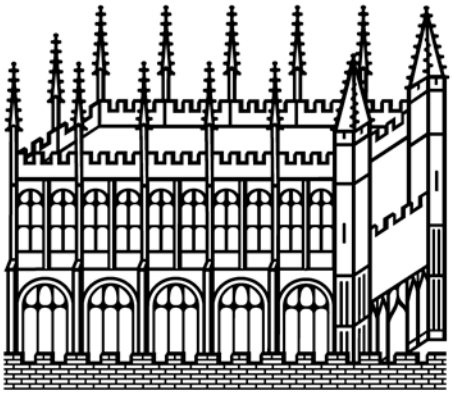

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STRANGE FOOTSTEPS

STRANGE FOOTSTEPS;

OR,

THOUGHTS ON THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD;

Illustrated by Incidents New and Old.

BY

REVS. C. AND H. KENDALL.

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PREFACE.

THE design of the following work is due to Charles Kendall, who also prepared a considerable quantity of material, and wrote the first draft of most of the chapters. Chapter IV., together with the Introduction and Conclusion, however, were written exclusively by Henry Kendall.

The subject of the volume is the Providence of God, whether General or Special. We regard these two spheres of Providential operation as departments of one great whole, and as distinct rather in our thought than in reality. We have, therefore, chosen to consider them in unison.

The narrowness of Supernaturalists, who see a miracle in every curious coincidence, and a warning in every dream, and imagine a reinforcement of spirits in each fresh tingling of the fingers laid on a table at a *séance*, is only equalled by the narrowness of Materialists who reduce this boundless universe to a sort of automatic machine; make God the slave of His own works, and ignore, with a cynical sneer, the innumerable facts which bespeak influences residing in a region of being invisible to us, projected by Intelligence and Will into that terrestrial and material sphere wherein we move. We ask for breadth; we plead for larger views. The universe is wide, and God is great.

There are 'Strange Footsteps' around our human dwelling, which a material philosophy fails to trace or to identify. There is an element of the Supernatural and the Divine in life and in history.

One great use of special interpositions of Providence is, that they serve as specimens of its general operations. They call attention to a class of neglected facts with which, in spirit and meaning, they correspond, if not in outward form. For one instance of a Special Providence, there are ten thousand acts of a General Providence directed towards precisely the same object, and having on them the same marks of design.

Yet instances of a Special Providence are sufficiently numerous to deserve and to demand for it a distinct place in our regard. Comets, compared with stars, are in the minority, and if we multiply both by the moments when they are visible, the disproportion between them will be still greater. Yet no prosy besom shall sweep the comets from our sky. The Aurora Borealis does not perform for us the important and continuous services of the sunlight, yet no incredulous laugh shall frighten away its fire mist as it glows and flits along the Northern heavens. The *Cerus Serpentinus* blooms only one night in the year. About eleven P.M. its flowers begin to open; they unfold themselves of prodigious size, and of the loveliest and most delicate hues imaginable, amply repaying the midnight vigils of the gardener, who, in possession of the secret, sits up that night to watch the evanescent inflorescence; evanescent, for in two or three hours the beautiful hues begin to tarnish, and in the morning the corollas hang dull and soppy. Other visions

besides Blair's Churchyard Ghost, 'evanish at the crowing of the cock.'

Mere coincidence is insufficient to account for the instances of a Special Providence which come before us. Coincidence, in the broad acceptation of the term, is, as a grand rule, the result of design. *Mere* coincidence, where the meeting of related objects takes place by accident, is exceptional. Sometimes two persons who wished to see each other meet accidentally, but how much oftener the meeting occurs because it was sought. Where it is coincidence in events, that disposes us to ascribe them to Providence; the presumption is, before we enquire particularly, that it was ruled by Intelligence; and, when we do enquire particularly, we find in many of these cases, accompanying circumstances that positively forbid their classification under the heading of '*mere* coincidence.'

Truth is stranger than fiction; the marvels of reality are greater and more numerous than the wonders of credulity. Scott, in his 'Demonology,' tells how a man, standing before Northumberland House, in the Strand, rivetting his eyes on the outstretched tail of the bronze lion of Percy, succeeded in gathering a crowd around him, and in persuading a few out of the crowd that the tail of the lion moved, by solemnly declaring—'By heaven it wags—it wags again.' But at the very time that this little imposition was, with some effort, being practised upon a few persons in the Strand, the hundreds of millions of the earth's population were unconscious of the fact that they were being whirled round the earth's centre at the rate of one thousand miles in an hour, and borne right onward in space by means of its annual revolution, at a speed

swifter than that of the swiftest cannon ball. It is a commoner error to see nothing where there is much, than to imagine one sees something where there is nothing.

It is admitted, however, that the abstract arguments for special interposition of Providence are good; analogy is faithful to the cause; it is only facts that prove deserters. It is precisely on facts—ancient and modern—that we are disposed to rest our case. Although this book is liberally interspersed with historical and biographical incident we have brought to the market only a single brick of the building. The evidence of facts is cumulative, and in some departments, where we have scarcely ventured, it is overwhelming.

This book does not profess to be exhaustive, or scientifically theological, as a treatise on the subject of Providence. It is intended rather to be of a popular character—to stimulate enquiry, and to lead to practical results.

It is the privilege of sincere and devout minds to find more of God's presence and guidance in life than it is usual even for the pious to credit. If these pages shall promote the conviction that the Divine Government is an active thing, which has to do with us every hour; that its purpose is, by means of the discipline to which it subjects us, to make us pure and useful, and to fit us for a higher sphere in our future existence; and that it is possible to obtain effectual help, and clear guidance, and deep consolation through prayer, we shall regard this, our joint labour, as well spent.

CHARLES KENDALL,
HENRY KENDALL.

May 1, 1871.

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STRANGE FOOTSTEPS;

OR,

Thoughts on the Providence of God.

INTRODUCTION.

THE Bible abounds with the noblest spiritual truths which concern all men alike, and the importance of which will last till the end of time. Of these truths one of the most interesting and helpful is that of Divine Providence. The word *providence* is derived from the Latin *pro, before;* and *videre, to see;* or from *providere, to foresee, to provide.* The corresponding Greek word, *pronoia,* signifies *forethought.* When applied to God, this word Providence denotes the superintending care which He exercises over all His works; involving all that infinite foreknowledge and wisdom with which He shapes the causes that are at work, and influences the events which take place, so as to bring about the purposes of His holy and blessed will, whether in the career of a single individual or in the mightiest movements affecting the well-being of communities or of the

world at large. As represented in Scripture, Providence is at once so comprehensive, that no periods are too long or multitudes too vast for its grasp, and so minute that no creature is too insignificant for its notice. On the one hand, it covers the whole ground of history; it erects a bridge of many arches over the awful gulf of time; and is now developing to wider reaches the plan which began to be unfolded with the origin of the human race: while on the other hand, as it watches over a nation, it also guards a little child, numbers the very hairs of our head, feeds the ravens, clothes the lilies, and marks the fall of a twittering sparrow to the ground. So far as efficiency of supervision is concerned, it knows no distinction between great and small; it exercises the same sufficient care over all alike. It has shown as much finish, and accuracy, and adaptation in the formation of an insect's wing as in the architecture of the human body. In this Providence every man is moving; it surrounds him more closely than the atmosphere which he breathes; go where he will, and do what he may, he cannot escape from it; he may make it his enemy, but it waits and works to be his friend. All his actions call forth corresponding acts of the Deity towards him: every step he takes in life he treads on springs which vibrate through the universe. He may seem insignificant; his weal or woe may be of no account to the world; but his fate is of supreme moment to himself, and it is a subject of tender concern to the Being who is best and greatest.

There is a distinction which it is important to notice between a general and a particular Providence; and again, between a general and a special Providence. By a general as opposed to a particular Providence, we mean that which

deals with things as a whole, and presides over classes and orders of beings. By a particular Providence, we mean that which extends to details and takes care of individual creatures. When we distinguish between a general and a special Providence, the distinction refers not so much to the objects of the Divine care, as to the kind of care exercised over them; which indeed may be always the same, but to our apprehension has its regular and its peculiar, its ordinary and its extraordinary manifestations. In this distinction, we mean by a general Providence that supervision of the world as a whole, whose end is to secure the general welfare or the general Divine intention; and that exercise of Divine forethought which has instituted great, comprehensive laws for calling into being, sustaining, governing, and removing His creatures, according to which certain natural causes invariably produce certain effects: whereas a special Providence not only secures special ends, but also involves the idea of supernatural operation. Its essential element is the immediate exercise of the Divine will, whether by way of command or of permission; and whether the instrumentality employed be the forces of material nature, or disembodied spirits, or aught else. Miracles, the inspiration of Scripture, and the gracious work of regeneration and sanctification accomplished by the Holy Spirit in the minds of men, productive as it is of such important outward consequences, must be classed along with those supernatural interpositions in human affairs which are ordinarily designated special Providences. The fresh direct forthputting of the Divine energy is the common mark by which they are all distinguished.

The general Providence of God forms an immense, and,

practically, a boundless field for research and for contemplation. It includes all those instances of design in nature which meet the deep instincts of our own breasts, and which, next to these instincts, form the most convincing evidence that there is a God who has created all things, and that this God is a Personal Intelligence. Even little children understand quite correctly, that mouths were given to eat with, noses to smell with, eyes to see with, ears to hear with, feet to walk with, and hands for work. These organs have been fashioned by the Creator for these purposes in accordance with a general plan. By one broad arrangement He provided for the wants which He foresaw we should experience. Paley, in his Natural Theology, a book which has run through many editions, has brought together numerous instances of design in nature; and with characteristic clearness and force, has urged them in proof of the personality and intelligence of the Creator. Perhaps no one has contributed more to the number of these recorded instances than Mr. Darwin—who is often alleged to have damaged the Design Argument, though Charles Kingsley has maintained, very earnestly, in Good Words for Oct., 1870, that there is nothing in Darwin's Hypothesis of Natural Selection calculated to lower our conceptions of Divine Providence, but the contrary. His recent work, however, on "The Descent of Man," pushes this beautiful hypothesis to an extreme far beyond the support of facts, and is in decisive conflict with Revelation. An able scientific work has been written by Dr. Bell, on the Human Hand, which demonstrates elaborate design in that member of the body. The Duke of Argyll, in his volume on the Reign of Law, has a very instructive and most interesting

chapter on the Flight of Birds, which exhibits with a perspecuity evidently resulting from complete mastery of the subject, the Divine skill in the construction of a bird's wing; and shows how the problem of navigating the air with efficiency, at which mechanicians and philosophers are still toiling in vain, was solved by the Creator at a period far back in the pre-historical past, when He called the feathered races into existence, and gave them the atmosphere as their peculiar domain. God has exercised a marvellous foresight in nature, providing for the accomplishment of beneficent ends by means which human ingenuity humbly strives to imitate, but often fails to copy with sufficient accuracy to ensure success.

To whatever extent the theory of Development may be found to be true, our impression of design, and our admiration of the Designer, must be proportionately enhanced; just as we admire our alphabet, out of the twenty-six letters of which we are able to construct every word in the language, much more than we admire the old system of hieroglyphics, which required for every word a separate sign.

That there is a general Providence at work, maintaining the laws of nature and shaping the course of events, as a whole, is a truth so obvious that it is all but universally admitted by those who believe in a God. But the particular and the special Providence of God are frequently doubted or denied. As to a Particular Providence, no solid reason can be assigned that should lead the Deity to exercise any degree of Providential care over the world which would not lead Him to exercise a like care over every part of it, and over everything that He is pleased to create. A mere

general Providence involves the atheistic notion that God really exercises no control over a large portion of His works. As far as Providence is confined to generalities and overlooks particulars, it is incomplete, and therefore inconsistent with the idea of a perfect Being. Earthly sovereigns, it is true, are compelled to do nearly all the work of government by means of deputies: they have a subordinate minister for each department of state affairs, who again has under him inferior officers. Government would be much more efficient if it could be carried on altogether by one man, but there is no one man equal to the task—no one that has time and strength enough to make himself acquainted with the minute affairs of a whole kingdom, and with every individual subject that it contains. This which man cannot do, God does in His empire, though it is inconceivably wider than the widest realm of earth, and His ability to do it declares His perfection. Omnipresence, omnipotence, omniscience, perfect holiness, and infinite benevolence—these are attributes necessary to the very conception of a God, and at the same time necessitating the extension of His Providence to the minute as well as to the vast, to the parts and atoms of a system as well as to its main outlines, even as the light with which the glorious sun makes day within our hemisphere, is reflected by glistening grains of sand as well as by the ridges of the hills, and by tiny moss as well as by the gigantic oak of the forest, and falls upon the fox's hole where the young ones play and sun themselves, as well as on the halls of legislators, and the palaces of kings.

It is this superiority of the Heavenly to any earthly sovereign, which enables Him to be at once Father and

King to every one of His intelligent creatures. While His empire is so vast that it contains innumerable millions, He is so intimately acquainted with the affairs of each individual, and so tenderly concerned for the welfare of each, that He is a Father to every one of His countless subjects. No earthly sovereign can be a father to his people in the true sense of the word. It is only God who can combine both these relationships in one person.

It is frequently found that men object to the doctrine of a particular Providence from a feeling that it is below the dignity of so lofty a Being as God. For Him to watch over the smallest creatures, and the minutest affairs, is supposed to be a degradation. To this it may be replied, first, that God is not the proud being we expect to find a man to be: the little and the lowly are precious in His sight. Then again we have to notice that a great number of minute affairs, if they are each of them of some consequence, make up a sum which is of great importance, and that there is no way of taking care of the sum without taking care of each particular. A small mishap or defect often proves to be of serious consequence. It has been said that the waving of one's arm sends a shudder to the stars, and that the casting of a pebble into a pond alters the position of the universe, and some have theorized, not without plausibility, on the possibility of a superior being at the Judgment Day reading all the deeds which have been done on earth, and all the words that have been spoken, though but whispered to the breeze in the infinitesimal vibrations still circulating in the atmosphere as the result of them. Such refinements as these produce no practical impression: but this at least we must feel, that a great matter is so often

kindled by a little fire, and the veriest trifle of an accident is sometimes productive of such extensive changes, that it is a positive relief to know that there is a wise Providence superintending all things. Let us not be hasty in concluding that this object or that event is little in the estimation of God. Who shall determine what is little or what is great that is linked with the vast designs of Him who sees the end from the beginning? Was it a little event when Eve ate the forbidden fruit? Was it a little event when the babe Moses was discovered floating on the river Nile in his ark of bulrushes, or when the daughter of Pharaoh unwittingly committed him into the hands of his own mother to be nursed? Was it a little event when Ruth went a gleaning after the reapers? Was it little when David learned to play the harp, or when he was sent to carry refreshments to his brothers in Saul's camp? Was it an insignificant occurrence when Saul of Tarsus was converted? Was it a trivial circumstance when Mahomet's pursuers turned away from the cave where he had taken refuge, because they noticed a dove fly from the mouth of it, and so concluded that no one could be hiding there? Was it trivial when Oliver Cromwell was brought back out of the boat that was to take him to the ship in which he intended to sail to America? Was it a small thing when John Wesley, as a child, was remembered at the very last, and rescued from his father's burning house by one neighbour standing on the shoulders of another, and receiving the little fellow from the bedroom window where he had shown himself? Was that puff of wind of no moment which by blowing out the light of the examiner at the door, enabled William Clowes, one of the founders of the Primitive

Methodist Connexion, to pass with a false ticket into the lovefeast where he was first awakened to a sense of sin? It is impossible for us to tell whether anything is trivial until we know all the consequences which it is destined to produce.

This life of ours, though prosy enough in many of its details—we smile at the mention of some of the occupations to which human beings have to give their time and talents—is yet sublime on account of its connection with Christ and with the great Hereafter. It is the portico to a massive, magnificent building. We may enter Westminster Abbey by a low archway and a queer old door, but when we get inside what a sudden enlargement! and what wonders! what visions in stone! Life is a low doorway where we must stoop even to the dust, but it conducts to infinite possibilities. Heaven or hell is suspended on the use we make of it.

A very little thing may put a period to our earthly career: a falling stone, an ounce of lead, the breathing of contagious breath, a chill caught from the cold atmosphere, might do it: but what tremendous consequences would ensue. The change that would be produced by this insignificant cause, would be nothing less than emigration to the land of light or transportation to the region where day has been swallowed up in one long night. Our great Dramatist has brought out with marvellous power, in his celebrated soliloquy of Hamlet, this hingeing of vast results on any petty instrument which might be employed to procure death. A man might make his own quietus with a bare bodkin, and any time rid himself of all the ills of life, but the dread of worse ills hereafter puzzles him, and holds his hand in check.

In asserting a special Providence, that is to say a Providence which contains an element of the supernatural and the Divine, brought to bear on the lives of men, we are well aware that we place ourselves in a position which is simply contemptible to a powerful section of the intelligent and scientific world. They think that the supernatural in human affairs is a dream of the past, a hobgoblin of superstition. The researches of science have ascertained the existence of law in every direction : the most irregular phenomena, such as comets and earthquakes, plagues and storms, are now proved to be just as much under its dominion as the solid rocks. Scores of thousands of witches were burned in Christendom on evidence taken before judges, and deemed unimpeachable ; and the tribe never died out until men ceased either to persecute them or to believe in them. Apparitions have vanished with the morning light of knowledge ; the whistle of railway engines has scattered them ; natural law is universal, incessant, all-pervading ; there is no satisfactory evidence that ever once within the limits of history it has been suspended ; it is a reflection on the constancy of God to suppose that He will allow the order which He has established to be violated.

What answer have we to make? Why, first, it is freely admitted that law, though not natural law, is universal ; and that there is no such thing as the violation of law in the ways and works of God. The supernatural is just as much in harmony with it as the natural ; miracles as much as ordinary occurrences ; the acts of spirits disembodied as much as those of men in the flesh. It is not to be supposed that God in effecting a supernatural interposition works without means or proceeds contrary to law. All that

we are warranted in saying, is that He is stronger than we are, that He uses means which to us are not available, and laws of which we are ignorant. There is one great law, however, which we can clearly see embraces both ordinary and miraculous events, and enables us to include them in the same category. Dr. Bushnell, in 'Nature and the Supernatural,' has made an important contribution to this part of theological science by expounding and exhibiting in various lights the power of the will to originate fresh chains of causation, fresh successions of cause and effect. There are certain forces now at work in nature, which, if let alone, will produce a certain result. But it is the prerogative of will to play into nature a fresh force, and to divert the pre-existing ones from the channel they were pursuing. Men are always interfering in this way with the course of nature. The principle is the same when God interferes, and a miracle is wrought. It was no more a violation or suspension of law when an angel rolled away the stone from the sepulchre of Jesus, than it was when men rolled away the stone from the tomb of Lazarus. It was the law of the stone to lie still if not disturbed and compelled to move by an extraneous force. In each case another and stronger law was brought to bear on its immobility. Volition overcame gravitation. In the one case volition employed an arm composed of bone and muscle, and constituting a mechanical lever; in the other, it employed we know not what; but we do not for a moment suppose that it employed nothing at all.

Secondly.—Since all things that are done at all are admitted to be done by law, and the whole universe of being and acting to be under the dominion of law, the

next question is as to the size of the universe. Is it small or great? Is it limited to what we call natural, or does it include something supernatural? And if there be something supernatural, does it ever mix as an element in combination with the natural on this terrestrial sphere? The presumption arising from past discoveries effected by science itself, is in favour of the wider universe and the unlimited variety of elements. For, at one time, the stars were thought to be small globes of fire, situated only a few miles above the ground: but astronomy has proved them to be immense worlds, revolving at inconceivable distances from our earth, and among astronomers to-day it is almost counted a heresy to suppose they are all uninhabited. The Bible had always taught that there were men up in the sky, whom it called angels, and science has come over substantially to this doctrine. Once it was supposed that Asia, Africa, and Europe, comprised the habitable globe. Columbus pushed over the Atlantic, and found another continent inhabited by other races of plants and animals. Once a drop of water was supposed to be a drop of water and nothing more. The microscope shewed it to be a city in miniature, tenanted by a million living creatures. Once the existence of electricity was unknown; now it is ascertained to pervade all bodies and to be powerful in proportion to its subtilty. Once the material elements were reckoned up at four—air, earth, fire, and water; now their number is swelled to about seventy, and we cannot tell where it will stop. The advance of science and the progress of discovery are simply the opening up and linking on to the domain already won, fresh realms of existence, fresh orders of being, fresh classes of laws. To attempt then to fix any limit, and

to say we will believe in the things that are natural but not in those that are supernatural, is absurd in the light of past discovery.

Thirdly.—When the savans and literati ask for *facts* to prove that supernatural influences are actually at work in the world in which we live, the question causes us a mischievous triumph, for we hear a clamour of voices proceeding from their own side of the hedge, calling them disagreeable names for presuming to deny the activity of the supernatural. The Spiritualists are chiefly composed of men who are of a sceptical order, or whose sympathies are progressive and scientific. In their ranks they number literary men, artists, mathematicians, electricians; they boast that they have found a scientific bridge right over into the spiritual world; that the existence of spirits is as demonstrable as the existence of any material substance; that intercourse with them is a common privilege. We leave the antagonist classes of literary and scientific men—those who have a spirit-phobia and those who have a spirit-mania—to settle between themselves the science of the question; while we take the liberty to pursue the middle path prescribed by the Bible, and maintain the reasonableness of special interpositions of Providence, direct answers to prayer, and a Divine care over every individual however insignificant. The swinging of the pendulum beats time; the compromises of political parties effect political progress; and in this matter of the supernatural, we are persuaded that the truth will be found to lie between the violent extremes of materialists on the one hand, and spiritualists on the other.

Fourthly.—The Spiritualists have their own complaint to

make against us on this subject of Providence. They say, we believe what you tell us about supernatural help and guidance, answers to prayer, and so forth; indeed, we believe that instances of this kind are a thousand times more numerous than you imagine, and we blame you for handling them with such dainty fingers; but we can explain them all by the agency of spirits, and we don't choose to make God so prominent as you do. To this, we have to reply, that the theory of the intervention of spirits covers but a very small part of the ground occupied by Providence. It does not explain the innumerable instances of design in nature, nor the vast and complicated scheme of history, nor even the plan of one man's life. It fails to conduct us fairly across the border land, where Providence and Grace merge in each other. As to many special interpositions and answers to prayer for temporal blessings, we rejoice to admit that they argue the sympathy and co-operation of friendly spirits on the other side of the veil. It is long enough since the question was asked by inspiration with all the effect of an emphatic affirmation, 'are they not all ministering spirits?' But this view of the instrumentality by which many special interpositions are achieved, only enlarges the territory which has to be superintended by the presiding mind of the Deity, and therefore only makes His rule more sublime. It does not warrant us to seek direct intercourse with disembodied spirits. Such intercourse was held to be criminal under the Old Testament dispensation, and was punishable with death. If it be possible to carry it on systematically at the present time, as many affirm it is, the signs are, that it is unhealthy and degrading. The instinct of human nature and of Christian purity revolts at it as an unnatural connection, as

a sort of spiritual incest. The condition of spiritual beings is so superior to ours, that we cannot meet them on an equality, nor hold our own in any continuous intercourse with them. If they were evil, we should become the victims of their cunning: if they were good, we should give to them the trust and reverence which belong to their Master and ours. We are often found leaning unduly on the opinions and on the kindness of loved relatives who are in the flesh, notwithstanding all their imperfections: what could save us from sacrificing heart and intellect, body and soul, to the fascinations of a spiritual being if he should become our familiar? The evangelist John 'falls down to worship before the feet of the angel which showed him these things,' and has to be restrained and solemnly exhorted to worship God. Help must be assimilated, like food, to our own conditions. In the nineteenth chapter of Deuteronomy, it is promised in opposition to the charmers, the consulters with familiar spirits, the wizards and necromancers—declared to be an abomination and a curse to the nations—that the Lord will raise up unto the people of Israel a Prophet from the midst of them, of their brethren, just as Moses had been raised up, and to Him they were to hearken. The Incarnation is the antidote to the poison of necromancy and of spiritualism. Immanuel is the glorious substitute for the spirits of dead men. The Protestant who deems himself justified in asking for the help or for the prayers of a fellow-mortal, maintains that the terms would be completely altered if he were to ask for the intercessions of the Virgin Mary or any one of the Saints. The same distinction may be drawn here with still greater propriety. Outside the sphere of nature we ought to have direct familiar dealing with none

but the Lord of nature, in whose hands we know that we are safe. To Him our requests for help should be addressed, and to Him should be returned our thanksgivings for help received. Not even angels must be allowed to overshadow the Deity, and to come in between us and our Highest Love.

In the *Standard* Newspaper of October 7th, 1869, there is a letter from W. G. Faulkner, Philosophical Instrument Maker, London, stating, that 'for many years he has had a large sale for spirit-rapping magnets and batteries, expressly made for concealment under the floor, in cupboards, under tables, and even for the interior of the centre support of large round tables and boxes, and that he has supplied to the same parties quantities of prepared wire to be placed under the carpets and oilcloth, or under the wainscot and gilt beading around ceilings and rooms, in fact, for every conceivable place.' Although we have often joined in experiments, we have never witnessed anything in connection with table-rapping, which did not seem capable of easy explanation on the theory of involuntary motion secretly influenced by the mind. We do not, however, make our experience the measure of other people's. Augustus de Morgan, the eminent mathematician, in an Introduction which he wrote to his wife's book *From Matter to Spirit*, declares that he heard distinct raps on a table, as if produced by the ends of a bundle of knitting needles when there was nothing to be seen. He does not decide definitely in favour of spiritual agency, but he thinks it the best working theory to go upon in the meantime, till further investigation; and he protects himself from the suspicion of weakness, which he evidently apprehends, by a running fire of raillery kept

up against scientific men who imagine that they can explain everything by their natural laws. In an unpublished letter of his, which we have seen, he predicts that their experience will turn out similar to that of the French savant who was explaining that the boomerang must go in a certain direction, when to his astonishment it turned round and hit his nose. The late Sir David Brewster, as we learn from one of his letters given in his *Home Life*, by his daughter, Mrs. Gordon, witnessed, along with Lord Brougham, movements which they not only could not explain, but could not conceive possible of explanation on natural principles. What they did witness according to his account, was the rising of the table into the air when no one was touching it, and a hand-bell coming of its own accord and putting itself into their hands; but they stoutly refused to refer the wonders they had seen to idle spirits. 'Spirits,' said Sir David, 'is the last thing I will give in to.' Later on in life, however, his daughter tells us, he was more and more inclined to trace up these strange phenomena to diabolical agency, and to connect them with what he read in scripture of the wizards that 'peeped and muttered' in old times, and of the seducing spirits whose 'lying wonders' were yet to come as a characteristic of the last times. It may be mentioned, in connection with the opinion of this eminent man, that a popular scientific Lecturer, in the North of England, who at first entered into the spiritualistic movement with enthusiasm, led by his sympathy with all kinds of progress, afterwards beat a retreat; and assigned as the reason, his full belief that the phenomena were produced by spirits, but that, the spirits were 'nae cannie.' He had no qualms of conscience as to the propriety of communing with ghosts

if their moral character were at all decent; but he found it impossible to test their professions by the process which mathematicians call 'verification,' or to certify himself that they were the persons they gave themselves out to be. The following extract from a letter to us, however, defines his exact position. 'When I completed my inquiries into the phenomena of modern spiritualism, my position was this:—We are in communication with the spiritual world—the communicators from that world may be good, bad, or indifferent, but we have no reliable evidence of their personality, and the communications therefore are not reliable, and to certain minds may be very dangerous. Present opinion precisely the same.' We have not advanced so far in our investigations as the writer of the above, and our position is this:—There are two great questions that must be answered in the affirmative before we can enlist under the banner of spiritualism. First, are the reported movements due to spirits rather than to natural causes? Secondly, if due to spirits, what is their character, and is it right to hold communion with them? And of these two questions, it always seems to us that the second is the more serious.

Much confusion sometimes arises on the subject of Providence, for want of distinguishing between the several great modes or departments of its operation. There is, for instance, a Providence of direction, and a Providence of permission. Many are hurt when they hear Providence spoken of in connection with a train of calamitous events, originating in some one's wickedness. They interrupt the speaker with the round affirmation, there is no Providence at all in it. Most likely the contradiction is only a strife of words. One party means that the original crime or mistake

which led off the train of calamitous events, did not receive the direct sanction of Providence; and that if the will of God had been consulted in the matter, a very different train of consequences would have been originated—which is quite true. The other party means that the whole thing has been *permitted* by the Deity, and dovetailed into His great scheme: that He is sure to bring good out of the evil; and that He will overrule what He disapproved for the accomplishment of His glory and the good of His creatures—which is also quite true. As a moral act, nothing ever was perpetrated so odious to the Divine Father as the crucifixion of His Son Jesus Christ; yet, as a thing permitted and overruled, nothing ever was so highly Providential. There is again a Providence of penalty, and a Providence of discipline. If a bad man suffers for doing wrong, and a good man suffers for doing right, the suffering has in each case a Providential aspect. That which is penalty to the wicked, is discipline or is self-sacrifice to the righteous. The chains of the criminal, and the chains of the patriot, in their clanking, are an accompaniment to two very different tunes. In the department of retributive Providence, much confusion will be avoided by noticing that it has two main divisions, in one of which we must place the suffering arising from sin and crime, and in the other the sufferings that spring from simple ignorance and intellectual mistake—such as fever and death, from the want of proper sanitary arrangements. The best man alive might fall, when on an errand of mercy, and break his leg, in which case he would suffer a physical penalty for a physical offence. It must be confessed, however, that in other instances which might be adduced, the ignorance from

which the physical offence springs, is itself due to moral evil, and in this way the ultimate suffering has both a moral and a physical cause: it punishes in an immediate manner the violation of physical law from which it immediately proceeds, and it punishes more remotely the sin which bred the ignorance which made that violation of physical law possible. Natural philosophers are predisposed by their studies to see in such events as the Great Plague of London in 1665, and the Great Fire which burned down five-sixths of the city within the walls in 1666, nothing beyond physical cause and effect. The narrowness of the streets and the bad sanitary regulations, brought the plague. The fire spread fast and far, because the houses were mostly built of wood, and because there were no fire engines to put it out. But the fire, disastrous as were its immediate effects, led to the rebuilding of the City, with wider streets and with houses of brick or stone, since which time the Plague has never returned, nor has any general conflagration happened. The moral philosopher then who is inclined to take cheerful views, will see in these two events a Providential arrangement, by which out of physical evil much and lasting physical good was educed. But when he recollects the enormities of a great city like London, the manifold ways in which moral evil stimulates physical disorders, and the complicated ramifications of Providence, whose myriad lines converge like the rays of dawn before sunrise, to a point below the horizon, he will reverently pause, and pause long, before he asserts, with I-know-all-about-it air, that such natural catastrophes as pestilence, and fire, and flood, never have a moral origin or end.

It has been objected that believers in Providence record

the instances which favour their views, but take no note of those which are unfavourable. They record remarkable answers to prayer; they are silent respecting the far greater number of cases in which prayer elicits no response. If one man out of a hundred is saved from a colliery explosion, or a foundering ship, the salvation of the one is held up as Providential, while the destruction of the ninety-nine is conveniently passed over. Now, those who explain all by natural causes, see in the failures, as well as in the successes, the power and honour of law, the direct results of due causation. Do the advocates of Providence see anything less? If not, they have clearly the advantage of a wider view, which includes both general law and special interposition, in harmony with the familiar example of all sovereigns exercising a supreme discretionary power over special cases, while in general allowing the law to take its course. And what of these so-called failures? The majority of the seeds which plants produce fail to germinate, but this does not disprove the germination of the remainder. In commercial life, plenty of calls are made, and letters written, without a bargain being struck; but for all that, business gets done, and merchandise is a great fact. As to unanswered prayers, some of them are hardly inferior to those which are answered, as illustrations of the wisdom and kindness of Providence, and many, it cannot be doubted, are humbling illustrations of the dishonesty or the half-heartedness of the petitioner.

In the great scheme of Providence, and in the detailed events which take place in working out that scheme, there are mysteries. While we set out with the conviction that nothing is done under the Divine government arbitrarily,

we are puzzled with the numerous exceptions which we meet with to the great rules by which it works; we find one principle of Providence in apparent conflict with another; and to crown the difficulty, the higher not unfrequently succumbs to the lower—the seven thin and blasted ears devour the seven that are rank and full. The sacrifice of useful lives to trivial accidents; the long continuance of nations in heathen darkness; the growing up of children under systems and circumstances so inimical to their highest interests, that they are expected, as a natural consequence, to be ignorant and vicious; the triumph of despotism over liberty, and of truth over error in certain instances, as when the Inquisition crushed the nascent evangelical movement in Italy in the 16th century; the sore trials that sometimes befal good men, while the unworthy go free—these are phenomena which, when the observer stands at a certain angle, dart doubt into his mind with poignant force. The 73rd Psalm, the discussions of the book of Job, and the speculations of the book of Ecclesiastes, are noble monuments of the mental conflicts gone through thousands of years ago, with respect to some of the aspects of Providence. There are those who have been so impressed by the exceptional cases which they have witnessed, that they have drawn from them a rule, and expect, as a matter of course, the worthy man to get the worst of it in the battle of life; they expect the knave, if he be not outrageous in his knavery, to have a comfortable course through the world, and the honest man to meet with only scanty fare; noble women to marry worthless husbands, and true men to get horrid wives; 'the good,' as Wordsworth has it, 'to die early,

while those whose hearts are dry as summer dust, burn to the socket.' The grand answer to the difficulties connected with the subject of Providence, is that it is *God's* Providence. It is not the Providence of a man, which we might be able to measure and to criticise, but of a Being whose thoughts transcend ours as much as the lofty heavens above us transcend the low earth on which we tread. If we could comprehend Providence, the circumstance would be suspicious. The ways of a man are incomprehensible to a child; the thoughts of a philosopher travel far beyond the range of an ignorant peasant; and it follows of necessity that infinite skill, working in boundless space through endless time, will adopt measures, which, to the frail intelligence of a child of the dust, are mysterious and incomprehensible. There are many mysteries in the word and works of God, and in the course of His Providence, many questions which in this world we shall not be able to settle: but this is plain, that God is love, and that He has no pleasure in the death of the wicked; this is plain, that Christ died for all, and whosoever will come to Him may come; this is plain, that a life spent in loving obedience to Him is and must be blessed. Let us act, then, on these plain, indisputable truths, and some day the mysteries will all be cleared up: the things we know not now we shall know hereafter.

God is the Supreme Ruler of the universe, but He is not the author of evil. Foreknowledge of evil does not imply complicity with the evil. We may see many wrong things done by men to-day; but the fact that we see them done does not make the men do them: on the contrary, their

doing them causes us to see them. In like manner, if we could foresee the evil that will be done to-morrow, our foreknowledge would be the effect, and not the cause, of the evil that will be done to-morrow. We should foresee it because it will be done; it would not be done because we foresaw it; God's foreseeing the sins and crimes of the world does not make Him answerable for them.

It may be said, and often is said, God is so powerful that He could have prevented the evil which He foresaw—that is to say, He could have turned aside from the path in which He foresaw that evil would arise, and could have taken a course along which it would never be encountered. He could have prevented the fall of our first parents, by never creating them. He could have prevented in the same way the rebellion of the angels, that kept not their first estate. But if we believe, as we must do, that He is a God of infinite wisdom, we must conclude that He could have prevented these evils only by acting unwisely. Any other course which He might have taken would have failed to produce as much good on the whole as the one He has taken. It was the necessary condition of free agency that sin should be possible; only at this risk could He create intelligent beings the very crown and glory of His works, and if to avoid the risk He had refrained from creating beings endowed with intelligence and free will, we must feel that His other works would have been created in vain: we must see that He would have had to dwell solitary in the midst of all His other works, having none that were capable of understanding what He did, or of holding loving communion with Him.

No, God is not the author of evil; it sprang into being not as the result of His direct desire or creative fiat, but by the abuse of free will on the part of His creatures, and, as a drawback, if we may say so, to a wise and comprehensive scheme—a drawback which we devoutly believe to be slight compared with the ocean of happiness which that scheme has produced, and which it is destined to produce hereafter. That the number of the lost is going to equal the number of the saved, we cannot believe; but rather that the lost in comparison with the saved will be as a little pond compared with the Atlantic. Even in this world, notwithstanding its wickedness, there is vastly more pleasure than pain; and if it be so now, what will it be in the Millenium? and if it be so here, what is it in worlds where sin has never entered, or where it has been long since entirely vanquished?

God is not the author of evil *at any time.* He suffers, but He does not wish it; He permits, but He does not approve, nor stimulate, nor become a party to the guilt of it. The origin of the bad deeds which afflict men and dishonour our Lord Jesus day by day, is to be found in the suggestions of demons, and in the restless rebellious workings of the depraved human heart. Time and opportunity may coincide with an evil inclination; there may be a conjuncture of circumstances that seems to point the way to an object which we sinfully desire, but let us not on that account conclude that Providence favours the deed. What God has forbidden in His Word He never sanctions by His Providence, and those who interpret circumstances to mean that they may do what His written

Word declares that they must not do, on pain of His displeasure, make a fatal mistake.

Pliny described it as one of the greatest proofs of the bounty of Providence, that it has filled the world with herbs by which the weary may find a rapid and painless death. We who know the vast utility of poisonous plants as medicine, can smile at the reasoning of the ancient Naturalist, who thus attempted to justify suicide on the ground that there were means in nature for committing it. He completely misread the intention of Providence, by taking that which was sent to preserve life for an instrument Providentially prepared for its destruction.

During the reign of Charles II., a band of Scotch Covenanters, consisting of small proprietors in the county of Fife, chafed in their minds like a bear robbed of her whelps, by the many cruel wrongs they had endured, took the law into their own hands, and led by Hackston, of Rathillet, and Balfour, of Burley, went out to kill a persecuting agent of Archbishop Sharp's, called Carmichael. Carmichael escaped, but the Archbishop himself (inventor of that horrid instrument called the Iron Boot, which excited the fury of the people), happened to pass that way in a carriage along with his daughter. 'Truly,' they said, 'this is of God, and it is a clear call from God to fall upon him.' They came up with him on Magus Muir, and fired on him as he sat in his carriage, after which they would have rode off satisfied that they had done enough; but one of them, hearing the daughter say, 'There is life yet,' they compelled him to get out, exhorted him to pray and prepare for death, and finished him with their swords. Opportunity favoured their wishes, but Providence did not sanction the

violent deed. Impartial history has dealt leniently with their memory, on account of the wrongs which they were suffering, and the improbability of their obtaining justice by the regular course of law; but subsequent events showed that when they interpreted opportunity to mean approval, they made a grand mistake. The ready road they took to their end, proved a tedious and bloody round-about. It prolonged and aggravated the struggle instead of ending it. It was the signal for *war*, and the fortunes of war were against them. The brilliant success at Drumclog was quickly followed by defeat at Bothwell Bridge, by pillage of the poor, and confiscation of the estates of nobles, by judicial murders, called executions, and by the horrid atrocities perpetrated by Claverhouse and his dragoons. The one life which the Covenanters took in their unhallowed zeal, cost them a thousand. In less than two months after the murder of Archbishop Sharp, they were suppressed by the English army under the Duke of Monmouth, and for nine years their cause was lost, though it eventually triumphed through the English Revolution of 1688.

It is one of the objects of Providence to give every man an opportunity of declaring himself—to 'try every man's work of what sort it is.' A number of coincident circumstances may be permitted to happen, in order to put our moral principles to the proof. These circumstances act like the test which the chemist applies, in order to detect the presence of a hidden poison. The test does not create the poison; is not responsible for the presence of the poison: all that it does is to expose it if it be there.

In York Minster a long tomb is shown, where, in a narrow space between it and the adjoining wall, Jonathan

Martin hid himself till evening service was over, and the doors were locked upon him. Everything proved favourable to his purpose: no accident betrayed his hiding: the prayer-books made a good blaze till the wood took hold: the ladder of rope facilitated his escape through the window: fiercely as his fanatic zeal, the conflagration raged, effectually stopping 'the buzzing' of the organ, which he so much detested, and greedily devouring stall and rafter, ornamental window, and goodly arch, destroying in a few hours works which had stood for many hundreds of years. Yet, his temporary success benefited neither him nor his cause, and the speedy restoration of the fabric—apart from any other consideration—showed that he had completely misread the intention of Providence. The fact that circumstances permitted him to execute the dark design of his fanaticism, was so far from indicating the approval of fanaticism, that it became the means of branding it to future times, so that all who looked upon it in the light of that conflagration might know that the fanatic's zeal is madness, and the fire of it defiled with brimstone. An event of this kind labels a thing, so that the mere apprentice can read it off at a glance: and sometimes by permitting one person to have his blind way, a great number are deterred from the same folly, for they see that the experiment has been tried, and found a ridiculous or it may be a horrible failure.

For the results, the marks and evidences of a Divine Providence in human affairs, we go to history and biography. History records the life of a nation; biography, the lives of individuals. History has to do with long periods; biography with short spaces of time. The History of England goes back nearly 2,000 years, and embraces the

reigns of nearly forty kings, besides those of petty sovereigns who reigned before the Conquest. During this protracted period, the great plan of Providence respecting us has developed into colossal proportions. Seventy years, which are everything to an individual—which, as a rule, begin and end his career—are insignificant in the life of a nation. One generation begins where another ends: takes up the work which its predecessor left unfinished: advances it a farther stage, and then in its turn retires to give place to fresh labourers, who still, whether they know it or not, work at the same great plan. 'God buries His workmen, and carries on His work.'

To those who are not accustomed to read, history will be almost, if not altogether, a sealed book; but the book of human life is open to the perusal of all, however busy, and however illiterate. There is one's own life, which, with its ups and downs, its joys and sorrows, its times of crisis, and its periods of monotonous uniformity, is photographed upon the memory, and it reveals a Providence, kind, yet firm, that has been exercised all along from earliest infancy. But, however interesting, however thrilling might be the narrative which we could give of the way by which we have been led, it would be egotism on our part to suppose that it is not surpassed in romantic interest, and in the significance of its incidents by the lives of thousands of other people who have been our contemporaries. We have then the career of friends and acquaintance, and of persons whom we never saw, but of whom we may have often heard, to instruct us on this great subject of the Providence of God. If we could have the events that are happening now-a-days written by Inspiration, we should learn that He

dwells among men, and takes part in their affairs as truly now as He was wont to do thousands of years ago. One great use of the Bible to us, is that it takes the lives of men of like passions with ourselves, and exhibits them in a Divine light; shows us the moral and spiritual significance of the manifold changes that happened to them; and gives us to know, on unquestionable authority, that it was not the jugglery of fortune or the play of secondary causes that ruled their destiny, but that the hand of the Almighty was laid upon them in every step of their path. Does David rise from the sheepfold to the throne? It is not an accident: it is because the eye of God, searching through the land, detects him in his obscurity, as the man that is nearest—though by no means up to—His idea of what a man should be, the most heroic soul in all Israel, and the one man of the nation best fitted to be a king of men. As long as he obeys the impulses of the Holy Spirit within him, he prospers and performs exploits. But when he yields to base passion, and grievously transgresses, a gloomy shadow, out of which he never fairly emerges, falls upon his way. Treachery, incest, murder in his own family; rebellion and pestilence among his subjects—these are the plagues that darken and distress the latter part of his career. Why? Because his subjects have lost confidence in him? Because his crime has reacted on his own spirit, and made him morally weak? No; but to go to the root of the matter, because God is displeased, and has withdrawn, in great measure, His Spirit from him: it was God that had unsheathed the sword; it was God that had winged the angel of death to fly over the land. In the same way, the Bible shows us right through the history of Israel, that it went well

with them when they served the Lord; but it always went ill with them when they forsook Him and served other gods. Their happiness, when they were happy, did not spring up by chance: their miseries, when they were miserable, were not the result of mere material causes: all had a spiritual source. Sin and holiness as seen by the Omniscient, decided their destiny behind the material causes that were undoubtedly operating; the same Almighty finger that pencilled the flowers and dotted the firmament of heaven with twinkling stars, was at work determining their lot and writing their history.

'Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples, and were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.' We turn from ancient times, as thus depicted by Inspiration, to modern times: we look at the lives of our neighbours and at our own, and we feel that we have got the key to them. We are in a labyrinth, but our finger is on the silken thread. We have to do with God as truly as David had to do with Him; we are as much the objects of His care and the subjects of His government as David was. There is a Providence presiding over the destinies of England to-day, as really as there was over the fortunes of Israel in olden times; and we feel persuaded that if a modern Bible could be written by an inspired pen, many events would be found to have an important moral signification which had not been supposed to have any moral signification at all. The revelations that would be made in it, would be perfectly startling; and it would be seen, that except for the outward dress of them, the changes taking place in churches and in nations, the decisions written in blood on battle fields, the incidents of

the household circle, and the ceaseless play of joys and sorrows upon individual human hearts, had precisely the same connection with an invisible world, and with a Supreme Being, as the events that are chronicled in the Old and New Testaments. It would be found that there were other Jobs besides him who dwelt in the land of Uz, on whom Satan was permitted to make experiment; other Hamans that were hanged on the gallows they had erected for Mordecai; other Peters that denied their Lord, yet were afterwards melted into contrition by His reproving glance; other Judases that sold their master for a miserable pittance, and to whom existence became intolerable, through remorse.

Blind unbelief contents itself with histories, with monuments, with traditions: it is quite willing to admit that God concerned Himself in the affairs of men long ago, but not that He has anything to do with us. It operates in the reverse way to physical dimness of sight; for it can see that which is far off, but cannot perceive the momentous realities that are close at hand.

What is the grand cure for this perversity, this obliquity of spiritual vision? It is to have Christ revealed in us by the ever-blessed Spirit. He who has believed with his heart the mystery of redeeming love, that God was manifested in the flesh, and in that flesh dwelt more than thirty years on earth, man with men, and in that flesh wept, and bled and died a sacrifice for the world's sin, will have little difficulty in admitting the Scripture doctrine of Providence. He will say, Nothing that God can do for me or for sinful men like me, will surprise me after the life and death and resurrection of Jesus; nothing that He can ever do will

surpass that which He has done already. The cross is the effectual silencer of our doubts; it is the guarantee of every blessing; it is the celestial sunlight that discloses even terrestrial objects. It makes us feel that we are sacred, that we are bought with a high price, that we are very dear to God; it satisfies us that He who has expended so much on our recovery, will not treat our welfare with indifference, nor easily give us up.

CHAPTER I.

Recompense; or, the Law of Self-Sacrifice.

SACRIFICE *is the Divine law of increase.* We must lose in order to gain; we must suffer if we would acquire dominion; we must die to become immortal. It is God's appointment, and whoever goes against it, whoever takes as he thinks a short cut, an easier road, will defeat his own object. It is in vain we try to force the barriers which the Almighty has set up. We can succeed only when our strength is joined with His, only when *we work according to His methods.*

'Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit.' The grain of wheat which the farmer casts into the soil undergoes a process of partial decay. The germ does not die; but the germ constitutes only a small portion of the seed, and the great bulk of the seed rots to feed the germ. The corn of wheat as a corn perishes: for a season it is lost: it is lost as an article of food and of mer-

chandise: it is lost as a thing of beauty: it is lost, but not irretrievably, for out of its decay the germ of a nobler formation slowly rises up. 'God blesses the springing thereof:' His rains and dews water it: His light paints it: His warmth nurtures and draws it upwards, till in the succeeding summer it waves in the breeze, a rich ear, the repository of many individual grains, gracefully bending on its tall stem. The one grain has yielded thirty, sixty, or even a hundred: it has multiplied at the rate of five or ten thousand per cent.: its fall and decay have been followed by an astonishing resurrection.

The growth of wheat—familiar to us by means of agriculture, and important for us because the bread which it furnishes is the staff of life—is a type of God's general way of working. It is one instance of a great law of Providence, of which thousands of instances might be adduced.

Work which is a species of sacrifice—a giving out of energy, and a giving up of ease—is the grand source of profit. It is that which supplies us with the necessaries and with the comforts of existence; it has brought our fields under cultivation, laid down our highways, and built our towns and villages; it has founded and successfully carries on our churches, and schools, and missions; it has developed our science and our civilisation to the vastness of their present proportions. 'In all labour there is profit.' A man has but to exert himself in any direction, and he is sure to accomplish something. The weekly wages of the artisan are a quick return upon his outlay of labour. In other cases, as in the planting of woods, and in enterprises of social and political reform, it may

be years before the first effort expended is crowned with fruit. God is the King of workers. He is no sleepy divinity, lazily opening and shutting his eyes between the intervals of pleasant dreams: He sets us the example of untiring diligence: He rests not day or night, and this magnificent universe, practically boundless in extent, yet admirable in every part and detail, is the result of His unwearied industry. 'My Father worketh hitherto, and I work!'

Providence repays men for their sacrifices in the cause of Christ and of duty, with good interest. The Lord is not content simply to return a man's kindness: He returns it with a manifest addition. He does this in every instance, and the only question is, When will He do it? soon or late? in this world or in the next? Even in this life we are sure that every good deed is recompensed spiritually, and that is the highest kind of recompense, without which everything else would leave a man miserably destitute. It is the only kind of recompense upon which a man ought to calculate when he is doing good, the only kind of recompense upon which he will calculate if he be sincere. He will count the riches of the heart, the deepening of his spirituality, and the increase of his treasure in Heaven, a better reward than aught else.

'It is related of an old Catholic saint, that at the evening of a laborious and well-spent life, Christ appeared to him as a man of sorrows, and commending his past exertions, asked him what reward he would desire. Fame, and wealth, and earthly pleasures, had no attraction to one who had long been weaned from the things of sense, yet the prospect of other and spiritual blessings for a moment

thrilled the saint with joy; but when he looked upon that sacred brow, still shadowed as with the anguish of Gethsemane, every selfish wish was forgotten, and with a voice of ineffable love he answered, "Lord, that I might suffer most."'* Another legend tells how an adventurous knight went forth to seek the Holy Grail—the identical cup out of which the Redeemer drank at the Last Supper, and supposed to consist of a gem most rich and beautiful. Just as he started on his long journey, a poor old man asked him for a drink of water, but the knight paid no heed to his request. After a weary, fruitless search for the sacred cup, he returned to his home; and as he stopped at the end of his journey was met by the same old man, who again asked him for water. This time the knight dismounted, and hastened to put a cup to the suppliant's lips, when, to his wonder and delight, the vessel sparkled like a jewel in his hand, and proved to be the very cup of our Lord, the Holy Grail which he had gone so far in vain to seek. Another story, painted on a window of the thirteenth century, in Rouen cathedral, states that a solitary hermit had made it the charity of his life to ferry over travellers across a great, bridgeless river. One very stormy and dangerous night he embarked at the voice of a traveller in distress, and lo! he received Christ into his boat. These are but pleasing tales, and all their value to us is that they convey in a tender and beautiful form the truth that Christ is Himself the reward of His servants; and that on souls devoted to Him, the greatest favour that can be conferred is that they should be allowed to labour and to suffer

* Lecky's Rationalism, ii., 266.

for Him whom they love, even as the band of the apostles reckoned when they had been called up before the Sanhedrim, and 'rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name.' Yet none the less for all this is it true that, Providence does often in a singular manner repay, even in kind, the sacrifices which men make in order to do good.

The Rev. W. F. Stevenson, in a well-written volume called *Praying and Working*, relates of John Evangelist Gossner: 'Soon after he had received Christ for us and in us, he went to Seeg, where Feneberg, the vicar, received him into his house. With him and Schmid, another scholar of Sailer's, and the author of well-known and well-loved books for children, Gossner gained strength and light. The household life of the vicar and his two curates has not been very distinctly preserved. The diary deals mostly with personal matters; yet, judging from one incident, it must have abounded in the most practical and impressive teaching. A poor man with an empty purse came one day, and begged three crowns, that he might finish his journey. It was all the money Feneberg had, but as he besought him so earnestly in the name of Jesus, in the name of Jesus he gave it. Immediately after, he found himself in great outward need, and seeing no way of relief, he prayed, saying, "Lord, I lent Thee three crowns; Thou hast not yet returned them, and Thou knowest how I need them; Lord, I pray Thee give them back." The same day a messenger brought a money letter, which Gossner reached over to Feneberg, saying, "Here, father, is what you expended." The letter contained two hundred thalers (£30), which the poor traveller

had begged from a rich man for the vicar; and the child-like old man in joyful amazement cried out, "Ah, dear Lord, one dare ask nothing of Thee, for straightway Thou makest one feel so much ashamed!"' This incident not only illustrates Recompense, but also serves as a specimen of the way Providence sometimes anticipates prayer, and even before it is offered starts the answer on its journey. He who is able to foresee the earnest petition that we shall offer to Him to-morrow, as easily as He knows what we are doing to-day, can so arrange events that His reply shall come while we are in the act of supplicating Him. 'It shall come to pass, that before they call I will answer, and while they are yet speaking I will hear.'

The annals of piety in every country and in every Church, illustrate God's recompensing kindness. The Rev. Charles Simeon was a very zealous and benevolent clergyman, and beyond any other single individual, was instrumental in the revival of evangelical religion in the Church of England. Having considerable private means, he gave a great deal away; but at one time he had sustained heavy loss and diminution of his property through his charities, when quite unexpectedly he received from an unknown hand a legacy of eight hundred pounds, and one hundred for his trouble as executor. Upon the front of the letter which conveyed to Mr. Simeon the intelligence of this legacy, he wrote, 'I had, about a year before, suffered great loss in my fortune (no matter how) for doing good with my money. Here a man whom I never saw left me £800 to do good with, and no responsibility in accounting for it. No one needs to tell me whence this came!' In his later years, through his brother's decease, and the

benefactions of friends, he had a great deal of money placed at his disposal, and he expended it in a way which he believed would serve in generations to come the interests of the Redeemer's kingdom.

In that well-known book called *Scots Worthies*, there is a sketch of the life of John Craig, who, though he was not the originator of the Reformation in Scotland, was one great instrument in its defence and consolidation. When a young man, he travelled as far as Italy, and was admitted to an honourable post among the Dominicans in Bologna. There he was converted to the reformed opinions by reading Calvin's Institutes, which he found in the library of the Inquisition. He quitted the monastery in obedience to his new convictions, and entered as a tutor into the family of a neighbouring nobleman, who had embraced Protestant principles. Near to this nobleman's residence was a wood, to the corner of which Mr. Craig often repaired with his pupils. One day, when at this spot, a poor wounded soldier, who had been shot in his body, passed by. Mr. Craig spoke kindly to him, directed him to a doctor, and gave him a considerable sum of money to defray his expenses. Not long after, Mr. Craig was seized by the familiars of the Inquisition, and carried to Rome, where he was thrown into a noisome dungeon into which the river Tiber flowed every tide, so that the prisoners were sometimes standing up to the middle in water. After nine months' imprisonment, he was brought to trial, and condemned to be burned for heresy, along with some others. But on the night previous to their appointed execution, the Pope, Paul IV., died, and prisoners, according to custom on such occasions, were liberated. Heretics, indeed, were an exception; but in a tumult which

arose, Craig and his companions managed to effect their escape. Half-naked, and without any money, he scarcely knew what to do; but he thought it safest to leave the city. He made his way to the suburbs, and entered an inn. While he was warming himself at the fire, there came in a military officer with his retinue at his back, and ordered dinner for himself and his friends. Mr. Craig was now afraid he should be re-taken. After the officer had walked up and down awhile, he began to look narrowly at the poor fugitive, which increased his fears. At last, he said, 'I believe I have seen you before, and in better condition than I see you now.' 'That may be, sir!' said Mr. Craig. The officer went on, 'Do not you, sir, remember that so many years ago you (as I believe, sir), were in such a wood with young scholars and your books, and that a poor wounded soldier came past to whom you gave money largely?' 'Yes!' said Mr. Craig, 'I remember very well!' The officer rejoined, 'Now this is a happy re-contré, and we are well met; but I am sorry to see you in this sad condition, for I was that poor wounded soldier. The money you gave me, I gave to a surgeon who cured me. So you saved my life, and the fortune of war having favoured me, I am a commander, and am well able to pay you back with interest.' He presented him with meat and drink, procured him a suit of clothes, and gave him what money he had upon him, and directions how to escape. In the course of his journey through Italy, says Archbishop Spottiswoode, while he avoided the public roads and took a circuitous route to escape pursuit, the money which he had received from the grateful soilder failed him. It was a circumstance that he often related to his friends, that once

when he had laid himself down beside a wood, he saw a dog approaching with a purse in his mouth. He suspected that it had been sent by some evil-disposed person in the wood, who wanted to pick a quarrel with him. So he tried to drive it away; but when the animal refused to go, and kept fawning upon him, he at last took the purse, and found in it a sum of money which enabled him to continue his journey. He reached Scotland in safety; found that the Reformed Religion, for which he had suffered so much, had been set up, and became one of its most active and useful ministers.

It was a law of the Jewish Church, and appears to have been an acknowledged duty, long before the Jewish nation came into existence, that every man should devote a tenth part of all his income to religious and benevolent purposes. It has been forcibly argued, that if law required a tenth, the love and liberty of Christianity will not stop short of a tenth; yet to anyone just beginning to act upon this rule, it seems a large sum. It is found, however, that the sacrifice involved is another instance of the seed-sowing which is crowned with harvest, and that financially it is a profitable investment. The inspired men of Old Testament days had no doubt upon this point. One of them says, 'Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the first-fruits of all thy increase; so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.' The last of the prophets says, 'Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in Mine house, and prove Me now herewith, saith the Lord of Hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room

enough to receive it.' In the New Testament the same belief re-appears. In the ninth chapter of his second Epistle to the Corinthians, St. Paul, who had enforced on them the duty of liberality, and recommended the weekly offering, says, 'But this I say, he which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully;' and he adds, that God is able to grant them sufficient for their own wants, and an overplus to give away. It is probable that the vast wealth of the Jews is due to no small extent to their acting upon the ancient law of their Church, and setting aside a tenth part of their income for God and the poor. Recently a gentleman fell into conversation with a Jew, who informed him that he commenced business on this principle, but his gains became so great that he begrudged the large tithe which they represented, and kept most of it for himself; from that time his affairs took an adverse turn, until he was brought to poverty. He was convinced that the cause was the violation of his vow, and of the law of his God; so he had renewed the vow, and had just been setting aside 6d. out of five shillings that he had cleared. It is the testimony of many that they have never wanted money since they adopted this principle. A poor lad, a member of the Wesleyan denomination, went from the north of England to live in the West Riding. He became clerk in the office of a manufactory, and early adopted the system of private tithing. When first married, his income was £100 per annum, out of which he gave away £10; his income to-day is £100,000, and he gives away on the same principle ten thousand a year.

The sacrifices that men have made in order to do good

have often been richly recompensed in the spiritual welfare of their children and descendants. They may have left them less money than they would have done if they had been selfish; but they have bequeathed the blessing of God and the prayers of the poor, and their spirit has lived in their posterity.

Dr. Samuel Annesley, in early life, entered on the ministry of the Divine Word, at Cliff, in Kent. The parishioners were stoutly opposed to his settling among them, having previously had a minister of a very different sort. Dr. A. was insulted, hissed, and pelted with stones; but he said, 'Let them use him as they would, he was resolved to continue with them until God had fitted them by his ministry to entertain a better man who should succeed him.' They were happily changed, and he kept his vow. He was afterwards rector of Cripplegate, and lecturer at St. Paul's. His Nonconformity caused him trouble, but God signally interfered at different times on his behalf: one man died in the act of signing a warrant for his apprehension. He took great care of the widows and orphans of the ejected ministers. He always laid aside the tenth part of his income before any other part of it was touched, and by this means he always had a fund for the help of those who were in need. When any of his friends tried to dissuade him from his extensive charities, because of his large family, he would reply, 'That he was laying up portions for his children.' Nor did the event contradict his expectations. One of his daughters was the mother of John and Charles Wesley, and it is well known that it was chiefly to her those noble men were indebted for the moral and religious training which lay at the foundation

of their nobleness: and if it was a grief to the good old man that his daughter became, from conviction, a Conformist to the church, from which, by conviction, he was a Nonconformist, especially after all that he had suffered for his principles, this may be said that he would have been perfectly satisfied, could he have foreseen that her Conformity was to be the Providential means of furthering the cause for which he had sacrificed so much, and of raising up millions who would sympathise with him in his views.

It may be said that there are many cases which go to counterbalance the effect produced on the mind by the case of Dr. Annesley: that the piety and benevolence of the father are sometimes followed by profligacy in the children; that his faith becomes in the next generation, infidelity, his evangelical simplicity, ceremonialism. "'Tis true, and pity 'tis 'tis true:' but we believe there are wheels within wheels, which if they were known, would show that these cases were no argument against a recompensing Providence; but possibly that they were an argument for a retributive Providence. We are enabled to see the working of the wheels in the family of old Eli, and we know that the dark fate of his sons was retributive.

Here is a pleasing instance of recompense which occurred not long ago, and looks in the same direction as Dr. Annesley's, though it is not imposing in its historic importance. Isabella—was the widow of a poor shoemaker: when first left a widow, her means of living were slender, her family considerable, and her prospects gloomy. She and her deceased husband had materially helped to sustain the preaching of the Gospel in the village, and she had found it the means of salvation to her own soul. She feared it

would have to be withdrawn from the place on account of her poverty. She was full of thought about it, and earnestly asked the help and guidance of God. She determined to bake and sell plain bread, as a means of obtaining a livelihood. The project succeeded, and in the course of years, when she found she was growing much older, she owned at least £250. With £150 of this money she wished to build a chapel, and with the remaining £100 to make some permanent provision for the preaching of the Gospel in it. She mentioned her scheme to the superintendent minister: he recommended prayerful deliberation, and the advice of her own family, some of whom were married and settled in the neighbourhood. Strange to say, not one objected: indeed, all approved. Land was secured, a chapel built and opened, and during the opening services a powerful religious influence was kindled, under which her family, with their partners, were brought to Christ. At this time she had one daughter at home with her, unmarried: this daughter shortly after united in marriage with one of the ministers of her own people. When Isabella grew old and infirm, her ministerial son-in-law and her daughter requested her to go to them to spend the remainder of her days. She consented, and in their household found a peaceful harbour for her declining age: then went to her heavenly reward.

Those who give up all for Christ's sake; who go forth at the bidding of conscience from the position of security and honour which they held among men, into the battle and the storm, place themselves peculiarly under the protection of the Deity. Times of emergency and of revolution develop such characters more abundantly; but they belong to all periods. They relieve the barren wastes of

history: they give us hope for the future. It would not be well for all to be required to sacrifice everything they possess in order to meet exigencies of conscience; but it is well for all that cases of this kind should occur from time to time to ashame our moral cowardice, and prove before our eyes the blessedness of a life consecrated at all risks to the glory of the Giver. 'We are compassed about with a great cloud of witnesses:' 'martyrs' is the word in the Greek, for *martyr* signifies a *witness.* Those who sacrifice their lives for Christ's sake, are martyrs *par excellence,* and we know that for them is laid up the imperishable crown; but there are many who are martyrs without dying: many who witness for the truth by sacrifices which are very severe and testing, although they stop short of the deliberate forfeiture of life.

It is interesting to notice in some of these cases of self-sacrifice the extraordinary way in which the declaration of Jehovah has been fulfilled, 'Them that honour Me I will honour.' Probably no mere man ever made such a sacrifice of honour as Moses did: and no mere man has been so highly honoured. He was the adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter: that is to say, he was by adoption grandchild of the King of Egypt, the greatest monarch of the world at that time. In the East it has sometimes happened, even in recent times, that slaves, through the favour of their royal masters, have climbed to the throne. Moses had the prospect of succeeding to Pharaoh's power, and of reigning over the richest and most civilised people of the earth, beside whom the poor Israelites, reduced to a condition of slavery, eating out of flesh pots like swine, and toiling with hardly any in-

termission to make bricks for the Government, must have appeared contemptible. Yet what did he do? He threw away his magnificent prospects, like a fool, as most men must have said; identified himself with the cause of the downtrodden race; stood up for them, and tried to settle their differences; fought and even killed for them; then fled for his life to the deserts of Horeb. He had honoured God, and so far it had proved a losing game; then it became God's turn, and He did not spare. Moses was commissioned to return; he was made the liberator of oppressed Israel, the founder of a new economy, and a lawgiver whose legislation has been a fountain of wisdom to subsequent ages. To-day, when we look back, we see him towering in colossal magnitude above all other men; and in Heaven itself they reverently link his name with that of the Redeemer of humanity; they sing 'the song of Moses and of the Lamb.'

Many a reader of the Gospels has been ready to smile at Peter's saying to the Master, 'Lo, we have left all and followed Thee!' What was this all that they left? A few fishing nets, and two or three cobles. Yet, since it was their all, it was of vastly more value to them than it would be to an emperor or a millionaire. It was a peaceful life, far away from the busy world, that they were leading, and no doubt as far as it is possible for life to be happy, it was a happy life. They quitted it to be the butt of ridicule, and the objects of relentless persecution. Wherever they went, toil, hardships, and danger awaited them. They passed away one after another, unregretted and unnoticed by the wise and the mighty of this world. No proud monument marks the place of their sepulture. The very country

where they fell asleep is, in most instances, a matter of doubtful tradition. Yet, who among the mighty of their time attained to equal honour? Their names are recorded on the imperishable page of Inspiration. Their instructions daily edify millions, and to them is awarded the praise of having set in motion holy truths and influences, which have been propagated onwards to this hour, and outwards to the ends of the earth.

John Fletcher, of Madeley, was a saintly man; his name and that of the place where he ministered are indissolubly linked together, as in life his heart was bound up with the welfare of the people. Before his final appointment as vicar of Madeley, he was informed one day by Mr. Hill, that the living of Dunham, in Cheshire, then vacant, was at his service. 'The parish,' he continued, 'is small, the duty light, the income good (£400 per annum), and it is situated in a fine, healthy, sporting country.' After thanking Mr. Hill most cordially for his kindness, Mr. Fletcher added, 'Alas, sir, Dunham will not suit me; there is too much money, and too little labour.' 'Few clergymen make such objections,' said Mr. Hill. 'It is a pity to decline such a living, as I do not know that I can find you another. What shall we do? Would you like Madeley?' 'That sir, would be the very place for me.' 'My object Mr. Fletcher,' rejoined Mr. Hill, 'is to make you comfortable in your own way. If you prefer Madeley, I shall find no difficulty in persuading the present vicar to exchange it for Dunham, which is worth more than twice as much.' In this way he became vicar of Madeley, with which place he was so perfectly satisfied, that he never afterwards sought honour or preferment. Was he rewarded for the sacrifice

he had made? The answer will be found in the peace which he enjoyed at the quiet parsonage; his marriage with Miss Bosanquet, one of the noblest of her sex; the prosperity that attended his work; the extensive diffusion of his writings; and above all, the high degree of grace to which he attained, the almost angelic purity and the mighty joys amounting at times to ecstacy. These things show that he was richly recompensed, even in this world, and, as to his reward in the next world, what pen shall describe it?

Sacrifice has ever been the instrument of progress, and whensoever the Lord has brought about some great extension of the truth, he has first called his servants into conflict. They have had to hold themselves ready for any fate; to give up their time to exhausting labours; to stand pilloried on infamy's high stage, and to hold even their lives cheap. It was so when that great Protestant Reformation was achieved, which some misguided spirits in our country would have us disown. It is exciting as any romance, to read, even at this distance of time, the history of the conflict, especially as it was carried on in Germany, and as it centred in the stalwart figure of Martin Luther. He was a hero, a man of fine genius and herculean strength, in whom the Spirit of God richly dwelt. To him, as the Providential instrument, the great work is mainly due. He accomplished it by renouncing all worldly hope and fear, and giving up his noble powers for the promulgation of the truth at any hazard. He refused the aid of the sword, when he might have had it at a word; for he saw distinctly that it was not the instrument by which Christianity was to be promoted. Dukes, princes, and electors were under his influence, and were counted

among his friends; and he might, if he had chosen, have feathered his own nest; but he chose to live in poverty on £20 a year, and at one time had to do work as a turner, in order to eke out his scanty income. Here is a copy of his will, which is unique: 'My most dear God, I thank Thee from my heart that Thou hast willed that I should be poor, and a beggar upon earth; therefore, I can leave neither house, nor fields, estates, money, or property, to my wife and child after me. As Thou hast given them to me, so I restore them to Thee again. Thou rich, faithful God, feed them, teach them, preserve them, as Thou hast hitherto fed, taught, and preserved me, O Father of the orphans, and Judge of the widows.' Luther's life was a battle daily renewed; there was an end in those times to ease and quiet for all true men. But out of that terrific struggle, and especially out of the gigantic toil of that great soul who was the acknowledged Leader of attack, the Reformation came, whereby several nations were liberated from the deadly yoke of the Papacy, and the Holy Scriptures became the possession of the common people.

In the last century, a deep sleep had fallen on the Church of Christ. Indifference, like a frosty winter's day, held the land in icy fetters, and infidelity first took a distinct shape. It was by means of the Methodists that a revival of religion was effected; and never—not even in the early times of Christianity—were men more despised. The era of religious toleration had set in, so that they did not suffer corporeally, as the Puritans before them had to suffer. But many even in this respect suffered indirect martyrdom, and had their days shortened. But

they suffered chiefly from excessive toil, from the unmitigated scorn which was poured upon them, and from the cruel anger and opposition of unconverted relatives. A man who loved the good opinion of society, would as soon have had burning sealing-wax dropped on his skin, as be called and thought a Methodist. Wesley himself probably did as much work as any man that ever lived; and that gold was not his reward is evident enough, from his declaration that if £10 remained after the expenses of his funeral were paid, he would give the world leave to call him a rogue. It was a time of fiery trial for the most devoted Christians the world then contained; but their trial was the casting away of seed in order to harvest. We shudder to think where we should have been to-day, had it not been for their self-sacrificing devotion.

The era of Christian Missions furnishes us with a new and delightful chapter in illustration of the law of spiritual increase. So long as the Church was content to expend her efforts entirely at home, she won no new territory for her Lord; but when she extended her sympathies to men in heathen lands—when she poured out her treasures of money and living hearts to enrich them—her converts became very many, and a girdle of Churches was put round the globe.

Our civil liberties have been achieved by means of pain, mental pain amid angry political debate, and pain of the flesh, suffered by patriots in prison, on the scaffold, and the battle field. Perhaps, no living man has laid his country under greater obligations than Mr. Bright, not only by employing his extraordinary powers of eloquence first to awaken popular interest in certain great political reforms,

and afterwards to get them carried through the legislature; but also, in doing so much to infuse into political life generally a higher degree of earnestness. Yet, it is not too much to say, that for twenty years he was the best abused man in all England. To quote his own words, he 'endured measureless insult, and passed through hurricanes of abuse.'

It was to be expected that if our glorious Head and Representative, the Lord Jesus Christ, submitted at all to the operation of the law of sacrifice, it would be seen in His case to the greatest advantage, and would be followed by the most stupendous results. We are filled with admiration when we find that in spite of the universal expectation entertained by His countrymen, that the Messiah would come as a Conqueror—an expectation cherished by His own disciples till the crucifixion rudely awoke them from their dream—an expectation, too, which appeared to be countenanced by a great deal of Old Testament prophecy, Jesus clearly discerned from the very first that He must suffer in order to reign. He did suffer. Every circumstance of pain, and sorrow, and ignominy, seemed to meet in His death. We know from the mode of that death, nailed as He was to a piece of wood, that the physical torture which He endured must have been excruciating. It is not necessary to suppose that His bodily pain was greater than has ever been borne; that it was greater, for instance, than the torture of the two thieves who were crucified at His side. It may be that many have suffered physically more than Christ, even on a death bed, surrounded by every help and every comfort, which money or friendship could procure. His suffering was

certainly sufficient, especially when we consider the dignity of His person, to satisfy the most tragic craving of the imagination. But it was in sorrow that He was pre-eminent. His pure and sensitive spirit was affected with inexpressible grief at the thought of our sin, and with inconceivable horror at the withdrawal of the light of His Father's countenance. It is contended by some that He died of a broken heart, and that this was the reason He expired in three hours instead of lingering three days, as it was common enough for the crucified to linger. This view was maintained with great plausibility by Dr. Stroud, a Christian physician, and has been endorsed more recently by several eminent medical men, as may be seen in an appendix to Dr. Hanna's narrative of the Last Day of our Lord's Passion. But whether this view be correct or not, we are sure that the agony was terrible, which forced blood, along with the perspiration, from the pores of His skin. Yet, this agony after being relieved by angelic ministration in the garden of Gethsemane evidently returned upon Him while He was on the cross. The Prince of the kings of the earth died as a malefactor, and His body lay cold and stiff in the sepulchre. His cause was ruined as it seemed: His enemies hoped it, His friends feared it; but they were alike mistaken, for they did not comprehend how death ensured increase. By His mournful decease Jesus Christ became enshrined in myriads of human hearts; His image is stamped anew every day upon believing souls; 'and at this moment,' to use the expression of Napoleon in his conversation in St. Helena, 'millions would die for him.' Had he pursued the career of grandeur and of conquest which He was expected to

pursue, how different would have been the result, judging from all other cases which history has put on record. Alexander has no empire now: Cæsar has no soldier to do or die at his command: their names live as a matter of curiosity and of intellectual inquiry, but no one loves them, or seeks to please them, or defers to their authority, or desires to go to them. Jesus Christ lives in the affections of His people, and to-day He sways a sceptre more real, more potent than that of any president, king, or emperor on the globe! 'His name shall endure for ever: His name shall be continued as long as the sun, and men shall be blessed in Him: all nations shall call Him blessed.'

CHAPTER II.

Retribution.

STRANGE Footsteps of an Avenger are seen tracking the career of guilt. 'I shall not,' says Gibbon, 'be readily accused of fanaticism; yet I must admit that there are often strong appearances of retribution in human affairs.'

For dealing with transgressors, the Providence of God is armed with ample powers. Some of these powers are quite visible and tangible, and the mode of their operation can be plainly perceived. They are as easy to be seen as the policemen that patrol our streets. Physical laws, when violated, whether by intellectual mistake or with guilty intent, become the administrators of justice on behalf of the Great King. The grosser vices, such as drunkenness and licentiousness, are punished in this way. With tens of thousands of men and women sinking every year, through drunkenness, into a premature grave, in Great Britain alone, who shall say that retribution is a

myth? In these cases, the execution of the sentence is no mystery. Years before the fatal day it is clearly foreseen. In other instances, social and economic forces come in and perform the part of bailiffs and executioners, where mere physical laws have no jurisdiction. The most frightful mode of retribution which we are able distinctly to trace, is the self-propagating power, the downhill course and ever-accelerating speed of vice. If we see a man concerned in one bad thing, we may calculate that we shall find him by-and-bye connected with another as bad or even worse. True as a beast of prey to its carnivorous instincts, he will repeat his offence and advance to farther degrees of criminality, until he runs his head into a noose that will hold him tight, and strangle him. It may thus happen that the particular deed which ruins him at last, shall have no other connection with the first or with any subsequent offence, than this reproductive power of an evil passion, which essentially links all his offences together, and makes the punishment of the last, the punishment of all that went before. In these ways we are able, in many cases of retribution, perhaps in the majority, to lay down the law of its operation, to follow up the poisoned stream to the poisonous fountain. But there are doubtless ten thousand instances of retribution occurring under our eyes, which we do not know or suspect to be such, because we are ignorant of their antecedents: we have lost the clue to them; and there are other instances which we reverently acknowledge, indeed, to be retributive, but we are baffled to tell how the retribution was effected. The God of Providence presides over the spiritual as well as the material world, and the ten thousand

influences which act upon a man's destiny, lie open to His inspection in all their complicated working, and are perfectly pliant to His touch. Furthermore, time is at His service; if life is not sufficient, He holds death and eternity in reserve. How then should He be at a loss for means to punish the evildoer?

We are warned by Christ, and by facts constantly recurring, not to argue from suffering to sin, but rather to proceed in our calculations from the sin to the suffering. The Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices, and the eighteen men crushed by the falling tower of Siloam, were not necessarily sinners above all that dwelt in Jerusalem; but this was certain, that except the Jerusalemites themselves repented, they would all likewise perish. On this subject, *à posteriori* reasoning is unsafe: but with the reservation of the power of repentance, the *à priori* argument is certain. Without repentance, great sin is sure to entail great suffering, sooner or later, in this world or the next. The chances are that the suffering will come in this world: shrewd observers look out for it as a matter, not of absolute certainty, but of high probability. On the other hand, great suffering by no means proves great sin, else were the martyrs consummate in crime. Sudden death may mean sudden glory. The same event, externally, may in reality not be the same. A university degree may be of first, second, or third class; and it may even be a stigma. One man emigrates because he has done well at home, and saved a little money: another emigrates because he has done badly, and got over head and ears in debt. One meets with his death in the performance of duty: another

meets with it in the commission of a crime. To the wicked death is a summons to the court of sovereign justice and to prison: to the righteous, it is a messenger sent to fetch the exiled spirit home. The same event may be retribution to one man, and reward to another; just according to the circumstances by which it is accompanied, and the state of mind in which it finds him; and if we know that state and those circumstances, an event which otherwise would have no moral meaning to us, will become admonitory.

It would be mere superstition to imagine that the case of Ananias and Sapphira is continually being repeated, and that when a man drops down dead with a blasphemy upon his lips, it is a supernatural or even a direct judgment upon him for the blasphemy. Persons are apt to look at the calamities of their opponents through jaundiced eyes, and to see in them not what is really there to be seen, but what they secretly wish to see. The founder of one of our minor evangelical sects died at dinner, choked by a fish bone, whereupon some of his former co-religionists said it was a judgment upon him for the sin of secession. A certain Catholic Archbishop, while the Franco-Prussian war was still undecided, was reported to have ascribed Prussia's being involved in it, to the fact that she erected not long since a magnificent monument to Martin Luther. It is only hopeless prejudice or crass ignorance that could see in such sequences as these any connection of cause and effect. The philosophy of Wordsworth's little boy was more respectable. Pressed five times to declare why he preferred Kilve by the green sea to sweet Liswyn farm, he blushed and hung down his head, but happening in his extremity to

catch sight of a broad, gilded vane on a house top opposite, he made reply—

'At Kilve there was no weather-cock,
And that's the reason why.'

We have heard such cases as the following related and pronounced to be judgments in the sense of direct, supernatural visitation for sin. A woman wished a bad wish, that if she had any children they might be deaf and dumb: and she afterwards bore four children, who were deaf and dumb. Two women at Devizes went together into the market, and each bought a bowl of corn, costing half-a-sovereign. One of them paid; the other was coming away without paying, and when asked for payment declared she had paid already, and if it were not so, wished God might strike her dead. Immediately she fell on the floor and expired, and the half-sovereign was found in her mouth. In a village of North Yorkshire, which could be named, there was a man given to drinking and profane language. In a fit of jealousy against his wife, he said one morning before he went out to work, that if what he had said about her was not true, he wished his arm might be cut off that very day. Before night, one of his arms was severed from his body by an accident which happened while he was at work, and to this day he goes about in the place with only one arm, and people whisper the reason. In the same place, there was another man whose favourite imprecation was that his eyes might be blasted. He one day, while engaged with some other men turning a crane, was crushed to death beneath a lot of pig metal, and it was found that one of the bars had done for him what he had so often requested God to do,

for it lay across the upper part of his face, and his two eyes squeezed by it out of their sockets lay on his two cheeks. Instances like these could no doubt be multiplied indefinitely. What shall be said of them? That they are altogether painful and horrible to contemplate every one feels. That there is even an element of penalty and of judgment in them we readily admit, but it is not of the kind that is commonly supposed. The very same catastrophes might have happened, and very often have happened to good men and women diligently pursuing their duty. Where, for instance, there is disease of the heart, a high degree of excitement will bring on instantaneous death, whether the excitement be sinful or holy. Apoplexy makes no difference between saint and sinner. Paralysis is blind to all moral distinctions. Dr. Beaumont falls down and dies in the pulpit at Hull, while in the act of giving out a verse of a hymn. Others have been known to drop down and die while cursing and swearing and foaming at the mouth with passion. 'All things come alike to all. There is one event to the righteous and to the wicked. As is the good so is the sinner, and he that sweareth as he that feareth an oath.' It is only the past conduct and present state of the sufferer in such cases as the above, which make the calamity penal or otherwise, so far as we know. The moral element of the calamity is there not as the result of substantial connection, but like a shadow on a wall, or the rainbow on a thunder-cloud, as the effect of reflection. The state of the heart and of the conscience determines the quality of events. Their circumstances and their mechanical details are but the husk of them. The spiritual condition of the actors is their quintessence. The same

fire will melt the precious metals and harden base clay. The same chemical may be poured into two different liquids standing side by side, and one shall keep quite calm, the other boil with rage; one shall become a pleasant drink, the other a deadly poison. And nothing exhibits more impressively the peril of sin than this—that it puts a man into such a position that the calamities of life catch him at a disadvantage, and even the results of purely natural causes, which should be perfectly innocent, become vicious; and assume, under the transforming influence of guilt, an aspect of reproach, of permanent injury, and of Divine indignation.

Retribution begins with those who in the main are right, but whose motives have been imperfect, and advances afterwards to those who have been decidedly and utterly wrong. If two persons sin, the one that is comparatively innocent may be expected to be first called up for castigation. This was the way the Apostle Peter read the dark subject of retribution. The Christians were to suffer first: the heathen were to have their turn last. 'For the time,' says he, 'is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the Gospel of God?' Satan is not bound till the eve of the Millenium.

Sometimes God works by arithmetic in dealing out retribution. There is a coincidence of numbers or of dates between crime and penalty, which is quite startling. This should not be difficult to credit if nature and Providence are under the same ruling mind, for mathematics and chronology are extensively employed in nature. The

number of parts in the flower of an exogenous plant is generally some power of four or five; if there are five sepals there are five petals, and five, ten, fifteen, etc., stamens. The number of parts of an endogenous flower is generally a power of three: there are three sepals, three petals, three, six, nine, etc., stamens, and three carpels. Of the three great astronomical laws established by Kepler, the second is that the radius vector moves over equal areas in equal times, and the third that the squares of the times in which the planets revolve round the sun are proportional to the cubes of their mean distances from the centre. The shadow of eclipse first stains the bright disk of sun or moon at the appointed moment to the decimals of a second. There is one night in the year when the meteoric shower is abundant, and one year in a generation when it is superabundant. The birds and the flowers have their months. 'The stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed times; and the turtle, and the crane, and the swallow observe the time of their coming.' If man had less to do with events they would probably exhibit less irregularity in point of time and number; but even as it is we see in them significant indications that the great Mathematician has been at work.

As a punishment for their unbelief, the Israelites were kept wandering in the wilderness forty years, the number of the years being so regulated as to correspond with the number of the days during which the spies were absent, whose evil report of the good land terrified them out of all propriety. The Mosaic law directed that every seventh year the land should lie fallow, and the poor reap a special advantage from its resting. But this law was gene-

rally disregarded, and it is computed that they were robbed in the course of time of seventy years' casual produce of the fields. Then the nation was driven into captivity in Babylon, and kept there till the land had run out its lost Sabbaths. The exile lasted seventy years, exactly the number of years of which the poor had been robbed.

A line of seventy weeks—a day standing for a year—was drawn from the restoration of Jerusalem to the time when the protecting shield of Jehovah should be removed from the city, and the rejected Gospel pass over to the Gentiles. It was extensively held by Protestant interpreters, that a chain of 1260 years was stretched in prophecy between the rise of the temporal power of the Papacy and the time of its fall; and as it was believed to have risen in A.D. 606, its fall was long expected to take place in A.D. 1866. In view of this anticipation it is remarkable, that in 1866 the left arm of Papal sovereignty was paralysed by the victory of Prussia over Austria, while the end of that war proved to be but the beginning of a second and greater war by which, in 1870, France, the right arm of the Papacy, was so shattered, that Rome was quietly absorbed by Italy without any fear of French interference. Mr. Elliott and Dr. Cumming are sufficiently vindicated. Their blunders are condoned by the success of this their cardinal calculation.

There is great plausibility in the view held by some, that just as the seventy years of the Babylonish captivity had several commencing and several closing periods, so it was to be with the despotism of the Western Church. Its corruption and domination commenced in the third century, and 1260 years afterwards, the great Reformation was

accomplished. In A.D. 532, the Emperor Justinian announced his endeavour to bring all the Church into subjection to the See of Rome: 1260 years afterwards, the French Revolution broke out, which was the beginning of the movement by which the Roman Pontiff's political power was to be destroyed. In A.D. 606, the title of 'Universal Bishop' was confirmed to the Pope by the Emperor Phocus: 1260 years afterwards, his political humiliation began to be consummated. Once more, in A.D. 752, the Pope of Rome received from Pepin, the Exarchate of Ravenna and the Pentapolis, and if the former coincidences are to be repeated, men may look to A.D. 2012, should the world last so long, for a completer collapse of the gigantic system of ecclesiastical tyranny which now dominates the major part of Christendom.*

A peep into the Almanack of Retribution has sometimes alarmed the wrong doer. The coincidence of dates has impressed him with the fact of a designing mind at work behind the scenes, and has terrified him into propriety.

'Just on the outskirts of Rochdale, on the side of the highway leading to Manchester, at a place called Sparth, there formerly stood a large stone table, supported by three thick stone pillars. Here in bygone days, country farmers brought their milk, and were met by their town customers with pitchers: owing to this custom it was designated the Milkstone. Underneath it many a schoolboy had taken shelter from the storm, and on the top of it many a weary traveller had laid down his heavy burden.

* See several striking coincidences in Alison's History of Europe, c. 82 and 85.

'One cold winter day, a young man was seen going from Rochdale towards Marsland Workhouse with an old man on his back: the young man's strength being exhausted, he set down the old man in a sitting posture on the Milkstone. While both were resting, the old man began to weep most bitterly. "You may cry as hard as you like," said the young man, "but to the Workhouse you shall go if my legs can carry you: for I will not be burdened with you any longer." "I am not weeping because thou art taking me to the Workhouse, my son, but because of my own cruelty to thy grandfather. Twenty-five years since, this very day, I was carrying him on my back to the Workhouse, and rested with him on this very stone. He wept and begged I would let him live with me the few days he had to live, promising to rock and nurse the little children, and do anything that he could; but I mocked his sorrow, turned a deaf ear to his cries and tears, and took him to the Workhouse. It is the thought of such cruel conduct to my poor old dead father that makes me weep." The son was amazed and said—"Get on to my back, father, and I will take you home again, for if that be the way my turn will come next; it seems it is weight for weight. Get on to my back, and you shall have your old corner, and rock the little children."'*

The simplest and commonest form of retribution is the loss of that which has been abused or neglected. We see a tendency in Providence to deprive people of the advantages which they possess, where they fail to make a right use of them. This principle of the Divine Govern-

* Ashworth's Strange Tales. First Series.

ment is laid down in the Parable of the talents. The man who had received five talents, and also the man who had received two talents, doubled by using the capital with which they were originally entrusted; but the man who had received only one talent, and had buried it instead of turning it over in trade, was sentenced to lose the only talent which he possessed. And it is worthy of special notice, that his was a case of mere neglect. He had not employed his talent in actively counterworking his master's interests: he had simply done nothing with it; he had hidden it in the earth, where it was of no use to any one. There may be special reasons in certain cases for delaying this result, but it will come about eventually: there may be special influences at work to bolster up for a time a system of imposture, but its fall will inevitably take place at last.

The very first instance of retribution which occurred in our world was of this kind. Our first parents were driven out of the Garden of Eden when they abused the privilege of keeping it. They had to quit the scene of their disobedience, though it was a scene of beauty and of luxuriance unparalleled on the face of the globe. They had to exchange it for the uncultivated wilderness, out of which a livelihood could be wrung only by the sweat of the brow.

We are familiar enough with cases where excellent situations are forfeited by bad conduct: we continually see blessings, which were never valued while they were held in possession, taken away, and their value learned when they are lost.

The execution of Christ as a malefactor was an enor-

mous crime. Had those who took part in it repented, they would undoubtedly have been forgiven, because for their sakes also He shed His precious blood, but without repentance it might be expected that the dire offence would be followed by signal retribution. And so it was. Forty years afterwards, Jerusalem suffered unexampled miseries in a protracted siege; the temple was rased to the ground, and has never been rebuilt; the Jewish people were scattered through all nations, and they are still strangers where they dwell. They lost the exalted position which they had abused. But long before this a marked punishment had fallen on the three prominent actors in the awful tragedy, wherein the Divine man was nailed by the hands and feet to a gibbet. Judas, one of his twelve Apostles, betrayed him, and upon that traitor there was immediately executed the prophetic sentence of the Psalms, 'his bishoprick let another take.' He forfeited his Apostleship; he sank to his true level; he went to his own place. Caiaphas was the high priest who condemned Jesus; and only two or three years afterwards he was deposed from his office by the Roman Emperor. Pilate, the Roman Governor of Judea, delivered Christ to be crucified; he, contrary to the convictions of his own conscience, supplied the secular power and authority to carry into effect the fierce hate of the Nazarene, long nursed in the bosoms of bigoted ecclesiastics. He was reminded by his mysterious prisoner, during the course of the trial, that all the power which he possessed as a governor was a delegated power—something he had received from above, and for which he was responsible to high heaven: yet he frightfully abused that power, from a fear of offending

his earthly superiors, and he was deprived of it a few years after by the very parties he had so sinfully sought to please. It was only A.D. 36, when he was sent to Rome by Vitellius, president of Syria, on the complaints of the Samaritans, to meet their accusations before the Emperor, and he was entrusted with office no more. The historian Eusebius states, that wearied with misfortunes he killed himself. As to the scene of his death there are various traditions. One is, that he was banished to Vienna Allobrogum, in Gaul—now Vienne on the Rhone—where a singular monument, on a quadrangular base, fifty-two feet high, is called Pontius Pilate's tomb. Another is, that he sought to hide his sorrows on the mountain, by the Lake of Lucerne, now called Mount Pilatus; and there, after spending years in its recesses in remorse and despair, rather than penitence, plunged into the dismal lake which occupies its summit. According to the popular belief, a form is often seen to emerge from the gloomy waters, and go through the action of one washing his hands; and when he does so, dark clouds of mist gather first round the bosom of the lake, and then wrapping the whole upper part of the mountain in darkness, presage a tempest or hurricane, which is sure to follow in a short space.*

This superstition is mentioned only to show the horror felt at Pilate's crime, and the deep sense which men have had that some terrible retribution was sure to befal him, and all such as he. The probability certainly is that both Caiaphas and Pilate committed suicide: that Judas did so we know from the record of the Evangelist

* Smith's Dictionary of the Bible.

Matthew, which expressly states that he went and hanged himself.

Thus it is probable that the three men who were most prominent in taking away the life of Christ—the only perfect life—shortly afterwards took away their own lives.

This leads us to notice the singular correspondence in point of nature and circumstance, which often subsists between the offence and its punishment, and which forcibly impresses observers with the idea of a supernatural arrangement. It was this peculiar sentiment of justice which found expression in the Mosaic law: 'An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth;' and in the still more ancient decree, 'Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed.' Carrying out this decree, even Christian nations—though it seems diametrically opposed to the spirit of Christianity—still persist almost universally in destroying the lives of murderers.

The patriarch, Jacob, won his father's blessing by simulating the voice of his brother Esau, and making his hands hairy; so that the blind and bedridden old man supposed it was really Esau, and blessed him accordingly. It was at the instigation of his mother that Jacob so shamefully deceived his father. That mother had, in consequence of the foul trick, to say farewell to her favourite son shortly afterwards, and never saw him again. As for Jacob, he was deceived in turn by that mother's own brother. After he had toiled seven years for Rachel, whom he loved, Laban sent Leah to his bridal chamber, in disguise. But he was deceived still more seriously and cruelly by his own sons, when they brought him back Joseph's party-coloured coat—badge of favouritism—all

stained with blood, and allowed him to remain for years under the dismal deception which that little artifice had wrought.

By Pharaoh's orders all the male children of Israel were to be destroyed; in a vast number of instances no doubt the cruel mandate was carried into effect; but Moses, who was one of these children, escaped, and brought up by Pharaoh himself as his adopted grandchild, became the instrument in the hands of Providence of avenging the untimely death of those who had been sacrificed. The firstborn in every Egyptian house perished in that night when the angel of the Lord passed over the land; and at the Red Sea, Pharaoh himself, with his army, the flower of Egypt's sons, sank like lead into the waters.

The wheel of events had run completely round when the King of Bezek, the practised amputater of royal thumbs and big toes, found one day he had nothing left of his own but the bloody stumps, and he felt that somehow the hand of God was in it requiting him. Thus reads the record:—'And they found Adoni-bezek in Bezek: and they fought against him, and they slew the Canaanites and the Perizzites. But Adoni-bezek fled; and they pursued after him, and caught him, and cut off his thumbs and his great toes. And Adoni-bezek said: Three score and ten kings, having their thumbs and their great toes cut off, gathered their meat under my table: as I have done, so God hath requited me.'*

Uriah, the faithful soldier, fell in battle, because, by David's direction he was set in the thick of the fight for

* Judges i. 5-7.

that very purpose. On account of this crime, David was told by Nathan, the seer, that the sword should never depart from his house; and it never did depart. His son Ammon was murdered by Absalom's direction, after a family banquet. Absalom raised an insurrection, and was thrust to the heart by Joab, who was cousin to him. Then Amasa, who was nephew to David, was treacherously smitten under the fifth rib, by Joab, another nephew. Thus was the misguided monarch made bitterly to feel, that what the sword had done to please, it could do to grieve him. His previous piety, and even his subsequent repentance, could not turn aside the strokes of retribution.

King Ahab, and his infamous queen Jezebel, in order to obtain Naboth's vineyard, incited the authorities of the city to put him to death on a trumped-up charge of blasphemy: he was put to death by stoning, and the dogs licked his blood. For this crime it came to pass, years after, that when the bloody chariot in which Ahab had died of his wounds was washed out, dogs lapped the impurpled water. As for Jezebel, because she was by far the worse criminal, she perished more ignominiously; she was hurled out of her palace window, and trampled under the feet of Jehu's charger; and when, afterwards, the body was sought in order to give it decent sepulture, because she was a king's daughter, all that was found of her was the skull, the feet, and the palms of the hands.

Cardinal Beaton, a Scotch prelate, was a fierce persecutor of Christ's faithful witnesses. Four men were burned by his direction on the Castle hill of Edinburgh, and two more the year after: and at this game he continued till

he got the excellent George Wishart into his power, and brought him to the flames. The stake to which Wishart was fastened, was in front of the Cardinal's castle at St. Andrew's; and in order that the Cardinal might gratify his eyes with the sight, cushions were laid for him and his company to lean upon while looking out at the windows. After the fire was kindled, the martyr said amongst other things, 'This fire torments my body, but no ways abates my spirit; but he who now looks down so proudly from yonder lofty palace,' pointing to the Cardinal, 'and feeds his eyes with my torments, shall ere long hang out at that window as ignominiously as he now leans there with pride.' These words were fulfilled so literally, as to suggest the question whether they did not fulfil themselves? A few days after Wishart's death, the Cardinal was slain in that Castle of St. Andrew's; and to satisfy the citizens that he was really dead, his carcase was hung out of the very window where he had sat on his cushioned seat, feasting his eyes with the sight of 'the pale martyr and his shirt of fire.'*

The fate of persecutors has in all ages been observed to be gloomy, and to indicate the action of a retributive Providence. The views of Christian people on this subject, a few generations ago, were no doubt exaggerated; but there was far more truth in their overrating of the matter, than there is in the underrating of it, which is now so common. In 'Scots Worthies' there is a long list of prominent persecutors, with an account of the judgments that befel them. In George Fox's journal, we are often startled by the rapidity and terribleness of the deaths of those who treated

* Scots Worthies.

the Lord's messengers with cruelty. The Methodist Magazines furnish many fearful instances of the same nature. 'The House of Valois was now extinct. Those bloody and deceitful men had not lived out half their days. Henry II. perished in the prime of life by the lance of Montgomery. His eldest son, Francis II., did not complete his nineteenth year. The unhappy Charles IX., his second son, had not reached the age of twenty-four, when he died in strange and fearful torments. At the same early period, the Duke d' Alençon, the fourth son of Henry, fell a victim to intemperance. Henry III., his only other son, was assassinated in his thirty-eighth year. Francis of Guise met the same fate, while in the full vigour of his manhood; and Henry of Guise had not accomplished his thirty-seventh year when he was also struck down by the daggers of hired murderers. It was not without an intelligible and an awful purpose that a retributive Providence thus openly rebuked the persecutors of their brethren.' *

Our sense of Providence in the punishment of the wicked is very much quickened when we see the offender caught in his own snare, and falling into the pit which he had digged for another. Ahithophel, in the days of David, was regarded as a perfect oracle. He was so sagacious that people felt as much confidence in his advice as in the supernatural directions of Urim and Thummim. This man abetted Absalom in his treason and gave him counsel, which, if it had been followed, would have been the ruin of David's cause. But all it did was to effect the ruin of himself. Another counsellor was listened to in preference to him, and this circumstance so humiliated the poor man, that

* Lectures on the History of France, by Sir James Stephens.

he saddled his ass, rode home, put his affairs in order, and hanged himself. So it was said that God had turned the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness. But the most celebrated instance of this kind of retribution is that which fell upon wicked Haman. He was a great man with King Ahasuerus, and had conceived a deep dislike to Mordecai, because he did not pay him all the homage he was accustomed to receive. He went so far as to get a gallows 40 feet high erected, on which to hang Mordecai, when the plot suddenly broke down. Mordecai was raised to extraordinary honour at Court, and on the gallows which Haman had erected for him, Haman himself swung by the neck.

Here is an instance of cunning overreaching itself, which was lately reprinted in the newspapers from an old London paper of the year 1771. It states as facts, which the public might rely on, that John Eyre, Esq., though worth upwards of £30,000, had been convicted at the Old Bailey, and sentenced to transportation; that a few years ago, this Mr. Eyre's uncle, a gentleman of considerable property, made his will in favour of a clergyman, who was an intimate friend, and committed it, unknown to the rest of the family, to the custody of the divine; but not long before he died, having altered his mind with regard to the disposal of his property, he made another will, wherein he left the clergyman only £500, the bulk of his large fortune to go to his nephew, Mr. Eyre. Soon after the old gentleman's death, Mr. Eyre, rummaging in his drawers, found this last will and perceiving the legacy of £500 in it for the clergyman, without any hesitation or scruple, put it in the fire and took possession of the whole effects in consequence of his uncle being supposed to have died intestate. The clergyman,

coming to town soon after, and enquiring into the circumstances of his old friend's death, asked if he had made any will before he died. Upon being answered by Eyre in the negative, the clergyman very coolly put his hand into his pocket, and pulled out the former will, which had been committed to his care, wherein the elder Mr. Eyre had bequeathed him his whole fortune, amounting to several thousand pounds, excepting a legacy of £500 to his nephew.

Pope Alexander VI. ascended the throne in 1492. He was old when he attained to this dignity, and his aim during his whole course of life had been to gratify to the utmost his love of ease, his sensuality, and his ambition. His only serious considerations, after becoming Pope, were how to advance his sons to dignity and power. One of these sons was Cæsar Borgia, who attained to perfection in wickedness —a very virtuoso in crime. Alexander once meditated taking off one of the richest of the cardinals by poison : the cardinal managed, however, by means of presents, promises, and prayers, to gain over to his interests the head cook, and the dish which had been prepared for him was set before the Pope, who thus died of the poison he intended for another.* One of the most terrible ways which crime has of punishing itself, is to provoke crime in others, and draw down on itself retaliation.

'They that take the sword shall perish with the sword.' Whoever relies upon brute force is likely to become, in the long run, a melancholy example of its power. It might be only a curious coincidence, that both the Earl of Morton, in Scotland, and the Frenchman, Guillotine, were executed

* Ranke's History of the Popes, i., 52.

with the instrument which they had contrived for putting an end to the lives of others; but there is something more than coincidence in the dark fate of violent men. Even the man who fetches a revolver into his house for protection, is in ten times greater danger after the revolver enters than he was when without a weapon; much more is the man or the nation in danger, that with the help of murderous weapons, makes a wicked aggression on another.

At the beginning of this century there flourished a wholesale murderer and robber on the grand scale, who kept Europe in a state of terror. The first Napoleon allowed a restless ambition to carry him beyond all bounds. There is no man from the beginning of the world who comes so near to our idea of Satan, for the dazzling splendour of his genius and the prostitution of that genius to the purposes of pride. For a time he conquered wherever he went; the more numerous his opponents the greater his victory; and even in this sea-girt isle nurses used his dreaded name to terrify naughty children. Through the Napoleonic wars land rose to fabulous prices. One market-day, in a small country town in the south of England, a farmer who had made his mark as a sagacious, rising man, astonished the other farmers with whom he was dining, by intimating a disposition to sell all the land he owned. When asked if he really meant to sell, he replied, 'At a price, gentlemen.' He got his price, and it was no light one; and the bargain, as affairs turned out, enhanced his reputation for sagacity. But how was this? Why, as he confessed afterwards, he simply argued from his belief in retribution: Napoleon was then at the summit of his power, but such a raw-head-and-bloody-

bones would not long be permitted to go on. So he sold out when land was very high, and soon afterwards both Napoleon and land came down low enough.

When Napoleon invaded Russia, his army amounted to six hundred thousand men, of whom above eighty thousand were cavalry. The army believed itself invincible, and the only answer which its leader had for the expostulations of a relative, was to open the window and point him to the stars. It was in the height of summer that they entered the Muscovite Empire ; and with rapid marches they passed on into the interior, aiming for the metropolis. They had several sanguinary encounters ere they reached it, in one of which—the Battle of Borodino—fifty thousand of the French and fifty thousand of the Russians were killed and wounded. It was a drawn battle, but the subsequent retreat of the Russians and abandonment of their capital, enabled Napoleon soon afterwards to enter Moscow in triumph. Here he had expected to find provisions for his army and quarters for the winter, and here it was his proud intention to dictate orders to the Czar of all the Russias. To his dismay, he found Moscow deserted by all its inhabitants, save a crew of squalid wretches who went about hallooing in the streets, and a few of a higher class, who had been left to set the city on fire. They did the deed, and the consequence was, that Napoleon was compelled to rush out of Moscow on foot, surrounded by crackling flames. The extensive quarters and abundant stores upon which he had calculated, were thus suddenly consumed. Winter was drawing on, and the Russians, still unsubdued, began to renew their attacks. In October he was reluctantly compelled to commence his retreat towards France, a distance

of two thousand miles. It has been remarked that it would require a fine genius to portray the passions of remorse, disappointment, grief, and hate, which agitated his mind during this retreat. One day the winter suddenly came upon them: cold fogs whirled from the heavens; bitter blasts swept along the earth; and at length the snow fell in huge flakes, which darkened the atmosphere. The very breath of the soldiers was changed to ice as it issued from their mouths; and many of them, when the frost had benumbed their senses, would be tripped up by a stone or a piece of ice, and, falling to the ground, the snow formed their white winding-sheet, and then their grave. As they marched, the crows croaked above their heads, and the dogs howled behind them, impatient to devour the dropping dead. At night, waggons were split up for fuel, and the poor wretches crowded around the fires, devouring raw and bloody horseflesh, and many, falling asleep before those fires, awoke no more. At last the scene presented an aspect similar to Milton's Hell, of ice and snow, and the soldiers flitted along like unhappy spirits therein. There was a doleful silence all round them, interrupted only by the tramp of their feet, the cracking of the snow, and the groans of dying men. Those who halted for a few moments were at once seized by the icy hand of the frost: their very heart congealed: they staggered as though they had been intoxicated: from their inflamed eyes flowed real tears of blood. They first fell upon their knees; their heads waved to and fro for a few moments, and then sank upon the snow, which their bleeding mouths at once dyed red; and one might have traced the track of that army some hundreds of miles by the corpses, the muskets, and fragments which lay

at intervals upon the ground. How could the sufferers refrain from execrating the evil genius that led them thither to perish? How was the mighty fallen! He took with him more than half-a-million in the prime of life, but on his return there were left out of his French division only 32,000, of whom very many were wounded. Altogether he had lost 550,000 men. Sixteen months after, Napoleon himself was an exile in the isle of Elba, and though he rallied his forces at Waterloo, his power had received a mortal blow, and the hero of a hundred fights had to spend the closing years of his dazzling career like a lion in a cage, eating his heart out with vexation, in the rocky island of St. Helena, thousands of miles from the scene of his exploits.*

As an illustration of a retributive Providence, the story of Napoleon the Little may now be told, by way of supplement to that of Napoleon the Great. This supplement forms a romance in real life. The prisoner of Ham—the special constable of London—became Emperor of France, and for a time the most influential monarch in the world. On the setting up of the Second Republic, he was elected first president through the magic of his uncle's name. He took a solemn oath to preserve the Republic intact, and to retire into private life at the close of his term of office, which was four years. How he kept this solemn oath is notorious. First, as head of the French Republic, he sent an army to Rome to put down the Roman Republic. Next he stole a march on the Chambers, and got his term of office lengthened from four to ten years; and, last of all, he managed,

* See Alison's History; also thrilling narrative in Chambers' Miscellany.

by means of a piece of voting by ballot which was entirely under his own manipulation, to get himself elected Emperor. These manœuvres he seasoned with the massacre of some two thousand people, a large proportion of whom were shot down in wantonness as they stood on the pavement, and as they sat at the windows of their houses, inoffensive spectators. Henceforth he occupied a false position. He might be very amiable to his friends; he might maintain order in the country; he might promote commerce and free trade; he might transform Paris into a city of palaces; he might give to France a predominating influence in the councils of the nations; he might prosper in everything that he undertook, from the humiliation of Austria to the patronage of the Suez Canal, but the damning fact remained that his very position was based on perjury and murder. There were plenty who were willing to forgive him on account of his success; he was just the man for the French; they required a ruler who could hold the reins with a tight hand; there were many advantages in a sovereign's being able to act without consulting a parliament. But there were others to whom it was an article of faith that a curse was on him, and that he would come to a bad end. And when they saw his first mistake in the expedition to Mexico; and, still more, when they perceived how he was outwitted by Bismarck, in 1866, they concluded that the tide had turned, and that it would not cease to ebb until the shores lay foul and muddy before all eyes. And when he entered into war with Germany, they calculated upon his defeat, not for military, but for moral reasons. They expected it, because there was an old score standing against him, which it seemed high time he should pay, and because

he had begun to make mistakes. The process of his ruin had commenced several years before; and as there had been no sign of repentance to arrest it, they could not believe that it would be stopped until it was complete. Seven weeks from the day on which he declared war he was a prisoner, and half of his army along with him; while the other half was shut up in the proud fortress of Metz as in a trap.

It may be said, however, that wrong-doers often prosper by their wrong-doing, and prosper to the last; that there are huge fortunes built up out of systematic fraud; that there are honourable positions in society won by diabolic cunning and cruelty. What of these cases? Why this, that the prosperity of these men is a sham, and that beneath it all their noblest feelings are blighted. The moral nature of the wrong-doer is degraded by the wrong which he does: he is written down a bad man, and he carries with him wherever he goes the conscience which he has seared and the heart into which he has emptied the poison of vice. If the sinner be permitted to die in outward security, his case is the worst of all. His entire bill remains to be paid in eternity, and his host will stand by at the reckoning. There is a hell where the wicked are a torment to themselves and a torment to one another: where the cause of the innocent that had long been neglected is at last fearfully avenged, and the base practices, which in this life secured an exceptional worldly success, meet with their due reward. Undoubtedly, representations were formerly made, and are still made, of future punishment, as revolting to our sense of justice as they are offensive to good taste, and it is incumbent on Christian teachers that they bring their

teaching on this subject into accord with Scripture and with conscience. For, as the jury continually refuse to convict for murder while the punishment is capital, so if the future retribution of the wicked be exaggerated beyond all bounds of reason, the truth itself will lose its effect on the minds of men. This is probably the cause why we hear so little of this subject at present, when it ought to be proclaimed as with a trumpet. After every correction has been made of popular notions which careful thought suggests, hell remains the most terrible fact in the universe of God.

Individuals may be called to suffer in the present life for their very goodness—for their truthfulness, for their honesty, for their generosity, for their faith in Christ. Martyrdom may be the price of integrity. One man's life and energy are too limited to gain the victory in all cases over exceptional circumstances. But in the life of a nation, where there is wider space and longer time for the play of principles, a much better test is afforded of the effect of any particular system upon the condition of men in the present world. If Christianity be true, those nations that receive it ought to be superior in every respect, to those that reject it. If Protestantism be true, the Protestant kingdoms ought to be ahead of the rest of Christendom. As Protestant Christians, we fearlessly accept the test. A comparison of different countries will show, that precisely as religious light is increased, there is a development of all those qualities which make a nation great. The nations that we call Christian, are, with all their imperfections, far in advance of the Heathen and of Mahometans: and of Christian nations it is precisely those that have the purest and simplest form of Christianity, that have the most liberty

and order, and intelligence. The Greek Church has not produced a single nation that is at once free and powerful. Russia is powerful, but it is not free: it is a huge half-civilised Empire, with an absolute despotism for its form of government: the Czar is master of the lives and property of all his subjects: a stroke of his pen can consign whomsoever he chooses to the mines of Siberia or to death. Greece is free, but it is not powerful or prosperous. Its mountains are the home of brigands, its government is destitute of stability: its people are branded with the reputation of duplicity and dishonesty. As to Protestant *versus* Papal countries, we have only to pass from Spain to England, from Ireland to Scotland, from the North of Ireland to the South and West of Ireland, from Protestant Prussia to Catholic Bavaria, from the Catholic to the Protestant cantons of Switzerland, and from the United States and the Canadian Confederation of North America to the wretched Republics of South America, to see that light is life, and that the free circulation of the truth as it is in Jesus, is intimately connected with the welfare of a people for this world, as we believe it is for the world that is to come. The liberty and prosperity of the little Catholic kingdom of Belgium, will hardly be felt to be a set-off to these numerous comparisons. It is bolstered up by Protestant England, to whom it is indebted for its constitutional Government, and it has been favoured with a wise Protestant king for its first ruler. As to Atheism, the example of Paris at one end of the scale of civilisation, and of the Bushmen of South Africa and the Aborigines of Australia at the other end, ought to make us pray earnestly that no other community may be foolish enough to repeat the experiment.

It is only in the present world that nations can be punished, for in the next world they will have no existence as nations. That they do suffer and go down for their wickedness, is a position which the histories and prophecies of the Old Testament have firmly established. Nineveh and Babylon buried—Egypt well nigh defunct—Tyre turned into a place for drying fishermen's nets upon—Israel, repeatedly enslaved by neighbouring tribes when they fell into idolatry, and twice driven into exile for their unfaithfulness, the second and worse exile continuing yet, though with hope of return—are familiar examples of national retribution. Unhappily, we are not compelled to go to ancient times or Biblical records alone for our examples. Every period produces its own examples, and it would be well if we pondered a little more than we are accustomed to do, those which belong to recent times, and to the age in which we live.

To begin with England, we ought to notice that, though her prosperity is unparalleled, her debt also has been till this year, 1871, without parallel. She has hung a millstone of £792,000,000 around her neck, by her stupid wars. Earl Russell, speaking in the House of Lords, May 26, 1864, said, that under George III., one hundred millions of money had been spent in an unsuccessful attempt to conquer the revolt of thirteen colonies, which were eventually lost to this country, and several hundred millions more had been expended in the Revolutionary war with France, and that two wars more wicked and ill-judged had never, he believed, been entered into by this country. The sins of the fathers are visited upon the children unto the third and fourth generation, and are likely enough, at

the present slow rate of paying off the national debt, to be visited upon the thirtieth and fortieth generation. Twenty-seven millions annually, are abstracted from the produce of the industry of this country, to defray the interest on this huge debt, before a penny can be expended on our present requirements—money, which but for this frightful leakage, might be employed to increase the comforts of the people, to open out new fields of productive labour, and to render education at once thorough and universal. In the growing pauperism of the country, and in the amount which every family is forced to fling annually into the bottomless pit of this national debt, and which the majority can so ill afford to spare, England pays the penalty of her pride, her passion, and her political mistakes.

Spain was once without a superior among the nations: the commerce and the wealth of the world were given into her hands. Her fall was brought about by her own fanaticism and intolerance. First, she banished the Jews, who were her ablest financiers and her most enterprising merchants. Next, she destroyed the Moors, who were her best agriculturists, and whose destruction left vast tracts of country desolate or inhabited only by banditti. Again, by the annihilation of that Invincible Armada which she sent against England, she lost her maritime supremacy, and the highways of commerce passed over to her Protestant rivals. Once more, by the crusade which she undertook against Protestantism and free thought in her own dominions, she completed her act of suicide. Flanders, after being made the scene of shocking cruelties, was finally forfeited to the Spanish crown, and it was ages before it could recover from the weakness superinduced by the loss of the best portion

of its population. In Spain itself the Inquisition flourished, but manhood decayed. The last spark of freedom was stamped out: the Papal church remained undisputed master of the country: there was no heretic, no dissenter to be found. This crime against liberty, humanity, and truth, was silently but terribly avenged. Spain sank to a position of contempt among the nations. She became the home of intrigues, of assassinations, and of revolutions. Her mental condition became a horrid combination of religious intolerance and religious indifference. She forfeited her immense possessions in South America, with their mines of gold and silver, their rich tropical productions, their barbaric splendours; and, what was worse, the daughters, while they renounced the authority of their passionate mother, rose up in her likeness.

The modern history of France presents us with a perfect Epic of retribution. In the middle of the 16th century, that country seemed on the verge of Protestantism. One of the cardinals wrote to the Pope, 'The kingdom is already half Huguenot.' His alarm might somewhat exaggerate the spread of the new doctrines, but Admiral Coligny, who was himself a Huguenot, informed Catherine de Medicis, the queen mother in 1562, that they had two thousand and fifty churches, and four hundred thousand men able to bear arms, without taking into account their secret adherents. Persecution was let loose upon them the very next year. The massacre of Vassy was repeated all over France. At Tours the banks of the Loire were covered with the corpses of slaughtered men, women, and children. A period of civil war ensued, by which France was miserably devastated and weakened. Peace was concluded in 1570, and there

was a lull in the storm for two years. Then the persecution burst forth anew, and with greater fury. While the Huguenots, as the Protestants were called, were assembled in Paris in great numbers, and unsuspicious of any design against them, a plot was hatched for their wholesale destruction by the Catholic King, Charles IX., and his mother, Catherine de Medicis. Between two and three o'clock in the morning of St. Bartholomew's Day, August 24th, 1572, while the King sat in his chamber with his mother and the Duke of Anjou, the great bell of the church of Saint Germain de l'Auxerrois began to ring to early prayer. It was the signal that had been agreed upon for the commencement of the massacre, and almost immediately after the first pistol-shot was heard. The houses of the Huguenots, which had long been marked, were broken into, and their inmates shot or sabred. The fugitives were slaughtered in the open streets. The King fired upon them as he sat in security at the windows of the Louvre. The massacre went on for three days. Mutilated corpses lay in every lane and passage: thousands were cast into the river Seine. On the fourth day, when most of the Huguenots had been butchered, and the fury of their murderers was glutted with slaughter, a dead silence fell upon the city. But in other towns of France, the horrid tragedy was enacted over again on a smaller scale; and it is computed that altogether between 70,000 and 100,000 persons were butchered in cold blood.

This massacre roused the remaining Protestants to save themselves by flying or fighting. Many on the Western coast put to sea in ships and boats, and came over to England. The rest banded themselves together for pro-

tection, and the wars of the League went on till 1594. Peace came with the accession of Henry of Navarre to the throne, an accession which he purchased by renouncing Protestantism. He gained many privileges, however, for his old co-religionists. The Edict of Nantes, which he promulgated, secured to them a large amount of liberty of conscience. That edict was revoked by Louis XIV. in 1685. The Huguenots were at that time the best merchants, the most skilful artisans and manufacturers, and the most industrious cultivators of the soil that France contained. The proud King, licentious as he was bigoted, determined that no one in his dominions should be of a different religion from himself. Fifteen days were given to the Protestant pastors to quit the country, after which if they were caught they were to be made galley-slaves for life. As for the people, they were required to abjure Protestantism, and if they attempted to leave the country, they were to be made galley-slaves, and their property was to be confiscated. Nevertheless, vast numbers managed to effect their escape. Nearly half a million perished, but well nigh half a million more found their way to Switzerland, to Germany, to Holland, and over the sea to England. About one hundred and twenty thousand came to England. They rewarded us for the hospitality which they received by teaching us the industrial arts in which they were so skilful, and in which we were at that time so egregiously deficient. It is hardly too much to say that they made England. They contributed largely to the success of the Revolution of 1688. In Ireland they settled mostly in the North, and this circumstance goes far to account for the vast superiority of the North to the rest of that unhappy country. They

founded Lisburn, and established the linen manufacture, to which it owes its wealth. They conferred great advantages on other countries, where they settled on the continent. But what of the country from which they had been so cruelly made to fly? The effect was the same as if a vigorous man should in a fit of frenzy open an artery, and let out the best blood of his system. The industrial arts decayed; flourishing manufactures came to a stand; great men rapidly died out, and genius failed from the land; religion fled into the desert: the nation was sold to the devil. The Catholic Church, which had expended its energy in crushing the Protestants, lost its own vitality; it became a mass of corruption and hypocrisy; yet it went on aggrandising itself at the expense of the people, until its property amounted to £160,000,000, or one-fifth of the landed property of all the country. Beneath the shadow of this hollow and oppressive Church infidelity grew rank. Bayle, Voltaire, and Rousseau gave impetus and direction to the sceptical tendency of the time. Then it was that the want of the Huguenots was bitterly felt. The manufactures which they had transplanted to other lands left the people destitute of remunerative employment, and there was no middle class to mediate between democracy on the one hand, and the Church and the aristocracy on the other. Beggars swarmed. In Paris alone it was computed that there were no less than 200,000. The Bishop of Chartres told Louis XV. that in his own diocese the men browsed like sheep, filling their stomachs with grass for want of bread. In every direction people were dying for hunger. The great body of the nation was on the brink of starvation. At last the storm, which had long been brewing, burst in blood and thunder. The Revo-

lution of 1789 was a political earthquake, beneath which the ancient edifice of Church and State, enriched with the spoils of many generations, toppled and fell. The religious persecution which Louis XIV., misnamed the Great, carried on only too successfully, recoiled upon his offspring. Louis XVI. and his beautiful Queen, Marie Antoinette, were beheaded, and the dynasty was set aside. The guillotine became the chief institution of the country; one knife alone, which may now be seen in Madame Tussaud's Exhibition in London, decapitated 90,000 heads. Altogether, it has been computed that a million perished. The property of the Church was confiscated; the plate was coined into money; the bells were cast into cannon; many of the priests were seized, and scourged before their own altars, many were cast into prison, many were guillotined, and in Aix roads where the poor Huguenot galley-slaves had been kept in misery before, 400 of these priests lay, wasted to a shadow, choked with stench, and horribly over-crowded, seventy sleeping in a berth; so that with the morning light one would be seen dead, kneeling with clasped hands in the attitude of prayer.*

Enough of misery, enough of vengeance. France has surely had enough! But no, the original mischief goes on to propagate and perpetuate itself. The Revolution which punished the first crime, constituted a second crime, and must itself be punished. Once more the manhood of France was drained off, but not, as in the first instance, to fertilise other soils with peaceful arts, but to fertilise them with the corpses of slain men. The conscription incessantly carried off husbands and sons: the sword incessantly

* See Smiles's Huguenots.

evoked the tears and cries of widows and orphans. The wars of the Revolution and of the Empire scourged the back of mad democracy, till the blood ran down in streams, and it was seen how dreadful is the responsibility of a people who avenge themselves, even though they have had cruel wrongs to be redressed.

But not yet was the iniquity of France by any means purged; and therefore, not yet was the punishment of France at an end. A fresh link was added to that chain of evil consequences which started with the persecution of God's people. Those wars which cost France so many of her children, covered her with military glory; and that glory once more became her snare. They bequeathed to her the great renown of the First Napoleon, whom, as distance began to lend enchantment to the view, she began increasingly to admire and almost to idolise. He was the embodiment of her self-glorification. At his shrine she knelt and worshipped. By the permission of the British Government, she fetched home his embalmed body, thirty years after burial, and deposited it in a magnificent marble tomb under the dome of the Hotel des Invalides, in Paris; when if she had been wise she would have rejoiced that it rested so far away from her excitable populace, and would have wished the place of its sepulture to be forgotten. She sold herself for the sake of glory to an unprincipled adventurer, who rejoiced in the appellation of his nephew; and for twenty years she served that nephew, and wore his chains, because they were made of gold, and quaffed the cup of pleasure, and laughed and grew wanton, and dreamed she was the universe. Her penalty? She began to pay it with the first day of his accession to power. During the first ten years of his rule

her debt increased at the rate of £50,000 a day, and during the whole twenty years it increased £330,000,000. It had astonished the world to see how soon France recovered from the exhaustion of the wars of the Revolution. The secret was that she incurred very little debt by them; they were costly in life, but financially cheap, because the infamous rule of the first Napoleon was to make war pay for war. The bill for Napoleonism was not presented till the reign of the late Emperor, when the debt incurred in a time of comparative peace was found to be immensely larger than the founder of the dynasty had incurred during incessant war, and when this debt of peace was suddenly swelled to monstrous proportions by the expenses of an unsuccessful conflict with Germany. And it is worthy of notice, that this conflict might well have wound up at Sedan, had it not been for the wrongs perpetrated by Louis XIV., the great persecutor of the Huguenots. He treacherously annexed Alsace and Lorraine to his dominion; he made them the scene of his most cruel dragoonades for the extirpation of Protestantism; and by a strange recoil of events, these very provinces became a bone of contention, and led to the protracting of a most disastrous campaign. Germany wished to have them back, while France was determined not to let them go; and for this Paris was besieged, and the ramifications of the war extended through the heart of the nation. Have we reached the Finis of this Epic of retribution? We earnestly hope so, but we know that it will be so only on condition that France shall at last be led by her calamities to fear God and keep His commandments—only on condition that she receive back her martyred and her exiled Huguenots, by

the resurrection of their spirit among the masses of her population, and by the enthronement of their principles on the high place of power.

CHAPTER III.

Little Things.

'WHO hath despised the day of small things?' Not the Being who could best afford to do it—He who is of all Beings wisest, and has at His command exhaustless resources. In those 'small things' which only the thoughtless despise, He has contrived to insert a strange power of multiplication, He has invested them with an influence that is great in the inverse ratio of their bulk. He makes the ocean of drops and builds up the universe out of atoms. He has countless armies of efficient workers under His command, which are so small that man is unable even to see them, until he consents to borrow aid of tiny grains of sand, which when fused make him magnifying glass and help his deficient vision. Time and number are brought into such relationship with littleness that a small funnel would run off the Atlantic. No summit is reached at one bound: by a succession of laborious strides men gain the mountain height, and even

ants must creep to the top of their municipal hillock. By planting many steps between a low beginning and a lofty climax room is given for the play of that Law of Progress which is one of the chief ordinances of Heaven. No doubt it would have been possible to commence everything at its best, but the joy and the moral discipline of progress would have been sacrificed. A thousand varieties of life, a thousand pleasurable sensations would have been suppressed. By bringing a thing to perfection at twenty stages instead of one, there are twenty sensations instead of one wrung out of it; and after waiting so long the last stage out of the score causes more pleasure than the whole journey would have caused if it had been accomplished at a single stage. In all this there is a wise economy of force for the production of the greatest amount of utility, and the greatest amount of happiness.

The richest gift which God can bestow on the world is a child. Within that child may be wrapped up the elements of some piece of progress in art, in science, in politics, or in religion. He may be the hieroglyphic of a nation's deliverance from tyranny. There may be condensed into his diminutive form, ready to be expanded in due time, events that shall brighten the pages of history. We never felt the force of that passage in the prophecies of Isaiah, 'Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given,' so much as one day when taking a stroll along the Tyneside, starting from Ryton. First, we came to a house near Wylam, standing beside an old waggon-way, in which house George Stephenson was born. The farthest point of our wanderings was Cherryburn, where we saw a stable, once a respectable house, which has a brass plate on

the door with this inscription, 'Thomas Bewick was born here.' The stable at Cherryburn reminded us of another stable at Bethlehem, where the child of the ages was born; and we perceived distinctly that when God would confer some great blessing on the world, He does not send it cut and dried and finished as a blessing, but He sends it disguised as a little child.

When the art of wood engraving was to be invented, Providence said, 'Let Bewick be born.' When the Railway System was to be developed in order to multiply indefinitely commercial facilities, and bring the divided peoples into closer fellowship, the same Providence ushered little George Stephenson upon the scene. If any one had been praying for those facilities and for that closer fellowship, not knowing how they were to be brought about, and had been directed to the little child at Wylam as the answer to his prayer, he would have been confounded: he would have said, I prayed for the speed of the greyhound, combined with more than the strength of the elephant, and the answer is a helpless infant. I asked for a practical omnipotence, and there has been sent a creature that is too weak to stand upright. Yet the answer was effectual. The foolishness of God proved to be wiser than men, and the weakness of God turned out to be stronger than men.

Could we have been introduced to one of the choice spirits of our race in his infancy, having a full knowledge of what he was to be and to do, we should have gazed on him with a feeling akin to reverence, because we should have seen in his fragile figure the embodiment of the splendid results he was destined to achieve. We should

have seen in the infant Mazzini the liberation and unification of Italy; we should have seen in young Washington the independence of America; in little Walter Scott a wide realm of the noblest literature lifted at one bound above the prevailing impurities of fine writing; and in the boy Bacon the broad and deep foundation of the grand superstructure of modern science. What then should we in imagination have beheld, when we gazed on Jesus in the arms of His mother Mary? We should have seen a multitude which no man can number, gathered out of all countries, and peoples, and tongues, and redeemed by His blood from their iniquities.

It was to be the characteristic of Messiah that He should not break a bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax, till He sent forth judgment unto victory; and in the gracious tenderness of Jesus watching over the first faint feeling of contrition in the sinner's breast, till it issue in conversion, and in the strength and bliss of Heaven, the prophecy is ever receiving a triumphant fulfilment.

Little outward circumstances have sometimes played an important part in the conversion of men to God. Providence co-works with grace to save sinners: one works without, the other works within; they work towards one end, and the result is glorious. The outward means and events which Providence employs are very various, while conducting to the same blessed issue. Many are brought to Christ through hearing the Gospel preached; many through reading it; many through the instrumentality of Sunday schools; many through the example and the persuasion of pious parents; and there have been instances where the miraculous and the supernatural have been

brought into requisition to effect this object. Paul was arrested on the road to Damascus by the dazzling splendour and the potent voice of our Lord. Cornelius was directed by an angel where to send, in order to be instructed in the right way. But, how often, on the other hand, have very singular, and apparently trivial, causes, led, in the Providence of God, to this consequence—the grandest that can occur in the history of a human being.

The sting of a fly has led to conversion. In the last century, a clergyman of considerable note preached, on taking possession of his living at a certain place, with such earnestness and power, that a great deal of excitement was created, and his church was crowded. One man, however, an innkeeper, who was fearfully addicted to drunkenness and blasphemy, swore he would never go to hear him; but, some time afterwards, on learning that the singing was remarkably good, he, being fond of vocal music, went to the service with the view of hearing the singing, declaring, at the same time, that he would not hear a word of the sermon. When the hymn had been sung, he placed his fingers in his ears during the prayer before sermon, to keep out the sound, and kept them in when the text was announced. The minister, however, had not proceeded far in his sermon, before a large fly alighted on the innkeeper's face, and stung it sharply; this made him hastily withdraw one finger from one ear, to drive the assailant away, when, by a curious coincidence, as it would generally be called, the clergyman was pronouncing those words—'He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.' The man's attention was arrested by the sentence so singularly appropriate, and he determined to

listen to a few sentences. By-and-bye, the other finger was withdrawn from the other ear; and he heard with deep attention all the rest of the sermon. From that day he became a new man, and at last died rejoicing in hope, and blessing God that He had employed one of the meanest of His creatures to open his ears to hear words whereby he might be saved.

The striking of a clock has been known to awaken a man out of the sleep of sin. A young gentleman, of high connections and great respectability, was induced by some gay acquaintances to accompany them to a ball. He was highly diverted with the entertainment, and amid music and dancing and merry voices, the hours sped fast away; when suddenly, as if a message had been delivered to him from another world, the clock struck one, and instantly that powerful passage in Dr. Young's 'Night Thoughts' rushed into his mind:—

> 'The bell strikes *one*. We take no note of time
> But from its loss. To give it then a tongue
> Is wise in man. As if an angel spoke,
> I feel the solemn sound. If heard aright,
> It is the *knell* of my departed hours.
> Where are they?—With the years beyond the flood!
> It is the signal that demands despatch.—
> How much is to be done? My hopes and fears
> Start up alarmed, and o'er life's narrow verge
> Look down—on what?—A fathomless abyss—
> A dread eternity! How surely *mine!*'

Conviction seized the gay youth. Alarmed and terrified, he left the dissipated throng, and retired to his own room to think and pray. From that night he was known as a decided Christian.

Conversion has, in God's Providence, followed from the asking of a single question. Harlan Page, of New York, once went round among the teachers of his Sabbath School, at a meeting which they had, and inquired of each whether he thought he had a well-grounded hope in Christ; and he recorded their several replies. Coming to an amiable young merchant, whom he highly respected, and who seemed not far from the Kingdom of God, he tenderly inquired—'Have you a hope?' The reply was, 'No, sir.' 'Then I am to put down your name as having no hope?' 'Yes, sir.' 'Well, I write down your name as having no hope.' He closed his little book, and left him; but the young gentleman could find no rest till he obtained a hope through Christ.

Dr. Spencer, Presbyterian minister, of the same city, once went round at an inquiry meeting, where there were about seventy persons present; and, as he passed rapidly from one to another, he came to an individual who had never been there before, and who said, when asked the state of his mind—'I feel that I have a very wicked heart.' Dr. Spencer simply said in reply, 'It is a great deal more wicked than you think it;' and went on to the next person in the company. Now, it afterwards appeared, that the individual who complained of the wickedness of his heart, had really begun to think that his heart was improving, and he expected to receive comfort from Dr. Spencer; but the laconic reply he got, and which seemed cruel to him at the moment, drove the arrow of conviction deeper. He thought of those words—'A great deal more wicked than you think it'—the last thing before he went to bed at night, and the first after

he awoke in the morning, and he could get no relief till he gave up all into the hands of Christ.*

A sovereign Providence has been exercised over those discoveries and inventions which have widened the boundaries of human knowledge, and promoted the best interests of mankind. They occurred at the right time, and could neither be antedated nor postponed. And our perception of Providence in them is aided by the very insignificance of the circumstances which have sometimes been employed to flash the light on the eye of genius.

Next to the art of writing, that of printing is the most important ever invented. The way was prepared for it by the discovery of paper-making. Almost simultaneously, cotton paper was introduced from the East by the Greeks, and rag paper was invented by the Moors. Humanly speaking, the Reformation was an impossibility without these two arts of paper-making and printing. Pictures and images are 'the books of the ignorant;' but Protestantism must live in the light, and requires for its subsistence the general diffusion of the Scriptures. That diffusion was not possible so long as every copy of every book had to be written out by the slow labour of the pen; and while the material of which it was composed was parchment, which was so scarce that thousands of ancient manuscripts were blotted out with the sponge, in order to make room upon the old parchment for fresh writing. It took an expert copyist ten months to produce a copy of the Bible. When produced it sold for a sum varying from £125 to £150. Printing revolutionised these prices, and it came as

* Dr. Spencer's 'Pastor's Sketches.'

the necessary forerunner of the Reformation, It was found without being sought. It is said that in 1430 a man named Lawrence Coster, of Haarlem, in Holland, was amusing himself by cutting some letters on the smooth bark of a tree. It occurred to him to transfer an impression of these letters to paper, and he imprinted two or three lines for the amusement of his children. This was essentially the art of printing. A suitable ink was soon contrived, and whole pages of letters were cut on blocks of wood, to be afterwards impressed on paper. Guttenberg and Schœffer, of Mentz, contributed improvements, and the art of printing was brought to such perfection that an edition of the Bible was at length printed at Mentz, John Faust, a wealthy goldsmith of that city, supplying the capital. This edition was disposed of at the ordinary manuscript prices, and the method of its production was kept a profound secret. A second edition was brought out, and Faust carried a number of copies to Paris. He disposed of several of these copies at the usual high figure, but when, in order to get rid of the remainder, he suddenly lowered the price to £15, and even to half that sum, he excited the suspicion of the Parisians. His lodgings were searched, and a number of complete copies of the Bible were discovered. There was great astonishment at their exact conformity with one another, down to points and commas. The ready explanation reached was, that he was in league with the devil; that the uniformity of the copies was due to magic; and that the red ink was the magician's blood. He was hurried off to prison, and obtained his freedom only by divulging his secret.*

* Smiles's Huguenots.

The press has proved a mighty engine for the diffusion of truth. True, it has been prostituted by bad men to base purposes; it has been employed to propagate error, and to corrupt mankind; but this prostitution is no proof that the art of printing was not the gift of a kind Providence, any more than the fact that the tongue in so many mouths tells lies, is a proof that the tongue was not fashioned by the Almighty.

It might seem a small thing when it was discovered, that a magnetised needle if poised freely would point to the north, yet that discovery created modern navigation, and enabled the mariner, who before had crept timorously along the coast from one headland to another, to put off upon the open deep, far out of sight of land. It might seem a small thing when it was ascertained that the vapour of steam, whose power was known chiefly by the rattling of kettle lids, could be so applied as to produce regulated motion, yet that discovery revolutionized the world. It multiplied indefinitely the power of man for all sorts of industries, and brought the nations of the earth, separated by such great distances, to be practically near neighbours.

Everybody is supposed to know how Sir Isaac Newton sat in an orchard with his book before him, and noticed an apple fall to the ground—how this trivial circumstance set the mind of the great philosopher working, and led him to ask why the apple did not go up instead of down?—and how the pursuit of this question resulted, eighteen years after, in a triumphant demonstration of the law of gravitation. The electric telegraph sprang from a circumstance equally trivial. An Italian Professor, named Galvani, had

placed an electric machine on the table near to some frogs, which had been procured as a delicacy for his wife: he observed their legs twitching in a singular fashion, and found that it was through the influence of the electrifying machine. Here was the discovery of a new power, denominated from its discoverer, Galvanism, and this discovery was the foundation of that wonderful system of telegraphic communication by which we can sit in a room and converse with people in France, in Germany, and even in America, though three thousand miles of salt sea water lie between us and them. There is something in this power akin to the supernatural, and no doubt it is a preparation for the happy time when knowledge shall be universally diffused, and when space, being practically annihilated, all the nations of the earth shall dwell peacefully together on the globe as in the different counties of one kingdom, or even as in the different streets of one town.

Out in the North Atlantic ocean, about 800 miles to the west of the Spanish Peninsula, there is a group of islands called the Azores. Until Columbus arose, these islands formed the farthest point of land westward that was known to the civilised world. It is said that on the beach of one of them a small weed, such as no one had ever seen before, was picked up one day, and that this simple circumstance awoke in the mind of the great Discoverer the idea that it had been grown in some other country still farther to the west, and that there was, therefore, land across the Atlantic ocean. The successful termination of the voyage of discovery, which at last Christopher Columbus was enabled to organise, turned upon a mere point of time. A few more

hours, and his crew, grown impatient by a perseverance which they considered mere madness, would have compelled him to return.

The wickedness of the world is so great, that but for Providential restraint it would overflow in a universal deluge: ruin would overtake the entire race: the vicious would destroy the good: the bad would be 'consumed one of another.' In various ways the Almighty limits the operation of evil, checks its progress, and thwarts and bruises those who delight in it. He is never at a loss for instruments. The annals of crime abound in marvellous instances of the part which little things—such as a forgotten tool or a speck of blood—have played in the discovery of murderers. A borrowed walking-stick was the cause of the detection of the last murderers ever gibbeted in Ireland.

A little child has unconsciously avenged his father's violent death. Addison in his elegant essay, No. 237 of the Spectator, has familiarized us with the Jewish tradition, which tells how Moses was called up to the top of a mountain, where, in conference with the Supreme Being, he was permitted to propose certain difficult questions respecting the Government of the universe. In the midst of the colloquy he was ordered to look down on the plain below. He looked, and saw a spring of crystal water issuing out at the foot of the mountain, and a mounted soldier alighting from his horse to quench his thirst. As soon as he was gone a little boy came up to the spot, found a purse of gold, which the soldier had dropped, picked it up, and went off with it. Immediately afterwards there came an infirm old man, weary with age and with travel—he

drank at the spring, and then sat down beside it to rest himself. The soldier, missing his purse, returns in search of it, and demands it of the old man, who declares that he knows nothing of it, and appeals to Heaven to witness his innocence. The soldier refuses to believe him, and so kills him. Moses falls on his face horror-struck, but before he is able to say a word in expostulation, the Lord thus explains to him the mystery: 'Be not surprised, Moses, nor ask why the Judge of the whole earth has suffered this thing to come to pass: the child is the occasion that the blood of the old man is spilt, but know that the old man whom thou sawest was the murderer of that child's father.' This legendary tale is translated for us into modern fact in the following incident: A gentleman who was very ill, sending for Dr. Lake, told him he found he must die, and would therefore relate a very odd story to him. He had, about a fortnight before, been riding over Hounslow Heath, where several boys were playing at cricket. One of them, striking the ball, hit him just on the toe with it, looked him in the face, and ran away. The toe pained him exceedingly. As soon as he came to Brentford he sent for a surgeon, who was for amputating it; but, unwilling to suffer that, he went on to London. When he arrived there he immediately called in another surgeon to examine his hurt, and that surgeon told him his foot must be taken off. But this he would not hear of, and before the next day mortification seized the leg, and in a day or two more struck up into his body. Dr. Lake asked him whether he knew the boy that struck the ball? He answered, 'About ten years ago, I was riding over Hounslow Heath, when an old

man ran by my horse's side, begged me to relieve him, and said he was almost famished. I bade him begone: he kept up with me still, upon which I threatened to beat him. Finding he did not take any notice of it, I drew my sword, and with one blow killed him. A boy about four years old, who was with him, screamed out that his father was killed. His face I perfectly remember. That boy it was who struck the ball against me, which is the cause of my death.' *

The author of 'Tell Jesus: Recollections of Emily Gosse,' wife of Philip Henry Gosse, F.R.S., relates a curious incident, the authority for which she does not give, but there is nothing on the face of it improbable. A remarkable trial for murder once took place in Paris, of which the facts were as follows:—A man who had lived unhappily with his wife determined to get rid of her by poison. Long time he waited his opportunity of administering the deadly potion. One day while they were dining, and the husband was serving, he managed to mix the poison in his wife's food; but when he had done so he could not endure to see her eat it, and making some excuse he arose, and left the room. During his absence from the room, and before his wife could partake of the poisoned food, her eye was attracted to a spider which let itself down by a thread from the ceiling upon her plate, over which it crawled. Disgusted at the sight, she could not eat her portion, but thinking that, as her husband had not seen the spider, he would not loathe the meat, she changed their plates before he re-entered the room. The man ate, and in a short time was seized with cramp, and

*Wesleyan Methodist Magazine, from MS. by Wesley.

every symptom of poison appeared. The woman was taken into custody on suspicion of having poisoned him. She declared her innocence, and on being questioned, related the circumstance which caused her to change the plates. The husband, astonished to find that a spider had diverted the fatal dish from his wife to himself, confessed all and died.

Providence can help by many or by few; by feeble instrumentalities or by agencies more powerful; by a mighty host armed with formidable weapons or by Gideon's three hundred, with their lamps and pitchers. When men are delivered from great adversity by little things, they feel that the deliverance is doubly wonderful. William Reed lived at Bath, and made a practice of following his trade as a barber on Sundays. One Sabbath morning he happened to look into a place of worship, as the minister was reading out his text, 'Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.' He listened long enough to feel convinced that he was sinning against God by following his trade on a Sunday. He went back to his work with a heavy heart. He opened his mind to his minister, who advised him to begin to keep the first day of the week sacred. He replied that beggary would be the result: he had a flourishing trade, but it would almost all be lost. At length, after many a sleepless night, he made the resolve to honour the Lord's day. He discontinued his work on that day, went to the different means of grace, and enjoyed great peace of mind. But the consequences which he foresaw actually came to pass. His genteel customers left him; he was obliged to give up his fashionable shop, and to take another under the Market-house, and shave a hum-

bler class of people. One Saturday evening, between light and dark, a stranger from one of the coaches, asking for a barber, was directed by the ostler to the cellar opposite. Coming in hastily, he requested to be shaved quickly, whilst they were changing horses, as he did not like to violate the Sabbath. This touched a tender chord in the barber's breast. He burst into tears, and asked the stranger to lend him a halfpenny, to buy a candle, as it was not light enough to shave him with safety. He did so, revolving in his mind the extreme poverty to which the poor man must be reduced. When shaved, he said, 'There must be something extraordinary in your history, which I have not time to hear. Here is half-a-crown for you, and when I return, I will call and investigate your case. What is your name?' 'William Reed,' said the barber. 'William Reed!' echoed the stranger. 'William Reed! by your dialect you are from the West.' 'Yes, sir; from Kingston, near Taunton.' 'William Reed, from Kingston, near Taunton! What was your father's name?' 'Thomas.' 'Had he any brother?' 'Yes; one, after whom I was named, but as he went to the Indies, and as we never heard from him, we supposed him dead.' 'Come along; follow me,' said the strange gentleman. 'I am going to see a person who says *his* name is William Reed, of Kingston, near Taunton. Come and confront him. If you prove to be indeed he whom you say you are, I have glorious news for you. Your uncle is dead, and has left an immense fortune, which I will put you in possession of when all legal doubts are removed.' They went by the coach, saw the pretended William Reed, and proved him to be an impostor. The stranger, who was a pious attorney, was

soon legally satisfied of the identity of the barber with William Reed, of Taunton, and told him that he had advertised him in vain; that Providence had now thrown him in his way in a most extraordinary manner, and he had great pleasure in transferring the property, which amounted to many thousands of pounds, to a worthy man, who was the rightful heir.*

How trifling in themselves were the circumstances which led to William Reed's deliverance; yet how great to him was the deliverance. Without a halfpenny candle, or credit to get one! 'Man's extremity is God's opportunity.'

The proverb says 'a miss is as good as a mile;' but, taking another view of the matter, a miss might so much more easily have been a hit than the mile could have been, and the results would have been so different if it had been a hit, that the hinging of so much on so little has been a favourite theme of moralizing in all ages. It has also disposed men to believe in Providence, without which, it has seemed to them, the universal order might be involved in hopeless ruin by a bagatelle. The wish of a wilful king to divorce his queen was the occasion of the Established Church of England becoming Protestant. The fact that the same king had no grandchildren led to the union of England and Scotland under one sovereign. By one vote, Episcopacy triumphed over Puritanism in the Convocation at the Chapter House of St. Paul's, in 1562. By one vote, the Baptists lost their cause, and the sprinkling of infants was pronounced the proper thing, in the Westminster Assembly, in 1647. Lord Brougham ascribed his restless energy, in great measure, to the Highland

* Christian Miscellany and Family Visitor.

blood that flowed in his veins by inheritance from his mother. His father, after being engaged to a Miss Mary Whelpdale, 'the last of a purely Saxon race,' lost his betrothed the day before the appointed wedding-day; and, when he had got over the shock, married the niece of Robertson the Historian. Brougham has recorded his conviction, that if Mary Whelpdale had been his mother, he should have remained in that state of respectable mediocrity in which his ancestors had lived and died. By trivial incidents, the course of study or the career of life is often determined. Dr. Boerhaave became a physician because his way into the ministry was closed by the slander of an insignificant person. The conversation of a few friends, in the chamber of John Locke, led him to write his celebrated 'Essay on the Human Understanding.' Butler's 'Analogy' is due to a brief passage in one of the Fathers. A casual opportunity of reading Locke's 'Essay' made Samuel Drew a metaphysician. The same worthy, when on the point of making up his mind to emigrate to America, was detained in England by a couplet in Goldsmith's 'Edwin and Angelina,' in 'The Vicar of Wakefield':—

> 'Man wants but little here below,
> Nor wants that little long.'

The irrational creatures are of low degree in the presence of man, yet they have their rights and claims which he has been too slow to acknowledge: they are beloved by their Maker, who has fashioned them with admirable skill: they have all their special uses: they have an important part to take in the general scheme of Providence, and sometimes He entrusts them with the execution of some particular

commission. A dove makes known to Noah the state of the Deluge: Balaam is reproved by the ass on which he rides: the ravens feed Elijah: a great fish swallows the runaway prophet, and afterwards vomits him upon the shore: the lions respect the person of Daniel, but instantly tear in pieces his persecutors: when tribute is demanded of Christ, he sends Simon Peter to the sea side, with instructions that he will find in the mouth of the first fish his hook brings up, a coin that will answer the demand.

It is said that the cackling of geese saved Rome, and that a fly once choked a Pope. It has been mentioned already that the flight of a dove is reckoned to have saved the life of Mahomet, and thereby changed the aspect of the East. On this account it is a favourite bird with the Mahometan, and may be seen in great numbers in the neighbourhood of every mosque. The romantic Scotch story tells how the hero Bruce, dispirited by six successive defeats, lay in a hut and watched the attempts of a spider to swing itself from one beam to another. Six times in succession it failed, but at the seventh attempt succeeded; whereupon Bruce took heart, and fought his seventh battle, which was crowned with victory. At the massacre of St. Bartholomew's Day, Du Moulin crept into an oven, over the mouth of which a spider quickly wove its web, so that when some of the assassins inspected the premises, they passed the oven with the remark, that no one could have been there for some days. On the same dreadful day, while Admiral Coligny, the eminent Huguenot leader, was murdered in his own house, his chaplain, Merlin, managed to conceal himself in a hayloft, and in the acts of the next synod, of which he was moderator, it is related that while many in similar cir-

cumstances perished of hunger, he was supported by a hen regularly laying her egg near his place of refuge. Sir Thomas Gresham, who built the Royal Exchange in London, was the son of a poor woman, who, while he was an infant, abandoned him in a field. To the spot where he lay, a boy was attracted by the chirping of a grasshopper, and became his preserver. In remembrance of this mercy, Sir Thomas, after he rose to the pinnacle of commercial greatness, chose the grasshopper for his crest: on the walls of the Royal Exchange in several places he had this crest planted, and on the top of the tower he fixed a grasshopper vane. There are strange cases on record in which dogs have mysteriously saved the lives of human beings. The bleating of sheep has preserved the persecuted. In the days of Claverhouse, when the faithful in Scotland were afflicted and tormented, they were not permitted as we are to worship God in beautiful churches without fear of molestation, but had to resort to secret places in the mountains and valleys, and often met at midnight. One time when a number of them had assembled in a barn or shed in a lonely part, their attention was attracted by the loud bleating of sheep outside, and on going to ascertain the cause, they discovered that their enemies were approaching. Through this curious yet timely intimation of danger, they succeeded in making their escape.

'God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty.' A single spark would burn down London. There is power in one grain of wheat to fill the granaries of the world. The law of progress strives to repeat itself wherever there is life, and from small beginnings pushes towards a great ending. The life

of individuals, and the life of systems, if they are of God, alike obey this law of progress and try to expand. The vital movements that have taken place from time to time in the Christian Church, and the history of the Church itself, furnish impressive illustrations of the way in which Providence delights to hinge great results upon a small beginning. Christianity has sprung from one who was 'despised and rejected of men.' As we trace back the succession of generations and of centuries, we observe the number of Christians growing less and less, like a river dwindling as we follow it up to its source, until we find ourselves at last in a disreputable village of Palestine, called Nazareth, and in the house of a carpenter of that village, where we see a Young Man who, whenever He is addressed by any other member of the family, is called Jesus. Within the breast and brain of that Young Man the whole Christian Church of the future was contained.

If the farmer has a lot of dry stubble which he wishes to burn, running in a continuous line across a ploughed field, he needs only take the candle out of the lantern, and touch with it the stubble at one end of the line, or in the middle, or at any point where he happens to be standing, and then he may put back the candle into the lantern, and walk away home, and next day he will find the stubble reduced to ashes. The Lord sees, we will suppose, so many minds in a community that are open to good impressions by a certain special influence; He sees in what direction the line of them runs, and how different persons communicate with one another; and He touches one part of the living line with celestial fire: He blesses a small number with holy earnestness, and they, instrumentally,

impart it to others; and so it passes on and on, until the last person amenable and accessible to it has caught the hallowed flame.

It was thus with the great Methodist revival. It commenced with a small band of Oxford students, who, in the year 1729, agreed to spend three or four evenings in the week together, to read classics on common evenings, and on Sundays some book in divinity. They were so diligent in good works, that they soon got the title of the 'Holy Club,' and then, the opprobrious, yet really creditable, epithet of the 'The Methodists,' because they lived—as it was known that an ancient sect of physicians, called Methodists, had followed their profession—according to method and rule. It was remarkable that this little company should contain two who were both destined to be eminent as leaders, but who became opposed on the subject of predestination. John Wesley took the Arminian view; George Whitefield espoused Calvinism; and by this means one had access where the other could not go. The 'Holy Club' at Oxford was the little cloud no bigger than a man's hand, and, like that other cloud seen by Elijah's servant, it has spread. The four young men who formed it have become as many millions.

It was a little thing, when, about the year 1568, twenty-seven godly men and women, who had been confined in Bridewell prison for not conforming to the Established Religion, formed themselves into an independent Church, with Richard Fritz as their pastor, and Thomas Rowland for deacon, and acknowledged no head or authority above them except Christ; yet this was the origin of the Congregational churches of Great Britain and America.

The British and Foreign Bible Society was a noble conception; but the foundation of it was effected quietly and unostentatiously, and bore no correspondence with the extraordinary results. A Welsh clergyman asked a young girl what was the text of his last sermon. She gave him no answer; she only wept. By further questioning, he ascertained that she did not possess a Bible. This led him to inquire whether her parents or neighbours had one, and the result of his inquiries being unfavourable, led, ultimately, to a meeting in London of a few intelligent and devoted Christians, to devise means for supplying the Welsh with the Bible; and this issued in the formation of the British and Foreign Bible Society, which has done wonders for the welfare of the world, having circulated more than thirty millions of copies of the sacred Scriptures. Nor has the good ended here; for America and various other countries, impressed with the value and necessity of such an institution, have established one of their own, after the model of the British.

It was a little thing when Robert Raikes first collected together on the Sunday a few neglected children to teach them how to read, and especially how to read and understand the Scriptures, yet out of that little thing has sprung the mighty institution of Sunday Schools. It was a little thing when Hugh and James Bourne, James Steele, and William Clowes gave the people a day's praying and preaching on Mow Hill, in Staffordshire, yet out of that Camp Meeting has come the Primitive Methodist Connexion with its 160,000 members. 'Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth.'

'Yes' and 'No' are little words, yet they are the two

pivots on which the fate of immortals turns. 'Yes' or 'No,' says the speculator in trade, and a huge fortune or bankruptcy is the result. 'Yes' or 'No,' says the maiden to her suitor, and angels clap their hands for joy, or fiends chuckle because they know they have her in their power. 'Yes' or 'No,' says the emigrant, and he lands safely on a foreign shore to become the ancestor of a long line of substantial citizens under other skies, or choosing some ill-fated steamer he and his find death and burial in the same minute, and a grave five miles deep at the bottom of the sea. 'Yes' or 'No,' and the young man walks at liberty, his independence, his moral integrity, and his religious principles preserved, or the Great Sportsman has him in his net ready to be clean despatched when it shall suit his convenience. 'Yes' or 'No,' and the Prince of the Kings of the earth is a guest beneath our humble roof, or He stands outside knocking in vain for admission, until He finally take His departure, never to return.

But let us take care to give the glory to God to whom it is due. The reason that so much turns upon the decisions of the human will and upon simple circumstances occurring in connection with human affairs, is not so much the innate power that is in them as the great things that the Divine Providence has stationed outside of them. There are mountain passes leading across dizzy heights into extensive kingdoms where the path is so narrow that it could be easily held by fifty men against fifty thousand. Let the little band stand steadfast, and they keep back a force one thousand times greater than their own: let them give way, and that mighty force shall roll on and change

the face of a nation, and alter the direction of history. But the vastness of the consequences in the latter case proceeds not so much from the yielding of the few that originally held the pass, as from the marching onward of the many when the way was clear.

A small door will keep out the tide when it rises: not because it is stronger than the tide: not because it can of itself do near as much as the tide. It can of itself do very little. It can just say 'Yes' or 'No'; 'You shall come in'; or, 'You shall stay out'; but it cannot float big ships: it cannot flood the surrounding country: it cannot dig deep pits, and scoop long, wide rivers out of the earth's breast: it cannot do these things: it can only decide whether they shall be done: it has a strange determining power allowed. In like manner the decisions of the human will, and the occurrence of minute circumstances in life and in history, could do nothing of themselves, but they become omnipotent, because they link on to influences which stretch into the infinite and project themselves into eternity; they take hold of the great power of God.

CHAPTER IV.

Good Out of Evil; or, Civilisation and the Wars of the Nineteenth Century.*

THERE is nothing more horrible than war. It is organised robbery. It is wholesale murder. It is the combination and concentration of all the crimes and miseries of which human nature is capable. The Providence of God must be proclaimed triumphant, if, out of an evil so dire, it is seen to fetch any good result; triumphant, if by the facts of history, we can vindicate the truth of that bold utterance, 'Surely the wrath of man shall praise Thee: the remainder of wrath shalt Thou restrain!' We shall, therefore, follow a single line of illustration in showing that the Divine Providence brings good out of

* The substance of this chapter, by H. K., appeared as an article in the 'Christian Ambassador' for Feb., 1871, edited by Rev. C. C. M'Kechnie.

evil. We shall take war as a specimen of all evils, and the wars of the nineteenth century as a specimen of all wars.

We write in A.D. 1871, when the nineteenth century has less than one-third of its course to run, so that it requires no prophetic glance to tell the leading features it will wear in the eyes of succeeding generations. It has been a great century for mechanical inventions and scientific discoveries; for religious and philanthropic societies; for the spread of commerce and of education; and we know now, whatever takes place before A.D. 1900, it will not stand in history below its predecessors for great wars. It is to be hoped it will go out like a lamb, but it must be confessed it came in like a lion. The wars of the French Revolution, which had begun in 1792, went on with slight intermission until 1815, when the battle of Waterloo wound up the awful struggle. The responsibility of that struggle was not confined altogether to one side. Revolutionary frenzy, developing into Imperial aggression, an aggression which seemed to aim at realising the ancient dream of universal empire—this was the crime of France. On the part of the other European Powers the fatal mistake was, interference with the internal affairs of the French people, with the view, in the first instance, of suppressing the spirit of democracy, which threatened to overthrow all the thrones and dynasties of Europe. The atrocities of the Revolution had filled them with dismay and with horror; and in the interests of order and of humanity, as they supposed, they marched to put it down; but, in the attempt to extinguish a local fire, they set all Europe in a blaze. They encountered an unexpected resistance, which hurled them back over their own fron-

tiers, and, following them into the very heart of their territories, avenged their invasion by wholesale plunder and annexation.

The cause of liberty inherits a great gain from that unexampled contest, in the narrowing of the ground on which it is now held lawful for foreign intervention to operate. It was painfully taught that this power of intervention must not pass into the interior of a kingdom, to impose upon the people one form of government or another, but that, if employed at all, it must be called into requisition only when a government transgresses its own limits, and meddles with a neighbour. The principle acquired distinct recognition that no nation ought to be molested in the management of its own affairs. There can hardly occur a stronger case for the testing of this principle than was afforded by the French Revolution. No small share of the guilt of blood incurred during that Revolution must be laid at the door of the old despotisms who looked on monarchy as something indispensable, and would not leave the people alone to work out their new ideas. It is probable that the awful excesses into which the movement ran in its later stages would never have been developed, had it not been for the alarm created by foreign intervention. The first attempt to interfere was made in pursuance of the treaty of Pilnitz, entered into by the King of Prussia and the Emperor of Austria, England remaining neutral. This attempt was a very unfortunate affair. It was not weak enough to be harmless, nor powerful enough to be efficient for its purpose. It did not repress the disorders of the Revolution, but it vastly augmented them, and lashed into wild fury all the fears of the Revolutionists. They

rushed into frightful extremes, and the Reign of Terror began. Then it was that England joined the Allies. Considering the state of political science and opinion at the time, we cannot wonder that neighbouring nations, listening to the thud of the guillotine, which never seemed to rest, felt, at last, when the king and queen had suffered, and hundreds of thousands of their subjects had perished, that it was time to go in and interfere, especially when they were apprehensive that the same madness would spread through the world, unless suppressed with a strong hand. At the cry of murder the policeman is free to break through the inviolability that encircles a private home. If ever the nations were justified in interfering with the internal affairs of a neighbouring nation, it was while judicial murder was so rife in France during the Reign of Terror. Yet the result shewed that the interference was a huge blunder. The lesson at that time taught to statesmen was taught effectually. When, in 1848, France declared a second time for a Republic, and when, in 1851, Louis Napoleon restored the Empire, no neighbouring country cared to interfere. Lord Palmerston, as Foreign Minister, in 1851, erred, by undue haste, in recognising the imperial status of the man whose great ambition was to restore the *régime* of his uncle, for whose overthrow England expended so much blood and gold. The Provisional Government, which took the reins at Paris on the surrender of the Emperor ('gentlemen of the pavement,' as Count Bismarck termed them), a Government which had not been elected or approved by the national suffrage, nor in any formal or official way placed in power, was immediately recognised by several nations, while several others entered into busi-

ness relations with it, and withheld distinct and formal recognition only because France herself had not yet recognised. The United States, in its Republican zeal, might be hurried into an untimely recognition; but the more judicious decision of England and of other European States paid a really higher compliment to France; for it virtually said—Anything you please: whatever satisfies you will do for us: we only wait till you make up your own mind: we would not in the slightest degree anticipate your verdict; and, meanwhile, we are willing to work with the men that are even tacitly accepted by you. In these proceedings we have evidence of the triumph achieved by the principle, that each nation should be free to do as it pleases within its own boundaries. It was to be regretted that the principle should have to be learned at such a frightful cost; but, once established. it became the guarantee of great good to the world.

The grand signification of the wars of the Revolution was that in a political sense, 'old things were passing away, all things were becoming new.' Mediævalism was dying with the throes and convulsions of an expiring Titan, and modern civil institutions were struggling into birth. By a rare conjuncture of qualities, the great Napoleon, who in one aspect of his character appears a mere war fiend, a fiery scourge of humanity, a nuisance and a curse, in another aspect, stands before us as the wise legislator in sympathy with progress, and impatient of the effete methods which were everywhere followed. Where it did not clash with his own ambition, he had a fine perception of justice, and a resolute determination to uphold it. He was not all loss to the world. By a strange Providence, the bad qualities of

his nature became the means of turning the good and great qualities into account for the benefit of mankind. If he had not been so wise he could not, and if he had not been so wicked he would not have imposed upon so many nations the political advantages which he undoubtedly gave them. The man who is commonly supposed to have turned the Revolution into ridicule, because he converted a Republic into an Empire, did in reality develop and consolidate the principles of the Revolution; did in reality extend the authority of those principles far beyond the bounds of France. With one hand he chastised the nations, and with the other he gave them laws and institutions far in advance of their own, but which they were too ignorant, and too apathetic, and too much held down by their rulers, to win for themselves. The *Code Napoléon* was a substantial gain to civilisation. Lord Bacon has observed that when 'laws have been heaped upon laws in such a state of confusion as to render it necessary to revise them and collect their spirit into a new and intelligible system, those who accomplish such an heroic task have a good right to be named among the benefactors of mankind.' Strong views of the criminality of the First Napoleon's career ought not to repress the admission that in this way and to this extent he proved himself a public benefactor. In the digest and improvement of the existing laws of France, which had become a chaos, his active and sagacious brain found a congenial task. He summoned to his aid in this great work the ablest lawyers of the land; he presided at their councils, and frequently sat six or eight hours a day. He took a prominent part in the debates, and displayed an extraordinary amount of information on the subjects brought under

review. Though it was not his special line, he showed himself fully equal to any of the members of the distinguished Board at which he presided. The result was a code of laws which bears his name, and which is a noble monument of legislative wisdom. In this code were incorporated the great principles of the Revolution. One of these was the equal succession of sons and daughters, by which the emancipation of woman, so far as the inheritance of property was concerned, was accomplished; and a clean sweep was made of the mischievous law of primogeniture and entail, under which England, with all her boasted freedom and enlightenment, is found, eighty years after, painfully labouring. Such important and beneficent changes as these would have fallen into confusion and desuetude in France, and out of it they would not have had a chance of being even tried, had it not been for the code which the conqueror, first with consummate wisdom, composed, and then with consummate ambition, propagated. It became the law, not of France only, but of all the kingdoms which his arms subdued. When his military power perished, and his empire passed away, this one noble achievement of his mind retained its sway, as on the subsidence of the Nile a precious deposit remains to fructify the soil of Egypt. Over half of Europe the *Code Napoléon* still exercises authority, and no mean influence has to be ascribed to it in shaping the civilisation of the present age.

Recent events impart special interest to the consideration of the effect of Napoleon's wars on Germany. There is reason to think that if Germany had not been conquered by Napoleon I., she would not have been able to dispoes so easily of Napoleon III. Before the close of the last

century, a deep sleep of unbelief, of refined selfishness, and political indifference had fallen upon the German nation. Frederick the Great had set the example of a cold and cynical scepticism. On German literature he looked down with contempt, while he revelled in the French classics, which at that time were steeped in atheism and licentiousness. Voltaire was on free and easy terms with him, and a resident at his court whenever he chose. The simplicity and moderation that had characterised German life were gradually sapped by the corrupt influence of France. Patriotism died out, and the watchword became, 'Every man for himself.' The ties of moral obligation were loosened; manhood deteriorated; a soft and selfish sentiment infected all ranks, and the French eagles found the half-putrid carcase of the German nation ready for their talons. Prussia fell prostrate before the dreaded conqueror, and by her fall increased his fame. Berlin became a humble dependent on Paris; the royal successor of the great Frederick a vassal of the Corsican adventurer. In one of the closing years of the last century Beister had said to F. H. Jacobi, 'We must not relax our efforts, and then in twenty years' time the name of Jesus in a religious sense will no more be heard.' Exactly twenty years after the utterance of this boastful prediction, the battle of Jena was fought, when Prussia was decisively defeated by Napoleon, and placed completely at his mercy. It was a day of deep humiliation, but it was a day of deep repentance. The misery and terror of French invasion and conquest brought over Germany a burning sensation of shame and a revival of national life. It was bitterly felt that the enforced sacrifices of selfishness and isolation were

heavier by far than any losses that might have to be incurred by virtue and patriotism. Professors in the universities, and nobles on their ancestral estates, set the example of self-sacrificing devotion. To be real and true, though poor and homely, was discovered to be infinitely nobler than to be decked out in the trappings of foreign finery and meretricious sentiment. Roused up from her sensual dream, and animated with fresh national life, Prussia nobly did her part to drive back the proud invader across the Rhine, and to seize his capital, in 1814; and when he broke loose again the following year, from the isle of Elba, she joined her potent hosts with those of the British, and helped to recage the escaped lion and bring the tremendous conflict to a triumphant close at Waterloo. From that time it was seen that a new and better era had dawned for the North of Germany, as well as for several other lands where the ravages of war had been experienced. A cry arose for education, and the vigour which had been developed, in repelling a formidable invader, took the direction of internal reform. The superior system of compulsory education, which had already been inaugurated in Prussia, soon raised its inhabitants above every other nation in the world in point of intelligence.

Seven years after the battle of Waterloo came the war of Greek Independence. This was a small and harmless affair compared with that kind of warfare with which Europe had grown only too familiar. Yet it delivered the fair historic realm of Greece, the country where, in ancient times, civilisation found a congenial home, and art and science and philosophy were carried to their highest perfection, from a race of conquerors who were the uncompromising enemies

of progress. Their presence acted as a dead weight upon the spirit and energies of the Greeks. Not only were they alien in race, in language, in habits, and in religion, but their government was despotic and their ideas were wholly retrogressive. Yet a cobra-de-capello would as soon have thought of relinquishing its victim as the Turks of surrendering their hold of Greece. The great European Powers came to the rescue; and by their combined fleets, the navies of Turkey and Egypt were annihilated at the battle of Navarino in 1829. Greece obtained its freedom and was put upon its own responsibility under a constitutional government. It cannot be said that its history since that time has been such as its enthusiastic friends desired and anticipated, but the just national aspirations of the people were fulfilled, and a decisive beginning was made, not only of the process of resuscitating the national vitality—grown torpid by long oppression—but also of rolling back the dark tide of oriental despotism and Mahometan bigotry, which for nearly four hundred years had inundated regions peculiarly sacred to civilisation and Christianity.

After the settlement of Greek Independence, the wars of the British in India formed for a long time the principal reminders that the war spirit was not extinct. With the enlightened views now so extensively disseminated in England, it would have been difficult even for a Tory Government to prosecute that course of conquest in India which has been at once the admiration and the envy of the world. This course began at a time when it was thought to be a right thing for a nation to acquire territory simply for the sake of acquisition, and without much regard to the means employed. One step in the line of conquest led

to another, until the greater part of Hindostan, with a population of nearly 200,000,000, became subject to the Sovereign of this little island. In 1857 a fearful insurrection broke out, ostensibly because greased cartridges were supplied to the Sepoys, and were suspected by them to be a treacherous means of defiling their personal sanctity, and tampering with their religion, but in reality from a natural repugnance to an alien Government and from the irritation caused by various grievances of which they had just reason to complain. English valour and endurance achieved prodigies, and the insurrection was put down.

Notwithstanding its faults and shortcomings, the advent of British rule in India was the advent of a higher civilisation, of science, and of Christianity, and of an incorruptible justice in courts of law, which was a new thing to the people. Even under the government of the East India Company they found themselves well off compared with their experience of Pagan and Mahometan rule. But the brief, bloody insurrection of 1857 precipitated many improvements. The Company's rule was abolished; there was an end of pandering to the worship of false gods; a new impetus was given to education and commerce, and one of the best governed realms of the earth to-day is British India. The Hindoos themselves confess, especially the educated part of them, that never in their history were they so advantageously situated as now; never so secure against war from without, and anarchy and oppression within.

The Crimean war is regarded by an increasing number of people in England, and by persons too who are by no

means members of the Peace Society, as a great mistake, as an attempt to bolster up an effete government, doomed by its inherent corruption and decrepitude to go to pieces. The speeches of the Right Honourable John Bright against that war are a monument of his almost prophetic sagacity. They excite our unqualified admiration for the daring honesty with which they opposed the tide both of aristocratic and popular opinion; for the scathing invective which could not soon have been forgotten by those who were the objects of it; and for a cogency of reasoning which only political madness at the time could have resisted. With these speeches on record, and with the awful example of the Franco-Prussian war before our eyes, it was disappointing to find the leading newspapers of the country, on the first provocation from St. Petersburg, in the shape of a note by Prince Gortschakoff, writing up the war spirit to a white heat, and appearing quite ready for a second Crimean campaign. The first was a mistake on both sides, but all the more on that account it became an illustration of the wonderful way in which Providence brings good out of evil. The least that is to be said of it is, that neither in Russia nor in Turkey did the highest interests of civilisation go back after it. But much more may be said. The result of the war was very painful to Russia, and broke the proud heart of the Czar. He died, as it has been said, of the Crimean war, and with his death the Russia that we identify with Peter the Great, and with Catharine, with stolidity, and serfdom, and superstition, passed away, and a new Russia began to be. Military defeat and disaster constituted the practical demonstration which led to the condemnation of the old

order of things, and to the inauguration of the new. Alexander II., the successor of Nicholas, has shown himself a true patriot. He found the nation, on his accession to power, bleeding at every pore: he found the people downtrodden, the higher classes corrupt, the officials shamefully guilty of venality in their public transactions, and of immorality in private life. He found religion an instrument of persecution, the press gagged, and justice sold like an article of merchandise in the courts of law; and he set himself by a series of wise reforms to save and to lift up his country. In 1861 he passed an Emancipation Act, which is surely the greatest Act passed this century in any country. By this Act, 25,000,000 serfs obtained their freedom, so that they were no longer the property—body and soul—of their masters, and could no longer be bought and sold with the land. The Augean stables of the Law Courts have been swept out; trial by jury has been instituted; the censorship of the press has been materially modified, and something like free journalism has sprung up; municipal corporations on a most liberal model have been conferred on all large cities; the railway system has been marvellously developed, having already reached a mileage of 5,000, and being likely in a few years to reach 13,000; and, in short, beyond any other country—beyond England itself, the chosen home of progress—Russia has advanced in civilisation since Sebastopol fell. As to the Turkish Government, it came after the Crimean war more than ever under the influence of Western ideas, and especially of England, by whom it had been befriended, and has since then allowed an amount of religious toleration in its dominions not enjoyed in the majority of countries pro-

fessedly Christian. 'The torpid nuisance,' as Mr. Carlyle has denominated Turkey, was rendered as innocuous as it well could be to be above ground.

The civil war in America, as far as the South was concerned, was the direct result of an infatuated resolve to uphold and perpetuate the system of slavery. It may be quite true that at first the North fought only for the preservation of the Union; it is certain that the South fought for slavery. There was a time when this tiger's cub could have been easily strangled; but that time was allowed to go by, and the system grew to such monstrous proportions that even the free states entered into a compact with it, and became infected, more or less, with its corrupt and cruel spirit. They were bound by laws of their own making to restore the fugitive slave to his master; they became possessed of a contempt for the black man, and would not allow him to work in the same shop, or to worship in the same church, with whites. They were guilty of complicity with the evil system, and when the day of reckoning came, they had a heavy sum to pay. The war raged for four years, and few wars could be pointed to in Christian times wherein more lives were destroyed between two belligerents, or more money wasted in so short a time. When it was over, and the gain to civilisation was computed, it was found that for every year the war lasted, a million slaves had obtained their freedom. The total number of the slave population was about four millions, and the sword cut their fetters in every state where they were found. The boast of Cowper, that 'slaves cannot breathe in England;' that they but touch our country, and their shackles fall,' became also the boast of the Americans. The standing

reproach of the free institutions of America—the one thing that crippled and almost nullified their influence for good throughout the world, was buried in a bloody grave. Almost the beginning of the war put an end to the kidnapping of negroes, which had been secretly carried on by United States' vessels on the coast of Africa; the end of it saw the freed negroes raised, not merely to the possession of personal freedom, but to the advantages of education, and to equal electoral rights with the white population. Their conduct and their progress since that time have disappointed their foes, and amply fulfilled the predictions of their friends. The scars left by the war upon the body politic are still ugly, but those scars are preferable to that running sore which was surely draining away its very life. The house of bondage kept in the South was a lazar house; it bred moral corruption, and it must eventually have tainted and destroyed the whole nation. If the question had been, 'Shall slavery be blown up by gunpowder or by discussion? Shall it succumb in four years to physical or to moral force?' no right-minded man could have been at a loss for his answer. But now that all is over, and the dread reality is chronicled as fixedly as the Punic wars on the page of history, the true lover of humanity would hesitate to cancel the record, even if he could, if at least the condition of its cancelling were the restoration of slavery. He would hesitate to pronounce a short war worse than continued slavery; and he would be disposed to say, Let the few hundreds of thousands of victims of the war sleep on in their gory shrouds, rather than four millions of human beings should go back to a condition of living death for generations yet to come.

The sentiment of nationality has always been strong, because it is a natural sentiment, but it has been overruled till this century by the power of kings, in whose interests it seems to have been tacitly admitted that armies ought to bleed, and citizens be bought and sold, and territory adjusted. The very word *kingdom* is an embodiment of this egregious falsehood. But the rising sentiment of nationality has asserted the superiority of the claims of a whole people to consideration in the adjustment of political boundaries, to the claims of a few royal houses, however ancient their pedigrees. Community of race and temperament, of manners and customs, of ideas, of language, and of religion, creates a loftier barrier than the Alps, and a broader line of demarcation than the sea. Rivers and hills are incapable of arresting the flow of sympathy and the intercommunication of thought. No number of Imperial decrees, or bristling forts, can enforce silence on the voice of nature. That people who are really alike in national characteristics, should bind themselves together for the purposes of internal government and external defence, seems as natural as that a family should dwell alone, and that their house should be their castle. In the practical acknowledgement of these commanding influences we have a good guarantee of peace and progress.

The sentiment of nationality has in this century commenced its conquering career. As was to be expected, it has encountered resistance from the vested interests of royal dynasties and ancient aristocracies, and this resistance has culminated in war. The upshot has been that vested interests have been beaten, and the people have remained masters of the situation. War has lessened the chances of war.

The number of separate governments and of possible belligerents has been diminished. Chronic, irritating grievances have been extinguished. The efforts of patriots, and the generous aspirations of peoples, have been crowned with success. Beyond the immediate success, whatever it be, there will be great ulterior consequences. A new note has been sounded in Europe; an important principle asserted, which rulers themselves show signs of believing, namely, that Governments are made for the people, and not the people for the Governments. Loyalty has passed into patriotism, and a long stage has been travelled towards the point where patriotism will develop into philanthropy.

Until 1859 Italy was divided into a number of petty states, which were for the most part as illiberal as they were weak. They were dangerous only to their own subjects. The only real power in the Italian peninsula was that of an alien. The baleful shadow of Austria, at that time one of the most bigoted and despotic Governments in Europe, rested upon the fair provinces of Venice and Lombardy. To dislodge that power seemed about as easy as to shift the Appenines. The country appeared to be doomed to division and decay. Suddenly, Louis Napoleon, who was then strutting his little hour before the astonished nations, the most powerful personage anywhere to be seen, espoused the cause of Italian Independence. He set out at the head of a powerful army, with the professed determination to free Italy, from the Alps to the Adriatic; and though his performance fell short of his promise, it was of incalculable service to the cause of European freedom. Blood flowed freely at Magenta and Solferino. Austria was compelled to surrender her hold of the rich domain of

Lombardy. The constitutional Kingdom of Sardinia, which was Napoleon's ally in the campaign, received the ceded territory. Soon after this, the neighbouring Dukedoms of Parma, Modena, and Tuscany, voluntarily joined Sardinia, and ranged themselves under the sceptre of Victor Emmanuel. Then came Garibaldi's victorious march with his insurgent band through the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, and the shearing down of the Papal States by means of the Italian troops. These movements were effected with very little sacrifice of life, because the people were ripe for a revolution.

Much had been done; but the unification of Italy was not yet accomplished. Each step of its deliverance thus far had been effected by means of war, and there had to be farther sanguinary struggles before the goal was reached. Venetia was still held in the grasp of Austria, and Rome, the historical metropolis of Italy, was still ruled by the Pope-king, whose Government was generally pronounced the worst in Europe. For a few years the tide of liberty and unification was arrested, and then a new ally appeared upon the scene. The numerous states into which Germany was divided, although they had less cause to complain of despotic treatment than Italy, had been long yearning for the unity of the Fatherland. The first step towards this unity was the wresting of Schleswig-Holstein from the dominion of Denmark. Whatever may be said of the motives of Austria and Prussia, the two leaders in the attack, the wishes of a majority of the Schleswig-Holsteiners were accomplished, and the foregone conclusion of Germany was ratified. It was hard for a gallant little state like Denmark to be pounced upon by two of the great

Powers together, and deprived of a large portion of her territory; but it was harder still for the people of a German province to be kept against their mind under the Danish rule, alien as it was to them in blood and speech. It was with considerable satisfaction that those who sympathised with Denmark saw the two robbers, as they deemed them, shortly begin to quarrel over the spoils. In that quarrel, Prussia had the advantage of her antagonist, because she represented two nationalities, while Austria was the champion of division and oppression. At the very time when Prussia was wishing to be rid of Austria's presence in the Germanic Confederation, Italy was longing for her riddance in Venetia; and it was evident to both Prussia and Italy that the cause of the one was the cause of the other. An alliance was entered into between them, and Austria found herself assailed on two sides at once. The murderous conflict of Sadowa broke the back of her power in one day, and sent her home to work much-needed and long-delayed internal reforms, and to discover, in her bitter humiliation, that civil and ecclesiastical despotism was as unable to stand against modern progress as the musket had been to match the needle gun. Venetia was added to the realm of young Italy, and the North German Confederation marked a second and great step towards the complete unity of Germany. As for Austria, it is said that she would not now undo, even if she could, the events of 1866. 'It is good for her that she has been afflicted.' The reactionary policy which was her bane from time immemorial, has been finally abandoned, and to-day the conquered are enjoying a degree of liberty on which their conquerors, the Germans, have cause to look with envy.

The sudden and extraordinary growth of Prussia's military power irritated the pride and excited the jealousy of France; but, by the cunning diplomacy of Count Bismarck, 'the man of mystery' was appeased, and the evil day postponed. From this day, however, the position of France became similar to that which Austria had just occupied, and from which she had been so ignominiously driven. For who was it that now stood in the way of German unity? It was France. And who was it that denied to Italy the accomplished unity, for hope of which, so long deferred, her heart was sick? Again it was France; and she was evidently seated in Canute's chair without Canute's good sense. It is true the French were withdrawn for a while from Rome under a convention with Italy; but they returned as soon as the Garibaldians poured into the Papal States, and Italy hesitated to drive them out. The Battle of Mentana was fought; the powers of the Chassepot were tried upon the patriots, and many a red shirt was riddled. Liberty, just on the threshold of her triumph was checked, and Rome was once more garrisoned on behalf of the Pope by the most famous military nation in the world.

The defeat at Mentana was a disappointment to Liberals and to Protestants everywhere; it seemed at the time as if war had cast its sword into the wrong scale. But Time brought an astounding explanation of the mystery. But for the defeat of Garibaldi at Mentana, in 1867, Pius IX., we may depend, would never have summoned his Œcumenical Council at Rome, in 1870. Under the protection of French bayonets, that Council of 800 bishops assembled, and put the top-stone on the edifice of the Papacy.

They did a foolish and a wicked thing, when they set themselves in opposition to the advance of civilisation, and when they invested a mortal man with one of the attributes of Almighty God. But it was to the advantage of the truth, that a great spiritual despotism should unmask itself, and proclaim its own folly and presumption. If an evil system will not allow itself to be cured, the sooner it commits suicide the better for all men. On Wednesday, July 13, the Pope promulgated, in the church of the Vatican, the dogma of Infallibility, amid a terrific storm of the elements. Two days afterwards, the tempest of war, compared with which the elements of nature are mild and merciful, burst upon Europe. The candidature of a prince of the House of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen for the Spanish throne became the hypocritical pretext for France to let slip the dogs of war upon Germany. Men held their breath in dismay as they looked on at the commencement of the campaign, for never before had two such powerful combatants, furnished with such destructive weapons, entered the lists against each other. On the part of Germany was the determination not to be invaded, not to lose one inch of territory, and not to be dictated to by a foreign power in the management of their internal affairs. On the side of France was the desire to seize upon the Rhine provinces, if not on Belgium, to keep Germany divided and weak, to assert the old French authority in European affairs, and to redeem the fading prestige of the Empire by the lustre of a new success. But the Imperial Government reckoned without their host. They had reckoned on the defection of South Germany from the cause of Prussia, and lo ! they found that their

wanton attack had proved an electric spark which had fused all Germany into one, and raised a patriotic enthusiasm deep, solemn, and sublime. The Emperor had chosen his own time, yet no sooner had he given the signal to commence hostilities, than he discovered that his own army was unprepared, and that Germany was ready. Day and night and night and day the Teutonic legions poured on to the Rhine. Never in all history was there such a deep and rapid torrent of armed men directed, with perfect order, to the point of danger. There was an oppressive pause, and the world wondered why the dreaded Emperor delayed to strike. At last he did strike, by enacting a theatrical piece at Saarbruck, at which, despite the solemnity of the moment, men could not forbear to laugh. Next Germany took her turn, and showed herself in earnest. At the storming of Weissenberg, followed immediately by the battles of Woerth and Forbach, France sent up to the heavens a shriek of agony. In haste, the marines, that had been intended to be poured into the North of Germany, were recalled from the fleet; and the garrison at Rome, which for twenty years had been a standing menace and insult to Italy, and an upholder of a system of superstition and despotism which was a burlesque upon the enlightenment of the age, had plenty to do to save its own country, and leave Italy alone. The battles of Metz, and the surrender of McMahon and the Emperor at Sedan, followed quick upon the first staggering blow that Germany had delivered. The lion's skin dropped from the donkey that had long kept all the beasts of the wood in terror. Italy felt that she had no longer anything to fear from France: and her Government

coolly advertised in the newspapers of Florence their intention to be at Rome by the end of September. It was no idle boast. All the anathemas and the prayers and the spiritual terrors wielded by the infallible bishop of the place, backed by a show of fight from the Antibes Legion, were unable to keep the Italian troops outside the gates of Rome. They entered, and that throne which had stood for more than a thousand years, the bulwark of bigots, oppressors, fanatics, and irreconcilables, fell, and fell we believe, to rise no more. As with the stroke of a magician's wand it vanished. War did it as the immediate instrument, a war of insignificant dimensions, a mere street broil. But it was the existence of a great war at a distance that made the success of this small affair possible. Let no one say that the hoary-headed despotism of Rome, stained with the blood of innumerable martyrs, fell easily at last. The real battle was fought in France, and the shock of it made the earth tremble. Not on the Tiber, but on the Saar, on the Moselle, on the Meuse, on the Seine, and on the Loire, the long-standing question was settled. Other important issues were of course involved. Spain proceeded quietly to elect a constitutional monarch after its own heart. The negotiations for the union of the Southern States of Germany with the North German Confederation were completed. What may be the gain to France, as a set-off to all her shame and loss and misery, it is not for us to predict with confidence; but it may be hoped that she will be aware in future of trusting her destinies to a paternal, irresponsible Government; that she will put a higher estimate on the advantages of peace, and a

more modest estimate on her own position among the nations; and that she will awake from the sensual dream, in which she has so long slumbered, to that moral earnestness which alone is required to turn the high talent of her people to rich account for the good of the world.

One great gain from the war France reaps already—she has got rid of Napoleonism. The corrupt and expensive Empire has ceased to be. The sword of the foreigner has done her the kindness to cut out the cancer that was wasting away her system, and poisoning her blood. Those who sympathise with Republicanism are looking in this direction for the one redeeming result of the war. They applauded Germany as long as she was fighting Imperial France; they hissed her as soon as it was against Republican France—she was making war. As for the particular form of government known by the name of Republic, France by her instability and her excesses has proved its worst enemy; the true lovers of the cause may well wish it were in other hands. The Revolution of 1789 put back the shadow on the dial half a century, and it would have been cut off altogether—it would have been absorbed by the broader shadow of night—had it not been for the perseverance and prosperity of the United States, from which France derived her Republicanism, as the United States had derived it in spirit from England, in form from Holland, and from Congregationalism. But when France borrowed Republicanism from America, she borrowed it without the religious principle with which, in America, it is so closely identified; she wedded liberty with licentiousness, and there could be no peace in the house with such a union. It is to be hoped

that the fresh experiment now being tried will be serviceable, not only to France herself, but also to the nations that look on. Every political experiment, whether a success or a failure is valuable. But, whatever may be the particular form of government finally established, if there shall come a social and political regeneration out of the baptism of fire and blood which has descended on the people, their sufferings will not be in vain. The licentiousness, the vanity, and falsehood of France, but especially of Paris, were such that the march of the conquerors from Sedan to that city seemed a moral necessity. 'Wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together.' But for the protracted miseries of that great siege, the war, as a piece of moral discipline, would probably have been useless.

Civilisation has reaped great advantages from recent wars, but let it not be forgotten that it has paid a heavy price for them. That the result has been no worse; that it has been, in many respects, so happy, so favourable to civil and religious liberty, ought to be to us no slight proof of an overruling Providence which succeeds in bringing good out of evil. It does not shew that war is a thing which should at any time be gone into with a light heart, or that it is an instrument to which there should be early recourse. It does not even demonstrate its lawfulness in any case, Providence is not a rule of conduct. The fact that Divine skill and strength can bend an evil thing to some beneficent end does not warrant us in becoming parties to the evil. Leaving untouched the abstract question of the lawfulness of war under any circumstances, there are weighty considerations that should dispose all right-minded men to

leave no stone unturned for the solution of political problems by moral means. For, if by these means international differences could be accommodated, they would be infinitely preferable to war. They would render the immense sacrifices of war unnecessary; they would forestall its incalculable hardships, its wholesale destruction of property, its holocausts of slain, its rivers of tears and blood; they would avoid those crushing burdens of debt which, even for generations after peace is restored, continue to tax so heavily the industry of the people, and they would prevent the hideous moral evils which war invariably brings in its train. Every victory gained by moral means would nourish and strengthen moral principle in the heart of a community. So many triumphs have been achieved by discussion in England, that the conviction has taken fast hold of the country that it is competent to any lawful task. If your cause be good, you have only to work and wait and you will win. And a good cause won by moral means is worth a thousand times more than a cause won by brute force. 'The weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty.' Truth, justice, generosity, forgiveness, prayer, faith in God, self-sacrifice—these have more force than steel and gunpowder. It is to be hoped that recent legislation with respect to Ireland will be the means of conciliating the good will of the Irish, and making impossible, in the future, any such movement as Fenianism. It has been already hinted that had America been just to the Negro at an earlier period of her history, slavery would have died out, and the South would never have thought of secession.

There are cases in the quarrels of nations where the

danger of war springs from a sense of injury on the part of those who are wronged, and that is impelled to the employment of force in order to obtain justice. Yet forbearance may be a duty where justice would rain heavy blows on the oppressor. Even if it were a forbearance to the death of thousands—who would in that case be martyrs—the loss of life would probably be less than an appeal to arms would cost, whether successful or unsuccessful. It may be calculated that any righteous cause will gain more by the martyrdom of its friends than by the murder of its enemies. It is this that explains, in some degree, the rapid subjugation of the Roman empire by Primitive Christianity. The first Christians never dreamed of resorting to the sword for the propagation of their faith. The same secret casts light on the Reformation of the fifteenth century. And it has recently received another illustration, beautiful as only heaven could make it. Mr. Ellis has shown, in his 'Martyr Church of Madagascar,' how the Christians of that island were restrained by the advice of the missionaries from attempting any violent measures to obtain deliverance from the cruelties so long practised upon them. The persecution lasted twenty-six years. It was borne by the persecuted without retaliation, although, as there were persons of all ranks—slaves, artisans, soldiers, officers in the army, princes of royal blood—who had given in their adhesion to the new faith, there would have been some chance of success had they got up an insurrection. Happily they relied on moral means, and they gloriously triumphed. Persecution deepened their faith in their principles, and rapidly multiplied in secret their adherents, and now Christianity occupies the high places of the island, and bids fair

in a short time to imbue with its divine ideas the whole of the population. The Queen herself and the Prime Minister, to whom she has lately been united in marriage, are baptised Christians; the places of worship are crowded; schools are springing up on all hands and flourishing; the idols are extensively abolished; and on those spots where Christian natives sank in flames or fell beneath the cruel spear, or were hurled over the hideous precipice, where the sea thundered among jagged rocks underneath, Gothic churches stand to-day, in commemoration of their constancy to the faith.

It would be a great mistake to suppose that war, even in a righteous cause, is always successful. It has repeatedly failed the Poles. It failed the Hungarians in 1848, though Kossuth was their leader. It has not saved the Circassians from being absorbed by Russia. It did not deliver Egypt from vassalage to Turkey, though its forces were under the direction of the powerful Mehemet Ali, and though, as a country, it has an antiquity illustrious for art which makes Greece look quite modern. When the Huguenots, on the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685, submitted to the spoiling of their goods, and obeyed the Master's direction, 'When ye are persecuted in one city flee to another,' though France was incalculably injured, several neighbouring nations were correspondingly benefited. Switzerland, Prussia, Holland, and England, were built up into moral and industrial strength; the cause of Protestantism was consolidated. But when the Camisards, only a quarter-of-a century later, tried the sword in Languedoc, though they maintained a gallant struggle against the great army of France for five years, and achieved marvels, they not only

lost their cause, but brought stains upon it by reprisals and atrocities such as it is difficult to avoid when once the war fever is kindled. Whereas, deeds of moral heroism are an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations. They always smell sweet. Time has no power to turn them to corruption. The historian has pointed out how the Huguenots themselves missed their way at the commencement of their course, by worldly alliances, which were a discredit and a snare to them; and by acts of retaliation—under extreme provocation, it is true—which were contrary to the forgiving spirit enjoined by Christ on His followers. Had they, from the first, cast themselves on their principles, and put their trust in God; had they used moral means of aggression and defence with as much resolution and faith as their enemies brought to bear on the employment of brute force, the history of France might have been very different. Certainly, the defeat of the Huguenots, so far as their own country was concerned, could not have been more complete.

For two centuries after the ascension of Christ, the Christian Church appears to have believed in peace at any price; and those two centuries are regarded as the brightest and purest of her history. Then she forsook her high, unworldly standard, and allowed her banner of peace to be trampled in the dust. It lay there until the Quakers recovered it, and hoisted it anew into the sunshine and the breeze. A class of men are now rallying round it who 'follow not with us.' Even the fighters fight, and protest against fighting at the same time, as though they were growing ashamed of their trade. But the indications are, that peace will be the offspring of contention,

and that war will destroy itself. England under the Heptarchy, so called, knew no peace. It was war that welded the contending tribes into one great united nation, that has scarcely known civil strife for more than 200 years. There must be two to fight. So long as England and Scotland were two distinct nations, there was no lack of fighting between them. But now they are two clasped hands: they are joined for mutual support; and wherever there is a battle to be fought, or a colony to be established, or a piece of legislative reform to be carried, the Englishman and the Scotchman are seen side by side. The numerous States of North America have quarrelled only once since they were constituted an independent nation, while the nations of Europe, whose territory is very little larger, have quarrelled and fought at least twenty times. Professor Seeley has advocated a federation of European states, corresponding to the American federation, as the speediest and most effectual method of putting an end to war in Europe. Republicanism will not extinguish war. The contests of the people have been, and will be, more terrific than the contests of kings. But a community of interests and a unity of organization would enlist the selfish with generous sentiments in the cause of peace. When each nation has its own special legislature, but a federal union with other nations, this community of interests will be realised. There is no need for more than six nations on the globe. Each continent should form one kingdom. When the good time is come—when the golden age returns, there is reason to believe that the whole earth will constitute a single commonwealth; and that this commonwealth will exhibit the utmost variety with the

most complete unity; the fullest development of individual and national character, with the rapid massive power of a central authority. This at least we know—for the Word of the Lord hath spoken it—that a day is coming when 'the Lord shall be King over all the earth,' and when 'He shall have dominion from sea to sea.' This too we know, that in the good day coming 'they shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation; neither shall they learn war any more.'

The conclusion of the matter is, that while we have reason reverently to acknowledge the hand of God in compelling the dread calamity of war to promote, on various occasions and in various ways, the cause of liberty, of civilization, and of religion; war itself is a caricature of civilization, and a grinning death's head, mocking a religion of love; and it behoves all good and honest men to lend their influence to put an end to war, to induce Governments to carry their disputes into an international court of arbitration, and to exhaust all moral means before they once think of an appeal to the bloody arbitrament of the sword; or, better still, to persuade the various sections of mankind, now so isolated and jealous of one another, to throw in their lot together, and combine, under a common Government, that shall leave no second Government to create a chance of conflict; and thus the self-love of the nations shall be unfastened from the gory chariot of war, and yoked to the flowery car of peace, in an endless procession of prosperity.

CHAPTER V.

The Poor—especially Widows and Orphans.

THE deep sympathy and earnestness with which the Bible speaks of the poor is one of its most striking characteristics. Its Divine Author has taken special pains to proclaim His relationship to them—a proceeding diametrically opposite to that which we commonly observe amongst men. Rich people do not readily proclaim their relationship to those low down in the social scale. They, as a rule, observe a marked silence respecting relatives of this description. The poor find a lack of friends. The companions of prosperity melt away in adversity. But the Great God is not ashamed of the lowly. Throughout His Word He sets Himself forth as the Friend of the poor, the Husband of the widow, the Father of the fatherless, the Judge of the oppressed; and nowhere does His anger burn so hot as when He speaks of the wrongs done to them by bad men. The Mosaic law directed that

a curse should be pronounced on the man who perverted the judgment of the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow; and all the people were required to say Amen to that curse. The meek and lowly Jesus never grew so indignant in His speech as when He denounced the Scribes and Pharisees, who devoured widows' houses, and for a pretence made long prayers. And the course which Providence pursues in our time is in harmony with the attitude that is taken in the Bible. There is a special care exercised over the needy, and whoever oppresses them does so at the risk of being smitten by an invisible hand.

It is quite true that there is a great deal of poverty in the world, and much suffering, from this cause; and individual instances of suffering, perfectly harrowing to the feelings, may be adduced in abundance. This may seem to some a sufficient set-off against any evidence that is brought forward to prove that Providence helps the poor. In reply to this objection, let it be noticed that it is not the design of Providence to put an end, during the present dispensation, to poverty, which corresponds to the general state of insurrection against the Divine Government, in which we see the world to be. The comparative poverty of the world is a proof of an over-ruling Providence which will not allow a sinful race to be perfectly happy. Wickedness and want will die out together. Let it be observed again, that in a vast number of individual instances misery is self-caused by vice, or by ignorance, or entailed by that close connection with others who have done wrong, which necessarily brings suffering even to the innocent, just as surely as those who are embarked in a vessel commanded by a villainous, or by an incompetent, captain, may expect

to suffer shipwreck. Let it be observed farther, that there is compensation given to the poor, by which they have advantages unknown to the rich; that their state when sanctified has its peculiar blessings; and that if all exercised their prerogative, praying as well as working, and claiming in faith the special promises made to them in Scripture, they would be delivered from many ills which bear them down, because they persist in carrying them alone. And once more, let it be stated that there has been great progress effected in the temporal, as in the intellectual and moral, condition of the human family. Luxuries which used to be the exclusive privilege of the few, are now the possession of the many; the average standard of comfort has risen, and it seems probable that the pressure which remains will have the Providential effect of forcing the people into such an acknowledgment of their common brotherhood, and such a system of mutual help, as will make moral improvement and material benefit go hand in hand.

The general Providence of the Almighty is acquitted of blame with respect to the poor by these two considerations: First, that the earth is able to bring forth more than sufficient for all its inhabitants. It only wants occupying and cultivating, and it will yield plenty for every one. Let man do his part as God has done His, and want will be unknown. It is because the nations violate righteous laws and serve the devil, that they contain so much distress. Not that any blame necessarily rests upon the individuals who suffer the poverty. They may be the very excellent of the earth. The blame rests on the nations, as a whole, which by their wars, their crimes

and follies, their selfishness and wilful ignorance, stop up or shamefully divert the channels of wealth. Secondly, there is a general movement of benevolence originated under the inspiration of Christianity for the relief of the needy. The general Providence of God, not content with providing a sufficiency in nature, is evidently conducting onwards to a triumphant issue a series of events, by which the attempt of the Evil One to frustrate the original beneficence laid up in nature shall be defeated. Hospitals for the sick, asylums for the insane, the blind, the aged, and the infirm; schools for the education of the masses of young children; the putting down of the amphitheatre and of gladiatorship; the amelioration of the condition of the captive; the freedom of the slave; the social elevation of woman—these great developments of benevolence and of humanity have sprung from the heart of Christ. Heathenism knew nothing of them. It was only a religion which taught that the Son of God had died for every human being, young and old, rich and poor, that was able to give them birth. That so long a time is taken for the extinction of the ills of poverty—that the work is spread over ages—is in harmony with that law of progress by which the general Providence of God proceeds. Meanwhile, the presence of these ills in the world affords room for signal displays of that special Providence which singles one out of a whole multitude, answers the prayers of an individual, however obscure, and uses suffering as the means of calling forth the noblest displays of faith, and patience, and heroism. 'But I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when

great famine was throughout all the land; but unto none was Elias sent, save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow. And many lepers were in Israel, in the time of Eliseus the prophet; and none of them was cleansed saving Naaman the Syrian.' Many widows and only one for whom oil and meal were miraculously multiplied: many lepers, and only one supernaturally cured. That was the order, and it is the order still.

'Leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve them alive; and let thy widows trust in me.' These words are Jehovah's warranty that the poor, even when deprived of their natural protectors and helpers, are not left to accident or to the forgetfulness of men. After all arrangements have been made for their welfare that can be made (and in the majority of instances these arrangements amount to very little), they are to be commended by the dying into the hands of God as their Guardian, and it will be seen that His guardian care is a reality—that He does not neglect His trust—that nothing but the folly of His charge can defeat His goodness.

A husband who has been kind, but not wise, is snatched away by sudden death. Though affectionate to his family, he has lacked judgment in business, and prudence in laying out his small income, and debt and difficulty have been the result. The widow, surrounded by her fatherless children, is smitten with grief, and is ready to sink into despair. She wonders how a livelihood is to be obtained for her little ones. Crying to God for help, she begins a life of prayerful industry, determined in her mind to serve God and do her best for her family, and leave the

rest to Him. God sees her condition, and blesses everything she takes in hand; and she finds the husband's place, as bread-winner of the household, supplied by the benefactions of Providence which come rolling in upon her. 'When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I will hear them: I, the God of Israel, will not forsake them.' The fulfilment of this, and of kindred promises, has often been effected in a singular manner.

The case of the prophet's widow, related in the fourth chapter of the second book of Kings—a case where the miraculous comes into play—illustrates in a startling fashion Jehovah's care of those who serve Him. The prophet, her husband, had left some debt unpaid, and no means to meet it, and the hard creditor was proceeding to indemnify himself by the sale of the two surviving sons into slavery; for the law of that time made the children of an insolvent debtor available for this purpose. The widow, in her distress, applied to Elisha for aid, and his enquiries elicited the fact that the only thing she had left in the house was a pot of oil; this being in that country the most essential necessary of life next to bread. He directed her to go about among her neighbours and borrow of them a great number of empty vessels, then to retire into her own house, and shut herself in with her two sons, fastening the door on all the world outside, and there to pour out of the one vessel that was full into the empty vessels which she had borrowed. She did so, and what a wonder was witnessed! Mother and children each performed a part, her part being the most important. She stood with the full cask in her hands to pour out; the two lads kept bringing

her the empty vessels; as soon as one was filled they put down another, and still their own vessel, the only possession of their poverty, continued to flow, till at last when they failed to supply her with another empty vessel, she had to ask for one, and was told that they had brought her all there were in the house. Not till then did she desist. The oil was sold, the debt was paid, and a surplus left for them to live upon. The oil had been secretly multiplied in pouring. The way to add is to use what we have; it is not by hoarding but by trading that the talents entrusted to us are increased.

The importance of the miracles of Scripture to us is, that while they were special Providences they were types of a general Providence. Like guide posts only a few inches long, they point along a road that stretches many miles. The widow's single pot of oil, and the barrel of meal and cruse of oil nearly spent, belonging to that other widow who dwelt at Zarephath, typify poverty; while the secret multiplication of the scant store in each case is a symbol of the way in which the slender resources of the poor, always on the point of being exhausted, are enabled to hold out. It is analogous to the mode in which God feeds us all. The majority are dependent upon continued exertion for their daily bread, and if they were to cease to work, they would very soon find, to their dismay, that supplies had ceased to come in. Hard-working men, and busy industrious women that continue their activities long after their children are fast asleep in bed, are experiencing continually something that bears a close resemblance to the ancient miracle. As the widow of Zarephath could put all her meal into one barrel, and all her oil into one cruse, and fill neither, so could they

easily enough lay all the money they are worth in the world in the palm of one hand, and every day they are spending some of that small amount, yet, strange to say, the amount never grows any less. The hand of industry is as prolific as the widow's barrel and cruse. It has a way of replenishing itself as fast as it gives out its treasures. Wonderful hand! Like the wizard's bottle, it will produce anything we choose. Meat and drink are in it; houses and furniture, and raiment, and fires, and light, and books, all lie hidden in the cunning hand, and it is hard work that brings them out. Or to look at the matter on a larger scale, we may liken this great globe to a huge barrel or an immense cruse. If the ground were to cease everywhere to grow anything, all the stores and granaries of the world would speedily be exhausted. The great family of mankind is only a poor family. If one brother in the family possesses much, others possess very little; and there are many paupers and beggars. What is laid up in any quarter beyond actual need is termed capital, but only let the fields and gardens cease to bring forth vegetation, let the animated tribes of the land die out, and the waters no longer teem with fish, and capital would soon be all expended. But, as it is, our mother earth, with her countless millions of children depending on her, always produces for them enough and to spare: enough for man wearing the crown of dominion on his brow, and for the ugly, squatting toad; enough for the colossal elephant browsing in African wilds, and for the animalcule in a drop of water suspended from the point of a needle; enough for golden eagle and robin redbreast; enough for the huge whale that makes the deep boil like a pot, and the tiny shrimp that finds an ocean in a pool.

That is a wise fable which tells how a dying farmer advised his sons to dig a certain field, and they would find treasure; how as they dug and dug, expecting to come upon a pot of money, the field produced heavier and heavier crops, until the fellows discovered what the treasure was. They never found the pot of money; but they found many a well-filled sack of corn that was money's worth to them. Is any one staggered at the thought of the barrel whose meal never wasted, and the cruse whose oil never ran dry? Let him recollect that the dull and heavy ground, no better to touch than a barrel or a hard cruse, has yet, for these six thousand years, according to our common chronology, supplied the wants of the human and all other races, without being exhausted. As fast as they have taken away from the mighty reservoir, a fresh supply has flowed to the surface. The miracle is merely that, on a very small scale, which may be seen in nature on a large scale; only men are so perverse, that they never wonder at the great thing, but reserve all their astonishment for that which is least.

It is a subject of admiration, that weak women, bereaved of the husbands of their youth, battle successfully with gigantic difficulties, and bring up bravely a numerous brood. They develop a latent, unsuspected energy; they rise to the occasion; their strength is proportioned to their day. Sometimes, in a worldly sense, the great loss proves a decided gain; but oftener it is found, in the Christian life, that, though the worldly loss is irreparable, there is such a development of humility and trust, such a blooming forth of heroic qualities, as must be pronounced an infinite gain.

Instances of *special* interposition on behalf of the poor, rest on their own merits, and on unequivocal testimony. If those which now occur are not so extraordinary as that which was vouchsafed to the prophet's widow, or to the widow of Zarephath, yet they are sufficiently marked to challenge attention, and to point out the finger of God. Providence has illimitable resources, and the same end—the relief of the needy—is reached by different ways. In this light, it is not difficult to supply a modern parallel to the ancient case of the prophet's widow. Here is one furnished by the Rev. John Wesley, in his sermon on 'Temptation,' founded on 1 Cor. x. 13. It occurred within the circle of the preacher's own acquaintance; and he was able, when relating it, to refer to the daughter of the widow as still living, and no dishonour to her mother. Elizabeth Chadsey, resident in London, on being left a widow, was advised to administer to the affairs of her husband, who was supposed to have died in good circumstances. But when full enquiry was made, it was found that, instead of leaving property for his family to enjoy, he was not solvent. Not long after the funeral a man called at the house, and said, 'Mrs. Chadsey, you are much indebted to your landlord, and he has sent me to demand the rent that is due to him.' She replied, 'Sir, I have not so much money in the world; indeed, I have none at all!' 'But,' he asked, 'have you nothing that will fetch money?' She answered him, 'Sir, you see all that I have. I have nothing in the house but these six little children.' 'Then,' said he, 'I must execute my writ, and carry you to Newgate. But it is a hard case. I will leave you here till to-morrow, and will go and try if I cannot persuade your

landlord to give you time.' He returned next morning and reported, 'I have done all I can; I have used all the arguments I could think of, but your landlord is not to be moved. He vows if I do not carry you to prison without delay I shall go thither myself.' Her answer was, 'You have done *your* part; the will of the Lord be done.' He said, however, 'I will venture to make one trial more, and will come again in the morning.' He came in the morning, and said, 'Mrs. Chadsey, God has undertaken your cause. None can give you any trouble now, for your landlord died last night. But he has left no will, and no one knows who is heir to the estate.' Here was a great deliverance, and coming at the moment when it did, it was as serviceable—and shall we not say as Providential?—as the miraculous increase of the oil by the direction of Elisha.

A good woman, a widow, in the town of Hull, had a son in his teens, who was an apprentice, and had fallen into evil company. Passion being strong, and reason weak, he was induced to run away. The poor mother was much pained and exercised in her mind on account of her wayward lad. She got to know the place of his residence, but had no money to go and fetch him home. One day she dressed as if she were about to take the journey, intending to go as far as the railway station, and, though she could do nothing more, to look along the lines which led to her unhappy child. She had no sooner emerged into the open street than she met a rich and benevolent gentleman—Alderman W. Hodge—who enquired after her health, and put a sovereign into her hand. She proceeded to the station with the money that had been given to her, procured a ticket, and went and brought home her runaway boy.

There have been instances where help has come to the poor so mysteriously, that, in *its effect upon the mind*, it has been to the recipient quite as wonderful as the miraculous multiplication of the widow's oil. Such is the instance related by the Rev. Dr. Fawcett, where a poor woman, who had many children, having retired in great distress, rose in the morning, and proceeded to light the fire, when, to her astonishment, she found on the hearth a piece of paper folded up, with a £10 note inside. It was advertised, but never found out how it came there. The bank cashed it as a genuine bill. Such another instance is that supplied to Mr. Tregortha, author of 'The Bank of Faith,' by a poor man called Simon G——. He had seven children, and through affliction was reduced in the winter of 1808 to great distress; when, one day, one of his little daughters went to the sea side to gather sticks, and remarked a bit of paper floating on the waves, which was borne by a high wind to her feet, and proved to be a £1 note, scarcely wet. Such, too, is the curious instance related by the Rev. John Sing, of Bridgnorth, in a letter to the Rev. Samuel Wilson, of London, published in the 'Evangelical Magazine' for March, 1772, who invariably found a shilling on the road to Wolverhampton, at a certain point on the top of a hill. The shilling was applied to the support of a poor man who was denied the help of the vestry, because he was a Baptist; but Mr. Sing could never solve the mystery of its finding. The secret of such cases as these may be as simple, if it were known, as the boiling of water or the baking of bread; but the result is a deliverance just as great as that which was effected for the prophet's widow by miracle; and the awe and wonder left upon the mind may be something greater.

Prayer is the expression of a sense of need, and is most urgent where the sense is most acute. Among answered petitions for temporal help, no doubt those of the widow occupy a large space. Having fewer sources of remunerative employment open to her than men, and being cast on her own resources when, it may be, her best days are over, her lot is often peculiarly dark and trying. But facts which have continued to transpire from old times till now, imply that there is a beneficent Power watching over her that is specially active on her behalf, and very sensitive to her entreaties.

Mr. G. W. Bartlett, town missionary, in Darlington, and deacon of the Baptist Church under the pastoral care of the Rev. P. W. Grant, having lent us his manuscript journal for last year, we extracted from it the following little narrative :—

'In the course of a most interesting conversation I had with M. W., a member of the Primitive Methodist Society, she related to me an incident in her long life which both astonished and pleased me much, as it so clearly showed her strong faith in the efficacy of prayer, and her unshaken confidence in the care of her Heavenly Father. About sixteen years ago her faith was rather severely tried. The week to which she referred, her parish allowance of two shillings and sixpence was expended two or three days before the next payment became due. Her coals were all gone, and she had nothing to eat in the house. She would not get anything on credit, because she would be as bad the next week. So she laid her case before the Lord, and asked for help. No help came, and she passed the first day without food. She was supported she scarcely knew

how, but she did not suffer much from the cravings of hunger. Towards the evening of the next day she felt faint, and prayed more earnestly that the Lord would send her help. And she said, "While I was praying, a knock came to the door. I opened it, and saw two gentlemen; one was the late Mr. Pilkington, and the other Mr. Wilford. They spoke very kindly to me, and one of them gave me a shilling, and the other sixpence, and Mr. W. promised to give me threepence every week to buy tea with (she had particularly prayed for tea), and he kept his promise as long as he was in the town, and from that day to this I have never felt the want of a meal; and I often tell our folks that if they had more faith, they would not have so often to complain that their prayers were not answered.' I give this case, not on account of its intrinsic importance, but because it is a living testimony to the truth of those remarkable instances of the interposition of Divine Providence, about which we are sometimes apt to be so incredulous.'

The Rev. C. C. M'Kechnie, Primitive Methodist Minister, and editor of a quarterly journal and review, published in that denomination, related recently in our hearing, a striking instance of temporal relief in answer to prayer. He travelled five years at North Shields, and used to enjoy very much an occasional visit to an old member of the Town Society, called Mrs. T——. This woman, a widow, supported herself by washing, and kept out of debt. One time her daughter was at home with her, out of health, and at the same time that this additional burden was thrown upon her, she herself was seized with a bad knee. She was confined to bed through it, and her scanty stock of

provisions ran short. One morning, at breakfast time, as she lay in bed, she asked her daughter to look into the cupboard, and see what they had left. The daughter reported that there was just one potatoe, and a spoonful of tea. There was not a single penny in the house to buy anything with, and Mrs. T—— had a conscientious objection against running into debt, or purchasing anything on credit. It must be admitted that under these circumstances she had a difficult piece of household engineering before her. What she did was, first to direct her daughter to make them each a cup of tea with the modicum of tea left in the caddy, and as for the one potatoe, they shared it between them. Having now nothing left, and no money wherewith to procure anything, she felt she had good grounds for an appeal to Heaven. So next she set herself to pray this prayer: 'O Lord, dispose some kind Christian friend to help us this day.' This prayer she kept repeating at intervals, from hour to hour. With great difficulty she rose from her bed, and resting her knee on a chair, made shift to finish some clothes which had been washed. Noon came, and no relief. There was no dinner for either mother or daughter, and the same petition had still to be urged, 'Lord, dispose some kind Christian friend to help us this day.' About three o'clock in the afternoon there was a knock at the door, and Mrs. T—— called aloud, 'Come in,' and in walked Mrs. ——, daughter of Alderman M——, a benevolent Christian lady, well known to her. She had sometimes done a little work for this lady, and at sight of her, apologised, 'O Mrs. ——, is that you? I didn't know who it was; but indeed if I had known I could not have come to the door to let you in.' Mrs. ——

finding she had been ill for some time, inquired more particularly about her affliction, and then judging that a little help would be acceptable, gave her five shillings. Mrs. T—— burst into tears on receipt of the bounty, and exclaimed, 'And so my prayer has been answered!' On hearing this exclamation, Mrs. —— questioned her: 'And do you mean to say that you've been praying for help to day?' Mrs. T—— replied that she had; and related in detail the trying experience of the day. When she had finished her recital, her visitor said, 'You do gladden my heart, Mrs. T——; I was going into the town to make some purchases, having no thought of coming to see you, when all at once something seemed to say to me, Go see Mrs. T——. I did not see why I should come, and so I proceeded to buy what I wanted, but when I was returning, the same impression that I must call to see you came on me again, and now I'm here; and since you've been praying for some Christian friend to be sent, I may conclude that I'm the Lord's child, since He employs me as His messenger, in answer to your prayer. And now,' added the lady, her face wet with tears, 'let me beseech you, if you are ever in want in future, let me know.'

The Rev. Henry Ward Beecher, whom we take to be, on the whole, the noblest preacher of this century, occasionally gives a glimpse into his personal history so exquisite, that his hearers, far from feeling it to be egotistical, must wish such personal references were more frequent. When he was over in this country, in 1863, he addressed the students of the Lancashire Independent College, and among other things he said—'To a young man who looks out with some proper diffidence of his own powers; who

is uncertain whether he shall succeed or not; who has, if he be a cautious man by nature, some prudent fears as to support, and as to relative position in society, it ought to be something encouraging to hear one as old as I am, and after so many years of ministration, say that there is nowhere else in the world where the promise of the Saviour is so sure to be fulfilled—"Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." Young gentlemen, if you seek a settlement for the purpose of forestalling God's Providence, and making your own arrangements; if it is an ambitious settlement, if it is a profitable settlement, you put that promise away from you; you make men your almoners and treasurers, and not God. But I had rather settle in poverty, with God for my treasurer, than take the most ambitious position in life, with only man to lean upon. He never betrays His promises; and, although I have seen days of poverty, days also of abundance, under both circumstances, I have the most simple, unfeigned, and child-like faith in this, that if a man will, without reserve, give himself to the work of God, God will put about him the everlasting arms of His support, and he never—not for an hour—not for a moment—whatever the seeming may be, will be betrayed or forsaken. You may trust God, and you may give yourselves, without a thought for external matters, to the work of the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ.'

In one of Mr. Beecher's published discourses, we meet with a rare bit of personal reminiscence, which reveals the experimental ground on which the above confident testimony to Providence rested:—'I was living,' he says,

'in the West, and was in straitened circumstances. I think that, for a period of four years, there had not been a time when some member of my family was not sick from the malaria which prevailed in that part of the country. I did not expect or desire to be anything except a missionary. I was poor, so far as money was concerned; but quite contented. But there came a time when it seemed to me that I should be ousted from the humble berth I occupied; and I made up my mind that if I was, I would go to some smaller place where my services would be acceptable. The reason why I expected to be ousted was, because I had attempted to stand up against the leading men of the vicinity where I was, on the slavery question, at a time when the people of Indiana did not dare to say that their souls were their own, or that the Negro's soul was his own. It seemed to me that my church would be shut up, and that I would be deprived of the means on which I depended for the support of my family: and I recollect, that on a certain day, while reflecting on the unhappy state of my affairs, I read this passage—"Let your conversation be without covetousness," that is, do not borrow trouble about where your salary is coming from, "and be content with such things as ye have." "Why yes," I thought, "I have not many things; but I will be content with them." And now, for the royalty of the reason for contentment: "For He hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." These words, as I read them, seemed really a message from God to me, as if the white form of an angel had spoken to me, saying—"Henry, I am sent to tell thee, from your God, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." And the

rest of the passage is this: "So that we may boldly say, the Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me." I then thought, "Now, Mr. Elders, shut up the church if you have a mind to. I am not afraid of any man that lives, since I have this message from my God." It sank like a seed into my soul, and it has never been rooted out. If there is any text of the Bible that has been an anchor to me, it is that one. I have held fast by it through many a storm. It has held me a thousand times if it has once. I never think of it that it is not to my soul like the touch on the keys of a piano. There is always music in it to me. "Let your conversation be without covetousness." Do not fidget, and worry, and vex yourself about how the ends are going to meet: you may be sure that they always will meet, though you may not always see how they can meet. If they do not meet in this life, a man dies, and then they meet. I used often to think—"If they do their worst, they can only kill me, and I shall thank them for that." When to shove a man through a door is to shove him into heaven, you cannot do him any great indignity.'

It was reserved for the man thus tried by poverty and domestic affliction, and buffeted by the storm of public disapprobation, to become, a few years after, the minister of a church whose annual income is at least £15,000, of which £5,000 is paid to the pastor; probably the largest stipend from voluntary offerings received by any minister in the world. The services rendered are such, indeed, as gold cannot compensate; but it is not probable that those services would have been so valuable, if it had

not been for the humanising and sanctifying influences of the conflict with poverty in Indiana.

If there be one thing more than another which we are taught to recognise as an evidence of true Christianity, and of the reality of our love to God, it is love to our fellow-creatures, taking the form not of idle sentiment, but of active sympathy and hearty help. This sign of grace and of the operation in men's hearts of the Spirit of the infinitely benevolent One, whose tender mercies are over all His works, has been manifest in every age of the Church from that strange movement of communism which appeared in the infant Church at Jerusalem down to the Mansion House Fund for the distress of Paris; but it has been more especially conspicuous in recent times. There have been men to whom the cause of the destitute and the oppressed was a perfect passion and a life's mission, for the success of which they were willing to encounter any risk. Providence employs means for the accomplishment of its purposes, and of all the instrumentality which it uses, the sublimest is a human soul kindled by the lightning flash of heaven into undying enthusiasm for some noble enterprise. In the zeal with which Howard prosecuted his mission to ameliorate the condition of prisoners in the various countries of Europe; with which the first Sir Robert Peel sought, by restrictive measures, to protect the factory apprentices from the tyranny even of free trade in labour; with which Clarkson and Wilberforce toiled and pleaded for the abolition of the slave trade; and Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton and Lloyd Garrett for the abolition of slavery—we see, however others may be disposed to explain it, the inspiration of the Great and Good Father, who, if He hears the young ravens

when they cry, will certainly not listen unmoved to the groans of oppressed humanity, but will raise up helpers and deliverers. As surely as He raised up in succession Gideon, Jephthah, and Samson, to break the heavy yoke imposed on Israel by the heathen, the deliverer ever appearing when Israel cried, so surely has He raised up in recent times men who, to use the peculiar expression of 'Ecce Homo,' glowed with 'the Enthusiasm of Humanity,' and were ready to sacrifice their time and property, and their very lives, for the good of the weak and helpless. We see a singular illustration of God's care for orphans by disposing men to care for them, in the springing up and in the maintenance of those orphan institutions which are almost peculiar to Germany. The men at the head of them have refused to solicit subscriptions from anyone, and have cast themselves by faith and prayer on the bounty of the Almighty for support, and the result has shown that their folly, their madness as the worldling would deem it, is the highest wisdom.

John Falk was born October, 1768, at Dantzic; his father was a barber. John had a taste for poetry and learning, and despite his discouragements and hardships he made considerable proficiency. The burghers of the town became interested in him and determined to send him to the University. When they met to send him, one in the name of the rest said, that they had only one request, viz.: 'If a poor child should ever knock at your door, think it is we, the dead, the old grey-headed burgomasters and councillors of Dantzic, and do not turn us away.' Falk's eyes filled with tears; the words sank into his heart. He spent three years at the University; he associated with the

literary spirits of his age. But trouble visited his native land in the Wars of the Revolution. Poverty, suffering, and death prevailed, and Falk was taught to feel the need of a Divine Saviour; he then turned a good Samaritan to many. The land was desolate, and what the war spared, was often carried off by pestilence. In one village sixty orphans wept both parents. Falk lost four out of six children, and buried, as he said, the best part of his life in the grave. At first he seemed to sink under the blow, but he rallied. 'So it is,' he afterwards wrote, 'we all like to go to Tabor, but we cannot bear to spend our nights upon Golgotha.' But God led him there to receive the right direction, the consecration of his life. Up to Falk's door the orphans came, weary, hungry, tearful, and clamorous; he thought of the burgomaster's solemn words, and he opened his door, gave them to eat and to drink, clothed them and went out and wept bitterly. He gathered together the children of the streets and waysides. 'Come in,' he cried, 'God has taken my four angels, and spared me that I might be your father.' He instituted a Reformatory, not only for orphans, but for those who were outcasts, left without restraint to practise evil. The results were good; some turned out ill, but the majority did not. His government was remarkable. There was no compulsion; the boys might wander away or return. His maxim was—'Love overcometh;' 'We forge all our chains on the heart,' he would say, 'and scorn those which are laid on the body.'

Some pleasing incidents are associated with Falk's useful career. One evening at supper table, a little boy had said the pious grace, 'Come, Lord Jesus, be our guest, and bless

what thou hast provided,' when a little fellow looked up and said—'Do tell me why the Lord Jesus never comes? We ask Him every day to sit with us, and He never comes!' 'Dear children, only believe and you may be sure He will come, for He does not despise our invitation.' 'I shall set Him a seat,' said the little fellow; and just then there was a knock at the door. A poor frozen boy entered, begging a night's lodging. He was made welcome; the chair stood empty for him; every child wanted him to have his plate, and one was lamenting that his bed was too small for the stranger. The little one who had been thinking hard all the time, said—'Jesus could not come, and so He sent this poor lad in His place.' The child was not far from the mark.

The last Home for outcasts which Falk erected was built by the boys under his care. People laughed at the idea of Falk's boys building a house; but he was determined that every tile on the roof, every nail in the walls, every lock on the doors, every chair and table, should be a witness to the industry of those in his charge. The site and the old building on it was nearly £1,000. The materials required cost about another £1,000. 'Trust in God,' he cried, 'trust in God, and we have all that we need, and often more.' He had learned the power of prayer. He knew that there was a more direct method of begging than going to men. 'We began our work,' he wrote, 'with whole and half florins, and in peace. We had only need for the current day. Our balance was—"Take no thought for to-morrow"—"Behold the lilies of the field!"' He pronounced, a short while ere he died, in his own way, a blessing on the house—

'So long as this house will receive poor children within its walls, so long will the blessing of God rest upon it; but if, forgetting mercy, it shall ever close its door against poor children, the blessing of God will depart from it.' Three hundred children were in his Reformatory, many schoolmasters were employed, hundreds of children apprenticed out to various trades, and helpless children of every description cared for, and welcomed to his home. Many young people proceeded thence to fill various important callings in life; these lived to pray for and aid the institution which, through God, had snatched them from ruin. Who can contemplate such a career, and not see in it strange imprints, as of 'those feet that once were nailed for our advantage to the bitter cross?'

The history of Professor Francke's orphan house, at Halle, in Germany, should not be passed over. He was a learned, earnest, and devout minister of Christ. He first invited the poor, once a week, to come to his house for bread. He also took this opportunity of imparting religious instruction to them; then he gave and collected money to send their children to school. He also liberally aided poor students, and used for this purpose gifts that were sent him. He received a few orphans, and put them out to board, depending upon God to influence men to aid him in his good work. He next decided to have the orphans under his own supervision, and secured premises for this purpose; but his accommodation proved insufficient for those that were sent to him.

Francke, in God's strength, determined to build a large house, in order to carry out his large benevolence of heart. He had to live by faith. When crowded with difficulties,

one of the workmen, in clearing the rubbish, found a coin. This being handed to the steward, there were found on it the following words: 'May Jehovah, the builder, crown this building with a happy conclusion.' This little incident was viewed by Francke as an augury of good. Some men laughed, and ridiculed the project; hinted it would never be completed, and, if completed, never sustained; to which its originator was enabled to reply, 'That the Lord was rich enough to pay for it all; that he had not gone to work without counting the cost, for he knew that the Great Steward of the universe would think the paying the expenses of the orphan house at Halle a very little thing.'

About February, in the year 1699, Francke found himself in great straits, and indeed it was an hour of probation. All their provision was spent, and the daily necessity of the poor called for large supplies. That saying, 'Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you,' made a deep impression upon his mind. He shook off temporal cares, and directed all his thoughts to the subject of union with God. When laying out his last piece of money, he inwardly prayed, 'Domine, respice ad indigentiam meam,' that is to say, 'Lord, look upon my necessity.' Quitting his chamber in order to repair to the University, to lecture to his class, he found a student in the house waiting for him, and this student delivered into his hand the sum of £14, sent for the hospital by some friends who resided two hundred miles off. Other help flowed in, so that the serenity of his mind was never ruffled by anxiety, nor could any one detect in the establishment a single token of want.

About Michaelmas, the same year, Francke was in great

straits again. One day, when the weather was very fine and pleasant, he took a stroll. He was filled with admiration of the magnificence of the sky, and faith in God became an easy exercise. He thought, What a good thing it was for one that was in poverty, and possessed nothing, to trust in the Great Creator, and rest satisfied. He knew money was required that very day, but he was not cast down. It was Saturday, and as soon as he reached home, the master-mason, who wanted cash to pay the workmen's wages, came to him with the enquiry, 'Is there any money brought in yet?' to which he replied, 'No, but I have faith in God.' Scarcely had he spoken the words, when he was told that a student wished to speak with him. He went to him, and found that he had come to hand over for the hospital the sum of £6, from a donor who wished his name to be unknown. Returning to the builder, he asked him how much he wanted. 'Six pounds,' was the answer. 'Here they are, but don't you want any more?' 'No.' This incident confirmed the faith of both in God, who had sent, just at the time when it was wanted, the exact sum that was required.

Another time, when all their provision was spent, Francke in his devotion found himself deeply affected with the fourth petition of the Lord's prayer, 'Give us this day our daily bread,' and his thoughts were fixed especially on the words, 'this day,' because on that very day they had need of help. While he was yet praying, a friend of his drove up to the door in a coach, and brought him £80. Then he perceived a special reason why he had found such a sweet savour in the words, 'this day,' and he praised God, who had all things at His disposal.

Again, it fell out that Francke stood in great need of money, insomuch that £20 would not have been sufficient; and yet, judging from appearances, he did not see how he was to obtain twenty groats. When the steward came and represented the state of affairs, he asked him to come again after dinner, and he resolved to put up prayer for assistance. After dinner, the steward called a second time: no help had come, and he had to be requested to call again in the evening. During the afternoon, Francke was visited by a pious friend: he obtained his concert in supplication: prayer was turned into praise, and he found himself strongly moved to magnify the Lord for all His admirable dealings with mankind from the beginning of the world; and the most remarkable instances came crowding into his mind. He found scarcely any inclination to put up petitions. He could do little else but bless God for what He had done already. When at last his friend took leave of him, he went with him to the door, and there, on one side was the steward, waiting for the money that he wanted; and, on the other side, was some person who had brought above thirty pounds for the hospital, sealed up in a bag.

Other instances of extraordinary interposition, as related by Professor Francke, might be given; but these will suffice for our purpose. The Orphan House at Halle is still carried on; but its present conductors have no faith in prayer, and support the institution by means of a large bookseller's establishment. But inasmuch as it is still carried on and by honest means, this is sufficient. Providence has many instruments, and many ways of working, for the support of its numerous charge of dependent ones; and, while Francke's method renders good service, not only by

providing for so many that are destitute, but also by the lesson which it reads an unbelieving age, as to the reality of the power of prayer, it would scarcely be pretended that this method ought to be universally or even generally adopted. It is of such a nature, however, that it cannot be carried beyond the line of the direct will of God.

A monument to the power of faith and prayer, kindred to that reared in Germany by Professor Francke, has been erected in England by Mr. Müller, who is a German by birth. The Orphan House at Bristol has now been open many years, and its history strikingly attests the reality of Providence, and ought to silence the cavils of infidels against prayer, and encourage every Christian to trust implicitly in God. It is worthy of notice, that Mr. Müller was well acquainted with Professor Francke's great work of benevolence, and imported the ideas he had gathered from it into England. 'Thus good men span the centuries.' Their example and their influence are immortal, and go on reproducing themselves from age to age. Mr. Müller's visit to the Orphanage at Halle, though brief, probably led to the erection of the House at Bristol. He has fifteen hundred orphans, with all their attendants, under his care. He is without private funds, and never asks any person for a donation; yet he declares that the children have never wanted. Occasionally, there has been nothing in the house for the next meal; and yet, before the hour for the next meal arrived, the necessary provisions came. Not only money, but meat and clothes, and jewellery, and all kinds of articles capable of being converted into money, come in, at uncertain times, and from unknown quarters. Do we ask for the explanation of this

strange phenomenon, in these days of materialism and unbelief? To Mr. Müller, who ought to know best, the matter is quite plain. In his view, those orphans are under the care of God, who stands in the place of father and mother to them, and will not see them want. We speak to men, especially to the rich, when we require help for the varied institutions of the age: we employ agents; we send out collectors to procure the necessary funds. Mr. Müller cuts off all this human, and often unholy machinery. He goes direct to God, and tells him what is wanted, and asks Him to influence the minds of those who have the means to send help for the children. He believes that God will do it. That it is done, is a fact which cannot be got over. God honours the trust reposed in Him, and, by the mysterious operation of His Providence, the needed help is always forthcoming. The miracle of the manna, which fell daily around the camp of Israel in the wilderness, is repeated in another form in the maintenance of the Orphan House in Bristol.

The spirit of munificent liberality is not dead; it is going on to achieve new victories over want, and squalor, and ignorance. The late Mr. George Peabody, an American citizen, gave and bequeathed £500,000 to be laid out in dwellings for the London poor. The Crossleys, of Halifax, have earned the gratitude of their country by their munificence. When as a family they began to rise in the world, and comfort flowed in upon them, their good mother said—'The poor shall have a share of it.' To that noble resolution the sons have steadily adhered; and by almshouses, by a park for the people, by a co-partnership of industry, and by innumerable private benefactions, they have made their

less fortunate neighbours participators with them in the remarkable success which they have achieved in business. It is for the common good that such men prosper; the more they get, the more they give. They act as stewards of God's bounty. Instead of consuming their immense incomes on their own gratification, on studs of horses, on gambling, racing, and dissipation, they put their surplus wealth into heaven's bank by giving it away, and they effect the distribution of it so as not to pauperise but to help the community.

The days of nationally endowed churches are numbered; but instead of endowing churches, we are about to endow the poor, the maimed, the halt, and the blind.

But the finest exercise of benevolence is that which helps men to help themselves. In the direction of legislation and of social reform, philanthropy has some of its greatest triumphs yet to achieve.

Let us remember 'Him who though He was rich yet for our sakes became poor, that we through His poverty might be rich.' First, we see a glorious King, whose throne is the highest heaven, and whose lightest word is law to archangels, principalities, and powers; and then we see a Young Man hammering nails, and sawing and planing wood in a carpenter's shop; and yet it is the same Being. For our sakes He performed this deep descent; He emptied Himself that we might be filled with everlasting good; He parted with His life that we might not taste the bitterness of the second death. It has been pointed out as a touching proof of the poverty of our Lord's home and parentage, that when Mary, His mother, went up to the temple to fulfil the customary rites, just as Christian parents take their infants

to God's house to be baptised, she presented a pair of doves for sacrifice. Now the law had appointed that a lamb and a dove should be offered on such occasions; but there was a proviso that if the mother was poor and could not afford the more costly sacrifice, she should offer a pair of turtle doves, or two young pigeons. The fact that the Virgin Mother brought the doves, and not the lamb and the dove, may be taken as a quiet indication that Joseph and Mary were far from being rich. It is probable that those gifts which the wise men of the East brought and presented to the Holy Child in the stable of the inn at Bethlehem, were the Providential means supplied by the Almighty Father for the sustenance of His Incarnate Son, and the foster parents, during the flight into Egypt. During the three or four years of His itinerancy, Jesus had no settled home, and was dependent on casual supplies, so that He had occasion to practise the lesson of trust in Providence, which He taught to His disciples. He once said that foxes had holes, and birds had nests, homes to which they could repair whenever they chose, but He—the Son of Man—had not where to lay His head. He was a wanderer dependent on chance, that is to say, on Providence for every night's lodging. Even at the Cross there was seen an affecting token of His poverty. That seamless coat for which the soldiers raffled was worn by the peasant class in Judea, just as our agricultural labourers in the South wear smocks. When a mother comes accidentally upon the clothes of a dead child, she can hardly forbear weeping; and if the clothes are plain and mean, the sight of them is far more touching than if they were gay and costly, because it suggests that the little one, while it lived, was poor; and so

we, when fancy brings up before us the seamless coat, would let fall a tear at the thought of the poverty of that Blessed One who stooped to our low estate, that He might lift us up for ever. But do not rest, reader, in sentimental grief; give thy heart, give thy life to Him. If thou art poor, make Him thy friend, for He is able to sympathise with thee, knowing, as He does by personal experience, what poverty means. He who was cradled in a manger, and buried in a borrowed tomb; He who used gladly to accept hospitality in fishermen's huts, when He was on earth in bodily presence, will come in the power of His Spirit into thy heart, and make thy humble home and lowly lot illustrious with the light of His love.

Let those who possess many of the comforts of this world remember their brethren and sisters who are less favoured, and, for the sake of Jesus, help them according to their abundant means. But, indeed, who is there that cannot do something to make the burden lighter, and the way less difficult to some poor child of want and affliction? The poor can help the poor. At the Judgment-day, the great test of acceptance will be, not the creed we have held, not the church we have attended, but love to Christ shown practically by kindness to our fellow-creatures, whom He claims as His brethren and sisters. What was done to His hungry, thirsty, naked, sick, imprisoned ones, He will take as done to Him. 'Inasmuch as ye did it to the least of these My brethren, ye did it unto me—*go to the right.*' 'Inasmuch as ye did it not to the least of these, ye did it not to me—*go to the left.*'

CHAPTER VI.

Answers to Prayer.

THE age in which we live is unfriendly to the use of prayer as an instrument either of temporal or spiritual good. It is unfriendly, not merely because the numerous objects which demand our attention dissipate the spirit of calm contemplation, but, also, because the operations of commerce, and the romantic progress effected in the sciences, have thrown the great weight of faith into the balance of the material, and left the scale of the spiritual light and almost empty. There is no fair equipoise between them. Men believe in instruments they can handle; in causes they can set in motion, and watch with their eyes. But prayer is an instrument of which they can see only one end; the other end dips into the invisible world, and works concealed from human view; and because they cannot follow it throughout, they are tempted to regard it as an old superstition, or a piece of fine sentiment. Yet there it is, a mighty instrument for good, which no

discoveries, no inventions, will be able to supersede. When chemistry finds out something more suitable for the lungs than air, or optics something better adapted to the eyes than light, men may begin to think of a substitute for prayer. What does it do for us? What good ends is it the means of achieving? It subdues our pride; it trains us to trust in a higher power; it awakens in us a consciousness of the Divine presence; it elevates our aspirations above the region of the visible and transitory; it obtains for us pardon of our trespasses, consolation in sorrow, guidance in perplexity, strength against temptation; it fills us with God's own spirit; it gains us help for this world, and for the next. It is commended to us by Christ, and by the uniform testimony of Scripture, as the way to win the highest blessings; and from Abel, whose prayer went up with the smoke of an accepted sacrifice, down to our own times, those who have used it the most diligently have found it the most effectual.

Amongst the many parables set forth by our Lord as a pictorial representation of spiritual truth, we are told that He spoke one to this end:—*That men ought always to pray, and not to faint.* The first part of the proposition—*that men ought always to pray*—is supported by a thousand arguments: our ignorance of things divine; our depravity, our sins, and our sorrows; our unseen spiritual enemies, and our difficulties in the world; our weakness in the presence of temptation; our pains, diseases, and anxieties; our duties and responsibilities—all cry to us with a loud continuous voice, that we ought always to pray. And the second part of the proposition—*and not to faint*—that we should not grow discouraged

nor give over praying because the answer is delayed—how is this to be maintained? The parable to which it is an introduction maintains it, by argument drawn from analogy. Men are found to be overcome by importunity. It is proverbially difficult to say 'no' to a request. Persons are sometimes made bankrupt because the power of a request was too great for their resistance. Even men who are supremely selfish in their disposition are known to give way before this engine; for very selfishness they yield: they grant a request that they may hear no more of it, and that they may escape being dunned. Much more will the loving God accede to the reiterated prayer of His people, whom He has called out of the world to be the objects of His richest loving-kindness; much more, when it is actually He who has prompted them to put up their petition. Furthermore, to keep us from despairing of our suit, we have innumerable facts which go to show that true, persevering prayer has in all ages been successful; and, as the mind is materially influenced in its hopes by the history of past achievements, it may be an edifying exercise to string together a series of these facts, leaving them to produce their own impression. Let us notice first, some answers to prayer recorded in Scripture; and afterwards notice a few incidents of like nature which have occurred in recent times.

There is an instance in the life of Jacob which, while it illustrates the power of prayer, shows us that even so long ago it was clearly understood that praying and working must go together, just as the two hands of the human body are mutual helpers. Jacob was far from being perfect as a young man, and before he had undergone a

decisive spiritual change—before he had awoke to a sense of the continual presence of God, which he never did until that night when he slept on the ground at Bethel—he treated his brother Esau in a very unbrotherly fashion, and was guilty of a piece of cunning which has lowered him in the estimation of all subsequent ages. Esau's anger was aroused, and, outdoing the sin of Jacob, he vowed revenge, and nursed his hatred for many a year. Jacob fled to his uncle Laban. In his employment as a shepherd he led the life of an industrious, hard-working man for twenty years. After this his uncle ceased to be cordial towards him. The change of feeling was written in his countenance; and as the best way of dealing with the difficulty, the Lord directed him to return to his native district, promising to be with him. Accordingly, he returned, but on the way it seemed as if he had fled from one difficulty only to plunge into another far worse. He learned that Esau, with a band of four hundred armed men, was coming to meet him, evidently determined to settle in blood the old score. Jacob, instead of running away, or preparing to give battle, as most men would have done, prayed and pleaded the Divine promises. He did this at the onset. At the same time he took the precaution of dividing his party into two bands, so that if one company should be smitten, the other might escape. Next he chose out a handsome present of goats, sheep, camels, oxen, and asses, and arranged them in separate droves, with so much space between them that each successive drove might make a distinct impression on Esau's murderous soul. It was a battery of the heart, and never was artillery more wisely planted for demolishing a fortress than that present was

arranged. Jacob evidently knew the power of kindness; but lest it should fail after all (for revenge is a terrible thing, and was so especially in that age and country), he determined to call into requisition the power of prayer. At midnight, and after he had done everything which human prudence could devise, he sent his company forwards over the brook Jabbok, while he remained behind, and spent the night alone, in prayer. Alone, and yet not alone, for there wrestled a man with him till break of day. He was conscious of a supernatural presence; in fact, the Jehovah-angel appeared to him in visible form. Foot against foot they wrestled through the live-long night. The marks of that conflict the patriarch carried with him to the grave, as many a one has carried through life the scars of mental conflict, but he prevailed at the break of day; he gained the particular favour that he sought, and a knowledge of God which, perhaps, at the beginning he had not sought, and which, but for this night's wrestling he would never have possessed: and at their meeting, the brother who had set out to murder him, ran and threw his arms around his neck and kissed him. Twenty years after we find them celebrating together the funeral rites of their deceased father. An offended brother is hard to be won; but in this instance the interposition of God in answer to special supplication on this behalf crowned the means that had been used, and made them effectual.

'The prayer of faith,' says the practical apostle, 'shall save the sick.' In confirmation of this statement, we may instance the case of Miriam, the sister of Moses. This distinguished woman was smitten with leprosy, as a pun-

ishment for her presumption and self-sufficiency in claiming, along with Aaron, an authority equal to that of Moses, whom God had specially commissioned to be the leader of Israel, and the interpreter of His will. From head to foot, the person of the proud prophetess bore the marks of the hateful disease. Moses prayed for his erring sister; no doubt she was very dear to him: it was she who watched over his cradle when it was rocked on the waves of the Nile: it was she who suggested to Pharaoh's daughter a Hebrew nurse, and went and fetched her own mother to be that nurse. The prayer which Moses offered for the cure of Miriam's leprosy was very urgent: 'Heal her now,' he said, 'O God, I beseech Thee!' The prayer was answered in her speedy restoration—a restoration, we may believe, to a better state of mind as well as to bodily health.

Prayer and prophecy help to accomplish each other. Prayer is one of the means by which prophecy is fulfilled, as prophecy, in its turn, lays a foundation for prayer. When Daniel saw that the allotted time for the captivity of the Jews in Babylon was, according to the prophecies of Jeremiah, drawing to a close, he set himself to seek, by prayer and fasting, the restoration of his people. The angel Gabriel was despatched from the skies with a reply to his petition; and touching him, about the time of the evening sacrifice, informed him that his prayer was heard, and that Jerusalem should be rebuilt; and then delivered to him, over and above what he had asked, the famous prophecy of the seventy weeks, which told how long it would be before the coming of the Messiah.

In the New Testament we read, that after the ascension

of their Lord, the disciples waited, according to His direction, in daily prayer and conference, in an upper room at Jerusalem, for the promised baptism of the Spirit. Not long were they kept waiting—about ten days—and then the Spirit descended, accompanied with a noise as of a rushing mighty wind, and with tongues of flame that played over each consecrated head. By united prayer, in this instance, the greatest possible blessing was secured. Many have been its victories; but this was its most signal achievement: the flood-gates of the heavenly land were opened, and the tides of life poured forth to revive a dying world.

One more incident from Scripture shall suffice. It may be found in the twelfth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. Herod Agrippa, nephew of that Herod Antipas who beheaded John the Baptist, copying the infamous example of his uncle, beheaded the Apostle James, that is James the Greater, as he is called. This impious act made him popular with the Jews, who wanted to see the new sect of the Christians put down; so he determined to do to Peter as he had done to James; and, accordingly, the foremost Apostle was, by his orders, arrested and shut up in prison. Every precaution was taken to make him secure; he was placed in a dungeon from which it was impossible to escape without passing through two doors and an iron gate. A guard of sixteen soldiers were appointed to watch over him, four in turn for each of the four watches of the night; two of the four being stationed outside the door, and two inside, to guard the person of the prisoner; his right hand being pinioned to the left hand of one soldier, and his left hand bound to the right hand of the other soldier. The

sympathy of the Church at Jerusalem was deeply exercised ; the martyrdom of Peter was likely to prove a heavy blow to their cause, and that he would be martyred there was too much reason to believe, from what had already happened to James. The tyrant was evidently in earnest, and a tiger's ferocity is not abated by the taste of blood. Their prayers went up to God continually for Peter's deliverance—but no answer came ; the grim prison still held him fast. It came to the night before his intended execution ; and we can understand what an agony of feeling there was in the Church while it was seen that the great Apostle's life must be saved now or never. A prayer-meeting was held in Mark's mother's house on behalf of his liberation ; it seems to have continued deep into the night, and would probably have continued, like the praying of Jacob, till the break of day, and even to the moment of execution, if a favourable answer had not arrived. Meanwhile Peter, and the two soldiers to whose arms he was pinioned, were fast asleep in the prison, for sleep, which is the image of death, is not always found to be scared away by the prospect of the dread reality on the morrow. A messenger from the invisible world passed unseen into the cell ; a celestial light illuminated the walls and played on the faces of the sleepers ; at a blow upon his side Peter awoke, and the iron manacles dropped from his wrists like rotten bands ; casting his mantle round him, as he was bidden, he followed in a maze his unknown deliverer ; they passed, for deep sleep overpowered the guards, through the inner door and through the outer into the prison yard. As they approached the iron gate by which the prison premises were cleared, it flew open of its own accord ; out they went into the open

street, the angel followed by the man, and not until that first street was traversed did Peter find himself left alone. The sudden vanishing of his guide appears to have convinced him that his liberation was not a dream, as he had half suspected, but a delightful reality. For a short while he paused and considered where he should go, and then he hied away to the very house where they were praying for him. There is a knock at the door; a young woman called Rhoda goes and asks, 'Who's there?' and when she hears the voice, she rushes back like one wild to tell them all that Peter is standing outside. At first they could not credit it: they concluded it must be his guardian angel that had simulated his voice; proof this that prayer when it is offered for things respecting which we have no promise, may be offered in uncertainty and in fear, yet be effectual. When the thing for which they had been so long pleading was granted, they could hardly credit the fact.

There are other instances in Scripture similar to these, exhibiting the interposition of Providence in answer to prayer; and when we read them there we are apt to take them as a matter of course; but there is a latent scepticism in men's minds, which says, when it is interpreted and put into plain English, God used to do wonderful things for good men, but he has long since given over; prayer is a worn-out instrument; it is mere superstition and fanaticism to expect that you shall obtain temporal help or deliverance in answer to the petitions you have presented to God, except in that very indirect way in which prayer strengthens a man's moral feeling, and so leads him to do his duty, and make a vigorous use of the means within his reach. Now, the best answer which any one can give to these doubts,

these cavils, is to take the instrument which unbelief says is worn out, if indeed it was ever worth anything, and fairly try it for himself. If there be any truth in it, he may be sure that it is as true for him as it was for Jacob; as it was for Moses; as it was for Daniel; as true for the churches of our day, as it was for the first Christian Church at Jerusalem; and he who having tried the power of prayer has found it a reality, has found that help has come to him corresponding to his petitions, and accompanied by circumstances which showed it to be the result of the petitions; and that the law of the kingdom of Heaven, 'Ask and ye shall receive,' has been continually verified in his experience—especially in the department of morals, and in the region of the spiritual life—he will not be much affected by the cavils of other men, neither will he need learned arguments and evidences to prove that the Bible is the Word of God.

Whether Providence interferes in answer to prayer now-a-days, is a question that must be determined by facts; and the best and most convincing facts to every man, are, undoubtedly, those of his own experience. But in order to encourage ourselves to institute this most satisfactory test, let us inquire whether men of our day, or men who have lived in recent times, have ever had tangible reasons for believing that God heard their prayers. We shall, perhaps, be surprised to find how numerous and how well attested are the cases of recent interposition, and be ready to exclaim, like Jacob at Bethel—'God is here, and I knew it not.'—God is working now, and I was ignorant of the fact.

In that model prayer which Christ has taught us, we

are directed to ask our heavenly Father for our daily bread. It is not in man, unaided and undirected, to order his steps aright, or to take the best and happiest course. But when human strength and wisdom fail; when no way is left open, God often interferes in a remarkable manner, for the relief of those who are in distress.

Samuel C——, about six years ago, passed away to the metropolis of the good. Not very long before his decease, he found himself unable to repay fifty pounds which he had borrowed, a few years before, to commence a small business. He was a truly pious man, wishful to owe no man anything but love: at the same time, it must be confessed, he was a little too yielding in his family, some of the members of which were imprudent and headstrong, and required a firm guiding hand. He was growing old, and began to feel that he would probably not live long, and that if he died in debt, he would bring a reproach upon that Gospel which he had long preached to others. He knew no earthly friend who was able and willing to assist him. He began to knock at heaven's door. His prayers were frequent and they were importunate. There was living in the same town a well-to-do, aged gentleman, usually called Squire D——. This squire was by no means distinguished for his charitable deeds; but all at once, he became interested in Mr. C——. He thought of him often in the day; and, if he awoke in the night, an inward voice seemed to say—'Help Mr. C——.' At last, he sent for Mr. C——, and asked him—'Is something the matter with you? Are you in difficulties?' Mr. C—— was very tender, and the tears came quick and fast to his eyes. He confessed that he was in difficulties. And

when asked to what extent, said 'fifty pounds.' 'Then,' returned Squire D——, 'I suppose I shall have to give you fifty pounds?' He gave him this sum at once; and also said to him—'As long as you live, you must come every Sabbath and dine with me.' But Samuel C—— was not long permitted to pay this weekly visit to his benefactor; for, after having so helped him out of his pecuniary difficulties, the Lord shortly delivered him out of all his troubles, by calling him home to the better land. We give this account from our acquaintance with the parties.

Dr. Bushnell, in his work called 'Nature and the Supernatural,' chapter fourteenth, gives a striking instance of the power of prayer, which he learned on a visit to California :—

'I fell in, also, in that new world, with a different and more directly Christian example, in the case of an acquaintance whom I had known for the last twenty years; an educated man, in successful practice as a physician; a man who makes no affectations of piety, and puts on no airs of sanctimony; living always in a kind of jovial element, and serving everybody but himself. He laughs at the current incredulity of men respecting prayer; and relates many instances out of his own experience, to show—for that is his doctrine—that God will certainly hear every man's prayer if only he is honest in it. Among others he gave the following :—He had hired his little house of one room in a new trading town that was planted last year, agreeing to give a rent for it of ten dollars per month. At length on the day preceding the rent-day he found that he had nothing in hand to meet the payment, and could not see

at all whence the money was to come. Consulting with his wife, they agreed that prayer, so often tried, was their only hope. They went accordingly to prayer, and found assurance that their want should be supplied. That was the end of their trouble, and there they rested, dismissing farther concern. But the morning came, and the money did not. The owner made his appearance earlier than usual. As he entered the door their hearts began to sink, whispering that now for once they must give it up, and allow that prayer had failed. But before the demand was made, a neighbour coming in, called out the untimely visitor, engaging him in a conversation a few minutes at the door. Meantime a stranger came in, saying, "Doctor ——, I owe you ten dollars for attending me in a low fever, at such a time, and here is the money." He could muster no recollection either of the man or of the service, but he was willing to be convinced, and so had the money in hand after all, when the demand was made. When Stelling and Francke recite their multitudes of specific answers to prayer, their reports are very hastily discredited by many because of their strangeness. But I have heard so many examples, personally, of the kind just cited, that I begin to think they are even common.'

Mr. Müller, in his 'Narrative of Facts' relative to the Orphan Houses which he conducts, being a Report for the year ending May, 1869, relates the following incident: —

'At the early part of the year 1868, a Christian business man wrote to me for advice in his peculiar difficult business affairs. His letter showed me that he had a desire to walk in the ways of the Lord, and to carry on his business to the glory of God, but his circumstances were of the most

trying character. I therefore wrote to him that, greatly as I was occupied, I would gladly counsel him, but that it was necessary he should come to Bristol, so that I might minutely know his affairs, in order that I might be able rightly to advise him. Accordingly he undertook the long journey, and I had a lengthened interview with him, through which I saw his most trying position in his business. Having fully conversed with him, I gave him the following counsel:—1. That he should day by day, expressly for the purpose, retire with his Christian wife, in order that they might unitedly spread their business difficulties before God in prayer; and to do this, if possible, twice a day. 2. That he should look out for answers to his prayers and expect that God would help him. 3. That he should avoid all business trickeries, such as exposing two or three articles of goods which were marked below cost price, for the sake of attracting customers, because of its being unbecoming in a disciple of the Lord Jesus to use such artifices; and because, if he did so, he could not reckon on the blessing of God. 4. I advised him farther, that he should set apart, out of his profits, week by week, a certain proportion for the work of God, whether his income was much or little, and use this income faithfully for the Lord. 5. Lastly, I asked him to let me know month after month, how the Lord dealt with him. The reader will feel interested in learning that from that time the Lord was pleased to prosper the business of this dear Christian brother; and so much so, that his returns from the 1st of March, 1868, up to March 1, 1869, were £9,138 13s. 5d., whilst in the same period of the previous year they had been only £6,609 18s. 3d., therefore

£2,528 15s. 2d. more than the year before. When he sent me the donation above referred to, he also writes that he had been enabled to put aside during the previous year £123 13s. 3d. for the work of God, or the need of the poor. I have so fully dwelt on this because one or the other Christian in business may be benefited by it.'

Dr. Immanuel Wichern began his philanthropic work at Hamburg with a small band of co-workers. They were all comparatively poor and obscure; unable to give much money, or to get it; but they were all in earnest for the same object. They had all been deeply moved with pity for the forlorn children they had seen in their religious visits from house to house, and were convinced that nothing effective could be done to elevate them, unless they could be taken away from the holes misnamed homes, where they were festering in vice and filth. They determined to build a Reformatory. They had no funds, and no prospect of obtaining any; but they looked to the Lord as their Treasurer. When they met one another in the streets, the inquiry was—'Are you praying earnestly?' It was not long before help came for their project; and that in such a way, as left no doubt upon their minds that it was in answer to prayer. A gentleman who was quite ignorant of their scheme, gave them fifteen pounds for the poor, especially to help in establishing an institution for reclaiming criminals. They thought this a great sum, and sought for some public man in whose name they could invest it. One of the senators was suggested. He accepted the trust, and then mentioned that he was executor of the will of a Christian merchant, who had bequeathed large sums to pious objects, and, among others,

one thousand pounds for a Reformatory. This sum, he said, would be at their disposal. Other help came in, and they felt that God was strangely working for them. Then came a brief trial of their faith. The will of the merchant was disputed, and the site which was available for their purpose was occupied by a house which was let on a lease. But they went on, praying and hoping, as before; and the clouds soon dispersed. The tenants of the leased house were anxious to leave; the will case went in favour of the charities, and was decided in an unusually short time. In less than a year after commencing to pray for means to erect a Reformatory, they were in possession of the money and the building.*

The erection of a place of worship has often been a matter of deep solicitude to Christian people for the sake of the spiritual good that was likely to accrue from it. Since the days of David, who vowed that he would not give sleep to his eyes, or slumber to his eyelids, until he had found out a place for the Lord, a habitation for the mighty God of Jacob; and the days of Daniel and Nehemiah, who fasted and prayed on behalf of the restoration of Jerusalem; prayer has achieved many signal triumphs in the secret disposing of unwilling minds to help the same object on a smaller scale.

A few Christian people, in a retired place in the country, began to hold meetings in a small room. These meetings were conducted by preachers from a neighbouring town; and, so much success attended them, that it was felt to be desirable that a little chapel should be built. But a difficulty stood in the way; for while money was likely

* See Stevenson's 'Praying and Working.'

to be forthcoming, the only site in the place that was eligible for their purpose was in the possession of a bigoted proprietor, who was very unfriendly to them, and was of an obstinate disposition. Most of the people thought that any application to him would be fruitless; but as there was no alternative, it was resolved to call into requisition the power of prayer, for the removal of the difficulty. Two delegates were appointed to wait on the owner of the land, and a whole night was spent in prayer for the success of the application. Next morning, the delegates proceeded to the rich man's house; but as soon as he learned the object of their visit, he drove them out, without waiting to hear another word. When they returned to their friends, and reported their uncivil reception, instead of giving up in despair, it was resolved to spend another night in supplication. Next day, the same two delegates waited on the proud landowner with the same request. He received them with an apology for his rudeness the day before, and acceded to their request; adding—'I cannot tell how it is, but I have had no sleep all last night for thinking of you and of your chapel; and I have now made up my mind to let you have the piece of land you want.'*

The life of the condemned has repeatedly been spared by kings, through the passionate intreaties of their friends. What kings are able to do, can surely be done with infinite ease by the King of kings, in whom we have our being. Dr. Leifchild, in his 'Remarkable Facts,' just quoted, has preserved the following extract from a letter written to him by a Christian friend:—'When travelling

* Leifchild's 'Remarkable Facts.'

on the borders of Italy, we arrived, one evening, at the town of C——, from whence we were to proceed on our journey at nine o'clock the next morning. On rising, the first thing we heard was, that a young man in the military service, having been guilty of a misdemeanour, was to suffer the penalty of death for his offence, at nine o'clock that morning. The thought rushed into my mind—how dreadful that this young man should be thus precipitated into eternity, perhaps wholly unprepared. I became greatly agitated, and I could ill control my feelings. The instant I could leave the breakfast table, I retired to a secluded chamber, and locked myself in, and there, in earnest prayer, I felt compelled to plead and wrestle for the salvation of the doomed soldier. The burden of my petition was, that if he were not prepared to enter the presence of his Judge, his death might be averted, and time be given him for repentance.

'I continued upon my knees thus agonizing in prayer, till in a moment I heard the sound of a discharged volley of guns. It vibrated through my heart; my lips were closed; my prayer was stopped, and in a few minutes I was obliged, agitated as I was, to hurry down to join my friends, who were just starting to leave the town. We were quickly beyond its precincts, and heard no more of the awful catastrophe of that morning. Having been for some time past severely exercised on spiritual things, I had been led to form the resolution not to read any of the public papers that came in my way, their topics ill according with the state of my mind at that time.

'I adhered to this resolution until about two months after, when in a distant town I one morning, almost uncon-

sciously, took up a paper, and the first thing that caught my eye was the account of an extraordinary event which occurred at the town of C——, namely, that a young soldier, having been sentenced to death, was accordingly brought out for execution in the usual manner by the hands of his comrades, twenty-four of whom were, at a given signal, to fire at his heart. The signal was given, the guns were discharged, but, to the amazement of all, every bullet missed its aim! The volley had been fired, but he stood unhurt; and so extraordinary, and even miraculous, was his escape considered, that his pardon was instantly granted, and he was permitted to live! His subsequent history remains unknown.'

It is usual to draw a distinction between Providence and Grace, but as these two departments of Divine operation run into each other; as the conversion of a soul and the revival of a church are followed by important external changes, and by far-reaching consequences written on the face of society, and on Nature itself (Job's wish becoming fulfilled, and his fugitive words somehow getting 'graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever'); as, furthermore, the work of grace is that which contains the motive and purpose of Providence—the delicate flower and diminutive fruit of the bulky tree, with its hard bole and numerous ramifications—it may not be out of place to bring forward a few instances where prayer has won spiritual blessings, either for the petitioner himself, or for others.

The Rev. Joseph Spoor, who died in October, 1869, was a Primitive Methodist minister, and was distinguished for zeal even in that zealous community. We have repeatedly

heard him relate that when, as a young man, he travelled in the Thirsk and Bedale Mission, an attempt was made to establish a society at the village of Langthorne, which for a time was unsuccessful. One morning, at breakfast, after a service held there the preceding evening, the old lady at whose house he was staying said to him, 'I tell you what, preacher, you'll never get on here till you get John Hobson converted!' 'And who is John Hobson?' 'Why, he's the tallest man in all the village; and if ye see a man at the preaching bigger than anybody else, that's John Hobson. I tell ye, ye'll never do any good till you get him converted.' The old lady's testimony, confirmed by the result of various other enquiries, convinced Mr. Spoor that this son of Anak had power to make or mar their evangelistic enterprise. On the way to Thirsk he was joined by his colleague, the Rev. Anthony Dent, a man mighty in prayer, and began to say to him, 'Brother Dent, what do you think Mrs. A. says? she says that we shall never do any good at Langthorne till we get John Hobson converted?' 'Then,' was Mr. Dent's ready answer, 'what do you think if we have him converted?' This he said, not with flippant presumption, but with that joyous courage which is often observed to become half playful, even when most earnest. 'Agreed,' rejoined Mr. Spoor, in full sympathy with his friend, and as he has often said, in relating this incident, 'Talk of striking a bargain! when was a better bargain struck in this world than this one, when we agreed in God's name, and in the Holy Ghost, to have John Hobson converted.' There and then they knelt down by the roadside, and pleaded for the conversion of John Hobson, and every day, at the same hour,

they met, though in different localities, at the same throne of grace, and pressed their suit. Not long after Mr. Spoor was at Langthorne again, and who should be present at the meeting but a man so very tall as to satisfy him he could be no other than John Hobson. He found that it was he, and he found too that he was a penitent. The old woman's prophecy proved true. Mr. Hobson's conversion was followed by that of many others. The Gospel had free course; a flourishing society was formed, and a great improvement passed over the face of the neighbourhood. Mr. Hobson was made leader and local preacher; under his auspices a chapel was soon built, and a Sabbath school established, and to this day he remains a tower of strength to the cause of Christ in Langthorne and the surrounding villages.*

Dr. Büchsell, of Berlin, relating his experiences in his first charge, which was in a village, says—'It occurred to me to pray that it might be granted to me to find out and touch the heart of some one individual; and yet, when I thought who that one should be, turned over the case now of this man, now of that, my courage died away. At length I determined to choose my next door neighbour, whom out of my window I daily saw in his farmyard, and who, in point of fact, was neither better nor worse than other farmers. I continued to intercede for him for some weeks, and was soon conscious of a feeling of increased interest and affection for him. But when I heard him, as indeed I often did, swear at or quarrel with his wife, or play cards on Sundays, till quite late into the night, or go into the public-house, I own I found it rather difficult to

* Memoirs of the Rev. Joseph Spoor, by the Rev. E. Hall.

persevere in my prayers. However, one day when I was preaching about the unhappiness of those who live without God in the world, and more especially about the discomforts of an irreligious married pair; how they daily vex and irritate each other; how Satan delights to make them instruments of mutual torment; and what lamentable consequences ensue to the poor children; I could see the water come into my neighbour's eyes, and unconventional and unusual as it might seem for a rich farmer to shed tears in church, he could not keep them back. At this my hope revived, and I thanked God. However, that very afternoon, after my return from the chapel-of-ease, I heard a great uproar as I sat in my quiet chamber, and moving to my window, I saw my neighbour beating his shepherd lads, and swearing most fearfully. His wife came running up, and tried to screen the youths; but she set about it in so ill judged a manner that the tumult only grew worse. I was dreadfully discouraged at this, and it even occurred to me to give up my intercessory prayer for this unpromising subject. In the evening I went out walking in the fields, and met my neighbour, who, though he held out his hand with the utmost friendliness, yet felt, I observed, embarrassed in my presence. He spoke of many different subjects, and seemed resolved to keep the conversation in his own hands; but, indeed, my own natural timidity, and my youth, were sufficient to prevent my touching upon the subject uppermost in the minds of both. However, that evening I renewed my intercession. Some time after I heard it remarked that he had left off going to the public-house, and playing at cards, and I could see that he took a real pleasure in doing me any little service.

'Time went on; harvest came; the days had grown short, when late one evening, I heard a knock at my door; it was my neighbour who came to pay me a visit for the first time. Plainly he had some special reason for this step, but, after the manner of country people, he did not allude to it at once: he went on talking of his horses and cows, his farm and his children; and, after an hour so spent, prepared to go away, just saying, when he reached the door, that he wished to attend the Sacrament the next day but one, and adding, in a broken voice, "Pray for me, and for my wife." Upon this I drew him back, and informed him how long I had been in the habit of praying for them. He sighed deeply and said—"I would gladly be saved, but I have been a great sinner in the course of my life." At this my joy was so great that I had to pause and reflect what reply I might safely make. He consented to kneel down with me. That evening I was so happy, and so thankful to God the hearer of prayer, that when I went to bed it was long before I could fall asleep.'*

Samuel Hicks was a Wesleyan Local Preacher, very widely known as an eccentric yet holy man. He was a blacksmith, living some ten miles from Leeds. At one time he received into his service a journeyman who refused to attend family worship, or, if in the room where prayer was offered, evidenced his antipathy to it by refusing to kneel down. Mr. Hicks was a good deal exercised in his mind respecting him, and thought at first that as a religious man and a local preacher he could not consistently retain him in his service; but his second thoughts were that it

* My Ministerial Experiences. By Rev. Dr. Büchsell.

would be better to try to effect his conversion. 'So,' said he, 'I set a trap for him, baiting it with faith and prayer.' The result was, the man was brought to Christ. Was this an accident? Was it not achieved by the use of means—of these means, earnest prayer being the chief? Yet, but for the antipathy shown by the journeyman to family devotion, the feelings which led to such earnest prayer might never have been excited. Here was a double Providence employing both the sin of the sinner, and the piety of the saint, to bring about its beneficent purpose.

How many Sabbath School children have been led to give their hearts to Christ through the fervent and importunate prayers of their teachers. It is said of a lady who undertook to teach a number of very unpromising young people in a Sabbath School, that in her diary were found after her death entries to the following effect:—'Prayed for my class, but no particular signs of good.' Again, 'Prayed for my class, but no conversions appear.' After this it was written—'Agonised in prayer for my class, and some are converted.' But there was still another record—'I have prayed and agonised before God for my class, and now they are all giving evidence of conversion.'

These records of an earnest teacher's experience exhibit an ascending scale of desire, culminating in intense emotion; and when it reached this height it prevailed. This is the course of true prayer. It deepens by means of delay; it gains momentum by resistance. Many begin to plead for their fellow-creatures, and grow disheartened; their voice becomes fainter and fainter, till it dies away in silence. They are warmest at first, but cold enough at last. Such prayers have no power to prevail.

How often has God signally answered when parents have claimed his promises in prayer for the conversion of their children. When the son and daughter of Mr. B. Carvosso were rapidly advancing to maturity, he commenced to pray earnestly for them. He tells us that he had always prayed for them, but now he began to grasp the promises with the hand of faith, and to retire daily at special seasons to put the Lord to His Word. No one knew of his efforts, except the Searcher of hearts with whom he wrestled. Not more than a fortnight had elapsed when a message came to him from his wife, while he was in the field, saying that he was wanted. On going home he was told that Grace was upstairs apparently distressed for something. He found her a weeping penitent at the feet of Jesus. On seeing her father, she exclaimed—'O, father, I am afraid I shall go to hell.' The answer to which was—'No, glory be to God, I am not afraid of that now.' She soon found peace through the atoning blood of Christ. The son who had been careless about religion, became the subject of new and better thoughts, and one Sunday afternoon he went to his father and expressed a wish to go with him to his class; the result was, that he obtained peace through believing, threw in his lot with God's people, and subsequently became a minister and a missionary.

Now and then such an instance as this finds a record in the biography of some good man, but who shall tell the number of instances that are never recorded? Very often the immediate instrument of the conversion of a child of pious parents is some solitary effort put forth for his good by a comparative stranger; some sermon preached by a minister heard only a few times, or perhaps only once; but

this solitary effort, this single sermon, would never have produced such an effect if it had not been for the prayers offered up for that child by his father or mother, or by both father and mother; and if it had not been for all the holy influences exerted by them upon him from his earliest infancy—influences which again were the outgrowth of their prayers.

If we believe that the soul is of more value than the whole world, we shall own its salvation to be a great and glorious work. This is the work which is effected, on a large scale, in every genuine revival of religion. Do these revivals take place in an arbitrary or accidental manner? The Divine Sovereignty is displayed in them; but it is not such an exercise of sovereignty as ignores the use of means by men. The prayers of Christians are always found to go before these outbursts of spiritual life, and to account for them, so far as the church is concerned. Those who pray will work, if it be necessary for their purpose. Prayer will inspire action, and clothe it with omnipotent energy. Nothing could have seemed more hopeless than the state of the dry bones, which Ezekiel saw in the valley of vision. It was certain that only the power of God could reunite the disjointed fragments, cover them with flesh, and put life in them; yet that power was brought to bear upon them by means of testimony and prayer. A sermon was preached to the bones. and the breath of heaven was invoked upon the bones. It might seem to the prophet an idle thing to call on the four winds to blow; but as he was directed by the Lord to do it, he obeyed; and, mortal though he was, the winds obeyed him when he obeyed the Lord.

The quickening influences of the Spirit are symbolised by the four winds, and these influences are commanded by the prayers of mortals. The history of all true revivals of religion is an illustration and exposition of Ezekiel's vision. The revival which began at Enfield, Massachusetts, July 8th, 1741, under a sermon preached by the elder President Edwards, on the words 'Their feet shall slide in due time,' is regarded as one of the most powerful on record. The impression of eternal things was awful and overwhelming. Many, knowing nothing of the history of that work, are surprised at so great effects from one sermon; but the fact was, that some Christians in the neighbourhood had become alarmed lest God should in anger pass by that church, and had spent the whole of the preceding night in prayer. Prior to this visitation of the Spirit, religion was at a low ebb. The young people were gay triflers, and were known to treat religious things with contempt. The great change was faintly shown at first; but the Divine power upon the people gradually increased, till the majority were overcome by it; indeed, 'there was scarcely a single person in the town, either old or young, that was left unconcerned about the great things of the eternal world. Those that were wont to be the vainest and loosest; those that had been most disposed to think and speak slightingly of vital and experimental religion, were generally subject to great awakenings. And the work of conversion was carried on in a most astonishing manner, and increased more and more.' Here was an example of Ezekiel's double process of prophesying over the dry bones and prophesying to the winds; and the result corresponded with that which he saw in vision.

The power of prayer for spiritual blessings was remarkably manifested in the religious awakening which took place in 1857-8. That revival was in the fullest sense of the words the child of prayer. In the lecture-room of the Old North Dutch Church, Fulton Street, New York, a solitary mourner continuously engaged in supplication for the thousands around him who were ready to perish. Day by day, and many times a day, he has continued in this behalf, and his constant inquiry has been, 'Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?' The oftener he prays the more earnest he becomes, till at last God answers, by showing him what to do. This man—Mr. J. C. Lanphier, town missionary of the church—felt the responsibility of his office, and sought help in prayer. The more he prayed the more confident he grew that God would guide him to the best means of usefulness. Walking along the street one day it came into his mind that an hour of prayer from twelve to one o'clock at noon would be a happy thing. Arrangements were made accordingly, and at noon on the twenty-third of September, 1857, the Lecture Room door was thrown open. The first day, though only a few came, he could say, 'The Lord was with us to bless us.' The second meeting was held a week after; there were present between thirty and forty. From that time the meetings were held daily. The numbers and the interest rapidly increased. Prayer meetings in a morning were soon established, and others at noon. Business men, merchants, lawyers, and doctors, began to be found amongst the crowds who attended. The revival spread throughout the country, and through all classes of society. It passed like a holy contagion across the Atlantic; swept over the north

of Ireland: then crossed the channel, and lodged in Scotland. But everywhere it was marked by the prevalence of the spirit of prayer. No confidence was felt in the mere use of means. Preaching fell into the background, and prayer became, to an extent that was hardly ever seen before, the instrument of conversion. It was computed that hundreds of thousands were made the subjects of powerful religious influence.

It is only in a casual manner that cases of the power of prayer are chronicled. We have no observers stationed here and there to watch them like the astronomers at Greenwich watching the motions of the heavenly bodies, or the meteorologist noting the fall of rain and the force of winds. And those who in their own experience have met with proofs of the power of prayer to bring down spiritual blessings upon themselves and upon others, are often disposed to be silent upon the subject, lest they should be thought to be sounding their own trumpet. Yet for all this, so many cases do crop up, and are noted by some one interested in the theme, as ought to encourage us to use to a far greater extent this power for good. It is a power which happily is not restricted to rank in the world or office in the Church.

Mr. Finney, in his Lectures on Revivals of Religion, says—'Take a fact which was related in my hearing by a minister. He said, that in a certain village, there had been no revival for many years. The church was nearly run out, the youth were all unconverted, and desolation reigned unbroken. There lived in a retired part of the town an aged man, a blacksmith by trade, and of so stammering a tongue, that it was painful to hear

him speak. On one Friday, as he was at work in his shop, alone, his mind became greatly exercised about the state of the church and the impenitent. His agony became so great, that he was induced to lay by his work, lock the shop door, and spend the afternoon in prayer. He prevailed, and on the Sabbath called on the minister, and desired him to appoint a conference meeting. After some hesitation, the minister consented, observing, however, that he feared but few would attend. He appointed it the same evening, at a large private house. When evening came, more assembled than could be accommodated in the house. All was silent for a time, until one sinner broke out in tears, and said, if any one could pray, he begged him to pray for *him*. Another followed and another, and still another, until it was found that persons from every quarter of the town were under deep conviction. And what was remarkable was, that they all dated their conviction at the hour the old man was praying in his shop. A powerful revival followed. Thus, this old stammering man prevailed, and, as a prince, had power with God.'

In estimating the power of prayer, we must take into account a certain mysterious influence which our minds are able to radiate towards other minds; an influence which in earnest prayer must become particularly active. Innumerable facts go to show the possibility of persons influencing each other at great distances, and especially when one of them is passing through danger or trouble. The most familiar form in which this strange power is detected is that curious coincidence which happens every day, that when one is talking or thinking about a person, he suddenly

makes his appearance. This occurs so often that it can hardly be accidental. There must be some distinct force at work, that has its law as certain and as normal as the magnetic attraction by which the needle turns to the pole. This force, when taken up in prayer, must give one person advantage over another for good.

Then, again, we must remember in accounting for the power of prayer, that we are surrounded by a spiritual world which is co-extensive with the material. It is a vast silent sea, on whose shores we are ever treading. We think it a shadowy realm; but, in reality, ours is the land of shadows. The true substance is invisible. 'The things that are not seen are eternal.' Beautiful glimpses of this glorious inner universe are given us in Scripture; as, when the chariot and horses of fire are seen bearing away the prophet Elijah into the heavens; and when, as the scales fall from the eyes of Elisha's servant, he sees the mountain full of horses of fire and chariots of fire, come for the defence of his master; and when again, as Daniel begins to pray, a messenger is despatched from the heavenly world, and caused to fly swiftly, being withstood by a hostile spirit, is helped by the friendly Michael. We are taught that spiritual beings are possessed of amazing strength; that they are guardians to the children of men; that they minister to the heirs of salvation. We see them in sacred history, on various occasions, helping the good, and hindering the bad; lodging all night beneath Lot's hospitable roof, and rewarding his kindness to strangers by rescuing him from the impending ruin of the vile city where he dwelt; waking Elijah, under a juniper tree, to a repast baked on a

fire of coals; bringing the destructive simoom of the desert over the army of Sennacherib; speaking a few consolatory words to the apostles on Mount Olivet, as they strain their eyes in vain to catch another glimpse of their ascending Lord. The existence of this great spiritual world, where the intensest force is, and where the greatest number of intelligent beings dwell, throws a flood of light on the means by which prayer on behalf of others—and especially prayer for their temporal welfare—may be answered.

But the last and greatest consideration for us is that our God is infinite in all His perfections; He is present everywhere; His power is Almighty power; His wisdom is Omniscience. The laws of nature are but the expression of His will, and that will having established them, can work by them in a thousand ways beyond the reach or understanding of men, just as the accomplished player on harp or organ can bring out melting harmonies, where the unskilful hand shall only make a noise. But why do we speak of laws? The will of God becomes its own law. It changes the relation of objects; it creates and destroys; it is the force of forces; it is the mainspring of universal motion. All of life, all of strength, all of beauty which the universe contains has flowed from Him, yet it is only a drop to the ocean of His infinitude. 'He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think.' There is an immediate efflux of the Divine energy. There is a direct operation of the Holy Spirit on the minds of men. Religion is the friendship of man and his Maker. God is a Person, and able, as such, though so superior to us, to come into contact with our spirits. He speaks to us, and encourages us to speak to

Him in return. Prayer is not a mere reflex influence, but a real asking and receiving.

There are objects for which prayer is more effectual when it is offered by several than when it is offered by one. As a matter of simple addition we should expect this to be the case. We should expect that if there were two men equally devoted to God's glory, and of equal capacity, praying with the same fervour, their influence would be double that of one praying alone. But it is more than double. A process not of mere addition, but of multiplication, takes place; and every arithmetician knows that the result of multiplication is much greater than that of addition. If we add two fours together we get only eight, but if we multiply two fours into each other we get sixteen. It is on this principle we understand the passage which speaks of one chasing a thousand, while two put ten thousand to flight—a passage which is true either for good or for evil. It might seem that if one chased a thousand, two should put only two thousand to flight. But in the kingdom of Heaven, as in mathematics, there is a rule of multiplication, and a sort of geometrical progression, by which the influence of prayer is enormously increased. 'If *two* of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father which is in Heaven.' The isolation of pious souls terribly narrows their influence. It is not commonly given to one to move a whole community. It is not so much the want of prayer, as the want of *united* prayer, that prevents the prosperity of the churches. If even one man who has power in prayer—one who is accomplished in the use of this grand instrument—is a rare object, much

rarer is the meeting and combination of two or more such in a holy compact, based on common aims and sympathies, to give Heaven no rest till their suit be gained.

In the inward experience of earnest Christians, there are triumphs achieved by means of prayer, which are to them more memorable than any outward deliverance which may have come to them; and these triumphs affect the whole of their subsequent career, colouring, if they do not mould it. A good man whom we knew, who lived on the banks of the Ouse, was addicted to drunkenness previous to his conversion; and, after it, the craving for strong drink was so strong in him, that it seemed to him as if he must yield, and he became quite distressed. He has often declared that, in answer to earnest prayer, this craving suddenly left him, and he was never afterwards troubled with it. In a chapter on the zealous amendment of our whole life, Thomas à Kempis, quoting, probably, from the records of his own experience, says—'When one that was in anxiety of mind, often wavering between fear and hope, did once, being oppressed with grief, humbly prostrate himself in a church, before the altar, in prayer, and said within himself—"O, if I knew that I should yet persevere!" he presently heard within him an answer from God, which said—"If thou didst know it what wouldst thou do? Do now what thou wouldst do then, and thou shalt be secure." And being herewith comforted and strengthened, he committed himself wholly to the will of God; and his anxious wavering ceased: neither had he the mind to search curiously any farther, to

know what should befall him, but rather laboured to understand what was the perfect and acceptable will of God, for the beginning and accomplishing of every good work.'

A man of middle age, of a cold, slow, and doubting temperament, obtained a hope in Christ. He hoped that his name was in the Book of Life; but he was a weakly infant, and seemed to grow very little in the course of six or eight years. He was painfully apprehensive of his deficiency in one particular feature of the Christian character—the love of enemies—so plainly enjoined by the Master. He felt that he would not hurt them, or fight them, or return them evil for evil; but he was not conscious of any out-going of compassion towards them. He tried to love his enemies: he tried hard and long: he read and thought, and prayed over the subject for several years, with no appreciable improvement in the state of his feeling. At last, he became ashamed: he fasted and prayed in earnest, and, at a time unexpected, there flowed into his soul that real love to his enemies which evidenced itself, and could no more be mistaken for any other sentiment than joy could be mistaken for grief. This great grace, instantaneously communicated, proved to be a permanent acquisition; and though there were moments afterwards when he had a return of his old bitterness, a fresh application to the throne of grace invariably restored the ascendancy of love to his heart.*

It has often been observed that a fierce conflict with the powers of darkness has preceded that deep peace in which the Christian has expired. Under cover of bodily weak-

* Arvine's Anecdotes, 162*a*.

ness, doubts and fears have advanced upon the soul in force, and gained a temporary advantage. In this crisis ordinary expedients have failed; the will has been deprived of its vigour; argument has been inadequate—as a fine-edged razor is unfit to fell an oak; consolation has sounded all unreal; prayer has been the only resource left. And there are not wanting instances where the prayer of another has secured the victory of the departing Christian soul.

The family of the Janeways is distinguished in the annals of Nonconformity—as the family of the Beechers in America is likely to be—by the number of sons who were all devoted to the Christian ministry, and all eminent for their ability and piety. When the father of this devoted band was dying in 1644, at Kelshall, of which place he was minister, his mind was filled with apprehensions respecting his eternal safety. To his son John he expressed himself in the following manner:—'Oh, John, this passing into eternity is a great thing; this dying is a solemn business, and enough to make any one's heart ache that hath not his pardon sealed, and his evidences for heaven clear. And truly, son, I am under no small fears as to my own estate for another world. Oh! that I could say cheerfully, I can die.' His son, after making a suitable reply, which seemed to have no effect, retired, and in solitary prayer implored that his father might have peace in believing as a token for good in leaving the world. His intercessions were manifestly heard. Upon returning to his father, he enquired how he felt himself. No answer was given, but the departing saint, though little subject to such emotions, wept for a long time in an extraordinary manner, till at last he broke forth in the language of impassioned exultation—'Oh! son,

now it is come; it is come. I bless God I can die; the Spirit of God hath witnessed with my spirit that I am His child. Now I can look upon God as my dear Father, and Christ as my Redeemer. I can now say, This is my Friend, and This is my Beloved. My heart is full—it is brimfull; I can hold no more. I know now what that sentence means—"The peace of God which passeth understanding." I know now what that white stone is, whereon a new name is written, which none know but they who have it. And that fit of weeping which you saw me in, was a fit of overpowering love and joy so great that I could not for my heart contain myself; neither can I express what glorious discoveries God hath made of Himself to me. And had that joy been greater, I question whether I could have borne it, and whether it would not have separated soul and body. Oh! now I can die! It is nothing! I bless God I can die. I desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ.'

It was by a deep knowledge of Scripture, and of the Christian life, that John Bunyan was led to place the Valley of the Shadow of Death long before death itself. Many years previous to the occurrence of that great physical change, which men call death, the mind may have passed through the essential experience of death. There are also severe conflicts of mind coming in the noontide of our days and of our strength, when the thought of dying is not particularly prominent, but which resemble death struggles in their desperateness. Such a conflict arising from inward temptation Bunyan himself had twice known for a period of two years; and it is a significant circumstance, drawn from the diary of his own heart, that in his 'Pilgrim's Progress,' Christian, after vanquishing Apollyon in the

Valley of Humility with the Sword of the Spirit, is compelled, in the Valley of the Shadow of Death, to put up that Sword, and betake himself to another weapon called All-Prayer. Scripture was powerless against the flames, and noises, and demon shapes; the snares, and pits, and quagmires of that dreadful valley; nothing was left but to pray. In any man's life a time may come when his sagacity is baffled, and he is utterly perplexed as to the course he ought to take; when he is perfectly powerless in the presence of great difficulties and dangers; when he is shut up to some hard fact, or to some continuous trial, as within the stone walls of a narrow prison, from which there is no escape; when severe mental exercises arise it may be without any apparent cause; and at such a time, if it come, what is to be done? When all other means are exhausted, prayer remains; such prayer as Peter's when he exclaimed —'Lord, save me;' such prayer as the Syrophenician woman's when she cried—'Lord, help me;' such prayer as the Psalmist's when he said—'O, Lord, I beseech Thee, deliver my soul.' Were childlike, importunate, protracted prayer employed in these emergencies, they would become to Christians the Ebenezers of their history, and would stand up before their eyes, whenever they looked back, as memorials of the reality of their religion. But it is to be feared that most of those who in old age turn round and review the past, while they see plainly enough that they have passed through the Valley of the Shadow of Death, see also that they have failed to employ that only weapon of All-Prayer, which was able to serve them there, and that they suffered in consequence of this sad oversight irreparable loss.

'When the Children of Israel cried unto the Lord, the Lord raised up a deliverer to the Children of Israel.' This statement repeatedly occurs in the Book of Judges, in nearly the same words. So does the corresponding statement that when the Children of Israel forsook the Lord, He sold them into the hand of their enemies. As a people they kept sinning and repenting all through their history. At one time we read that when they forgot God, He sold them into the hand of Chushan-rishathaim, King of Mesopotamia; him they served for eight years; then they cried unto the Lord, and He delivered them by means of Othniel, nephew of Caleb. After this they had rest for forty years; then as a nation they sinned again, and they fell under the yoke of Eglon, King of Moab. Him they served eighteen years; then the cry of distress arose, and they were delivered by means of Ehud. That deliverance lasted eighty years; then again they did evil, and came under the power of Jabin, King of Canaan, whose captain was Sisera. The cry of earnest prayer resulted in the raising up of Deborah the prophetess, and of the warrior Barak. When there was another moral relapse, Midian became their oppressor for a period of seven years. This oppression at last extorted the cry of importunate supplication from the oppressed, and Gideon appeared to vindicate their cause. A fresh relapse was followed by bondage to the Philistines and Ammonites for eighteen years. A fresh cry brought Jephthah, the Gileadite, to the rescue. When they did evil again, the Philistines got the mastery over them for forty years. It was a long time for God's people to be in bondage; a long time ere the cry of prayer went up to Heaven. That cry, though late, procured the advent of the giant

Samson. It is pleasing to notice that the seasons of bondage were much shorter than the periods of liberty and rest. God's mercy, which he manifested in answer to the prayer of His people, lasted longer than His anger, when it was provoked by their idolatries. But it is observable that alike their prosperity and adversity, as a nation, had a moral and spiritual cause. When they were disobedient, they fell under the power of tyrants that wasted and afflicted them. When they prayed and turned to the Lord they recovered their freedom.

It is one of the most perplexing specimens of the stupidity and slowness of heart superinduced by our dull unbelief, that those who know where help is to be found can remain so long sinning and suffering before they make a thoroughly earnest appeal to the right quarter. It often takes years of misery to extort a genuine cry. It is common enough for those who pray at all, to make the evils of their lot the subject of a formal kind of petition; to refer to them in their devotions after a feeble and resigned fashion; but it is rarely that any one is brought to the point of mental distress or resolute determination respecting any evil, temporal or spiritual, from which he is suffering. When the load that presses on us becomes intolerable: when the iron of some trial enters into our soul, till we rouse up and pray like men who believe there is a God, He says to us—'At last, my child, I see that you are in earnest; you mean what you say: you really wish me to help you, and I will help you. I will either take away your burden, or give you strength to bear it.' After such a season of supplication, a man finds himself possessed of

a new power: it was not his before: it has come in answer to prayer, and he knows that it is from God. He can go, perhaps, to some place where he wrestled, as in an agony, with some terrible evil. A monster seemed to have him in his clutches; but at his cry of distress, vented, not upon the mocking winds, but into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth, an invisible Helper drew near, and the monster fled.

Very often God answers the prayers of His servants, so far as it respects the end which they desire, while He rejects the pet scheme which they have formed as to the means. Monica, the mother of St. Augustine, prayed earnestly for his conversion, when he was a gay dissipated young man; and, in order to this result, she besought that he might wed a certain pious maiden; he did not wed the maiden, but at thirty years of age his conversion was singularly effected. Paul desired to see Rome that he might preach the gospel there also; and, of course, he desired to go thither as a free man. His petition, so far as it respected the lofty end contemplated, was granted; he did see Rome, and he did preach there the Gospel of Christ; but when he went he went as a prisoner, and even as he preached, which he did for two whole years in his own hired house, the manacle was on his wrist, and a soldier was always nigh, who was responsible for his appearance any hour before Cæsar, to answer for his life.

If we would hope to be heard when we pray for temporal things, we must learn first to feel the paramount importance of spiritual things, so as to pray for them oftenest and most earnestly. Prayer is not a species of magic, which any kind of man can exercise. It is a solemn

expression of the whole life and character. When our Lord stood beside the grave of Lazarus, just before He pronounced the potent words that brought back the departed spirit from the mysterious region where the souls of the dead reside, He said, 'Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard Me. And I knew that Thou hearest Me always.' His prayers never failed, because the conditions of true prayer in Him were perfectly fulfilled; and in proportion as we approximate that state wherein He continually dwelt, in the same proportion will our prayers also infallibly prevail. 'If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.' So far as we are enlightened by His teaching we shall be saved from pleading any cause which is not in harmony with the mind of the Supreme Judge, who must decide it. We shall plead only a right cause, and we shall plead it with prevailing power. It may be said, Why not ask for the conversion of the nation, nay, of the whole world, before going to bed to-night, and expect it to take place? The answer is, Because if His Word abide in us we shall be wisely and Divinely guided in our prayers, and we shall be kept from insisting on things for which we have no promise in Scripture, and no warrant, either in the inward whispers of the Spirit, or in the outward indications of Providence.

If any kind of character could obtain temporal advantages in answer to prayer, then prayer would be employed, like necromancy and the black art, by those who live in sin; they would pray one minute, and curse the next; and the idle would give up working, and compel the angels to fetch them all they wanted. But as it is, the men who have

experienced the most remarkable interpositions of a temporal nature, are the very men who think little of them compared with those higher spiritual mercies which they are receiving every day. If their prayers could be measured, it would probably be found that two-thirds of them were taken up with petitions for spiritual blessings, which the unregenerate despise, and with thoughts of trustful, affectionate communion with that God whom the wicked in their secret hearts do hate; and that it was a very insignificant portion of time that they occupied with requests for mere temporal things. The salvation of the soul is more important than the health and safety of the body. The Kingdom of God towers in grandeur high as the stars above the affairs of the present world.

If we wish then to ply the mighty instrument of prayer, having never made use of it before, we must begin by seeking pardon and a change of heart. When the ship is going down there is no time for dinner; when the criminal is just being led forth to execution, he wants no medicine to cure a cough; and for him who is unsaved to fill his prayers with the small matters of time, would be a burlesque on the value of the soul. 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things'—such as food and raiment—'shall be added unto you.'

But it is the order of redemption to begin in the central recesses of the spirit, and work outwards to the farthest circumference of our interests. The blazing sun planted in the midst of the solar system kindles a light on distant Neptune, slowly performing his cold journey on the borders of the infinite Empire of Night. It is the prerogative of those who are born anew of the spirit, to view in God all

things pertaining to them; to have 'Holiness to the Lord' inscribed on the very bells of the horses; to ask and to obtain His blessing on all their pursuits. The righteous resembles a tree planted by a river; a tree whose tiniest leaf and topmost twig drink the water that laves its roots; 'Whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.' Let not the child of God hesitate to speak to his Heavenly Father about the things of his every-day life. We have household cares; we have trials in the world; we have personal or relative sorrows; we have some enterprise in hand of great pith and moment; we have laudable objects to secure, which to others may be very insignificant, but which, in relation to our little sphere of action, are of huge magnitude; and is it possible that we hold no consultation respecting them with the Father and Guide of our life? Is it possible that we talk of them to any one and to every one we meet, but not to Him who is with us night and day? Is it possible that we can go on turning them over and over in our minds till the process resembles the threshing of beaten straw which refuses to yield another grain; that we brood perpetually on an anxious subject without obtaining a single fresh idea, yet never put ourselves in communication with that glorious Mind whose thoughts are more numerous than the drops of ocean, and fresher to the parched and fevered spirit than the distillations of the dew? Let us pray about everything that affects our happiness: let us pray for others as the Spirit of God may lead us: let us pray till light dawns: let us pray till that enterprise is accomplished, or till it enters on a new and brighter phase: let us pray till that burden is removed, or greater strength

is given to us to bear it; and let us be assured that, if having brought our will into harmony with the will of the Lord, we pray with persevering faith, as certainly as the morning cometh after night, we shall succeed in one way or another. We may not be delivered from the den of lions; but the mouths of the lions will be shut, so that they cannot devour: the cup of anguish in our Gethsemane may not literally pass from us, but we shall be strengthened to drink it; and thus, in a sublimer sense, it will pass from us by being exhausted—by being drained to its dregs. The thorn that rankles in our flesh may have to be carried to the tomb; but the silence that met our threefold petition for its extraction, will be broken at last by the grand assurance—'My grace is sufficient for thee.'

CHAPTER VII.

Mental Impressions.

THE Providence of God sometimes interposes in a remarkable manner, by means of impressions upon the mind. Not unfrequently the object of these interpositions is the preservation of human life. When God wills to keep a man alive, whether it be for a purpose which we think we can see, or for some reason which is all dark to us, He, who is all-wise and all-powerful, can have no difficulty in effecting His object. It may be said that all events are effects of pre-existing causes, and that these causes, when they are traced up, will be found to be natural: that the laws of nature are inviolable: that they will not be broken to save any man's life, however valuable; their maintenance being of infinitely greater consequence than the preservation of any one individual. Pope, in his 'Essay on Man,' puts into beautiful language a quiet sarcasm on the belief in a special Providence. He asks—

'When the loose mountain trembles from on high,
Shall gravitation cease as you go by?
Or some old temple nodding to its fall,
For Chartres' head reserve the hanging wall?'

His question implies, and as good as asserts, that gravitation will not cease, either for you or for anybody else—either for a beggar or a king; either for a sinner or a saint. There is something very narrow in such an assertion. Gravitation is not the only force in the universe. There are many material forces besides gravitation; and who shall say that the Being who has them all under His control, cannot play off one of these material forces against another, so as to counteract it, and effect some special object which He has in view? This is a thing which even man can do, within his own little sphere: melting ice with heat; propelling great vessels against wind and tide, by means of steam; changing chemical states with a current of electricity; stopping the course of a rivulet with his embankments, and creating a smooth lake at the entrance of his harbours by a breakwater which opposes immoveable stone to the fury of the ocean billows. Miracle is not the cutting of the connection between cause and effect. It is the insertion of a fresh cause; and, by it, the production of a different effect. It is not the violation of the laws of nature: it is only the overcoming of one law by means of another which is stronger.

But there are intellectual and spiritual forces in the universe which are subtler, yet grander and more commanding than those which are material. There are minds as well as bodies; there is a power of passion, a force of

instinct, an energy of will; there are spirits disembodied, there are natives of other spheres besides this tiny planet. These spiritual forces may be employed to keep a man alive, when, if left to the mercy of mere material causes, he would infallibly perish. The Rev. Thomas Binney, in a sermon which he preached on the Hartley Colliery catastrophe, made this strong assertion, that if the twelve apostles were walking along a railway, and meeting a locomotive engine, they would be crushed to atoms if they did not get out of the way. The startling statement rests on the little word 'if.' The twelve apostles never *would*, either in recklessness or in forgetfulness, plant themselves in front of a moving locomotive engine. The operation of mind as well as matter, and of mind before matter, is necessary to account for men walking on a railway; and if the mind be rightly guided, the feet will pursue a safe path. To take the case supposed by the poet Pope, it has been conclusively argued by the Rev. Richard Watson, in his sermon 'On Providence,' that the man who is about to pass underneath 'the loose mountain that trembles from on high,' would be saved from harm if somehow he was led to take his journey five minutes earlier or five minutes later than he had intended, so as to pass the point of danger before or after the catastrophe; a little expedition or a little delay would secure his safety, without interfering in the slightest degree with the law of gravitation. The man may wait till the mountain has fallen, or push on so as to pass the spot before the fall takes place, and all the reason he may have for waiting or for pushing on, shall be some secret, unaccountable impression made upon his mind.

There was once a terrible explosion at Haswell Colliery, near Durham, in which a hundred persons, young and old, lost their lives. We have been told in the neighbourhood, that just before it occurred, a man who was working down in the pit felt an uncontrollable wish to go home. There was no definite object before his mind to be gained by going home; there was no reason that he could see why he should leave his work; yet, still the impression that he must do so was so strong upon him, that he yielded to it, and actually left his workmate behind him. He had not quitted his work above a quarter of an hour, when the explosion took place, in which many scores of his fellow-workmen, and among them his own mate, perished. Why he was saved, while so many were lost, who were perhaps better than he, is a mystery which we have not the means of solving.

We had written the above from recollection of a conversation held sixteen years before, and without remembering aught respecting the favoured individual whose singular impression sets at defiance all Pope's elegant reasoning. An accidental correspondence with the friend at whose house this conversation was held—Mr. Roscamp, who is underviewer at Ellemour Colliery, and Steward of the Primitive Methodist Circuit of Hetton-le-Hole—gave us the opportunity of obtaining confirmation of the fact, and farther details respecting it. Mr. Roscamp, writing January 12th, 1871, says, 'I think you will be right in the Haswell Explosion case. The man's name was John Hall. He was a member with us when you came to my house, but has many years since gone to his rest. We have his widow a member with us here at present. I will try to relate

the case as well as I can again. J. Hall was a very anxious man to have work finished, and I never knew him to come home before "the pit was done" (as we call it at the pits), or all work done; but on September 28th, 1844, the day of the accident, he was so impressed with desires to come home and leave his work and partner, or, as the pit phrase is, his 'marrow,' that he came away about three o'clock, p.m. All ought to be done at four. The accident occurred about a quarter-past three; so that he only got about two-thirds of the way from his work, to the shaft bottom. More wonderful: the boy that had just passed him driving a horse with waggons was lost, both he and his horse. The sparks of the explosion nearly reached Hall, who was only about two hundred yards farther out towards the shaft bottom. He had, as we might say, just passed the line from death to life. This accident brings many sorrowful thoughts into my mind, as I had two dear brothers, with many kind friends, lost at it.'

The above letter, compared with our own account, supplies a good illustration of the extent to which cases of this kind lose as they travel. Scandal is understood to grow larger as it passes from mouth to mouth. The mole-hill becomes a mountain. This arises from the tendency of human nature to believe what is evil. But in regard to the supernatural, the order is curiously reversed. The mountain shrinks to a mole-hill; the angles of the incident are chipped off as it goes along; the circumstances that render it most impressive and convincing are dropped out; the memory of the successive reporters leaks, and this leakage, leagued with a latent scepticism, causes a constant loss of the details of the original story. Contrary to the

general supposition, it may be set down as a rule, when any case of the supernatural is heard, that for every stage it has travelled away from the eye and ear witnesses, there must be a corresponding per centage, not taken off, but added to, the amount, to repair the waste.

A lady known to us, Mrs. P——, wife of the Rev. Dr. P., of S——, Clergyman of the Church of England, had arranged on one occasion to sail with her cousin, the wife of the Rev. Mr. C——, from Leith to Hull, on a Wednesday, with the *Pegasus*. Suddenly, on the Saturday previous, the cousin changed her mind, and determined, under the influence of a mysterious and most unaccountable impression, to sail on that very day instead. She sent a man on horseback six miles to let Mrs. P. know that she would sail that day at 4 P.M.; that she felt she *must* go, and that if Mrs. P. wished to go with her, she must meet her at Leith Pier at the hour named. The father of Mrs. P. objected on various grounds to her going; but after much persuasion yielded; and, although there were only three hours left to prepare for the journey, the party reached the vessel just in time to get on board. The *Pegasus*, which sailed on the following Wednesday was lost, and only two of all on board were saved. Mrs. P. has kindly furnished us in writing with the above particulars. We may add, that the steam-ship *Pegasus* was wrecked off the Gladstone Rock, July 20, 1843, and that in this wreck perished the Rev. John Morell Mackenzie, M.A. He was a man of very versatile powers. His memory was extraordinary, insomuch that he was afraid of preaching extempore, lest he should recite entire pages from theological authors without knowing it. He was Professor in the

Glasgow Independent Theological Academy, and his premature death cast a gloom over that denomination, he being regarded as one of their most promising scholars. Amidst his encyclopædic acquisitions, he had not neglected the art of swimming, and there is reason to believe that he lost his life through his desire to be useful to the souls of his fellow-passengers. When last seen he was kneeled at prayer with an anxious circle round him, and was believed to have been drawn down with the rest when the ship sank; where, if he had thought of himself alone, he could have escaped by swimming. The peculiar eclectic nature of a special Providence is thus brought out into bold relief —'One shall be taken, and another left.' The natural law which the General Providence of God maintains rolls onward and crushes beneath its iron wheels a mass of human beings—crushes whatever comes in its way—as relentlessly as if it were only an old rag; while a Special Providence, for deep reasons, saves one or two from the general wreck; stretches out the arm of powerful interposition, and draws them aside just in time.

Peter Cartwright, in his racy autobiography, says, 'On Horse Creek we had a good society. Old brother Joseph Dixon was leader. He had been a great hunter and trapper, to take furs. In early life he and two others made a voyage up the Missouri river, which at that time was an unbroken Indian country, and many of the Indians hostile to the whites. When the trappers had been there more than a year, and had escaped many dangers, and endured extraordinary hardships, they differed, and separated. Dixon was left alone. He dug a cave in the side of a mountain, and spent the winter. Through constant gazing

on the snow, his eyes became inflamed to such a degree he could not see anything. He was utterly helpless and hopeless, and reflecting on his condition, discovered he was a great sinner, and unprepared for death. For the first time he knelt down and cried for mercy. He promised God, if He would deliver him, he would serve Him faithfully all the rest of his life. When he had made this covenant with God, all of a sudden there was a strong impression made upon his mind, that if he would take the inside bark of a certain tree that stood a few steps from his earthy habitation, and beat it up soft and fine, soak it in water, and wash his eyes with it, he would soon recover his sight. He groped his way to the tree, got the bark, prepared it as impressed, bathed his eyes, bound some of this bark to them, and laid down and slept, not knowing whether it was day or night. When he awoke, his eyes were easy; in a short time his sight began to return, and when fully assured that he should recover, he kneeled down to return thanks to God; a sweet peace ran through his mind, and he then and there, all alone, shouted the high praises of God. He started for home, and after marvellous escapes from imminent peril, reached his family in safety, and lived to carry out the vow which he made in his distress.'

It is said that many Baptist congregations in Bedfordshire owe their origin to John Bunyan's midnight preachings during the twelve years that he was a prisoner in Bedford Gaol. He was allowed an extraordinary degree of liberty, and one time went as far as London on a visit to his friends. On another occasion he had been permitted by the gaoler to go out and visit his family, with

whom he intended to remain for the night, but at a very late hour he felt so uneasy that he went back to prison. Meanwhile information had been given to a neighbouring clerical magistrate, that there was a strong suspicion of Bunyan's having got out of prison; and at midnight this magistrate despatched a messenger to the gaol for the purpose of detecting and exposing the laxity of the keeper. On his arrival the following pointed dialogue took place between messenger and keeper:—'Are all the prisoners safe?' 'Yes.' 'Is John Bunyan safe?' 'Yes.' 'Let me see him?' The precious article demanded was immediately produced, and the disappointed witness went away to make his report to his master accordingly. The gaoler said afterwards, with a touch of humour, to Bunyan, 'You may go out when you will, for you know much better when to return than I can tell you.'*

Impressions on the mind usually present themselves to our notice as purely subjective in their character. The urgency of them, and the result when they are obeyed, may, indeed, suggest the inquiry, whether there has not been some agency at work outside the mind, as the objective source or cause of them; but the work is wrought so secretly, that the hand of the worker is not usually betrayed. Providential impulses spring up within the mind as if they originated in it, like a fountain which bubbles up, as if its waters were the independent product of the ground, when we know that they have come by secret passages from the clouds and from the ocean. But there are not wanting well authenticated instances, where

* See Memoir of Bunyan, p. 59, prefixed to vol. ii. of his Works, Edited by George Offor, Esq.

the objective source of a supernatural impression is more or less distinctly indicated; and sight or sound bears witness that it proceeded from a being other than self. A striking instance of what we mean, is related by Dr. Guthrie, in the 'Sunday Magazine' for April, 1870; and it may best be given in his own words. It has respect to the Madiai, who were thrown into prison at Florence, in 1848, for reading the Bible and having religious meetings in their house. Dr. Guthrie says:—

'The deliverance of the Madiai from their prison is not the least interesting, and by much the most marvellous part of the story. Its full and true history has never yet, I think, been published. I heard it first from Dr. Frazer, and afterwards from the signora's own lips. It is well fitted to encourage God's people to commit their way to Him who works by many or by few, never to despond, still less to despair; "casting all their care upon Him, for He careth for them."

'When the Protestant world had its eyes turned on the Madiai and their fellow-sufferers, and when, while prayers were offered up by many families and churches also, to move heaven, Lord Shaftesbury, Lord Roden, Sir Culling Eardley, Colonel Tronchin, and such men, were moving earth on their behalf, there was living in London a man who was by birth a German, and by business a livery stable keeper, a respectable man in his own calling. He had a devout and pious woman for his wife. One morning, as she rose from her bed, she heard—and here, to say the least of it, is a very marvellous circumstance—a voice saying—"Plead for the Madiai." She started and looked round; but found herself alone in the bedroom.

None had entered or left it. She was amazed, as well she might be—struck, indeed, with awe.

'What this voice was, it is hard to say. Vocal are rare, compared with optical illusions; there being, for one case of an impression made, without sound on the ear, a hundred made without substance, on the eye. I remember a remarkable example of the first, which occurred in my old country parish, and was related to me by James D——, the subject of it, and one of the best of my people. Occupying a humble position in life, he was a man of genius and of a vivid imagination, which he had nursed amid the solitudes of the moor where his cottage stood. On the morning of a communion Sunday, as he told me, he rose in a state of mental darkness, so cast down, indeed, by a sense of his sins, that he hesitated about approaching the Lord's table. In the language of Holy Scripture, he was "tossed and not comforted." While in this state, as he was preparing himself to go to church, there came a voice to him, as the voice of our Lord Himself, saying—"Cannot my blood wash away your sins as easily as that water washes your hands?" "I do not say," he said to me, "there was an actual voice; but I seemed to hear one, as distinct and loud as you now hear mine; and I took courage, and went forward to the table."

'Without settling any more than I attempt to do how the voice came to her, this good woman in London resolved to obey it. However, before she could do anything in the matter, the tide of business set in, and occupied all the day. On retiring to bed at night, conscience upbraided her for the neglect of what she was now inclined to regard

as a special message from Heaven. She could not sleep, explaining to her husband, on his asking her if she was ill, the reason of her restlessness. He treated the matter lightly; and seeking to persuade her that it was all a delusion, and the voice she heard but a trick of fancy, he asked, "What have you or I to do with the Madiai?" However, like the importunate woman of the parable, she prevailed at last, not only getting his attention, but securing his services.

'He had been a coachman to the Prince of Moskwa, a grandson I suppose of Marshal Ney, and such satisfaction had he given, that his master, when he left his service, promised to grant him afterwards any favour he could. Of this his wife reminded her husband and got him to apply to the Prince on behalf of the Madiai. The Prince was astonished at such an application coming from his old coachman, asking in his turn, "What have you or I to do with the Madiai?" However, he yielded to their entreaties, giving them a letter of introduction to one who had great influence with Napoleon. I do not remember whether this person was, or was not, the French Ambassador, but he resided at that time in London. The wife of the livery-stable keeper waited on him, having by perseverance, and a resolution not to be daunted, fought her way to the great man's presence. She was met with the old question, "What had he or the emperor to do with the Madiai?" He would certainly not ask Napoleon to interfere with the Grand Duke in the matter. But with the strange voice in her ear, and strong faith in her heart, denied the woman would not be. With God's blessing, importunity once more carried the day. He applied

to the Emperor; the Emperor applied to the Duke; and the telegraph flashed the news to London, "The Madiai are free!" Thus in God's wonderful Providence, neither the churches, nor the great men of the earth, but an obscure woman, like the angel of God who delivered Peter, brought them out of prison and of bonds.'

Dr. Liefchild, in his volume titled—'Remarkable Facts Illustrative of Scripture,' says—'The following incident [was] related to me by the individual who was concerned in it; a brother minister in the neighbourhood of London. He was a man of great intelligence, courage, and piety, and prompt to acts of benevolence and mercy.

'A young relative of his having been ordered to Margate for her health, and finding no one else able to accompany her, he undertook that duty himself, and stayed with her for some time at that place. On one occasion, having retired to rest as usual, some time after midnight, or rather very early in the morning, he was startled out of his slumbers by the sound of a voice pronouncing, as if close to his ear, in a loud tone—"Ramsgate! Ramsgate!" He endeavoured to discover the quarter from which it came, and to account for it, but in vain. Again it was repeated, in a tone that seemed to him to summon him to that town. He rose, and still the call was renewed. It was useless to think of recovering sleep after this event, which impressed his mind deeply; and he, therefore, in a leisurely manner dressed himself and prepared to comply with the mysterious summons. As soon as convenient he departed for Ramsgate, and arrived there without any definite aim. He repaired to the beach, and

sauntered along musing upon the extraordinary cause which had moved him, and half blaming himself for having yielded to an impulse which, as he then in the full daylight conceived might have misled him. Yet he still remembered the solemnity and loudness of the voice that came to him through the darkness.

'He was now unexpectedly accosted by a friend of long standing, whose invitation to join his family at dinner he complied with, and repaired with him to a house situated upon an adjoining eminence, and fronting the sea. In the afternoon he parted with his host, and strolled out to amuse his leisure upon the beach, which was nearly in front of his friend's house. There he contemplated the receding tide, and came upon a retired spot where several youths were preparing to bathe. Amongst those who went into the sea, he observed one venturing farther than the others to the distant waves, which he seemed to buffet with evident pleasure and comfort. While watching him, however, he saw the youth suddenly succumb to a stronger wave than the preceding ones; nor did he re-appear, as my friend anxiously looked for and expected him. He was horrified at the sight; and, keeping his eye steadily fixed upon the precise point where the youth had gone down, he hastened to his companions, and enquiring for the most expert swimmer amongst them, directed him most earnestly and encouragingly to the spot, and besought him to attempt the rescue of his friend. His request was complied with, and the noble lad plunged into the sea, and swam as directed till he arrived at the exact place which was indicated. He then boldly dived, and with great difficulty brought up the

body and conveyed it to the shore, where it lay, unhappily, to all appearance destitute of life.

'The minister now secured, as speedily as possible, a private room, to which he conveyed the senseless body. He then devoted himself with all his strength and judgment to the labour of restoring suspended animation. He had formerly listened to a recital of the various means suitable to be employed for this purpose, and he employed them all according to his ability. He used continual friction; he breathed into the youth's mouth, and left nothing untried which he thought would conduce to the anxiously desired result. For a long time, however, no success appeared to crown his labours; and some of the few bystanders who had at first proffered assistance, discouraged farther efforts, by pronouncing them to be hopeless. My friend himself now began to fear this opinion was too well founded; yet his spirit was strong within him, and the impulse he felt to renewed exertions was uncontrollable. Again and again did he assiduously operate, and at length he perceived faint tokens of life begin to manifest themselves. Still he was in sad suspense, for his own strength was failing him: but he persisted once more, and now, not without more evident signs that life was slowly returning—slowly, very slowly—almost doubtfully; but yet, at last, certainly.

'A warm bath was now instantly procured, and accelerated the returning animation. Nor was it long before the speech of the youth came back to him; and, after a slight convulsion, he fell into a profound slumber. My friend watched beside him with unspeakable interest while he slept. When at last he awoke, he seemed like one

beside himself—impatiently asking where he was, who he was, who was near him, and how he came there. It seemed as if a veil of oblivion had fallen upon him from the moment of his disappearance in the sea to that of his returning consciousness. He was gently and gradually informed of what had taken place; when, in spite of all entreaties, he was so overcome with emotions of gratitude to him who had thus determinately persisted in recovering him, that he sprang from the bed, and threw himself at his feet, exclaiming, "Oh! my more than father!" In that one moment, my friend was recompensed for all, and returned to Margate, to recount his adventure.

'At the ensuing annual meeting of the Royal Humane Society, this philanthropic man, whose benevolent assiduity had become known, was invited to be present. He described to me as I myself cannot describe, the tide of emotions which flooded his soul, when, at a certain stage of the proceedings, the doors of the large room in which they were assembled were suddenly opened, a procession began to enter, and slowly passed along the lines of the company. Each constituent of this procession was a human being who had been rescued from a watery grave and restored to life, at least instrumentally, by the exertions of a fellow-creature.

'As the procession moved along, my friend scanned it carefully, and at length his heart beat violently, when he saw the youth he had restored approaching him, animated, and anxiously peering into every countenance as he passed. When at last the eye of the young man caught that of his restorer, his emotions were too powerful to be

restrained. He broke from the rank, fell at his feet, and embraced his deliverer from death, with a fervour that kindled the sympathies and visibly affected the hearts of all the spectators. Soon the chief officers of the institution summoned my friend to the chair, and publicly presented to him an annual medal of the Society, adding to it their united and hearty acknowledgments of his successful services.

'Often during his after life did my friend thank God that he had yielded to the impulse that had mysteriously summoned him to that special act of benevolence.'

A singular instance of lapse of memory, which is hardly to be accounted for, except on the supposition that it was an interposition of Providence, once occurred to Dr. Leifchild himself, during the course of his ministry at Kensington. It is related in the memoir written by Mr. Leifchild, the doctor's son. It is well known that Dr. L. was uniformly careful in the preparation of his sermons, and that he had a powerful memory. One Saturday he had prepared a sermon to be preached next morning at his chapel in Kensington, but when he arose in the morning such a thing had happened to him as never happened before or after; for the life of him he could not tell what the text was on which he had fixed the day before, nor could he lay hold of a single shred of the sermon which he had mentally composed. What was to be done? The inevitable hour when he must ascend the pulpit, and face the people, was drawing near. In his perplexity he wandered out before breakfast into Kensington Gardens, and there a text occurred to him around which his thoughts seemed readily to revolve; so he determined to accept

the stranger text, and make the best of it, without any farther attempt to extort from his memory the text of the day previous, respecting which it was so unaccountably and stubbornly silent. He had never ventured before, in the course of his ministry, to preach after such slight preparation. The text which had come into his mind was, 'Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.' He preached on it with great freedom, and in the course of the sermon quoted two lines of poetry—

'Beware of desperate steps! the darkest day—
Live till to-morrow—will have passed away!'

It afterwards appeared that this sermon had saved a man's life. That very morning he had gone in despair to the Serpentine to drown himself, and had his pockets filled with stones, to ensure that he should sink at once, and not rise again. Some people passing by, however, disturbed him while he was on the brink of the water, and he returned to Kensington, intending to drown himself in the evening. Passing Dr. Leifchild's chapel, and seeing the people crowding in he thought that he would go in too, in order to while away his time. The sermon rivetted his attention; it seemed to have been composed for him. The appropriate poetry crowned it, and when he heard it he abandoned his dark design.

The guidance of life is an object still worthier of Providential interposition, by means of impressions, than the mere preservation of life; whether we live or die is a matter of small moment compared with the question how to live wisely and well. Many a useful career has received its general direction from some strong impulse that came unaccountably upon the mind, and became its own

reason for obedience. Mr. Spurgeon, in a sermon on that text—'Is thy Counseller perished?' preached in 1858, says—'I remember an incident which was a turning-point in my life, and led me to this place. I had determined that I would enter a college; I had made up my mind and resolved to see the Principal; in fact, I had waited at the house some time to see him; but, by Divine Providence, though I waited in the house, he was shown into one drawing-room, and I into another. He never knew that I was there, and I never knew that he was there. So that there we sat waiting for each other all the time, and I left without seeing him. I went home, and the text came into my mind—"Seekest thou great things for thyself? seek them not." And as I pondered them I thought—I know what this means; I have been thinking of great things for myself, but I will not seek them. So I made up my mind the other way, and I said—By God's grace I will never disgrace myself by going there. Then I found rest for my spirit by following God's Word—"Seekest thou great things for thyself? seek them not." I shall never doubt, as long as I live, it was a Divine impulse; nor shall I ever cast away that thought from my mind.'

Martin Luther's deliverance from superstition came by means of a passage quoted in the epistle to the Romans from the prophecies of Habakkuk, which seemed to be pronounced aloud, as he was performing a piece of ceremonial folly, for the advantage of his soul. He was climbing Peter's staircase at Rome, on hands and knees. The steps of this staircase were said to have been miraculously transported from Jerusalem, and a special indulgence

was promised to anyone who should ascend them in that painful fashion. Luther, in the midst of his degrading task, heard a voice like thunder, speaking in the depths of his heart—'The just shall live by faith.' He started up, horrified at himself, and fled from the scene of his folly. It was a decisive epoch in his life.

God speaks to earnest minds and tells them when and where to move. There are inward impulses; there are clear flashing convictions which those who have watched the motions of their own minds and learned the difference between a voice from above and a voice from beneath, know well to be from God. A rash, a worldly, a wicked impulse, is accompanied with misgiving, and irritates the mind, as some foreign improper element, such as an atom of dust in the eye irritates the physical frame. An impulse in accordance with truth and duty commends itself to the judgment, heart, and conscience, and exerts upon the mind a sweet constraining force. Socrates, the heathen philosopher, used to speak of his daemōn, or good genius, as if he had a friendly invisible monitor, that always told him what to do. It would be strange if the servants of Christ were left without such a monitor, after the Holy Ghost has been given, and after the light of revelation has become so clear. Those who wish to make progress, as individuals, must watch the current of those good impulses which at intervals spring up within the breast; and then, when they see the tide is rising, unfasten the boat from its moorings; for they may depend that then is their chance, if they mean to perform a prosperous voyage. A Congregational minister who is now pastor of an influential church on the east coast,

had taken the degree of Bachelor of Arts while a student at a college in Wales, and intended to proceed no farther in his university course; but, having entered the Lancashire Independent College for Theology, one Sunday, when, having no public engagement, he was left very much to the play of his own thoughts, an impulse suddenly came upon him to go up for his master's degree. He was one who liked a thing to *possess him;* and so he obeyed most faithfully the feeling which had seized him with an almost preternatural force. With the regularity of the clock, he wrought at his task for the next twelve months, and then went up to London for the M.A. examination. He had an unusual number of competitors from various colleges; but he came out highest on the list, and won the gold medal. This came of obeying a generous impulse. Had he suppressed it; had he conjured down the spirit which on that Lord's day haunted him, he would neither have attained to such distinction, nor would he have acquired the strength, intellectual and moral, which that one task thoroughly accomplished undoubtedly gave him.

In connection with a University degree we have a sublime instance of a deep continuous impression on the mind, which, judged by its fruits, and its whole working, was as truly Providential as anything that was ever experienced. In the year 1785 Dr. Peckard was vice-chancellor of the University of Cambridge. In consequence of his office it devolved upon him to give out two subjects for Latin dissertations—one to the Middle Bachelors, and the other to the Senior Bachelors of Arts. Being stoutly opposed to the slave trade, he gave to the Senior Bachelors

as a subject this question, 'Is it right to make slaves of others against their will?' Thomas Clarkson was one of the Senior Bachelors for that year; and as he had gained the first prize for the best Latin dissertation in the former year, it would have been regarded as a discredit if he had not won the first prize again, so he felt urged to do his best. He set himself to read up on the subject which had been given out. But all his pleasure in the intellectual exercise of preparing his dissertation was damped by the facts which came before him. In the day he was uneasy, and in the night he had little rest. It became with him, not so much a trial for academical reputation as for the production of a treatise which might be useful to injured Africa. He always slept with a candle in his room, that he might rise out of bed, and put down such thoughts as occurred to him in the night if he deemed them valuable, as he conceived that no argument of any moment should be lost in so good a cause. At length he finished his painful task, and forwarded his essay to the vice-chancellor. Soon afterwards he was gratified with the intelligence that he had, as before, won the first prize. According to custom he had to read the essay publicly in the senate-house, and went down to Cambridge for that purpose. The reading over, he had done with the Latin dissertation; but he found that he had not done with the subject of it. On returning to London it almost wholly occupied him. At times he became seriously affected upon the road. Occasionally he dismounted and walked; he tried to persuade himself that the horrible things he had read were not true. Coming in sight of Wades Mill, in Hertfordshire, he sat down disconsolate on the turf by the

roadside, and held his horse. While in this situation *a thought came into his mind*, that if the contents of his essay were true, it was time some person should see these calamities ended. Eventually he resolved to be that person, at the sacrifice of superior prospects in life—he having taken deacon's orders in the Church, and being sure of preferment—and he carried out his resolution with a determination that was probably never surpassed. He travelled thousands of miles in search of facts wherewith to enlighten and arouse the public and the Parliament. He wore down his strength in the holy service he had undertaken. But he gained his object. In 1807, after a twenty years' struggle, the abolition of the slave trade was carried.*

The Society of Friends, commonly called Quakers, have furnished the Church with a chapter on the subject of mental impressions, which makes the marvels of the Bible easier to believe. They have stood for the doctrine of an ever-living spirit in the Church finding voice and vent, not in the decrees of an infallible Pope, or the dogmas of an infallible Council, but in the heart and intellect of every true believer. They cultivate impressions; they utilise impulses. They endeavour to take missionary journeys and to speak to individuals for consolation, or for warning, and to preach and pray in public under a consciousness of Divine prompting. Yet their sagacity and prudence are far above the average level. They try the spirits whether they be of God; they strive, and that too with a success which has commanded general respect, to adjust the

* See Clarkson's History of the Abolition of the African Slave Trade.

scales of faith and works, of impulse and industry to an equilibrium; and while yielding to inspirations which require plain speaking and painful sacrifices, no one can accuse them of neglecting their business, or suffering their household affairs to run into disorder. It is on this account that their testimony to the hand of God in impressions on the mind commands special attention.

George Fox, the founder of the Society of Friends, was a seer of the olden type. The spiritual faculty within him was marvellously developed. When he was at Coventry, in 1646, a young man of twenty-one, as he was walking in a field, on a first-day morning, the Lord opened to him 'that being bred at Oxford or Cambridge was not enough to qualify men to be ministers of Christ.' He grasped that revelation and held it fast. Nor have his people ever lost it. They have continued to despise a ministry of mere professionalism, and a qualification for the preaching of the Gospel that is only intellectual. At the beginning of 1653, he prophesied to two justices who were talking over the public news, that before that day two weeks the Long Parliament, as it was called, would be brought to an end, and the Speaker plucked out of his chair. That very day fortnight, one of those justices brought in word that Oliver had broken up the Parliament by force. When Colonel Hacker determines to send him before the Protector, Fox prays beside him, and warns him that he is acting the part of Pilate—washing his hands of a difficulty; and bids him remember when the day of his misery and trial came. Colonel Hacker was afterwards hanged at Tyburn, and confessed

that the prophecy had troubled him. On the road to Hampton Court to speak with the great Protector about the sufferings of Friends, Fox meets him riding at the head of his Life Guards into Hampton Court Park, but before coming up to him he sees and feels a waft or apparition of death go forth against him, and perceives his look to be that of a dead man, and the next day the Protector is seized with mortal sickness. He has a sight of the King's return a good while before it comes to pass. He has a vision several years before the great fire, in which he sees London lying in heaps. While in Lancaster Jail he has a perfect sense of the sufferings of Friends in New England, as though it had been himself, and as though the halter had been put round his own neck; and soon after he hears of the imprisonment of Friends, and the execution of several in that quarter. When the Turks are overspreading Christendom, he walks his prison chamber in Lancaster Castle, and sees the Lord's power turning against them, and that they are turning back again; and so it proves. Another time, while in the same place, he sees the angel of the Lord with a glittering drawn sword stretched southward, as though the court had been all on fire; and war, pestilence, and fire break out shortly afterwards to the affliction of London. In 1670 he is brought very low physically, loses both sight and hearing, and goes through severe conflicts, in which he is fighting with the evil powers of the world. All this time the persecution of the Nonconformists is at its height. Then he begins in spirit to conquer and to recover his bodily health, and as this process goes on in him, the persecution in the country declines. On a voyage to the West Indies

the ship in which he sails is pursued by a Turkish man-of-war of great size, and a fast sailer. He obtains an assurance that the Lord's life and power are placed between them and their pursuers. They singularly escape, and they hear afterwards of a Sallee man-of-war that had a yacht in chase, and was just upon her, but there was a spirit in her they could not take. He directs the Friends in Barbadoes to deal mildly and gently with their Negroes, and after certain years of servitude to set them free, thus clearly enunciating anti-slavery views nearly two hundred years before the full triumph of the anti-slavery cause. At John Rous's, at Kingston, he has a sight of being taken prisoner; and when at Bray Doily's, in Oxfordshire, sitting at supper, he sees himself taken, and that he has a suffering to undergo, yet he says nothing to any one of it. Next day he goes into Worcestershire, and in the evening, after a meeting, he is arrested and sent as a prisoner to Worcester Jail. In 1688, he is in London, and a great weight comes upon him, and a sight is given him of the great troubles and changes which are impending. His strength departs from him, so that he reels and is ready to fall as he goes along the streets. At last he becomes so weak that he cannot go abroad at all, till he receives an assurance from the Lord that he will preserve his people. The Revolution follows, which drives out James the Second, and brings in William of Orange, but proves highly advantageous to the cause of religious toleration. If George Fox was a fanatic, he was a most admirable fanatic; there was 'method in his madness.'*

Thomas Shillitoe, a ministering Friend, who died in

* Journal of George Fox. Seventh edition. London: 1852.

1836, was originally a banker's clerk, but becoming uncomfortable on account of the lottery tickets which he had to purchase for country correspondents, he earnestly craved Divine direction, and it was declared to his inward ear, he says, as intelligibly as ever words were to his outward ear, that he must be willing to humble himself and learn the trade of a shoemaker. His friends were amazed, but the change proved a happy one, and early in life he was enabled to retire from business on a moderate competency. In 1793, a concern came with great weight upon his mind to pay a visit to King George III. This concern cost him much distress of mind, but at last he yielded to it, and his way opened to an interview with royalty by means of one who was employed about Windsor Castle. He gained His Majesty's attention at the stables, as he was preparing to set out hunting. The interview lasted twenty minutes. The Quaker commenced his address with the words—'Hear, O King,' and as it proceeded tears trickled down George's cheeks, and there was no hunting for him that day. Perhaps no ministering Friend ever trusted more completely than Thomas Shillitoe to the principle of a conscious Divine guidance in things small and great. He endeavoured to follow the inward voice in all his movements, in seeking an interview with particular persons, in addressing pointed words adapted to the state of some unknown individual in the congregation, in determining the routes he should take, and in ordering his temporal affairs. When, for instance, he wishes to gain an interview with the King of Prussia, he takes the list of religious persons in Berlin, supplied to him by a friend, goes slowly over it, and lets his mind

rest on the name to which it is drawn, and through that person he seeks and finds access.*

The life of Peter Bedford is singularly linked with that of Tawell, the Friend, who a few years ago was executed for murder. When Tawell was young, he was taken as a porter into the service of Mr. Hitching, a Friend, a draper, in Whitechapel. He was attentive to his work, and very insinuating in his address, so that he won the confidence of his employer, and soon rose from his subordinate position. He became very assiduous in observing the practices of Friends, yet there were some who were dissatisfied with his religious profession, and felt strongly that there was something wrong beneath all his specious demeanour. Among these was Peter Bedford, who was so impressed with the wickedness of Tawell, though he knew nothing from information or evidence, that he felt an irresistible impulse to go and tell him that he believed he had committed some act that would bring him to the gallows. This was a very serious errand to go upon. Mr. Bedford deliberated seriously about it, but the more he did so the more he felt persuaded that the impulse proceeded from a higher source than his own fancy or imagination. He started for Tawell's house along the City Road, then he hesitated, and after he had gone considerably beyond the turnpike bar, at St. Luke's, he felt so reluctant to deliver his message that he turned back ; but when he reached the bar a second time, he felt so uneasy that he determined to yield to his impression. He was received by Mrs. Tawell very pleasantly, but he intimated that his call was of a pri-

* Journal of the Life, Labours, and Travels of Thomas Shillitoe. London : 1839.

vate nature, and had reference to her husband. When she had withdrawn, he proceeded to address Tawell in a very impressive manner, and at length told him his conviction that he had perpetrated some flagrant deed. Tawell heard him with awe and astonishment, and then confessed that the conviction was correct, but that it was not too late to prevent the final accomplishment of the wrong on which he had entered. *He had in his possession notes forged by himself, but not yet passed.* It may well be imagined that this interview was not one to be forgotten by either of the parties.

Notwithstanding his narrow escape, the infatuated Tawell, at a subsequent period, committed and consummated an act of forgery, for which he was transported. He soon, however, obtained his liberty, established a business in Sydney, saved a considerable sum of money, and was zealous in promoting the religion of the Friends. Having acquired a competency, he returned to England; old friends were pleased to see him, apparently in a changed and satisfactory condition of mind and estate. He wished to live near Mr. Bedford, who had in past years been such a faithful monitor to him. He did not, however, long reside at Croydon, but removed farther into the country; there he committed the crime which brought him to the gallows.

About the time of his committing the atrocious deed for which he suffered, Tawell and his wife one Sunday attended as usual a Friend's meeting; a minister from Yorkshire, a total stranger to Tawell's character, was present that morning; after the customary silent devotion, he arose and delivered an address of extraordinary

solemnity and power. He stated that a feeling had taken possession of his mind, for which he could not account, except on the supposition that there was some one present who was contemplating an act of extreme wickedness and atrocity; and then proceeding in his discourse he expressed his belief, that if his warning voice now raised were not heeded, the unknown individual addressed would never again receive a similar offer of mercy and recall. This circumstance has often been referred to among the Friends; and it is stated that Tawell's wife said to him, after leaving the meeting-house, 'John, what a remarkable sermon that was; why, one would think we had a murderer amongst us.'*

Stephen Grellett was the son of a French nobleman, but, through the troubles of the Revolution, found his way to America. He had imbibed the Infidel sentiments prevailing in his country, but after his emigration he became convinced of the truth of the Gospel, and joined the Society of Friends at Philadelphia in 1796, when he was twenty-three years of age.

In 1797, he removed to New York, and engaged with his brother Joseph in mercantile concerns in that city. Here he heard that John Hall, a Ministering Friend, was coming over from England to the United States, on a religious visit, and the impression was made strongly upon his mind that he must stand prepared to accompany him on his arrival. Soon after he reached New York, Stephen Grellett visited him, and was taken aside and told by him in a solemn manner, that he was the identical person that he had seen whilst at sea, prepared of the Lord to be

* Tallack's Life of Peter Bedford.

his companion. Notwithstanding this double commission, the characteristic prudence of the sect was so strong in him, that he agreed to go only as far as Philadelphia, to see whether it were a right spirit that was influencing him; the experiment only confirmed the previous singular impressions; he returned to New York, obtained his certificate from the monthly meeting, and accompanied Mr. Hall through the rest of his extensive tour. In the course of it they visited the island of Nantucket, and then went on board packet early one morning, with a good wind, to sail for New Bedford; but Grellet was under a heavy weight of mental depression, from the feeling that his work in that island was not done. His distress increased as they proceeded; he entreated God to open a way for him to return, and by degrees the wind changed, then blew vehemently, and became so violent that the Captain said their only safety was to return to port. After having been out some hours they landed again, and Stephen Grellet had the opportunity of completing his service. He relates a still more striking instance of the same kind which happened to Comfort Collins and Sarah Barney, who embarked under a sense of duty to go to England on a religious visit. After they had been out at sea about a week, as they were sitting together in the cabin, in solemn silence before the Lord, Comfort said to Sarah—'The Lord has accepted my free-will offering to his Divine will to go to Europe, and now he releases me from this service; and, as a proof of it, he will bring us back again to the American shores.' They continued a considerable time without exchanging a word with each other; then they heard the Captain speaking

with his trumpet to another ship, and saying that he was under the necessity of returning to port, as his vessel had sprung a leak, a circumstance of which the two Friends were ignorant till that moment.

On sitting down at meeting at William's Port, a long way from New York, Stephen Grellet's mind was brought under an apprehension that the yellow fever had made its appearance in that city; and this language passed through his mind—'One of thy near relations is taken with it.' The impression remained upon him next day, and he pushed for home, though it was not till four days after he first received the impression, that he met the news that the dreaded fever was actually prevailing in New York. The day after getting this intelligence, it seemed to him in meeting, that he was following some of his near relatives to the grave, and before he had yet reached the city he learned that his wife's mother had been seized with the epidemic. She was dead before he arrived, and his wife narrowly escaped.

When Grellett was at Marseilles, in 1813, he wished to go into Italy, but he felt restrained from taking the accustomed route through Mont Cenis. Without going a long distance round, there was no other course, except a very difficult one, over precipitous mountains, by way of Nice. Yet he felt it right to choose the latter apparently impassable road. He afterwards learned that the Minister of Police had sent orders to have him arrested and sent back to Paris. The Prefect of Nismes sent his gendarmes after him to Marseilles; they, finding he had set off for Italy, did not suppose he could have gone by the difficult road; so they hastened along

the highway that led through Chambery and Mont Cenis; but finding he had not passed through Chambery, they returned, and reported that they could not discover where he had gone. After he arrived at Nice, 'he essayed to go into Italy; but the spirit suffered him not.' He was permitted to proceed only as far as Genoa; and there, when he was going to engage his passage by sea to Leghorn, his mind was introduced to unutterable darkness. Before him, his path seemed densely dark; whilst, behind him, it resembled a stream of light. Then came farther instructions—that he should go, indeed, some time, to Rome, Naples, &c.; but that now he must proceed with all speed to Geneva and Switzerland. He obeyed the inner voice, and had hardly quitted Italy, when the retreating armies of Bonaparte began to arrive, closely pursued by the Austrians; and he saw that a delay of a few days would have shut him up within their lines.

While at Port-au-Prince, in 1816, Grellet was seized with severe illness. The physician thought his recovery impossible: his limbs became cold, and he gave directions for his funeral; yet at the time when he was lowest, an old concern for the nations of Europe came forcibly upon him, and these words shot through his mind: 'Thou shalt, indeed, visit those nations: the days of thy earthly race are not yet accomplished.' In the following year, this concern came upon him like a weight, and grew heavier and heavier. Sometimes, he seemed to see a pathway through Norway, and Sweden, and Russia, towards the Crimea, over the Black Sea, into Greece and Italy. Eventually, he set off, and took the very

path that had been indicated. He saw many places, delivered God's word to many people, and was favoured to be the instrument of ameliorating the condition of many sufferers. One young man, a prisoner in Russia, was released at his instance, who had carried chains for eighteen years, for simply threatening to strike his mother. At St. Petersburgh, Grellet had several pleasing interviews with the Emperor Alexander. At Rome, he was permitted to inspect the Inquisition itself, and was favoured with an audience of the Pope. When he went to see his Holiness, the valet de chambre opened the door of the cabinet, and said in Italian—'The Quaker is come;' and the Pope said—'Let him come in.' As he entered, some one behind gently but quickly took off his hat, and, before he could look for it, the door was quietly closed behind him, and he found himself closeted with his Holiness and a priest who was to act as interpreter. He laid before the aged bishop the results of his observations, and urged on him various reforms. Finally, as he felt the fire of love kindle, he particularly addressed him for his spiritual good. The Pope inclined his head, and appeared tender: then rising in a kind and respectful manner, prayed that the Lord would bless and protect him wherever he went.*

The above instances are taken, not from the Acts of the Apostles, written by Inspiration at the close of the first century; but from the memoirs of one who fell asleep within the last twenty years. It is said that the editor suppressed some of the most marvellous things

* Memoirs of the Life and Gospel Labours of Stephen Grellet, edited by Benjamin Seebohm. London: 1862.

which he found in the papers of Stephen Grellet, lest they should provoke scepticism, and injure the spiritual effect which was sought to be produced by the memoir; but enough has been recorded to cast a doubt on the current notion, that the age of supernatural inspiration has ceased.

CHAPTER VIII.

Dreams.

IT is one of the commonest things in the world to dream, and one of the most absurd things in the world to take notice of everything that one does dream. There are millions of people who cannot fall asleep, night or day, without dreaming; they could not take a five minutes' nap in an old arm chair after dinner without dreaming; yet they are compelled to confess that they never dreamed anything which they could suppose to have on it the faintest tinge of the supernatural. They were never warned in a dream of anything that was going to happen; they never saw in a dream anything which they could not explain on the common principles of mental philosophy. This is true; and it is quite as true that millions have traded without making a fortune by trade; that millions have taken voyages, who never crossed the Atlantic in a yacht; that most people know what it is to rise above the ground by means of a staircase or a ladder,

but very few know what it is to soar above it in a balloon; that all have their imaginings, but all do not compose sublime epic poems; and every sane person makes discoveries of importance to himself, but only one here and there discovers anything that is of consequence to science. The words 'uncommon' and 'impossible' are not synonymous. Premonitory and Providential dreams are uncommon, yet who shall say that they are impossible? Their number, compared with the dreams of all descriptions that are dreamed, is small; but their positive number is imposing enough to challenge attention. The storms that sweep over land and sea are few compared with common breezes and halcyon hours; but they are sufficiently numerous to make the law of storms a subject of scientific investigation, and they are sufficiently serious to take a prominent place in the practical calculations of the mariner.

Dreams are known to convey information of something that has already occurred. By a subtler telegraphy than that of the electric wire, a message is conveyed from a distance to the soul of the sleeper. Joseph in a dream learns the purity of Mary, his espoused, and the honour put upon her as mother of Messiah. Again he learns in a dream, while sojourning in Egypt with Mary and the Holy Child, that Herod, who sought to destroy the Child, is dead, and he receives direction to go back to Palestine; once more—he is warned in a dream, after returning, to turn aside into Galilee, instead of taking up his abode in Judea, under the sway of Archelaus, who was as little to be trusted as Herod, his cruel sire.

Many of the strange things of Scripture would cease to be strange to us if we were only a little more conversant

with the life of our own time. Take as an instance, the dream which Joseph the carpenter had in Egypt. That he should learn in sleep a death which had just occurred so far away as Judea; that he should see without eyes, and hear without ears, a being not in the flesh, is pronounced most strange. It is conveniently dubbed miraculous, and declared doubtful because miraculous; it is imagined that nothing of the kind occurs at present. Then intelligent persons must undergo strange delusions at present. A gentleman of our acquaintance, Mr. M——, of D——, who is actively engaged in commercial pursuits, had a brother called Titus, who lived in Michigan, U.S., and who, for aught he knew, was in perfect health. One night, while lying, as it were, half asleep and half awake, this brother seemed to come hastily into his bedroom, dressed for a journey, waved his hand, said 'Good bye, C——, I'm just going,' and disappeared. This vision made so deep an impression on his mind, that he related it to Mrs. M—— in the morning, and requested her to make a memorandum of the time when it occurred, for, said he to her, 'depend upon it something has happened to Titus.' Word came shortly after that Titus died that very night after a brief illness. Allowance was made for the difference of the clocks between England and Michigan, and as near as could be made out it was the very hour and minute of Titus's death when Mr. M—— had the dream or vision of his farewell.

A lady of our acquaintance, Mrs. L——, of D——, had a curious experience of the same nature. She was ill at the time, and residing at a distance of ten miles from her parents, who lived at S——. Her father had long been

ailing, but there was no apprehension of his speedy decease. Early one morning she woke up, and said, 'O nurse, my father has just died; I've seen him.' The nurse tried to persuade her that it was only a dream, but Mrs. L—— insisted that it was no mere dream; that whether asleep or awake at the time did not matter—she had seen her father; that he stood by her bedside dressed, but with the ghastly face of death, looked direct at her, then fell back, and expired. The nurse looked at the clock, and found it was two a.m. When Mr. L—— entered the room somewhere about seven o'clock in the morning, he began to tell his wife that a lad had just arrived from S—— with a letter, to say that her father was worse, and he proposed to go over to see him; whereupon she said it was no use his saying he was worse, for she knew he was dead. He then confessed that the letter stated her father had died at two o'clock that morning. It was Sunday, and the last thing he had said, was a wish that his two daughters, who were residing at a distance, had been with them at S——, that they might all spend one more Sabbath together on earth.

Dr. William Thompson was minister of Middle Perth church, and his brother, Dr. Andrew Thompson, was minister of East Perth at the same time. Andrew afterwards removed to Edinburgh, and became minister of St. George's, and leader of the Evangelical party in the Church of Scotland. He was a man of vast energy and great logical power, and remained leader of his party until his death, when he was succeeded by Chalmers. Dr. William remained in his church at Perth, and lived till he was ninety. Andrew was at a stirring debate of

Presbytery one night, and grew excited, which was for him a dangerous thing, as he had disease of the heart. He went home, reached his own door, and rang the bell, then dropped down and expired, and was found lifeless when the servant opened the door. The same night, William, at Perth, dreamed that he saw Andrew's sudden death, at Edinburgh, and was led from his dream to look out for the letter which arrived two mornings afterwards, informing him of the solemn event. This incident was related to us by a minister who had an aunt and two cousins that attended on Dr. William's ministry, and had heard the circumstances from his own lips.

If the deaths of individuals are made known to dreamers now-a-days (and we could continue extracts of the very same kind from our note-book), is it to be wondered at that the death of Herod the Great should be announced in a dream to Joseph, when the object was the preservation of the life of the infant Saviour? A little widening of our inquiries would curiously reverse our temptation. We should be tempted to scepticism, not because these things were so rare, but because they were so frequent. The great works of God, such as the rising and setting of the sun, lose their effect on thoughtless minds, because they are often repeated; and they are apt, in the process of generalization into law, to be turned into a thick veil which hides the Legislator.

One more instance shall be given of the class of dreams which reveal some past or present event—dreams of simple information. We quote this instance from Dr.

Bushnell,* and the Providence of it will be apparent, because the information conveyed by the dream became the ground of benevolent action on the part of the dreamer.

'As I sat by the fire, one stormy November night, in a hotel parlour in the Napa Valley of California, there came in a most venerable and benignant-looking person, with his wife, taking their seats in the circle. The stranger, as I afterwards learned, was Captain Yonnt, a man who came over into California, as a trapper, more than forty years ago. Here he has lived, apart from the great world and its questions, acquiring an immense landed estate, and becoming a kind of acknowledged patriarch in the country. His tall, manly person, and his gracious, paternal look, as totally unsophisticated in the expression as if he had never heard of a philosophic doubt or question in his life, marked him as the true patriarch. The conversation turned, I know not how, on spiritism and the modern necromancy; and he discovered a degree of inclination to believe in the reported mysteries. His wife, a much younger and apparently Christian person, intimated that, probably, he was predisposed to this kind of faith by a very peculiar experience of his own, and evidently desired that he might be drawn out by some intelligent discussion of his queries.

'At my request, he gave me his story. About six or seven years previous, in a mid-winter's night, he had a dream, in which he saw what appeared to be a company of emigrants arrested by the snows of the mountains, and perishing rapidly by cold and hunger. He noted

* Nature and the Supernatural, c. 14.

the very cast of the scenery, marked by a huge perpendicular front of white rock cliff: he saw the men cutting off what appeared to be tree tops, rising out of deep gulfs of snow: he distinguished the very features of the persons, and the look of their particular distress. He woke profoundly impressed with the distinctness and apparent reality of his dream. At length he fell asleep, and dreamed exactly the same dream again. In the morning he could not expel it from his mind. Falling in shortly with an old hunter comrade, he told him the story, and was only the more deeply impressed by his recognizing, without hesitation, the scenery of the dream. This comrade came over the Sierra by the Carson Valley Pass, and declared that a spot in the pass answered exactly to his description. By this the unsophisticated patriarch was decided. He immediately collected a company of men, with mules and blankets, and all necessary provisions. The neighbours were laughing, in the mean time, at his credulity. "No matter," said he; "I am able to do this, and I will; for I verily believe that the fact is according to my dream." The men were sent into the mountains, one hundred and fifty miles distant, directly to the Carson Valley Pass; and there they found the company in exactly the condition of the dream, and brought in the remnant alive.

'A gentleman present said, "You need have no doubt of this, for we Californians all know the facts, and the names of the families brought in, who now look upon our venerable friend as a kind of saviour." These names he gave, and the places where they reside, and I found afterwards that the California people were ready everywhere to second his testimony.

'Nothing could be more natural than for the good-hearted patriarch himself to add, that the brightest thing in his life, and that which gave him greatest joy, was his simple faith in that dream. I thought, also, I could see in that joy the glimmer of a true Christian love and life, into which, unawares to himself, he had really been entered by that faith. Let anyone attempt now to account for the coincidences of that dream by mere natural causalities, and he will be glad enough to ease his labour by the acknowledgment of a supernatural Providence.'

Dreams of *prescience* are much more remarkable than dreams of simple information. They involve two impossibilities—the knowledge of events without any natural means of information and *foreknowledge*, which is a power not given to mortals. The only way in which we are able to anticipate the future is to take the causes which we see to be in operation at present, and to deduce from them a result on the theory of probabilities. But we have to perform this process under reserve. We are aware that in our ignorance we may have neglected some factor that essentially belongs to the sum, and is necessary to the correctness of the resultant. There are causes now in operation of which we are unaware; and unexpected combinations of circumstances may arise hereafter. Our best calculations may be upset by some unforeseen contingency. There will be fresh births of causes from the prolific will of the innumerable beings that tenant the universe, and from the mind of the Supreme, which may entirely change the aspect of affairs from what it appears to-day. To calculate the future is to play a game at chess

against God and all His works. We are helpless in His hands. We cannot anticipate the evolutions of the game.

Yet in sleep, this daring, this impossible feat is sometimes performed. That which the most sagacious intellect cannot see in its brightest waking hours, is seen with an accuracy that reaches down to minute detail, by persons of ordinary capacity when lying unconscious, their mind the sport of wild and wayward fancies. He who dreams in his sleep is akin, for the time being, to a madman. He links together the most incongruous ideas, without questioning the propriety of their sequence. He finds himself ten thousand miles away from home, and never asks how he came thither, nor thinks the circumstance suspicious. The beggar suddenly grows a millionaire; the mean man a king; the mild man fights; the honest man steals in sleep. The spirit wanders through a world of chaos, and sees towering height and lowly vale, land and water, fields and houses, in rapid succession; sees hosts of faces flit by—strange, familiar; lovely, hideous. Footsteps come and go; confused voices are heard speaking lowly, whispering softly. Now on board ship, far out at sea, winds whistle among the cordage; sails flap, timbers creak, the waves sob and prattle, and the sailor's deep voice answers the captain, 'Ay, ay, sir'; and now in the baronial hall, far inland, the lights burn bright, the guests are assembled, music resounds, and the merry dance goes on, when—suddenly the man awakes, and in a moment all is hushed and gone; the honest morning light is streaming through the window, revealing the homely furniture of the bedroom, and a hard day's work has to be done. There is a sudden, and it may be a painful, change of scene, but it has this ad-

vantage, that whereas all was fiction before, all is reality now. This is the ordinary character of dreams, and if they ever foretell the future it must be a repetition of the miracle of the dumb ass speaking with man's voice, and forbidding the madness of the prophet.

Dreams of prescience are of value to the student of Providence, because they demonstrate the existence of foresight, and of foresight Providence is etymologically shown to consist. In very many instances they reveal the sympathy of a higher power, as well as simple foresight. They give directions what to do; they warn of impending dangers; they carry us a step nearer than our ordinary experience to the wise and benevolent Father of all, who sees the end from the beginning, and has this reserve force at His command, to accomplish special purposes that stand up as a rock of refuge amid the sweeping waters of some more general law.

Joseph, while yet a lad at home, saw in the metaphorical scenes of two dreams his future ascendancy over his brethren and his father. He dreamed that he and his brethren were binding sheaves in the harvest-field, when his sheaf, as if it had been endued with life, stood upright, and the sheaves of his brethren took their stations in a circle round it, and made the salaam of obeisance. He dreamed again, and it seemed to him that the sun, the moon, and eleven of the great constellations of the stars, revolved around his constellation, the twelfth. By a dream in prison it was signified to the chief butler that in three days he would be restored to his old position of cupbearer to the king; and by a dream the same night, in the same place, it was signified to the chief baker

that in three days he would be hanged. Pharaoh saw the seven years of plenty that were to be followed by seven years of famine in two different dreams; in one of which seven lean kine devoured seven that were fat, and in the other seven blasted ears of corn swallowed seven that were rank and full. Nebuchadnezzar in a dream beheld the four universal monarchies that were to be succeeded by the Kingdom of Christ; in a dream, too, he was warned of his approaching insanity. Joseph, the husband of Mary, was warned in a dream of Herod's fell purpose to murder the Holy Child; and Pilate's wife in a dream the night before the Crucifixion, 'suffered many things' on account of the Defendant in the great trial then impending, from which she took occasion to advise her husband to have 'nothing to do with that Just Person.' These instances go to show that the premonitory revelations of sleep are not confined to any one class or nation.

When Stephen Grellett was travelling in Russia, the Countess Toutschkoff related to him a remarkable instance of premonition in sleep of which she had been the subject, and which had produced upon her mind a happy spiritual effect. Her husband was a General in the Russian army, and three months before Napoleon's invasion, while they were staying on their estate near Toula, she dreamed that she was at an inn in a town that was strange to her; that her father came into her chamber, having her only son by the hand, and said to her in a tone of great sadness—'All thy comforts are cut off; he has fallen (meaning her husband), he has fallen at Borodino.' She woke in a state of distress, but knowing that her husband was safe beside her, she considered it was only a dream, and com-

posed herself to sleep. The dream was repeated, and attended by such an increase of distress, that it was long before she could get over it, and fall asleep again. At last she succeeded, and she dreamed the same ugly dream for the third time. On this her anguish of mind was such that she awoke her husband, and enquired—'Where is Borodino?' and related to him her dream. He could not tell her where Borodino was; and though she and her husband and her father searched the maps of Russia with the greatest care, they could not discover any such place. At that time the seat of war was far off, but it soon drew near. The General Toutschkoff, her husband, was placed at the head of the army of reserve; and one morning her father, leading her little son by the hand, entered the chamber of the inn at which she was staying, and cried out in great distress—just as she had seen and heard him in her dream—'He has fallen; he has fallen at Borodino.' Then she saw herself in the very same chamber, and through the windows perceived the very same objects that she had seen in her threefold dream. Her husband was one of the many who perished in the bloody battle fought near the river Borodino, from which an obscure village takes its name. The Countess was convinced, by her strange experience, that there is a sensible influence of the Divine Spirit; she endeavoured to attend to it, and one thing after another was unfolded to her of 'the deep things of God.'*

Some fourteen or fifteen years ago, Mr. J. O. Chapman and Mr. John Green, both of Cleethorpes, being Primitive Methodist Local Preachers, were planned one Sunday to

* Memoirs of Stephen Grellet.

preach at two and six o'clock at Wold-Newton, which was then included in the Grimsby circuit. We give the following circumstances, which transpired in connection with this appointment, in the words of Mr. Chapman. He related them to us several years ago, but, at our request, the Rev. C. Ross recently spoke to him afresh upon the subject, took down the narrative from his own lips, and read over to him what he had written. The narrative is as follows :—

'On the Saturday night previous to going to preach, I went to bed and dreamed I saw a poor afflicted man, in want of bread, standing at the four cross lanes in Waltham, going out to Wold-Newton, and that I was to relieve him with a pound. I awoke and thought it a strange dream. I fell asleep again, and dreamed a second time that I saw the man still standing there, and that I was to give him a pound. I awoke, and fell asleep, and dreamed a third time the same thing. When I awoke the third time, I said to myself—"Well, my Lord, if it be Thy will that I should give this man a pound, I will do so, if it be the last pound I have in the world, if the man be there in the morning when I go to my appointment." There could be no mistake; I saw the man, his dress and features, distinctly. In the morning, before going to my appointment, I told my wife to go and fetch me a pound. Being Sunday, she asked me what I wanted with a sovereign. I did not tell her then, but promised to tell her when I came from my appointment. She then fetched me the pound.

'I then yoked my own trap, called of my companion, and we started on our journey. When we came within

a mile of the cross lanes, I said to my companion—When we get to the cross lanes there will be a poor afflicted man standing there, in want of bread, and I shall give him a pound. I then told him why I should do so; that I last night dreamed three times that I should see this man standing there, and I was to give him a pound. My companion said—"If there be such a man as you describe when we get to the place, I will give him all I have with me, which is two-shillings-and-sixpence." As we neared the place, I wondered if the man would be there. But, to my great astonishment, when turning the corner where we could see him, there was the very man standing whom I had seen in my dream. When we reached him, I pulled up and asked him what he was doing there? He said he had come out to get away from his wife and children, for they were crying for bread, and he had nothing to give them. I then put the pound into his hand, and my companion gave him his two-shillings-and-sixpence. The poor man was overjoyed and said—"There, I have now got as much as will last me my life," and in a few days—I think the very same week—he died. I did not know the man then, but afterwards found it was Brother R. Collinson, of Waltham, then a Primitive Methodist Local Preacher. He had been ill for a long time, and his affliction had reduced him to abject poverty.'

For minuteness of detail, the most remarkable dream we remember to have heard, is one that once occurred to the Rev. Moses Lupton, Primitive Methodist Minister. Mr. L., who has seen long and arduous service, and occupied various positions of trust, in that Connexion, with unblemished reputation, and is, we may observe,

more fitted, by the constitution of his mind, for a lawyer, than for a poet or mere dreamer, has, at our request, supplied us in writing with the following account of this remarkable dream :—

'By the District Meeting (Hull District) of 1833, I was re-stationed for the Malton Circuit, with the late Rev. T. Batty. I was then Superintendent of the Lincoln Circuit; and, up to a few days before the change, Mrs. Lupton and myself were full of anticipation of the pleasures we should enjoy among our old friends, on being so much nearer home. But some days before we got the news of our destination, one night—I cannot now give the date; but it was during the sittings of the Conference—I had a dream; and, next morning I said to my wife—"We shall not go to Malton, as we expect; but to some large town: I do not know its name; but it is a very large town. The house we shall occupy is up a flight of stairs, three storeys high. We shall have three rooms on one level: the first—the kitchen—will have a closed bed in the right corner, a large wooden box in another corner, and the window will look down upon a small grass plot. The room adjoining will be the best room: it will have a dark carpet, with six hair-seated mahogany chairs. The other will be a small bed-room. We shall not worship in a chapel, but in a large hall, which will be formed like a gallery. There will be a pulpit in it, and a large circular table before it. The entrance to it will be by a flight of stairs, like those in a church tower. After we have ascended so far, the stairs will divide; one way leading up to the left, to the top of the place. This will be

the principal entrance, and it leads to the top of the gallery, which is entered by a door covered with green baize, fastened with brass nails. The other stairs lead to the floor of the place; and, between the door and the hall, on the right-hand side, in a corner, is a little room or vestry: in that vestry there will be three men accustomed to meet, that will cause us much trouble; but I shall know them as soon as ever I see them, and we shall ultimately overcome them, and do well."

'By reason of some mishap or misadventure, the letter from Conference was delayed so that only some week or ten days prior to the change I got a letter that informed me my station was Glasgow. You may judge our surprise and great disappointment; however, after much pain of mind, and much fatigue of body and expense (for there were no railways then, and coaching was coaching in those days), we arrived at No. 6, Rotton Row, Glasgow, on the Saturday, about half-past three. To our surprise we found the entrance to our house up a flight of stairs (called in Scotland *turnpike stairs*), such as I saw in my dream. The house was three-storeys high also, and when we entered the kitchen door, lo, there was the closed bed, and there the box (in Scotland called a *bunker*). I said to Mrs. Lupton—look out of the window, and she said—here is the plot of grass. I then said—look into the other rooms, and she replied—Yes, they are as you said. My colleague, Mr. J. Johnson, said—We preach in the Mechanics' Institution Hall, North Hanover Street, George Street, and you will have to preach there in the morning. Well, morning came; and, accompanied by Mr. Johnson, I found the place. The entrance was as I had seen in my dream. But we

entered the hall by the right; there was the little room in the corner. We entered it, and one of the men I had seen in my dream, J. M'M——, was standing in it. We next entered the hall; there was the pulpit and the circular table before it. The hall was galleried to the top; and, lo, the entrance door at the top was covered with green baize and brass nails. Only one man was seated, J. P——; he was another of the men I saw in my dream. I did not wait long before J. Y——, the other man entered. My dream was thus so far fulfilled. Well, we soon had very large, overflowing congregations. The three men above-named got into loose, dissipated habits; and, intriguing for some months, caused us very much trouble, seeking, in conjunction with my colleague, to form a division and make a party and church for him. But, by God's help, their schemes were frustrated, and I left the station in a healthy and prosperous state.'

Warnings of impending danger are conveyed by dreams. In some instances the warning is heeded, and life is preserved; in other instances, the warning is neglected if not despised, and destruction is the consequence. The dreamer is not always the subject of the danger. Very frequently it is some friend or acquaintance, or even an entire stranger. Various considerations would suggest that there is some faculty or fitness of temperament in the person who dreams prophetically, which determines the selection of him as the recipient of the prophecy. Dr. Abercrombie, in his work on the 'Intellectual Powers,' says—

'Many years ago there was mentioned in several of the newspapers a dream which gave notice of the murder of

Mr. Perceval. Through the kindness of an eminent medical friend in England, I have received the authentic particulars of this remarkable case from the gentleman to whom the dream occurred. He resides in Cornwall, and eight days before the murder was committed, dreamed that he was in the lobby of the House of Commons, and saw a small man enter, dressed in a blue coat and white waistcoat. Immediately after he saw a man dressed in a brown coat, with yellow basket metal buttons, draw a pistol from under his coat, and discharge it at the former, who instantly fell. The blood issued from a wound a little below the left breast. He saw the murderer seized by some gentlemen who were present, and observed his countenance; and on asking who the gentleman was that had been shot, he was told it was the Chancellor (Mr. Perceval was at the time Chancellor of the Exchequer). He then awoke, and mentioned the dream to his wife, who made light of it; but in the course of the night the dream occurred three times without the slightest variation in any of the circumstances. He was now so much impressed by it that he felt much inclined to give notice to Mr. Perceval, but was dissuaded by some friends whom he consulted, who assured him he would only get himself treated as a fanatic. On the evening of the eighth day after he received the account of the murder. Being in London a short time after, he found in the print shops a representation of the scene, and recognised in it the countenances and dress of the parties, the blood on Mr. Perceval's waistcoat, and the peculiar yellow basket buttons on Bellingham's coat, precisely as he had seen them in his dream.' Well may Dr. Abercrombie remark, in introducing this strange narrative, that

there are dreams which do not admit of explanation on any principles which we are able to trace.

A correspondent of the 'Methodist Magazine' for October, 1806, calls attention to an unheeded warning by dream, of which he had recently read in a respectable publication, to the following effect:—'On Wednesday, three lads were returning from school at Chester; and passing the dam of a fishpond, one of them observed that, two nights ago, he dreamed that he fell into the pool on the place on which he then stood, and was drowned. He had scarcely uttered the words, when his foot slipped. He fell in, and rose no more.'

Mr. K——, store keeper, at S——, an upright and devout man, with whom we are well acquainted, dreamed one night, when a boy at sea, that the mate fell from the masthead and was killed. In the morning he told the mate his dream, who replied, 'Out boy, you're always dreaming.' But before the day was over the dream was strictly fulfilled.

'Blackwood's Magazine' for 1826, contains the following letter:—

'Being in company, the other day, when the conversation turned upon dreams, I related one, which, as it happened to my own father, I can answer for the perfect truth of it.

'About the year 1731, my father, Joseph D'Acre, Esq., of Kirklinton, in the county of Cumberland, came to Edinburgh, to attend the classes, having the advantage of an uncle in the regiment, then in the castle, and remained under the protection of his uncle and aunt, Major and Mrs. Griffiths, during the winter. When spring

arrived, Mr. D'Acre and three or four young gentlemen from England (his associates), made parties to visit all the neighbouring places about Edinburgh: Roslin, Arthur's seat, Craigmillan, &c.

'Coming home, one evening, from some of these places, Mr. D'Acre said, "We have made a party to go a-fishing to Inchkeith, to-morrow, if the morning is fine; and have bespoke our boat; we shall be off at six."

'No objection being made, they separated for the night.

'Mrs. Griffiths had not been long asleep, when she screamed out, in the most violent, agitated manner—"The boat is sinking: save, oh, save them."

'The Major awakened her, and said—"Were you uneasy about the fishing party?"

'"Oh, no;" she said, "I had not once thought of it."

'She then composed herself, and soon fell asleep again. In about another hour, she cried out, in a dreadful fright—"I see the boat is going down."

'The Major again awoke her, and she said—"It has been owing to the other dream I had; for I feel no uneasiness about it."

'After some conversation, they both fell sound asleep; but no rest could be obtained for her. In the most extreme agony, she again screamed—"They are gone! The boat is sunk!"

'When the Major awakened her, she said—"Now, I cannot rest; Mr. D'Acre must not go; for I feel should he go, I should be miserable till his return. The thoughts of it would almost kill me."

'She instantly arose, threw on her wrapping gown,

went to his bed-side (for his room was next their own) and, with great difficulty, she got his promise to remain at home.

'"But what am I to say to my young friends whom I was to meet at Leith, at six o'clock?"

'"With great truth you may say, your aunt is ill; for I am so at present. Consider, you are an only son, under our protection; and should anything happen to you, it would be my death."

'Mr. D'Acre immediately wrote a note to his friends, saying he was prevented joining them; and sent his servant with it to Leith. The morning came in most beautifully, and continued so till three o'clock, when a violent storm arose; and, in an instant, the boat and all that were in it went to the bottom, and were never more heard of; nor was any part of it ever seen.

'I have often heard the story from my father, who always added—"It has not made me superstitious; but with awful gratitude, I never can forget my life, by Providence, was saved by a dream."'

In Chambers' 'Book of Days,' vol. II., p. 188, the writer of the above letter is identified as Lady Clerk, of Penicuick, whose maiden name was Mary D'Acre.

The highest style of prophecy does not deal in dates and localities, and the minutiæ of coming events. It sees without those two eyes called chronology and geography. It utters forth eternal truths; it deals in grand generalisations. It sums up many events under one characteristic feature; its utterances are more akin to prayer and preaching than to the talk of a teller of fortunes. There are dreams which reach this highest

style of prophecy, and are rich in religious instruction. Such was the dream of Linnæus when the death of the successive generations of plants was explained to him; such was the dream of Madame Guion when she saw depicted the deep serenity of a soul that dwelt in God; such was the dream of Major-General Burn, who learned the straitness of the entrance into the Kingdom of God by the difficulty with which he forced his way into church at the time of communion; such also the double dream of John Huss, of Bohemia, who one day saw the images of Jesus Christ on the walls of his oratory obliterated by the Pope and the Bishops, and the next day saw several painters at work restoring the images in greater number and with increased brilliancy; and such once more was the beautiful dream of Dr. Doddridge, a little while before his death, one night after a conversation with Dr. Watts on the future state, when his spirit seemed to come forth out of his body, and to be escorted by a bright being to the heavenly world, where he had an ecstatic interview with the Lord, by whom he was told that he must return to the earth for a short season.

'God speaketh once, yea, twice, yet man perceiveth it not. In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men in slumberings upon the bed; then He openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction; that He may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man; He keepeth back his soul from the pit, and his life from perishing.'

CONCLUSION.

The Pillar of Cloud and of Fire.

"And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light; to go by day and night. He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night from before the people."—*Ex.* xiii. 21, 22.

WHEN a party of pilgrims is crossing one of those immense deserts which are found in the East, each individual has to take care that he does not get separated from his companions. If once he lose sight of the caravan he may give himself up for lost. The sandy waste is as trackless as the watery deep. There is no human habitation at hand, where the wanderer can obtain direction, and no supplies of food on which he may subsist till he recover the right way. It is death to wander. Strange stories, that make the skin creep upon the listener's back, are told by the Arabs, as they sit at

nights around their tent fires, of supernatural beings assuming the forms of friends, and by that means luring the deluded pilgrim out of sight of the camp, and then disappearing, and leaving him to his fate. These stories have been produced by fervid imaginations acting upon a real danger, and upon many a sad instance of wandering, and of destruction in consequence, that has been known to happen. To provide against this danger in large parties of pilgrims—such as that of the annual pilgrimage of the Mohammedans to Mecca—a simple expedient is adopted. At the head of the caravan where the guides are, there is a fire carried aloft in sight of all the host. Burning coals are placed in a fire-grate, fastened on the head of a long pole or cresset. By day, when the light of a glowing sun makes any artificial fire ineffectual, and almost invisible, this way-mark is seen by means of the smoke which the burning coals emit; and at night when the cloud of smoke is hidden by the thicker cloud of darkness that envelopes the earth, the yellow flames and red embers of the cresset-fire come into view, for fire is best seen at night, when even a little candle throws its beams across wide acres.

When Israel quitted Egypt and entered on their great desert journey, they too needed some effective signal to lead the way, and to keep them together. The vast dimensions of the camp required that the signal should be lifted high, and that it should be conspicuous from afar, so that stragglers on the outskirts should be able to see it at a glance, just as men from all points of the horizon look up and see the moon when she is hanging in their heaven. Furthermore, as the leaders themselves required to be led, and knew no more than children the way that

they should take from day to day; as Jehovah had constituted himself the Guide of the timid, fleeing host, it was necessary that He should indicate by some infallible means the route to be followed. Both these ends were secured by one device. The right way was shown, and the horde of runaway slaves, with their wives and children, was kept together by means of a beautiful phenomenon, miraculously produced, which was like the ordinary expedient of the caravan, exhibited on a grander scale. He who has all the elements of nature at His command, and has, besides, the requisite skill to combine them in endless ways and proportions, so as to bring out all their capabilities; who also presides with equal authority over realms of being whose borders the adventurous foot of science has never yet crossed, He could be at no loss to produce this continuous appearance. And so by day upcurling wreaths of cloudy vapour, as of smoke, proclaimed the vanguard of the host; and at night the proclamation was continued with increased effect by a bright column of flame, which shot its triumphant rays through the darkness on every enquiring eye within an extensive radius. This pillar of alternate cloud and fire first appeared soon after they had quitted 'the house of bondage,' and it was never withdrawn through all the marchings and countermarchings of their great wilderness journey, till they reached the precincts of the Promised Land, where it was no longer needed. While it continued with them it was their absolute guide. When it rested, they rested; when it moved, they moved. Whether it rested for a whole year, or only for a single night, their stay was of the same duration, and they followed whithersoever it led the way—east or west, north

or south—the way they most desired to go, or the route they specially wished to avoid.

Many will say—Ah, how nice it must have been for the Israelites to have had their movements absolutely settled for them by God, and clearly indicated by a visible token, which they could see for themselves at any moment, day or night. We should like to have something of the sort done for us: it would save us much anxiety, and prevent many a mistake. We should like well, for instance, to find, on rising in the morning, a paper laid on our table by an angel's hand; blank if the day were to be quite uneventful—if no fresh tactics on our part would be required; but containing a written intimation of any great change, or any important event that was about to happen, and giving us brief but positive instructions when to abandon some old position; when, also, to attempt some new thing in business, and when to form some fresh arrangement in social life. This would save us a great deal of thought and anxiety. It would preclude many a disaster: travelling would become quite safe: no fear of our taking passage by a ship that was destined to go down with all hands on board: no danger of our booking by some ill-fated train, that would rush with us over the parapet of the bridge into the river. The snares of the wicked would be seen before they were set: the black man, dressed as an angel of light, would find us on our guard: the advent of the thief and the visit of the impostor would be duly telegraphed before their arrival. Marriage would be no lottery: speculation no game at chance. We should tarry in safety, and travel with advantage.

Advantage! Yes, just such advantage as we should have, if we were to be deprived of eyes and ears, and led about by the hand of our guardian angel. No doubt he would keep us out of danger, but it would be at the cost of our manhood; our mental and moral growth would be stunted; our powers would never attain to their proper development; we should be children all our days. God's plan is better, which makes us co-workers with Himself; providing us with organs for seeing and hearing; and sending the informing light and sound; and then leaving us responsible for the proper interpretation, and the right use of the impressions produced. In regard to the conduct of life, it is true, we have no card of written instructions laid, by an angel's hand, upon our dressing table every morning; nor have we a pillar of cloud and of fire to go before us, as Israel had in the wilderness; but we have something far better —the Providence of Almighty God—Providence which never slumbers; but watches over us every moment: Providence, which, while it is truly Divine, works through our human powers, and trains our spiritual faculties to a nicer discernment, and to a freer, fuller obedience. The former dispensation was a time of moral childhood. It has passed away; and its visible signs have been laid aside for spiritual realities. The High Priests have been permanently succeeded by the Lord Jesus, the sacrifices by the atonement of the Cross, Israel by the Christian Church, the priesthood by all true believers, and the pillar of cloud and of fire by Providence, which, in the increase of truth, and of the influence of the Holy Spirit, under this economy, has obtained fuller

scope than it had before, for the elevation, both of individuals and of communities.

I. Our pillar of cloud and of fire consists—First, of eternal principles of truth and righteousness which have been ascertained and made known to us.

A young child that does not yet know the danger of fire, has to be watched continually, when he comes near it, and prevented from burning himself by the special interposition of his seniors. This interposition has to be repeated every time that he comes nigh the fire. But when he has learned—perhaps by painful experience—that fire burns, this knowledge will serve as a guide and a protector to him as long as he lives; it will determine his conduct on innumerable occasions, and keep him always at a respectful distance from the destroyer. Knowledge both guides and guards.

There are elements which are more destructive than fire. There are evils which ought to be shunned with greater care. It is the will of God that we should keep ourselves free from them. The first thought and care of Providence is, that all the arrangements pertaining to our lot should be made in harmony with righteous laws. These should give a general shape to our household affairs; to our business transactions; to all our enterprises and pursuits; to our life, from childhood onwards to the end.

One good principle clearly ascertained is a key that will turn the wards of many a difficult question. Take as an instance the great rule of truth, which is enjoined at once by reason and by revelation, and confirmed by

all experience. When we have learned that it is our duty always and everywhere to speak the truth, that it is the will of God, not to be violated without incurring His painful displeasure, we have seen something of the pillar of cloud and of fire—we have ascertained a principle which is to determine our course on thousands of occasions. There will be times when in deference to this principle we shall have to keep our lips closed; there will be many other times when it will compel us to say less or to say more than we should like to say if we consulted our pleasure at the moment. There are many who live by falsehood; many who try to lick themselves clean by a lying tongue if there be but a speck of dirt on them; many who achieve success by trickery and fraudulent device; many who minister in Churches, from which they would have to retire if they were true to their convictions; many whose life is a sham, a 'walking in a vain show,' a putting on of appearances which are not in accordance with the reality. These are not led by the pillar of cloud and of fire, nor can they justly plead Providence as their guide.

What has now been said of the great law of truth is applicable to every good principle, whether it pertains to the body or to the soul. Every law of truth and righteousness, when it is made known to us—and it will be found that Providence has a great deal to do with the discovery of it to our minds—comes to us as a message from God, as an expression of His will, and as a trustworthy guide to conduct.

II. The pillar of cloud and of fire is seen, secondly, in outward circumstances.

At our birth we wake up into being at the voice of God; we find ourselves in a home which our hands did not help to build, and subject to conditions which were fixed without our choice being consulted in the matter. The direction of our affections and of our activities is to a great extent determined by the question, Who are our relatives according to the flesh? and this question again is settled for us by a Providence over which we have no control. Right through life our way is hedged about by circumstances which are the result of ten thousand times ten thousand causes, that have been in operation outside the sphere of our individual will. These circumstances we cannot wisely disregard. They indicate to us, times without number, as distinctly as the shadow on the dial plate shows the time of the day, what is the proper thing for us to do, what the right course for us to take. There are numerous instances where, as we consider what we shall do, we clearly perceive that it is no question of right or wrong, of truth or error, but simply of expediency, what is best under the circumstances. And there is much more teaching, there is much more guidance in circumstances, than we are apt to imagine. The hand of God is in them, pointing out our way. They are guide-posts on our journey. We are apt to look far off to impossible conditions and to circumstances that are not in existence. These we vainly strive after: we try by violent acts of conjuring to fetch them up from the abyss. Whereas, if we were wise, we should look to our immediate surroundings as the best expounders of our duty. We should

look down to our feet, and not up to the clouds, for the causeway.

We complain of circumstances, but they have far more cause to complain of us. They are elastic, and we do not stretch them to the extent that they will bear. We fall beneath our privileges. We are unequal to our position. Where is the man who makes a full use of the advantages which he possesses? Who is he that works up and turns to the very best account the rude materials that lie scattered on the ground close to him, and ready to his hand? He who cries out against the straitness of Providence by which he is cooped up, and sighs for progress, let him examine, and he will see some little door, some hole in the wall, some gap in the hedge, by which he may gain more elbow room. David's harp, well played, introduces him to court; his sling, skilfully handled, though charged with only a pebble from the brook, gives him the victory over the proud Philistine. He who complains that he has nothing to do in the church; he who wishes to be useful to his fellow-men, but sees no opportunity, let him lower his ambition to the level of his circumstances; let him accept the humble service which is offered him, and one duty faithfully performed, will lead up to another, until he has to confess that his hands are full enough, and that the work to be done transcends his time and strength.

Every day comes to us as a revelation from God. It tells us our present duty; and if we would be content with that intimation, and not trouble ourselves about to-morrow, we should be saved incalculable misery. To live a day at

once is the dictate of reason, and it is the precept of the Master. Every one must confess that he who should carry out this precept would be a much happier man for it, and that he would also accomplish a great deal more work. Whatever is necessary to be done to-day by way of simple preparation for to-morrow, let it be cheerfully done as a proper part of to-day's task; but to add anxiety to it, and expend a large portion of the energy needed for to-day, over the troubles of to-morrow, which may never come, is a foolish and criminal waste.

III. Thirdly, the pillar of cloud and of fire takes the form of inward impressions.

It is the distinguishing doctrine of the New Testament that the mind of God is brought into living and loving contact with the minds of His people; and there is surely nothing that can be imagined which is likely to affect so deeply, in the long run, our outward life. His predominating influence will be the fountain of action; it will form sometimes a pressure of restraint, sometimes a source of fiery impulse; it will lead us to do many things which we should otherwise have left undone, and to leave undone many which, but for it, we should have done. It will free us from prejudice; it will silence the clamour of passion, so that the calm voice of reason may be heard; it will give us right views of the moral element of every question, so that if we err, our error shall be intellectual merely—a blunder but not a crime. It is impossible that he who follows closely the leading of the Spirit should commit any decided moral mistake. Granted that for want of information, and for want of mental grasp, he

fails on various occasions to do the best thing for himself, socially or financially speaking; granted that he subjects himself to much unnecessary inconvenience, and is outstripped in the race of business by shrewder competitors, who never pray, yet in the fact that he is kept sincere, and pure, and holy, that his life is a spiritual success, that it glorifies God and ensures Heaven hereafter, there is seen a sufficient indication of the reality, and the advantage of the Spirit's guidance.

A large proportion of the blunders of life are caused by passion prejudicing the judgment. Self-will secretly warps the decision of the reason. There may be no suspicion of any such influence, and yet it may be predominant. With an imperceptible jugglery, it may have thrust into the back-ground those considerations that were likely to tell against it, and pushed into undue prominence those that were favourable. If a thread be suspended by the hand above a glass tumbler, and a ring be suspended from the thread in the centre of the glass, a very curious effect of will may be exhibited. Let the operator will that the ring shall begin to swing, and touch one side of the glass, and even strike against it the hour of the day; and though he, at the same time, do his best to keep his hand steady above the centre, and to impart no motion to the thread, yet, somehow, the motion will take place, and the hours will be struck. The secret influence of the will and of the passions, is a great fact in human life. Candour is difficult when feeling has been aroused; and if the feeling be wrong, it will be hard for the conclusions of the judgment to be right. In proportion as the Holy Spirit sanctifies the mind, He takes away

every sinful bias that would hinder the free action of the judgment. By acting upon the heart so as to regulate its passions, by restoring conscience to its supremacy, and by keeping the will, with its herculean strength, out of court, until the trial of the cause is ended, the most important part of the work of guiding the man is done.

Out of the three, or the twenty and three ways that may be open at any time to a man to take, and between which, so far as can be seen, there is no question of moral right or wrong involved, there must be one way which would be best for him if all things were known, one way in which a greater amount of usefulness and happiness would be attained than in any of the others. That way, disentangled of all complications, and cleared of all mist, is seen by our Heavenly Father, and His voice in the soul is given in its favour. The distinctness with which that voice will be heard, will be proportioned to the original capacity, to the knowledge and the right feeling of the man. Perception, memory, judgment, the advice of friends, the information contained in books—these may be the channels through which the prophetic truth may find its way. Or it may be that on the unfathomable deeps of consciousness—so like the sea, where the viewless winds keep revel, and the billows chase each other in quick succession to the shore, and the lights and shades cast by cloud and sun from the overarching sky perpetually play—some impression may be received of such a nature, that it becomes its own reason for obedience. An impulsive man or woman may be a dangerous creature; but a

man or woman without impulses is as dry and narrow as a dead vine. Noble and generous impulses are of God, and are sent by Him as His messengers to those who are capable of receiving them, to stimulate and to direct to enterprises at which mere caution stands aghast, and logic is struck dumb. Where there is no 'bee in the bonnet,' and where vanity—hot, fussy, restless vanity, ever seeking to astonish the neighbours by some fresh display—is kept well under heel, an impulse is deserving of the greatest respect and consideration. Though its face be strange, if it be kindly lodged, it may be found in the morning to be an angel entertained unawares.

'You saw the pillar of cloud and fire *move*,' said one gentleman to another, who had been describing how he made a change of situation, and who was characterised by great prayerfulness and zeal. The reply of this good man was worthy of a rabid materialist. 'The pillar never moved till I moved. I had been ill, and as I lay in bed recovering, I came to the conclusion that when I got well I would have a change. I got well, and made the change.' Here was a misapprehension of the essential nature of the fiery, cloudy pillar. It assumed that Providence means we are never to take a step in life till we have received a signal from without, that the order to move is never heard first of all from within: that we are to be always the creatures, and at no time the creators of circumstances: that we are never to knock at the door of a house to gain admission, but as we go along the street, are to watch for a house where the door happens to be open, and walk in there. When the guiding pillar

moved before Israel there was no change without to account for the movement. The camp was healthy; the manna daily rained from Heaven showed no sign of diminishing; the ground was firm; the wide desert did not threaten to close up; no letter of invitation, offering snug quarters, had been received from Og, King of Bashan, or from Sihon, King of the Amorites; the pillar moved because it had an impulse within itself to move, and that impulse was from God. Without impulse, aspiration, enthusiasm, the Bible would have to be exchanged for the ready reckoner, life would harden into iron, poetry would perish, self-sacrifice would never be practised, and martyrdom would cease, not for want of persecutors, but for want of martyrs. Without mental impressions, the far-reaching conceptions of genius would be cut off, and its noblest achievements rendered impossible. Watt would never have had force enough to overcome the difficulties that lay in the way of the improvement of the steam engine; Kepler would have lacked the necessary fire for hunting the hiding Mars through all his mazes; Palissy, the potter, would never have burned his furniture to keep his furnace hot, in order to obtain enamel for his tiles. Without inward impulses the brightest pages of philanthropy and religion would lose their lustre. Howard would have kept outside the filthy, infected prisons of Europe; Savanarola would have toned down his thunder to the cooing of a sucking dove; Paul would have managed better than to incur the suspicion of mad ness from such a man as Festus, or to allow such a doubtful accompaniment to the eloquence of one of his finest passages, as the clanking of a manacle upon his

uplifted arm; and we may say it with reverence, Jesus Christ would never have found His way to Calvary. Had He possessed the caution of some people, He would have prudently retired; He would have taken in His sails, and run into harbour, before the storm burst.

'Despise not prophesyings.' 'Try the spirits, whether they be of God.' These two precepts are the complement of each other. Impressions, like coin, want looking at, and sometimes ringing on the counter. If they are genuine they will stand every lawful test. Where inward impressions and outward circumstances coincide, the presumptive evidence which they furnish in favour of a certain course becomes very strong. Yet one eternal principle of righteousness laid in the other scale makes it all mount up a bubble. If a thing be wrong it cannot be Providential. The grand jury has found no true bill, and the case must close. The great Providence for every man is to do right—to fulfil his near and evident duties, and to please his God. It is vain for the idle, for the dissipated, for the proud and the malicious to talk of Providence. It is a mystery too deep and holy for them to know—the A B C of it they have not yet learned. Their troubles are self-caused, and are Providential only in that secondary sense in which the law, when it cannot recompense a man for being industrious, may yet punish him for being a vagabond.

Let it be borne in mind, that Israel never saw the pillar of cloud and of fire till they had quitted Egypt. If we would be guided, we must first be regenerated. Many Providential mercies are, undoubtedly, bestowed on those who have no heart to appreciate them; but

it is comparatively little that Providence can do for a man who pursues the broad road to destruction; who is bent, whether he thinks of it or not, on going to hell. The first step towards Providential guidance is to quit the slavery of Satan, and yield ourselves unto God. In harmony with this key-note, sounded at the commencement, the whole anthem must be played. We must subordinate lower interests to higher; we must bear in mind that it is a greater thing to please God than to be useful, as we may judge of usefulness; and a greater thing to be useful than to be happy; and a greater to be happy than to be rich, or popular, or at ease; and, finally, let it be remembered, that the end is greater than the way. The permanent possession of the land flowing with milk and honey was worth forty years' wandering in the wilderness. God and Heaven solve the problem of life. Through all the mazes of our passage, the silken thread conducts us to the temple filled with light and sound of song. The way would be a loss; but the end converts every inch of it into gain. We travel towards the sunrise, and the coming glory is projected across the whole hemisphere of our mortal being, and meets us even as we start from the farthest limit of the opposite horizon. Through alternate storm and calm, cloud and sunshine, across a sea endangered by gale and iceberg, by fog and sunken rock, by mad mountain billow and hostile cruiser, we safely enter port at last. 'All's well that ends well.'

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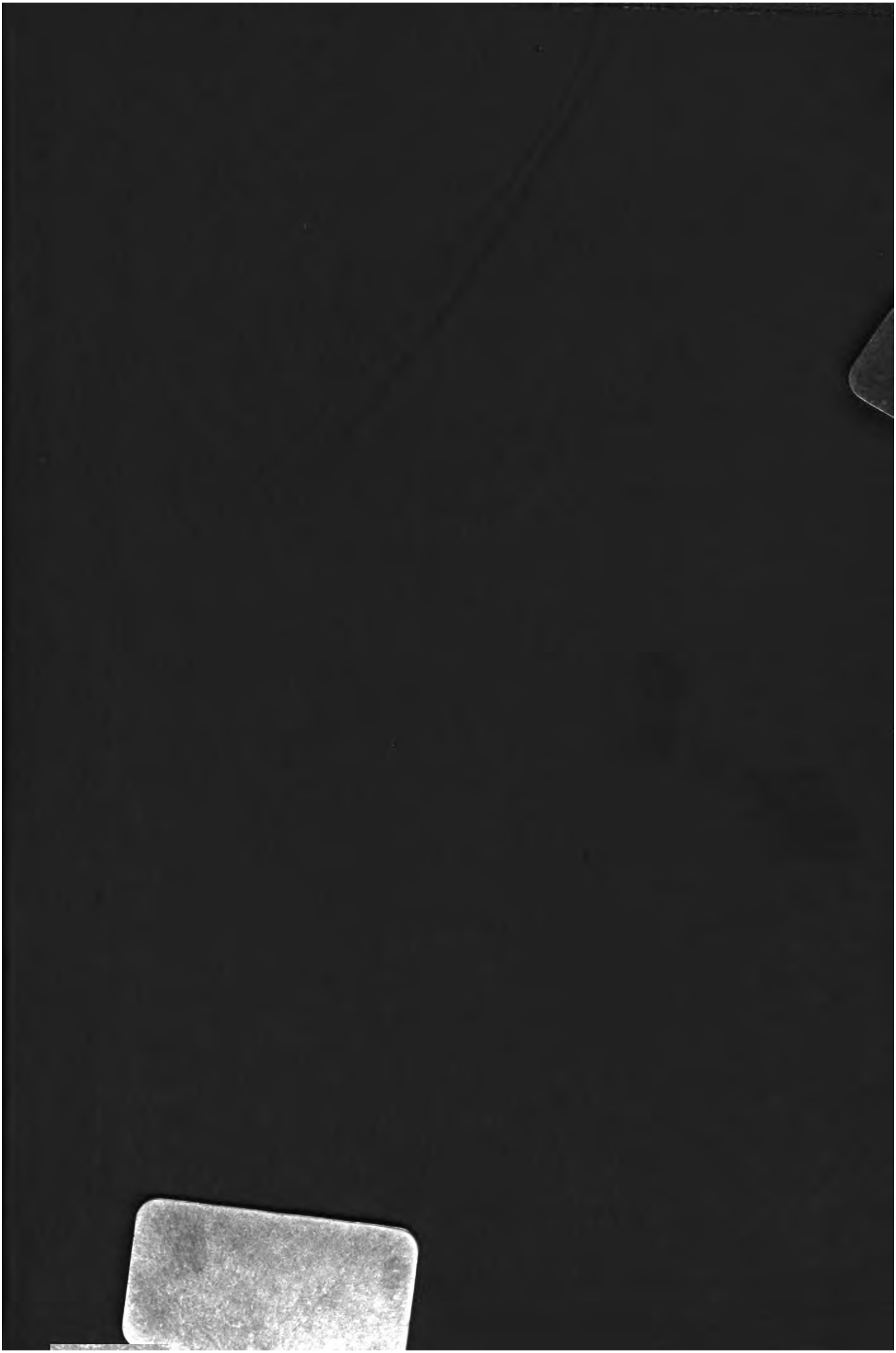
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