in taking it. He appointed it to be the means of communicating with him, and of thy enjoying fellowship with him in his sufferings.

It is a spiritual believing act, in which thou art invited to partake of the paschal lamb. It is the Lord's Passover, and will certainly answer every purpose for which he instituted it. He appointed it to be the means of safety from the destroyer, of deliverance from bondage, of free and full forgiveness of all sins, of a happy passage through the Red Sea, and of the everlasting possession of the promised inheritance. For these gracious purposes the Father's love gave his Son to be a lamb slain, and then a lamb feasted on; and the Holy Spirit makes it a feast indeed. It is to the believing receiver spiritually, whatever the passover was to the Jews on their coming out of Egypt. It is a communion with the blessed Trinity—with the Father, for providing such a banquet of love—with the Son, for giving himself to be a lamb slain, and to be a spiritual repast to his people in earth and in heaven—with the Holy Spirit, for rendering the bread which is broken the communion of the body of Christ, and the cup of blessing the communion of the blood of Christ. Communion signifies union with—the believer united to Christ—one with Christ—a member in his body, lives in him, and on him, has communications of life, nourishment, strength, comfort; &c., as the members have from their union with the head. He has a real inward fellowship with Jesus, in his cross and passion, in his resurrection and ascension, in his intercession, and sitting at the right hand of the Majesty on high. He communicates now with Jesus in all the blessings of his Father's love, and will communicate with him in all his Father's glory.

O what a privilege is the Lord's Supper, when it is thus the means of communion with the Son, and with his Father through the Spirit! What an honor is it to be admitted to a feast instituted by the Lamb of God, and for the

enjoyment of the love of God! What a blessing is it to sit down now to the marriage supper of the Lamb, and to partake by faith of its spiritual realities and delights! There is nothing beyond this upon earth, and it has sometimes been to the believing receiver a foretaste of heaven. Yes, Blessed be God, it has been, even to thee, O my soul, unworthy as thou art of one crumb from the master's table, a feast of fat things, of wines kept, even of fat things, full of marrow, of wines kept and well refined. And when thou hast not been so highly feasted, yet thou hast enjoyed solid communion, partaking of the bread and wine according to the Lord's institution, and depending on the Lord's promise, thou hast been fed and nourished at his table. The virtue of the Spirit has been put forth in thy heart, and thou hast as truly by faith eat the flesh and drunk the blood of the Son of man as thou didst eat the bread and drink the wine. It was, strictly speaking, a communion: being united to Christ, thou was a partaker of Christ, and has fellowship with him in his life and death. O pray for more of this; beg of the Holy Spirit to increase thy communion with Jesus, that thou mayest live more in him and on him, and thereby enjoy more of the love of thy heavenly Father. Plead his promise, and expect the fulfilling of it: "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me." (John 6: 56, 57.)

Viewing the duties of the first table in this light, how exalted are they, and spiritual! What a glory does it put upon them, that the believer has fellowship with the eternal Three, and in prayer and praise, in hearing and reading the word, and at the Lord's Supper he enjoys their covenant mercies, partaking of them now as really by faith, as ever he will by sense in heaven! The law written and engraven in stones was glorious, but the law thus written upon his heart excelleth in glory. The two first tables of stone were broken, the other two are lost: but no time shall deface the writing of the Holy Spirit. The new heart turned in love to God, shall keep his impression forever. Faith should rest securely upon this, because he has undertaken to abide forever with his own people, that the purposes of the Father's love and the blessings of the Son's salvation may be always enjoyed by them. In remembrance of this great truth, they keep the LORD'S-DAY. They rest on it from labor, declaring thereby their belief of the rest which the eternal Three have provided in Jesus—a rest in their souls—given without their labor and pains—secured to them by coven, ant—kept for them by almighty power—a Sabbath remaining for the people of God, into which they shall as certainly enter as Jesus their forerunner has entered. Sabbath signifies a day of rest. It was set apart in memory of God's finishing the works of the first creation; and is observed now in memory

of his finishing the works of the new creation. The end for which the world was made will be answered soon, and then it, and all the works therein, shall be burnt up, and the place of them found no more; but the glorious work of the God-man shall endure forever. In honor of this greatest work of God we keep the Lord's-day. It is his Sabbath—a day eternally famous for his finishing the work of salvation, and entering into his rest. "And we who have believed," says the apostle, "do enter into rest." We do enter into it now by faith, and we share with him in his Sabbath. The atonement which he made, the righteousness which he wrought out, the victory which he obtained, the works which he perfected forever, and the glory which he now inherits, we enjoy at present by believing, and enter upon the possession of them. According to our faith, such is our rest. He that believes without doubt or wavering in the finished salvation of Jesus, he will have the peace of God ruling in his conscience, he will experience the perfect love of God to him, which will make him rest in his love to God, and then he will delight himself in the ways of God. This is the Christian Sabbath. It consists in resting upon Jesus, and in depending upon his having finished the works of redemption, and then in living upon them for our souls, as much as we do upon the works of creation for our bodies.

Sweet is the day of rest, spent in this holy employment. Happy time! set apart for spiritual intercourse with God, and consecrated for keeping up fellowship with him in his fatherly love in Jesus, and for receiving from him communications of his graces and blessings. Thrice happy day! in which this fellowship is kept up; and these graces and blessings are enjoyed. By this heavenly converse the inward man is renewed with growing strength: his faculties are enlarged, and their happiness is increased. By which means he comes nearer to the spiritual rest of the heavenly Sabbath. He calls it his delight, holy of the Lord, honorable; because the end of its institution is answered to him, and he has on it happy communion with his God. When he draws near to God in his appointed ways, he finds God in them, and experiences his loving-kindness, which is better than life itself.

Blessed is the man who is thus highly favored, He enters within the veil into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, and stands a most loving Father upon a throne of grace. In every service on the Lord's-day, he seeks a more intimate acquaintance and more spiritual fellowship with him. His very heart is engaged in this work. His soul thirsteth, and his very flesh longeth to meet God, as he has met him in the sanctuary. Therein he has found communications of grace, which have rendered the ordinances delightful

indeed, He rejoices in hopes of meeting God, and of drawing near to him in prayer, of praising him still more and more for his abundant mercies; of hearing the reviving sound of gospel grace, and of everlasting love; and of receiving it not as the word of man, but as it is in truth the word of God; and of sitting down to the banquet of heaven in communion with Christ crucified, through him partaking of the Father's love by the Spirit's influence. Blessed is he of the Lord, who is thus spiritual in sabbath duties. By keeping up constant communion with God in them his blessedness is increasing. He is already in possession of the same things which his elder brethren are enjoying in heaven: and he will become more heavenly-minded, while he maintains daily fellowship with the eternal Three in their covenant offices and blessings.

Consider, O my soul, that these privileges are thine. Look well to thy improvement of them. Remember, thou art already, by believing, entered into rest. Thy sabbath is begun—a day, whose sun shall never set—whose glory shall shine brighter for evermore. May thine enjoyment of this rest, which is so glorious, be growing, until thou attain to the eternal Sabbath. O pray thy Lord to lift up the light of his countenance upon thee, to vouchsafe thee more of the love of his heart, and more of the bounty of his hand, more communion with him, and more communications from him, that thou mayest be growing up into Jesus in all things and be ready whenever he calls thee, to enter in with him into his perfect rest.

Thus, the first table duties are kept. By the teaching of the Holy Spirit, they became gospel privileges. When he makes us new creatures in Christ Jesus, then we take the Three in Jehovah to be our God. We know our Father in Christ, believe in him and love him. We will have no other gods but him. We give his honor to none, his name to none, our time and heart-service to none, but him. His love made known to us, engages our affections, and puts us upon seeking fellowship with him in all appointed ways. Yea, the more we know of his perfect love to us, the more we are disposed to love him, and to witness it in everything we do. It becomes our study to walk before him in all well-pleasing: for we find it our happiness. Whether we eat or drink, rise up or lie down to rest, follow our worldly calling or have any dealings with men, we endeavor to do all in faith. This makes the common things of life spiritual actions: because in them we maintain intercourse with God. This is, indeed, the heavenly temper of the children of the Most High. They seek the presence, and the blessings of their Father in Jesus, in all they do. They are taught to live in a simple dependence upon him. They acknowledge this dependence by looking up to him for everything needful, and having received it by giving

him all his glory. Then they are returned in heart and life to that God, from whom they had departed by unbelief. Most blessed return! For now, the old sinful nature with its affections and lusts is pardoned, and thereby they have lost their dominion. They have no right to exercise their tyranny any longer. The base, selfish tempers, which rendered a man a plague to others, and often a burden to himself, are dethroned. The pardoning them is subduing them. These always go together. They kept the understanding in darkness, but now it is light in the Lord. They blinded the conscience and made it insensible, but now it has seen its guilt, and has found peace with God. The heart was engaged in their service, but now God has set up his throne in it, and sweetly rules over the affections. Thus, a free pardon brings a man into liberty. He ceases to be a slave to his selfish tempers. A full pardon bring victory over them: for then he has the blood of Jesus to cleanse him from all sin, and the Spirit of Jesus to subdue all sin. He is taken into the protection of Christ, and is his free man. None shall make him a slave. The Spirit of Christ rules in him, and makes him willing to live under the reign of grace: He dwells and abides with him, to preserve in his heart the love of God, and to produce in it the proper fruits of that love towards men. Thus, he brings the sinner to love the

DUTIES OF THE SECOND TABLE, which our Lord has summed up in one sentence—"Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." This love was lost at the fall. Nothing is in mankind, by nature, but selfishness. He is a slave to divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. Every age has felt this malady, and complained of it; but no human means have been able to remedy it. Fine systems of ethics and beautiful plans of natural religion have been tried: the aid of strong reasoning, assisted with the forces, of logic and metaphysics, has been called in, but all in vain. Selfish tempers broke through their cobweb arguments, and sported with their imaginary bonds. Sometimes they polished the outside a little, and made man a courtier: he looked, and smiled, and seemed to love; but they did not reach his heart. This is the prerogative of the Lord God. He only, who made us creatures, can make us new creatures. And until we are newborn of God, we have everything in us opposite to brotherly love. But when we are born of the Spirit, then we are taught of him to love one another. He teaches it, and he enforces it. His lessons are entirely practical. He not only informs the understanding, but also influences the affections.

Having disposed and enabled the heart to love God, he evidences the power of this divine love by its genuine fruits towards men. These are inseparable from their cause. Divine love is never without brotherly love: for so far as the

love of God is felt, it produces loving tempers; it opens and enlarges the heart, as the warm beams of the sun open and expand the flowers. The agency, which performs this, is almighty. The Holy Spirit having begotten the new nature, writes upon it the law of love. He keeps it willing to resist, and makes it able to overcome, the selfish tempers of the old man. The apostle Peter has given us a delightful description of the manner of the divine proceeding herein (1 Peter.1: 21-23):—"Christ was manifest in those last times for you, who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might, be in God. Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever."

The Christians to whom he writes were partakers of the new birth, they were born again not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible. The Holy Spirit was the author of their regeneration. The word of truth was the means which he made use of, they obeyed the truth through the Spirit. By believing it, they were begotten again to a lively faith and hope in God. They evidenced their love to him by their unfeigned love of the brethren: they loved him that begat, and loved those also that were begotten of him. From whence it appears, that the love of the brethren is not in the heart by nature, but is from the grace of the Holy Spirit. He gives a new heart and he sheds abroad in it the love of God, which by his influence works mightily in opposing and overcoming our selfish tempers, and in establishing the practice of second-table duties. These spring from divine love. The Holy Spirit joins them together as the cause and the effect. He teaches no man to love God without teaching him also to love the brethren. He rains and shines upon the tree of love: under his cultivation it thrives. He brings forth the sweet and loving tempers of the new man, and they bear fruit abundantly.

And blessed fruit it is, for God has great glory from it, and men much good. Love thinketh, speaketh, and doeth no evil. Yea, it cannot be in the heart, without a desire to do good to all men, especially unto them that are of the household of faith—to do good to their bodies and souls—to give honor to whom honor is due—to preserve their lives—their property—their chastity—their good name—to bear no false witness, but always to speak the truth of them—and to covet none of their blessings, either spiritual or temporal. This is morality—Christian morality—for it is learnt nowhere but in the school of Christ. What his Spirit teaches, he enables also to perform, which moral persuasion cannot,

He gives a will and a power to put off the selfish tempers of the old man, and to put on the loving graces of the new man. These graces he preserves by his almighty agency, and calls them into daily practice, through faith working by love—love to God from a sense of his infinite good-ness—and love to man for God's sake. Thus, the second table duties, when done out of gratitude to God for his infinite mercies, help the believer on in his walk heavenwards, and are the means of maintaining constant fellowship with his God.

Is this, O my soul, thy happy experience? Examine carefully. What are thy tempers? 'What is thy practice, with respect to loving thy neighbor as thyself? There is great complaint in the world of the want of brotherly love. And no wonder. It cannot be in them who are wholly lovers of themselves. But may not the same complaint be taken up of the household and family of faith? Are not the children of the same Father deficient in brotherly love? Yes, they are. Too, too often they live below their privilege, and thereby bring great dishonor upon God, and give great offence to men. Be humbled, O my soul, for thine own failing. Remember what reason thou hast to mourn for the infirmities of thy love—how barren it is in its proper fruits—how cold, when it should be fervent—how polluted, when it should be pure—how covetous, when it should be liberal. Hast thou duly attended to the cause of this, and does it grieve thee to thy heart? Wouldst thou be saved from self-love, and increase in brotherly love yet more anti more? Since this is thy case, meditate carefully upon what is promised, and pray earnestly for what is provided for the subduing of those tempers which are enemies to brotherly love, and which, if not subdued, will hinder thee from enjoying the love of God in thy walk with him.

First, —Consider thy state. Thou art a pardoned sinner, not under the law, but under grace—freely, fully saved from the guilt of all thy sins. There is none to condemn, God having justified thee. He sees thee in his Son, washed in his blood, clothed in his righteousness, and he embraces him and thee, the head and the members, with the same affection.

Secondly, —Consider what is promised to them who are in Christ. Sin shall not have dominion over them. Pardoned sin shall not reign. It cannot; for it is dethroned. Thou art therefore free from its bondage. Stand fast in this liberty. Now the condemning power of sin is taken out of thy conscience, make use of the grace provided in Jesus to deliver thine heart from the love of it, and thy conversation from the slavish service of it. And remember this grace is almighty. Trust in it, and thou shalt be saved from the tyranny of every sin. Therefore,

Thirdly, –Read the great charter of grace, and mark to what glorious privileges thou art entitled. Being saved from the guilt of all sin, and having a promise of being saved from the dominion of all sin, as the Lord's free man thou art by faith to claim thy birthright and to enjoy it. Since Christ has given thee liberty, to whom shouldst thou be a slave? Put off, therefore, the old man with his lusts and deeds; serve him no longer, it is a blessed part of redemption to be saved from his service. God be thanked, that he may be put off, as a garment, which you have done with, and will put on no more. Away with it, it is filthy and abominable, altogether. Yea, worse still: the plague is in it. Death and hell are in it, for the old man, sinful nature, thus to be put off, is a body of sin, and selfish tempers are his members; such as anger, wrath, malice, lies, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which, is idolatry. These must be put off, or they will be always plotting and acting against brotherly love. Therefore, the new man, renewed in the spirit of his mind, opposes them, and is mighty through God to mortify them. By the same power he puts on, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering, forgiveness of injuries, even as Christ forgave him, so he forgives: and unto all these graces he puts on love, which is the complete binding et' them together.

What an amiable character is here of the new man! He is created anew in Christ Jesus, that he may exercise every kind and benevolent temper to the brethren. He is renewed in his heart to the unfeigned love of them; and is enabled to manifest it by every work and labor of love, And lest the vile tempers of the old man, still in being, although dethroned, should get dominion again, he is strengthened mightily by the Spirit in the inner man to crucify them day by day. Since this is hard work, consisting in continual and severe self-denial, no less than in cutting off right hand, and in plucking out right eye, lusts; for thine encouragement to persevere, consider, –

Fourthly, –That thou art in Christ—a member in his body—and in him thou hast perfect and eternal redemption from the old man of sin with his affections and lusts. The more tiffs is believed, the more will the fruits of it appear. Faith in the absolute and everlasting victory of thy glorified head will animate thee as one of his members to resist thy vanquished foes, knowing thou art a partaker of his victory, and in his strength, and to his glory, thou art fighting against them. In him thou hast already conquered. In him thou shalt be more than a conqueror. Reckon thyself, therefore, to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God in Jesus Christ thy Lord. And depend on him for the power of his death, that he may put it forth in thee, and mortify sin, and for the power of

his resurrection to quicken thee to newness of life. Thy communion with him in his death and resurrection will be in proportion to thy faith.

If thou believest steadfastly, that thou art one with him, thou wilt find the effect of it in steadfast communion. Cleave then to him, as a branch in the vine. Planted together in the likeness of his death, thou wilt find virtue coming from him to crucify thy selfish tempers. Planted together in the likeness of his resurrection, thou wilt find virtue coming from him to keep time alive to God. To this fellowship with Jesus thou art called. Thou hast a right to communicate with him in his life and death. And whilst thou art enjoying it by the faith of the Son of God, sin shall have no more dominion over thee, than it has over him. This being thy glorious birthright, O my soul, put honor upon it. Enjoy it in the peace of thy conscience, and in the love of thy heart. Read thy perfect redemption in Jesus from everything opposite to brotherly love, and improve this thy experience As there is sufficient grace promised and provided for thee, see thou make use of it, and manifest it openly in thy tempers, and in thy walk! For consider, –

Fifthly, –Thy God and Father calls upon thee to give glory to him for his love to thee by exercising love towards the brethren: and thou art bound to this by ten thousand ties. Has he loved thee freely, dost thou know it, and is the grateful sense of it upon thy heart? How then can it be hid? It cannot; it will manifest itself, as light does. The Father has chosen thee in his Son, that he might communicate to thee of his goodness, and he has made thee a child of light, that thou mightest reflect the rays of his goodness upon others. Thou art to show forth the praises of him that hath called thee out of darkness into his marvelous light, He hath called thee out of the deadness and blindness of thy natural state, and hath enlightened thee with the light of life. How marvelous, that it should ever shine upon thee! Marvelous indeed, that thou shouldst shine, as a light, in the world! Admire this grace. Let others admire it with thee, by seeing the reality, and by feeling the comfort of it.

As the sun not only enlightens, but also enlivens with his fruitful rays the face of the earth, and cheers every creature upon it: so let thy light; shine before melt. Give them clear proof of thy love to God by thy love to them: let them feel the blessed fruits of it, that they may see thy good works, and glorify thy Father who is in heaven. Love in thy heart will show itself. It will communicate its gracious rays, and the Father of lights will have the praise. This should be thine end, as it is his. He aims at his own glory in all his mercies: this aim should be thine also. Thy Father calls upon thee to do good

to others, that he may be glorified thereby. O what a high calling is thine! What an honor does God put upon thee. Thou art to bring him glory from men—from his own children: for their bowels are to be refreshed by thee—and from others, that whereas they would speak against thee as an evil-doer, they may by thy good works which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation. Aim at this. Look at no motive to do good to men below the glory of God. And remember, thy doing it may be the means of his visiting them, as he visited thee, with his great salvation. O blessed fruit of brotherly love; may it be the happy effect of thy light shining before men. May God be daily honored by it, and the comfort, and, in it please him, the salvation of his people, be thereby promoted. Yea, Lord, this is my prayer. My heart says, Amen.

If thou findest it very difficult to live in the constant practice of brotherly love, meditate, O my soul, upon the gospel motives for an increase of faith, and seek for the promised assistance to enable thee to love others as God hath loved thee. Above all, expect the effectual teaching of the Holy Ghost. He only can write this delightful law upon the heart—the fair impression of it is kept by his power, and the exercise of it in thy tempers and walk, is the work of his grace. O pray then for a constant supply of the Spirit, that in all thy dealings with mankind it may appear thou hast been with Jesus. Set his most amiable life before their eyes. Give them reason to honor his beneficence, from thy copying it legibly after him. Let his love to thee be glorified from thy labor of love to them. Study to show forth his praises, and go about doing good as he did. And hereby convince the world, that Jesus Christ was the greatest moralist, and that his disciples come the nearest to the perfect pattern of their master; as a poet of our own observes—

"Talk they of morals? O thou bleeding
love!
Thou maker of new morals to
mankind!
The grand morality is love of thee."

The love of Jesus teaches and enforces the love of the brethren. The Spirit of Jesus writes it upon the heart, and makes it practical in the life. And thus, the two tables are joined together: and love to him that begat produces love to them that are begotten of him. When the happy believer is walking in this love to his Father, and to his family, then He will live in the observance of the duties which relate to himself: for he was taught them, when He returned in

his heart to God. And every step he walks with God is in the practice of them. The first temptation was an offer of independence—"Ye shall be as gods"—man was drawn away by it, and fell from his high estate. Still this mother sin is fruitful in fallen man. In great mercy there is a pardon provided, and in the way of receiving the pardon, there is a remedy for it. The infinite wisdom of God so contrived the way of our recovery, that without Christ we can do nothing. His salvation undertaken and finished for us, his salvation applied to us, the blessings of his salvation enjoyed by us in time, and in eternity, are the free gifts of his free grace. He is the author; He is the finisher. He carries it on from first to last. All our sufficiency is of him. We cannot, without him, so much as think a good thought. Therefore, his redeemed people are brought off from all trust in any other object, and are taught to place their whole dependence for salvation, and for everything that accompanies it, upon the Lord Jesus Christ.

To this end the Holy Spirit, the great convincer of sin, had made them acquainted with themselves. He had awakened them to a right knowledge of their state, of which they had not been sensible before; and they found that they were fallen and apostate creatures. He showed them sin in its exceeding sinfulness, and they tasted some of the bitter fruits of it; they felt in what a dreadful condition their departure from God had left them—so ignorant that they could not by any human means attain to the least saving knowledge of God—so guilty, that let them do all they could, still the condemning sentence of the law stood out against them—so unholy, that soul and body were sold under sin, and ready to every unholy word and work—so utterly helpless, that it was impossible they should of themselves attain true happiness, or escape deserved misery. The Holy Spirit taught them these lessons practically, His conviction carried demonstration with it. He not only made them feel their guilt and their danger; but he also opened a way for pardon and safety. He led them to Jesus, and in him they found everything needful for their salvation—treasured up for them by the free covenant love of the Father—secured to them by the fulfilling of all covenant conditions in the life and death of the God-man—and received by the faith of the operation of the Holy Ghost: by whom they were made new creatures in Christ Jesus—members under him, their head—united as intimately as the branches are to the vine—and living by, and in, and on him, every moment and for everything. Thus, the glorifier of Jesus teaches all his members to depend upon the fulness of their head, and he abides with them in order to keep them in this dependence. He testifies to them of Jesus—"He is your whole salvation, your all in all; you have not, you never will have, any-thing to glory in, but in the Lord—whatever good you receive,

comes from his grace—whatever evil you escape, is from his blessing—and if ever you have eternal life, it will be the free gift of God in Christ Jesus. Your bodies also are dependent on him, as well as your souls; personal, family, national mercies are his royal favors, and bestowed out of his sovereign bounty." Thus he teaches believers. He humbles them, that they may exalt the Saviour. He makes them poor in spirit, that they may live upon his riches. He keeps them sensible of their own emptiness, that they may be making constant use of the Saviour's fulness, and living in an absolute dependence upon him for everything. While they live thus by the faith of the Son of God, every high thought is brought into subjection, to him. Pride is daily mortified: self-complacency is abhorred: self-admiration is abominable: humility is become their clothing, and they cannot put it off; because every moment they are making use of it. Sins, wants, miseries, temptations, &c., are continually reminding them of their vileness, and of God's goodness. And this truth enforced by the Holy Spirit, makes them willing to learn of Jesus to be meek and lowly. They become teachable scholars, and sit very low at his feet, where they attain to true humility of heart. And this influences their whole behavior. In a deep and abiding sense of their entire sinfulness and helplessness, they loathe themselves before God, and walk humbly before men. They feel they are of themselves nothing but sin, and if left to themselves can be nothing but misery; therefore, they put their whole trust and confidence in a covenant God, and his free grace has from them all its glory. What is thy knowledge, O my soul, and what is thine experience of this Christian poverty of spirit? Art, thou acquainted with it in the ground of thine heart, and is it in thy daily practice? Examine thyself, and with diligence: for it is a most blessed grace, advanced to high honour in the court of Jesus. To it he has made many exceeding great and precious promises. O pray to him for this royal gift. Wait on thy divine prophet, and hear his lessons, He teaches as man cannot. He recommends, he gives, the grace of humility. He makes his scholars truly humble in heart. Observe his abasing doctrine, and may all within thee bow to the power of it.

Observe, how he humbles the sinner, He convinces him of his sinful state, of the corruption of his whole nature, and of the depravity of every faculty of soul and body. The sinner is made to feel it, and to live under the sense of it. And in order to fasten the conviction, clearer discoveries are daily made of this corruption: for it is a mystery of iniquity. There is no tracing to the bottom its deep-laid devices and never-ceasing workings. The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? There is not a man upon earth who knows all that may be known of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and of his own sinfulness. When the Lord, who searcheth the heart, has laid

open some of its infinite evil, he continues to discover more. Every day brings to light strange workings of corruption. The convinced sinner has deeper views of his helplessness, and of his unworthiness. And after many vain legal trials, he at last finds it impossible for him to do anything for which God should pardon him and save him. Thus, he is laid low with his mouth in the dust. Behold, I am vile, filthy, and abominable altogether; I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.

These are the humbling lessons which the Holy Spirit teaches. He convinces the sinner, that there is neither help nor hope in himself, and so leaves him nothing to trust in, but the salvation provided in Jesus by covenant love, and given freely by grace. And the manner of receiving this salvation is such as cuts off all occasion of boasting: for faith is the only means appointed of God—and faith is his gift—not bestowed upon the worthy, but upon the ungodly—not for any merit in them, or for any terms or conditions which they have performed, or ever will perform, but by an act of absolute sovereignty, to the praise of the glory of his own grace, He will have mercy because he will have mercy. O humbling consideration! How low does it bring the sinner! How must his proud heart be abased, while he feels himself a debtor for everything good to the mere will and pleasure of God! And so long as he enjoys those good things, he is kept poor in spirit, because he has none of them in himself. They are laid up in the fulness of Jesus, are to be had from thence only by faith, and are received as the sense of his wants leads the believer to make use of them. Living by faith is the death of self-importance. Then the loftiness of man is bowed down, the haughtiness of man is made low, and the Lord alone is exalted.

Observe, O my soul, what an honor God has put upon this grace. "Before honor is humility." Whom God honors he humbles first. He giveth grace to the humble; because the humble give him all his glory. The highest throne which he has upon earth is in the humblest heart. To it he vouchsafes his constant presence, and makes the greatest communications of his love: "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy, I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." O what an honor is here promised to the humble! The greatest they can have on this side of heaven. God will dwell with them; and what a blessing! and his temple shall be in the humble heart. The high and holy One passes by what is in highest esteem among men. He disdains the pride of human greatness and goodness. He does not vouchsafe to set up his throne

with the princes, nor to give his honor to the learned of the world. But he puts honor upon the contrite and humble. He condescends to visit them; yea, he delights to dwell with them, and in them—the highest above all heavens in the lowest hearts. There he communicates his choicest love and richest favours. O my God! bestow upon me this grace, which in thy sight is so precious. Humble me, that I may be revived with thy presence, and refreshed daily with thy love. Give me more humility, and fit me for nearer fellowship with thee. Bring down every high thought, and let me find it true, that God resisteth the proud but giveth more grace unto the humble.

Thus, the true poverty of spirit is needful, not only to bring the sinner to Christ, but also to preserve the believer in communion with him: for so long as he walks by faith, everything will tend to promote this communion. In the daily sense of his wants, he will go to his bountiful Saviour for a supply. In the feeling of his misery, he will depend on his loving Saviour for relief: whereby he will be led to more intercourse with him. What he finds wrong in himself, will bring him to live more by faith, and as faith increases, so will his delight in God. He will grow more sensible of his weakness, and that will make him stronger in the Lord. He will know more of his own heart, which will humble him and keep him dependent on the grace of Jesus. He will see reason not to lean to his own understanding, but ever to pray—Lord guide me by thy good Spirit. Viewing spots and blemishes in his best doings, his triumph will be, "I will make mention of thy righteousness, Lord Jesus, even of thine ONLY."

Thus everything will humble him, and lead him to live more by faith; by which means he will get faster hold of Jesus, live in nearer fellowship, and be receiving out; of his fulness grace for grace—two graces at once—the blessing needed—and thankfulness for it. Hereby a sweet intercourse will be kept open. To the humble God delights to give grace, and they delight to return him his glory. The more he gives, the more glory would they gladly return. And he does give more, and he receives it back again in thanks and praise. Blessed grace! by which this holy fellowship is maintained. Happy humility! by which the heart, being emptied of self, is made capable of receiving the fulness which is of God. Then is the promise fulfilled—"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven"—it is theirs now—not only in title, but also in possession, for the kingdom of God is within them; and they are partakers at present of its blessings and glories, as truly, though not so perfectly, as they will be in heaven.

Meditate, O my soul! upon this divine grace. Thou seest the necessity of it. O pray earnestly for it, and for more of it. The great idol SELF must be dethroned, where God reigns. Thou canst not walk with him, unless thou art; humble in heart. And if thou hast been walking with him, thou wilt be taught to stop, whenever thou beginnest; to look at thyself with admiration. O beg of the Lord then to give thee the true gospel poverty of spirit. It is to be in constant practice, and used for everything: for thou seest how it keeps up fellowship with God, who makes the greatest communications of himself to the humblest.

And the reason is plain: because they return him all his glory. If, therefore, thou wouldst have much grace in exercise, pray for much humility. O my God, whatever thou givest, give humility with it, that I may not seek self in it, but thine honor, nor lay it out upon myself, but to thy glory. Meek and lowly Jesus, make me like thyself: keep me learning of thee, till I am perfectly like thee. I would come always poor to thee, to receive of thy riches, and to receive with them an humble heart to praise thee for them. O let thy glory be mine end and aim. Let me and mine be thine—I humbled—thou exalted. Let thy graces and gifts bring thee in a constant revenue of praise. And may thine increasing goodness be joined with a constant increase of humility, that my heart and all within me may bless and praise thy holy name, to-day and for ever. Amen. And

Let this appear in my whole behavior to others. This is another blessed fruit or humility. It has an influence over the believer's intercourse with mankind, and renders his tempers and manners loving and amiable. Pride was not made for man; and yet it is in all men, and is the chief parent of human woe. It sets people above their place, and makes them think that they could support the greatest; fortunes, and are able to manage the most difficult affairs. Others, as proud as they, deny them their fancied superiority. Hence come wars and righting's, public and private. The sweet grace of humility is sent from Heaven to relieve those distresses: for into whatever bosom it enters, it renders men kind to one another, tender-hearted, ready to every good word and work. Thus runs the divine exhortation: "Be ye kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love, in honor preferring one another."

This is heart-humility, which the Holy Spirit requires, and which he bestows. He brings his disciples into humble subjection to God, and then to one another: which has the most happy effects upon public, social, and private happiness. How would these flourish if all men were of a meek and quiet spirit! But there

is none of this among the unconverted; and, alas! how little is there among believers! How often are they found in the proud spirit of the world, acting contrary to the lowly spirit of Jesus! And yet it is not for want of precept, nor for want of promised help; but it is because they are not walking by faith, as becometh the gospel, nor out of love to God's glory studying to recommend humility by their practice.

Observe, O my soul, the remedy provided of God for the subduing of all selfish tempers, and pray that it may be effectual in thy life and conversation. Do ye think that the Scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy? But God giveth more grace, wherefore he saith, "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble." This Scripture cannot speak in vain, for fallen man is certainly such as he is here described. The spirit that dwelleth in him, in his own nature, lusteth to envy—a passion made up of pride and discontent—offended with God, and displeased with the blessings which he bestows upon men. It is an enemy to the love both of God and man, and transgresses the law of both tables. Pride brought it into heaven, and the fallen angels brought it into this world. Ever since it entered by sin, natural corruption breaks out very much in envy. But God giveth more grace to conquer thru passion than sinful nature has to put it forth, he not only gives grace to pardon it, but also more grace to subdue it: so that envy loses its dominion in the reign of grace. We cannot subdue, any more than we can pardon, envy, pride, and such passions; but grace is almighty. Want ever so much, use ever so much, God has still more for you. And he gives more when the creature is humbled enough to take it out of the hands of his mercy.

Thus he overcomes envy, "for he resisteth the proud;" he is at open war with them, and they with him. Pride lifts up the creature against the Creator, and puts it upon seeking happiness out of God: this is resisting his sovereignty, attacking his providence, and opposing his law. He is concerned to pull such rebels down, and he says their pride goeth before destruction: "but he giveth grace unto the humble; "he gives them grace to humble them, and, being emptied, He delights to fill them for then they are disposed to receive his grace, and to value it. Whatever God gives, the humble give it back again to him. They have the blessing; he has the praise: which is the just tribute due to him for his gifts. And he gives more grace where he can get more glory. Thus He subdues self-conceit with its various proud workings. And as grace reigns over them, humility prevails, which has a friendly aspect towards mankind. It keeps brotherly love in the heart, and tends mightily to the practice of every social virtue, Humility suffereth long and is kind; humility envieth not;

humility vaunteth not itself—is not puffed up—doth not behave itself unseemly—seeketh not her own—is not easily provoked—thinketh no evil.

Consider, O my soul, those motives to a holy walk. Put them all together. Weigh them carefully again and again. Do it faithfully, as in the presence of God. And then try whether thou art walking in the way of duty with a free spirit! Dost, thou proceed upon evangelical or upon legal principles? Dost, thou serve God for wages or for love? Examine thy heart. God looks chiefly at it. How is it in duty? Is thine obedience to justify thee in the least, or does it spring from a sense of thy being justified freely and fully? Art, thou going about to establish thine own righteousness, or dost thou submit to the righteousness of God? Art, thou working from life, or for life? I require thee to examine diligently, by the light of the word, and by the teaching of the Holy Spirit, what thy motives are; for there is no acceptable obedience but what is done in faith: what-soever is not of faith is sin. If thou art acting aright, the love of Christ is constraining thee to obedience. Thou art living under the influence of free grace. Thy conscience is at peace; with God. Thou hast sweet liberty to serve him without that. Thy heart delights in his service, and love makes his ways the joy of thy soul. Thou knowest what Jacob felt when he served seven years for Rachael, and they seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had to her. A gospel spirit does the same to God—love makes long service short, and hard service easy. Nothing is pain which love does. And this is gospel obedience. It is faith working by love, which relines duty into a grace; the commandments are exalted into privileges; the ordinances become happy means of fellowship with God. The believer meets God in them, and by free converse he exercises and improves his love. He draws near to God, and God draws near to him in prayer, in praise, in hearing the word, at the Lord's supper, and in all Sabbath duties!

In these ways God manifests his gracious presence, and the believer rejoices in it. God communicates his graces, and the believer receives them with thankfulness. O my soul, pray before duty for much of this communion with God in it. Seek it as the one great end of all duty. And if thou findest it, bless and praise the goodness of thy God. But still seek to be more spiritual and evangelical, that the fruits of thy fellowship with God may appear in thy practice of the duties of the second table. Love to God will manifest itself by love to men: for the Holy Spirit teaches all his disciples to love one another, and he teaches effectually, He not only makes them understand what brotherly love is, but he also gives it. They become partakers of the grace, and are enabled to practice it. Thus, he recommends and enforces his lessons, He

renders his scholars kind to one another, and tenderhearted, He puts forth his mighty power, and subdues the vile selfish tempers of the old man, and brings into use the benevolent tempers of the new man. While he carries on the gracious work, his disciples grow more acquainted with themselves, and learn heart-humility. He makes them feel their fallen state, their sinfulness, and their danger; in the sense of their guilt, and of their distance from God, they are willing to receive Christ for their whole salvation, and then to enjoy in him all the blessings of the Father's love in earth and heaven.

If thou findest it difficult, O my soul, to walk according to this rule: if to obey from love to God, to love men for God's sake, and in the sense of thine own vileness to be humbled to the dust—if these be hard lessons, consider what makes them so. Where is the difficulty? Is it not in thyself? And is it not chiefly in thy not using and not bringing into practice the principles advanced in the former chapters? Duty must be hard if the spring of obedience be not in motion: but if this act freely, then all will go on well.

Thy whole conduct through life depends upon the nature of the salvation of which thou art a partaker by grace. Consider it attentively. The growing knowledge of it will engage thine affections to a willing obedience. Is it not a complete salvation, an absolutely perfect work—yea, the greatest work of God?—because all the rest come from it, and lead to it. Is it not the infinitely wise contrivance of the eternal Three, for which everlasting glory is to be given to every divine attribute? When every other work of God shall cease, for this all heaven will to eternity be ascribing honour, and blessing, and praise, to Father, Son, and Spirit. Attend, O my soul, to the Scripture account of this salvation. Review the glory of it. Read again and again the revealed descriptions of it, till thy heart be satisfied that this salvation is as perfect and complete as the Lord God Almighty could make it. This is its character. Hast thou studied it well, and art thou well-grounded and established in the belief of it? Mind, this is the foundation. If this totter, so will all the superstructure. O pray, then, and be earnest in prayer, that God would enlarge thy views of the infinitely glorious and everlastingly perfect salvation which is in Christ Jesus.

As thou growest more acquainted with it, thou wilt see less reason to be discouraged at the experience of what thou art in thyself. It is a salvation for sinners, such as thou art, and no way differing from thee. Only when they are called to the knowledge of the truth, they are acquainted with their fallen state, are made sensible of their helplessness and of their misery, but are made willing to cast their souls, at God's command, upon the Lord Jesus, trusting to

the peace which he made by the blood of the cross. And art not thou in the happy number of these redeemed sinners? Dost not thou believe the record which God hath given of his Son, and look upon it as thy lawful warrant?—to make use of what is laid up in the fulness of Jesus—thine to take freely—thine to use fully, the more the better—thine for receiving, without any condition or any qualification? He loves to give, and without money or money's worth. He thinks himself honored by the pensioners of his grace, who bring nothing to recommend themselves but their sins and miseries, and yet trust in his promised relief. Herein he glories. When they come to him believing, he bestows his royal gifts upon every one of them: and so far as they believe, He withholds nothing that is needful for their holy walk in the way of duty.

These are the principles which thou art to bring into practice. Carry them, O my soul, into every act of obedience. Go to prayer and every duty with this faith, that thou art in Christ, and in him a partaker of his finished salvation: then the Father's love to thee will be manifest, and thou wilt have sweet fellowship with him in all thine approaches to the throne. Whatever thou undertakest, forget not this leading truth. If thou lose sight of it, thou wilt get into darkness; if thou art not influenced by it, thou wilt be brought into bondage. Upon this absolutely perfect salvation thou art to live by faith upon earth, and thou wilt have nothing else to live upon by sense in heaven. Trusting to the complete work of Jesus, thou art to walk with thy God in time as thou wilt follow the Lamb in eternity, receiving all out of his fulness. O view him in this light, and it will have the happiest effects upon thy daily walk. While thou art receiving from him grace for grace, thou wilt live with him in sweet friendship; duty will be the way and means of enjoying the love of thy divine friend, and the more thou art in his company the more delightful will be the way of his commandments. These are thy privileges. Read the promises concerning them. Call to mind what thy Father in Jesus has engaged to give his children. Has he not provided grace sufficient for them? And is it not for his honor, as well as thy profit, that he should give both the will and the power to walk humbly with him? O plead his promises. Bind him with his faithfulness. Be importunate with him, and pray without ceasing. Let this be thy daily plea.

O my God! order my walk according to thy holy word. It is thy mind and will that I should love thee with all my heart, and soul, and mind, and strength, and my neighbor as myself; but I am not sufficient for these things. There is no pure love in my soul by nature. Every affection in me is turned from the Creator to the creature. I am in bondage, a slave to lust, sold under sin. I

'cannot love thee, infinitely lovely as thou art, until thou break my bonds asunder, and set my soul at liberty. But being now redeemed from guilt and fear, I am become thy freeman; and for the unspeakable redemption that is in Jesus, thou wouldst have me to serve thee. Blessed be thy holy name for requiring mine obedience upon this sweet motive—"I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, and out of the house of bondage." On this account obey me, because I am the Lord your God, and I stand related to you, as your Redeemer from slavery.

O my gracious God and Father, I desire upon this motive to keep thy commandments. I believe thou art my God in Jesus, and through him I have redemption from bondage to my sins and enemies. With this free spirit would I always go to duty; but I cannot walk in this liberty, any more than I could at first attain it, without thy grace. O my God let the spirit of adoption abide with me, that he may draw me nearer to thee in thy ways and ordinances, and I may in them enjoy more of thy presence and of the light of thy countenance. Thee I seek in them. Thou art the end of all ways and means; and if they lead me not to thee, I go empty away. Gracious God make thy commandments the joy of my heart, and let them be the means of keeping up holy intercourse and happy fellowship with thee. This my heart pants after. Duty without this is nothing worth. I wait in thine appointed ways for the visits of thy grace, hoping to grow in knowledge and faith, in hope and love. The communion which I have enjoyed has increased my longing. My soul is a thirst for God, praying to be more with thee, and more like thee. And is not this what thou requirest, and what thou hast promised to do for me? Grant me then, my gracious God, the prayer of my heart. In all my duties let me enjoy thy presence and communications of thy love. Let me do them in faith, and with a single eye to thy glory. Let me be thus spiritual and heavenly minded in them, that I may grow up into Christ Jesus in all things.

And I desire, holy Father, to grow in love to thee, that I may manifest the fruits of it by my love to mankind. Pardon every selfish temper, which is opposite to the love of the brethren, and teach me to love them as thou hast loved me. Whatever thou hast promised, fulfil in me. Make me, O thou Spirit of love, like the loving Jesus. Give me his benevolent tempers, and help me to imitate his beneficent actions. Let his love to me be the pattern of my love to them. Since thou hast in much mercy made me a child of light, O let me shine before men, that they may see and feel my good works, and may glorify thee for them. And the more thou doest in me, and by me, humble me still more, O my God. Keep me meek and lowly, always ready to give the glory of all my

mercies to the Three in Jehovah, Father, Son, and Spirit, to whom be equal honor and praise for ever and ever. Amen.

THE WALK OF FAITH CHAPTER VII.

THE BELIEVER GOES ON HIS WAY REJOICING IN GOD.

HAPPY is the man to whom it is given on the behalf of Christ to believe, He has the blessing of peace. He is reconciled to God through faith in the blood of Jesus; and he is freely justified through faith in the righteousness of Jesus. The Father has accepted him in his beloved Son, and it is the joy of his soul to know it; therefore, he loves God, because God first loved him. In the enjoyment of this love he finds his heaven begun. By the same Spirit, who manifested it and shed it abroad in his heart, he is kept seeking for more discoveries of it. In every appointed means he waits. As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth his soul after more of the presence of God, and of the light of his loving countenance. Having a command—Seek ye my face—he obeys it from his heart; but his chief view in obedience is to behold the face of the Lord turned to him in love. He wants fellowship with God in duty, which highly enables and also endears it to him. He performs it in faith, and in a free spirit, he goes to it as a beloved child to a most loving parent; and his heavenly Father meets him in it, receives him graciously, speaks to his heart, and makes him sensible that he can deny him no manner of thing which is good. Hence the ways of duty become ways of pleasantness. The farther he advances in them, and the more spiritual he grows in the performance of them, he finds clearer communications of his Father's grace and love, which still increase his joy, and afford him surer earnest, and happier foretastes of joy unspeakable and full of glory.

As for the ungodly, it is not so with them. They are always seeking after joy. They are busy, and weary themselves in the pursuit of it, but they cannot find it. While they are turned in heart from the Lord, they look downwards for it, where it is not. They expect it will spring out of the ground; and if they cannot discover it upon the surface, they will dig into the bowels of the earth for

treasures of hidden joy. But they disquiet themselves in vain. It is the sovereign decree of the Almighty, that nothing can make a sinner truly happy but God in Christ: this they will not believe; and, therefore, they go from creature to creature, from object to object, inquiring, "Where is the best joy to be found?" Each promises them, "It is in me." But each disappoints them. And yet they go on, seeking it to-day in that very thing which deluded them yesterday. Yea, their foolish hearts are willingly deluded. They love to be pursuing what it is impossible they should attain. If after many trials they find the emptiness of one creature-comfort, then they turn to another; and they will try the whole compass of beings and things, and will at last die in the trial, rather than seek for joy where it is holy, perfect, and everlasting.

The believer is saved from this vain pursuit. He has been convinced of the insufficiency of the creature to make him happy. He has seen all end of all perfection in it. He can say, with the royal preacher, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity,"—all is changeable and imperfect under the sun; for the whole world lieth in wickedness, and under the curse. Deeply sensible of his error in having sought for joy in the way of destruction, he now seeks it in the living God. Here he comes to the supreme good, the springhead et true joy, and the streams which he receives from thence are always in proportion to his faith. If this be strong, there is great joy in the soul. If this be weak, joy is at a low ebb. The effect is according to the cause which produces it. Joy in God is the effect of faith, according to the apostle's prayer: "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy in believing." There is a present fulness of joy which we have by believing, as there is a future fulness of joy, which we shall have by sense. So that joy rises as believing does; fulness of believing brings in ALL joy—present enjoyment increasing as the title to future is dear. The present is the divine pledge of the future, and is therefore given us, that by believing we may now rejoice in the Lord, and be glad in the God of our salvation.

From hence it appears how necessary it is to the believer's walking in joy, that his understanding should be clearly enlightened with the knowledge of the doctrines of grace, and that his heart should be established in the belief of them. Thou canst not, O my soul, review them too much, nor meditate upon them too long, for they enter into the very essence of all true joy. Study the gospel method of making reconciliation for iniquity, which was the work of Immanuel, and of reconciling man to God, which is the work of the Holy Spirit. Has he done this in thee? Art, thou reconciled to God? Is thy conscience at peace? Is thine heart happy through faith in the atonement and righteousness of thy Saviour? Art; thou satisfied of thy perfect acceptance in the beloved?

Dost thou, therefore, obey thy Father out of gratitude, and go to duty to meet him, and to have fellowship with him in his love, and to glorify him for it? Dost thou find his presence? Is he with thee in all means, and art thou seeking in them for nearer and more intimate communion with him? Since this is thy case, what return wilt thou make for such inestimable favors? Surely, thou wilt be glad in the Lord, and wilt rejoice in the God of thy salvation. Being at peace with him, and a partaker of his love, waiting for the establishing of this peace and love in the way of obedience, and expecting more communion with thy God in the way of duty, who can have greater reason to rejoice?

A saved sinner, delivered by mere grace from wrath and hell, entitled to all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus, and already admitted to partake of them, may sing and make melody in his heart all the way to heaven. And yet, alas! how often art thou, O my soul, in heaviness, walking in distress, and east down, as if thy hope of rejoicing was in vain. And this is not thy case alone. It is too common. How many of God's children spend their days in a mournful frame, and seem to forget their high calling and undoubted title to the fulness of joy. Meditate a little upon the ingratitude of this behavior, and may the gospel motives to rejoice in the Lord always be the means of saving thee from an unthankful and mournful temper.

First, —Observe, he requires it of thee. The Scripture speaks much of the holy joy of believers, and calls for it. They are in duty bound to be glad in their God, as much as to pray to him; for he is always bestowing mercies upon them, which demand their everlasting tribute of thanks; and they cannot be thankful without being joyful. How closely were these two united in the holy Psalmist? None ever more famous for praising God, or for rejoicing in God. What he felt himself he often exhorts the redeemed to experience: "Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous; for praise is comely for the upright: Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart: Rejoice in the Lord, ye righteous, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness." Remember his righteousness and holiness, how great they are, and how great the grace is, which has found out a way to make you righteous and holy: remember those blessings with faith, and your hearts will be glad, and your mouths will praise God with joyful lips.

What a sense had the prophet of those blessings, when he broke forth into this acknowledgment: "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God: for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself

with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels." These are the wedding garments, with which the heavenly bridegroom adorns his church, and in which he introduces her to the eternal banquet of love. Blessed are they who are called to the marriage-supper of the Lamb. Blessed are they indeed, for they are arrayed in royal robes; their souls are all glorious with the beauties of Immanuel, with his divine righteousness and matchless graces. They have reason now to rejoice greatly: for they shall soon come to Sion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away forever. These scriptures prove evidently, that believers are called upon to rejoice: it is their bounden duty to be glad in their God, for they are not living like his children, and making up their happiness in their Father's love, unless they are rejoicing in his rich and everlasting blessings: for,—

Secondly, —Joy arises from the sense of some good. Joy in God arises from the sense of his being our chief good, and of our interest in him. And this is the joy of faith; which is not in the least like the light frothy Joy of the sensualist, nor the wanton mirth of the unthinking multitude. It is not drawn, as worldly joy is, from vain perishing things, but from the word of God, which standeth fast forever. It springs from the revelation of grace and mercy in Jesus, and from giving credit to it. Whoever honors its testimony, as the truth of God, will be convinced, that he, trusting to the atonement of Jesus, shall never perish, and trusting to the righteousness of Jesus, shall have everlasting life. Hence come joy and peace in believing. The conscience is reconciled to God, and is at peace. The heart is made sensible of the love of God, and rejoices in him. This was the experience of the sweet singer of Israel (in the 33rd Psalm): "Our heart shall rejoice in the Lord, BECAUSE we have trusted in his holy name." This is a good reason. Whoever trusts in God will certainly rejoice in God: for by trusting in his word, and by depending upon his faithfulness, he cannot be disappointed of the good things which God has promised.

We have an instance of this in a trembling despairing stoner, who had drawn his dagger, and was plunging it into his heart. In that moment he heard of Jesus. It was given him to feel his want of a Saviour—"Sirs," says he to Paul and Silas, "what muse I do to be saved?" And they said, "Believe in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." And they preached unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes, and was baptized, he and all his, straightway. And when he had brought them into his

house, he set meat before them, and REJOICED BELIEVING. O what a happy change was here, and made by believing! The self-murderer forgets his bloody design, and drops his dagger, he hears of a pardon, and believes. His black despair gives way to sweet peace in God. His misery ends in the knowledge of a joyful salvation. How blessed are they that believe! God has pronounced them, and God will make them blessed. There is no misery deserved, but by faith they are saved from it; and no good promised, but by faith they may now enjoy it: they have, therefore, all the reason to rejoice that any person can have on this side of heaven. For, –

Thirdly, –This joy is distinguished from the vain joy of the world, by its author. It is the gift of God. It is one of the graces of the Spirit of God. St. Paul says, "The fruit of the spirit is love, joy," &c.–love to God, and then rejoicing in God. When the Spirit of adoption enters into any heart, he manifests, by believing, the love of the Father, and thereby excites it into holy joy. He comes to make the soul happy in its return to God. It is the very end for which he is sent from the Father and the Son; and therefore, it is called the joy of the Holy Ghost. It is his fruit, produced by his influence, and kept by his power. It is like himself; of a spiritual and heavenly nature—a pure affection—in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth. He refines it from creature-delight, and exalts it above sensual pleasure: for it is the result of nearness to God, and the effect of fellowship with him: which is, – Fourthly, –Another blessed ingredient in the joy of believers. It has God for its object. It is joy in God as their God, their supreme good, known, believed in, and enjoyed. The Holy Spirit has consecrated their hearts for fellowship with him. He has brought a free pardon for past apostasy, and full power to dethrone creature-love: and he abides in their hearts to subdue it. He enlightens their understandings to see the vanity of the creature and the fulness of God, and he enables them to reject everything that promises them happiness, if they cannot enjoy God in it. Thus, he keeps their hearts chaste and fixed upon God. Their joy becomes simple, as their faith is: for this looks at the finished salvation, and resting entirely upon it, sees God perfectly reconciled: thereby it lays a sure foundation for their joy in God; because they now know him by faith to be their God, and can see their interest in all the blessings of his love in Jesus. This is the fountainhead of joy, from whence flow rivers of pleasure, for evermore. The nearer they live to the fountainhead, the more communion they have with God. Their hearts become purer and holier, and their joys are more spiritual and heavenly.

This is the only remedy for the miseries with which the world abounds. Men are uneasy; seek for joy; and cannot find it; because they seek where it is not. They go to broken cisterns, which cannot hold it. They are disappointed and wonder; but still go on, spending their days in this vain pursuit. They do not attain any true joy. It flies from them, and at last they lie down in sorrow. What thanks then art thou bound, O my soul, to return unto thy God, who has saved thee from this delusion! What a mercy is it, that thou hast been led to the fountain of joy! O live near it, and from it derive all thy streams. Seek them all in God, and seek them in faith upon the warrant of the divine promise. He has said, "The meek shall increase their joy in the Lord"—they shall have it, and increase it. The meeker and lowlier thou art, the more wilt thou be joyful in God.

Pray then for growing humility, that thou mayest experience the sweetness of this scripture—"Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, rejoice—there is always a matter of joy in the Lord. What a fulness did he find who testifies of it thus—"My joy shall be in the Lord—God is the gladness of my joy—all my springs are in thee—for thou art my exceeding joy." Happy prince! All his springs came from God, and led him to God. He did not draw his happiness from the brooks, but from the fountain. The brooks dry up, but the fountain cannot. He did not rejoice in his crown and dignity, in his victories and treasures, or in any worldly good. He enjoyed God in them, who was the joy of his heart. He only valued the gifts for the sake of the giver; for he made use of them by faith, and then they were the means of bringing him near to God, and of keeping up communion with God. Whatever does this is a great blessing. And everything should do this to a believer. While he lives like a child of God, he exercises his faith for spirituals and temporals; and his heavenly Father blesses him, according to his word, wherein he hath caused him to put his trust, and gives him continual matter for joy and thankfulness.

This is the portion of the Lord's people; he has entailed to them. It comes to them by inheritance. And thou art bound, O my soul, to make use of it. Thy duty and interest call upon thee to enjoy much of it. Thy gratitude for the exceeding great mercies of the Father's love cannot be so properly shown, as by rejoicing in him; for the thankful heart cannot but be joyful. It feels happy in God. "My meditation of him," says a grateful soul, "shall be sweet; I will be glad in the Lord." This is a just tribute, which the Father expects, and which the Holy Spirit enables his children to return him. "Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound; they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance: IN THY NAME shall they rejoice all the day, and in thy

righteousness shall they be exalted." These are great privileges; which God has promised and does bestow upon his people. It is true they do not all alike rejoice with great joy; but they all ought. When their faith is weak, their joy is little. But they have the same right to believe, and to rejoice in believing. There is the same provision made for the whole family and household of faith. They are interested in the same covenant, have the same promises, and the same faithfulness to make them good. They have perfect security given them, that they may trust and not be afraid. The people who know the joyful sound of a free-grace salvation, have good reason to believe, without doubt or wavering. By such a faith they will see God perfectly reconciled to them, and will behold the light of his countenance shining on them in love.

A blessed sight! To see it clearly is glory begun; to walk in it is glory increasing. What is it but heaven, to rejoice all the day long? But then it must be in thy name, in the incarnate Word, in Jehovah Jesus; by faith in whose righteousness they shall be exalted as high as a creature can be—being justified freely and fully, they have access into this perfect grace wherein they stand, and they rejoice in hope of the glory of God: and not only so, but they rejoice in the way to glory, in tribulations also, knowing that all things are working together for their present, and for their eternal enjoyment of God.

For their encouragement thus to rejoice in the Lord, he has promised them, that the joy whirled he gives shall not be taken away; which is, —

Fifthly, —Another great privilege. True joy is the gift of God is a grace of the Spirit of God. It has God for its author, and God for its object: and it has this prerogative annexed to it, that no one can destroy this gift of grace. The Lord Christ declares that he will not suffer any creature to take away what he bestows. What a rich cordial was this to his dejected apostles! They were mourning upon account of his leaving them, and were sadly cast down, as men without hope. But he revives their drooping hearts with a promise—"I will see you again, and your hearts shall rejoice, and your joy no one taketh from you."

This is indeed strong consolation: for it; is one of the streams which maketh glad the city of God—a stream that never fails—it runs out of the ocean of free grace, and none can stop its running back into it. "Not as the world giveth, give I unto you," says Jesus. The world giveth empty joys; continueth them by an uncertain tenure, at last takes away all its gifts, and leaves its deluded votary to suffer the vengeance of eternal fire. 'Whereas Christ gives what is truly good, solid, and lasting. His gifts are without repentance, he is of one

mind in continuing, as well as in giving: for his motives are in and of himself, and always the same. His own mere love, his free grace, and the good pleasure of his own will dispose him to give and to continue his favors; and his one end is his own glory. Therefore, he will not take away the joy which he has given, and he will suffer no one to take it away. He secures by his power what he gives by his love. Such is the believer's right to rejoice in the Lord always. His title is indefeasible. God has freely given him in Christ all the good that can make him happy; and he enjoys it, and is happy, so far as he lives by faith. While he goes on from faith to faith, his joys increase. Growing faith brings him in a richer harvest of joy. And he is commanded still to proceed, until his joy be full; which is a

Sixth privilege, peculiar to joy in God. Other springs fail they are often dry; and when they run the fullest, he that drinks of their waters thirsts the more. But joy in God has a satisfying fulness. The fountain is always full, yea, is always running over; and all the streams bring happy peace and holy joy. The more a man drinks thereof, the more sober and spiritual he becomes for whatever flows out of this fountain is grace, sanctifying grace: the more we partake of it, we grow more like it. There is in it the divine property of conforming and assimilating us to itself: for it weakens the corruption of nature, and strengthens the faculties of the new man; and as these grow stronger, they cleave closer to God, and have more fellowship with him. By which means they partake more of his joy. A happy partaker of it declares—"In thy presence is the fulness of joy," and therefore he prays—"Make me full of joy with thy countenance."

The presence of God with me, and his loving countenance shining upon me, is the fullest joy upon earth. And this comes from the grace of the Holy Spirit, and is received by faith. Our Lord says to his disciples, "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." His end in speaking was to give them good reason to rejoice, and to continue rejoicing; and if they received what he spake with full assurance, as they ought to do, it would produce in them a fulness of joy. And this would be so much to his honor, and to their profit, that he commands them to ask it of the Father in his name. "Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." To the same purpose the apostle John, treating of the person of God incarnate, through whom we have fellowship with the Father in all the blessings of his love, says, "These things write we unto you, that your joy may be full." His design in writing was to lead them to nearer fellowship with the blessed Trinity, and to stir them up to seek in it their fulness of joy: and they

have it full, who, satisfied of their title to the Father's blessings, are receiving them freely out of the Son's fulness, by the grace of the Spirit. It becometh them well to rejoice; for in the same blessings there is fulness of joy for evermore, joy unspeakable and full of glory.

Put all these considerations together, and then see, O my soul, what a rich provision thy God has made for the joy of thy heart. Admire and adore him for his great salvation, for delivering thee from sin and sorrow, and for the free gift of righteousness and life eternal. To pardon, to justify, to glorify such a one as thou art. O what divine and infinite grace! What wilt thou return him for manifesting his love to thee, and for engaging thy love to him? How great is thy debt for admitting thee to fellowship with him, as thy God and Father, and for the gracious communications of his love to thee in Jesus.

What a subject is here before thee for delightful praise! Look at it in any true light, thou hast reason to be glad with exceeding great joy. God the infinite fountain of good, is thy God. He rejoices in thee, therefore thou shouldst rejoice in him. He has loved thee freely: how canst thou be sensible of this without loving him? His love hath blessed thee with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus; whilst thou art receiving them out of his fulness, how canst thou refuse to thank him with joyful lips? He says that he rejoices over thee to do thee good; the belief of this should fill thy heart with joy and gladness. Indeed, there is nothing in God but what should be to thee matter of rejoicing. His faithfulness and justice are on thy side, as well as his never-failing compassion: for he is thy God, thy covenant God. He has given his Son for thee, and his Spirit to thee; by his grace thou hast been called to enjoy fellowship with the Father and the Son, and to partake of their covenant-blessings. It is thy privilege to be improving this fellowship, and even upon earth to be tasting the joys of heaven. May thy faith bring thee in a rich feast, yea a fulness of joy till thy cup run over with the rivers of pleasure, which are at God's right hand for evermore.

Remember, O my soul, it is thy duty and thy privilege thus to rejoice in God: it is thine interest and thy happiness. Thy God requires it of thee, as the grateful acknowledgment of his favors; they are all of grace, inestimably rich, and everlasting, he would have thee to honor him for the gifts by rejoicing in the giver. Joy is the sense of his goodness to thee; and canst thou receive the present, and live in hopes of the eternal blessings of his goodness, and yet be without a joyful sense of them? Examine well; and try thyself. How is thy heart? Is it happy in God? Is it happy in nothing but God? Whatever a man

puts his trust in, from that he expects his happiness. In what then dost thou trust? Certainly, thou wilt say, My trust is in the mercy of God for ever and ever. And should not he be the only matter of thy joy, who is the only ground of thy faith? If he be, then why art thou so often cast down, O my soul, and why art thou so disquieted within me? How many dejections, what great sorrows, and what frequent heaviness dost thou experience, from whence come they? Joy is sown for thee. The sower is the Son of man. The Father has promised it, and bestowed it on thee for thy portion: thou hast been called by grace, and the joy in believing is thy birthright. What is the reason thou art not happy in thy God, and rejoicing in him always? Search diligently for the cause. Depend upon it, there is a great mistake somewhere. The Scriptures cannot be broken, which treat of continual joy in God. The promises cannot fail. The promiser is faithful; and yet thou art not always a partaker of the promised grace. How is this? O try to come to the bottom of this error. May the Spirit of wisdom lay it open to thee, and may thy sorrow be turned into joy.

Perhaps thou art seeking for some reason to rejoice in thyself. This rejoicing is not good, although it be very common. It has a bad motive: it comes from pride. The end is bad: it is to exalt and aggrandize SELF, which was man's sin and ruin. It is forbidden in Scripture—He that rejoiceth, let him rejoice in the Lord. If thou couldst find something in thyself to be pleased with, thou wouldst then rejoice in thy pride. Sorrow for not finding it may bring thee right; because it may be the means of showing thee that thou hast nothing of thine own to look at with self-complacency. What hast thou that thou hast not received? And if thou hast received it, why wouldst thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it? Hast thou anything of thine own but sin? Who gave thee grace, and made thee to differ from others? Was it not God? Did not all come from the good pleasure of his own will? He saw nothing good in thee at first to move him to be gracious, and what he continues is to the praise of the glory of his own grace.

If thou hast lost the sight of these truths, no wonder thou shouldst go mourning. God will not vouchsafe his joy to them who sacrifice to their own net, and burn incense to their own drag. He humbles and fills the humble with good things, but he sendeth the rich empty away. The rich rob him of his glory, and he refuses them his grace. Watch therefore over thy proud legal heart. Be jealous over it with a godly jealousy; and entreat the Holy Spirit to bring down every high thought in it, that thou mayest exalt God and he may exalt thee. Remember the promise,—"The meek shall increase their joy in the Lord." Seek

the fulfilling of this; for joy in him is the death of self-seeking and self-pleasing. O beg of God then to keep thee meek and lowly, that thou mayest be willing to live upon Jesus by faith, and to receive all the joy out of his fulness of joy.

Perhaps thou art mourning under a sense of thy sinful nature, and groaning under the burden of indwelling sin, as holy Paul did, and as all the dear children of God do, when they are in their right mind. This is godly sorrow, which worketh repentance not to be repented of. It is the true poverty of spirit, to which the Lord hath promised his blessing. Indeed, every one that has it is blessed, because it is not only consistent with the truest joy, but also is the very proper temper of mind in which it is preserved and increased. They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. Self-knowledge is the breaking up of the fallow-ground, and is the ploughing and harrowing, of it, thereby making it fit for the good seed, and to receive the enlivening influence of the heavens.

The more any man knows of himself, the greater reason will he have to seek the harvest of his joys in God; and seeking by faith he will find them. If he be in the deepest humiliation, he will be then best disposed to rejoice in God. This holy joy generally rises highest, when self is lowest: as the highest tide is always after the lowest ebb. Remember this, O my soul, in the most abasing views of thy fallen nature, and it will lead thee to seek, and in believing to find, that in God which thou hast not in thyself. The empty, and none but the empty, may be filled with his joy. Let every discovery of thine emptiness lead thee to trust more in the salvation of God, and to enjoy more of its blessings; and then thou mayest be, with Paul, always sorrowful, yet always rejoicing. Sorrow for self is the greatest friend to joy in God. Self-loathing is accompanied with the sweetest delight in God. May the apostle's experience herein be thine: "We are of the circumcision, who worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." O pray for the same grace, and thou wilt find that the less confidence there is in the flesh, the more rejoicing there will be in Christ Jesus.

Perhaps thou hast been tempted to seek for joy in some creature-comfort, and hast not received it as the gift of God; nor enjoyed it by faith, nor returned him his glory. Thou wast looking below God for happiness, and expecting it from some other object. The world had herein ensnared thy heart. There is not a greater enemy to the children of God: because it has objects suited to their senses, and capable of gratifying them: by which the world is always trying to engage their affections, and always succeeds, when they are not living by the

faith of the Son of God: for this is the only victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. See, whether thy sorrow did not spring from some worldly disappointment? Thou hadst dropped thy shield, and wast falling asleep in Delilah's lap: but awaking didst find the pleasure turned into pain. This pain may be very profitable. It should convince thee of thy dreadful mistake in leaving God for the world, and should stop up thy way for the future. Now thou seest the need of being cautioned Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world; for all things out of Christ are under the curse. There can be no blessedness in them. The whole world lieth in wickedness; it cannot make thee happy any more than hell can. But it is thy privilege to be delivered from this present evil world, and to be saved from the love of it. This is a blessed part of thy salvation. Expect it by faith. the victory is obtained; see thy share in it. "I have overcome the world," says Jesus. Almighty Lord overcome it in me, as thou hast overcome it for me.

But remember, O my soul! whatever be the real cause of thy sorrowing, there is joy in God, and for thee: because he is thy God, in whom there is nothing to make thee sorrowful, but everything which can possibly give thee true joy. The blessed Trinity are in covenant for thee and for thy salvation. And it is thy bounden duty, trusting to the finished work of the Son, to rejoice in the love of the Father. In the peace of thy conscience, and in the love of thy heart, thou art required to have fellowship with the Father and the Son, and to be always giving thanks to the Holy Spirit for this fellowship. Every enjoyment of their covenant-blessings on earth is a foretaste of heaven, and a pledge of joy unspeakable. What thou hast now by faith, thou shalt certainly have in everlasting possession: for there is a sure foundation laid in the covenant for thee to build thy hopes upon of rejoicing evermore.

Thy Father has chosen thee, and accepted thee in his Son. He has set his heart upon doing thee good, and he changeth not. His loving-kindness is like himself. He has drawn time by his Spirit to believe in his love, and he has promised to love thee unto the end. He has freely given thee all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus, and he reserves the full enjoyment of them for heaven. Nothing can rob thee of them; because he keeps them by his power for thee, and thee for them. How should this help to flu up the measure of thy joys! The Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort is thine, with all that his love can do to make thee happy. What canst thou want but more faith? The Lord increase it, that thy heart and conversation may be more with him. As thine affections are set more on things above, the temptations to the love of the things below will be weakened. The

sweetness of heavenly communion will deaden thee to the charms of the world: yea, the world will be to thee as nothing, while God is ALL.

And is he not all in all to thee? Consider his nature, his personality, his covenant, his works, his graces, and his blessings: view them in their greatness and goodness; thou hast an interest in them all. His wisdom contrives for thee; his providence watches over thee: his love waits to be gracious to thee; his holiness and justice and truth are thy friends; all his attributes have engaged his power to bring thee to glory. The perfect salvation of Jesus is thine. His rather is thy rather in him, and has nothing in his heart but love to thee: The Holy Spirit has manifested it to thee in believing, to be a perfect, unchangeable, and everlasting love. Whatever the Godhead has promised to give of happiness is promised to thee: and thou dost believe it, although thou art sometimes in heaviness, through manifold temptations. But even then, there is joy laid up for thee in God. Joy enough in the fountain It is always full: only thy faith draws out of it sparingly. Enough in Goal to 'turn thy sorrow into joy, if faith did its perfect work. O for more faith, that thou mayest have more joy in believing.

From whatever cause then, O my soul, thy sorrow arose, it certainly did not spring from anything which faith discovered to be in God. Be assured of this: and learn to improve thy sorrow about other things, so as to see thy need of trusting more, and of rejoicing more, in God. If thy sorrow be lawful, coming from a sight and sense of thy sinfulness, there is good reason thou shouldst abhor thyself, and repent in dust and ashes. But this is also a good reason for joy in thy God: because the Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart, and sayeth such as be of a contrite spirit, he gives to them the knowledge of salvation, and makes them glad with the joy of his countenance. Thus, he delivers them from their sins and sorrows. He continues his loving-kindness: surely his goodness and mercy shall follow them all the days of their lives. When they are under temptations to seek for joy in other things, he hedges up their way, that they cannot attain the expected good; or if they do, he embitters the enjoyment, and will not let them find anything in the creature but vanity and vexation: by which means he would teach them to derive all their joys from him, and from nothing but him.

Wait, O my soul, and read, and hear, and pray; be diligent in all means for thine improvement in this 'divine lesson. Seek the presence of God, wherever thou art. Expect his blessing upon all that thou doest. Account his love thy chief happiness, and be sure nothing can make thee happy in which thou canst

not enjoy his love. If riches increase, the world smiles; health be granted thee, relations are kind, and all things go well, set not thy heart upon them. Look at the bountiful hand which gives, and depend on the grace which sanctifies those things. They are not worth having but as they come from and lead to God, and so may be spiritually improved. If thou canst live by faith, and enjoy God in them, then they are real blessings: for then thou wilt receive them as his gifts, and use them to his praise; thou wilt eye his goodness in them, and admire him for them: and while he continues them, thou wilt be dependent on his grace to keep thy heart from idolatry, that thou mayest love the gifts only for the sake of the giver.

Whatever thou art going to do, ask thyself, How can this be the means of my rejoicing in God? If it cannot, avoid it. If it come with all the world's flatteries, and make thee the greatest offers of joy, fly from it: there is deadly poison under its gilded outside. Lay it down as an invariable rule of thy walk, that nothing can do thee good but what thou canst enjoy God in. He is the only source of good; and everything is to thee what he makes it: not what it is in itself; as such, all is vanity: but it is good when God makes it so. True joy is from him and in him. It is the gift of his grace, and does not stop at any of the streams, but goes up to the fountainhead, from whence they flow, and there finds its comforts, O my God, teach me thus to seek my joy in thee, and to make thee my crown or rejoicing.

For thine encouragement, consider, O my soul, what he did to the travelers gone before thee in the way to Sion: how he comforted them, and made them glad with the joy of his countenance. He led them indeed through the valley of Baca (of mourning), the only highway to the kingdom; but they found a well in it, a fountain of living waters: they went on sorrowing for their departure from God, but were made glad at their hearts in being brought back by his grace: therefore they wept rejoicing. Happy mourners! And hast thou not the same reason as they had to sorrow for thyself, and yet to be exceeding glad in God? Is not this also the case with all thy fellow travelers now upon the road? Their hearts are with God. He is their portion. His heaven is their home. They would not make up their happiness in the accommodations by the way, but in God, their treasure, their supreme good, and their everlasting joy. Neither would they be stopped by the inconveniences which they may meet with: these, improved by faith, will tend to make them long more to be at home: for these will lead them to feel more of the true joy there is in God, and will thereby inspire them with higher strains of praise and thankfulness. So that everything they meet with on the road will be sanctified to them, and will

dispose them to make melody in their hearts unto the Lord. Their Father and our Father, out of the riches of his grace, has not only given them matter of thanks, but has also provided the very words to be used by them. Many a weary traveler has found them a rich cordial. His spirits have been raised, his soul and all within made happy, while he was singing the sweet and heavenly hymn. The gospel prophet, who had seen the glory of Immanuel, and who was the honored penman of this divine poem, has left us a direction, when any one has a right to sing it, and to make it his own (Isaiah.12: 1): –"And in that day thou shalt say."

By looking at the context, the time here mentioned appears to be the day of the Lord's power, when the Spirit of life enters into the sinner, and he is quickened from a death in trespasses and sins. A happy, eternally happy day. The same Spirit will be his comforter, will bring him to the knowledge of his salvation through faith in the gloriously complete work of Immanuel, by which he shall find himself freed from guilt and fear, and in Jesus made a partaker of grace and glory. Then the joy of the Holy Ghost is felt in his soul, and his heart is in tune to bless the Lord his God—"O Lord, I will praise thee, though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortest me. Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid: for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and ray song, he also is become my salvation: therefore, with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation."

These wells are the fountains of grace, from which the heavenly travelers draw their holy comforts, and with which refreshed they go on from strength to strength, praising Jehovah, and ascribing to him all the glory of their salvation. He was angry with them, and justly. The fire of his wrath might have burned to the lowest hell: and his law, his justice, his holiness, and his truth would have been glorified forever in their destruction. But admired be his mercy, adored be his sovereign grace, he himself found out a way to magnify every divine attribute in their salvation. This was the wonderful contrivance of the Three in covenant. The Father accepted his co-equal Son in the place of his people, and his obedience unto death ill their stead: he is now perfectly reconciled unto them in Jesus; his anger is turned away from them. And when it is given unto them to know it, and they receive the comfort of it, when they have joy and peace in believing, O what a day of light and glory then breaks in upon their souls—a day sometimes clouded with the rising mists and vapors of the body of sin, but often so bright and serene, that the warm beams of the Sun of Righteousness shine directly into their hearts. These are times of great refreshing from the presence of the Lord. The communications of his love are

then felt with pure delight; and the soul is made sensible that it is in Jesus a happy partaker of the fulness of joy. The man cannot contain his mighty bliss, but breaks out aloud into thanks, and calls upon the bystanders to admire the marvelous goodness of God.

Behold, see here a miracle of grace—God is my salvation. Wonder with me at the exceeding riches of this love. Why me? What am I, that the most high God should be my Saviour? I am sure he never set his love upon one more unworthy, nor plucked any brand out of the burning that was fitter fuel for hell fire. O help me, then, angels and men, to praise and adore that infinite mercy which contrived, wrought out, and has now applied to me this salvation, with all its blessings. My debt increases, and I want to praise him more; for in that unspeakable gift of his Son he gave me all things, and he has now given me faith, and has put me into possession. I have his word for it, and I believe it—a word of infallible truth, confirmed by promise, ratified by the covenant oath of the blessed Trinity. These engagements cannot be broken; therefore "I will trust and not be afraid."

On the part of the divine covenanters all is sure. They have given me the fullest security that can be, and I may take the comfort of it. They will never leave me nor forsake me, and my faith shall not fail. Blessed promise! I shall be kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation. Glory be to "the Lord Jehovah, who is my strength."—his almighty arm holds me up, and therefore "he is my song:" the same arm will carry me safe to the end; therefore my heart rejoiceth in him, and with my song will I praise him. I will make my boast of his strength; all the day long will I be telling of his salvation. How can I mention too often these infinite mercies of my God? I love to dwell on the delightful theme. It warms my heart, it inflames mine affections, and raises my soul to heavens. My joys are all in this one: "He also is become my salvation." He is my present salvation, for he has opened the fountain, and has opened my heart to receive the life-giving streams. How can I but bless and adore his holy name while I am "with joy drawing water out of the wells of salvation?"

O ye blessed of the Lord, who have received the same salvation out of the infinite fountain of divine grace, assist me to praise. Your rejoicing with me will increase my joys, and improve my thankfulness. So, it follows in the prophet: "In that day shall YE say"—YE; not one only, as before, but the many partakers of the same mercies will sing in chorus. They will join in social worship, and with one heart unite in the common tribute of praise: "Praise ye

the Lord, call upon his name, declare his doings among the people, make mention that his name is exalted. Sing unto the Lord, for he hath done excellent things—this is known in all the earth. Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Sion, for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee."

Great he is, indeed; infinitely—everlastingly great in himself, and to be admired for his excellent greatness in saving sinners. This is his greatest work, and it demands of them their highest praise; and they are glad to give it him. Happy are they now, when humble and poor in spirit they can exalt their Saviour God: but who can tell how happy they shall be when he shall exalt them, and make them partakers of his own happiness? Eternal salvation will demand the tribute of their eternal praise; and they will be most blessedly employed in paying it, when they shall return to Sion with songs, and everlasting joy shall be upon their heads. Crowned heads may well sing, for their coronation-day will last forever; and the King of kings will put such honor upon his royal friends that all heaven will ring with his praises. They will with one heart and one voice adore God the Lamb, whose gracious hand wiped away all tears from their eyes, and made sorrow and sighing flee away forever; and who gave them his joy and gladness, such as are, even in heaven, inexpressible, and will be to eternity full of glory.

O my God accept of my poor mite. I desire to join all the redeemed in earth and heaven in blessing and praising them at all times. I would give thee praise continually, with my heart and with my mouth. I would rejoice in thee, and in nothing but thee: for thou art my God, my supreme good, and mine everlasting portion. Let me, then, for thy mercies' sake, glory in praising thee henceforth and forever. I ascribe it to thee now with a glad heart, rejoicing in hope that my praise will be better ere long, and never ceasing. Thou art worthy of all that angels and men can pay. To thee, holy Father, with the Son and Spirit, the Three in one Jehovah, be equal and endless praise. To this I give my hearty Amen.

THE WALK OF FAITH CHAPTER VIII.

THE BELIEVER WALKS HUMBLY WITH GOD, BEARING HIS CROSS.

THE happy believer is now advanced a great way in his journey, He has been brought to the saving knowledge of God—has received faith in his reconciled God in Jesus—has been taught by the Spirit to love his God—and has found the blessedness of holy communion with him in the way of obedience and duty, which makes him go on rejoicing; then it is become fit and proper that his faith and love should be tried. He must expect it. It is to the honor of God, to the good of others, and to the establishing of those graces, that proof should be made of them, and that they should be put, like gold, into the furnace. This is only a refiner's fire. If the furnace be very hot, one seven times more than it was want to be heated, the gold will lose nothing. Sterling grace is purer and brighter for every fiery trial. Its enemies, who blow the flame, have no intention to refine it, and sometimes the believer himself cannot see how the means will answer the end: but God overrules every trial for his glory and the believer's good, and makes it more precious than that of gold, which perisheth. Troubles, opposition from within and from without, all the difficulties he can meet with, only serve to purge out his dross, and to render him more fit for his heavenly walk. Herein the grace of God is most marvelous. Such a power as brought light out of darkness, is continually directing and sanctifying the crosses of the believer, so that not one, of them can stop him; nay, the greatest of them help him forward in his journey, and bring him not only more safely, but also more happily to the end of it. Adored forever be the Father's love, which makes all things work together for his children's good!

When man was in Paradise, there was nothing in him but what was conformed to the image of God. His will was one with the will of God. In this state there was no cross, Harmony ruled in the innocent breast; and God looked on his favorite man with delight. They were perfectly agreed, and they walked together in holy and happy friendship. But when man fell, then sin brought in sorrow, in the ten thousand miseries which the body suffers, and in the entire corruption of the faculties of the soul, particularly of the will, now at enmity with the will of God.

Hence our crosses. Sin is their fruitful parent; and while we are in a body of sin and of death, we cannot be exempt from suffering: for man is born to

trouble as naturally as the sparks fly upwards. But the unregenerate man does not feel the cause of this: he has no spiritual senses: he is dead to God: he does not know why he suffers, and he is not sensible of what he deserves to suffer; therefore he goes on merrily, laughing and singing under a load of guilt, enough to rum a thousand worlds. But when the spirit of life enters into him, and he is made to see his state, to feel his guilt, and to fear his danger, then he begins to groan under the cross. Every day he discovers how totally he was fallen, and departed in heart from the living God. He now tastes the bitterness of sin, and finds the deadly fruits of it. Although there be a remedy provided to bring the wanderers home, and he is made acquainted with it, yet he is without strength to apply it. He cannot by believing take the comfort of it. When it is given him to believe, he still has sin and suffering to exercise his faith. Against his corruptions and temptations, he must be continually fighting the good fight of faith. From this warfare he can have no discharge but by death. He must take to himself the whole armour of God, and be under arms night and day, or he will never be able to resist the assaults of evil spirits, or to overcome the opposition of evil men.

This is the heritage of all the servants of the Lord. All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. If they be on the Lord's side, all his enemies will certainly be theirs; so that if they enter into his kingdom, it must be through much tribulation. The King himself went this way to the crown, bearing his cross; and he has assured us there is no other way: "Whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, CANNOT be my disciple." He must deny himself what by nature he loves, and must love what by nature he hates: unless he live in this state of self-denial, which is to be his daily cross, he cannot live in communion with me, as one of my disciples. If he be one of the highest of them, yet he must carry his cross: for he has still a fallen nature, and its senses and appetites are always lusting against the will of God, and it is like plucking out a right eye to deny them their gratifications, and to refuse them their much-coveted pleasures, he is in a body of sin and death, and must carry his cross to his grave, being liable to all the sufferings which mortality is heir to, and all the way mortified under them, because he cannot bear them without faith, nor hold out without patience; and these graces are not et' himself, but are the gift of God. He is also forced to carry another cross all his days, even the corruption of his nature, depraved in every faculty, and always inclined to evil.

This is the burden and grief of the children of God, under which they all groan: and a sore and heavy burden it is, heavier for being continual, and for its

always working against the grace and glory of the Lord Christ; for this infection of nature doth remain, yea, in them that are regenerated, and appears in nothing more than that are regenerated, and appears in nothing more than in their adulterous love to their own righteousness, of which they are so dotingly fond, that after the Holy Spirit has divorced them from it, and their Maker is become their husband, even the Lord their RIGHTEOUSNESS, yet still an unlawful attachment to their own righteousness remains, and is the cause of the greatest crosses and of the heaviest trials they meet with in their way to heaven.

Hence the cross becomes necessary for the whole nature of fallen man—for body and soul. The sensual appetites are continually seeking their gratification in unlawful things, and the spiritual faculties are full of blind pride and self-righteousness, and know no way to the divine favor but by their own works and goodness. The cross is indispensably needful to mortify the flesh, with its affections and lusts, and to crucify the vanity of the mind, that when it would glory, it would have nothing left to glory in but the Lord. In this light let us consider the infinite love which appointed the outward cross for the outward man, and the inward cross for the inward man; and let us see how, by each of them, communion with God is preserved, and the believer is helped forward in his blessed journey.

THE WALK OF FAITH CHAPTER IX.

THE BELIEVER, EXERCISED WITH THE OUTWARD CROSS, CARRIES IT WITH PATIENCE, AND FINDS IT A GREAT HELP TO HIM IN HIS WALK HEAVENWARDS.

WE call that a cross which opposes our will. This supposition renders it painful and grievous. A very little matter, the least trifle, becomes a great cross, when our will is set much against it. How then can the believer rejoice with a heavy cross upon his back? or how can he rejoice all his days, if he must carry it to his grave? The blessed gospel discovers how this may be, and the blessed Spirit gives the experience of it: for he continues to teach the doctrines of grace, and under the cross he enforces them. What has been treated of in the former chapters he now applies with life and power. The

doctrines are put to the trial, and it appears that they are of God; for none could produce the effects which follow upon believing them, but an Almighty arm. Faith is tried in the fire, and the believer is convinced it is the faith of God's elect; for the promise is made good. "When thou walkest through the very fire thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." His love to his reconciled God is put into the fiery furnace, and it comes out, like the three children, sensible their God had been with them in the furnace, and their God had brought them out; for which marvelous instances of his love to them, their love was increased to him.

This is God's way. He gives grace and then tries it. When he has enabled the sinner, by believing, to find peace and love, then he would improve those graces by daily exercise; and if the exercise of them be very sharp and afflicting, it is only to establish the trust of his heart, and to confirm the affection of his soul more perfectly in his God.—His God. Mind that. His God still. The cross is not sent to weaken that relation. He is the same tender Father to his children, when he puts it upon them, as when he takes it off; and he would have them by faith to experience it. While they depend on his being perfectly reconciled to them through the obedience and sacrifice of Immanuel, they will see the same paternal affection invariably set upon them, and always disposed to do them good. His love changeth not. The happy objects of it have given this glorious testimony, even when under his cross—"We know that all things work together for good:"—they found it so. Whatever he sent to them came with a message of his love. "Hear ye the rod, and him that sent it." They hear what he says by it, for it speaks of the Father's love, and the belief of this quiets their minds under the stroke of his rod. Thus it answers his purpose—This cometh not forth of the dust, but is appointed for me; my Father sent it, not in anger for the punishment of my sins, but in the tenderness of his affection—He is not dealing with me as the supreme disposer of all events, who may afflict, and justly, his rebel creatures according to his sovereign will; but he has sent me this affliction with a message of grace and peace—I know it is well ordered—I kiss the rod, and I bless him that sent it.

The apostle Paul uses this argument to the suffering Hebrews. They had endured a long and great fight of afflictions. They had need of patience. He therefore gives them, in the 11th chapter, a short history of the Lord's favorites, and shows that they all carried his cross, and that he supported them all under it; yea, gave them strength to run their race, till every one of them won the prize. Then he requires them to look to Jesus, the greatest sufferer, out of whose fulness they might receive faith to run, and patience happily to

finish the same race. And lest they should be weary through suffering long, or faint in their minds under hard suffering, he reminds them of the character of their heavenly Father, who out of the tenderest love, appointed their crosses:—"Have ye forgotten the exhortation," says the apostle, "in which your Father speaketh unto you as unto children? MY SON despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons: for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof ALL; are partakers, then are ye bastards and not sons." O what a blessed exhortation! How full of love—the love of God the Father love to his child, who wants correction—love that would not touch him with the rod, till he had most tenderly informed him of his gracious purpose. MY SON, my beloved, this chastening is from thy Father. It was determined for thee by covenant-love, and settled upon thee for thy portion in the great charter of heaven. All thy crosses were then mercifully appointed—their weight and measure—how long—how great—how many—what strength was needful to bear them—what comforts under them—and what holy fruits should be produced by them—all was fixed by love, is now given in love, and is to bring thee to greater enjoyment of my love. My dear child, despise not then my chastening, nor faint when I rebuke thee. Be assured it is for thy good. There is a need most sure. It is so necessary, that I cannot love thee without chastening thee, nor receive thee among mine adopted without scourging thee. See then how thou takest my correction. Look at thy temper and behaviour under it. Examine. Art thou patient? Not suffering merely, but suffering quietly, is the proof of thine adoption.—If ye ENDURE chastening—if when I afflict, thou canst possess thy soul in patience undermine afflicting hand, then I deal with thee as with sons—I give thee thy portion of suffering, and I give thee thy portion of grace to bear it. All my children want correcting, and they all have it: for what son is he whom the [Father chasteneth not? They are all sufferers. Mine only-begotten was the greatest. None of you can suffer as he did; but whoever is following him must share with him in his cress, and bear it after him. If any be without my chastisement, whereof all mine are partakers; if they cannot bear it; have not faith to receive my loving correction, and therefore no patience to wait the blessed issue of it: such do not belong to my family; they are none of mine; they are bastards, and not sons.

How should the argument in this scripture reconcile the believer to suffering! How easy, yea, how happy, should it make him under the cross! He suffers, but it is from his Father, who, in most perfect love and infinite wisdom,

appointed the cross, and appointed also the precious fruits, which it should produce. O my soul, keep this in mind. Remember who's cross thou art carrying. Thy Father contrived it. He sent and continues it, that it may work under him for the best. It is the chastening of his richest love. Receive it then patiently, thankfully at his hands, and thou wilt find it fall of blessings. But take heed how thou consults sense or carnal reason. These are always enemies to the cross, for they judge of it only by feeling, and always refuse to believe what God says concerning it. Adhere to the truth, and reject every suggestion which would insinuate to thee that there is anything but love in the chastening of the Lord. He is thy Father: he never loves thee more than when he chastens thee. There is no hatred in his heart, no vengeance in his hand. He assures thee of this from the infallible word of his mouth. Here may thy faith be settled; believe him, he is doing thee good, he is promoting thy best interest. Cast not away this confidence, and then the cross will be the means of bringing thee to the nearest and holiest communion which thou canst have with thy Father on this side heaven.

In this amiable light look upon thy Father and thy friend. Never' forget it, O my soul, but keep it in the faith of thy heart, especially when he chasteneth thee. Then expect from his love patience under his stroke, and after it the peaceable fruits of righteousness. These will grow abundantly upon the cross. They grow nowhere else so rich and ripe. Survey the promises which he has made to his suffering children, and wait in faith for a joyful harvest. In due season thou shalt reap, if thou faint not. And the cross is intended to keep thee from fainting, because thy Father sends it for the increase and for the strengthening of thy faith. Read and study what he says to thee upon this point. Learn and inwardly digest it. In the time of trouble, thou wilt find great, comfort from depending, upon the promise of the Father to give thee a happy issue. Meditate, then, upon the Scriptures, in which he has declared his gracious purposes in afflicting his children; namely, First, –It is for the trial of faith. God gives it, and then tries it, that it may appear to be his grace, that men may see it, and honor him for it, and that it may grow by use, which is as necessary to spiritual, as exercise is to bodily growth. Trial shows the truth, and brings forth the power of grace, and is thereby a matter of great joy, as the apostle James testifies, writing to the twelve tribes in their dispersion and affliction: "My brethren, count it ALL joy, when ye fall into divers temptations, knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience; but let patience have its perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing."

God be thanked for this word of strong consolation! What a precious scripture is it! How full of encouragement to the believer to look with delight at temptations—not temptations to sin, but trials, sent from God to keep from sin. When he falls into them by providence, and meets them in the way of duty, then he should judge of them, not from sense, which can feel nothing but sorrow in afflictions, but he should take account of them from the declared purpose of God in sending them, and he should wait in faith for the blessings which they are to produce. God says, that they are matter of joy, of ALL JOY of all true spiritual joy; they are not only such in his account, but he also makes them such to the believer. Accordingly, we read in Scripture of many who did rejoice in trials. The Hebrews did; for they took JOYFULLY the spoiling of their goods. Paul did: "I am comforted," says he, "I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation." Nay, he went farther—"We GLORY in tribulations." He leaped for joy with the cross upon his back. He boasted and triumphed under it. What the world accounted his worst, he made his very crown of rejoicing, for he knew and found that the trial of faith worketh patience; faith receives the cross from the Father's love, and learns to bear it after Jesus: by the grace of the Spirit, the bearing of it, as it exercises so it improves patience. The believer becomes more acquainted with it. Use we say makes perfect. He learns where the strength to bear is, from whence his comforts are to flow, and from whose hand the blessed issue is to be received. He waits, therefore, with sweet submission to his Father's will, that patience may have its perfect work, that by trials it may be exercised, by sharper trials it may be improved, and by daily trials it may appear to be the genuine grace of the Spirit, perfect and entire, lacking nothing. This the believer aims at. He would have everything that belongs to true patience and growth in it; he would have it refined by every fiery trial, and made purer and brighter, that it may hold out till it have done its perfect work.

The apostle Peter gives the same encouragement to the same afflicted Hebrews; he exhorts them to faith and patience under their sufferings in these words: "Ye are kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time; wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations, that the trial of your faith being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise, and honor, and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." What treasures of love are laid open in this scripture! Read, O my soul; and adore the exceeding riches of thy Father's grace, he knew how needful afflictions were, both for the flesh and for the spirit, and, therefore, he appointed thee thy portion, and he has in mercy

informed thee of his design in them. He has revealed his will for the ground of thy faith, that when he sends them, thou mightest experience the blessings promised to his suffering children. The belief of his love, in contriving and in proportioning them to the ability given thee to bear them, would administer matter of joy in sorrow, and by trusting to his faithfulness thou wouldst greatly rejoice, thy joy would so far exceed thy sorrow. The heaviness is but for a season, the joy forever. The heaviness only during the trial of faith, the joy increased by that very trial. The trial was only to prove the truth of faith, and to evidence the power of it; not to weaken, but to strengthen it; not to destroy, but to refine it. The refiner does not intend to lose one atom of his gold, but puts it into the fire to purge away the dross. So does God. "When he hath tried me," says Job, "I shall come forth as gold." He was tried in the fire, and his faith was found unto praise, and honor, and glory. Therefore, he is set forth for an example of suffering affliction and of patience. Behold, we account them happy, not who suffer, but who endure suffering.

Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord abounds in compassion, and is of tender mercy. O my soul, wait upon the same Lord, and he will bring all thy trials to the same blessed end. He has the same pity and mercy to thee as he had to Job. Thou hast the same reason to believe it as he had. Thy faith is tried in the fire, as he was, that it may come out of it like gold. The trial was appointed in perfect love, and is to produce the greatest blessings of love. Thy God has most gracious designs towards thee in putting thee into the fire. It is to try thy faith; whether thou canst trust him there. It is to improve thy faith by the trial, that thou mayest trust him more. If thou hast trusting faith, it is to teach thee patient faith. It is a hard lesson to learn to trust against sense and carnal reason, and to say, This cross is good for me, I desire to submit, and to take it patiently at the hand of God. O, it is very hard to believe that there is nothing but love in every suffering; and it is harder to find it so, while suffering. And yet the Spirit of God declares there is nothing but love 'in it; and by believing thou wilt certainly find it. May every trial of thy faith establish it, and thereby bring forth, –

Secondly, –The blessed fruit of patience. The cross does good to faith, because by it God teaches his children to bear up, and to hold out, trusting to his promises, and waiting in hope for his fulfilling them; and thus it exercises patience, which is a grace of the Spirit, learned only in the school of Christ; and therefore the giver of it, among his other high titles, is called the God of patience. He first enables his afflicted children to believe what he has said of his love in afflicting them, and then to wait for the experience of his love under

their afflictions. This waiting quietly, without giving way to sense, or unbelief, is patience. Faith is tried, and stands the trial. Tribulation comes, faith is exercised with it, but holds fast its confidence in the word of God, and thereby has full proof of the faithfulness of God. This worketh patience—a quiet submission to the divine will, and a holy subjection to the divine rod. The flesh murmurs, self-will repines, self-indulgence rebels; but faith looks up for the promised strength, and by it conquers them. It stops their mouth with a Hush, be still, and know that he is God; he is my Sovereign and my Father; this affliction, indeed, is not for the present joyous, but rather grievous; nevertheless, it comes from his love—love guides his hand—love will bring good out of it. O that all within me may submit to his will, and bless his name!

But the cross is hard and painful; flesh and blood cannot bear it. True; but grace can. To endure is the proper work of patience. It endures by trusting to the word of God, and by receiving from him the promised strength. What cannot such a grace endure? When God says, "Fear not; I will be with thee when thou goest through the fire," the believer is hereby forewarned of the fire; and when he is called to go through it, he expects the presence of his God, that if the bush burn, it may not be consumed. How comfortably does the apostle Peter speak of this to the suffering Hebrews: "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial, which is to try you, as though some strange thing had come unto you; but rejoice inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, that when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy."

He would have them to be accustomed to the cross, it being the only way to the crown. There is nothing new or strange in it. All the crowned heads in heaven carried it, while they were upon earth: yea, the King of saints went bearing it before them. There never was sorrow like unto his sorrow: and yet for the joy that was set before him, he endured the cross, and despised the shame. Take up thy cross, O my soul, and follow him. Look unto Jesus. He will give thee strength. He has taken the curse and wrath out of thy suffering. Thou wilt see it, the fruit of his love to thee, and it will be the means of engaging thy love to him. What if it be a burning fiery furnace: is it not almighty love which calls thee to go rote it? Not to hurt thee, but to try thee, to give thee happy proof of the soundness of thy faith, and of the power of thy patience, He would have thee to know, that thy patience, trusting to his tried word, is invincible; that no blow can beat it, no fire can burn it, from Christ. He would bring thee to experience what the prophet did, when he said—"Thy word is tried to the uttermost, and thy servant loveth it."

The good word of God was tried, as far as it could be, and the trial proved its truth, and, therefore, he had fresh reason to love it. The trial increased his confidence in the truth, and his experience in the sweetness of its promises; thereby his patience was confirmed, and he could rejoice, inasmuch as he was a partaker of Christ's sufferings, both of their infinite sufficiency, and also of their mighty efficacy to save. By enjoying these blessings under the cross, his heart was happy in the joy set before him. He had the earnest and the foretaste of heaven; for he knew that when the glory of Jesus should be revealed, he should be glad with exceeding joy.

But the carnal mind is ready to complain—This would be true, if the suffering was short; but it is long, as well as hard—I have borne up a great while, but now my patience is quite tired out—I am ready to give all up, being weary of my life with the length of my trials. How many have I known in this melancholy case! Fair blossoms in the mild and gentle spring. In fine weather and smiling sunshine they looked beautiful, and gave hopes of their being in the tree of life, and of their growing and ripening upon it. But, alas! a trying time came, a bleak, cold north wind, and a very sharp piercing frost-like leaves in autumn, down fell the promising bloom. My heart has mourned again and again at the fall of one and another, and mourns, while I am writing this, ever several now living, who have forsaken God and his ways, for the world and its delights. They met with trouble, and it was too much for them. They were tempted, and they had not strength to resist. The reason is thus assigned—"He that received seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon, with joy, receiveth it; yet hath he not root in himself, but endureth for a while; for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by-and-by he is offended." He is offended and falls away, because he had no root. And they who have root are too often tempted to be offended at the cross. They find it very difficult to bear up under it. Natural infirmity, remaining corruption, and strength of temptation, make pain and suffering grievous to the flesh: yea, when they are forced to bear the cross long, and it is very heavy, they are apt to murmur and fret, grow discontented, are tempted to unbelief; and, if they give way to it, to despair.

How necessary is it, then, that they should be enabled to possess their souls in patience, under their great and many trials! To which end, nothing can contribute more effectually than a settled faith in the word and promise of a reconciled God. This will stay and quiet the soul when trouble comes. It is the chastening of my Lord, says the believer—my loving Father sends it for good—he is only trying my faith and patience, and the trial will end well—it is

grievous, indeed, at present, and I go on my way weeping, but I have my supports now, and I shall soon reap a joyful harvest. I have a faithful promise for it, which is a constant cordial, and keeps up my spirits. My God will be with me as long as the trial lasts—he says he will. I believe him, and therefore expect his promised presence and strength, till faith and patience have their perfect work.

Such a cordial the apostle James gives to the Hebrews. They wanted it much. They were greatly oppressed by the rich, and some of them were persecuted even unto death. "Be patient, therefore, brethren," says he, "unto the coming of the Lord: behold the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it until he receive the early and the latter rain: be ye also patient: establish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh." He puts great stress upon the Lord's coming: Yet a very little while and your Lord will come to appear for you. It is true you are in a fiery trial, but your God calls you to it; and it may seem to you a long trial, but he has promised you grace sufficient to bear it. Trust him then, and he will keep you patient. He knows your frame and temper, and bids you look about you.

See, how the husbandman waits, having only a general promise, that seedtime and harvest shall not fail; and is it not more reasonable that you should wait with patience the end of the Lord? He sows his seed and leaves it. It endures much hard weather, frost and snow, rough winds and wintry storms. Summer comes, but he must still wait: his corn is in ear, yet it is liable to suffer from long drought and from blights, and to be beaten down with heavy thundershowers; but he has long patience. At last he is not disappointed of his hope. He reaps the precious fruit of the earth, and gathers in his joyful harvest. Behold, O my soul, and imitate. How strong is his faith! Is thine like his? God has only said that the seasons shall not fail: he has not said that the harvest in every field and country shall not fail; yet the farmer sows in faith, and waits in patience. But the promise is sure to thee: "He that believeth shall never be confounded:" and dost thou believe this with a hope that maketh not ashamed? He has long patience: how is thine? Art thou not weary and faint in thy mind, especially when the course of providence seems to run counter to thy hope? Canst thou hold thee still in the Lord, and abide patiently upon him, when he chastises thee, and seems in anger to cast thee off? He waits long for a harvest of perishing things, and canst not thou wait to have thy fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life? O what need hast thou of patience! Seek it, pray for it, beg of thy God to establish thy heart; that thou mayest be rooted and grounded in faith: and if troubles come great and heavy, thou mayest possess

thy soul in patience, so long as the Lord shall please to exercise thee with them. And never forget that he will certainly come, and quickly.

Let this promise keep thee from fainting, he will come in with his supports; he will administer his comforts under the cross; he will remove it in due season. What can be required for the establishing of thy heart, which is not promised to thee in this scriptures" Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward; for ye have need of patience, that after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise: for it is but a very little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. Wait then on the Lord, O my soul; be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord." Perhaps thou art ready to reply—I have waited long, but am still to learn; for my trials are so various, that as soon as I have been well exercised with one sort, presently it is changed, and another comes to which I was not accustomed; and this continually like Job's messengers, one after another; and still the last brings a sadder message than the former. Hard and long trials I have endured, but this constant change of them wearies me out; they come so unexpected, they find me so unprepared, they so harass my troubled mind, that I am ready to sink under them—frequently I am tempted to think, that if God loved me, he would not delight in afflicting me in this manner.

Thus the carnal mind is apt to reason against God and his ways: but when the believer goes into the sanctuary and consults the oracle, he receives an answer of grace and peace, and is satisfied that this change of trials is nothing new with God. It is his usual method of training up his children in faith and patience. He appoints troubles for the exercise, and all sorts of troubles for the improvement of their graces. The Captain of their salvation was made perfect through sufferings so are all the soldiers of Christ Jesus. It was the remark of one of his champions—"MANY are the troubles of the righteous." The apostle James, speaking of the persecuted Hebrews, says, "They had DIVERS temptations, different one from another;" and his brother Peter tries to comfort them under their MANIFOLD afflictions, many in number, succeeding as fast as wave follows alter wave, and of many kinds: some distressed them in their bodies, others in their minds, in their character, in their substance, in their families, in every way that affliction could be felt. Patience is the grace suited to all these trials; because it bears them in the strength of God: for it consists in trusting to his sure word of promise, and believing it against sense and feeling. Faith says, This present trial comes from the love of my covenant God: Patience says, Then I will bear it till he bring it to a good issue. Whatever

the trial be, patience has the same promise, and the same promise-keeping God to trust in. If he sends variety of trials, it is only to give a variety of proofs that he is faithful who hath promised. He knows we have divers' diseases, which must have divers remedies to heal them. We have manifold evils in us, which require manifold afflictions to subdue them. And our God intends to give us many blessings, and he appoints many troubles to bring us to the enjoyment of them.

All those are gracious dispensations, mercifully contrived, and seasonably administered, that patience may learn to bear, and may learn to persevere in bearing. God changes the trial. Patience has a new lesson, and a new opportunity of improvement. A good teacher brings his scholars forward, and when they are gone through one book and are well grounded in it, then he advances them to another: when they have learned Latin, he puts them into Greek. But he does not change their studies out of ill-will or hatred to his scholars. They had rather be at play than minding their books; and they had rather get but one lesson, and be saying it over from day to day; but the master knows what is best for them, and he keeps them to their work.

God trains up his scholars in various exercises, but all for their improvement. He does not consult what would please them, but he changes the lesson as he sees needful. He knows when their faith wants confirming, when their patience needs establishing, and therefore, in much mercy, he sends a new trial for the growth of those graces. Lest they should mistake his meaning in varying his trials so often, he gives them this general rule: "There hath no temptation taken you, but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." The Father will exercise his children with no trial but such as is common to man; and he will enable them to bear it; and he will make a way for them to escape. How should these considerations silence their murmurings! If the trial be new to them, yet it is common to man. If it be hard to bear, yet grace is almighty to strengthen patience. If it last long, yet it shall end well. How convincing are these reasons! How patiently should believers, influenced by them, submit to the chastening of the Lord! And yet there is still unbelief in them, which will be urging fresh complaints, and stirring up impatience.

The poor sufferer, feeling his smart, is apt to think—Any cross but mine would be tolerable—I should not say one word against God, if he tried me with any other; but this cuts me to the heart—Oh! it is a very agony both to my flesh and

spirit—there is 'nothing like it—it is so exactly calculated to cross my temper, to hurt me in the tenderest part, and to rob me of my most beloved gratification, that it is the very thing in the world from which I could have wished to be exempted.—Any cross, Lord, but this.

Nay, but, O man, who art thou that repliest thus against God? Hold thy tongue as it were with a bridle. Let not self-will murmur, and folly speak against the chastening of the Lord. He says that he as dealing with thee as with sons. Where is thy faith then, that sense and feeling should be permitted to plead, and to be heard against the witness of God in his word? Where is thy patience, that thou canst not bear the present cross, but wouldst take up any other? Alas! alas! mistaken man—what canst thou bear in thine own strength? Thou feelest the smart of thy present cross, and it makes thee peevish and fretful: the smart of any other would have the very same effect. A less than this, the least thing in the world, that opposes thy will, would stir up thine impatience.

Observe thy temper, how it catches fire at any little opposition from men. The same temper will be inflamed and rage, when God chastises thee, if thou refuse to receive his correction. Thy rebel will is the cause of thy pain, and makes thy cross so bitter: for if God's will and thine were one, there could be no cross; but his will is almighty, and yet thou resistest it. God puts his yoke upon thee, and thou art like a stubborn beast, which only hurts and galls itself by striving and kicking against its work. He tries thee with one cross, and thou art dissatisfied, thou couldst contrive a better for thyself. Thou wouldst be thine own lord and governor. Self-will, they say, is a sure guide to self-destruction. Beware then of thine own will. When God calls thee to take up any cross, do not wish for another. He sends this, and to it he requires thy submission. It is thy duty and thine interest to receive it for the exercise and for the improvement of thy patience; but instead of taking it up quietly, and waiting for the good fruit of it, thou art quarrelling with it, and opposing the will of God.

O take heed of this vain attempt. It is a snare laid for thee—a fatal trap, into which the love of independence seduced the first man, and which, ever since, easily ensnares his posterity. When thou art tempted to murmur at thy present cross, consider what it is—meditate a moment upon thy Father's love, who most mercifully appointed, who most seasonably sent it—and if it be nothing strange, but common to man, then do not try to shift it off, but seek the promised grace to bear it. There is not a cross that he will lay upon thee, but he has laid it before noon others, and it will tend greatly to the peace of thy

mind, and to the restraining of thine own will, to observe how he dealt with them. Take notice, then, how he, in love, exercised them with every cross that can be laid upon thee; how he supported them under it, and what blessed fruit they reaped from it.

This is the kingdom of the cross; and it is the Lord's will, that every disciple in it should be as his master. He has chosen them to suffer with him, as well as to reign with him. And therefore, intending to call forth his gifts and graces into daily exercise, he has honored them with the daily cross. He sees it needful often to change it, and he has informed them of his gracious designs herein. There is scarce any kind of suffering, but some or other of his people have been tried with it, and he has left promises in Scripture of his support, and of his coming in with comfort, and, in due time, with deliverance. So that whatever thy cross be, it is not sent, O my soul, to hinder, but to promote communion with thy God, and to help thee forward in the heavenly way.

Art thou pinched with poverty—a believer, but in distressed circumstances? Blessed art thou of the Lord. "Hearken, my beloved brother, hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom, which he hath promised to them that love him?" What a mercy is it to have thine outward estate thus appointed for thee by the choice of thy heavenly Father! and the same estate which he chose for his best beloved. In the exceeding riches of his love, he decreed that thou shouldst be poor in this world, as Jesus was—he knew it was best for thee—and he chose the rich in faith—outward poverty was to be the means of thine improvement in spiritual riches—thy want of temporals was to bring thee to live more by faith upon eternal things. O how good is thy God! He sent thee poverty to enrich thee. It is to bring thee near to God, to keep thee near to him, and to afford thee daily proof of his precious love. These are some of the blessings of' rich faith, and these are worth more than ail the treasures of the world. Be content then—thy God will supply all thy need. Be thankful—thou art an heir of' the kingdom. Bless thy God—no creature out of heaven has more reason to bless him than thou hast—He is thine—All things are thine.

Perhaps thou art tried with bodily pain and sickness: these are hard trials. To endure them is the very crown of patience; but strength to endure them is promised, and in waiting upon the Lord will be received; so that outward pains shall produce inward joy. Thus we read: "The Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing; thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness." He is weak—God strengthens him: he is sick—God comforts him: he is in pain—God

smoothest his bed, and he lies patient. Sickness cannot be pleasant in itself; but is profitable for its fruits. It is the appointment of God, and teaches submission to his sovereign will. It comes to the believer with a message of precious love—This bitter cup is sent from thy heavenly Father, who has many gracious purposes to answer by thy taking it:—He would humble thee, and let thee feel what thou art, and what thou deservest—he would mortify the life of sense. He would give occasion to increase faith, and to advance patience. — Drink it up—there is a rich cordial at the bottom—the taste of it will draw out thy heart in love to God. Happy sickness, which promotes spiritual health! Blessed pain, which the kind Physician often makes the way to pleasure, yea, to the sweetest communications of his love.

Art thou in the fire of persecution? Are thy friends and relations all in arms against thee, for leaving them to follow Christ? Is thy dependence upon them, and art thou greatly tempted to make some compliances lest they should east thee out, and thou shouldst come to poverty? This may be a fiery trial; but it is a blessed one. He will make it so, who says, "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: because great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets who were before you." This persecution will be so far from stopping thee in thy way, that it will both help thee forward, and will also make thy journey pleasant. Thy friends revile thee: look up to him who, when he was reviled, reviled not again, He will turn their re-preach into a blessing. They persecute thee: the goodly fellowship of the prophets carried the same cross, and found it no hinderance to their spiritual joy. They say all manner of evil of thee: take heed that they say it falsely, and for Christ's sake; and if thou suffer for him, and art evil spoken of for thine attachment to him, then rejoice, and be exceeding glad; for great is thy reward in heaven. Thou art a sufferer with him, and thou shalt also reign with him. Look forward to the promised kingdom. Expect it in faith, and the prospect will give thee, at every step, joy unspeakable and full of glory. Perhaps this persecution may be carried on to acts of injustice, even to the depriving thee of thy property: thou mayest suffer the loss of all thy worldly goods for Christ's sake. When God calls thee to this trial, he will give thee strength to bear it, and thou shalt be a great gainer by thy loss. So Paul found it: "I have suffered the loss of all things, and I do account them but dung that I may win Christ." So it was with the Hebrews: "They took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing in themselves that they had in heaven a better and an enduring substance." What love was here! God was their portion, and their great reward. He had made them happy in the sense of his love; and to

manifest the reality, and to demonstrate the power of it, what great things love can do for his name's sake, he took away all their earthly delights. "Let them go," says Paul; "I part with them as freely as I would with so much dung, for I have experienced that the loss of them has brought me to nearer fellowship with my precious, most precious Jesus." "Happy parting," say the Hebrews: "farewell, goods and chattels, we rejoice at the spoiling of our goods, because we have got faster hold of the substance by the loss of the shadow—out-ward comforts are gone, but inward richly supply their place—we are robbed of our earthly possessions; thank God, we cannot be robbed of our better and enduring substance; for it is reserved in heaven for us, where no moth or rust can corrupt, and where no thieves can break through or steal; in this faith we find our hearts free and light and happy in running the race that is set before us."

Thy trial may be something still nearer. It may be the loss of thy dearest relations. The wife of thy bosom is taken from thee: thy favorite child is dead, perhaps drowned or burned, or killed at a stroke: the delight of thine eyes is gone, and thine heart is ready to break. All sorrow is not forbidden, but sorrowing even as others who have no hope. Tears may flow, but Christian hope keeps them within their proper bounds; it restrains and sanctifies them. Thy wife is dead; thy child is dead: The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away. He requires thee to forsake loving wife and children, be they ever so dear, if love of them cannot be enjoyed without forfeiting his love. "And there were great multitudes with Christ, and he turned and said unto them, If any man come unto me, and hate not his father and mother, and wife and children, and brethren and sisters, he cannot be my disciple." The disciple gives up himself to the master's disposal—to learn of him—to believe in him—and to love him. "My son," says he, "give me thy heart." He has a right to it, and he will admit of no rival. It is his temple and his throne, in which he alone will be worshipped and honored, he is a jealous God; and if any love hinder love to him, it must be torn from the heart. O disciple, read this scripture, study it carefully, and it may be the means of showing thee the true cause of thy great sorrow about worldly relations: it is because thou hast so little love to thy best relation and friend, Jesus Christ. If thy love to him was what it should be, thy heart would not be so grieved at those losses; but would, in patient submission, acknowledge—It is the Lord; let him do what seemeth him good.

Perhaps thou art mourning for the loss of living friends. They have forsaken thee. Old connections, as dear to thee as thine own soul, are broken. Persons whom thou hast known from thy childhood, and with whom thou hast grown

up in strict friendship, are now thine enemies, and become so without any offence or fault of thine. They hate thee, because thou art a real Christian; and their hatred is harder to bear, because the world joins with them in it, and thy name is everywhere cast out with contempt.

It must be so. The decree cannot be altered: "I WILL PUT enmity between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent." God put it, and put it for ever. The enmity broke out as soon as there were two born into the world. Cain hated Abel, and slew him. Ever since, he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the spirit. There has been one, and but one, perfect man upon the earth since the fall, and the enmity of the world followed him unto death. Lest we should marvel at its following us, he has forewarned us: "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you: if ye were of the world, the world would love its own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." What a strange reason is this! Because I love you, therefore the world hates you. What God chooses, the world rejects. Why, then, O my soul, dost thou court its smiles, or fear its frowns? The world, which lieth in wickedness, cannot love thee, and its enmity cannot hurt thee. Remember the words of Jesus: "These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace: in the world ye SHALL have tribulation; but Be of good courage, I have overcome the world." I have overcome it for you, and I will overcome it in you: tribulation from it shall not hurt your peace in me, but shall increase it: I will make my love the sweeter for its enmity: troubles from it shall be well repaid with my joys: and when it quite casts you out, then will I take you into my bosom, and let you know what the affection of the heavenly bridegroom is.

Why, then, O my soul, art thou afraid of such an exchange? Is it not for thy profit to part with the world for Christ, and to give up its joys for his? What greater gain canst thou expect than to win Christ, and by him to be crucified to this present evil world? Dying to it, thou wilt be more alive to him, and therefore happier in him. As other ties are dissolved, thy heart will be knit closer to thy divine lover. Warmed with his precious love, "clothed with the sun, and the moon under thy feet," thou wilt hasten thy steps heavenwards; yea, thou wilt be ready to take wing, and to fly to the embraces of thy dear, ever-infinitely dear Jesus. Thou wilt want no comment upon the words of the bride, the Lamb's wife, but will gladly use them after her: "Make haste, my beloved, and be thou like to a roe, or to a young hart upon the mountains of spices." In former ages the children of God were often deprived of their

liberty, cast into prisons, and bound in chains. This seems to us a heavy cross. To be shut up in a dark dungeon, put into fetters, and deprived of every worldly comfort, requires great patience: but even this did not stop them in their way to heaven, nor in the enjoyment of God by the way. Paul, the prisoner of the Lord, often mentions it among his highest honors, that he was accounted worthy to suffer for the name of Christ. He and Silas were cruelly beaten with many stripes, at Philippi; were put into the inner prison, and their feet fastened in the stocks; but the Lord was with them, and he turned their prison into a paradise; his joy made them forget their wounds and pains, for at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and SANG PRAISES unto God. This has often been the case since their time; the Lord has often visited his prisoners, and the light of his countenance has made them happy in their bonds. Indeed, we are not called to this kind of suffering at present, thanks be to his grace. This is a day of such uncommon mercies, that we have more to fear from our want of thankfulness than from our want of liberty. I pray God we may not grow licentious, and abuse our great privileges; but may he enable us to value them, and live up to them, that he may be honored for continuing them to us, and to our posterity.

In former times, also, believers were often forced to seal the testimony of Jesus with their blood. And even this did not atop them in their walk, nor hinder their com-reunion with God. Hear one of his martyrs:—"The Holy Ghost witnesseth, that bonds and afflictions wait for me in every city; but none of these things move me, neither account I my life dear unto myself, so that I may finish' my course with JOY, and, the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus. This was not a vain brag. He spake it in humble faith, depending upon his Master's promise, that he would stand by him when his blood should he shed, and would make him a happy conqueror in the hour of death. And he was more than conqueror; but the grace which made him so was not peculiar to, or the privilege of an apostle; the same was given to a noble army of martyrs, who overcame Satan by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.

What a triumph of patience was this! They were enabled to bear anything, even the loss of life, rather than suffer the loss of the Lord's favor. Examine, O my soul, whether thy faith be like theirs. Canst thou endure as they did? How is thy patience under the cross? Read what they went through, who are well reported of by the Holy Ghost for their faith, and re member the same grace is promised to thee, to carry thee patiently through alt thy sufferings: "They had trials of cruel mocking's and scourging's: yea, moreover, of bonds

and imprisonments: they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword; they wandered about in sheep-skins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented; of whom the world was not worthy; they wandered in deserts and in mountains, and in dens and in caves of the earth: and these all obtained a good report, through faith." They are celebrated by the Holy Spirit, for having patiently endured till they had run their race, and finished their course with joy. He sets their example before thee, that thou shouldst not be slothful in running the same race, but a follower of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

Meditate seriously, O my soul, and reflect again and again upon the great need thou hast of patience, Remember the cross lies in thy way to the crown, and thou canst not avoid it. The Lord has appointed it to be thy portion, and it is entailed upon thee as much as the kingdom is. When he exercises and tries thee with it, he does not act merely as a sovereign, but as a father. He deals with thee as with sons. His children want, and his children have correction, None are without it; but they find it hard to bear. The will of the flesh is impatient under the cross. Self-love hates it. Carnal reason cannot be reconciled to it. If it be thus with sons, what must it be with bastards? The natural man, when he is brought into great trouble, is like a mad beast. If his pains be sharp and acute, he rages, storms, and blasphemes: if they be also lasting, having no God to go to, he often gives way to despair, and dispatches himself with a pistol, running to hell for relief. O my soul, marvel not at this. If God had left thee to thyself, the same trials might have brought thee to the same unhappy end. How necessary, then, is patience! Without it thou canst not bear the cross, nor hold on thy way under it, nor profit from it. And how necessary are the doctrines before insisted on for the practice of patience! No one can submit to bear the cross, unless he be first persuaded that God is reconciled to him, and loves him in his Son. When he is satisfied of this, he will see all things (the cross among the rest) well-ordered for him in the covenant, and all working together for the best.

The cross is mercifully sent to make a trial of these doctrines; by it God would manifest the truth, and bring forth the power of them, that it may appear they were not learned as notions, but experienced by his almighty grace. His end is answered. The trial of faith establishes the peace of God in the conscience, and confirms the love of God in the heart, and thereby keeps patience writing for strength to hold out, bland for a issue. The believer, made strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus, endures patiently, he knows from whom his cross comes. It is the appointment of his Father, who does not send it in hatred. He

never afflicts his children but in perfect love. He never puts a heavy cross upon them, to reek the back of their patience, but to strengthen it, and to train them up to bear greater burdens. He would teach them their weakness and his strength, their wants and his supplies; he would call forth their faith for the honour of his word, and their patience for the glory of his faithfulness.

Lord, teach me these lessons. I want the experience of them every day. O my God make me au humble disciple in the school of Christ. There only can I learn to suffer thy will; to thee I come for this grace. Assist me, O thou Spirit of wisdom and revelation, in reading thy word, that through patience and comfort of the Scriptures I may have hope. Enable me to meditate night and day on the doctrines of grace revealed in them, and to mix faith with them, that I may be strong in the patience of hope. O merciful God and Father, I desire to be strengthened mightily by thy Spirit in the inner man to bear thy cross. I would live in a continual dependence upon thine arm to carry me through every trial. O thou God of patience and consolation, enable me to bear thy cross daily to the praise of the glory of thy grace, and to bear it patiently to the end, that I may finish my course with joy. Be it unto thy servant according to thy word, wherein thou hast caused me to put my trust. Amen, so be it, Lord, Amen. To receive benefit from afflictions is a great blessing. To suffer them with a resigned will, yea, to rejoice in them, as if all the joy in the world was come to us, is contrary to sense and feeling, to carnal reason and to human philosophy; therefore our heavenly Father has graciously informed his children of his love in afflicting them: these information's are the ground of their faith, and were given to silence murmuring in their hearts, and to keep them waiting patiently for the promised fruits of suffering. Among which this is a,

THIRD, and not the least; namely, the crucifying of the flesh, and the deadening of it in those affections and lusts, which, if not daily mortified, would stop the believer in his walk, and would hinder his holy communion with God. When faith has been tried, and is come out of the fire, proved to be the faith of God's elect, and when patience as gone through the fiery furnace and has found no harm, then it is the Father's will to advance and to improve his children in the doctrine of the cross. They have a carnal mind still, which is enmity against God—a body of sin, an old man of sin—the flesh in them lusting against the spirit. This their fleshly nature, which doth remain, yea, in them that are regenerated, is the greatest enemy to their holy walk with God, in constant peace and growing love; because it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. The life of sense in them is always opposing the

life of God. Hence the continual war between nature and grace, which if a man does not find in himself, he may depend upon it he either never was alive to God, or else at that time he is dead to God. If he be living by the faith of the Son of God, he will also be fighting the good fight of faith against all the enemies of his salvation. He will never think of putting off the whole armour of God until he put off the body of sin and of death: and until that day come, he will be striving for the mastery over his body, that he may keep it under, and bring it into subjection.

How absolutely necessary this striving is, appears from the tender compassion of our God and Father, who has appointed and decreed in covenant love, all the crosses which were to be laid upon our rebel nature, and which were to be kept upon it, till death. It is his holy will, hereby to restrain its affections, to mortify its lusts, to hedge up its way by thorns and afflictions, and by these means he would weaken its power. Is not this mercy unspeakable? And what more likely method could he contrive thus to crucify the flesh, than to put it, and to keep it, upon the cross? For as the sinful nature is deadened, the new man is renewed, day by day. The one grows more alive by the mortification of the other. The subduing of unbelief, pride, and self-seeking is the strengthening of faith, humility, and glorifying God. This command, therefore, is frequently given to believers—Put off the old man—put on the new—mortify your members which are upon the earth—crucify the flesh, with its affections and lusts. And this is spoken to believers, high in grace, as high as ever any went, or can go. The Spirit of God says to the SAINTS at Rome:—"Let not sin reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof, neither yield ye your members, as instruments of unrighteousness, unto sin."

The infallible Spirit speaks to the SAINTS at Ephesus:—"Put off, concerning the former conversation, the old man, who is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and put on the new man." The same precept is given by the same Spirit, to the SAINTS at Coloss:—"Mortify your members which are upon the earth." This is a holy war; and all the saints of God are engaged in it. They are fighting against everything sinful; but more particularly watching under arms against their own corrupt nature, which is their hardest warfare; because there is no release from it, and it is carried on by continual self-denial, by resisting the affections and lusts of the old man, and by opposing his giving up the members of his body, as instruments of unrighteousness, unto sin. But as good soldiers of Christ Jesus, they resist unto blood, striving against sin. The captain of their salvation is always on their side, to encourage them with his

promises, and to help them with his strength. He intends to lead them on, conquering, and to conquer; therefore he lays the cross upon their corruptions, as the most effectual means of subduing them, and to reconcile them to it, he speaks unto them, as unto children— My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord. I do not afflict thee in hatred, but in covenant love. My design is to mortify the body of sin, and therefore, I give thee this wholesome physic. Thou hast many bad humors and corruptions, for which I have appointed this sovereign medicine. Trust my skill—believe my love—depend upon mine arm—and thou wilt infallibly find it profitable to the spirit, however painful to the flesh. Wait, and the end shall be blessed.

To this truth the prophet Isaiah bears a clear testimony. He explains the Lord's design in afflicting his people, and tells them, it was to purge them from their iniquity, to keep them from the love of sin, and to restrain the practice of it. He afflicted them in mercy; but he afflicted their enemies in justice. Hath he smitten Israel as he smote those that smote him? No; he has not. Or, is he slain according to the slaughter of them that are slain by him? No; he chastises his in love; he has appointed the measure, the time, the degree of their correction. "In measure, when it shooteth forth, thou wilt debate with it; he stayeth his rough wind in the day of his east wind; by this (moderate affliction), therefore, shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged, and this is all the fruit to take away his sin"—to keep him back from sin in general, and from the sin of idolatry in particular, as it follow; in the prophet:—"When he maketh all the stones of the altar like chalk stones that are beaten in sunder, then the groves and images shall not stand up" The altar at which they offered their idol-worship, shall be broken down, like stones burnt in pieces for lime, and the groves and images shall not stand up, but shall be broken down also. These happy effects shall be brought about by sanctified affliction—iniquity shall be purged—sin shall be restrained—idolatry shall be thrown down. And God says, this shall be ALL the fruit and end of his chastening. He tells his people of his design, that they might know their affliction would bring forth good fruit, and that they might wait patiently for the fulfilling of his promise. Blessed are all they that wait for him: they shall never be disappointed of their hope. How gracious is God in his dealings with his children! He provides the best for them, informs them of it, and, because they have a fallen nature opposite to his holy mind and will, an enemy to his glory and to their own peace, he acquaints them with his design in subduing it. He appoints affliction for this end. It is the chastening of the Lord. He promises them strength to bear it, and comfort under it. Nothing but good shall flow from it. Iniquity, their worst enemy, shall be crucified: actual sin, springing from the iniquity of their nature, shall be

mortified: the heart shall be deadened to its old idols, and as it dies to them, it shall be happier in the love of God. O blessed cross! what mercies dost thou bring with thee! Is not that blessed indeed, which, under God, produces such unspeakable mercies? Take it up then, O my soul, bear it patiently, and expect the choicest blessings of the Father's love from it. Why dost thou refuse? It is heavy. It is painful. True; but what makes it so? The burden is from thy rebel will. The pain comes from thy corruption, unwilling to be mortified. Take it up in faith, and thou wilt find strength enough to bear it, and blessings enough to make it a matter of all joy.

Lord God reconcile me to my daily cross. May thy will in it be done. Mortify sin, weaken its power, deaden its affections and lusts. Only, Lord, whatever cross thou sendest, give grace with it, that I may bear it patiently, and may wait for its promised fruit. Thou knowest what would stop me in my heavenly journey: if it be my bosom favorite, the dearest object of my love, O tear it from my heart. Thou hast given me a desire to have every rival dethroned. O come, and reign alone in me, almighty Jesus, and subdue whatever opposes thy lawful government. My Saviour and my God, make all within me feel the power of thy cross. Crucify the body of sin. Spare nothing that would hinder my walking with thee, or would deprive me of thy friendship and favors. I bless thee, I worship thee, I glorify thee, for this infinite grace, that thou hast made me willing to have all mine idols pulled down. On thee I depend every moment for keeping them down. O my loving Jesus, carry on thy work, and in thine own way subdue sin in me: let me be planted together in the likeness of thy death; that I may be also in the likeness of thy resurrection—dead to sin, but alive to God. I ask this for thy great name's sake. Let it be thy good pleasure to hear and answer. I believe thou wilt. I have thy word for it. There I rest. Amen and Amen.

With this faith review thy mercies. Consider, O my soul, what a good God has clone for thee, and what greater things he has still in store. He has, in some measure, reconciled thee to his cross. Thou art convinced it is thy Father's appointment, contrived for the best by his infinite love, and settled on thee for thy richest portion, in time—He sends it for the trial of thy faith, flint it may be found unto praise and honor and glory—for the exercise and for the improvement of thy patience—for the mortifying of the body of sin, and for the deadening of the life of sense This is the will of thy most loving and tender Father. He sends the cross to be the means of these blessings. Certainly, then, it cannot hinder thy walk with him, but in all these respects will tend to keep thee in the way, and to help thee forward in it; and thus,

Fourthly, —It will assist and promote thy holy fellowship and communion with God. This is the principal thing in religion. We fell from God by sin, and it is the greatest mercy to be brought back to him again. In this point all religions fail, but the Christian. Christ is the way. No one cometh to the Father but by him: for there is salvation in no other, he only can forgive sin: he only can justify sinners. And this way was contrived in the covenant of the Trinity, for the highest display of their divine perfections; which begin to be manifested when the Spirit of life enters into the sinner, and quickens him; when the Spirit of adoption enables him to trust in the atonement and obedience of Immanuel, and thereby to see God reconciled, and to call him, Abba, Father. With this faith in Jesus he expects from the Father's love all his promised mercies. Thus, he has fellowship with the Father and the Son, by the Holy Spirit. He stands related to the eternal Three in their covenant offices, and he receives freely in believing the covenant blessings of each.

Among these blessings the cross is not the least: for it is mercifully appointed to be the means of bringing sinners to this divine fellowship. They go on stubbornly after their own hearts, and in the error of their own ways, until the Lord sends some trouble to stop them. They look wishfully at the gilded cup of pleasure, and drink greedily of its sweets without any fear of the deadly poison mixed up with it. But when God convinces of sin, then comes sorrow: they feel the poison working in a sense of guilt and dread of punishment, which teach the want of a saviour, and are a good schoolmaster to bring them unto Christ.

So God dealt with the chief of the Old Testament; sinners—a giant in iniquity, who surpassed all that were before him in Jerusalem, for idolatry and bloodshedding. The Lord sent his prophets to warn him of his guilt, but he would not hearken, he hardened his heart, till the Lord brought upon him the captains of the host of the king of Assyria, who took Manasseh among the thorns, and bound him with fetters, and carried him to Babylon: and when he was in affliction he besought the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, and prayed unto him; and he was intreated of him, and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom: then Manasseh knew that the Lord he was God. His case was not singular. It is a common firing with the Lord to send affliction to make sin bitter, that he may lead his people to true sorrow for it, and that they may seek until they find salvation. And when they have found it, he still uses the cross to keep them near unto himself. Indeed, the cross alone has not this effect, but rather the contrary. The natural man has his fretfulness stirred up by suffering, and

cannot help murmuring at the will of God. But grace sanctifies suffering. God makes it a blessing to his children, as by it he exercises their faith in such general promises as these.

If God send great and many troubles, they shall not separate believers from him; because he will then be with them; as he spake unto Israel: "Fear not to go down into Egypt, for I will there make of thee a great nation; I will go down with thee into Egypt." It was the house of bondage, in which the taskmasters heavily afflicted his descendants with their burdens; but the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew. So, it is with the Israel of God. They need not fear any affliction: for their God has promised to be with them in it, and by it, to make them great Christians; the more they are afflicted the more shall their graces multiply and grow:—"I will be with thee in trouble, says God; I will redeem, I will save thee from all thy troubles—many are the troubles of the righteous, but I will deliver thee out of them all—yea, when thou passest through the water and through the fire, I will be with thee, and will preserve thee from all evil—I will make all these things work together for thy good." These pro-raises are a great support to faith: for God engages to be with his children in every affliction. He does not intend that any should separate them from him, but that all should keep them near to himself. He says he will be with them; they therefore expect his presence; and if their afflictions be very great, they may on good grounds wait for his time of deliverance. And as his word cannot be broken, their trust in it will be confirmed, and their hearts will be established in waiting upon the Lord. If their afflictions continue long, he is with them all the time, making them sensible of their own weakness, and putting forth his promised strength, both that they may endure, and may also persevere in enduring: thus, he improves their patience. And because they have still a carnal nature, which cannot bear the cross, God therefore keeps it upon them, in order to crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts; that as they die unto sin, they may live unto righteousness.

Such is the declared purpose of God in afflicting his children; he would hereby cherish these graces in them, by which communion with him is kept up; and as these grow, communion with him will grow in proportion. Faith will look more at the truth, and live more upon the faithfulness of God. Patience will depend more on his arm, and the less happiness the believer can find in the creature, he will seek and will find the more in his God. The mortifying of the old man will, of course, make the new man more alive: for as the power of the

cross of Christ is laid upon the former, the power of the life of Christ will be experienced in the latter.

But such is the goodness of God to his children under the cross, that he has given them several very particular and express promises, in order to strengthen their faith and patience. He has shown them what fellowship they are to expect with the eternal Three in their covenant offices: for promoting which he most mercifully provided the cross. O my soul, attend to this; carefully survey this rich contrivance of divine love, and when the cross is sent, take it up in faith, and expect to be a partaker of its covenant blessings. Remember, it is laid upon thee to promote communion with thy God and Saviour. The appointed trial comes. It is to give thee proof of the soundness of thy faith in Jesus, and to let thee see, by experience, that thou hast not believed in vain. Thou hast fled to him for refuge, from sin and guilt, from wrath and hell: he took thee into his protection, and now thy safety in him is to be attacked. It will be seen that the foundation upon which thou standest will bear thee up in an hour of temptation. If thou hast indeed fellowship with him in his glorious salvation, it will now be made manifest, to thy great profit. The cross is laid upon thee, a heavy, a bitter cross: it deprives thee of all sensible comfort, and is kept upon thee till thou hast no prospect of any. Hope in creature-comfort has failed. This is a sweet season for spiritual communion with thy Jesus. He has deadened the enjoyment of other things, that thy heart might be happier in him; therefore now thou art to bring the principles laid down in the former chapters into practice. Here is a fair opportunity to make use of them: for without them a man must sink under such a cross; but, through faith in the righteousness of thy God and Saviour, thou wilt not only have powerful arguments, but wilt also have powerful grace, to bear thy sufferings, patient under them, and thankful for them.

Under them thou wilt be tried—Is it good ground upon which I have built my hope of salvation? Is it the rock of ages? Does it bear me up safe, and keep me unshaken in this time of trouble? Yes; blessings, eternal blessings on my precious Jesus: I have fled to him for refuge, and he has set my feet upon a rock that can never be moved: Christ, my Passover, is sacrificed for me: in the blood of sprinkling I have put my trust, and I am safe from the destroyer: he is my propitiation, in whom I have redemption through faith in his blood: he is mine advocate also with the Father, standing in his presence as my surety: while the Father sees him and loves him, he will see me in him, and love me with the same love: Jesus is mine atonement with him, my righteousness, my sanctification, and my full redemption.

O thou most lovely loving Jesus, I have often been happy in the sense of mine interest in thee, but never so happy as now. This cross is sanctified indeed: for it has removed what hindered my communion with thee, and has brought me to seek thy presence, and to enjoy thy supports and thy comforts. I was foolish enough to wish it might pass from me: but this was mine infirmity. Pardon it, my sweet Jesus, and accept my unfeigned thanks for thy late mercies. Never in my life did I find the virtue of thy sacrifice in the peace of my conscience, nor had I such intimate communion with thee in thy finished salvation, as I have had under this cross. It tried me indeed, but the trial was to thy glory, and to my profit. I am now more satisfied than ever that thy salvation is infinitely perfect, and that I have my share in it: I have it indeed now; for I am a partaker of the things which accompany salvation. I am making use of them—I find their reality—I enjoy their sweetness—blessing, and thanks, and praise without ceasing, be unto thee, my adorable God and Saviour.

Is it not, O my soul, thy fervent prayer, that thou mayest live in holy friendship with Jesus? Why then dost thou fear his cross, which is his appointed way and means of improving thine intimacy with him, and likeness to him? O study the discovery of his love in the Scriptures; and take particular notice of the promises which he has made to his suffering brethren. Read, mark them, mix faith with them, that they may be fulfilled in thine experience. Remember, thou canst not suffer but by his will, to which he expects submission: he sends the cross to teach thee this lesson. It cannot hurt thee if thou dost not quarrel with it; but if thy will be resigned to his, herein thou wilt have fellowship with him; and thou wilt have reason constantly to be praying to him—Not my will, Lord, but thine be done.

Consider, for the improvement of this fellowship, that thy Lord himself was exercised with the cross. He has gone before thee, bearing it. He has taken the curse and wrath out of it, and has sanctified it to all his followers. In faith they must take it up, and in patience carry it, or they will not come to the kingdom. Certainly then, their crucified Lord will be with them: yea, he has promised: "I will be with thee in trouble"—seek his presence, O my soul, under the cross—wait for communion with him—he has said he will be with thee: expect, therefore, the light of his countenance, which is better than life.

Do not fear the cross, since it is to bring; thee such a blessing; it is to be the means of thy fellowship with Jesus, in his sensible support and heavenly comfort: take it up then. Suppose it removes all thy earthly joy: let it go. The pain of its loss is not to be compared with the joy of thy spirit. Jesus will give

thee pure holy joy; and, by his divine heart, will extract it out of pain. He afflicts that he may comfort, he takes away sensual that he may give spiritual pleasure. He removes creature-love, that he may communicate more of this happy love. In mercy he chastises. He sees there is need to mortify sin. He sends the cross for this purpose, and blesses what he sends. It works like wholesome physic. But oh! it is bitter, it is nauseous to the taste. Why do you chew it then, Swallow the pill? The benefit is not to be found in the mouth, but in the stomach. There it will purge bad humors. The sovereign Physician intends it should operate upon every evil temper which would hinder your blessed communion with him, and should be the means of exorcising those graces by which that communion is maintained and may be improved.

Such is the cross of Christ—taken up in faith, and carried in patience, it promotes daily fellowship with him; which is the greatest blessing upon earth. There is no greater in heaven—only they enjoy it by sense, and we by faith. But we have the same fellowship with them in Jesus, and the same communion with them in the graces of his salvation. And for these he makes way by his cross. He deadens the soul to the life of sense, that it may feel more of happiness in him. When he has withdrawn other joys, he often shines into the heart with joy unspeakable, tie generally vouchsafes these his love-tokens to his suffering brethren, and gives his richest cordials in their deepest distress. Each of such happy souls can say—It is good for me to suffer with Jesus. Yes, Lord; I am thy witness; thy cross is good; it; has been the means of my greatest good; for thou hast brought me by it to forsake communion with other objects, and to enjoy communion with thee in thy precious love. If thou hast been pleased to take away any of my beloved objects, thou hast, in much mercy, supplied their place with thy presence. I have found my losses my chief gain. O my Jesus, Lord God Almighty, I bless thee and adore thee for the distinguishing grace vouchsafed to me under the cross. It was entirely from thee, and the effect of thy love, that I had any patience, or any fellowship with thee in the way of suffering. It was thy doing, and I glorify thee for enabling me to maintain peace with the Father through faith in thine obedience unto death, and for satisfying me that my crosses were appointed and sent by covenant love. Thou art the giver of these blessings, and on thee I wait for the continuance of' them. Whatever thou callest upon me to suffer, order it and me, as seemeth best to thy godly wisdom; but leave me not to myself. Be always with me, my good Lord, that I may bear thy cross, and carry it patiently and profitably, thou sustaining both me and it every step of my way to heaven. Hear me, my Jesus, and answer; for without thee I can do nothing; but strengthened by thee I shall be able to bear all things, and my daily cross will

keep me in daily communion with thee to my profit and to thine eternal praise. Amen.

Thus, the cross of Christ is sanctified, and keeps up communion with him in the blessings of his salvation. So it does with the Father in his love. In the covenant, his name is expressive of his office, he is a father, who has every holy affection and feeling of love. He embraces, in the bowels of the tenderest parent, all his family—Christ the head, and all the members of his body the church. With one undivided love his heart is set upon Christ and them, and with the same bountiful hand he blesses him and them. What Christ is, they shall be. In this most gracious relation, he stands to the whole household of faith. He is their Father, who loves and accepts them, pardons, justifies, sanctifies, and blesses them with all spiritual and eternal blessings in Christ; Jesus.

It is hard to believe this under the cross. To cleave to him in love, as our Father, when his hand is lifted up to smite, yea, when we smart under his rod, then to see love in his heart, and love guiding his hand, is faith very triumphant. We are apt to look upon our sufferings as coming from the wrath of God. We think he must be displeased, or else he would not delight to put us to pain; upon this account we are not reconciled to the cross, but would shake it off, if we could. The Scripture gives us different view of this matter, and represents God in more amiable light, even in the severest chastisement of his children. He is their Father, and they are his sons. This relation cannot subsist without his chastening them. He informs them of the necessity of it; he declares to them his purpose and grace before the chastening, and he assigns the motives and ends of his proceeding, He has always the same Father's love, and is always dealing with them as with sons. His cross is one of the chief marks of it. He sends it with a message of love, and it comes to them big with mercies.

When the Father intends an abundant communication of his love, he generally makes way for it by some heavy cross; and when he would continue or increase his favors, he keeps the cross upon them. It is his appointed means of promoting fellowship with him in the graces and blessings of his fatherly love. And it answers this end, when it is received by faith, and carried by patience: for then the believer, resting on the sure foundation laid for him, in the holy life and death of Immanuel, sees the Father reconciled, and expects every promised blessing from his love. Whatever cross comes, he receives it from his loather in Jesus. He holds fast this truth—God is my God—he loves me

perfectly in his Son, and, therefore, I shall find some proof of his fatherly love in this affliction. But if his faith be weak, if he forgets, or forsake for a time his foundation, then the cross will become intolerable. Murmuring will arise. The flesh will hearken to unbelief. Fretfulness will take place, and thus God will be robbed of his glory, and the believer of his comfort.

It has pleased God, therefore, in order to strengthen his children's faith against these attacks, to give them many plain declarations of his invariable intention to do them good in all their afflictions. The Son is a witness for him, he was in the bosom of the Father, and knew all the purposes of his heart, he has given us a most delightful account of the Father's design in afflicting his children: "I am," says he to his disciples, "the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman; every branch that beareth not fruit in me, he taketh away, and every branch that beareth fruit, HE PURGETH IT, THAT IT MAY BRING FORTH MORE FRUIT." The Father looks upon all his children as one with Christ; as much united to him, and in him, as the branches are in the vine; there-fore, as a wise husbandman, he takes the special charge and care of them. Every branch that does not bear fruit in Christ—it is not as we read it, every branch in me, but every branch that does not bear fruit IN ME—whatever it may seem to be—in profession, a branch-in show, a fruitful branch, yet it has no life; it was never cut off from the old dead stock, nor grafted into me, the life-giving vine.

The husbandman knows this well. Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up. He does this in an hour of trial. Then it appears that such branches were only in appearance united to the vine; for if he had made them part of it, he would, no doubt, have continued them in it; but he took them away, that they might be manifest that they were not one with the vine. This is a great part of the vine-dresser's business; he suffers no rotten branches upon his vine. He goes over his charge, and attends to every branch. If any seem to men, or to themselves, to be in the vine,—for hypocrites are great self-deceivers, and the self-righteous love to be deceived, and proud nature is fond of growing into Christ by something of its own,—the vine-dresser, in due time, discovers their mistake, and manifests to the world that they were not branches of his grafting: for he taketh them away: but every branch, says Christ, that beareth fruit by its communion with me, he purgeth: by his divine husbandry, he removes everything which would stop its growth and hinder its fruitfulness. The branches of the vine are so weak that they always want a prop—he supports them. They often run very luxuriant—he cuts them with his pruning-knife. They have many bad humors and juices in them—

those he corrects. He purges every noxious quality, and whatever is contrary to the holy nature of the heavenly vine he subdues. Most merciful is his purpose herein. He would have the branches of his own grafting to be lively and flourishing, like the stock upon which they grow. I am the vine, says Christ, ye are the branches. God's husbandry is to make the branches like the vine; therefore, he purgeth them, in order that they may bring forth much fruit.

And is this his design? Does he afflict them entirely for their good? Does he send every trial and trouble to purge their corruptions, and to quicken their graces? as the Lord Jesus given us such a pleasing view of his Father's love, assuring us that all crosses are sent by him, to make us more lively and more fruitful? Since this is the ease, what great reason hast thou, O my soul, to expect these blessings from the cross! Here is a promise for thy faith to rest on—a promise which discovers the heart of thy Father, and his abundant love in afflicting thee. He would have thee not only to believe in his love, but also to enjoy it. He afflicts thee; but it is in order to thy keeping up communion with him under the cross; and he knows it is the best means of keeping it up, and of promoting it. O seek then, by faith, for the promised fruit. Expect in patience the rich harvest. And that thou mayest quietly submit to the Father's will in purging thee, as a branch, observe how exactly the apostle Paul agrees with his blessed Master: "Furthermore, we have had Fathers of our flesh, who corrected us, and we gave them reverence; shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily, for a few days, corrected us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be **PARTAKERS OF HIS HOLINESS.**"

There is a reverence due to earthly parents, and children are required to submit to their correction, although herein they often consult their own will and pleasure more than their children's profit. And is not greater reverence due to the Father of our spirits, and shall not we submit to his corrections? Especially since his design in them is to promote the greatest dignity and highest happiness of his children, even to make them partakers of his holiness; for to partake is not only to give them a title to, but also to give them possession of, to communicate, to have fellowship with him, to share with him in his holiness. Holiness is the Father's image in his children, by which he makes them like him, and capable of enjoying him. He chose them in Christ before the foundation of the world, that they should be holy. He chose them in Christ, and made Christ their sanctification. In him they partake, as branches in the vine, of his holy nature. They are one with him in righteousness and true holiness, He is the divine root from which all the branches, by the influence

of the Holy Spirit, derive their nourishment and growth. From him is their fruit found. And the heavenly husbandman purposing to make the branches very fruitful, has provided effectual means. Among which the chief is his fatherly correction.

This he sends to all his children, and in the tenderest love. He would have them to bring forth much fruit, that herein he may be glorified; holy fruit, produced by his care and culture, and ripened by daily communications of his grace. Therefore, he appoints many heavy trials and crosses, by which he designs to bring them not only to believe in his love, but also to a growing enjoyment of it. He would communicate to them an increase of its blessings, tie would have them nearer to himself, and more like to himself; holy as he is holy, not in degree, but in likeness. He would teach them more submission to his will, for which he wisely and mercifully suits the cross. He would improve their love to him, which he does by manifesting his to them: therefore, he sends his cross to deaden their hearts to other love, that he may give them a happier sense of his. And his children have found suffering times blessed times. They never had such nearness to their Father, such holy freedom with him, and such heavenly refreshments from him as under the cross. It only took away what stopped the increase of this happiness, which thereby was made more spiritual and exalted. The cross thus sanctified is the greatest blessing on this side of heaven, because by it the Father keeps his children in the closest communion that they have with him upon earth; by it he purges them, makes them fruitful, and partakers of his holiness; by it he crucifies the life of sense, deadens them to the world, mortifies their lusts and passions; and by it, as the outward man perisheth, the inward man is renewed day by day. Most blessed renewal! Daily the Father communicates, and by means of the cross, new life, new strength, and new comfort to the inward man. By the right spirit renewed within him, he learns the necessity of the daily cross; he sees the merciful appointment of it to teach resignation to the Father's holy will, to work a conformity to the first-born among many brethren, both in suffering and by suffering, to bring in sensible experience of the Father's support and comfort. What blessings are these! How great! How precious! to be branches in the vine, and to have the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ the husbandman, who grafts them into him—O what an infinite mercy is this And to be under his special care, faithfully watched over in order to remove everything hurtful, and to bestow everything useful, tiffs love passeth understanding. And to have this love to feast upon in the absence of other comforts, to have them taken away only to make room for this, to enjoy this most plentifully, even under

troubles and afflictions, and to be only purged by them in order to bring forth much fruit, these are triumphs of divine love.

O my God and Father, I confess and deplore my frequent mistaking thy dealings with me. I did not see they were all in love. Through mine ignorance and self-will, I thought thy cross was a punishment, and I used wickedly to despise the chastening of the Lord. Pardon thy servant concerning this thing. Forgive mine opposition to thy cross, and subdue mine impatient desire to shake it off. Holy Father, mortify my will, and make it bow to thine. Thy will be done in me and by me. Purge me, and make me fruitful under the cross. Chasten me, that I may be a partaker of thy holiness. I bless thee, O my God, for the desire which I have to keep up communion with thee in my sufferings: I believe thou art my perfectly reconciled Father in Jesus, and therefore, trusting to thy love in him, I would take up thy cross, and expect under it thy covenant blessings. Yes, Lord, this is of grace. Thine be the praise for showing me the need of suffering, and of renewing me by it in the inward man to a conformity to thy holy will. I now see thy love herein. It is as much love to crucify the outward man, as to renew the inward man. I believe it in my judgment; O blessed God, let me experience it in my heart and walk. Order all my crosses, that they may work together under thee, for thy glory and for my good: and if afflictions abound, let consolations abound also. I have thy promise, and I rely upon it. Let it be fulfilled unto thy servant for thy dear Son's sake. Amen and Amen.

I have thy promise, and I rely upon it. Let it be fulfilled unto thy servant for thy dear Son's sake. Amen and Amen. This blessed communion with the Father and the Son, which the sanctified use of the cross is made the means of promoting, is maintained by the Holy Spirit; he is a person the Godhead co-equal and co-eternal with the Father and with the Son. It is his office to apply and to make effectual all covenant blessings. Faith in the Son, and through him, love to the Father, are from his influence. He is the lord and giver of all spiritual life, and of every spiritual enjoyment; for so the apostle teaches in his prayer for the Corinthians:—"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God the Father, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all." This communion of the Holy Ghost consisted in partaking by his means with the Lord Jesus Christ in his grace, and with the Father in his love. The Holy Ghost made the application, he quickened the soul, and inspired the breath of life into it, and on him it depends for every spiritual act, as much as the life of the body does on its breathing.

Whoever steadfastly believes in Jesus under the cross, and experiences under it the Father's love, has this fellowship with the Father and the Son, by the operation of the Holy Spirit. Therefore that sweet grace which bears up with faith in Jesus, and with patience under the Father's rod, is said to be from him:—"The fruit of the Spirit is long-suffering;" he enables the soul to wait quietly; and if the time be long, and the suffering hard, he gives long patience. He does not take away the sense of pain, but he bestows strength to bear it, and by it he produces a plentiful harvest of graces and blessings. Thus, he teaches us himself: "Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness unto them who are exercised thereby."

These are the fruits of the Spirit: they are all of his producing, and they are fruits of righteousness, which none can produce but those who are one with Christ, and in him righteous before God. Although sense cannot perceive how they should grow or ripen upon the cross of Christ, yet faith can. The promise is sure; and waiting faith, exercised with suffering, finds many promised fruits. O my soul, consider this precious 'Scripture, and with close attention. Study it. Treasure it up in thy heart. It contains a rich cordial for the afflicted. Observe, there is love in sending the cross, love to be manifested by it, and heavenly fruits of love to grow upon it. Why then is suffering so hard? Why art thou so little profited by it? Is it not generally barren, because thou art not looking to the word of promise, and depending upon the Holy Spirit to give thee the promised fruit? Ask thyself therefore, especially in the hour of suffering, Am I now expecting the communion of the Holy Ghost, that by his grace I may partake with the Son in his salvation, and with the Father in his love? Is this my present experience? There is no bearing the cross without it. Art thou then, O my soul, trusting to him for this happy fellowship, and hoping that as thou art a branch in the vine, and the husbandman is now purging thee, thou mayest bring forth much fruit?

And observe what kind of fruit it is. All the effects of being in union with Christ, and of having communion with him, are called fruits of righteousness. Christ is the vine. The branch must be one with him before it can live and grow—one with him in his life and death—a partaker of his divine righteousness—and then the branch abiding in him by the influence of the Holy Spirit will be made fruitful in love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness, and truth. He brings forth all the fruit that is to the glory of God—And it is all peaceable fruit: for it is produced by him in

consequence of covenant; love, by which the Father is revealed as the God of peace, and the Son as the great peacemaker: and when the Holy Spirit enables the poor sinner to believe this, then he gives him joy and peace in believing—being justified by faith, he has peace with God through Jesus Christ. The cross soon comes after this—not to destroy, but to try this faith—not to take away, but to confirm this peace—it is sent to give proof of the soundness of faith, and to manifest the sweetness of divine love: for it comes from the God of peace, and all the fruits which he intends to produce by it are peaceable, such as should increase the happy sense of peace in the minds of his children. And for this purpose, the Holy Spirit abides with them. He has revealed the Father's love in Scripture, and he is a faithful witness of it to their hearts. He sheds it abroad, and satisfies them of it. Yea, he gives them sensible experience and enjoyment of it under the cross. This produces a quiet submission to his will, and an humble dependence upon his power; which are manifested by waiting upon God in all ways and means for the grace promised to his afflicted children.

The cross requires great grace, and therefore calls forth much prayer. Suffering times are praying times. The cross brings sinners upon their knees—Manasseh in affliction entreated the Lord—so did Paul—Behold, he prayeth. It keeps believers upon their knees, as the prophet witnesses: "Lord, in trouble have they visited thee, they poured out a prayer when thy chastening was upon them." The Lord himself declares the same: "I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my thee; in their affliction they will seek me early." Accordingly they did seek him: "Come," say they, "and let us return unto the Lord: for he hath torn and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up," O blessed fruit of affliction! when sanctified by the Spirit it teaches the children of God to pray fervently, and to continue instant in prayer: it discovers the weakness of the flesh, and the rebellion of the will; and shows the necessity of drawing near to God for strength and patience. It keeps the mind in a praying frame, expecting, by the grace of the Spirit, communion with the Father and the Son. The cross makes this communion necessary. It cannot be endured without a belief of the Father's love in Jesus, and therefore the Spirit of prayer keeps this belief in exercise, and enables the soul to plead the promise of strength, to endure patiently, and to bring forth much fruit. The promise cannot fail. They who trust in it cannot be disappointed, but shall find grace to help in time of need.

As prayer is thus necessary, so the Holy Spirit generally makes it sweet under the cross. Is any afflicted among you? Let him pray. Prayer is the appointed

means of his comfort. If affliction send him to God, God will meet him, and make him joyful in his house of prayer. How encouraging are these words: – "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you." In every case of distress, draw nigh in faith to God; he is a very present help. Seek his time, and you will find him near unto you: for the Lord is nigh unto all that call upon him; nigh to hear, to answer, and to comfort. Thus his promise runs: "Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer, thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am." What is your burden? I am present to give strength to bear it. What is your grief? Here are my comforts. Do your tribulations abound? Here are my consolations abounding also. Here I am. Ask what you will, believing, and it shall be done unto you. O what times of refreshing are these? The Holy Ghost sensibly comforts the afflicted. When they draw nigh to God, he is present to make their hearts joyful, he dispels their darkness with the light of his countenance, and turns their mourning into joy. And thus they have not only communion with God in prayer, but also such communications of his heavenly love that they can often say, It is good for us that we have been in trouble.

In time of trouble, the WORD also is generally sweet. All people in distress look out for some comfort: and the Holy Spirit directs believers to the Scriptures. "Whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning, that we, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope." The afflicted feel their want of patience and comfort, which puts them upon careful hearing and reading of the good word of God. They want to know what it says of their case; and when they meet a suitable promise, then they have a ground of hope. Their present trials require them to seek for something more than the truth of the promise. This being credited, they therefore expect the promised blessing. When the famine was in Canaan, Jacob and his family could not have been kept alive by believing that there was corn in Egypt: they must either fetch it or die. Trouble calls for the experience of the promised blessings, and when they are received at such a time, they are sweet indeed. They feel as ease does after pain. When the Holy Spirit applies the comfort, the promise, by which he applies it, is precious. It is like a reviving cordial to a fainting heart. O how sweet are thy words unto my taste, yea, sweeter than honey unto my mouth. Honey is sweet, but the word is sweeter. When, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, the afflicted believer enjoys the good of the promise, then he can say—Now I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, mad that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me: let, I pray thee, thy merciful kindness be for my comfort, according to thy word unto thy servant.

Sweet is the comfort which the afflicted receive from God the comforter, under the cross, not only in suffering, but also after it. AFTERWARD also "it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness." He who carries the cross of Christ does not labour in vain, and spend his strength for naught; but he is bearing forth good seed. If he sow it in tears, yet he shall reap in joy. The Lord looks at the fruit, and intends to bring forth much of it by the cross: we are apt to look at the suffering and to forget the fruit. He has the end in view in the use of all means; and the Holy Spirit has revealed this clearly, that we might depend upon him for receiving the proper fruit of affliction. The Lord says he led his people through the great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery flying serpents and scorpions, and drought, that he might humble them, and that he might prove them, to do them good at the latter end. He intended to do them good: this was first in his heart. Then the way in which he would do it: he would lead them through many a affliction, by which they should find, at the latter end, how good God was to them. The promise of this was their encouragement to bear the cross, till they reaped the fruit. In like manner the Lord says to the afflicted Jews, "I know the thoughts that I think towards you," saith the Lord; "thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end"—such an end as you would wish, and, having my promise, such as you may safely hope for. My thoughts, indeed, are not as your thoughts; you think I have cast you off, and that your present cross is to crush you: no, I mean to do you good by it, and so the end will prove; wait a little in faith, and all will come to a happy issue.

Are these scriptures the truth of God? Has the eternal Spirit promised in them, that although the bearing of the cross be very painful, yet it is very profitable? Will he afterwards cause them to bring forth much fruit, who have been exercised with it? Art thou then waiting, O my soul, under all thy troubles for the promised end. Dost, thou expect it, and in patience tarry the Lord's leisure? Canst thou look back and see how merciful the dealings of thy God have been—how gracious his rod, how loving his correction? Canst thou look forward under every cross, persuaded that God will do thee good at the latter end? That he will cause many peaceable fruits to grow upon this seemingly barren tree? Yea, that these light afflictions, which are but for a moment, shall work for thee an eternal weigh of glory, far more excellent than can be conceived?

O God the Holy Ghost, I do believe it: I would not doubt of the truth of the promise in thy word, nor of the truth of thy grace in my heart: I therefore beseech thee, O thou Spirit Jehovah, to enable me to keep up communion with thee in all my trials, that I may bring forth those peaceable fruits of

righteousness. Thou art the giver of every grace. I acknowledge thee to be the author of my spiritual life: I was dead in trespasses and sins, and, thou, hast quickened me. It is of thy mere gift I have any faith, and that upon the trial it was found to be true faith: I bless thee for this grace, and humbly pray for the continuance and for the increase of it. Meet me in the use of all means, and enable me to grow in faith, rooted and grounded in Christ Jesus, that I may also grow in love to his Father and to my Father. O thou divine revealer of his heavenly love, shed it abroad more abundantly in my heart, that I may learn more resignation to his will, more subjection to his authority, and more submission to his rod. I acknowledge thee, O holy-making Spirit, to be the teacher of patience, and what I have learned was thy revelation. It was in thy strength that I was enabled to go on with any quietness bearing my cross. Thy grace made me willing, and nothing else can keep me willing, to have the flesh crucified with its affections and lusts. O God put forth thine almighty power, and enable me to part with everything which would hinder my fellowship with the Father and the Son. I desire so to walk this day, as to have growing fellowship with the eternal Three; and I desire it through thine influence. O God the Holy Ghost carry on thy work. Exalt and purify my faith and patience and every grace; if it be thy will to do this under the cross, O make me willing and able to bear it. Let every cross bring forth richer and riper fruit, until thou give me an exceeding great and eternal harvest of glory. I ask this in the name of Jesus, and I expect an answer of grace through the Father's love in him; to whom with thee, O blessed Spirit, three persons in one Godhead, be equal glory, worship, and praise, now and forever. Amen.

Meditate, O my soul, with seriousness upon this great subject. Study the scripture account of the cross. The knowledge of it enters into the very essence of the peace and comfort of thy walk. Thou canst not run away from the cross; thou canst not cast it off: remember, if thou wilt be Christ's disciple, thou must take it up daily and follow him. If it be very heavy and very grievous, yet it will not hinder thee from following him. He carried the heaviest part for thee; he endured the curse and punishment due to thy sins; he left no wrath for thee to suffer. Blessed be his love, the cross has no curse in it now; thy sufferings are all sent from love, and his love will help thee to bear them, and to profit by them; for he has promised to bless and sanctify them to his people. And he makes them a blessing indeed. Never, on this side of heaven, does he give them such near and happy communion with himself as under the cross.

O read, then, and study what is revealed in Scripture concerning it. Go over it again and again. Learn well, and inwardly digest the doctrine of the cross of

Christ—the necessity, the benefit, the blessings of it. Meditate and feed upon the sweet promises relating to it; mix faith with them, that they may nourish and strengthen thee in time of need. But never forget that thy cross, be it what it will, is appointed for thee in covenant love: it is the portion allotted thee by thy heavenly Father—decreed, in weight and measure, to an atom—thou shalt not bear it one moment longer than he has determined; and many precious fruits it shall produce. Thou wilt; find suffering times growing times—growth in faith and patience, in mortification to sin, and in fellowship with the ever-blessed Trinity. The author of thy faith puts it to the trial: it comes out of the lions' den unhurt; it; comes out of the fiery furnace refined. God is glorified hereby, and thou art strengthened. He sends the cross to teach thee patience; and he continues it for the exercise and for the improvement of rite same grace. He intends by his chastening to crucify the flesh, and to mortify thy members which are upon the earth. In love he takes away sensual, that he may give thee spiritual joys. He does not hate thee, but love guides every stroke of his chastening. He is only weakening thine attachment to earthly things, that he may increase thy communion with Father, Son, and Spirit. O what blessings are these! Meditate, O my, soul, much and often upon them. Pray for the experience of them in time of need; and be assured, with all these helps, the cross will be exercised hard enough for thy patience. Thou canst carry it only in the strength of almighty grace. May the Lord strengthen thee from day to day to run the race set before thee, till thou win the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

THE WALK OF FAITH CHAPTER X.

THE BELIEVER, EXERCISED WITH THE INWARD CROSS, LEARNS TO WALK MORE HUMBLY WITH HIS GOD.

THE outward cross is not always a burden alike heavy. God gives his children a little respite. After they have been long tried, he sometimes removes their trouble, and gives them ease and outward prosperity. Their sun arises as it does in nature. After many cold and dark days, a fine season comes—finer for coming after them. The sky grows clear and serene, the air is soft and refreshing, the sun shines with warm and enlivening rays. Everything looks pleasant and smiles around you. So it is in the kingdom of grace. The believer may not be always in heaviness through manifold afflictions: he has his times

of refreshing from the presence of the Lord. He prospers, and is in health. The blessing of God is upon his substance: everything that he takes in hand succeeds, he is happy in his circumstances, and happy in his family. He sees the goodness of God in these mercies, and he is thankful. But in the heavenly Father sometimes indulge his children with the removal of the outward cross, yet he never does with the inward. They carry it all their days; and a heavy burden it is. So long as they are in this body, while they are in this tabernacle, they do groan, being burdened: for,

The INWARD CROSS is the fault and corruption of sinful nature, which doth remain in the regenerate, and is their continual grief and plague; because it is always opposing their holy and happy walk with God. It is called in Scripture,

THE FLESH, the whole man being carnal and full of lusting against the Spirit.

The OLD MAN, being the first in us before the new man is created by the Spirit of regeneration.

A BODY OF SIN, made up completely of members and appetites, in which there is not only an absence of all good, but also a propensity to all evil, insomuch that nothing can move or stir in this body but what is sinful.

THE LAW OF SIN, because sin rules and governs the natural man.

INDWELLING SIN, because it dwells in the whole man, both in soul and body.

CONCUPISCENCE, or LUST, which the apostle says he should not have known to be sin, unless the law had said, Thou shalt not covet, or lust.

This fallen nature is also said to be corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; to be contrary to the Spirit; to rebel against the law of God; and not to be subject to it, neither indeed can be. This corruption of nature doth remain, according to our reformers, Art. 9: "Yea, in them that are regenerated, whereby the lust of the flesh, called in the Greek *πρωνεμα σαρκος*, which some do expound, the wisdom; some, sensuality; some, the affection; some, the desire of the flesh, is not, subject to the law of God; and although there is no condemnation for them that believe and are baptized, yet the apostle doth confess that concupiscence anti lust hath of itself the nature of sin." And in the 15th Art.— "Of Christ alone without sin," they say, "that all we, the rest, although

baptized and born again in Christ, yet offend in many things; and if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."

The compilers of our Articles were holy men, and taught of God. They spake his mind and will according to the oracles of truth. And it will be a great comfort to a poor soldier, wearied with fighting against those lusts which war against the soul, to find that the best Christians, in every age, have been engaged in the same holy war. This will mightily encourage him to take to him the whole armour of God, that he may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all to stand.

Attend, then, O my soul, to the law and to the testimony. Pray for the Spirit of wisdom and revelation. Desire grace to submit to the truth of God, that whatever he teaches plainly and expressly in his word, thou mayest believe it and abide by it. Read and pray till thou art satisfied, and the conviction of thy mind influence thy heart and walk. Art thou to carry the inward cross all the way to heaven. Is there no discharge in this war? No truce to be made, not even a cessation of arms. But art thou to be fighting on the good fight of faith, till the Captain of thy salvation take thee out of the field of battle?

O hard service! To be night and day, at home and abroad, in the closet and in the church, at hearing the word and meditating upon it, fasting and praying, at the shop and at the exchange, everywhere and at all times forced to be in arms against the assaults of indwelling sin: this is a warfare terrible indeed to flesh and blood. The length of it—never ended so long as breath is in the body. The painfulness of it—consisting in being, at war with a man's self; and in resisting his bosom sins and strongest appetites. —What discouragements are these from entering into, and from continuing in, this battle! Why should it be wondered, then, that some persons, who only follow the camp, and are not of it, should repent when they see this war, and return to Egypt? Or that others, pretending to be on Christ's side, but never one with him, should dream of shaking off this cross, and of sitting down here in a land of perfect peace? This is the coward's paradise. They want to rest quiet on this side of Jordan, and would not go over with Jesus to fight for the promised land.

O, dear Saviour, keep thy noble army from this delusion of Satan; so long as they are in the body of sin and death, make them good soldiers of Christ Jesus, resisting unto blood, striving against sin. For so long must we be in this hot battle. It is decreed by the sovereign will of God, and he is always of one mind. He has revealed it in his word of truth, that the corruption of nature doth

remain in his regenerate children; they have an old man and a new, they have flesh and spirit, they have nature and grace, and he has described the combat, which is to last through life between these two. The beloved apostle bears a clear testimony. He is speaking of those whom the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin, and who had fellowship with the Father and with the Son, and who proved the truth of this by their walking in the light; he puts himself among them, and declares—"If we say that we have no sin now, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."

If WE say: he saith not if thou say, as if he spake of some particular person; nor if ye say, as if he intended ordinary Christians alone. But if WE, apostles, or whatever we be, say so; if any of us—if I, for instance, should think I had no sin now, who am a saint of a hundred years old; because I was a great favorite of the Lord Christ, and have been a great sufferer for him; or because I have lived blameless before men, and have been a witness for the truth in my writings, and am ready to seal it with my blood; if upon account of anything done by me, or in me, of any real excellency or attainment, I should fancy myself in a state of sinless perfection, the Holy Ghost charges me with self-deceit, is dreadful delusion, arising from the pride of my heart, and its rebellion against God, and discovering the most gross ignorance of God's righteousness in the holy law, and of Christ's righteousness in the glorious gospel: but if I was to say as well as to think it; if I should tell any-body—Now I have no sin, I am perfect; now, at this time, I have received perfect purity of heart: for ever since I received it I have had nothing stirring in me for one year, for two, twenty, forty years, but love, pure love to God; God is in all my thoughts, and nothing but God—I do his will on earth as it is done in heaven: if I should say so, I should tell a great lie—for I should deceive myself and the truth would not be in me.

Are these indeed the very words of the apostle: "If we say that we have no sin now, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us?" (Jan no other sense be fairly put upon them, but that the holy John had sin in him at every given moment of his life. Is this the plain literal meaning of the passage? As it certainly is, observe, then, O my soul, the decisive evidence given here by the Holy Ghost concerning the inward cross. Pray for his teaching, that thou mayest understand, and pray for his grace, that thou mayest profit from this scripture. Here is his infallible record concerning St. John, and all highly-favored believers; he asserts that there was no time of their lives in which they were free from indwelling sin: God forbid, then, that I should think I have no sin. He avers, that if they should say they had none, they were deceived; and

that if they should stand to it, as Popish mystics and Protestant perfectionists do, the searcher of hearts declares that they lie, and do not the truth—the truth is net in them; for the father of lies has flattered them, and drawn them into self-idolatry, with a wicked design to corrupt their minds from the simplicity that is in Christ.

Beware, O my soul, of this deceit: the Holy Ghost has warned thee of it. He foresaw how the first sin would break out in after-times, and pride would persuade men that they were perfect in the flesh; he, therefore, so guarded this scripture that none can mistake it but such as turn away their ears from the truth. He put, all the words in the present tense, lest any should think he was speaking of time past, or of what men were before the blood of Christ had cleansed them. If we NOW SAY—WE, who now have fellowship with the blessed Trinity, and are walking in the light of their countenance—say that WE HAVE NO SIN, nor had none formerly; he is not speaking of that: if he was—the Holy Ghost understands grammar; and can make no mistake in expressing himself—he would certainly have used the past tense; but he uses the present,—NOW HAVE NO SIN, so as not to want the cleansing blood of Jesus this moment as much as ever: if we have any such thoughts, WE NOW DECEIVE OURSELVES, AND THE TRUTH IS NOT NOW IN US.

How forcible and strong is this testimony from the mouth of John; and the sense, as well as the grammar, shows that he is speaking of believers, and that there is sin in them: for throughout the chapter he treats of the very same persons, and describes, not what they were before, but what they are since they received the grace of God. They were cleansed from all sin by the blood of the Lamb; were admitted into communion with the Father and the Son by the Spirit; and they enjoyed this communion, walking in the light, as God is in the light—these are the persons here mentioned—of whom God says they had sin still in them, indwelling sin—the fault and corruption of nature still remained in them; and if they fancied it did not, they would be sadly deceived—they would entirely mistake the covenant of grace, which was to bring sinners sensible of their wants and miseries, to live out of themselves upon the fulness of the God-man—they would forget their own character, under which alone they can be saved, salvation being only for sinners—they would fall into the crime of the devil, by pride exalting themselves against the person and work of the incarnate God—and they would quite pervert the law and the gospel; for, in order to maintain their inherent perfection, they are forced to legalize the gospel, and to make it consist of certain terms and conditions, upon the performance of which sinners shall be saved; and then in order to comfort

themselves with their having performed these terms and conditions, they are forced to turn rank Antinomians: they lessen the evil of sin, they excuse it in themselves, and maim just nothing of it. They call it by several pretty soft names, such as infirmity, frailty, excrescence, and at last they get quite rid of it, by laying it upon the devil, and by terming it an injection of old Satan. And thus they deceive themselves into perfection, and insist upon it that they have no sin, although they have enough in them to damn the whole World O God, open the eyes of these self-deceivers, and bring them into the way of truth.

Such is the clear evidence of the Holy Spirit: he asserts that the greatest believers, while in the body, have sin in them. Dost, thou yield, O my soul, to his testimony. Art thou fully convinced of it from the work of his grace, as well as from the word of his truth. Dost, thou feel indwelling sin? Is it the plague of thy heart, and the burden of thy life? When thou art willing to walk humbly with thy God, is it continually in thy way, raising objections, putting difficulties, and suggesting hinderance? Is it like a heavy weight pressing thee down in thy race, that thou canst not run so long or so fast as thou couldst wish? Since this is indeed thy daily cross, and the bearing of it the hardest part of thy wartime, O read with diligence the Scripture account of it. Take notice of the Lord's champions, how they felt under this burden, from whence they derived strength to bear it, and had comfort under it. Hear the man after God's own heart crying out—"Mine iniquities are gone over my head as a heavy burden; they are too heavy for me." David had a heavy load: he was ready to sink, and he could not cast it off. He could not go into his closet, or to the house of God; he could not sit upon his throne, or go in and out before his family, but this grievous cross so bowed him down greatly, that he went mourning all the day long. The burden of it was intolerable, and would have crushed him under it, if he had not learned how to cast it on the Lord. "Make haste," says he, "to help me, O Lord God of my salvation." Here he found relief. The prayer of faith was heard, and God was the strength of his salvation.

Under the same burden a New Testament saint went; groaning all his days. He had a hard conflict between the flesh and the spirit, and he has left the account of it upon record. Blessed be God for the seventh chapter of the Romans. We there read of the inward cross, with which all the children of God are exercised. In the very same Paul there was delight in the law of God after the inward man; but he found another law in his members, rebelling against the law of God—the flesh, in which dwelleth no good thing, never ceased to assault the spirit with its vile thoughts, legal workings, and rebellious inclinations; when he had a will to do good, he could not do it so perfectly as

he desired—his best moments were never free from the inroads of indwelling sin: therefore, in the bitterness of his soul, he cried out—"O wretched man that I am!" O! that sigh came from the bottom of his heart. I know what he felt—he groaned, being burdened; weary and tired with this continual conflict, he looked out for deliverance: "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" He saw, by faith, his Almighty Saviour, and in him expected everlasting victory: "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." He rested upon Christ in the battle, and through him waited for deliverance, knowing that one day he should be made more than conqueror.

Well, then, O my soul, here is comfort. If the corruption of nature be thy cross, so it was to David, and so it was to Paul. Thy case is not singular. It is common to every soldier who is fighting under the banner of Christ. This cross is unavoidable, because it is in thy bosom. It is thine inmost self—thy whole nature, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts. Thou hast not an atom of thy body, nor the least motion or stirring of any faculty in thy soul, but sin is in it; and therefore, it is capable of being a plague to the new man. The Holy Ghost speaks thus of the inward warfare:—"This I say, then; walk in the spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh: for the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." These words are addressed to the Galatians, who were believers, and called into the liberty of the gospel, but by false teaching they were under a great temptation. They had begun in the spirit, but they thought of being perfected in the flesh. They set out with salvation by faith, but expected salvation, at last, by works. Among other arguments to convince them of their mistake, here is one unanswerable, namely: No works of ours can save a sinner, but such as are perfect; no works of ours are perfect: therefore, they cannot save a sinner. And that none of them are perfect is certain, because in every one of them there is something of the flesh, of corrupt nature, as well as something of the spirit and of a spiritual nature. These two are contrary as life and death, and they are always in action, every moment the one lusting against the other: so that no believer can do the things which he would, so perfectly as the holy law requires. How grievous must this inward cross be to a real believer! For it consists in the opposition which he finds within him, to God and to the things of God. The flesh ever lusteth against the spirit—the old man against the new. There is a continual war between these contrary powers. The flesh is a complete body of sin, armed with every member and instrument of rebellion that can resist the motions and actions of the new man. There is darkness in the understanding always, clouding the light of the glorious gospel; and therefore, we know but in part.

The will of the flesh always opposes the holy will of God. There is enmity in the heart, working against the love of God and of his will. There is pride to weaken humility, anger to oppose meekness, the carnal mind to fight against; spiritual-mindedness. When the spirit is willing, the flesh is weak. When you draw near to God in prayer, the imagination will not be confined: it will wander after a thousand vain objects. When you are hearing the word, it will disturb your attention with its unaccountable excursions. It is so sportive and flighty that you cannot; keep it within any bounds.

Is it not so, O my soul? Art thou not sensible of this heavy cross? Dost thou not find something in thee always resisting and weakening the exercise of thy graces? –and is not this the great plague of thy life? Can there be a greater, than to carry about with thee a sinful nature, daily trying to hinder thee in thy holy walk and happy communion with God? O how much does it concern thee, then, to be well skilled in bearing this cross, and in behaving under it as a good soldier of Christ Jesus! And to this end the principles before laid down are absolutely necessary. Without them thou canst not rightly understand the nature of indwelling sin, and canst not possibly gain victory over it. Only the doctrines of grace received into thy heart can enable thee to walk with God under this cross.

Call to mind, then, what was agreed upon in the covenant of the Trinity, and was fulfilled in the person and work of Immanuel, for thy peace with the Father, and for thy returning to him in love, and has been applied to thee by the Holy Spirit, who has given thee faith in Jesus, and has manifested the love of the Father in him: thou art therefore now one with thy covenant-head—in him complete and perfect, although thou art in thyself still a sinner. Thou hast a body of sin, through the lusting of which thou art not able to keep the holy law according to its full demands, in any one instance. But thou art before the Father what thy surety is. He sees thee in him, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing –accepted as he is–beloved with the same love–looked upon with the same joy, and blessed with all spiritual blessings in him. Thy surety lived for thee; thou hast the righteousness of God for thy justification. Thy surety died for thee; in him thou art as truly dead unto sin, as Christ himself is. Thy surety rose again, and took possession of spiritual and eternal life for thee. He was delivered for thine offences, and raised again for thy justification. Thou shalt reign with him, as certainly as he has now the crown upon his own head. Such is the perfect salvation, which is for thee, although thou art still the subject of sin; for thy pardon is without exception or reserve—all trespasses are freely forgiven. Thy justification to life is absolute; for it is God himself

that justifieth. He chose thee in Jesus, that thou shouldst be holy and without blame before him; and so thou art. As a member of his body, thou art without blemish.

Here is thy relief under the inward cross. The Father chose thee in his Son, looks upon thee in him, and deals with thee according to covenant love; there is, therefore, now no condemnation to thee, who art in Christ Jesus. With the sweet sense of this upon thy conscience, persuaded that God is at peace with thee, take up the inward cross. In this delightful view see the curse removed. Thou hast no reason to fear wrath, or death, or hell. Victory over all sins and enemies is certain. Daily, eternal victory is promised. In tiffs faith follow the noble army who carried this cross to their graves. Fight; as they did, looking unto Jesus. Sin is in thee; it was in them; but they looked upon it as a vanquished foe, slain and put to death, when Jesus died for sin once. Likewise reckon thou also thyself to be in him dead unto sin—freed from the condemning sentence of the law—freed from the dreadful stroke of justice by his death—freed as truly as he is—and, therefore, thou art no more liable than he is to be condemned and punished. And for the strengthening of this faith, seek for fellowship with him in his death. It is thy privilege, as thou art planted in the likeness of his death, to derive power and efficacy from it daily to put sin to death. The more steadfastly thou believest that thou art one with him in his death, the more wilt thou find thy sinful nature crucified with him. Communion is always according to the faith of union with Christ. The strongest faith must have the strongest hold of him, and thereby draw the most virtue from him.

It is true, as our faith increases, we become more spiritual; and we see corruption more, as we see motes in the sunbeams. The senses of the new man, by exercise, gain a quicker perception of sin; we become all over tender as the eye, jealous of the motions, yea, of the appearance of evil. This is real growth. Sin is more felt, in order that the power of Jesus may be put forth to make us hate it, resist it, and overcome it more. As believers are more sensible of their sinfulness in the first Adam, so they grow up into the second Adam, the Lord from heaven; they bear the cross of the corruption of the first, which leads them to constant fellowship with the second—in his death, for the pardon of their corruption—in the power of his death, to mortify sin, that it may not have dominion over them.

Corruption is in thee, and it will strive for dominion. Thy sins will sometimes fiercely assault. Their allies, the world, the devil, will join them with

stratagems and force; when the battle is hot, and thou art weak, then it behooves thee to live by faith upon Jesus as thy surety, now acting for thee in heaven, as he acted for thee upon earth. He is gone up, as thy high priest, to carry thy name within the yeti. He bears it upon the ephod on his shoulders, and upon the breastplate on his heart; his power and his love are engaged for thee, now he is in glory, he stands in the presence of God, as thy representative. The Father sees thee in him, and thou art in his sight what thy forerunner is. As he stands there, so dost thou stand, righteous as he is righteous, holy as he is holy, beloved as he is beloved, and shalt be blessed as he is blessed. View, by faith, thy nature in him, exalted and glorified, and for the joy set before thee in hint take up thy cross.

It is a heavy burden; it is a hard warfare. True: but consider, who shall lay anything to thy charge for indwelling sin? It is God that justifieth thee from it. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died; yea, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for thee. He appears in the presence of God for thee, as thine intercessor. He is always in court to represent thy person, and to carry thy cause, especially as to what concerns sin: "If any of us sin," says the beloved disciple, "we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins." In this office he is skillful, and faithful, and compassionate. He has thine interest at heart—thy safety, thy comfort, under this cross, and thy victory over it. His very glory is so interwoven with thine, that they are one; yea, the advocate and his clients form but one spiritual body, of which every member is what the head is.

O my God and Saviour, I bless thee and worship thee, for acting for me as mine advocate and intercessor in heaven. Increase, I beseech thee, my faith, that I may see more of the glory of thine office, and make more use of it in the hearing of mine inward cross. O let thy faithful witness abide with me, to enable me, without doubt or wavering, to trust in what thou hast done for me upon earth, and to draw comfort from what thou art now doing for me in heaven. Into thy hands I desire to commit my cause. Lord, undertake for me; be surety for thy servant for good, and guide me with thy counsel, till thou bring me to thy glory. I ask this for thy mercies' sake. Amen. Is this the true state of the case? Is it certain from the word of God? Is it confirmed from matter of fact? Did the highest believer upon earth experience this inward cross? When his conscience summoned him to the bar of God, and put him upon inquiring what he would plead there for his justification, had he anything to urge but the sacrifice and righteousness of the ever-blessed Immanuel?

And is not this thy plea, O my soul? Dost not thou find so much weakness and infirmity in thy holy things, that thou wouldst seek atonement for the iniquity of them, through the intercession of the great High Priest? And thou wouldst not think of standing before the throne, to claim eternal life as the reward due to thine own holiness. Is not this thine experience? If it be, then take up thy cross in this FAITH. It is thy grief that sin is in thee. The motions and lustings of it are thy burden. The resisting and opposing them is thy continual warfare; and thou hast no prospect before thee of enjoying perfect deliverance from this heavy cross until death release thee. Blessed be God for the salvation that is in Christ Jesus. There is a provision made in the covenant of grace for the pardon of indwelling sin, for victory over it daily, and for the eternal destruction of the whole body of sin: it shall have no existence in the members, any more than it has in their glorified head. Here is a comfort for thee, O my soul, of God's own providing, and of God's own applying. When it is applied to thy heart, the cross will be easy. Observe carefully what is revealed concerning the being of sin in the best Christians, and concerning the pardon of it. The Holy Ghost declares it dwells in them, but they are forgiven all trespasses; they are in Christ without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing. In the first Adam they are heirs of sin, death, and hell; in the second Adam, the Lord from heaven, they are heirs of righteousness, life, and glory, he is their covenant-head, and they are before God what he is. This is the record of truth—**YE ARE COMPLETE IN HIM**. Abide by it, O my soul; give it full credit, and boldly plead it against all the charges of guilt, and fears of wrath.

"It is true, I have sin in me, but it is pardoned. God has forgiven me ALL trespasses. I stand before him in my surety, who undertook for me, and I am perfect in him. The Father chose me in his Son: he looks upon the face of his beloved, and sees me in him. In him he is well pleased, so he is with me. As he loves him, so he loves me. This is the glorious privilege which by faith I now enjoy. I deny sight and sense, and I stick to the word of God. I adhere strictly to its testimony concerning me, believing myself to be dead indeed unto sin in Christ, and in him absolutely freed from guilt and condemnation. The Father is at peace with me, and he loves me in his Son, and with the same love with which he loves him—his Father and my Father. With this persuasion I go to war with my corruptions. I see their traitorous designs. They are fighting against everything that is dear and precious to my soul. But having the promised grace of the almighty Saviour for my help, I desire to set upon them in his name. I know he has them among mine other enemies under his feet, and I have his word for it that he will put them under mine. Yea, Lord, I believe, and on thy faithful promise I trust this day. Although I must carry my

cross, yet I bless thee and worship thee for removing curse and wrath from it. I can now take it up as thy soldier, and fight against it in thy strength, expecting victory from thee, and to thy glory. O my God save me from indwelling sin. Let me feel it my burden. Glorify thy grace in me, and by me, that being endued with power from on high, I may hold out, resisting and conquering it till thou give me everlasting victory."

If this, O my soul, be thy constant dependence, then the cross will become light. Guilt makes it heavy: the curse in it makes it intolerable: but if by faith thou canst see guilt and curse removed, then it will be no hinderance to thee in thy heavenly walk, but will daily call forth into use and exercise those graces which will help thee forward; and especially

PATIENCE. Here is great need of patience—a continual war—and within thee—thine own bosom the seat of it—and thine own lusts carrying it on, and maintaining it. The more spiritual thou art, the more wilt thou feel this inward conflict. The more thou growest into Christ, the more will thy corruptions stir and move—they will be thy continual plague, so that thou will not be able to draw any comfort from what thou art in thyself. Here is exercise for patience. Everywhere indwelling sin is present with thee; upon every temptation ready with its flatteries to entice, and with its power to break out into act and deed. The opposing it is like cutting off a right hand, and plucking out a right eye—as contrary to nature, and as painful. The hand and the eye cannot be destroyed twice; but inbred lusts, overcome a thousand times, are not in the least discouraged from warring against the soul. Like the troubled sea, never at rest, they are always casting up some sinful mire and dirt. What canst thou do without faith in the Redeemer's blood, without patience to wait for the Redeemer's strength? Every moment there is need of faith and patience; and every moment, if these graces be exercised, they will be improved. The bearing of the cross continually, and fighting under it on the side of God, will also be the means of teaching thee

THE TRUE SPIRITUAL MORTIFICATION, which does not consist in sin not being in thee, nor in its being put upon the cross daily, nor yet in its being kept upon it. There must be something more to establish perfect peace in thy conscience; and that is the testimony of God concerning the body of sin. He has provided for thy per-feeet deliverance from it in Christ. Everything needful for this purpose was finished by him upon the cross. He was thy surety, He suffered for thee. Thy sins were crucified with him, and nailed to his cross. They were put to death when he died: for he was thy covenant-head, and thou,

as a member of his body, was legally represented by him, and art indeed dead to sin by his dying to sin once. The law has now no more right to condemn thee, a believer, than it has to condemn him. Justice is bound to deal with thee as it has with thy risen and ascended Saviour. If thou dost not thus see thy complete mortification in him, sin will reign in thee. No sin can be crucified either in heart or life, unless it be first pardoned in conscience: because there will be want of faith to receive the strength of Jesus, by whom alone it can be crucified. If it be not mortified in its guilt, it cannot be subdued in its power. If the believer does not see his perfect deadness to sin in Jesus, he will open a wide door to unbelief: and if he be not persuaded of his completeness in Christ, he gives room for the attacks of self-righteous and legal tempers. If Christ be not all in all, self must still be looked upon as something great; and there will be food left for the pride of self-importance and self-sufficiency. So that he cannot grow into the death of Christ, in sensible experience, farther than he believes himself to be dead to sin in Christ. The more clearly and steadfastly he believes this, as the apostle did—

I AM CRUCIFIED WITH CHRIST in proportion will he cleave to Christ, and receive from him greater power to crucify sin. This believing view of his absolute mortification in Christ is the true gospel method of mortifying sin in our own persons.

Examine then, O nay soul, the mistakes which thou hast made, and the temptations which thou art under, concerning this leading truth in thy walk. Pray to thy God for his wisdom to guide thee. Without; it thou wilt be afraid where no fear is. Thou wilt be inclined to think this doctrine rather encouraging to sin because it seems, to carnal reason, to take off thy mind from watchfulness against it, and from praying for victory over it. But be assured this is a great error. If thou art not complete in Christ, thou never canst be complete. Seek for the death of sin where thou wilt, it is not to be found but in his death. Try to conquer it upon any other principle than faith in his death, the very attempt is sinful, and proves thee to be under the law. Unless thou art one with him in his death, there can be no pardon of sin, and consequently no victory over it. O fear not then to lay the whole weight of thy salvation upon Jesus. Depend on him, as dying to sin for thee, and look at thyself dead to sin in him—as completely dead to it as he is. Read the testimony of the Holy Spirit. Study the infinite, the everlasting sufficiency of his death for thine absolute freedom from guilt and condemnation. Trust without wavering: be not afraid to view the everlasting perfection of thy deliverance in Jesus, and this will weaken the tyranny, and will crucify the power of sin.

This will, and nothing else can. Read the sixth of the Romans, and pray for the Spirit of revelation to open it to thee. There thou wilt discover the true way to mortify sin. It is by believing that thou art planted together with Christ in his death: from thence only thy pardon flows, from thence thy daily victory is received, and from thence thy eternal victory will be perfected. Fight on; soon thou shall be what Christ now is. The member shall be perfectly like the head.

O glorious prospect! Thou shall be with him, and like him—spotless and fair as Jesus, righteous and holy, happy in body and soul. Thou shall see him as he is, and awaking after Iris likeness, thou shall be satisfied with it. Take up thy cross for the joy here set before thee. Bear it in faith. It will be light and easy to thy pardoned conscience: yea, the carrying of it in patience will bring forth many peaceable fruits of righteousness: among the rest there is one which, in the sight of God, is of great price, and which is daily improved by the inward cross; namely,

HUMILITY, which consists in the right knowledge of ourselves, not only of what we have been, but also of what we now are. The best and holiest man upon earth has a corrupt fallen nature: he has flesh still which is always lusting against the spirit. While he is alive to God, he feels it. He is sensible of the inward conflict. Dead men, indeed, feel nothing. A dead corpse has no sense of the worms that are eating it up. He that has these lusts in him, and warring against his soul, and yet does not feel them, cannot be spiritually alive. A natural man has no sense of them, because they are in him as worms in a dead body: just so it is with the perfectionist. But so soon, and so long, as he lives to God, he will perceive them. If he be in happy communion with God, indwelling sin is present; to interrupt the enjoyment. If he exercises any grace, this besetting sin tries to weaken its actings. If he set about any duty, it will hinder him. from doing it so perfectly as God requires, and as he could wish.

The abiding sense of these truths will keep down pride. The believer will see nothing of his own to trust in; no faith, or hope, or love, no faithfulness to grace, no holy obedience; all is stained and polluted, he is forced to cry out of his best duties—unclean—unclean. In this school the disciple learns to walk humbly with his God. The more he knows of himself the more humble he becomes. And he grows in this heavenly grace, the more he is acquainted with the mercy of God in Jesus. This learning by divine teaching keeps the believer meek and lowly in his own eyes. Nothing softens and melts the soul into holy tenderness like the sense of God's mercy. A man who feels the plague of his own heart is never truly humbled until he be pardoned. But when he is justified

from all things in Christ, in him a partaker of all spiritual blessings in earth and heaven, when he sees all his salvation of grace, of free sovereign grace, flowing from the absolute favour of electing love, and bestowed upon him, as unworthy an object as ever did or can partake of it, then he becomes truly broken-hearted.

These truths, taught of God, bring every high thought into subjection to Christ Jesus. The soul bows before him, lies low at his feet; prostrates itself before the throne of his grace, and desires to be kept willing to take all its blessings out of his hands, and to use them to his glory. This is gospel humility, the true abasement of spirit, with which a man, sensible that he is saved by mere mercy, loathes himself. And while the experience of indwelling sin humbles him down to the dust, it produces, through God's grace, the happiest effects: for it keeps him in his strong tower and sanctuary, in which alone he is

SAFE. It is ever reminding him of his need of the blood of sprinkling—ever showing him his want of a perfect righteousness—and ever preaching to him the necessity of his being kept by the power of God. And while he hearkens to these lessons, trusting to Jesus, he will stand fast, and be established. The arm of the Lord God Almighty will hold him up, and he shall be safe. While he lives thus out of himself, the sense of indwelling sin will lead him to his true

HAPPINESS, which is all in the fulness of the God-man. He will enjoy the more of this, the less he finds in himself. When he cannot draw comfort from anything of his own, he will seek it more in God. When all the streams are dried up, he will get nearer to the fountainhead, and live more upon it. This is the portion of the Lord's people, and the inheritance of all his saints. And in this view indwelling sin is made the means of promoting their,

HOLINESS. They see their continual need of Christ. They can do nothing without him; but believing their oneness with him, they desire to improve it in experience. Everything they do keeps them sensible of their sins and wants, and shows them the necessity of living by the faith of the Son of God. This is true humility. The more they are humbled, the more they receive out of the fulness of Jesus: for he giveth more grace—more, to produce nearer fellowship with him in his death, whereby sin will be more dead, and in his resurrection, whereby the soul will be more alive to God. So that the humblest believer is the nearest to God, and is the safest, happiest, and holiest of all the men upon

earth: because he has most fellowship with God. He dwells in God, and God in him.

Meditate, O my soul, upon this use of the cross. Is sin in thee? Dost, thou feel it, and art thou fighting against it? And does not this humble thee? Art thou freely forgiven all trespasses, indwelling sin among the rest? Dost, thou know that thou art a saved sinner—a brand plucked out of hell? And does not this humble thee? I see reason enough to be humbled, but I feel pride in me lusting against humility. O my precious Jesus, humble me under thy mighty hand. To thee I look for all my salvation. Lord, save me from pride. Thou hast made me willing to be taught of thee to be meek and lowly, and I come to thee praying that the disciple may boast his Master. O let me drink deep into thy Spirit. In every day's warfare against my corruptions, enable me to renounce myself that I may find thou art carrying both me and my cross. Keep me humbled at thy feet, that thou mayest exalt me in due time. I pray to thee, my precious Saviour, for this grace, to mine eternal humbling, and to thine eternal exaltation. In life and death, and for evermore, I hope to glory only in the Lord, and to triumph in the God of my salvation.

Thus the believer learns to walk humbly under the inward cross. He is brought to trust all in the Saviour's hand. Daily he discovers more of the ruins of the fall, which leads him to fresh discoveries of the perfect salvation in Jesus. If he attend to what is passing in his own breast, he finds his need of a Saviour, every moment, and for everything: by which means he grows in grace, and in the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord. He learns to put no confidence in the flesh, but to rejoice only in his completeness in Jesus, from whom all his comforts and victories are received. Thus, while self is laid low, the Saviour is exalted, and his perfect work is more depended on. The believer, by hope and love, attains more delightful communion with his God.

Indwelling sin is his cross, but he bears it, looking unto Jesus; from whom he receives strength to go on, yea, to run the race set, before him. By faith he sees in Jesus the corruption of his nature condemned and dead in the law: he beholds himself freed from this, as well as from his other sins. Guilt is the most galling part of this cross; but when guilt is thus removed from the conscience, then the cross grows light. When taken up in faith, and carried in love to the almighty Saviour, then it does not stop the believer in his fellowship with Jesus, or in his happy walk with him.

Glory be to thee, my Lord, of this I have some experience. Yes, precious Jesus, I know the infinite value of that sacrifice which put away sin. I bless thee for that offering which perfects forever. Interested in it, I would not distrust my completeness in thee. Through thy holy nature I expect to be renewed after thy likeness. The fountain for cleansing from the filth of sin stands open: in it I daily wash my spotted soul. In thy divine righteousness I see the law and justice of the Father, infinitely honored by justifying me, and dealing with me as perfectly righteous. Complete in thee I am. In thy work finished upon earth I am perfect, and am represented as such by thee in heaven. I believe thou appearest there as my divine intercessor, bearing my name upon thy shoulders, and upon thy breast, with a glory beyond all the precious stones in the world.

O my blessed Jesus, increase this faith. Lead me from faith to faith, that, while I am travelling heavenwards, mine eye and my heart may be more simply fixed upon thee. Come, thou glorifier of the Saviour, and discover to me more of the sinfulness of sin, and of my need of his salvation. Holy Spirit teach me in the deepest; sense of indwelling sin, to trust wholly to the offering of the body of Jesus. O lead me to his cross, there to see all my sins nailed, crucified with him, dead in his death, buried in his grave; in this faith strengthen me mightily to resist and to conquer my corruptions. Enable me to experience the power of his cross, that I may feel sin weakened in the love and in the practice of it.

Almighty Spirit, in my daily warfare I find no strength less than thine can make me conqueror; and therein thou hast caused me to put my trust. Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord; awake as in the ancient days, in the generations of old. Art thou not it that cut the pride of nature to pieces, and wounded the old dragon? O my God magnify thine arm in subduing every sin. Thou seest my naked heart, and its sightings are not hid from thee. My corruptions are indeed my cross; and they would have been a sore burden, too heavy for me to bear, if the curse had not been taken out of them. But still, pardoned as they are, yet in this tabernacle I do groan, being burthened. I believe the day is coming when I shall have perfect and eternal freedom from sin and sorrow. The first fruits of this only make me long the more for the blessed harvest. But I desire to wait in hope, bearing my cross, till thy will be done. O Lord, make me willing to resist, give me power to overcome indwelling sin, till the day of redemption, and mortality be swallowed up of life. Hear me, my good God, and answer me, for thy name's sake, to the glory of Father, Son, and Spirit, the three in one Jehovah, to whom my heart now

bows in worship, and my soul hopes soon to join the song of never-ceasing praise. Amen, and Amen.

THE WALK OF FAITH CHAPTER XI.

THE BELIEVER FIGHTS THE GOOD FIGHT OF FAITH, AND GOES FORTH CONQUERING AND TO CONQUER.

WHEN the believer has been disciplined under the cross, and has learned to bear it with patience, the Captain of his salvation has other exercises for him. He has chosen him to be a soldier, and he intends to teach him to endure hardness. His life in Christ is one continued battle, not only against flesh and blood, but also against principalities and powers of earth and hell: he cannot discover their stratagems, nor overcome their assaults, but by being strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. His warfare is therefore to be carried on entirely by faith. The principles before laid down must be brought into use. What the Spirit of God had discovered to him of his salvation in Jesus is to be tried in every battle; and if it be maintained, it will be improved. If he hold fast the confidence of his faith, he will behave like a good soldier. If he always take up arms in absolute dependence on the divine General, to give him courage, to order him how to attack his enemies, to bestow strength upon him daily to resist them, then victory will be certain. Yea, he will be invincible while he stands strong in the Lord, mad in the power of his might, he will meditate upon the principles which he had been taught of God, and will find peace in his own conscience, and joy in his heart, by bringing them into daily experience. His believing views of the warfare to which he is called will be such as these—

I am, through sovereign grace, called to fight under the banner of Jesus. He has not left me to fight as uncertainly, but he has conquered all mine enemies for me, and he has undertaken to conquer them all in me. It is true, I am weak; but my Redeemer is strong: The Lord of hosts is his name. He has saved me from my sins, from the shame and pain of them, from the wicked one, and the wicked world, from the curse of the law, and from the wrath of God. He has given me a divine righteousness for my justification, and in it I am accepted before the throne; he has put it upon me for ornament and clef once—it is a garment of salvation—which cannot be lost upon earth, and which will shine with never-fading beauty in heaven. The Father is perfectly reconciled, and

loves me with a love that passes knowledge. I believe it. God is on my side: I need not fear what any enemy can do unto me. He has taken me into his protection. By his all-wise counsel, I am guided; by his almighty arm I am defended. 2Vly battles are the Lord's. Indeed, mine enemies are many, and they are too cunning and too mighty for me. But why do they now fight against me? Is it not because God is my friend? They hate me because he loves me. While I lived in friendship with them, and was at war with God, they were always trying to make me happy: but ever since I fled to Jesus for refuge, and sought redemption in his blood, they have taken up arms against me; and they have raged more furiously since I was enabled to believe in him. But I have no reason to fear their opposition. With them is an arm of flesh, but with me is the Lord my God to help me, and to fight my battles. I may therefore go to my daily warfare in faith, regarding the commands, waiting for the fulfilling of the promises of my God, and relying upon the provision which he has made for my present and for mine eternal victory.

Are thy meditations, O my soul, like these upon the Christian warfare? Examine thyself. If' thou art at peace with God, thou must expect war. It is unavoidable. If it be in thy heart to please him who hath chosen thee to be a soldier, then all the powers of wickedness will in arms. Night and day, with never-ceasing rage, they will pursue thee. Deep-laid plans will be formed, and fierce assaults will be made against thy true happiness. They will be attempting, so long as thou art the world, by some cunning or force, to draw thee from thy God. Thy life, from henceforth, is to be one continued battle. Thy victory depends every moment upon holding fast thy confidence in God: and therefore, thou must bring the principles of the doctrine of Christ into exercise. Thou hast seen how necessary they are for every step of thy walk, and thou wilt find them equally necessary for every part of thy warfare.

This is a leading truth—thine enemies are God's enemies. Once thou didst join with them, and was on their side fighting against God, but he has saved thee from the guilt of thy rebellion. In free love he chose thee in his Son, and in sovereign mercy gave him for thee. The Son rejoiced to do his Father's will for thy salvation: he did it in his life: he suffered it in his death. The ever-glorious work is finished. And it has been given thee on the behalf of Christ to believe. The Lord the Spirit has satisfied thy conscience, and has comforted thy heart with the knowledge of this perfect salvation. The Father is thy Father in Jesus—thine by his own free gift—thine by his own unchangeable purpose—and now thine by thy free choice, he has made thee willing in the day of his power to take him for thy God. He is perfectly reconciled unto thee in his Son:

and should not this perfectly reconcile thee to him? His love to thee is wonderful in all its properties, in its rise and origin, and in its free and full communication of every covenant blessing.

And does not the belief of this engage thy heart in love to God? Dost thou not love him for his love to thee, and is it not thy daily prayer that thy love may abound yet more and more? Has not the sense of this peace and love been improved in thy daily walk with him? Hast thou not found the truth, and enjoyed the comfort of these graces in thine experience? O fear not then, since God is on thy side—fear not, O my soul, to go to war with any enemy who would rob thee of the peace of God in thy conscience, or of the love of God in the heart. This is the design of all those who fight against thee. They want to shake thy confidence in God, and so to draw thee from him. They knew they cannot succeed while thou standest strong in the Lord, trusting to his being thy reconciled God and loving Father. O keep this trust in him, as the apple of thine eye—bind it continually to thy heart in love—and fight for it as for thy precious life. Be assured no enemies can prevail against thee, until they have first overcome thy faith: because while thou makest God thy refuge and strength, his almighty arm will be thy defense. "Be not afraid," says he, "I am with thee, and I will keep thee by my power, through faith, unto salvation."

In this warfare, it is the chief business of the believer to have respect to the orders given him. He is entirely to depend on the Captain of his salvation. What has he said, O my soul, to encourage thee to go to battle without fear? Mind his description—it is the good fight of faith in which thou art engaged. By faith thou art to attack thy foes: by faith alone thou canst conquer them: and faith must have his

COMMANDS, or else it can have no lawful warrant to fight, and no just ground to expect victory. Indeed, if he had spoken nothing, there could have been no faith: for his word comes first—it is spoken—it is heard—and then faith comes by hearing. Look well then to his word. Study it carefully. If thou obey it aright, thou art absolutely safe in the hottest battle, and thy victory is as certain as if the crown was already upon thy head. These are his standing orders: "Fear thou not, for I am with thee: be not afraid, for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee, yea, I will help thee, yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. Behold all they that were incensed against thee shall be ashamed and confounded; they shall be as nothing, and they that strive with thee shall perish. Thou shalt seek them, and shalt not find them, even them that contended with thee: they that war against thee shall be as nothing,

and as a thing of naught: for the Lord thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, fear not, I will help thee. Fear not, thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel: I will help thee, saith the Lord, and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel."

Are these indeed the words of God? Does he command poor worms, weak and defenceless, to go to war without fear? Does he encourage them to look up to his arm, promising to be on their side? Yes—the Lord of hosts fights for them. All their enemies are his, and therefore they may safely trust and not be afraid. O my soul, read carefully, read again and again, mark and inwardly digest every word of this divine command; and in obedience to it expect his help. Face thine enemies, whoever they be, with holy boldness: for God is with thee. He has undertaken to fight thy battles. Look at; this scripture. Canst thou meditate on it, and yet be afraid? Of whom, or of what? O vile unbelieving fear! Beg of God to save thee from it. Honor the Captain of thy salvation. Trust him. Doubt not but thou art as safe, obeying his orders and expecting his help, as almighty power can make thee. Observe the courage of one of thy fellow soldiers. Observe his victory: "When I cry unto thee, then shall mine enemies be turned back: this I know, for God is on my side. In God will I praise his word; in the Lord will I praise his word; in God have I put my trust, I will not be afraid what man can do unto me." The enemies of David came to swallow him up, but he encouraged himself in the Lord his God. He attended to his orders. He considered the word, which was spoken to him, he depended upon it, and had reason to praise God for his faithfulness: for God fulfilled it unto him. There was in it a,

PROMISE, as well as a command—do this—and I will be with thee. The promise is always made good to them who keep the command in faith. The one is our divine warrant to fight; the other is our encouragement to fight in certain hopes of victory. Attend, O my soul, to the promise, and fear not the accomplishment of it: "In righteousness shall thou be established: thou shall be far from oppression, for thou shall not fear; and from terror, for it shall not come near thee. Behold, they shall surely gather together, but not by me: whosoever shall gather together against thee, shall fall for thy sake. Behold I have created the smith that bloweth the coals in the fire, and that bringeth forth an instrument for his work; mid I have created the waster to destroy. No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper, mid every tongue that shall rise in judgment against thee thou shall condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord." Thou art here forewarned of thine enemies: they shall gather against thee. But the

Lord is not with them. He is thy defender and mighty deliverer, and he will bring all opposition to naught for thy sake. However numerous their hosts may be, yet they shall fall. Whatever weapons of war they may form, yet none of them shall prosper. This is the certain heritage of all believers. Their righteousness and their strength is of me, saith the Lord—I will fight their battles, and I wilt never leave them nor forsake them: I will make them daily conquerors; and behold the days come saith the Lord, that I will perform that good thing which I have promised them, I will make them more than conquerors.

Is this, O my soul, the infallible word of promise? Has the Lord of hosts undertaken to stand by his people? Has he engaged to lead them out to war by his wisdom, to defend them in battle by his power, and to give them eternal victory to the praise of his own grace? O what motives are these to strengthen thy earl and thy hands. What hast thou reason to fear since the Almighty is on thy side! The battle is his. If hosts of enemies oppose, yet, following his orders, and trusting to his strength, thy victory is infallibly sure: for then thou wilt fight against them strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might, and thou wilt be invincible

IN THE WHOLE ARMOUR OF GOD. This armour is the provision which God has made for the safety of his soldiers. He puts it on them, and he keeps it on them. It is a whole armour, a complete defense from head to toe. In great mercy, their God who provided it has revealed to them the use of every part. In the sixth of the Ephesians, the apostle has described it at large, he supposes them to be acquainted with the Christian doctrines, and to have walked in the comfort of them, and he calls upon them to bring them into practice in their daily warfare. "It only remains, my brethren," says he, "that ye be strong in the Lord,"—for no strength less than his can keep you—"and in the might of what he is able to do,"—by faith relying upon his promise and trusting to his power—"putting on the whole armour of God,"—that being strengthened mightily by the Spirit in the inner man, ye may be preserved dependent upon the Lord, and enabled to engage in his strength, and to conquer to his glory. Unless you thus rely upon his word and arm, you will not be able to stand against the wiles of the devil: for we wrestle not only against flesh and blood, but also against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places: therefore take unto you, the whole armour of God, that ye may be enabled to withstand in the evil day, against the combined legions of earth and hell, and after ye have done all, to stand conquerors in the field of battle, when your enemies

are driven out of it. Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth. This is the first grace in use—SAVING KNOWLEDGE, which the Holy Spirit teaches. He guides believers into all truth necessary for their salvation. As the military girdle went round the loins, and bound all the armour together, so the knowledge of the truth, as it is in Jesus, binds together all the graces. It is of the essence of every one of them—it is light in the understanding to discover what they are, that they may be received into the heart in love, and that in obeying the truth, their influence may operate upon the life and conversation. When a man is thus taught of God, then he sees his need of the breast-plate of righteousness, and he puts it on; namely, the

IMPUTED RIGHTEOUSNESS of the God-man. The breastplate was armour for the vital parts—so is the righteousness of Christ—it is a perfect protection from every stroke of every enemy. He that wears it upon his heart, believing in the life and death of Immanuel, has armour proof against all weapons. If the strength of his adversaries could be collected into one arm, which was to strike one mighty blow, his breastplate would ward it off. The armour of God could not be hurt. The soldier with it on cannot perish, but shall have everlasting life. Therefore, covered with tiffs invincible breastplate, he may face the stoutest foes, and attack them without fear. He may march on undaunted, "having his feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace."

PEACE WIT GOD, through Jesus Christ, is another grace of the Spirit, which mightily strengthens the inner man. Whoever sees the truth of the gospel, and believes it, will discover God to be at peace with him, perfectly reconciled to him in Jesus, and who, out of his fatherly love, will over-rule all things for his good. In the sense of this he may go on with holy boldness, as the soldier did with his greaves on. When his feet and legs were armed with them, he was not afraid of thorns or briars, of rough roads or sharp spikes. In like manner, the peace which the gospel brings carries the Christian soldier fearless through difficulties. He will march on conquering, if he keeps on his greaves. If he maintains peace with God through Jesus Christ, he will not be stopped by war, or trouble, or temptation. But he must remember, that to every piece of armour faith is essentially necessary—the girdle is good for nothing without the belief of the truth—the breast-plate is no defense without faith in the righteousness of God our Saviour—the greaves are no more than if the feet were covered with a bit of thin gauze, unless faith be mixed with the gospel: "Therefore TO ALL THESE take the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one." What excellent things are here spoken of,

FAITH, as a grace of the Holy Spirit! When they used to fight with bows and arrows, the soldier could hold up his shield and keep himself safe: so the Christian soldier, if the fiery darts of Satan fly thick about him, by faith will quench them all. He has much combustible within him, and one spark would set him in a flame, if he had not his shield: but, armed with it, and opposing it to the arrows of the wicked one, he may lift up his head with joy: "for he has the helmet of salvation" upon it. The grace here meant is

HOPE and it is fitly compared to a helmet, which was armour for the head, and a defense for all the senses which are seated in the head. It is called the helmet of

SALVATION, because it ALWAYS SAVES. It never can be destroyed. None of the senses of the spiritual man can perish in tiffs warfare, and therefore it is a hope that maketh not ashamed. Hope, with its helmet on, fears no blows. It can truly say, I am commanded to be strong and of good courage, not to be afraid or dismayed; for the Lord my God is with me whithersoever I go. Trusting to this command, hope is in wars and rightings full of glory and immortality. The Lord's orders to march forward are the ground of hope; and this supplies him with a weapon which none of his enemies can withstand, even the sword of the Spirit, "which is the

WORD OF GOD." The Scripture is called a sword (an offensive weapon—and it is the only one which the Christian soldier has—all the rest being for his defense) because it is mighty through the Spirit working by it to cut off all opposers. Our Lord, in combat with the old serpent, defeated him with this sword. And the noble army of his followers, now crowned in glory, overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony—they held fast their confidence in the word, and with it, as with a two-edged sword, they slew the old dragon, and gained eternal victory over him. Fight against him, O my soul, with the same weapon. Keep the sword in thy hand. Thou wilt stand in need of it every moment against that subtle foe. The word is the means of overcoming the devil, and it is mighty, through God, When heard and read in faith, and inwardly digested by prayer. The best soldier in the Lord's army is best acquainted with the necessity of prayer: he not only believes what God says of his armour, but he also depends upon him for the daily experience of it: and, therefore, when he has put his armour on, in the

PRAYER OF FAITH, he calls upon the Captain of his salvation for orders, courage, strength, victory, and everything needful: "Praying always with all

prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance." O my God, teach me thus to pray. I would depend on thee, and express my dependence without ceasing; for I am sensible that without thee I can do nothing. Although thou hast chosen me to be a soldier, yet I have neither counsel nor strength for war. My foolish heart loves ease: it would have the crown, but it would be excused striving lawfully for it. I find nothing in myself that disposes me to endure the hardship of the Christian warfare. My whole trust, therefore, is in thee, Jesus, my Lord and my God. Thou hast called me to the battle, thou must fit me for it, keep me in it, and make me conqueror. All is of thee. The whole armour of God which I have received, the saving knowledge, the righteousness and the peace, that precious faith and glorious hope, that sure word wherein thou hast caused me to put my trust—these are the gifts of thy grace: and on thee, my Jesus, I entirely depend for the right use of them. Thou must still cover my head in the day of battle. Mine eyes are lifted up to thee, my hopes center in thee, from whom alone cometh all my salvation. O Lord of hosts, keep me in this simple dependence upon thy word and arm, that I may exercise thy graces in fighting thy battles; and if thou art pleased to give me daily victory, I may be willing to return thee all glory. O faithful promise-keeping God stand by me, and enable me to hold out till I finish my course with joy, and, my warfare being ended, I may bless thee for evermore for that peace which passeth all understanding. O grant me this for thy mercies' sake. Amen.

If this be thy dependence, if thou art standing in the Lord's strength, and trusting entirely to his armour, then consider, O my soul, thy safety in every battle. If thou go to war, calling upon thy God to be with thee and to give thee victory, then victory is certain. Thou canst not be conquered, if thou fight in faith, relying upon the orders of thy General, expecting his promised help, and waiting for it in prayer, trusting to the armour which he has put upon thee. Is this then thy defense? Dost; thou pray always—begin the good fight—carry it on—and end it with the prayer of faith? Blessed be his holy name, since this is, in some measure, thy case, go on in his strength, and fear not to fight his battles who hath chosen thee to be a soldier. Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thy heart. The more bold thou art in thy faith, the stronger shall thou be in thy warfare: for whatever thou hast courage to do at his command, thou shall perform in his strength. And why should a doubt arise? Hast thou forgotten that the great decisive battle has been fought and won? Immanuel stood up the great champion for his people. The almighty warrior entered the lists with their enemies, and he conquered all their hosts. He triumphed over Satan and the world, over sin and death; and he led captivity captive.

Remember, he calls upon thee to share in his victory, by faith to partake with him of the spoils, and to keep the vanquished enemies daily under thy feet. He has made them his footstool, and he will make them thine.

This is thy warfare. And what hast thou to fear in it? What hurt can a dead man do thee? If he has gun charged in his hand, he cannot fire it: he is not able to stir a finger, No more able is any adversary to destroy thee. Whilst thou art trusting to the complete victory of Jesus, thou wilt daily share with him in it. And the more simple thy trust is in him, the greater conquest will he give thee, because he will then receive from thee greater glory. How should this consideration inspire thee with courage—it is for his glory that thou shouldst conquer. Thy God commands thee to fight on his side, promises to assist thee, has provided invincible armour, and has, in his own person, engaged and defeated every enemy against whom thou art to fight; and therefore he requires thee, in obedience to his orders, depending upon his promises and armour, to bring him glory, by conquering in his strength.

O my soul, hast thou not a zeal to promote the honor of thy Saviour? Is not his fame and renown very near thy heart? Dost thou not think it a privilege to be any ways instrumental in exalting his great name. Yes, Lord, thou hast made me willing to glorify thee. Thou art my lawful king, and I desire to honor thee by following thine orders, fighting thy battles, and relying entirely upon thy promises. I would not question thy faithfulness to them, nor tsar any enemy against whom thou hast commanded me to fight: I would not doubt of thy strength to carry me through the battle, or to give me the promised victory.

In this faith I conduct my warfare, and I would have all my success to bring fresh glory to thee. I know that the courage which I have in the field of battle is not from nature, but from grace, It arises from the belief that I am armed with the whole armour of God, and that the enemies against whom I fight are his as well as mine; his—whom he conquered for me, and is now conquering in me, and all to his own praise. From hence, Lord, arises my sure and certain hope of victory. I ground it on thy word: I fight in faith: I trust to thy complete victory, and now I am sharing in it. My daily victories are only the fruit and effect of thine. O my almighty Jesus, give me grace to ascribe all the glory to thee; it is thy due. Make me willing to give it thee for the victories obtained for me, and in me. O keep me by thine almighty power, through faith, till I have fought the good fight, and won the prize. Grant me this, blessed king of saints, to thine eternal honour and glory. Amen.

THE WALK OF FAITH CHAPTER XII.

THE BELIEVER MARCHES ON, FIGHTING THE GOOD FIGHT OF FAITH AND DAILY GAINS VICTORY OVER THE WORLD.

THE world signifies the visible frame of nature; not the earth only, but also the present constitution of the universe, of animate and inanimate beings; all which were created good at first, but, through the sin of man, and the just sentence of God, are now subject to vanity.

The world has become a great enemy to fallen man; because it is always presenting something to his senses which is a temptation to sin. It keeps him from God by its flatteries, promising to make him happy in its enjoyments. It sets them before him. He looks and loves, he gives his heart a willing sacrifice to the world, and suffers himself to be entirely influenced by its hopes and fears.

While man was innocent, every object raised in him some spiritual idea, and thereby led him to contemplate and adore the great Creator in his works; but upon the fall he lost this use of natural objects; they did not, as they struck upon the senses, excite correspondent ideas in the mind; because the man was alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that was in him. His understanding was in darkness: he could not see the things of the Spirit of God; neither, indeed, could he know them, for want of spiritual discernment. Being thus deprived of the image and likeness of God in knowledge, having no will but the will of the flesh, and his heart being at enmity with God, he sinks into communion with the creature. His very mind is carnal; his affections are earth[y]; his pursuits are after temporal things; his enjoyments are in the delights of sense. In this state he lives a mere animal life, without God in the world.

Indeed he has within him an immortal soul, but it is apostate: it is fallen from God, and has no more communion with him by nature than the devil has. The law has condemned it to death—"the soul that sinneth, it shall die"—and it is already spiritually dead to God, being as incapable of quickening itself as a dead corpse is: therefore it cannot attain of itself any true knowledge of God, or have any real fellowship with the things of God. While fallen man is in this state, his earthly and sensual appetites take the lead; and all the light in his mind, and the desires of his heart, only dispose him to seek for their present gratification. Outward objects offer themselves to him; they make an

impression upon his senses, and sometimes act upon them very forcibly, soliciting and enticing to the enjoyment of some fancied good; and so long as he continues an unregenerate man, these temptations prevail, and keep him from God. He does not see God in outward objects; he does not love God for them; he does not enjoy them to the glory of God: God is not in all his thoughts.

Man has been called a microcosm. He is so wonderfully made, that the whole creation comes under the observation of some of his senses. His eye, by means of light, can discover the form and surface of all objects; the ear takes in all sounds; the nose perceives all vapors and smells; the palate tastes all sorts of fluids; all sorts of solids come under the sense of feeling, which is in every part of the body, for the benefit and preservation of the whole. Thus every object in the universe is fitted to act upon some of the senses, and was intended by the Creator to excite some spiritual idea. But this use was lost by the fall. The impression made by outward objects does not raise up the mind to God, and excite adoration and praise, but keeps the heart from him, and affords a continual temptation to live to the world, and to the things of it. Whatever is presented to the eye, to the ear, &c., can stir up and bring forth evil: and actually does, according to the Scripture; for "the whole world"—as fallen from God—"lieth in wickedness," and is at enmity with him; and therefore believers are commanded, "Love ye not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him: for all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." Mind, ALL that is in the world is the means of feeding some lust; for which reason the apostle calls it "this present evil world;"—evil because of sin, and because of its temptations to keep the heart in love with it, and to shut out the love of the Father.

How awfully solemn are these scriptures! What strict examination, O my soul, should they put thee upon! Search and try thyself by them; and see whether thou art saved from the love of the world. It is a blessed part of redemption, and it is one of the brightest jewels in the Redeemer's crown. How infinitely glorious is this character: "Jesus Christ gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world." This deliverance is worthy of God. We had sinned by loving this present evil world, and he came to save us from our sins. It ruled over our hearts and lives, and kept us under its tyranny, and he came to deliver us from the love and from the power of it. Thrice happy are they for whom he thus gave himself. O my soul, read and study the everlasting honors of this great victory, and see whether thou art indeed a

partaker of them. Jehovah was made flesh for his people, and, as their divine surety, came to conquer their enemies, the world among the rest. He was in their nature, to enter into open war with it, and to overcome every temptation by which it had drawn Adam or any of his descendants from God.

Thus, he was to conquer the world for them; and then by his Spirit he was to conquer it in them. He began the battle with his first breath, and every moment of his life he was victorious. The world has its snares for every age and state, but he fell into none of them. His hands were clean; his heart was pure: he never lifted up his soul to vanity; he was in his infancy the holy child Jesus; and he grew in wisdom and stature. When he was twelve years old, he was wiser than his teachers; for he sat in the midst of the doctors, both bearing them and asking them questions; and all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers. His delight was in the law of the Lord, and in his law did he meditate day and night—he saw things as they are there described in their true nature. The world could not impose upon him. He lived above its offers of good, and he feared not the worst of its threatened evils. When he began his ministry, he fought a pitched battle, and became an eternal conqueror: the prince of this world was permitted to try every object by which the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, or the pride of life, had seduced mankind. They were presented to Christ in their richest dress. The beauty, the pleasure, the honour, and riches of the world, were set before him in all their glory. But they made no impression; they did not darken his understanding, nor influence his heart, nor provoke any sensual appetite. He rejected every pleasing offer; he withstood every flattering allurements.

Thus he conquered the world; but not for himself. His victory over all its temptations was for his people. He accounted their enemies his. He fought their battles. He conquered, as king for his subjects. And he gives them to share with him in his triumph, when they believe in him; for thus he encourages them: "These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace: in the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good courage, I HAVE OVERCOME THE WORLD." The world is your enemy. It had you in bondage, and you could not free yourselves; therefore, I came in your nature, God manifest in the flesh, to conquer it for you; and I have obtained a perfect conquest. When I have proclaimed it to your consciences, and pardoned your idolatrous attachment to the world—when in me you have found peace, yet still the world will be your enemy. Because I have chosen you out of it, therefore it will hate you. My peace will occasion and increase your tribulation in it. But fear not; remember it is a vanquished foe. Attack it in my

strength, as partakers of my victory. Fight against it, and treat it as under my feet and made my footstool. Whenever it tempts you, depend absolutely upon my conquest, and you will find my grace almighty to crucify the world to you, and you to it.

How animating are these words! With what courage should they inspire the Christian soldier! Although the world be his enemy, yet it cannot conquer him, and rob him of his crown. The main battle has been fought, the victory is gained, and the conqueror is already crowned in the name and person of all the redeemed. By faith he gives them their share in his victory, as it is written: "Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." Every person who is born again by the Spirit has a new nature, spiritual and heavenly, and has new senses to exercise about spiritual things. His renewed faculties are formed for heavenly things, as his bodily senses are for material. By faith he sees a better world than this, and surveys its beauties and glories, he has ears to hear the joyful sound of gospel grace, and to receive it. When that name which is dear and precious above every name, is preached, it is to him as ointment poured forth: the sweet-smelling savour refreshes his heart, and exhilarates his spirits. Then he tastes that the Lord is gracious—foretastes his heavenly love, and as truly lays hold of and enjoys its spiritual blessings as he ever did of anything material.

He is created anew in Christ Jesus, not only that he may know these things, but may also partake of them—as truly now by faith as he ever will by sense; and the more he knows and the more he partakes of them, the more will he be delivered from this present evil world: "for this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." By faith we see the victory of Christ, and rest upon it; and the more safely we put our trust and confidence in it, the more fellowship we shall have with him in its fruits—more wisdom to see the vanity of the world as he saw it—more grace to deliver us from the love of it—and more strength to subdue its temptations. These are some of the happy effects of his conquests, which he left us to enjoy here, as pledges of our being one day what he now is. He is more than conqueror, so shall we be, through him that loveth us. As our faith increases, we shall share more with him, and triumph more over the smiles and the frowns of the world.

Since this is the only way to conquer the world, art thou, O my soul, conquering it in this way, and hast thou faith in the victory of Jesus? Dost thou depend on him for the pardon of thy former love of the world, and for the crucifying the love of it thy heart? Art thou relying upon his victorious

grace to make thee a daily conqueror over all its temptations? Examine thy warfare, and see whether it be carried on according to the scripture rule, and with the promised success. Look at some of the Lord's champions. Survey the triumphs of Moses, and remember the Lord's hand is not shortened. "By FAITH, Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense the reward."

How great was this faith; how glorious its victories! It was a divine grace, and exercised by a divine operation—mighty through God. By it Moses saw the reality of heavenly things; by it he tasted their sweetness, enjoyed their blessedness, and had a hope full of glory and immortality. The world made him its highest offers, but he rejected them. His eye was kept single, his heart chaste towards his God. The honor of Pharaoh's alliance he despised, he preferred affliction with the people of God to the pleasures of sin. He embraced reproach, when it came on him for following Christ, and he esteemed it beyond all the treasures of Egypt. He saw the vanity and emptiness of earthly enjoyments, and he trampled upon them, having respect to the recompense of the reward. Thus, he was crucified to the world. What an exalted character! There is no such hero in the records of profane history; but thank God, there are great numbers in sacred, who follow the steps of his faith. Every soldier of Christ Jesus is called to war against the world, and every good soldier is a daily conqueror. The world is always present, and has its temptations ready to stop him, but he meets them strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might, trusting to the whole armour of God. Then victory is certain. And in order that the Lord may have all the glory, he will keep him fighting and praying in this manner: —

This world is not my portion. My happiness does not consist in loving and enjoying the things of it. It is an evil world—it lieth in wickedness—Satan has his seat and throne in it—and it is condemned to fire. Thank God, mine eyes are open to see a better world than this, and I am travelling to it. I believe it was the purpose and will of the eternal Three to choose me to be an heir of the world to come. Glory be to the Father for his free choice, and for all the blessings of his love. Glory be to the co-equal Son, for his complete and everlastingly perfect salvation. Glory be to the eternal Spirit, to whom I am indebted for what I believe of the Son's salvation, and for what I have experienced of the Father's love. On thee, O God the Holy Ghost, I place my

dependence for carrying on the work which thou hast begun. I would be guided by thy counsel every step of my walk, and strengthened by thee for every part of 'my warfare. Keep me in the right way, and make me conqueror over all the enemies who would stop me in it, or turn me out of it; especially deliver me from this present evil world. While I am going through it to a better, preserve my heart from the love of it. O my God give me a stranger's temper, and a pilgrim's frame. Let me live as a sojourner here below, that the good things I meet with on my journey may not tempt me to make this my rest, and the evil things I meet with may not lead me to fret and murmur, as in God was not my Father, and his heaven my home.

O thou divine teacher, show me daily the glory of my Saviour's victory over the world, that I may share with him in it; and enable me to go forth conquering and to conquer, in his strength and to his praise. Help me to look upon the world, and to treat it as he did, that, feeling the emptiness of its offered happiness, I may with a single heart cleave to my Father in Jesus, and may be saved from the spirit of the world. Keep me waiting for my appointed time, sitting quite loose and free to the things about me; and let heavenly and eternal things be always present to my faith, in their reality and blessedness, that I may grow more alive to them, and more dead to everything else. Preserve my heart, O my gracious God, that it may be simple with thee when I am in my worldly business. Enable me to cast all my cares and burdens on thee, believing thou carest for me. O daily crucify the world to me, and me to it, that when its offers stand in competition with thy love, I may have grace to reject them. In this holy war carry me on glorifying him who hath called me to be a soldier. Grant me this for Jesus' sake. Amen and Amen.

THE WALK OF FAITH CHAPTER XIII.

THE BELIEVER MARCHES ON, RESISTING AND OVERCOMING THE WILES AND THE ASSAULTS OF THE TEMPTER.

SATAN is a continual adversary. He rebelled against the sovereign will of the Most High in heaven, and was east out. As soon as man was formed, he began to tempt him to rebel against God, and he succeeded. Ever since the revelation was made of the divine purpose to redeem sinners, he has set himself up against it, and with impotent rage opposed it. He is always trying to hinder sinners from coming to the Saviour; and when they are come to him, to hinder them from living by faith upon his fulness. On the side of Satan are

principalities and powers, combined armies and united legions of apostate spirits—formidable to man for their number—more so for their subtlety and cunning. They have stratagems and wiles, depths of skill to deceive, in which they are so successful that they have deceived the whole world. Their courage is desperate: they fear nothing; for they were mad enough to take up arms against the Almighty. No wonder then that they should be unwearied in their attacks against man. They are always upon the watch—ready, as one temptation fails, to present another. Their strength is very great; they are called principalities and powers, rulers and princes; yea, the god of this world; because they work as they please in the children of disobedience, whom they keep so fast bound in the chains of sin, that no human arm can break them asunder. And it is the only joy they know—the joy of hell—to rivet the chains of sin upon those poor captives, till they bind them in everlasting chains of darkness.

These, O my soul, are thine enemies. They had drawn thee into their rebellion, and they are still trying to draw thee into their torments. They have free access to thy fallen nature. They know how to make use of the objects in the world to work upon thy senses, and to stir up evil thoughts. They have fiery darts always at hand to throw at thy faith, and rest not night and day in attacking thy peace and happiness in Jesus.

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy name, for undertaking to save thee from those enemies. The love of the Father gave his Son to be the woman's seed—Jehovah incarnate—for his people. In their nature he was to bruise the head of the serpent. His cunning, his poison, and all his power to hurt, lie in his head: when this is bruised, he is defeated. The battle to be fought was foretold, and the victory to be won was promised to Adam; and by faith in it, he and all the redeemed in the Old Testament conquered Satan. In the fulness of time, God was manifest in the flesh: he came to destroy the works of the devil. Sin is his great work; by it he drew man from God, and by it he keeps man from God. Immanuel began the destruction of the works of the devil by taking human nature. His manhood was perfectly holy—it had not, it could not have, any sin: because God was in Christ. There was everything in his holy life which the law could require. He obeyed all its precepts with uninterrupted conformity, and being co-equal and co-eternal with the Father, his obedience was therefore divine, absolutely complete, and infinitely sufficient to justify forever. He was tempted indeed, but he overcame every temptation, he defeated Satan in all his attempts, inasmuch

that when he was entering upon the last scene of his life, he could declare: "The prince of this world cometh, AND HATH NOTHING IN ME."

He did come, and the great pitched battle was fought which was to decide forever, whether the seed of the woman or the serpent should be crowned conqueror. The battle began in the garden of Gethsemane, and was finished upon Mount Calvary. Every stratagem of infernal policy was then tried; every assault of devilish malice was exerted against the Captain of our salvation; but he conquered them all, as it was foretold: "Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder; the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under thy feet." He trod upon the serpent's head, and crushed it; but at the same time, the serpent bit his heel. The heel is his lowest part—his body—this fell in the conflict; but he completed his victory by the loss of his life. The apostle speaks of the cross upon which he bled and died, as the great scene of this engagement, and on which he vanquished and triumphed forever over the powers of hell. Dying spoiled principalities and powers, and taken away all their armour wherein they trusted, he made a show of them, openly triumphing over them upon the cross, leading them as you would captives in chains; rebels still, but unable to rob the Lord Christ of the glory of any part of his conquest.

Thus, through death he conquered death, and him that had the power of death, that is, the devil. O blessed and almighty Jesus, eternal thanks are due to thee for this most glorious victory. Satan is now a vanquished foe: he is under thy feet, thou high exalted head of the redeemed. Thou hast for them, and in their stead, overcome all his wiles and assaults. He may tempt, but he cannot conquer them. He has no right to accuse them—thou hast made an end of sin. He has no power to torment them—thou hast brought in everlasting righteousness. He cannot pluck them out of thy hands—they are dear to thee, and kept as the apple of thine eye. Glory be to thee, thou wilt soon bring them out of the reach of his temptations, and thou wilt be to them an eternal and infinitely perfect Saviour.

In this faith, O my soul, thou art called upon to take up arms against the old serpent. Thou art to fight against him under the banner of Jesus—a name terrible to the devil and his angels. Trusting to the victory of Jesus for thee, and to the strength of Jesus working in thee, thou art daily to bring him honor and renown. How safe, how blessed is such a warfare! Thou hast the wisdom of thy God and Saviour to discover to thee the wiles of Satan. Trust to it, O my soul. Leave thyself simply to his direction; and although Satan be subtle and cunning, although he has depths of policy, and plans out of number, yet

thou shall not be ignorant of his devices. Thy all-knowing Saviour will detect his plots, and turn the counsel of that Ahithophel into folly. And if he attacks thee as a roaring lion, yet fear him not. Thy Redeemer is strong. He has bruised the serpent's head; resist him in faith, and thou shalt bruise it also. Lean on the arm of thy Jesus; depend on his promised strength; follow his orders, and thou shalt tread Satan under thy feet daily.

But above all, remember that thou canst only conquer him by faith; by faith in the victory of Jesus, built upon thy faith in the word of Jesus; for thus the Scripture testifies of the conquerors now round the throne, "that they overcame the devil by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony"—they overcame him by depending upon the atoning blood, and by trusting to what the word says of its all-sufficiency to save; and they found by experience the promised victory. To the same effect the apostle Peter stirs up believers to a sobriety in the use of all creature comforts, and to a continual watchfulness against their enemies, in order that they might daily Conquer: "Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: whom resist STEADFAST IN THE FAITH." This brings victory. The believer resists the devil, and stands against him steadfastly in the power of Christ. This power is almighty, and therefore faith relying upon it infallibly secures victory. The devil may throw his fiery darts thick and fast, but the shield of faith is proof against them. It is able, through God, to quench them; so that the fire of temptation shall not inflame the soul. How precious are these Scriptures! how encouraging to the Christian soldier! They promise him everything needful for the battle and for victory. Why then shouldst thou doubt, O my soul, of the promised blessings? Take courage. Fight under the banner of Jesus. Keep close to his colours. Follow strictly his orders; and he will keep Satan under thy feet to-day, and thou shalt be more than conqueror over him for ever.

Considering thy war with Satan in this light, what is there in it, O my soul, to stop thee in thy way to heaven? Thou art called upon to fight against him, but then it is in the Lord's strength, and as a partaker of his conquest. He made all thine enemies his. He fought thy battles. Ills triumph is thine. Thou mayest therefore sing of victory before every, battle. Thou dost not fight to gain the pardon of thy sins, or to make thyself righteous; but to oppose thine adversary, who would draw thee into sin, and, if he could, would rob thee of thy righteousness. He hates thee, because Christ loves thee. But his hatred is in vain. Thy Saviour has conquered him for thee, and by faith will conquer him in thee: for thou art kept by his almighty power. Trusting to this, go forth

strong in the Lord. While thou art living in communion with him, thy warfare will be successful. If thou attend to his word, and follow his orders, he will encourage thy heart, and strengthen thy hands with such promises as these—

I have chosen thee to be a soldier, and I send thee out to fight against all the enemies of thy peace. But thou dost not go to this warfare at thine own charges, nor carry it on doubtful of victory. I have provided everything needful for maintaining the battle, and for bringing thee off conqueror. Thou shalt find much profit in this holy war. it will be the means of keeping up constant fellowship with me. Thou shalt see thy need of coming to me for courage, for orders, for strength; and by faith thou wilt receive sensible experience of my being present with thee, and on thy side. Only trust me, and thou shalt find me faithful to my promise of help and victory. Go forth then to thy daily warfare, and boldly face Satan. Fear him not in the least: for that would betray a doubt of my having him under my feet, or of my putting him under thine. Give not place to him; no, not for a moment: but resist him, and continue to resist him, steadfast in faith and prayer—trusting to my promise, and depending on mine arm. Be sober, be vigilant. Thus oppose the devil, and thou wilt certainly conquer him. And having conquered, fight on. In the fight look to me for victory; having obtained it, expect a fresh battle, and look still to me for victory; and thus go on conquering and to conquer. Thy crown is in my keeping. As sure as I have it on my head, it shall be on thine. Thou shalt soon sit down with me on my throne, a crowned conqueror for evermore.

Glory be to thee, my precious Jesus, for these faithful promises, in which thou hast caused me to put my trust. And now, Lord, let the thing that thou hast spoken concerning thy servant be established, and do as thou hast said. Thou hast put it into my heart to desire to be a good soldier, and to fight thy battles against all the enemies of thy crown and dignity. O thou glorious Captain of my salvation, arm me for my daily warfare with Satan. He is too cunning for me; O my God, teach me his devices, he is too mighty for me, but the seed of the woman hath bruised his head; yes, almighty Jesus, thou hast destroyed the devil and his works. I believe in thy victory. O let me partake of its fruits, and daily bring thee honor and renown by my victories. Make me strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus, that I may not fear Satan: send me out against him armed with thine invincible armour. Strengthen me, O my God, that I faint not through the length or sharpness of the battle; but enable me to persevere, till thou discharge me from the war. Thus, in a constant dependence upon thee, would I light the good fight of faith, keeping up communion with thee in every battle, and growing more acquainted with my wants, and more

thankful for every supply. O my loving Jesus, increase my fellowship with thee. I desire to war a good warfare, and everything needful for it is from thee. From thy fulness I expect it; and when I receive it, I would use it to thy glory. Hear, Lord, and answer me, for thy mercies' sake. Amen and Amen.

THE WALK OF FAITH CHAPTER XIV.

THE BELIEVER, KEPT BY THE POWER OF GOD, PERSEVERES IN HIS HOLY WALK AND VICTORIOUS WARFARE.

AFTER the believer has made a great progress in his walk, and has been very successful in his warfare, yet he is not out of the reach of any temptation, he is still liable to be stopped in the way of duty. His enemies may cheat him by some stratagem, or gain some advantage over him by open force. While he is attending to these things, as they come before him in his daily experience, a thought will often arise: –

I am afraid my profession will at last come to nothing, and I shall, be a cast-away. I feel so much corruption working in my duties, and my heart is so ready to revolt and to turn from the Lord in every battle, that I cannot help being uneasy about my final state. How can I? It is not in me to hold out and persevere against so much opposition from within and without. What signifies my resolution to walk forward, or to fight for an uncertain crown? I think I gain no ground. Mine own carnal will plagues me, and I love ease and quiet as much as ever. My corruptions seem as many, and mine enemies as strong, as they were. One day, I fear, I shall perish by their hands. My heart faints at the thought. My courage fails me. O wretched man that I am! where, to whom shall I look for strength to enable me to hold out unto the end?

No believer is absolutely free from such an attack; and there are seasons very favorable to it. If his mind be in heaviness through manifold temptations, he may be reasoning legally upon them; if he be under the hidings of the Lord's countenance, or in a time of desertion; if he be fallen into any great sin, perhaps his old besetting sin; if the guilt of it be upon his conscience, and the indignation of God be heavy upon him: then such thoughts find easy admittance; and if they be indulged, they greatly distress the believer: for they directly assault his faith, and strike at the very being of his hope. As these

graces are weakened, he moves slowly; and if unbelief prevail, there is a stop put to his progress in the heavenly road.

Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, who has made ample provision for victory over this temptation. The principles before insisted on are now to be brought into practice. Here is a fresh occasion to try their power and influence, and to make it appear that in these distressing circumstances the Father has given his children good ground to rely upon his unchangeable love. He has revealed to them the immutability of his counsel and of his oath, that when they have fled to Jesus for refuge, they may comfort their hearts and say—I have been afraid of falling away, but it is without reason; for I have still immutable things to trust in—although to my sense and feeling everything seems to make against me, yet God has promised not to leave me nor forsake me. O that I may honor his promise, and without doubting rely upon his faithful arm to make it good!

Consider then, O my soul, the principles of the doctrine of Christ. Review them carefully. Thou seest what influence they have upon every step of thy hulk, and how mighty they are, through God, to carry thee through all thy difficulties. O study then the perfect freeness and the absolute sufficiency of the salvation of Jesus. Read and mark the bonds and securities which a faithful God has given thee to trust in and not to be afraid. The time to honor them most, is to believe them when thou hast the least sensible evidence; for that is the strongest faith. If thou canst believe upon his bare word—and it is a very good warrant,—thy feet shall stand firm upon the rock, and thy goings shall be well ordered: and that thou mayest believe this in the hardest trials, God informs thee that thy continuance in grace does not depend on thyself. "Thou standest by faith:" and faith should direct thee to what God has undertaken and has promised to do for thee. He would have thee to place the confidence of thy heart upon his tried word, which is a never-failing foundation, and if thou wast to build all thy hopes of persevering upon it, it would quiet thy fears and comfort thy heart. Thou wouldst then see that God has not left thee to thyself to stand or fall, but has engaged never to leave thee nor forsake thee. He has declared he will not turn away from thee to do thee good, and he will put his fear into thy heart, and thou shalt not turn away from him. View thy case in this comfortable light, and while thou art considering the safety of thy persevering, as revealed in Scripture for the ground of thy faith, may every promise lead thee to trust more in God, and to trust less to thyself, and then the snare which was laid for thee will be broken, and thou wilt be delivered.

But take heed of carrying thine opinions to Scripture, and of forcing it to speak for them. Beware of that common mistake; and beware of human systems. Pay no regard to men or names. Simply attend to the promises of God concerning thy persevering. Thy present trial has convinced thee that thou canst not depend on thy own faithfulness: this therefore is the time to learn practically the faithfulness of God, and to improve thy faith in it from such scripture arguments as these: –

First, the nature of the divine covenant, which is not only the unchangeable will of the eternal Three, but is also their agreement, confirmed by oath, concerning the heirs of promise.

The Father loved them as his children, freely, with an everlasting love: he chose them and gave them to his Son; he engaged to keep them by his power, through faith unto salvation.

The Son accepted them, and wrote all their names in his book (not one of them therefore can be lost); he undertook to be made man, and to live and die for them; to rise from the dead, to ascend, and to intercede for them: and he sitteth as King Mediator upon the throne, till every one of them be brought to glory.

The Holy Spirit covenanted to carry into execution the purposes of the Father's love, and to apply the blessings of the Son's salvation. He undertook to quicken the heirs of promise, to call them effectually, to guide, to strengthen, to sanctify, and to comfort them: yea, he is not to leave them, till the number of the elect be perfected. Therefore, HE ABIDES WITH THEM FOREVER.

In this covenant the eternal Three have undertaken for every heir of promise—to do all for him, and all in him—for the means, and for the end—so that not one of them can perish: for faithfulness to the covenant is one of the highest honours of the Godhead: "I am Jehovah your Elohim, which KEEPETH covenant; I will EVER BE MINDFUL of my covenant—My covenant WILL I NOT BREAK, nor alter the thing that has gone out of my mouth." What strong consolation is there in these words! Study them, O my soul, that by them thy faith may be established, and they may do thee good, like a medicine.

Thou art afraid of falling away; but the blessed Trinity have undertaken to hold thee up, and their covenant engagements are to be the ground of thy believing that they will fulfil what they have promised. Observe and adore the goodness of God; see, how he meets thy doubts, and answers thine objections—"An oath for confirmation is among men an end of all strife: wherein God,

willing more abundantly to show to the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge" to Jesus. Thy faith should run parallel with this promise, and should safely trust as far as it warrants thee: now it gives thee sufficient reason to conclude, that thy state before God is immutable, and that he has determined thou shalt not fall away and perish: for observe,

Secondly, his design in the covenant, he knew thy frame, thy infirmities, and thy temptations, and therefore he provided the covenant, and promised the blessings of it upon oath, for thy sake—to end ALL, strife in thy conscience—and to give thee strong consolation. This was his mind and will. He revealed it for thee, to settle thy heart in believing, and to administer to thee great comfort. Weigh attentively each of these particulars, and then say, what more could have been done to satisfy thee of thine immutable persevering?

But thou thinkest, "Such trials as thine are uncommon, and perhaps not provided for in the covenant, and therefore it can be no disparagement to the divine faithfulness if thou shouldst fall away." How can this be, since the everlasting covenant is ORDERED IN ALL THINGS, and on the part of God is absolutely SURE—nothing that concerns thee is left out of it—not a single hair of thy head—thy trials are all appointed and ordered, and the end also which they are to answer.

Perhaps, from the clear evidence of the divine record, thou art convinced of the covenant of God to save the heirs of promise, and of his engaging to keep them, that they shall never perish; but thou art afraid thou art not in the covenant, nor an heir of promise. From whence arise thy fears? From Scripture? No: all Scripture is on thy side. Hast thou not fled as a poor sinner to Jesus for refuge? Hast thou not acknowledged his divine nature, and his all-sufficient work? And though thou art now tempted to doubt, yet some faith is still fighting against unbelief. These are covenant blessings. O look up then to Jesus—why not THY Jesus? But however, look to him—keep looking on—and he will give thee reason to be ashamed of thy doubts and fears.

But the Lord hides himself from me, and therefore I fear I am not in his favor. This objection is answered in the charter of grace: I WILL NOT TURN AWAY FROM DOING THEE GOOD. He has hid his face, and thou art troubled: this trouble is for good. It should put thee upon inquiring into the reason of God's hiding himself. It should humble thee, and should exercise

thy faith upon such a scripture as this: "For the iniquity of his covetousness was I wroth, and smote him; I hid me, and was worth, and he went on forwardly in the way of his heart. I have been his ways and will heal him; I will lead him also, and will restore comforts to him and to his mourners." Although he hid himself, yet he had love to his people: although he smote them, yet it was a fatherly correction. But

Thou fearest God not only hides his face, but has also quite forsaken thee: he may, as to thy sense and feeling, but not as to his own purpose, which changeth not. Hear how he speaks to thee, and silences thy doubts: "For a small moment have I forsaken thee, but with great mercies will I gather thee; in a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment, but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer." How gracious is thy God! What infinite mercy is it, that he should give thee such promises, so suited to the trials of thy faith, to preserve thee under them, and to bring thee out of them! Read carefully, over and over again, these promises; and may every reading of them disperse the cloud of unbelief, until thy soul be enlivened with rite light of the Lord's loving countenance.

But perhaps thou art in a worse case, as to thine own apprehension: thou thinkest, "God is incensed against me, and justly—he has cast me off, and I can expect no more favor at his hand; once, indeed, I thought he loved me, but I have fallen into a great 'sin—an old besetting sin—my conscience accuses me of committing it against light and conviction—it is a foul black spot, such as is not to be found upon the children of God."

Thou art fallen: and wilt thou lie there, and not be raised up again? Thou art under guilt; and wilt thou nurse it, and add sin to sin? Aggravate the sinfulness of thy fall as much as thou wilt, yet thou canst not be truly humbled for it, but by returning to God, and by trusting in the plenteous redemption that is in Christ Jesus. Then thy heart will be softened and melted into love, for grace will have its due honor, and thou wilt see what the Scripture says of thy case, in its divine truth and majesty. Thou wilt feel thyself exactly what the word of God says of thee—a fallen sinful creature: in thee (that is, in thy. flesh) dwelleth no good thing; so that there is not any sin but thou art capable of failing into it, through the strength of temptation.

So long as thou art in the body, the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh: in this conflict thou mayest fall, but the covenant secures thee from perishing. Abraham, the father of the faithful, fell—the friend

of God fell into the stone sin again and again. Moses fell: so did David. Peter, forewarned, fell: so, did all the apostles. Yet they were believers, and they did recover themselves out of the snare of the devil. For whatever sin thou art fallen into may be pardoned, as theirs was. "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin:" there is in an infinite virtue to wash away every spot and stain; it is a public fountain; it stands open for daily use, that believers may wash and be clean; it is always, at every given moment, effectual; it **CLEANSETH**, in the present tense, now-to-day, while it is called to-day: for there is nothing new to be suffered on the part of Christ, in order to take away sin. He put it away by the sacrifice of himself: the Father accepted it, and thus proclaims the free forgiveness of all the trespasses for which the atonement was made: "I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more."

Why dost thou reject the comfort of this promise? It is suited to thy present distress, and is the remedy for it. Thou art fallen into unrighteousness: God says, I will be merciful to it. Thou art fallen into sins and iniquities: he says, I will remember them no more. Thou mayest remember thy fall, but let it be in order to rise from it by faith. It should teach thee thy need of the blood of the Lamb. It should bring thee to sprinkle it afresh upon thy conscience, and to live safe and happy under the protection of it. Thus, apply it to thy fall, and thou wilt repent aright; thou wilt be truly humbled and made more watchful. Thou wilt live more by faith in thy covenant God, wilt glorify more the infinitely perfect salvation of Jesus, and wilt be more dependent upon the grace and keeping of the eternal Spirit.

Consider, then, O my soul, the rich, abounding, super-abounding grace of thy God, in making such a provision for raising thee up when fallen into sin. He intended the promises in the covenant should be the means of thy recovery, as they give thee good ground still to trust in a covenant God, and in his immutable counsel and oath. O lie not then in guilt: rest not in unbelief: give not place to the devil. The Lord has put words into thy mouth, may he help thee, in the faith of thy heart, to take them up and say, "Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me. I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against me; he will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness." If the Lord open to thee the rich treasury of grace in this scripture, and enable thee to depend on the ample security here given for raising thee from thy fall; then consider, in the—

Third place, the express promises made in the covenant, that the believer shall not perish, but shall have everlasting life. These promises are not conditional, made to the believer upon certain terms, as if upon doing his part, God would do his also; for he does not stand by his own will, or strength, or faithfulness; he does not hold out to the end by his own diligence and watchfulness in means, or receive the crown of glory as the merited reward of any works of righteousness done by him. The promises are all of free grace, not dependent on man's will, but on God's; not yea and nay, but of absolutely certain fulfilment. They were all made in the covenant to Christ the head, and are already made good to Christ, as the head, for the use of his members. "For Ann the promises of God are in him Yea, and in him Amen." He was given for the covenant of his people, and as such, he undertook to do all their works for them and in them; and therefore, all the promised blessings of the covenant are laid up in his fulness. "In him they are yea"—and laid up, as the head has the fulness of the senses for the use of his members—" in him they are Amen." He communicates the promised blessings freely, not conditionally; by believing, and not for working. "Therefore," says the apostle, speaking of Christ's righteousness, "it is of faith, that it might be by grace, to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed."

In this sovereign manner and style runs the covenant, and every promise in it: I WILL BE THEIR GOD of mine own mere motion and grace, and according to the good pleasure of mine own will—AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE. My will shall make them willing in the day of ray power; for I will work in them both to will and to do: yea, I will be a Father unto them, and they shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord almighty. The word Father relates to his children, and expresses the unchangeable love of his heart towards them: it is a dear covenant name, and denotes the inseparable connection between him and his children: whenever they hear it, it should always excite in them an idea of his everlasting affection. He loves his family as a Father, and loves every one of them with the same almighty love. He cannot change. He cannot cease to be a Father, and they cannot cease to be his children. His name is a security to them, that they cannot perish for if one of them could, they all might. And then his covenant purpose to bring many sons unto glory would be defeated—his relation to them as their Father would be broken—he would be a Father without children—he would deny them the promised blessings—he would forget to be gracious to them—his will concerning them would change, or would be over-ruled by some opposite will—and his great plan in the covenant would come to nothing.

But these things cannot possibly be. He is the Father of his children, and he has engaged, by promise and oath, to love, to bless, and to keep them forever. Out of perfect love he gave them to his Son, who undertook to be their Saviour: he came and was made man, Jehovah incarnate, to live and die for them. He was so delighted with them (for he has all their names written in his book) and with the work, that he was straitened till it was accomplished. Blessings on him forever! it is finished. The royal Saviour is upon the throne, almighty to save his dear redeemed. He would lose his name, which is above every name; the honors of his salvation would fade away upon his head, and the glories of his offices would come to nothing, if one whom Jesus lived and died to save, should perish. But it is not possible. Whom he loves, he loves unto the end. "I give unto them," says he, "eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand."

They are his seed—and it was covenanted that he should see his seed. They are the travail of his soul—and he shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied. How can he be satisfied, if any one of them should be lost? He prayed: "Holy Father, keep, through thine own name, those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are one." And the Father always heard him. He prayed that they might be with him where he is, to see his glory: and the Holy Spirit covenanted to bring them to it—he undertook, as his name, Spirit, imports, to breathe life into them, to call, to convert them, to keep them, and to give them everything needful for their spiritual life. How can they fail of coming to glory, being thus kept for it by the power of God? The Holy Spirit would lose his name, Spirit, or breath of life; and his office, which is to abide with, and to dwell for ever in, the elect people of God, if any one of them should die from God, and perish. Thus there is full security given by the names and offices of the Trinity, that believers shall be kept from falling away. The Father cannot be without his children. The glory of Jesus would fade away, if one of his redeemed was plucked out of his hand. The divine honors of the Spirit of Life would be eclipsed: if he was to forsake his charge, and to suffer any of the redeemed to fall into hell. But these things cannot be. The will of the Father, Son, and Spirit is the same concerning the salvation of the elect, which is as secure as covenant bonds and oaths can make it.

Art thou then, O my soul, established in this great truth? Dost, thou yield to the power of the evidence which the blessed Trinity have vouchsafed to give thee? Meditate carefully upon it for the growth of thy faith. Search the Scriptures, and observe how clearly God declares his fixed purpose to keep his people, and to hold them up unto the end. The great preacher of the gospel

in the Old Testament church, speaks thus of the unchangeable will of a covenant God: "The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee." A great preacher in the New Testament church has confirmed the same precious truth. He is treating of the golden chain of salvation, and showing how inseparable every link of it is, and in this prospect, he triumphs: "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or sword? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us."

By the mouth of these two infallible witnesses the truth is established. They depose that the covenant is immutable, and that nothing can separate believers from the love wherewith God loves them in his Son. O most comfortable doctrine! How encouraging is it in any undertaking to set about it with certain hope of success? How animating in our Christian walk, how reviving in the dark and difficult paths of it, to have God's promise that he will keep us, and bring us to a happy end. How pleasing is it to go on by faith in our warfare, casting all our care upon him who careth for us. How delightful is it to trust his promise, and daily to find it made good: "Ye are kept by the power of God, through faith, unto eternal salvation." Here, O my soul, thou art to seek for strong consolation amidst the trials and difficulties of thy walk. Thou art afraid of falling God has engaged to hold thee up. Thou hast been tempted to think thou shouldst fall quite away, and come to nothing—but God says, thou art **PRESERVED** in Christ Jesus. His covenant and oath are made to confirm the faith of thy persevering. Thou standest by faith, and thy faith should lead thee to rest safely on what God says about thy standing: and for thy faith itself, its continuing, its increasing, thou hast his infallible faithfulness to depend upon. Thou art weak—but he keeps thee by his power. Thine enemies are strong—but none of them shall pluck thee out of his hand. Thou art willing to join them, and to depart from the living God—but he has promised to put his fear into thy heart, and thou shalt not depart from—him, he meets with thy doubts, and answers all thine objections in a word. For he hath said, **I WILL NEVER LEAVE THEE, NOR FORSAKE THEE.**

Be of good courage then, O my soul, and go forward, strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might, and he will bring thee safe to the end of thy journey,

tie has promised it. Put thyself into his hands, and give him the glory of keeping thee. He will hold up thy goings in his paths, that thy footsteps slip not. The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil. The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in, from this time forth, and even for evermore. How then canst thou miscarry, safe under his guidance and keeping? Commit; thy ways unto the Lord. Do it simply. Look up by faith to his promise, and then lean on his arm. Thus, going on, thou mayest rejoice at every step in the Lord thy God. he has left thee a sweet hymn upon the subject, with which the weary travellers to Sion have oft refreshed their spirits. Take it up, and sing it after them. Study it. Mix faith with it: and with perfect reliance on what God, who cannot lie, has promised in it to do for thee, sing and make melody with it in thy heart unto the Lord: –

"In that day sing ye unto her, A vineyard of red wine: I the Lord do keep it: I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day: fury is not in me: who would act the briers and thorns against me in battle? I would go through them; I would burn them together. Or will he take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me, then he shall make peace with me. He shall cause them that come of Jacob to take root: Israel shall blossom and bud, and shall fill the face of the world with fruit."

O my good God and faithful keeper, I do believe these precious promises; help mine unbelief. Forgive my distrusting thy faithfulness, and enable me steadfastly to rely upon it for the future. What return can I make unto thee for grafting me into the true vine? O Lord, this love surpasseth knowledge. I was fit for nothing but the fire, and thou hast brought me into the vineyard of red wine, and hast enabled me to trust in that blood of the Lamb which cheereth God and man. On this my soul lives, and is refreshed and being through grace in him, and living upon him, I bless thee, holy Father, for thy faithful promise to keep me unto the end. I am still an easy prey to all those who seek the hurt of my soul; but thou hast given me thy word, that lest any hurt me, thou wilt keep me night and day.

I confess, gracious God, that I have dishonored thee by doubting of thy love, and by questioning its unchangeableness, but now I believe that fury is not in thee to any one branch in the true vine. There is love, and nothing but love, in all thy dealings with Christ, and with his. Forgive my guilty fears and suspicions of thy forsaking me, arising, from my weakness, and from the strength of mine enemies. I now see that thou canst as easily consume them as fire can briers and thorns. Lord, increase my faith in thy promised strength,

that I may lay hold of it for peace, and may keep fast hold of it for maintaining peace with thee, always and by all means. O grant me this, my good God, that my faith may work more by love Let me take deeper root in Jesus, and grow up more into him, blossoming and budding and flourishing in his vineyard. I depend upon thee to keep me a branch in him, and to make me a fruitful branch bringing forth plentifully the fruits of righteousness, which are by Christ Jesus to the glory and praise of God. I believe the work is thine—thou hast begun it;—and thou wilt carry it on until the day of the Lord Jesus. Thou art faithful to thy word and work. In dependence upon thy faithfulness I hope to persevere. Let it be done unto me according to thy promises, wherein thou hast caused me to put my trust. Hear, Lord, and answer for thy mercies' sake in Jesus, to whom with thee and the eternal Spirit, three persons in one Godhead, be equal glory and praise, for ever and ever. Amen.

THE WALK OF FAITH CHAPTER XV.

THE BELIEVER FINISHES HIS COURSE, AND ENTERS INTO REST.

THE believer is now happily arrived at the verge of life. Goodness and mercy have followed him all His days, and will not lose their glory by forsaking him at the dose of them. It is appointed unto all men once to die, and his fixed time is at hand. The body is returning to dust, and the spirit must appear before the throne of God. In this trying hour he trusts to the principles which had carried him through life, and he finds them a perfect preservative from the fear and from the power of death. The same faith in a reconciled God and loving Father keeps peace in his conscience, and love in his heart, he depends upon the atonement of Immanuel, and is safe: he wraps himself up in the robe of Immanuel's righteousness, and is happy, he knows he shall be found in Jesus, when he stands before God; and therefore he looks upon death as his friend, and meets it with a hope full of glory and immortality.

This is the privilege of believers in Jesus. They die in peace. Their principles are mighty, through God, to support and comfort them in the hour of death. Reader, are these principles thine? Examine carefully. Come to a point in this matter: for it is of infinite and eternal moment. What is thy state? Art thou prepared to die? Perhaps thou art openly profane. And what wilt thou do upon thy deathbed, when the divine law accuses thee, justice condemns thee, and the terrors of hell Lake hold of thee? The stings of guilt, at such a time, will be worse in the conscience than all the tortures that thy sick body can possibly feel. But if thy conscience be asleep--O what a dreadful death! if thou go out

of the world with thine eyes shut, and open them not till thou find the flames of hell about thee!

Perhaps thou art not afraid, because thou hast a decent outside. O take care of trusting in thyself, lest thou shouldst have thy portion with the openly profane. If thou make what thou art or hast any ground of thy hope before God; it thou depend on thy duties, or righteousness, or join them with the work of Christ, and meet death in this confidence; how dreadful will be thy mistake, how inevitable thy ruin! Such false hopes are thus described: "Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, and compass yourselves about with sparks, walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled"—but mind the end—thus saith the Lord: "This shall ye have at mine hand, ye shall lie down in sorrow."

And together with them, will the open enemy of God and his Christ lie down. A denier of revelation is brought, to the bed of languishing—a slow lingering distemper is carrying him off—the physician has given him over—his disease is mortal, and he is convinced of it. But alas, he has no preparation for death and judgment, he has sonic Christian friends, and they talk freely to him about his eternal state, but he will hear nothing of his guilt, or of his want of a Saviour. They get a minister of Christ to visit him, and he speaks to him of sin, which is the transgression of the holy law, and of the justice of God, which is engaged to give transgressors their due, and of the impossibility of his finding mercy at the judgment-seat, until every demand be satisfied, which law and justice have upon him: he tries to persuade the dying man of the Godhead of Jesus, and of the divine work of Jesus, but in vain. He sets at naught the minister's advice, and with a hardened and impenitent heart replies—Be it as it will with me in eternity, I'll have nothing to do with your Christ. So he died. We need not follow him to the judgment-seat, to know what became of his soul. The infallible record has declared what will be the portion of the unbelieving. Their misery is as certain as the truth of God. O reader, examine thyself; for he that believeth not is condemned already: because he hath not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God.

Perhaps thou art in name a Christian, but what; thinkest thou of Christ? The grand heresy of this day is about his person; and if thou art fallen into it, there is no hope in thy death. Is he Jehovah? O leave not this matter undetermined. The truth of his word and the glory of his work depend entirely upon this one point; so does thy peace and comfort: for if thou believe him to be anything but the self-existent God, thou shall; die in thy sins. His sufferings cannot avail for thy pardon, nor his obedience for thy righteousness, unless he be

Jehovah. Without faith in him, as the self-existent Saviour, death will find thee under guilt, and judgment will leave thee among the enemies of God and his Christ.

Whatever evil there is in death to terrify, whatever pain to hurt, the blessed Jesus, by the grace of God, tasted it for all his. The grace of the Father gave him to be the surety for his people unto death, he died for them, and as truly tasted death as over the nicest palate tasted meat or drink. But it was like a taste—of short duration—was not possible that he should be holden long under the bands of death, he rose again on the third day: and because he lives, believers in him shall live also. They are partakers of his victory over death, and share in all its blessings. The sentence of the broken law is repealed. They do not die to bear the punishment of sin: Christ sustained that; the pains and agonies of death fell upon him: "The sorrows of death," says he, "compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me. "He was a just man, who had no reason to fear death; but being found in the place of his people, with their sins upon him, he was to bear every-thing that was dreadful in death. Hence his agonies at the approach of it: "My heart," says he, "is sore pained within me, and file terrors of death are fallen upon me: fearfulness and trembling are conic upon me, and horror hath overwhelmed me."

He endured those inconceivable horrors to deliver them who, through fear of death, had been all their lifetime subject to bondage. But the bondage is at an end, when they believe in his victory. Their fears are dispelled, when they see the glory of the battle which he fought and won—how by dying he took away sin, satisfied justice, removed the curse, conquered death, broke its scepter, took out its sting, and left nothing, in it but what is friendly to them. In these believing views they can meet death with confidence: for they cannot taste that in death which Christ tasted, he felt it, that they might not feel it: he died in agonies, that they might die in peace. O my most loving and precious Jesus, I believe this; let not any unbelief in me dishonor thy complete conquest over all that is fearful or painful in dying. My times are in thy hand: when thou art pleased to bring them to an end, let me find death swallowed up in victory. O that I may then triumph with thy redeemed—What can separate us from the love of Christ?—Shall the sting of death, or the fear of death, or of Satan, or of hell? No; thanks be to God—these were all conquered when Jesus died; subdued forever when he rose again. And he has left us many precious promises that we, trusting in him, shall share in his victory, and find the blessings of it in the hour of death.

Attend then, O my soul, to what he has engaged to bestow upon his dying disciples, as the fruit of his death; and give him credit, not doubting but he will make it good. Live now in the comfort of his promises, and fear not. The almighty Jesus will be with thee, and thou shalt conquer with him in the hour of death. Observe his word, which cannot be broken: "I will ransom them from the power of the grave, I will redeem them from death. O death, I will be thy plague; O grave, I will be thy destruction; repentance shall be hid from mine eyes." The ransom which he here engages to pay for his, he paid as their surety, and he daily applies it to them, as their Saviour. Upon quoting this promise, and 'finding, by faith, the happy fulfilment of it, mark how the apostle rejoices with the Corinthians, in the near view of death: "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law; but thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

O thou most glorious conqueror, almighty Jesus, eternal thanks be to thee, that the law cannot accuse,

Thou hast promised to make them happy in death, and faithful is thy word. The beloved John is one of thy witnesses: "I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, blessed are the dead which die in the Lord." Write it for the use of my disciples, that it may be the ground of their faith when they come to die: I promise to make them blessed in their death: being IN me, members under me their head, and living IN the Lord, they shall die IN the Lord: they shall have union with me, and communion too, when they are dying: the hour of death, the time of their dissolution, shall be a season of great blessedness; they shall have my presence in their last moments: I will walk with them through the valley of the shadow of death, and they shall fear no evil; my rod and my staff shall then comfort them. O my God make thy word good. Sweet Jesus, write this promise upon my heart. O help me to mix faith with it, that when mine appointed time is come, I may experience the blessedness of dying in the Lord. I wait for the time: it is not far off. O keep me, Jesus, till that hour; keep me, Jesus, in that hour. Save me through life and death, and bless me with thine eternal salvation, Hear, and answer, for thy mercies' sake. Amen.

Meditate, O my soul, upon these blessings. Consider how great, how many they are. Consider also thine unworthiness. –Thou art less than the least of them; and yet God has set his love upon thee, and has given thee the greatest of them. He has called thee to the knowledge of his love in Jesus, and has shed it abroad in thy heart, he has set thee in the way that leads to the eternal

enjoyment of his love, has promised to keep thee all the way, and to bless thee at the end of it. He will make thee blessed in death, and blessed for evermore. Hitherto thou hast found him faithful. Not one good thing has failed, which thou didst ask in faith, and wait for at his hands. Review all his dealings with thee, and see what infinite mercy there was in them. He made thy walk prosperous, thy warfare successful, thy crosses sanctified. Thou hast not taken a false step, but when thou was not living by the faith of the Son of God. O trust him then, and be not afraid. His love has brought thee thus far: he has led thee in the right way to the verge of life, and he declares he will not leave thee nor forsake thee in the hour of death. Fear not to look down: fear not to go down with Jesus into the grave. He has promised, "I will be with thee;" and wherever he is, there is heaven, he is with his dying friends, and they are blessed indeed. They die in faith; they live by faith in death; and as soon as faith ceases, they live with their God for ever. The body falls asleep, and rests safely, till the morning of the resurrection. The soul in a moment enters into the joy of its Lord—a joy like his—pure and holy—a fulness of joy: every sense has its proper object—enjoys it—and is satisfied forever.

O what will the heart feel in this blessedness! What acknowledgments will it make to God and the Lamb! To praise him for the wonders of his grace, in bringing to that glory, will be the happy employment of eternity. To see him as he is, in his divine majesty, is heaven. For how great communications of his love the being ever with him, and ever like him, will make the soul capable of, we cannot perfectly conceive. These things are at present too high and heavenly, even for our thoughts. By faith we sometimes have a little glimpse of the glory to be revealed, and it eclipses all the grandeur of the world. There are happy moments when we are permitted to behold the king in his beauty, when he discovers his matchless loveliness, and gives us a taste of the heavenly feast: at such blessed seasons the soul is bowed down and humbled to the dust, adoring the infinite mercy and goodness of God. If there be so much of heaven in these manifestations of divine love, what must the full enjoyment be? We may suppose a happy soul, entered into rest, thus meditating upon the grace which brought it to that glory:—

Blessings and thanks without ceasing be unto Father, Son, and Spirit, through whose sovereign grace I was chosen to this blessedness, and am now brought to the perfect and everlasting enjoyment of it. This communion with the Godhead, through Jesus, is as far beyond my former thoughts of it, as the heaven is above the earth. How great is his goodness, and how great is his beauty, that the Most High and Holy One should thus communicate his love

unto sinful creatures? Glory be to thee, holy Father, for predestinating me to the adoption of children, and for the free gift of the heavenly inheritance. Glory be to thee, incarnate Jehovah, for thy covenant undertakings for me, for thy life, death, and complete salvation. I worship thee, I glorify thee, O God the Holy Ghost, for quickening me, for teaching me, and enabling me, through believing in Jesus, to experience the love of the Father, and for bringing me to enjoy his endless blessings. Surely the goodness and mercy of the holy Trinity have followed me all the days of my life, were with me when I walked through the valley of the shadow of death, and are now my most blessed portion in the house of the Lord. I am made a pillar in the temple of my God, and am to go no more out. O what exceeding riches of grace are these! What has God done for me! Angels, and brethren, help me to raise my debt is immense. No saved sinner can owe him more: it is growing every moment. My praises pay none of it. With my thankful heart—and it is all thankfulness—I only acknowledge his infinite goodness, and own myself his eternal debtor. Blessing and honor, and glory and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb, forever. Reader, art thou in the way which leads to this glory? If not, may the Lord be merciful unto thee, and bring thee unto it. If thou art seeking to be set right in it, remember, Jesus is THE WAY. May his good Spirit enable thee to believe in his word, and to trust in it, till thou attain to the salvation of thy soul. If thou art in the way, and hast communion with the Father, through faith in the atonement and righteousness of his Son, art thou maintaining it in thy daily, walk, and improving it in every duty? And art thou going on thy way rejoicing in God? If thou art sorrowing for outward crosses, or burthened with inward conflicts, canst thou nevertheless find joy and peace in believing? Dost, thou march on, victorious in thy warfare, keeping up communion with God against all opposition of thy spiritual enemies? And is thy faith established upon the faithfulness of God, that he will carry on his own work in thee unto the day of the Lord Jesus? In this faith art thou now living? and in this faith dost thou hope to die? Has God indeed done these wonders for thee? O bless him then with me, and let us magnify his name together.

Be thou exalted, Lord, in us, and by us. Every day we would grow up into nearer and holier communion with thee. We desire to be more like thee, and to show forth more of thy lovely image before men. O help us to praise thee better with our lips and lives. By the communion of the Holy Ghost we would communicate more by faith with the Son in his salvation, and with the Father in his love. O holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity, in this divine fellowship we hope to find our heaven upon earth let it be growing and increasing, helped

forward by all means, and, if it please thee, by this volume. Make it, Lord, the instrument, under thee, of leading thy people into the right way, and of establishing them in it. Accompany the reading of' it with the teaching of thy Spirit, and to the advancement of' thy glory. I present this book unto thee, ever-glorious Jesus, and lay it at; thy feet. Thou knowest my heart: accept it graciously, as a public acknowledgment for inestimable mercies. In thy great compassion overlook the faults in it: what is agreeable to the Scripture is thine own. Make use of it to thy praise. I devote myself, my body and soul, my tongue and pen; all I have and am, to thy service. I would not look upon myself as any longer mine own, but being bought with a price, I would glorify thee in the use of all thy gifts and graces. With thee I desire to walk through life: in thine arms I hope to die. Through thee I expect soon to enjoy perfect; communion with the Father and the Spirit; therefore, into thy hands I commend myself. Keep me in the right way. Guide me to the end of it, that; I may finish my course with joy, and join thy redeemed in giving to thee, with the Father and the Spirit, the three in one Jehovah, equal and everlasting praise. Hear, Lord, and answer. Amen.