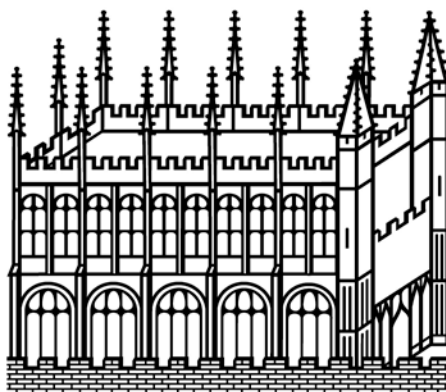




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SECOND THOUSAND.

THE ROOT
OF
THE MATTER.

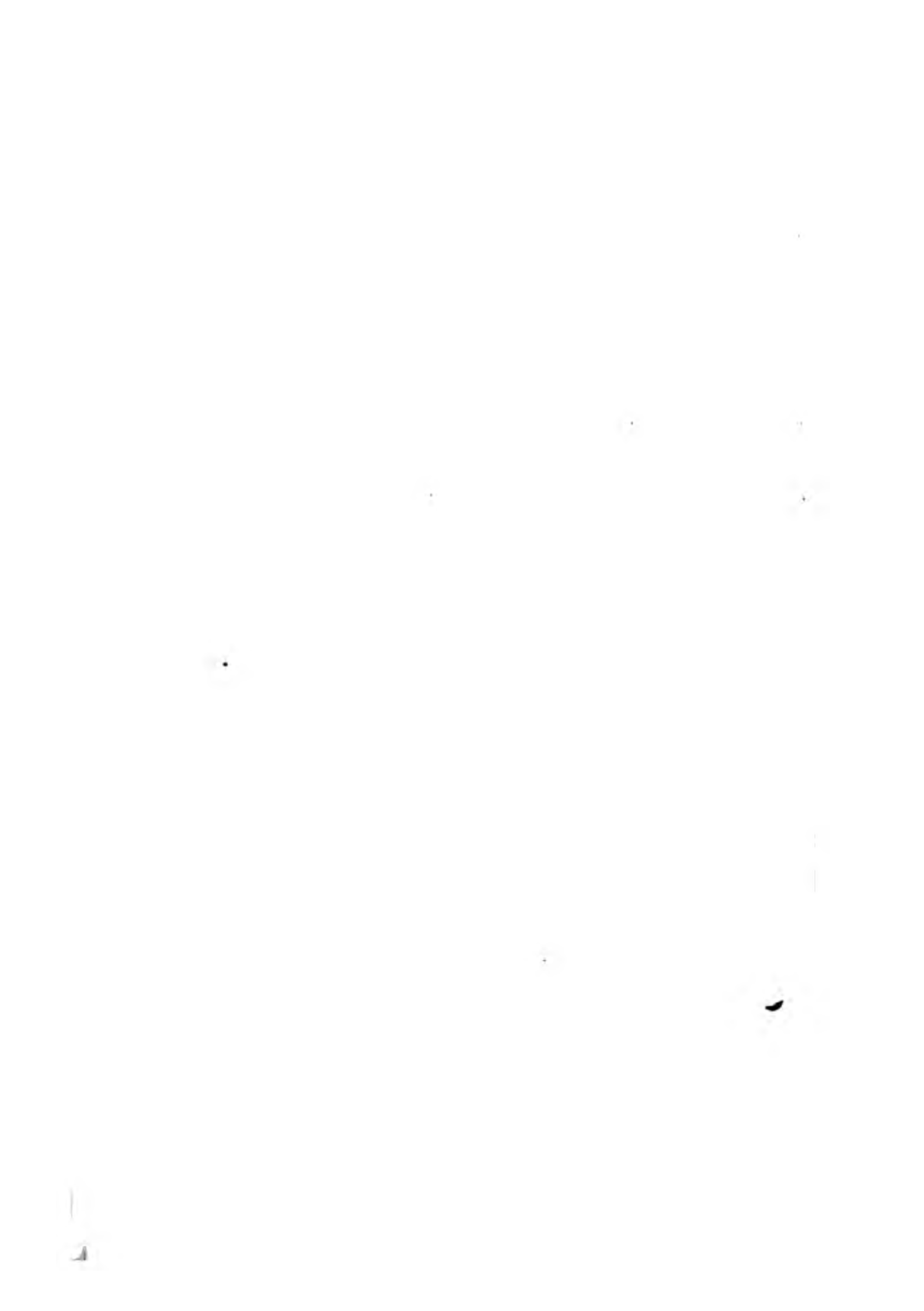
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THE ROOT OF THE MATTER.

"Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the Faith; Prove your own selves."—2 *Corinthians* xiii. 5.

Reader, whoever you may be, and in whatever station of life you may be placed, whether in the highest or in the lowest, you are a sinner in the sight of God, and require his forgiveness. Did you ever feel this? Not that empty and general acknowledgment which many make, but did you ever realize your individual state by nature, as one deeply sunk in sin? Have you ever felt with St. Paul, when he says, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"* or do you appreciate the fullness of that humility which the Apostle shews forth, when he says, "of sinners, I am chief."† Have you felt, that if God were to deal with you after your deserts, he would say, "Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground."‡ Has the prayer of the Publican ever found utterance in your heart? "God be merciful to me a sinner."§ These are momentous questions and worthy of your

* *Rom.* vii. 24. † *1 Tim.* i. 15. ‡ *Luke* xlii. 7. § *Luke* xviii. 13.

deepest consideration, for be assured, that if you are saying to yourself, "I am not worse than others, we have all sinned by Adam's transgression," you are building upon a sandy foundation which will fall away in the day of trial, and will most undoubtedly prove your everlasting destruction. You may perhaps say, "I do my duty to my neighbour, I never steal, I never swear, I never defraud any one, I never drink to excess, I never indulge in any of the lusts of the flesh, and more than all this, I attend the house of prayer regularly." These may all be fulfilled to the letter, yet the performance of them is but the perfection of morality, and not true vital godliness. You are still a sinner, you are still under condemnation.

As disease and sickness must first be felt in the human frame, before the Physician's remedy can be sought after or cared for, so must the human heart feel the plague of sin, before Christ and his salvation can be really looked to, in true and earnest faith. Our Saviour said, "they that are whole need not a Physician, but they that are sick."* There must be a deep and humbling feeling, that day by day, hour after hour, the thoughts of the mind, and the actions of life, are only evil continually, and altogether tainted with sin; for, "who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one."† What are the

* Luke v. 31. † Job xiv. 4.

best actions of the most pure of worldly men? By what principles are they influenced? Are not self-gratification and love of fame the great objects of their lives? Are not these principles almost always to be found lurking within their breasts?

You must not *pride* yourself upon abstaining from all the grosser iniquities of the world; because this may arise entirely from habit, education, or force of circumstance. You may do your duty to your neighbour, from having a naturally kind and benevolent disposition. You may never steal, because you may never have the temptation, or may possibly dread the disgrace which would follow such an action. You may never swear, because it is now considered ungentlemanly, and would mark you as a man of low habits. You may never defraud any one, from honourable and virtuous feelings, or you may fear to lose your reputation as a just man. You may never drink to excess, nor indulge in any of the lusts of the flesh, from want of inclination, or possibly from fear of injuring your health, or, from the knowledge that such conduct would cause you to forfeit any situation you may hold, and bring misery and wretchedness upon all connected with you. You may attend the house of Prayer regularly, because it is the custom of those around you so to do, it puts you to no personal inconvenience, and has a more decent appearance, besides you probably do not wish to be thought altogether an unbeliever.

Mistake me not, these things when performed are most laudable, and their fulfilment is highly commendable. But you see, that it is quite within the bounds of possibility to do all these things, without having the fear of God. The proud spirit of the Pharisee may be yours, saying "God, I thank, thee, that I am not as other men are."* The point, therefore, to be decided, is, what are your motives? Does the contemplation of sin ever give you a moment's uneasiness, as committed against your merciful Father; can you say with Joseph, "How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God."† Do you hate, abhor and detest sin? Is the language of your heart, "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts."‡ As you walk by the way, or in the secret of your closet, do you ever examine deeply all the hidden springs of your heart, all the motives, reasons, and causes by which you are actuated? If you have not, Oh, let me beseech you to do so now, recollect that wherever you may be, whether in the most lonely spot, or in the crowded and busy scenes of the world, you can always exercise secret self-examination. The daily practice of meditation, tends more than anything else, to bring the heart to feel its own wretchedness and helplessness; and to show the need of constantly looking to Christ Jesus, the only way of salvation.

* *Luke xviii. 11.* † *Genesis xxxix. 9.* ‡ *Psalms cxxxix. 23.*

To some persons, the foregoing remarks, may appear too strong, and may, perhaps, be thought unnecessarily severe. But upon so momentous and so important a subject, namely, whether you are building your hopes of eternal happiness, after this life shall have passed away, upon a right foundation or not, smooth words cannot be spoken, for that would be "saying, peace, peace, when there is no peace."*

If by the grace of God, you be led to feel yourself a sinner, and to be desirous of self-examination, let something like the following be the tenor of it. Is my heart really and truly thinking less of the world, and more of heaven? Do I prize above all things the attainment of a crown of glory hereafter. Do I delight more in reading God's holy word, than in any production of the greatest and most entertaining writer of this world? Am I resting my hopes of eternal life on any works of my own, however, pure and unspotted in this world's estimation, instead of a simple reliance on Christ? Do I endeavour by earnest prayer to God, through the only mediator Christ Jesus, to keep down within my heart, all selfishness, covetousness, and malice? Conscience is a most powerful monitor, and is a "still small voice," resist not its admonitions, but seek to have a conscience void of offence towards God and towards man.

Remember, "it is appointed unto man once to

* *Jeremiah vi. 14.*

die, but after this the judgment.”* It is a grand certainty, and also a grand uncertainty, you cannot delay it one moment after the summons has gone forth, “this night thy soul shall be required of thee,”† nor can you tell when that moment shall arrive. How important then to consider your ways, to see that you are not like the foolish man, who built his house upon the sand!‡

There are only two ways in which a man can walk in this world, and one of these you must be following, for there is no middle course, you must be living either to God or to the world. “Ye cannot serve God and Mammon.”§ “He that is not with me is against me.”|| Choose then, without loss of time, which you will follow, “now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation.”¶ Two ways are before you, the “narrow way” and the “broad way;” the former leads to everlasting happiness, the latter to everlasting destruction. The “narrow way,” however, is a difficult one, beset on all sides with dangers, trials, and temptations, to induce the traveller to turn from it, and he requires therefore, the light of God’s Holy Spirit to enable him to traverse it in safety. The “broad way” on the contrary, is apparently smooth and easy, beset on all sides by the most enticing and seductive allurements, the great mass of mankind are moving along it, without

* Heb. ix. 27. † Luke xii. 20. ‡ Mat. vii. 26. § Mat. vi. 24. || Mat. xii. 30.
¶ 2 Cor. vi. 2.

one thought for the future, and lulled to sleep in a carnal and false security, from which they will only awake when all is lost, and there will be no more time for repentance. Reader, pause and consider, note the following words of Scripture :—" Follow not the multitude to do evil."* " Come out from among them and be ye separate."† " If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear."‡

Put not off the work of repentance, to a more convenient season, as Felix did,§ there is no time like the present, you have not a day nor an hour which you can call your own. Commit not the fatal error of supposing that on your death-bed the whole work may be done, there is no greater infatuation than this, it is one of Satan's most subtle and soul destroying temptations. DR. CHALMERS writing upon this subject uses the following most forcible language. " How can we think of letting you go on with any other repentance, than the repentance of the precious moment that is now passing over you, when we look forward to the horrors of that impressive scene on which you propose to win the prize of immortality, and to contest it single-handed, and alone, with all the weight of opposition which you have accumulated against yourself—a death-bed—a languid, breathless, tossing, and agitated death-bed ; that scene of feeble-

* *Ex.* xxiii. 2. † *2 Cor.* vi. 17. ‡ *1 Peter* iv. 18. § *Acts* xxiv. 25.

ness, when the poor man cannot help himself to a single mouthful—when he must have attendants to sit around him, and watch his every wish, and interpret his every signal, and turn him to every posture where he may find a moment's ease, and wipe away the cold sweat that is running over him, and ply him with cordials for thirst, and sickness, and unsufferable langour. And this is the time, when occupied with such feelings and beset with such agonies as these, you propose to crowd within the compass of a few wretched days, the work of winding up the concerns of a neglected eternity."*

Take warning by this solemn and thrilling picture, prepare whilst you have the opportunity. Indeed, "what an argument for immediate repentance, is advancing frailty and decay, for betaking ourselves to the great movement of conversion immediately—for not merely seeking, but striving, not merely walking, but in the language of scripture, fleeing."* Pray earnestly to Almighty God to grant you his Holy Spirit. Prayer moves the hand of God, and by it will he be intreated of those who would come unto him. Christ says, "men ought always to pray and to faint."† "For in due season we shall reap if we faint not."‡ Believe that God through Christ, is able to do all that you ask; put your whole trust and confidence in him, and you are safe. He is

* Chalmers' Life, by Dr. Hannah, page 156. † Luke xviii. 1. ‡ Gal. vi. 9.

your only refuge, He is the door into the fold which now stands wide open, that whosoever will, may "go in and out and find pasture."^{*}

Be drinking constantly at the fountain of living waters. As the natural life soon pines away and dies without sustenance, so will the spiritual life, without being frequently fed by the bread which cometh down from above. He would be thought insane who expected to live upon air, so must not the Christian attempt in his own strength to live the life of Faith, so as to be able to fight manfully and successfully against every enemy. The warfare will be severe, Satan will raise up many enemies, and none are so formidable as those which are constantly dwelling within your own breast. But, St. Paul says, "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal,"[†] let us therefore be steadfast and firm, and not weary in well-doing.

Reader! should the whole subject of religion now appear to you in a new and more striking light, should you find that heretofore you have been resting your hopes of salvation upon a wrong foundation—your own self-righteousness—your moral rectitude of conduct towards all men,—without ever having been circumcised in heart; and if upon the review of this, the Spirit of God should make you desire to have the christians joy in hope, so eloquently dis-

^{*} John x. 9. [†] 2 Cor. x. 4.

cussed by St. Paul, even Faith in our Lord Jesus Christ—see to have a right conception of what that Faith really is, to which the Apostle refers, when he says, “Therefore being justified by Faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

Most readily will the real nature of true Faith be seen by a reference to what is passing around us in the world. Many men profess to believe, that is, to have Faith, in some particular event or circumstance, but bring forth no corresponding alteration of conduct, and it become fully evident to all that they do not believe. For instance, if some one comes and informs another that a certain event will take place, which will affect the latter in an injurious manner, he may say that he believes it to be quite true, but being a dead and lifeless belief, he makes no provision to prepare for the coming calamity. Further, a man may be told that some individual upon whom he has no claim, has done a great act of kindness towards him, and intends to continue to do so ; he may profess to believe all this, but if he neither shows an anxiety to know more of this individual, nor feels any gratitude and love towards him, his belief is of no value. Thus in the things of God and in the spiritual world, many say they *believe*, but use an empty word without meaning, and comprehend not the real essence of Faith. “Faith,” says the Apostle, “is

* *Romans v. 1.*

the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”* It is not a simple principle within the natural power of man, enabling him just to say, “I believe,” but it is the evidence that there is within, a saving knowledge of Christ. For you should never forget that it is not your Faith which will save you, but, it is Christ alone, and it is by Faith you grasp the offered salvation, so as to pass from death unto life. “The devils also believe and tremble.”† So does a man very often, who has only before him the just denunciations of God against the wicked, and will not bend his proud natural heart to see the salvation provided in the fountain of living waters ; even the atoning and sanctifying blood of Christ. Faith, to be real, must be an in-dwelling principle, showing itself forth in the life and conversation, the affections being centred in the things of heaven, and so enabled to soar above the trials, vexations, and temptations of this world. And under all circumstances of difficulty or distress, Faith will impart so deep a conviction, that the creature will say in the language of Jonah, “yet will I look towards thy holy temple,”‡ Instead of laying up treasures here, he who has this Faith, lays up treasures in heaven, “where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal.”§ If in possession of this Faith, you will wait for your Lord’s

* *Hebrews xi. 1.* † *James ii. 19.* ‡ *Jonah ii. 4.* § *Matt. vi. 20.*

coming, as a faithful servant, with your lamp burning and oil in your vessel ; or, be like the true soldier, who keeps ever his weapons bright and in good order, ready to be used in his Captain's service. If you are in the full enjoyment of this Faith, the language of your heart will be, " Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief."* It will not be a dead and lifeless Faith but a living principle, pervading every action, and your desire will be to do all to the glory of God. But before you can possibly possess this inestimable treasure, the Holy Spirit of God must be given you ; and he undoubtedly will be given to all who earnestly seek him by prayer,—humble prayer,—for a broken and contrite spirit is what God accepts, and Christ says, " ask and it shall be given you."† You must see your state by nature, for conviction of sin always goes before conversion of the soul to God. You must cast off your rags of self-righteousness, and have an abiding Faith in Christ, for he tells us, that, " as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine ; no more can ye except ye abide in me."‡

When you have been enabled to lay hold of Christ by Faith, you must ever keep alive a humble and prayerful spirit. Forget not that your course will ever be, whilst in the world, a constant contending against the stream. The progress of one rowing up the

* *Mark* ix. 24. † *Matt.* vii. 7. ‡ *John* xv. 4.

strong current of some rapid river, altogether depends upon a persevering and diligent use of the means in his power, however abundantly they may have been provided. Thus, if he relax in his exertions he finds himself going rapidly back, it may be towards some expansive waters, or to the edge of some deep cataract, and in either case beset with many perils and likely to prove his destruction. A place of safety is before him, he heeds not the resting places, which present themselves on his right hand and on the left, however beautiful or captivating they may appear, for he knows their treacherous nature, he can place no confidence in them, they have no charms for him, he cannot tarry by the way ; there is in fact, no safe anchorage. These, however, as he leaves them behind, become gratifying land marks and tests, that he is getting nearer and nearer the appointed refuge. So if you would reach the haven of eternal rest, keep your face turned Zionward, steer your bark right up the stream, for the less deviation there is in the course of a boat going against a stream, the more rapid and easy is its progress. Keep, therefore, a straight and an undeviating course, use diligently the means provided, relax not or you go rapidly back ; you cannot with safety stand still, if not growing in grace you will be falling from it. Be instant in prayer, " pray without ceasing,"* study God's written word deeply, it is the Christian's chart, and must be constantly

* 1 *Thess.* v. 17.

looked into, and Christ says, " Search the scriptures ; for in them ye think ye have eternal life ; and they are they which testify of me."*

As the rower only judges of the progress he makes by noting, how he passes by degrees, some stationary object, so do you likewise, use the things of this world as your tests, to see whether you are progressing. You may think that you are not doing so ; but where are your affections ? Do you find them gradually becoming removed from the things of this world ? If so, know that you are getting nearer and nearer the smooth waters of a full assurance of Faith ; for the attainment of which be diligently striving. It may be, that God may see fit to keep you long from the full enjoyment of this assurance, nay even sometimes it is never granted, and many, therefore, go mourning all their days. Thus an eminent writer says, " A man may have saving Faith in Christ, and yet never enjoy an assured hope, like the Apostle Paul. To believe and have a glimmering hope of acceptance is one thing ; to have joy and peace in our believing, and abound in hope, is quite another. All God's children have Faith : all have not assurance. I think this ought never to be forgotten." And again he says, " I do not shrink from saying, that by grace a man may have sufficient Faith to flee to Christ,—really to lay hold of him, really to trust in him,—really to be a child of God,—really to be saved ; and

* *John* v. 39.

yet to his last day be never free from much anxiety, doubt and fear."* But for all this it is attainable, and we have in Scripture many instances of God's people being in full possession of this blessed state of mind. Thus Job says, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth : and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God."† David also says, "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me : thy rod and thy staff they comfort me,"‡ and St. Paul says, "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day."§

As a tree is known by its fruit whether it be good or bad, so will you be enabled to judge of your state by the fruit brought forth in your life. "By their fruits ye shall know them,"|| says our Blessed Saviour, and unless these testify that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you, you can never possess either a saving faith or an assured hope, for, "if any man have not the spirit of Christ he is none of his."¶ It will be well, therefore, to lay before you some of the most prominent and marked evidences of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Of these there are many, but especially five, which may be said to contain the whole essence of Godliness.

* Rev. J. C. Ryle, on Assurance. † Job xix. 25, 26. ‡ Ps. xxiii. 4.

§ 2 Tim. i. 12 || Matthew vii. 20. ¶ Rom. viii. 9.

I. Humility, as opposed to pride, that is, not to have an exalted opinion of your own attainments, but to prefer others to yourself, in accordance with St. Paul's injunction, "let each esteem other better than themselves."* To feel a deep sense of unworthiness in the sight of God on account of sin ; for, "whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased."† "Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall."‡ "Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."§ "Humility is a most excellent grace of the spirit, induces the subject of it to be a child of God, and is accompanied with contentment, peace and submission to the will of God."||

II. Patience, in submitting to the hand of God with resignation at all times of trial. Taking patiently the false accusations of the world, enduring reproach with meekness, not easily provoked, bearing long with those who have injured you. There is naturally a great inclination to allow little things to ruffle and disturb the mind, it is therefore, an important mark of the indwelling of the Spirit, to have such patience as to be able to bear all things without repining. St. Paul says, "For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? But if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable

* *Phil.* ii. 3. † *Matt.* 23. 12. ‡ *Prov.* xvi. 18. § *Matt.* v. 3. || *Cruden's Concordance.*

with God.”* Take an example from Christ, who patiently endured the death of the cross, and when falsely accused answered nothing, but prayed for his enemies.

III. Brotherly-kindness towards all men, but especially towards the household of Faith. To love christians as christians for Christ’s sake, for their holiness and heavenly-mindedness, to feel the heart drawn out to love all those who love Christ. Truly to have this brotherly-kindness is one of the signs of a new birth. The world hates the true and faithful followers of Christ, “ye shall be hated of all men for my name’s sake.”† Cultivate, therefore, this blessed frame of mind—“be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love.”‡ Let brotherly love continue.”§

IV. Reverence for the name of God, to fear, honour, and obey him ; and this is united with love, for love and fear constitute true reverence. “Ye that fear the Lord, trust in the Lord.”|| The more this is kept alive, the more will sin be avoided. If truly reverencing the name of God, the heart will feel grieved and pierced at the slightest taking of His name in vain, or at the smallest reference to the Deity in a careless and thoughtless manner ; and if you cultivate the most reverential feelings towards your Father after the flesh ; how much more is it required at your hands towards your heavenly Father. “We have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and

* 1 Peter ii. 20. † Matt. x. 22. ‡ Rom. xii. 10. § Heb. xiii. 1. || Ps. cxv. 1 &

we gave them reverence : shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live ?”* To have a reverence for the name of God, is to have a high and exalted conception of His majesty and of His sovereignty, whose throne is in heaven, who holdeth all things in His hand, regulating every event that occurs in this world, for His own wise purposes. Joining not with those who would rob Him of his attributes by saying, that He looketh not upon the small events of life, as being beneath His notice ; forgetting that a sparrow falleth not to the ground without His knowledge.

V. To delight in all holiness, is certainly a most distinctive mark of true godliness, and to feel so deep a desire, so earnest a longing for the things of God, that everything else, in comparison, appears poor and contemptible. Every man seeks that in which he most delights, some pursue riches, some pleasure ; and it is by this means that a man’s taste or inclination is known, and those around him are enabled to judge of what spirit and temper he is. Thus will the christian be known ; and what is more important, will know himself. Be, therefore, diligent to try yourself by this standard. Where is your chief delight ? Is it in the Lord your God ? “ Whom have I in heaven but thee : and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee.”† Is this the language of your heart, can you say, God is my exceeding joy.

* *Heb.* xii 9. † *Ps* lxxviii. 25

Depend upon it, nothing short of delighting in holiness can prove you to be a true christian, it is by this means alone that you can hate sin. The attendance upon God's holy ordinances will be to you an infinite delight and pleasure, they will not appear long and tedious, but on the contrary, you will feel regret that you cannot join in the praises and glory of your Heavenly Father so frequently as you desire. Thus David said, "I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord."* If really in the possession of this grace, religion will cause a joy and happiness which the world knows not. They who merely go through the routine of christian duties without having the heart centred in them, are like a man without a palate to taste his food. The worldling, when revelling in the sinful pleasures around him, has no relish for anything else, his whole affections are placed in them. So should the christian have his affections placed only on the things of God. "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness for they shall be filled."† "As the heart panteth after the waterbrooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God."‡

Look well to your ways. Have you got these several tempers and dispositions, which spring from a living Faith? You may desire to have them, but you feel how far short you come of their attainment. You are ready to exclaim, "When I would do good

* *Ps. cxxii. 1.* † *Matt. v. 6.* ‡ *Ps. xlii. 1.*

evil is present with me.”* Be not discouraged under a view of your many short-comings—your backsliding—your rebellions, but lay hold of the promise of Christ, ask of him and he will so strengthen and enable you to regulate the tempers and affections of your heart, that you may thereby know indeed, that you are one of his adopted family, and an heir of eternal glory. In what a blessed state is this to live, it gives Peace to the mind now, and the certainty of everlasting Peace hereafter! St. Paul says, “we have Peace with God,”† clearly signifying that unless justified you are living without Peace and never at rest. Look upon the busy world which is moving around you, every one desires Peace, and wishes to feel secure from poverty or from danger. How varied are the efforts made in order to attain this much coveted state of mind! With what earnestness and anxiety do men follow after first one and then another object, from which they vainly hope to gain what is nearest the heart. Some pursue a giddy whirl of pleasure, indulging in all the pomps and vanities which surround them in captivating profusion. Some abstain altogether from intercourse with their fellow men, and by shutting themselves out from the world, think to keep out evil thoughts, and so bring to themselves Peace. Some while living a correct, moral, and what is called by the world a quiet life, determine in their own minds

* *Rom.* vii. 21. † *Rom.* v. 1.

never to think of the future, with all its gloomy and unhappy anticipations, and foolishly think that this will bring them peace. Some toil after the acquisition of wealth, labouring and panting for it, as says Scripture, "They rise up early, and so late take rest, and eat the bread of carefulness,"* thinking thus to obtain Peace. But it is all unsatisfactory. The possession of wealth if sought after, for this purpose, instead of bringing contentment, and increasing the comfort of the mind, almost always cause more disquietude and wretchedness. The mind is frequently filled with a dread, that something may come and destroy that vain boasting, which says, "Soul take thine ease, thou hast much good laid up for many years."†

You see then, that all such are seeking Peace, where they never can find it, "For there is no Peace, saith the Lord, to the wicked."‡ Everything in this world if trusted in, instead of imparting Peace, removes its attainment further off. And the fond objects of the desire of the several characters brought to your notice, is often, before reached, removed beyond their grasp, or, when gained, is in a moment cut down like Jonah's gourd. Be seeking, therefore, for Peace, where alone it can be found, and you will possess not only Peace with God, but Peace with your fellow men, and Peace within your own breast; that triumphant Peace which the world knows not. It is

* Ps. cxviii. 2. † Luke xii. 19. ‡ Jer. xlviii. 22.

Christ's peculiar blessing, it was especially given to his disciples before leaving them, and will likewise descend upon all his faithful followers. "Peace I leave with you, my Peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you." "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid;"* and again "the Peace of God passeth all understanding,"† and David says, "great Peace have they which love thy law, nothing shall offend them,"‡ and "the end of the upright man is Peace."§

But there are many into whose hands this Tract may fall, who, though living in open and undisguised sin, are fully sensible that they are doing so against light, reason, and the pricks of an accusing conscience. Such, frequently, say to themselves, "it cannot be that there is mercy for me, I am too great a sinner." Reader, if this character should be yours, let not the depth of your sin keep you from the Cross of Christ. "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son, cleanseth us from all sin,"|| and, therefore, the proclamation of mercy which God has made through the blessed gospel, is addressed equally to all those who have rebelled against Him. Heretofore you may have been the ringleader, as it were, in the open defiance of His laws; but feeling that you have sinned against Him, come at once and fear not. Lay down your arms, acknowledge your allegiance, and you will receive the full benefit of His merciful and gracious

* *John* xiv. 27. † *Phil.* iv. 7. ‡ *Psa.* cxix. 165 § *Psa.* xxxvii. 37. 1|| *John* i 7.

pardon. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon."* Oh blessed and gracious words! None need despair,

"There is a fountain fill'd with blood,
Drawn from Emanuel's veins,
And sinners plung'd beneath that flood,
Lose all their guilty stains."

May He who alone can give the increase, bless these words, and praised be His Holy name if they should be the humble instrument of causing some to pause and look well to their ways before it be too late. Reader, diligently try yourself, and see whether you have within you "THE ROOT OF THE MATTER."

* Isa. lv. 7.



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