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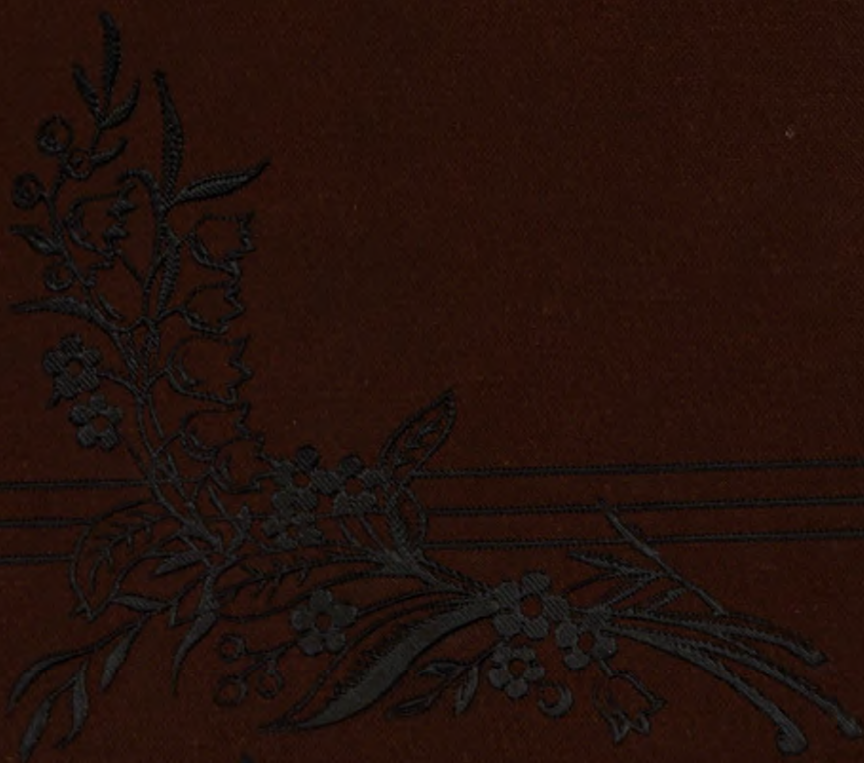
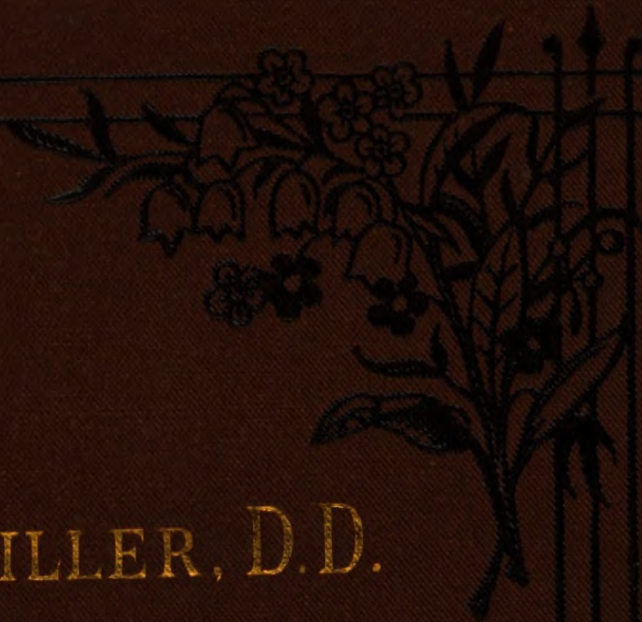
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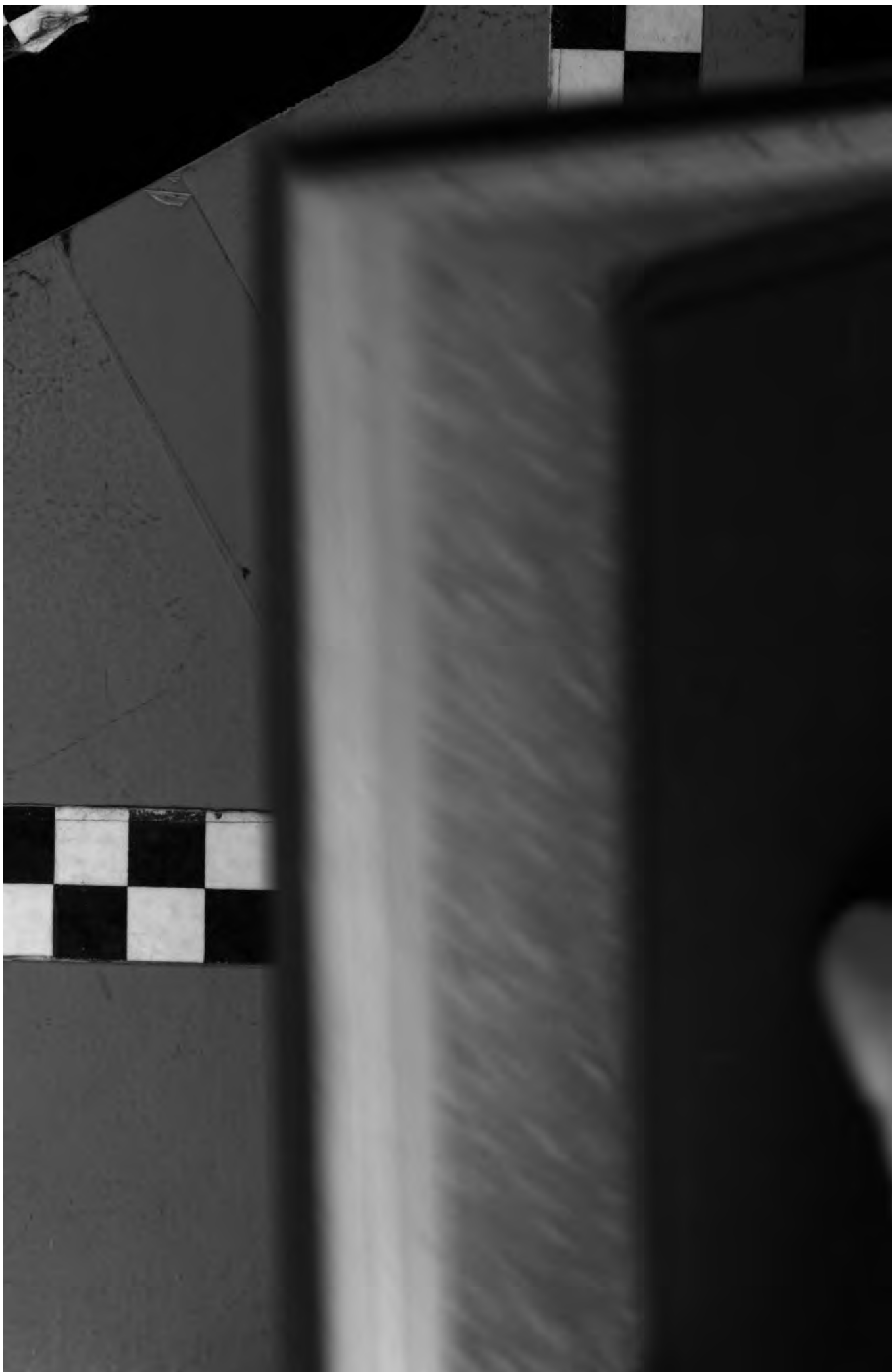


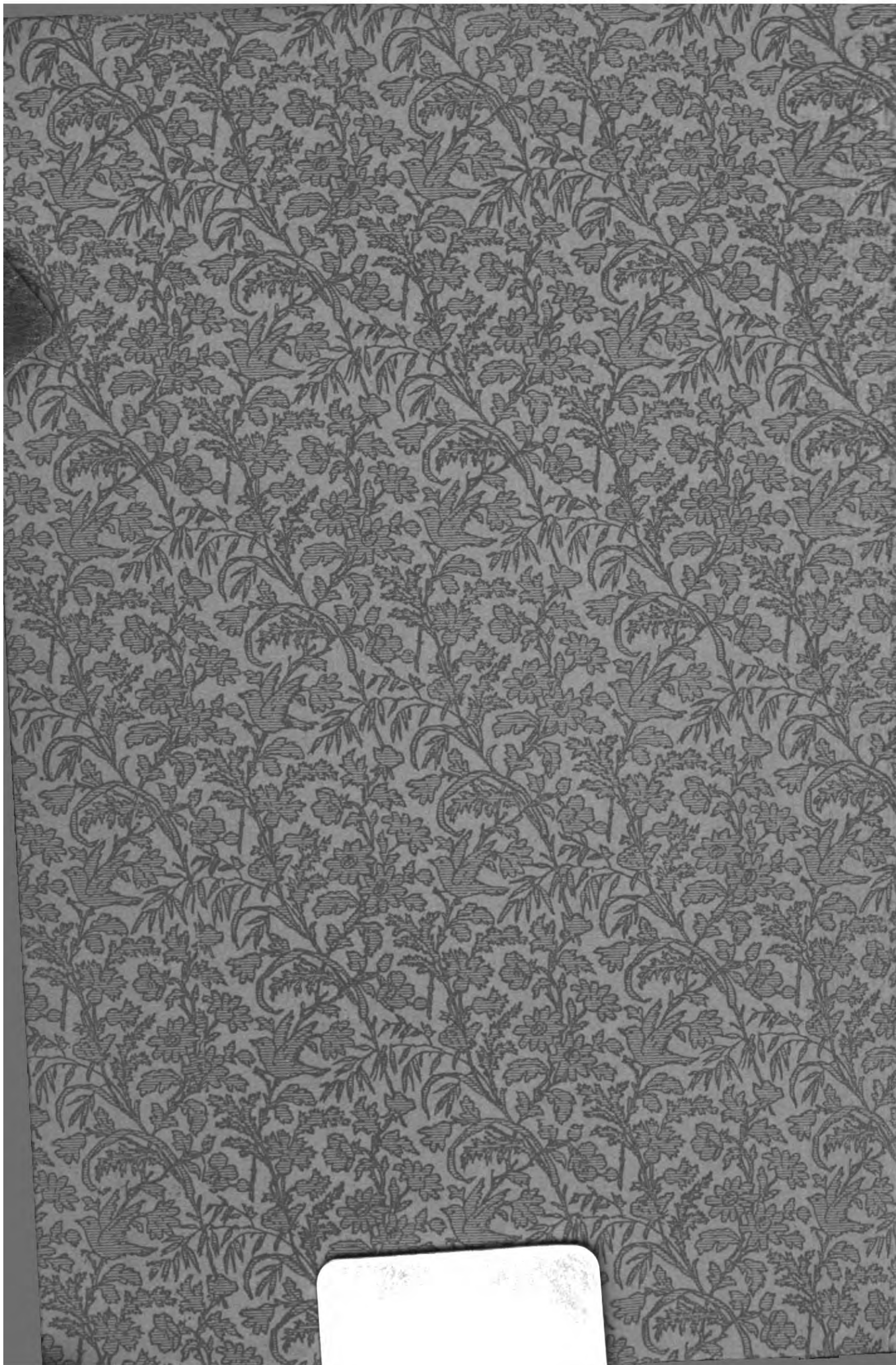
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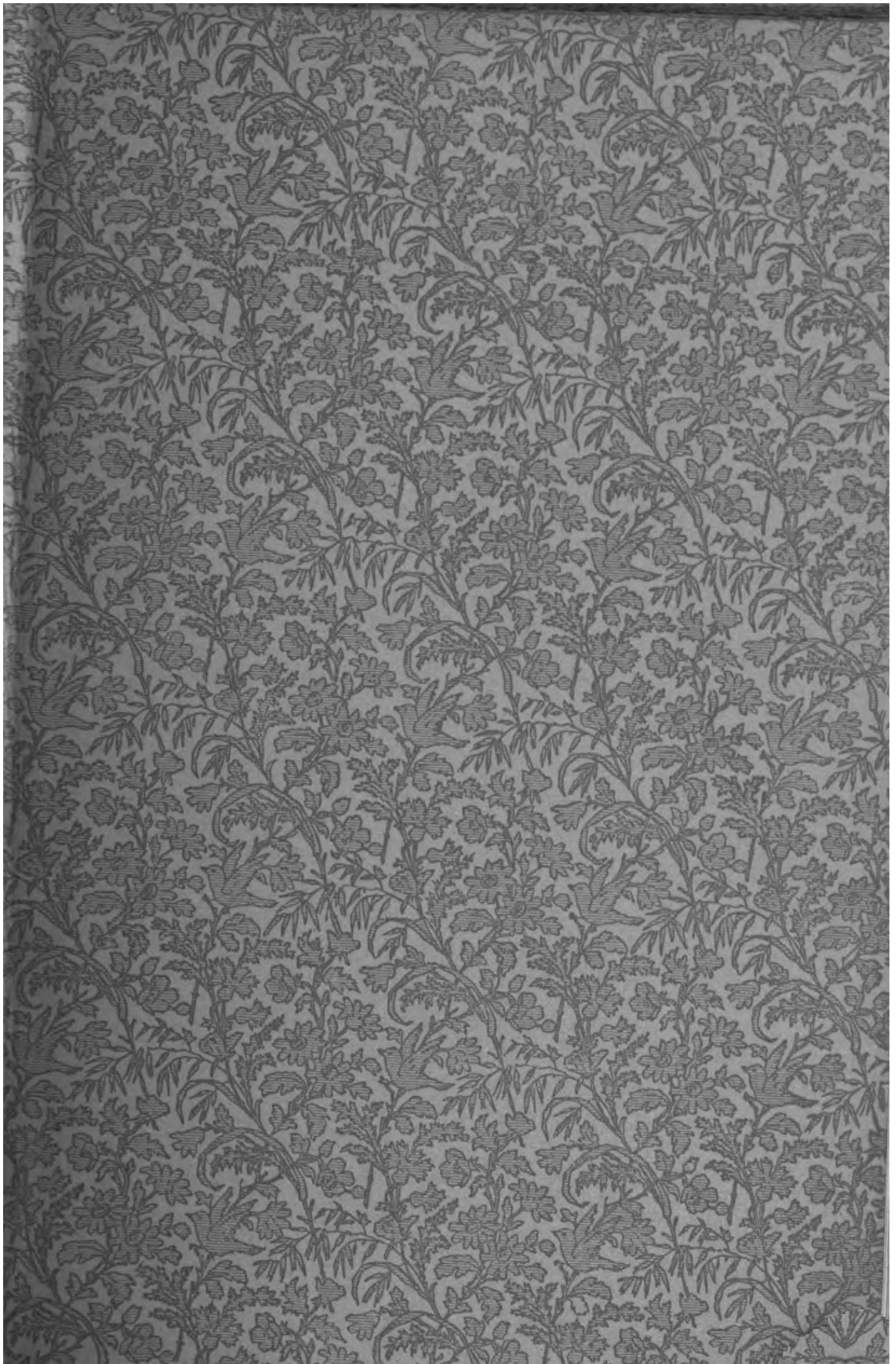
Memorials of

SAMUEL MILLER, D.D.









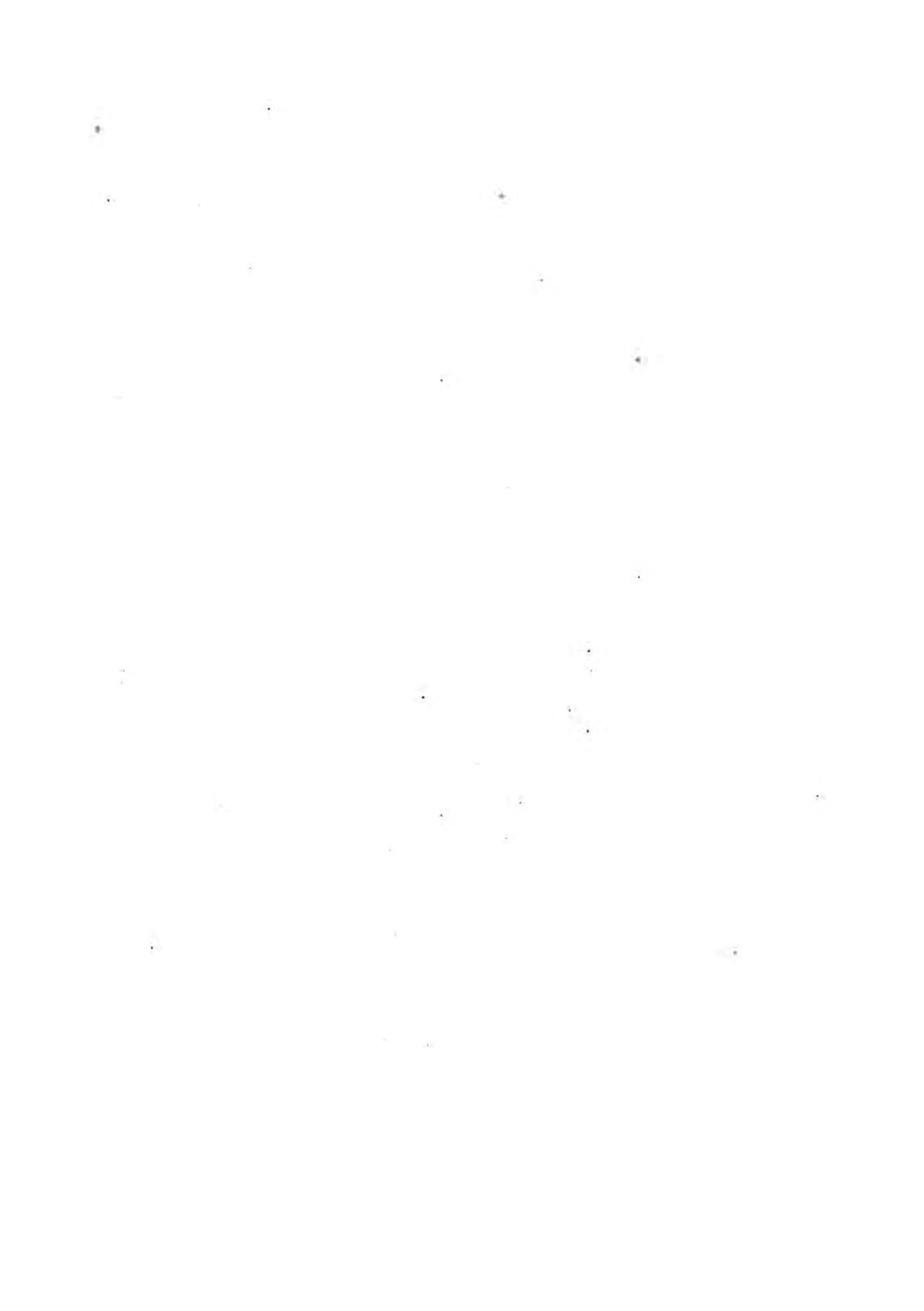


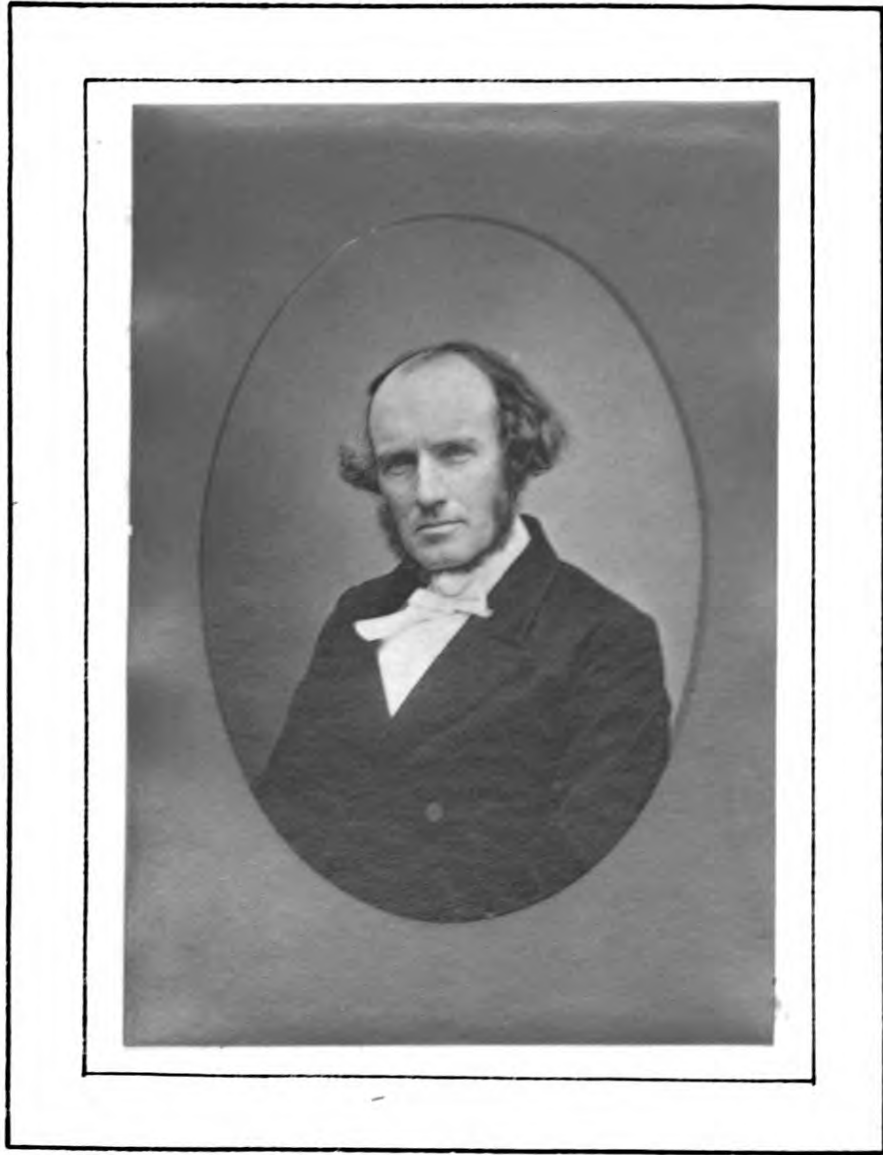
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MEMORIALS OF
THE REV. SAMUEL MILLER, D.D.

GLASGOW :
DAVID BRYCE AND SON.

HAMILTON, ADAMS & CO., LONDON.
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ANDREW ELLIOT, EDINBURGH.





Yrs. faithfully
Samuel Miller.

MEMORIALS

OF THE

REV. SAMUEL MILLER, D.D.,

MINISTER OF ST. MATTHEW'S FREE CHURCH, GLASGOW,

WITH A

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

BY THE

REV. THOMAS SMITH, D.D., EDINBURGH.

GLASGOW:

DAVID BRYCE & SON, 129 BUCHANAN STREET.

1883.

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TO THE
REV. C. A. SALMOND, M.A.,

AND TO THE

OFFICE-BEARERS AND MEMBERS OF ST. MATTHEW'S
FREE CHURCH, GLASGOW,

THIS VOLUME IS VERY RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED.



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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

READERS of clerical biography must have been interested in noticing the very different classes of society from which the ranks of the clergy are recruited. Although in churches where there are no "family livings" to be occupied, it is not to be expected that a large number of the sons of families of the highest class should choose the clerical profession, yet it is a matter of gratulation that such families do contribute their quota, and that from them come a number of ministers and preachers of the gospel, bearing, perhaps, a not much smaller proportion to the whole than these families bear to the whole population. Then it is a matter of thankfulness that, with cheap and easily obtained education, the sons of the poor—indeed of the poorest—may, and often do, overcome all difficulties, and have all the better reason to hope for success in their work, because they have had such difficulties to encounter and surmount. But it is, as might be expected, from the great middle class that our clergy are mainly derived, as indeed it is from that class that the secular professions also are mainly supplied. And there is a section of that middle class

that has contributed much more than its proportional share to the ministerial ranks. The "sons of the manse" have in very many cases become the occupants of the manse. And this is as it ought to be. Without any idea of advocating an exclusive hereditary ministry, formed after the model of the hereditary priesthood of an earlier dispensation, we rejoice in the many instances in which sons have worn the armour of their fathers—instances in which fathers have given evidence of their estimate of the blessedness of their sacred office by consecrating to it the best beloved and most gifted of their sons; instances in which sons have given an unconscious testimony to their fathers' qualities by their voluntary choice of their fathers' calling, regarding it as a worthy object of ambition to walk in their fathers' footsteps. It is in one sense a tribute to the genuineness of Christianity, when one who has the best opportunity of detecting hypocrisy or inconsistency in those who are the prominent representatives of the Christian character, thus tender their suffrage in its favour.

Such a one was Samuel Miller; a son of the manse, a member of one of those distinctively Christian families of whom we have had, and have, many in Scotland. His father, in Samuel's earliest days, was minister of the parish of Eassie, in Forfarshire, and was afterwards translated to Monikie in the same county. He was not, indeed, of a clerical family. But his wife, the mother of Samuel, was the daughter of Dr. Martin of Monimail, and was the daughter, sister, and

aunt of many whose names hold an honourable place in our ecclesiastical rolls. Mr. Miller of Monikie was a man of high character and superior ability, one of those ministers of the Church of Scotland who formed a cluster of morning stars, very noticeable in the spiritual sky, while the darkness of "moderatism" overspread it. Samuel was the second son in a family which ultimately contained thirteen children, seven sons and six daughters. He was born at the manse of Eassie on the 2nd March, 1810. As the family gradually increased, the difficulty was felt of obtaining education for its members, and of making the limited income suffice for the supply of the wants, and the sustaining of the respectability, of a minister's family—the filling of so many mouths and the culture of so many minds. It was thought that the double problem might to some extent be solved by the reception into the family of three or four sons of gentlemen, who should be treated as members of the family, and whose education should be conducted by a domestic tutor, under the superintendence of the minister and his wife. The high character of Mr. and Mrs. Miller made it no difficult matter to procure as many of such boarders as could be accommodated. This arrangement seems to have been perfectly satisfactory; and the boyish friendships thus formed between the sons and the boarders of the manse were perpetuated, to the mutual pleasure and profit of both. If I mistake not, this was the beginning of the life-long friendship between Samuel and the late Earl of Dalhousie, a man to whom

the Free Church was indebted for invaluable services in and out of Parliament. We have not much information as to his boyhood. The following scrap by his only surviving brother is not without interest.

“Samuel and his mother were great allies. She was a woman of peculiarly sweet, unselfish, and loving nature, and she and Samuel drew to each other as kindred spirits. Many a night I remember of these two sitting at the dining-room fire for hours after every one else had gone to bed, talking in the most affectionate manner, more like two lovers than mother and son; I rather think that some of us younger fry laughed at him for this.”

I have no doubt that this statement refers rather to Samuel's student days than to those before he left his father's house. In any case, it is no bad characteristic of boy or lad to be a “great ally” of his mother. It were interesting, if it were possible, to trace in his life, and ministry, and the development of his character, the effects of these midnight conferences with a “sweet, unselfish, and loving mother.” This, like so much else, we must take for granted. But like causes produce like effects, and it cannot be doubted that the effects in this case were similar to those which many biographies disclose.

There have come down to us traditions of mimic Waterloos fought in the play-ground of the manse, and of the difficulties which ensued from the unwillingness of the French to be beaten; and we can well believe that, with Samuel for a Wellington and James

for a Napoleon, or *vice versa*, the difficulty was not easily surmounted.

The result of the home teaching, where a few clever boys received the undivided attention of a tutor, under the superintendence and with the aid of the intelligent father, was that Samuel was "ready for college" in respect of scholastic attainments, at an age when he could not possibly profit to the full extent by academic methods. But there was no alternative, and Samuel became a student of the University of St. Andrews before he had completed his fourteenth year.

I have no doubt that it was his too early entrance into the college that prevented his making a very distinguished figure there. He was a conscientious and diligent student, and was undoubtedly possessed of abilities far above those of the great body of his class-fellows; but a youth of fourteen or fifteen will always be at a disadvantage in competing with others three or four years older than himself. It was, therefore, extremely creditable to him that his name appeared in the prize lists at all. His brother writes: "He was not particularly distinguished as a classical or mathematical student, though fair in both." But one surviving class-fellow writes: "You are safe to say that he took a high place in all his classes, and especially in Greek and mathematics." There is no real inconsistency between these apparently contradictory statements, nor between either of them and the other estimate which I have ventured to give. He *was* a distinguished student, considering that

probably he was the youngest in the class; but he did not attain the *highest* distinction, because his competitors were of maturer minds and years than he.

This disqualification ceased to operate when, his undergraduate course over, Mr. Miller became a theological student; for the disproportion between the maturity of a youth of 18 and one of 22 is by no means so great as between that of a youth of 14 and one of 18; accordingly, it appears that Mr. Miller gained the highest distinction in the theological class. The correspondent already quoted, Mr. Alexander of Duntocher, writes thus: "In the Hall he took the prize in one of his years for the best essay on the Resurrection of Christ. The whole Hall was to compete, and he was the victor. I transcribed the essay for him, as it had to be given in to the judges in the handwriting of another; and according to my judgment in those days, the essay was an admirable one."

Those acquainted with our Scottish Ecclesiastical Biography will have noticed that the session of 1823-4 in which St. Andrews received Samuel Miller as a student, was that in which she received the greatest of her professors, Dr. Chalmers, whose advent was to her as the rising of a brighter sun, and whose influence operated to the production of a cluster of students, most of whom have now passed away, but who were the means of unspeakable blessing to their generation. Never perhaps did so small a college send forth within so short a time so many men who were destined to reflect lustre upon their *alma*

mater. Mr. Miller had the advantage of being brought under the special notice of Dr. Chalmers from the beginning of his college course. We have before us the MS. of a letter addressed by Dr. Miller in 1851 to Dr. Hanna, a part of which, relating to our present subject, is published in the life of Dr. Chalmers.

“On being sent to college,” says Dr. Samuel Miller, “in 1823, my father commended me to Dr. Chalmers’s spiritual care; as that, however, was the year of Dr. Chalmers’s inauguration into the St. Andrews chair, and his hands were full, no particular method was adopted by him for discharging a trust which he readily undertook. Next session, however, it was suggested to him that he might act somewhat of a father’s part to the sons of some of his old friends, by taking us into his house on the Sabbath evenings, and giving us that religious instruction to which we had been accustomed at home. He at once consented to this; and during that winter four of us met regularly in his house on Sabbath evenings, when he instructed us and dealt with our souls as if we had been his own children. He gave us books for Sabbath reading, and examined us as to their contents, at the same time taking his own ‘Scripture References’ as a kind of doctrinal text-book for his expositions and examinations. By another year this little meeting was noised abroad, and, at the earnest solicitation of their parents, other students were admitted to the privilege of attending it, till the little company was increased to about a dozen. It was his very earnest desire not to have a larger number. He used again and again to tell us so, alleging as the reason, that he wished to look on us and deal with us in a *family* character. And so he did, in the way of parental counsel and prayer, joined with the approved old fashion of familiar catechising. By next year, however, applications for admission to this student’s class became so numerous and pressing, that, after resisting for a while, he at last gave way, and this third session of the class saw his large dining-room completely

crammed with students of all sorts and sizes. His mode of conducting the meeting now necessarily changed. His instructions became a kind of prelection to silent auditors on the leading topics of Christian doctrine and personal religion. Very simple and conversational they were, but all the more valuable on that account. It is now about a quarter of a century since, and not a few of that roomful have entered the eternal world. I believe that among these he now recognises the fruit of his labours. Others still remain ; and I have good reason for being confident that on many hearts impressions were made by the hallowed exercises of these *Horae Biblicae Sabbaticae* that have yielded, and will yield, fruit unto God. We all feel that we learned more of really Christian ethics at these meetings than by all his class-room lectures on moral philosophy.”

Dr. Chalmers continued these meetings all through his professorship in St. Andrews. The last two extracts from his diary given by his biographer are the following :—

“ *Sunday, 20th April (1828).*—Heard Dr. Hunter in the afternoon in the College Church ; eyed the last spectacle of the assembled students with emotion. Had my usual meetings, and *took leave of my student Sabbath scholars.*

“ *April 24th.*—Concluded my classes this day ; was well-nigh overcome by my allusions to the removal that was before me.”

Mr. Miller appears to have attended these exercises from first to last ; and we may be sure that he was present at the farewell lecture, and that he shared the emotion of the professor, who had been so much more to him than that term generally implies.

Among Dr. Miller’s papers now before me is a

large MS. which I have no doubt was produced while he was a theological student. It is entitled *Notes on Hebrew Poetry*, and contains a most elaborate classification of the various forms of Hebrew parallelism. How far it is original I have no means of ascertaining, but it is certainly not merely copied; and even if it be mainly a compilation, it indicates the thoroughness of the student's mind, and the labour which he expended in preparing himself to be an expositor of the Word of God, a scribe instructed into the kingdom of heaven, to bring out of his treasury things new and old.

As Mr. Miller's academical life began with the session 1823-4, so it would close with session 1830-1. He was accordingly licensed as a preacher of the gospel by the Presbytery of Dundee in February 1832, and was presumably occupied in assisting his father and other ministers, until he was ordained as minister of the parish of Monifieth, in September, 1835.

From the first it was manifest that his ministry was to be of no ordinary kind. With a splendid physique, and a graceful, because unaffected, delivery, with a mind originally strong, and admirably cultivated, with a heart filled to overflowing with love to God and love to man, and not inexperienced in the workings of the gospel and the Spirit of God upon the affections and emotions and will, he went among his people in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ. With a manageable parish, all of whose inhabitants he

knew and loved, he went in and out amongst them with a dignity that made his kindness more attractive, and a kindness that rendered his dignity all the more imposing. In these respects he was at the first as he remained to the last. Apart from his kindness, his dignity might have been taken for pride. Apart from his dignity, his kindness might have been regarded as mere good nature. So admirably were the two good qualities combined in him that no one was likely to fall into either mistake; or if any one did fall into it, the mistake was sure to be rectified on a little closer acquaintance. Deeply impressed with a sense of the importance of his office and of the weight of his responsibility, his preparation for the pulpit was most laborious. But it was a labour of love. In one respect his early preaching differed from his later. At first his sermons were carefully composed and fully written. Afterwards the best parts of them were unwritten, but came fresh from his full heart, under the impulse of the indescribable sympathy that unites the intellect and the heart of the earnest preacher with those of his audience. Latterly he was one of the best of extemporaneous preachers, and the best of his preaching was, in respect of the expression, extempore. But this excellence in extemporaneous preaching was attained by him, and is attainable by *all* but a very few, only by a rigid avoidance of extemporizing in the first stage of a ministry. Some one said truly with reference to this subject, "Justification is by faith alone, but extempore preaching is by works."

Judging from the recorded experience of very many men who have begun their ministry in the country and have afterwards been moved into cities, I think it likely that that was the happiest portion of Dr. Miller's professional life. With a manageable parish, every inhabitant of which regarded him, and was regarded by him, as a friend ; able to bring an undistracted mind and a vigorous bodily frame to bear upon his pastoral work and his pulpit preparation ; with a congregation of sufficient intelligence and thoughtfulness to save him from the temptation of thinking that anything inferior to his best would "do well enough for them ;" and with intimations from time to time that a blessing from on high was resting on his work, he had all that could be desired to make his life a happy and useful one. And then at Monifieth he was within short walking distance of Monikie, where his father was ready to impart to him wise counsel in every difficulty, and his maternal "ally" to cheer him when his spirits were like to droop, and a swarm of young brothers and sisters welcomed his coming with hearty joy, and vied with each other in interesting the big brother in all their sports and all their cares. And there was family mourning too in the Monikie manse, which, though not joyous but grievous, was salutary for all, and most for the two ministers, father and son, who were thereby rendered fitter to comfort the sorrowing members of their several flocks with the consolation wherewith they were comforted of God. There is now before me a most interesting sketch of

the last days of a young sister, Wilhelmina, who died in 1839, at the age of 10 years, which represents most attractively the relations between the parents and their children, and from which appears especially the position which Samuel held in the affection and the respect of all. It is altogether a beautiful picture of a Christian family under the chastening hand of a loving Father—troubled but not distressed, perplexed but not in despair, cast down but not destroyed. In the course of this touching narrative occur such utterances as these on the part of the lovely patient, indicating the way in which the members of the family regarded the elder brother. “She became anxious to see Samuel; for she said she loved him dearly and she liked his prayers, and she would like him to be beside her, to speak to her, and to pray with her. We sent for him on Thursday evening, and he came immediately. The meeting was affecting in the extreme, but truly delightful. He spoke to her plainly of her condition, and of her hopes, and of the promises of the gospel to little children who love the Lord. Her spirits were elevated, she seemed very happy, and expressed herself to him in terms of the warmest affection and thankfulness for his tender love. He prayed with her every now and then at her own request, and she was composed, and comforted, and thankful.” . . . “At another time she requested us to tell Samuel that Christ was very precious to her, and requested us when he came to pray with her, if she should be drowsy, to be sure and ‘touzle’ her up,

‘for oh, I would not like to sleep when he is here; I would like to hear him pray, for I like his prayers very much.’”

But ere long he became independent of Monikie manse for home comfort and domestic enjoyment. In the summer of 1840 his own manse of Monifieth was transmuted from a bachelor’s lodging-place into a most attractive home, as in July of that year, Miss Thomasina Ireland, daughter of Dr. Ireland of North Leith—one of the men whose names are held in affectionate remembrance by those who remember how precious the word of God was in those days when there was little of open vision—became Mrs. Miller. Through forty years of wedded life Mrs. Miller was a crown to her husband, and now that she and her husband are separated for a time, she looks forward with patient expectancy to reunion with him whose loving helpmeet it was her delight and pride to be.

All this time formed part of the historical “Ten Years’ Conflict,” which stirred to their depths the hearts of all Scottish ecclesiastics. Mr. Miller, as a young man, of course did not take any prominent part in the controversy. But it seems never to have been doubtful on which side his sympathy and his convictions were. Upon the eventful 18th of May, 1843, he and his venerable father ceased to be parish ministers, and neither the one nor the other ever regretted the step which made them ministers of the Free Church of Scotland. In a volume recently published—Sermons by the late Dr. John Bruce, of Edin-

burgh, with a sketch of Dr. Bruce's life, by one of Dr. Miller's earliest friends, Mr. Burns of Kirkliston—I find a notice of the relation in which Dr. Miller's younger brother, the late Professor Miller, stood originally to the Disruption, of which, being then in India, I was not aware. It is so germane to this part of my subject that I need make no apology for quoting it at length:—

“Of those above named who, though they did not come literally with Mr. Bruce, came after him and concerted with him, the distinguished man, named last (Professor Miller), is worthy of special mention as having done so. Up to the very eve of the Disruption he was one of many who did not believe that it would ever happen, at least to any considerable extent—who were as incredulous as Her Majesty's Government and their advisers. He regarded those who spoke of ‘going out’ (among the rest his own venerable father, his brother, and other near relatives in the ministry), as labouring under a temporary delusion, which would surely give way when they saw what their folly, their fanaticism, would cost them, and when, perhaps, it was too late to undo the mischief, to remedy the blunder. He remonstrated with them accordingly, especially with his father, on the fatuity of the step he seemed to contemplate, ‘quarrelling with his bread and butter’—and tried to frighten them from taking it. Of course *without effect*;—and yet not without effect, not without remarkable effect; for though his father would not listen to his entreaty, *he* was persuaded to listen to and comply with *his father's* entreaty in turn, which was, to inform himself on the merits of the question which was coming so soon to an issue, and, before pronouncing on it, to make conscience of understanding it as a question with which conscience, and conscience towards Christ, had to do. He promised to do this, and he did it. Honest, upright, manly fellow as he was, he gave

himself for weeks, if not months, to the study of the whole subject, not only reading the pamphlet literature with which his father supplied him, but reading his Bible too, and reading it, we may not doubt, as his father advised him to do, with prayer to God for wisdom.

“The result was, that when the time came for action, he was ready to act ; and on the first day of the congregation’s assembling in the Waterloo Rooms, he made his appearance there with his family, not only as a hearer, but avowedly as an adherent and as a Free Churchman.”

Having at a much later period formed a pretty intimate acquaintance with Professor Miller, and feeling that admiration of his intellectual, moral, and spiritual qualities which was felt by all who knew him—and most by those who knew him best—it is difficult for me to resist the temptation to expatiate upon these qualities, and to add an additional testimony to the multitudes that have been given to the inestimable services which he rendered to the cause of God and goodness in our city and our land. Having in his own noble profession attained the *cordons bleu*—for so, I understand, the surgical chair in the Edinburgh University is esteemed—and ardently devoted to the study and the practice of that profession, he was ever ready to lend his powerful aid to the advancement of every good cause, especially by bringing the attainments of his own science most efficiently to bear upon the interests of humanity and godliness. It was this that gave so special a value for example to his arguments in favour of temperance and of Sabbath-observance. But I must not

enlarge further than to say that Samuel and James Miller were brothers worthy of one another, each in his own department doing the work of the Master whom both regarded it as their highest privilege to serve.

Mr. Miller had great difficulties in connection with the Disruption ;—not greater indeed than very many of his brethren had to encounter, and smaller than fell to the lot of not a few ; but yet great, and peculiarly trying to a man of so sensitive a nature as his. I find a brief reference to these difficulties in a letter written by Mr. Miller to an American correspondent, just a year after the Disruption. This letter forms part of an interesting correspondence, to which I shall refer further on. In the letter now before me, he says :—

“I may mention that my father and I had conterminous parishes, and we still labour in them amid wholesale opposition from the land-owners, &c., but with much encouragement from the people. Neither of us have churches, not being able to procure a foot of land whereon to build them, even if our poor people had the money. My father has two barns where he collects his flock ; and I have a wooden shed in which I preach to mine. We have also got somewhat decent shelter for our households ; though this has been difficult in our country district, swayed by adverse landlords ; on the whole, we have much reason to bless God and be content, seeing that we have got £105 from the central sustentation fund for the past year. We thus do not feel so much the loss of the £300 a year that we gave up. . . . In short, we are much more comfortable than others around us ; the people in the neighbouring parish of Carmylie, for instance, have been forced to worship in the open

highway, and their pastor * has been obliged to remove his family to a country town six miles off."

Probably Mr. Miller would not have taken the trials of the Disruption so resignedly had it occurred a few years before. It appears that some time after his ministry in Monifieth began, the preaching of the gospel, which he had always known to be a duty, and had in good degree felt to be a pleasure and a privilege, became with him a passion. This is stated in substance by a surviving co-presbyter of those days, the Rev. J. Ewing of Dundee, who ascribes it, instrumentally, to the influence which was exerted over him by his neighbour and dear friend, the late Mr. Murray M'Cheyne. It may well be believed that the saintly fervour of M'Cheyne would stir up Miller to increased zeal, and inspire him with a more glowing love of souls, and with a more ardent longing for their salvation. Under the impulse of this new enthusiasm it mattered little to him whether he preached in the decent parish church or in the wooden shed, whether he lived in the manse or in the cottage, whether his income was 300 pounds or 100 guineas. To preach the gospel was all in all; church, manse, stipend were, in comparison, insignificant. And the fire that was then kindled never ceased to burn. Youth-

* Dr. William Wilson, who after a highly important and influential ministry in Dundee, is now one of the clerks of the General Assembly, and the most efficient administrator of the Sustentation Fund, of the committee for which he is secretary and joint-convener.—T. S.

ful enthusiasm might give place to maturer wisdom, but till the last day of his life Samuel Miller lived but to preach the gospel.

It was not to be expected that the small congregation of Monifieth should long retain undisturbed possession of their minister—of such a minister. In some of the most important towns in Scotland the ministers “stayed in,” but more or fewer of the people “came out.” It was manifestly for the interest of the church—almost essential to its existence—to occupy these stations with superior men; and such men as Miller were in demand for such places. Such a place was St. Andrews, a place associated with some of the most important events in our Scottish Church history, the scene of the labours of Knox and Rutherford and Chalmers, the chief leaders of the three Scottish Reformations. This place, every corner of which is rife with sacred memories for every Scotsman, was doubly endeared to all those who claimed its old university as an *alma mater*. I have no means of ascertaining what were the motives which induced Mr. Miller to decline acceptance of a call which was addressed to him from this most desirable place of residence, this place of most hallowed and endearing associations, this most important field for the exercises of the gospel ministry. But he did decline it, as well as a call to a Presbyterian congregation in Liverpool, and several others. But ere long a call came which he could not resist; a call which we now, looking back upon its results, cannot hesitate in recognizing as

having been the call of God ; the call which gave him the name by which he was known to thousands outside the metropolis of the west, "Samuel Miller of Glasgow," and that other name by which he was designated in Glasgow itself—"Miller of St. Matthews." As to the origin of his connection with that great city, of which he became one of the best known and most beloved and revered citizens, I cannot forbear quoting from an interesting memorandum which has been kindly sent me by his friend and mine, Mr. Alexander of Duntocher.

"Dr. Miller's first visit to the West of Scotland was on the occasion of my ordination in 1838. He introduced me on the following Sabbath,—his text being Psalm xlix. 8, 'For the redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever.' All that I now remember of the sermon is, that it was clear, full of solid matter, and decidedly evangelical ; and this last characteristic was a notable one in those days of Moderatism, which though on the wane was still abounding. After the services of the Sabbath were over at Duntocher we drove across to Paisley, he having engaged to preach there in the High Church in the evening. Mr. Macnaughton, now of Belfast, was then minister of the High Church, and whose assistant I had been for some time previous to my settlement in Duntocher ; and as he was by far the most popular preacher in Paisley our friend had a crowded audience. He preached the same sermon, and preached it with even more vigour than at Duntocher, pro-

ducing a marked impression. And accordingly on retiring from the church, one of the elders, a well known merchant in the town, said to me—‘Your friend is an able man, and ought to be brought to Glasgow.’ My reply was—‘Well, if you only have patience, very possibly he may.’ Little did either of the speakers in this colloquy imagine at the time that our vaticinations were so soon to be realized, or in what manner they were to be realized; for in five years thereafter the Free Church of Scotland was formed, and the following year Samuel Miller was called to Glasgow, and as minister of Free St. Matthew’s he at once took his place as one of the foremost pulpiteers in the city.

“Dr. Miller’s second visit to the west was on this wise. The Disruption had taken place, and its first Assembly over; and as a second Assembly for the Disruption year had been appointed to meet at Glasgow in October, he wrote me from Monifieth saying, that he and his father were to attend the Assembly, and requesting me to secure lodgings for them. But instead of ‘hired’ lodgings I applied to a well known family in Glasgow, who at once cordially agreed to have both father and son for their guests; and with that family Samuel Miller lived on terms of closest intimacy, both as their minister and friend, to the close of his days. On the Sabbath of the Assembly Dr. Miller preached for me at Duntocher,—his text in the forenoon being Psalm li. 14, ‘Deliver me from blood-guiltiness;’ and his subject in the evening—

the cities of refuge, Numbers xxxv. At this distance of time I remember nothing of the evening sermon, save that it was out and out evangelical; but the forenoon sermon I never can forget. It was the most faithful, the most awakening, the most tender, the most affectionate, the most melting sermon I ever heard; and the impression it made upon me at the time still remains with me. He had three heads or particulars, namely, the sinner or unconverted man is, first a deicide, second a fratricide, and third a suicide; and in the opening up of these three heads he opened the pores of every heart, whether saint or sinner, and immersed us all in a flood of tears. I had to make some intimation in reference to our coming sacramental communion, and before the blessing was pronounced, I went to the pulpit for that purpose; but such was the effect of the sermon, that though I made several attempts to speak, I had to sit down, not being able to utter a word; and then *my* breaking down became infectious, and made the whole congregation a Bochim a second time."

I have understood that what induced Mr. Miller to be willing to accept this call when he had declined others, was the feeling of a failure of health, which was supposed to be caused by the keen winds of eastern Scotland, and which would probably disappear in the softer air of the west. Of course, in accordance with our Presbyterian usage, the case had to be pleaded before the Presbytery; and when the plea of the minister's health was adduced, and the commissioners

from Monifieth were told that the retaining of their minister would involve the early loss of him by his death, it is said that one of them replied, "We're willing to run the risk of that!" However, the translation was agreed to.

The congregation of St. Matthew's was at that time in its infancy. So much as is measurable in the strength of a congregation is, in our Free Church, generally estimated by the amount of its contribution to the Sustentation Fund—an imperfect test, no doubt, and sometimes misleading, and which ought never to be applied to a comparison of one congregation with another, but which is apparently unexceptionable for one use, that of judging of the progress or retrogression of a particular congregation. In the present case I find that the contribution of St. Matthew's to this fund was in 1845—the year after Mr. Miller's induction—£132 10s. 1d., and thirty years after, in 1875, it was £1500; and this although large expenditure had taken place in the erection of a large and handsome church, the prosecution of home-mission work in a district of the city, and on many other accounts.

The history of Samuel Miller's ministerial and pastoral work in Glasgow is written on the tablets of hundreds of affectionate hearts, immeasurably better than it can be written in these pages. For his congregation he studied, prayed, laboured, lived. Although his physical frame might have served the sculptor as a model of manly beauty, yet he was for a long time subject to frequent and severe illnesses,

which necessitated a suspension of his pastoral and pulpit work, and drove him to the retirement of our own Highland glens, or to the softer airs of Cannes. In the former instances he entered with characteristic zest and eagerness into the only relaxation for which he cared much, that of angling. But the "pastoral letters" which he wrote to his flock, specimens of which form a section of this volume, and multitudes of letters to the sick and bereaved members of his flock, some of which are now in my possession, but which I regard as almost too sacred for publication, show how absolutely he lived for his work. In this way the people of St. Matthew's were no losers by the frequent absence of their beloved pastor. In another respect they were great gainers. For it was in these times of depression and seclusion, when the hurry of city life and city pastorate was exchanged for close and intimate communion with his own heart and with his God and Saviour, that his spiritual experience deepened, and he attained more and more nearly to the perfection of spiritual wisdom and spiritual sympathy.

So far as I can make out there were three departments of ministerial work in which he specially excelled. First was of course his preaching. In his own way Miller was a great preacher; although his way was not such as to procure for him a crowd-attracting fame, or to cause his eloquence to be applauded. Indeed, of eloquence in the ordinary sense of the term, there was none in his preaching. But

there was the eloquence of a man conscious that he was under an awful responsibility to produce a certain end—which end was also the object of passionate desire to his own heart—that of effecting the salvation of his hearers. He believed and knew that the instrumentality by which this was to be effected was the bringing of the truths of the Bible into contact with the understandings, the affections, and the consciences of his hearers. The impression which his whole bearing made upon me on the very few occasions on which I heard him, was of a man doing a work, rather than of a man delivering an oration. At first he wrote his sermons *verbatim*, but for many years he wrote only a very few, and of the others only brief outlines. Several thousands of these outlines are in my possession, and they furnish a fine illustration of his regularity and exactness. A *fac-simile* of one of them is given in this volume, and they are all of exactly the same length, written on uniform paper, and as if they had been written with one pen. The marks of division and of subdivision are evidently most systematic, and on each one of them is inscribed a list of appropriate psalms to be sung. A collection of these outlines, if published, might furnish, if rightly used, very important hints and helps to young preachers; but they would not be of much general interest. The principle which pervaded and dominated all his preaching seemed to be that it is by Scripture that Scripture is to be explained, and illustrated, and applied. Therefore, his preaching was, to

a large extent, a comparison of Scripture with Scripture. The unlikeliest passages he brought into juxtaposition with his text, which was for the time the focus to which all Scriptural light must converge. The appreciation of such preaching necessarily required a special education, and hence it was that his own people, who had received, and were daily receiving, such an education, were probably thought to overestimate the preaching of their minister, by those who were only casual hearers of it.

But his preaching was as far as possible from being a mere conglomeration of Scripture texts. To adapt a favourite simile of Lord Bacon, he was not like the ant merely cumulating, but rather like the bee, extracting, digesting, and assimilating, the sweet juice of innumerable flowers in the Bible-garden. I do not know that there was any preacher of our time through whose preaching was more likely to be realized, by the blessing of God, in the experience of an intelligent and spiritual hearer, the aspiration of the apostle that the word of Christ might dwell in him richly in all wisdom and spiritual understanding. The grand pervading matter of all his preaching was the grace of Christ. But he kept back nothing of the counsel of God. Most terrible were his denunciations of sin, most stern his statements of the claims of the law on the sinner, most uncompromising his statement of the demand of the gospel for a higher, and a deeper, and a farther-reaching morality than any legal enactments can prescribe. Another charac-

teristic of his preaching was the freedom with which he dealt with controverted doctrines. He neither kept in the background, nor timidly and apologetically introduced, unpopular doctrines; but propounded them to the acceptance of his hearers on the authority of the divine declarations. Setting out with the assumption that there must be much in the Divine doings in providence and in grace, which it is most important for us to believe, while of necessity it is beyond our power of comprehension, he had no timid aversion to propound to his hearer truths above their reason, and to confess frankly that they were above his. Midway between the path of the rationalist, who boastfully declares that he will not believe what he cannot understand, and that of the Romanist, who says, with respect for example to his doctrine of transubstantiation, that he believes it *because* it is impossible, he sought to know and to understand more and ever more of God's revelation of Himself and of His will; but he did not admit that faith ought to be held in abeyance till knowledge and understanding shall be perfected. "I speak," he might have said, "because I believe, and I believe because of God's testimony; and that testimony is given in God's word; and I know that the testimony and the word are His, partly by intuition, as I know that light comes from the sun, partly by evidence such as authenticates any human document, but mainly by the inward work of the Holy Spirit, bearing witness by and with the word in my heart." Having this conviction he used great

plainness of speech ; and spoke, not indeed as one having authority, yet as one commissioned to interpret, and expound, and enforce an absolutely authoritative document. Possibly his strong conviction might be taken by some for dogmatism, but in reality he was far from being a dogmatist, while indeed he had no sympathy with those who represent doubt and uncertainty as the normal condition of the Christian, and substitute even honest guesses of their own for faith in the divine testimony.

His preaching, in respect to its matter, was evidently of a deeply experimental character ; yet not such as was fitted to turn the eye of the soul inwardly, instead of directing its vision outwardly to Christ and His cross. He looked inwardly, and led his hearers to do so, for the discovery of their own wants and weaknesses and sins ; but only in order to lead them to the fulness of Christ for the supply of all their wants. In these respects his sacramental discourses and addresses—of which several specimens are contained in this volume—appear to have been specially rich. In all his ministrations, but most markedly in these, he brings down every high thought and every lofty imagination, in order to bring all into captivity to the obedience of Christ.

It was said by Robert Hall, I think, that if, after the fashion of an English Assize, the proceedings of the day of judgment were to be opened with a sermon, a certain friend of his was the man who would be selected to preach it. The selection of Samuel Miller

by the Assembly of 1851 to conduct the services of a day which was set apart for humiliation and prayer, indicates a similar estimate by his brethren of the solemnity of his ministrations. The sermon which he preached on that occasion was published at the request of the Assembly. It is reproduced in this volume, and the reader will be at no loss to account for the great impression which it produced upon the congregated brethren, as well as on the general audience. But it is to be borne in mind that, while it is true of all great preachers that only an imperfect estimate can be formed of what their sermons were from reading them when published, this is specially true of such preachers as Miller.

The second department of ministerial work in which he seems to me to have specially excelled, was that of dealing with the mourner. In the pulpit he might sometimes be betrayed into the expression of scornful contempt for those who, knowing little of science and nothing of religion, would assume the position of arbiters between the two. But by the death-bed, and in the darkened dwelling of bereavement and sorrow, he was ever the sympathizing Barnabas. There was less of sentimentalism in his mental constitution than in that of most men. But all the more on this account was his sympathy with the afflicted strong, because it was the sympathy of so strong a man. Large eyes, says the proverb, weep large tears; and it must have been a grand sight to see Samuel Miller summoning up all the faculties of his powerful intellect, and all

the emotions of his large heart, and all the resources of his own experience, to the task of administering comfort to the disconsolate widow or the desolate orphan. I have already alluded to the fact that his frequent absences through his own illness necessitated his sometimes administering this comfort by means of letters, and it is this fact that has, as it were, admitted me into some of the sacred scenes of grief and comfort. I have hesitated long as to the propriety of admitting the readers of this volume to the same confidence, and am still not sure of the rectitude of the negative decision to which I have been led. One peculiarity of his dealing with his people, for which I was not prepared until his manuscripts came into my hands, was his frequent recourse to poetical composition relating to events of joy and sorrow in their history. I had intended that a section of this volume should be occupied with specimens of these compositions; but the length to which the actual sections have extended prevents this. So far as my judgment on such a subject is of any value—and I confess that it is not of much—these poems are much above the average of such compositions.

The third specialty of Miller's ministration which has struck me was his interest in the young members of his flock. I have abundance of evidence of this before me. In particular, I have several outlines of addresses to a young men's society, in which, it is unnecessary to say, he strongly commended to them the diligent use of all their opportunities for mental

culture ; but at the same time insisted upon their securing their eternal interests by the immediate acceptance of the freely offered salvation of the gospel. I have also drafts of addresses to "young communicants," as well as special letters addressed to them when the sacrament of the Lord's Supper was dispensed in his absence. In them he pours out his whole soul in trembling anxiety for those who were to take the awfully critical step of a first communion. We have heard proposals in these days of the introduction into our Presbyterian church of something corresponding to "confirmation." With respect to these proposals it involves no digression to make two passing remarks: *first*, that confirmation is of all things the most distinctively Episcopal, and cannot by possibility be grafted on Presbyterianism ; and, *secondly*, that if our ministers dealt, as I have no doubt multitudes of them do deal, with their young communicants as Miller dealt with his, the advantages which are represented as attaching to confirmation would be fully attained without it.

I do not know whether Dr. Miller possessed any special gift of preaching to children, but I am sure that his sermons, while dealing profoundly with "the deep things of God," and sounding the depths of the human heart, were yet so simple in style, and so clear in order and expression, that they were well fitted to attract, and to instruct, and to impress the young. Especially young men must have had sympathy with his manliness, with his strongly expressed scorn of

all that is mean, and base, and false, and his chivalrous approbation of the noble and the true. They could not fail to be impressed with the honesty of his dealing with them, nor to be convinced that it was not ignorance of their special circumstances, nor desire to deprive them of the enjoyments of youth, that led him to be so urgent with them to choose the good part which should not be taken away from them.

Although the pulpit was Miller's special sphere, and he will probably be chiefly remembered as a preacher, yet those who knew him in private have a most pleasing remembrance of his familiar intercourse with them. With a manner somewhat stiff to strangers, and with a stern severity towards those in whom he thought that he detected any lack of ingenuousness, he was wonderfully gentle and winning towards those whom he esteemed and loved. I saw little of him in private life, but I have heard much of the flashing wit, and the genial humour that enlivened his conversation in his hours of unbending. I know something of the attractiveness of these qualities in the conversation of his brother, Professor Miller, and it seems that opinion is about equally divided between those who were intimate with both, as to which of the brothers excelled the other in these qualities. But there is absolute unanimity in the sentiment that few treats were greater than to be present at a family party at which both the brothers met. If I might venture to express an opinion, formed, I admit, on imperfect data, I should say that Samuel had the keener wit,

and James the broader and the richer humour, while each had far more than an ordinary share of both. But in neither of them was there an approach "within a measurable distance" to that foolish jesting which is not convenient, not suitable to men engaged in the two most solemnizing of human callings.

Apart from his pastoral letters, to which I have already referred, whether addressed to the congregation as a whole, or to afflicted members of it during his enforced absence, I do not find reason to believe that Miller's correspondence was very extensive. Indeed it is scarcely possible for the minister of a large city congregation to maintain an extensive correspondence. I have before me, however, a series of letters which passed between him and his namesake, the late Dr. Samuel Miller of Princeton. The value which the Scotchman attached to this correspondence is indicated by the fact that he not only carefully preserved the American letters, but also transcribed his own, and kept copies of them. The correspondence began with a request on the part of the venerable professor that the young Glasgow minister, whose name had struck him in a list of the Free Church clergy, would favour him with a letter, from time to time, so as to keep him informed as to the doings of the Free Church; in all whose concerns he was greatly interested. I shall take the liberty to give the full text of the last of the series, because it bears exclusively on a biographical item.

PRINCETON, *July 3, 1848.*

REV. AND DEAR BROTHER,—It gives me unfeigned pleasure to state that the Board of Trustees of the College of New Jersey, in this place, on Tuesday last, the 27th ult., with great cordiality and unanimity, conferred on you the degree of *Doctor of Divinity*, and as I am myself a member of that corporation, I should do injustice to my own respectful and fraternal feelings if I did not add that I have seldom given a vote in that body with more heartfelt pleasure than when I deposited my suffrage in this case.

As I am anxious to avail myself of the next steamer for the conveyance of this letter, I am constrained to send it off by this day's mail. And as I labour under much of that nervous debility which a man who is approaching the 80th year of his age must, of course, expect, I can only write a few hasty lines; especially as I am indulging the hope of receiving from you, in a few days, some account of the proceedings of the last Free Church Assembly, to an account of which we are looking with no small interest.—I am, rev. and dear sir, with cordial respect and fraternal affection, your brother in Christ,

SAML. MILLER.

A "Princeton Degree" is an honour of which any man may well be proud. It was, no doubt, a matter of gratification to its recipient, and its value must have been enhanced by the graceful manner in which the fine veteran announced it. There was, all over

Scotland, and especially in Glasgow, a unanimous "homologation" of the Degree. Probably Dr. Miller was the only man in Scotland who wondered why it had been conferred.

Dr. Miller neither was, nor ever desired to be, distinctively an ecclesiastic; but, as a Presbyterian and Free Church minister occupying a prominent and influential position, he took his part conscientiously in the discussions of the various questions which arose from time to time; and in Presbytery, Synod, and General Assembly, he was ever regarded as a man whose judgment was entitled to special respect. No opponent in controversy ever imputed to him unworthy motives. Every one instinctively felt that, whether his opinions were right or wrong, they were honestly formed and candidly expressed. It was mainly in connection with one of these controversies—that relating to union between the Free Church and the United Presbyterians, that the present writer was brought into close contact with Dr. Miller. It were not for edification to enter here into the merits of that controversy. Those who were called Anti-unionists did not fall a whit behind their opponents in respect for the United Presbyterians personally, nor in appreciation of the service which their church had been enabled to render to the cause of God and of vital religion in our country. But they considered that, by adopting what are called voluntary views, they were occupying ground on which the Free Church could not join them without prejudice to

what they regarded as a work to which she was specially called, the maintenance of the right of the Church to be free, along with the duty of the State, as also the minister of God, to apply her resources, directly and indirectly, for the furtherance of God's cause. All agreed that the great work of the Free Church was to preach the Gospel at home and abroad, to Jew and Gentile. All agreed that she had been specially honoured of God to prove that this can be done by the Church, to a larger extent than, perhaps, had till then been thought possible, not only without State aid, but in the face of State opposition. Both parties in the Free Church were at one with the United Presbyterians in reprobating such opposition; but the United Presbyterians equally denounced such aid. The Unionists in the Free Church either agreed with them in such denunciation, or at least held that State aid, while it might not be always unlawful, was yet of so little value, and moreover so liable to abuse, that it was scarcely worth contending for; while the Anti-unionists held that they had no right to cease contending for what they and their fathers had always held to be right. Such, I think, is a fair statement of the question, which was keenly discussed in a second "ten years' conflict," and which seemed at one time to be destined to rend the Free Church asunder.

While the controversy was at the fiercest, a proposal was made that Dr. Miller should be called to occupy the post of highest honour in the Free Church, by his being appointed Moderator of the General Assembly of

1872. I frankly declare that the leading men among his opponents were not to blame for not giving effect to this proposal. On the contrary, I believe that, over and above their sincere respect for Dr. Miller, they would have been pleased to be able to exhibit a degree of magnanimity on such a point, especially as it might have had the effect of conciliating some of the Anti-unionists. At all events—though this was too small a matter to be taken into account—it would have had the effect of silencing for a year one of the most potent voices on the other side; for it is an absolute law, not the less binding because it is unwritten, that the moderator, during the year of his holding office, is perfectly neutral in respect of all matters controverted within the Church. But, for a reason which was well-known at the time, and which was not of a party character, it was thought that the claim on behalf of Dr. Miller should be postponed; and when the proposal was repeated next year, and agreed to by all, matters had assumed such an aspect that Dr. Miller respectfully, but peremptorily, declined to occupy the chair. In fact, it was expected, or at all events greatly feared, that that Assembly would take a step which would issue in a disruption of the Free Church; and, as the party with which Dr. Miller had always acted were quite aware that they would be in a minority on that critical question, it was deemed altogether unsuitable that he should be called to announce the decision. This action was happily not taken by that Assembly; and one cannot but feel

some measure of regret that Dr. Miller never occupied that position, which all felt that he had well merited, and for the occupancy of which he had all qualifications in no ordinary degree.

I have had occasion to allude repeatedly to Dr. Miller's frequent illnesses. At one time his voice utterly failed him, and there was little hope of his ever recovering it sufficiently to be able to conduct the services in so large a church as St. Matthew's. These fears were happily disappointed. But it was indispensable for his sake, and the congregation's, that the whole weight of the charge should not rest upon him, and the Assembly of 1875 consented to the appointment of a colleague minister. To this matter two of Dr. Miller's letters in this volume relate. The proceedings resulted in the call and the appointment of Mr. John Watson—an appointment which Dr. Miller refrained from doing anything to promote, but which afforded him great satisfaction, which was not diminished but steadily increased as long as the two colleagues remained in the joint ministry of the congregation.

In one of his letters contained in this volume Dr. Miller expresses his thankfulness for bodily suffering as a means of training him to deal experientially with the sufferers among his flock. But his gracious Lord saw meet to visit him with greater trial than any amount of bodily suffering could have inflicted on him. In all his ministry he had rejoiced in a body of elders and office-bearers who equally rejoiced in him. I might say that they were proud of him and he of

them. But a painful misunderstanding arose between him and some of them. They imagined that he endeavoured somewhat dictatorially to carry out his own views regarding certain congregational arrangements. He imagined that they were deficient in respect to the position which he was entitled to occupy as *primus inter pares*. I am neither entitled nor required to sit in judgment upon them. I can quite well believe that so strong-minded a man, accustomed to state strongly what he felt keenly, may have sometimes appeared to assume an attitude of dictatorship; but of this I am sure, that no such desire was in his heart. I never heard a word of this matter from Dr. Miller himself; and as my information comes exclusively from those who took part with him in the unhappy strife, it were not fair to assume that those who opposed him had not sufficient grounds for their action, as I have no doubt that they thought they had. I should very gladly have passed over this matter altogether, but I could not, as an honest biographer, omit all reference to a matter which, for a long time, occupied a foremost place in Dr. Miller's thoughts, and pressed as a heavy burden on his spirits; both as it was the only personal quarrel in which he was ever engaged, and much more because it resulted in the withdrawal of a considerable number of members and office-bearers from his beloved St. Matthew's. I doubt not that this was a grief of heart to them, as I know that it was to him. Thus did Paul and Barnabas part at Pamphylia, not without anger indeed, but far more in sorrow.

On the evening of the 6th of November, 1879, I had the great pleasure of attending, on Dr. Miller's invitation, a great meeting of the congregation of St. Matthew's, when a splendid presentation was made by them to their minister in the form of a life-size portrait of himself. On that occasion the chair was occupied by Mr. Watson, the junior pastor, who discharged the pleasing but difficult duty which devolved upon him in a way which all who were present regarded as simply perfect. Admirable speeches were delivered by many of Dr. Miller's oldest friends, and the whole proceedings were of the most gratifying and delightful character.

Although it is the season of youth that is generally compared to the changeful April day with its alternation of sunshine and shower, yet it has often appeared to me that later life is still more frequently marked by the chequering of joy and sorrow. A heavy sorrow fell upon Dr. Miller when Mr. Watson received and accepted a call to a most important charge in Liverpool. There was considerable delay before Mr. Salmond was got as his successor; and it was a time of sore trial to Dr. Miller. The following letter, addressed by him to Mr. Salmond, will show how deeply he felt the uncertainty as to Mr. Salmond's acceptance of the call to St. Matthew's.

“23 NEWTON PLACE,
“GLASGOW, 18th Feb., 1881.

“DEAR MR. SALMOND,—The telegram which I received yesterday, at 3.20 p.m., from Aberdeen, telling shortly the result of

the Presbytery's dealing with our call to you, smote me down very much ; and, when the news reached the congregation at the Prayer Meeting in the evening, every one was bitterly grieved and disappointed. I am glad to find to-day that an appeal was taken to the Synod, and I may say to you at once that the St. Matthew's people will not fall from that appeal, but prosecute it, in the earnest hope that we may yet succeed in securing you as co-pastor.

“ I can easily understand, after what you wrote to me last week, why you cast yourself on your Presbytery, when you were not able to indicate that your own mind was fully made up, and I can also quite understand why the Presbytery decided as they did ; for when the person chiefly concerned, after solemn, protracted, and prayerful deliberation, could not see his way to say he was ready to accept the call, the members of Presbytery, whose minds had not been so occupied and exercised on the subject, could scarcely be expected to bid him leave his present attached flock to go to another. I believe, indeed, that most presbyteries would have acted as that of Aberdeen has done. Still such a verdict does not prove that the right decision has been arrived at ; and, therefore, we are all thankful of the appeal as a means of more fully trying what is the mind of the great Head of the Church as to the whole question. I entreat you, therefore, not to feel as if our appeal were unkind to yourself, in protracting your anxieties or as worrying you on the matter at issue. If your mind had been conclusively made up that you could not hear calls, we would have acquiesced at once, however sorrowful. But it is just because we think that your mind is *not* so conclusively made up, that we still have the earnest hope that you may see the hand of God in guiding you to accept of our call. At any rate we cannot give up the case, without trying to the utmost to obtain that on which our hearts are so anxiously set. I understand from what you have already written to me that you feel as if you were not the person for St. Matthew's—a very groundless fear I am persuaded. For not only does the congregation think the very reverse, but your own brethren and

all who know you are persuaded that, by God helping you, you are just the most suitable man for the position.

“I am full of hope as to the ultimate result, from a similar case which fell under my own experience years ago. Dr. Robert Buchanan and I went to the Presbytery of Fordoun to advocate Mr. George Philip’s translation to Glasgow from Stonehaven. Mr. Philip then did exactly as you have done, and the Presbytery of Fordoun did exactly as the Presbytery of Aberdeen did yesterday. We appealed to the Synod, and succeeded in effecting the translation; for, in the interval, Mr. Philip, on more mature consideration, saw his way to state to the Synod his readiness to accept the call to Glasgow, and he was translated accordingly. Our fond hope is that such may be the case with you in the present instance; and, O how gladly would we all hail such a consummation!

“Like yourself, I also could not see my way to leave my first flock, at Monifieth, within a short year after I had gathered my flock there after the Disruption—especially when they had no church, and even no site for one. Hence I *positively* declined several calls. But I was brought to see the *majus bonum* of the church pointed clearly to my removal, and I sorrowfully—but willingly—acquiesced. Two conflicting calls came to be decided on by my Presbytery; and, while I said plainly that I felt ready to be translated, I threw on my Presbytery the *onus* of deciding to which of the two congregations I should be sent, and they sent me to Glasgow. Now I am in very strong hopes that at the Synod you will be able to state your readiness to leave Cults, as I was brought to state my readiness to leave Monifieth; in which case your acceptance of our call would be certain.

“A congregational meeting will be held here on Thursday first, to consider whether or not the appeal should be prosecuted; and there can be no doubt that the appeal will be carried out, *unless you positively forbid us to do so*. Surely—surely—you will not interfere in that way—nay, rather let me urge upon you with all my might to come to the conclusion that God’s will is

that you should leave Cults—though the wrench may involve pain—and come to a sphere for which every one feels you are peculiarly fitted to do more effective work for the Lord, than that at which you are at present. Do excuse my writing thus ; but I strongly feel, and therefore I cannot help strongly stating my convictions to you.

“ Since I wrote last my dear brother-in-law, Rev. Robt. H. Ireland, of Portobello, has been cut down in mid-time of his days and usefulness. This coming so soon after the similar bereavement of another brother-in-law, Mr. Comrie, has smitten us down very sorely. But, as to both of these dear brethren, we can also rejoice that they have entered into the rest prepared for the people of God.

“ If you write any answer to this I shall be delighted to receive it ; but do not hastily commit yourself ; and, therefore, don't answer till farther consideration and prayer enable you to see your way more clearly, and I only ask in the meantime, *that you will not forbid us to prosecute the appeal.*

“ Ever faithfully,

“ SAMUEL MILLER.

“ REV. C. A. SALMOND.”

The result was as he had hoped. The appointment was specially gratifying to him, and he looked forward to much comfort from the co-operation of a man in whom he doubted not to obtain not merely an official helpmeet, but a congenial personal friend. Such hope was not to be realized. The last public service that Dr. Miller performed in St. Matthew's was the installation of his colleague ; one of the first public services which that colleague had to perform was to officiate, with heavy heart, at Dr. Miller's funeral.

In consequence of the unique position which I occupy in relation to our Free Church Colleges, it falls to my lot to spend a considerable portion of every winter in Glasgow. Some time in the winter of 1880-81 I received a kind message from Dr. Miller, to the effect that he was ill, and that he would like me to go and see him. I found him lying *on* his bed, and remember that I was struck, even more than I had ever been before, by the grandeur of his physique. He was a good deal depressed in spirits, and spoke plaintively of the bereavements that had befallen him within a short time, the removal of Mr. Watson and the death of two brothers-in-law, to whom he was warmly attached, Mr. Comrie of Carnoustie, the husband of his sister, and Mr. Ireland of Portobello, the brother of Mrs. Miller. At that time it was not thought that his illness was of a very serious character. As he requested me to visit him as often as I could, and as I was assured that conversation would do him good rather than harm, I repeated my visit several times—once a week, I think, as long as I remained in Glasgow. On every occasion I felt more admiration of, and affection to, the man. Neither he nor his friends at that time anticipated a fatal termination of his illness. But I have often thought since that I might have inferred from the manifest ripeness of his soul for glory that the time of its removal to the garner could not be distant.

What follows I must give in the simple words of Mrs. Miller, his most loving and most beloved wife.

“ In the month of January Dr. Miller was laid aside for nine weeks with a heavy cold. He seemed, however, to get quite over it, and resumed his loved work, preaching with his usual vigour each Sabbath.

“ In April he dispensed the Lord’s Supper, and preached several Sabbaths thereafter.

“ His heart was much gladdened when the decision was made known to him that Mr. Salmond had agreed to come as his colleague and successor, and anxiously desiring not to lay too much upon him on his first coming to city work, he arranged to get over some special meetings the week of the induction, so that each day and evening of that week were filled with work.

“ On the Friday evening he was made very happy by the reception his young colleague received from the congregation, and by the kindness shown to himself ; but that evening proved the last time he saw his beloved flock, for there he caught a fresh cold and a heavy cough. At first he kept his bed for a day or two, hoping to get rid of it as before, but the second week thereafter he was entirely confined to bed, and complained of pain in his right side.

“ All attention was paid him by his own medical attendant, but his relative in Edinburgh was requested to come and see him, which he at once did, and expressed himself satisfied with all that had been done, and hopeful that all would go on well.

“ At first Dr. Miller did not think himself very ill, but after his nephew’s second visit, he remarked, ‘ I

think the doctors think me worse than I thought I was.' It was answered 'Oh yes, you are very ill, but God is all-powerful and can raise you up again to do more work for Him.' He answered, 'I hope so.'

"He slept a great deal when not prevented by the cough, and spoke very little, always trying to read when awake, and the Bible he studied from was daily at his side.

"Pleurisy and congestion of the right lung being his ailment, it was always said, "the disease was going on favourably," and such was indeed the case. But on the Friday before his death he became greatly enfeebled, and a dread came over the mind lest his strength would give way. But he himself felt and said he would get better, and had yet work to do for God on earth. Once he turned his head and calmly said, 'I see the doctors are anxious about me.' It was answered, 'Yes, we are all anxious about you.'

"Other relations came to see him, and they were surprised to find so little change in his appearance. During all his illness his patience and submission were very great, as well as gratitude for all attention. Being reminded how he used nightly to go over the Psalms of David ere falling asleep, he answered, 'I am reaping the benefit of all that in my own experience now.' The text being repeated, 'Thou shalt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee,' he added, 'Because He trusteth in Thee, and I have done that long ago.'

"On the Monday, seeing he was so weakened, it was

said to him, 'God seems to be going to take you home;' but not fully understanding what was said, he added, 'We will go together.' Once on Monday he said, 'I think this cough will finish me,' but only being able now and then to say a word, and getting medicine every two hours, he scarcely spoke at all.

"On Tuesday, the morning of his death, about ten o'clock, he asked for his spectacles, put them on himself, asked his study Bible, but could not hold it up; he then tried the small one he had so long carried with him to the pulpit, even it he found too heavy. He wished to find the usual place for family worship, so looking up asked, 'Which chapter in Romans is it?' A small epistle to the Romans was given him; trying it also he laid it down saying, 'It won't do.' His sight was failing, and in an hour thereafter he calmly fell asleep in Jesus."

Seldom has a great city been more solemnised than was Glasgow, when on the 8th of July, a vast procession passed through her streets to lay the mortal part of Samuel Miller in the picturesque Necropolis. Old and young, rich and poor, felt that a blank had befallen in the list of her citizens which would not soon be filled.

On the following Sabbath discourses were delivered in St. Matthew's by Dr. Smeaton, Mr. Watson, and Mr. Salmond. They were published, and are probably in the hands of all who will read the present volume. It is not therefore necessary that I should give from them, but it will go some way towards

compensation for the imperfection of this sketch if I appropriate a paragraph or two from each of them.

DR. SMEATON.

“I shall notice a few things which struck me as characteristic of the man :—

“First, he had a rare power of expression and a felicitous ease of utterance always at command. From the clear and elegant simplicity of his language no one could fail to apprehend his meaning. With sharply defined thoughts, and a certain intensity of mind, his language was incisive, but never stronger than the truth would bear. His style was like the man.

“Second, he always addressed himself to the elements in man’s nature which linked the finite to the infinite, the creature to his Maker, Law-giver, and Judge. He did not entertain a congregation by sensuous or pictorial descriptions, to the neglect of direct appeals to the spiritual elements which are to find an echo in man’s nature. He commended the truth to every man’s conscience, and dilated on the grand doctrines which he had received into his own soul. But he was bent on reaching the entire man, the whole mind of the hearer. While objective doctrinal teaching was fully given to inform the understanding, and to make the impression which is fitly produced only by this channel, he never allowed his hearers to rest there till he reached their conscience by some of those allusions to the divine authority and law which he knew so well how to use.

“ Third, he enforced doctrine and duty, justification and sanctification, in admirable proportion. No one could allege against him that the certain and indissoluble connection between justification and sanctification was not emphatically taught. He felt that a preacher aims too low who stops short of conversion. But when men are converted he deeply felt that every thing will stagnate, unless prominence is given to Christian character, Christian experience, Christian ethics ; that they cannot exist apart ; that doctrine will not retain its freshness without life, and conversely ; and that Christian ethics infallibly follow, but do not precede, peace with God.

“ Fourth, add to all this a deep calm zeal which, while admitting whatever of good attached to any religious phenomenon, never bartered away certain truth for the uncertain possibility of advantage, or spent its energy in restless bustle. His balanced mind and regulated zeal like an instinct kept him in the happy medium.

“ I admired many things in our departed friend, who deservedly filled a large place in the public eye. But there was none that attracted me more than his inflexible allegiance to truth and duty, and his ripe spirituality of mind. He entered with astonishing clearness of perception into the historic incidents and doctrines of Scripture. He identified himself with these many-coloured scenes, on the principle that the new creature is the same in every age, and that the believer’s relation to Christ is the same amid all the

degrees of objective light. He lived over again the principles, aims, and motives of the several characters, and could at every turn distinguish grace from nature with singular precision. His first inquiry was how men would act, and ought to act, in given circumstances ; and he brought out the principles from which they did act with marked accuracy, recognising what was of God under every garb and every weakness. He exhibited the gospel in its application to men's life ; and he owned nothing as true which had not enough of vital energy to throw a transforming influence over life."

MR. WATSON.

" I am thankful that the preacher in the morning—remembered always by his own students as the most beloved of Professors—saw his way to give us a sketch of the excellence of that preaching. It appeared to me, with yourselves a hearer in this church for three too short years, as the only preaching of its kind I had ever heard. It was not occupied in building up and defending, one by one, a series of doctrines, though it left you in no doubt regarding the doctrines of the day. It did not turn, you will remember, on questions of authorship, and dates, and language. It seldom took the form either of a biographical or historical study. It did not deal very directly with the practical details of duty or service. It could hardly even be said to be, in the ordinary sense of the word, expository preaching. It was unique. It was

the Scriptural exposition of Scripture, and, at the risk of deepening our sorrow, I must recall to your minds the manner of his preaching. You can never forget with what solemnity he gave out his text, and with what clearness he stated its relation to the context; how he stated his heads and explained their meaning, and *then* appeared the peculiar feature of his sermons. Holding up the truth he wished to expound—holding it up as it were in one hand, with the other he illuminated it before our eyes. Turning over the leaves of his well-worn Bible he quoted now from a book of Moses, now from the writings of a Prophet, now from a Gospel, now from an Epistle, making rays of light from every corner of holy Scripture to converge on the truth in hand, till what at first may have seemed uninteresting, or even unintelligible, became bright and beautiful in a light that came, not from the creeds and philosophies of men, but from the eternal Word of God. Such preaching—need I remind you?—required a scholarly knowledge of the Scriptures in their original tongue, a mind trained to thought and reflection, a hard and persevering study of the Bible, and a very special unction of the Holy Ghost. And it was because Dr. Miller was one of the best students of his day, and one of the most spiritually minded men you could meet in any day, that he was able, by the grace of God, to lead his people into the richest and most satisfying pastures of the Gospel. Other features less remarkable, only because they are more common among all evangelical ministers, were his reverence for

the holy Scripture ; you remember how he used to say, " Thus saith the Lord ;" how sometimes he said, " Isaiah saith, that is, the Lord by the mouth of Isaiah"—you remember that ;—the honourable place he gave to the work of the Holy Ghost, and his constant reference in some part of his sermon to the atoning work of our Lord Jesus Christ ; together with his wide-spread knowledge of the trials and temptations of God's people. His power was of the highest kind, due not to any affectation of manner—his manner was his own, and none of us would have wished it different—nor to the lavish use of illustration—though you know at a time he could employ one with great effect—you remember when he preached on " Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?" and the illustrations he employed in that sermon—nor to anything like a habit of strained and laboured eloquence—though he was a master of the most beautiful English—but simply to the truth of God preached by one of His ablest, most faithful and devoted servants, who knew nothing but Christ, and Christ crucified.

" But along with the preacher went the man, and you could never separate the one from the other. I shall not venture to speak about him as a Christian. That would be presumptuous on my part, but Dr. Miller *was* a man, and a *real* man, and here and now I say boldly he was one of the kindest and largest-hearted men that ever lived. You, who have been long his attached people, know that ; but others who only saw him at a far distance did not always understand him.

Everyone was obliged to respect his lofty and spiritual tone, but I have often been amazed and indignant at finding that many fancied him stern and hard. Perhaps it was not their blame. Perhaps they had met him when he was suffering very severe pain, or when he was condemning unrighteousness, or perhaps they had only heard a false report. At any rate, to suppose him such a man was a lamentable mistake. He was the best of friends. He was not ready to take offence at the conduct of his friends, or to make exacting claims on their kindness. He always thought well of those he loved, and would do them good at any cost. There was nothing mean or small about him. He gave every one credit for honesty, and he was the perfection of honesty himself. He had the unsuspecting nature of a child, and the royal dignity of a king. His love for little children, whom he delighted to hold in his arms, was very great, and a more gracious picture I never saw than when that splendid-looking man folded to his breast an infant he had just baptized. His tenderness of voice and spirit when he visited the sick and sorrowful, his forbearance with foolish or forward people, his interest in all the lights and shadows of human life, and his sympathy with the dumb creatures of God ; his unworldliness—they say ministers are worldly ; alas ! too many of us are ; but he never was—you know that during all his ministry he left his temporal interests to be cared for by his people ; his incapability of anything like compromise, or unworthy diplomacy—he would allow nothing to interfere with

his testimony for God—his sympathy with all good men and good work—some of his dearest friends were in the Episcopal Church, and some of them in the Methodist Church—of these, and many other characteristics, I might speak were it possible. One I cannot omit: he rejoiced in the success of any minister who was preaching Christ; and if any one proclaimed Christ from this pulpit, though it were the weakest sermon that ever came from a Christian's lips, he would thank him for it, because he had preached Christ."

MR. SALMOND.

"Next to her who was nearest to him, and the inner circle of the bereaved, we as a congregation have this day most cause to mourn. For in him we have lost our chief earthly prop, our best human counsellor and friend. I shall not intrude on you to-day my personal anxieties; for I need not lay claim in words to your sympathy and forbearance, in going forward to the enhanced responsibilities that lie before me now. It is to me a solemn reflection that Dr. Miller's last public act was to bid me welcome to the work of the Lord among you. We little thought, on that happy evening, that his fatherly welcome to me was his last farewell to you, and that his ministry here had ended the hour that mine began! Pray that I may be worthy of the sacred trust! Brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified, and that I may open my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel.

“We could not forecast the future which is now our present. But let us trust that the Providence which has brought us into our present situation will sustain and bless us in it. And though, to many of you, the glory of this congregation must in great measure have departed with him who is gone, I am confident that we who are left in office among you will have your generous sympathy and ready co-operation still, as we seek, in humble dependence on the Great Shepherd, to feed the flock of God which is among you, and to bring erring sheep within the one safe fold.

“Dr. Miller’s enduring monument will be, not this edifice—though that too will speak of him to many generations—but the work which he did in human hearts. Be it ours, by the help of the Spirit of all grace, to follow up that work, and each in our own place to do what we can to further it. Then he that sowed and they that reap shall rejoice together. Let our common bereavement bind us the closer to one another, and draw us the nearer to our covenant-keeping God. May death itself, in this instance, be made ours (1 Cor. iii. 22), to quicken us to a livelier faith and a more complete devotion, that we, too, when God’s time comes, may die the death of the righteous, and our last end be like his.”

An appreciative notice of Dr. Miller was published in the *Free Church Record*, from the pen of Dr. Andrew Bonar. Ere long, minutes were recorded by the various church courts to which he belonged, and by

the various organizations of St. Matthew's. I conclude my labour of love by transcribing that adopted by the General Assembly.

“Dr. Samuel Miller, of Free St. Matthew's, Glasgow, has been taken from us during the past year. The minds of many brethren will go back to the important services he rendered at the Disruption, when minister of the parish of Monifieth; but more specially did his gifts and graces come into general notice when he was removed to Glasgow. There, it is well known, he served the Lord, with unceasing zeal and with great success, for a period of more than thirty-five years. It cannot be forgotten that he was, in that city, a tower of strength to the Free Church, alike by his life and by his preaching. Distinguished by intense love to the inspired Word of God, his delight was to proclaim the Gospel from Sabbath to Sabbath, not in words of man's wisdom, but comparing spiritual things with spiritual. Always upright and honourable, as well as vigorous in intellect, his counsel was sought and much valued by his brethren, and his influence widely felt. A steadfast and even stern defender of the Crown rights of Christ, our Head, he never failed to show, when occasion required, how decided were his convictions of the truth. Long will his commanding presence and powerful preaching be remembered; and it is not too much to say that, in his death, our Church has lost one of those ‘who seemed to be pillars.’”

I.

EARLY SERMONS.

A

SERMON 1.

“Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? Art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art; the Holy One of God.”—Luke iv. 34.

THE possession of the devil appears to have been a distemper of body, which, though common in the days of the Saviour's flesh, is now altogether unknown. This discontinuance of so grievous a malady has been accounted a fruit of the victory which Christ achieved over the kingdom of the wicked one by His death and resurrection; but whatever the cause—that is, the *instrumental* cause—how grateful should we be for the mercy of God, which, as the *originating* cause, has restrained this power of Satan from exercising such a dominion over us of these later days.

But though the *bodily* possession of the devil is now unknown, alas, the *spiritual* possession of the devil is as frequent and as fierce as ever it was. And this is a malady even still more grievous than that noticed in the passage before us. Yes, the devil actually dwells in the heart of every sinner; that he possesses, and there he holds his hellish reign. Every sin that the sinner commits is the prompting of Satan's wish;

he that does the devil's work is under the devil's power. If spiritual death be within him, he that hath the power of that death is also there. We read that before Iscariot betrayed his Lord the devil entered into him; and it is just the same with every other traitor who betrays the Saviour, and by his transgressions crucifies the Lord of glory afresh. All deeds of darkness clearly testify that as the tree is known by its fruits, it is from the prince of darkness that they come; for what saith the Scripture, "He that committeth sin is of the devil." Yea, unto every sinner the Saviour has as much reason to say now as He said aforetime unto Peter, "Get thee behind me, Satan." In short, if Christ dwell not by His Spirit in our hearts, the wicked one of a surety dwelleth there.

This, brethren, is surely a dreadful thought for sinners; it is, however, one which ought not to be winked at, because it is true. Do we pity the maniac among the tombs, whose name was Legion because the devils in him were so many? and then will we not ask ourselves, have not as many entered into us? And in order to our coming to a right solution of this question, I would propose to show the proof of the devil's being in the sinner as given in the text, illustrating that as it was Satan who spoke the words of it in the *body* of the man in the synagogue, so he still repeats the words out of the *souls* of those whom he possesses; for is not this the language of sinners in defying God, "Let us alone, what have we to do with Thee?"

1. The devil's first exclamation was, "Let us

alone ;” a very natural outburst of audacity on his part, and determined opposition to the authority of the Saviour. How fully does it display his impotent anger at being interfered with in his work of destruction ! How shortly, yet how peremptorily, does it manifest his malice against the Lord of glory ! He appears to question the *right* of Jesus to meddle with his doings ; and yet it is a kind of confession that He has the irresistible *power* to do so. He is continually setting himself against the work of Christ, but now he perversely finds fault when Christ sets Himself against his work. And be it remarked, he does not speak for himself alone, for he says, “ Let *us* alone.” That is, he takes upon him to make answer also for the wretched man who is under his power. And in truth, such is the fascinating power which Satan possesses over his victims, that they cordially adopt his language, and enter into his spirit, even when their own misery is the result of it.

But they who are spiritually possessed by the wicked one do also adopt the same language. When Christ comes to heal them of their plague they also cry “ Let us alone.” They appear to think that the Saviour, in desiring to drive the evil spirit from them, intends to do them an injury. They boldly declare that they are well pleased with being under the power of hell, and that they do not wish to make the exchange of being made free from their thralldom. This is their language, “ Let us alone ; we are contented with our master ; we choose rather to remain

in our sins ; we have no wish to have them pardoned and purged away ; we desire to live under God's wrath, and to remain heirs of damnation. Depart from us, therefore, for we will have none of thy ways ; we will not have thee to reign over us ; leave us as we are, for thy vengeance we defy, thy mercy we scorn, thy salvation we trample under foot." They are just like the Gadarenes, who flocked in multitudes around the Lord when He came to them, for they "besought Him that He should depart out of their coasts ;" or like the Jews, who would not be rebuked by Him out of those sinful ways which they loved so dearly, and who, on hearing his doctrine, "reviled and gnashed on Him with their teeth."

Yes, brethren, it is thus that all sinners desire to be let alone, and hate Christ and His Gospel for interfering with them. The evil spirit being within them, they are thereby enslaved to a love of their sinful pollution, and set their faces against anything that would interrupt their wicked ongoings. And, therefore, they strive to banish Christ from their souls, and if their mouths do not utter the very words, their hearts and lives show that the language of the devil before us is adopted by them as theirs. If Christ comes to them through the still small voice of conscience, and they be thereby made uneasy, they forthwith do their endeavour to drown that voice or to flee from it, crying "Let us alone." If Christ comes to them through His Word, and some passage of the Bible awakens their fears, they shut the book, and

will read no more, crying "Let us alone." If Christ comes to them through affliction, thus striving to bring them to a right mind, they murmur with impatience, and blasphemously cry, "Let us alone." If Christ overtakes them in His own house, and through the means of some awakening appeal their guilt and their danger are set before them, they shut their hearts, if not their ears, against the voice of conviction, and seem as if they muttered, "Let us alone." If Christ, in short, by any striving of His Spirit bear hard upon their souls, they strive as sedulously against Him, they try every means to get away from the siege, they rush to other thoughts and other employments, they turn their backs upon His entreaties, His threatenings they will not lay to heart; but still this is constantly their cry, "Let us alone"—torment us not—pursue us not.

Alas, there are many—very many—who thus set themselves purposely to oppose all the Saviour's endeavours to heal them, to bring them to a sense of sin, and to lead them to the fountain of His own blood. They would be well pleased to be out of the hearing of the Gospel, it is so distasteful to their souls. They want to be rid of all melancholy thoughts about death, and judgment, and eternity. They want to live as they have lived, without having their consciences disturbed by disquieting fears. Perhaps they may have all the while a profession of religion, but they desire none of its power. They want to be let alone in this profession, for they esteem

it quite enough. They may go to the place of worship, and wear the sanctimony of the sanctuary ; but they bring the evil spirit with them, and will not part with it even there. For you observe that in the case before us the man possessed with the devil was in the synagogue—in the place of worship—the last place, one would have thought, where the devil would have come. But, no ; even there did he cry out against the Son of God, while professing to worship God. And, surely, it behoves us here to examine ourselves if we be not the same ; if, indeed, we have come here pretending to seek Christ, and are yet saying, “ Let us alone.”

Do we really wish Christ to let us alone—to depart and seek no more after us ? Surely no. Oh, then, let sinners bethink themselves in continuing to despise the riches of His grace ; for, if they so do, the very thing may come to pass in regard to them for which this demoniac cried aloud. You remember it hath come to pass before ; for thus, aforetime, spoke the Lord — “ Ephraim is joined to his idols, let him alone.”

2. The devil’s next exclamation was, “ What have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth ? ” This is given as a kind of reason for the first part of the cry, as if it had been said, “ Let us alone, for we have nothing to do with each other ; we can have no fellowship or intercourse together.” And, with regard to the devil, this is most true, even though it was the father of lies who said it. For it is written, “ What

fellowship hath Christ with Belial?" Is there not a continual and an implacable hostility between them and their kingdoms? Hath it not been so from the time that the apostate spirit and his angels rebelled against heaven, and were cast forth from it? And, in regard to man especially, and the possession of his soul, hath not this hostility been raging from Adam's days until now on our earth? For this was the curse pronounced on the serpent who deceived Eve—"Because thou hast done this, I will put *enmity* between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed." And is not the seed of the woman Christ? Well, then, might that old serpent say, "What have I to do with thee?"

But he says more than this, for his words are, "What have *we* to do with thee?" He is again speaking for his victim as well as himself. And here again his victim, the sinner, is not slow in taking up his language against the Lord, and acting upon it. For do not sinners, by their continuing in sin, and perversely rejecting the Saviour, plainly declare that they will have nothing to do with the salvation that is in Christ? The time has indeed come which the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh feared would come, as we find it written (Joshua xxii. 21-25). The sinner has indeed "no part in the Lord"; but what is worse, he avows that he is determined that he will not have any. The Lord entreats him to come unto Him, and by casting, so to speak, in his lot with Him, to receive such a part; but

the sinner refuses to listen, and to accept of what is so freely offered ; thus demonstrating how inveterately the carnal heart is wedded to death ; how sadly the soul under Satan's dominion is blinded to its duty and its interest, and how the natural mind is enmity against God.

For example—the Saviour comes and offers *light* to the sinner's soul ; but the sinner is enamoured of darkness—he chooses darkness rather than the light, because his deeds are evil. His deeds cannot bear the light—he fears lest in coming to the light his deeds should be made manifest and reproved. Darkness hides his sins, or at least he trusts that it will do so. It serves his purpose best as an excuse for his sins—false and vain though that excuse must be. Light, therefore, will not do for him. He shuns it ; he turns away his eyes from beholding it and his feet from walking in it. His conduct says, “ I will have nothing to do with it,” which is just virtually saying to Christ, who is “ the light of the world,” “ What have I to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth ? ”

Or, again, the Saviour comes to the sinner and not only offers him *light* to see his sins, but also *deliverance* from his sins. But the sinner is averse to such deliverance ; he wallows in his uncleanness with delight, even as the sow in the mire. Christ says, Rise and follow me ; but he replies, I will rather follow my lusts. Christ says, Come and be made holy ; but he replies, I hate holiness, I will have nothing to do with it, for I rejoice in wickedness. Christ says, Come, and

I will give thee eternal life ; but he replies, I will rather take my pleasure in this life, and I am resolved to live for this world and not for the next. Christ says, Receive my Spirit into thy soul ; but he replies, I will follow my own spirit's desires, then why should I accept of thee ? Christ says to him, Worship God and serve Him ; but he replies, I will worship my own idols, I will glorify myself, and I will serve myself, which is work enough without undertaking any of them. In short, whatsoever Christ comes to exhort, to offer, to teach, or to require at the sinner's hand, the sinner still contradicts the message, and the burden of his reply is always to this effect—"I have enough to do with the devil and the world and the flesh, and I am determined that I will mind only these ; then, ' what have I to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth ' ? "

The consequence is that we find the Lord complaining that sinners will have nothing to do with Him : as, for example, " Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life ; " " O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thee as a hen doth her chickens under her wings, and *ye would not* ; " " Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which satisfieth not ? " " Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed ; " Christ is " despised and rejected of men ; " " I have called and ye have refused ; I have stretched out my hand and no man regarded. " And in the prophet Joel He takes up the

very language of the text, and says, "Yea, what have ye *to do with me*, O Tyre and Sidon and all the coasts of Palestine?" Can there, brethren, be a more obvious proof that it is the very spirit of the devil that animates the spirit and the conduct of sinners—that they are verily under the possession of the wicked one?

But is it true that sinners in reality have nothing to do with Christ? They may have nothing to do with Him here, but they will have to do with Him hereafter. They may refuse His message now, but they cannot escape His judgment hereafter. If they will not have to do with Him as a Saviour, they must have to do with Him as a judge and an avenger at the latter day. Then shall the slighted Jesus sit as a judge alike on sinners and the devils that possess them. Lo, what will then avail their cry of "Let us alone"! They may cry that cry throughout eternity—but their worm dieth not, and the flame of their torment is never quenched.

3. The devil's next question to Jesus was, "Art Thou come to destroy us?" Yes, this is the work of Christ which Satan fears, and which the children of Satan fear also. Satan fears that Christ will conquer him and snatch his prey from his devouring jaws, for well he knows the almighty power of the Saviour's arm. He strove with Him before, and was cast forth from heaven; he hath striven with Him again, but Christ, by His "death, hath overcome him that hath the power of death, that is the devil," and thus is it written of Him, "For this purpose the Son of God

was manifested, that He might *destroy the works* of the devil." But the wicked one rejoices in nothing so much as in conquering, and therefore grieves in nothing so much as in being conquered. From his soul, therefore, he cried—"Let us alone; art Thou come to destroy us?"

And then the sinner cries the same, because he dreads nothing so much as his sins being destroyed. He would not have so much objection to the Saviour's wish if that wish would let his sins alone. He would not be so averse to salvation if he could get salvation and at the same time keep his sins. But he sees that the preserving of his soul and the preserving of his wickedness cannot go together. He sees that he must either let his soul be destroyed or his sins be destroyed; and, alas, he loves his sins far more than his soul—he chooses its destruction rather than theirs. He sees that Christ has no fellowship with Belial, and as he himself delights in Belial's fellowship, he joins issue with him in hating and denying his Lord. He thinks that Christ, by taking away his sins, will destroy his happiness, for his happiness rests on them alone, and therefore he will not submit himself to the law or the spirit of Christ. Oh what folly—what madness is this; and yet is it not the very conduct of sinners? Surely they are too obviously under the possession of the arch-deceiver Satan.

What, then, is the true answer to the question—"Art Thou come to destroy us?" as spoken by man. No; Christ came to save sinners, not to destroy. He

came to save their souls—to save them from wrath—to save them from misery—to save them from hell. He came to save them *from* their sins, not save their sins. He does this by destroying their sins and the evil spirit within them—the one He nails to His cross, and the other He casts forth by His cross. Oh, then, how should sinners hail the Saviour's work, instead of crying "Let us alone!" And how should this be enforced by the fact that though He comes not to destroy sinners now, He will come to destroy them hereafter, when "all the wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God."

Other evangelists make the question before us take another, though similar, form, when they record it as to this effect, "Art Thou come to torment us before the time?" Now this language, as spoken personally by the devil, obviously refers to the permission which he has received to tempt men until the last day, when he shall be bound for ever in eternal torment to do no more hurt to Christ's kingdom. And now he complains that the time of his torment was not yet come, and that therefore he might still be permitted to do his work until it should arrive. But taking the clause as the language of *sinners*, it may have another meaning. They are always saying—"It is not time to repent yet; it is not time to renounce the devil yet; a little longer we may indulge in sin; at some future period we may seek for salvation. What need is there of tormenting ourselves with gloomy thoughts? why should we think so soon of the evil day? and why,

then, should we be tormented with calls to repentance? why should the Gospel torment us before the time?" O, brethren, is it really a torment to come to Christ? What does He say?—"Come to Me and ye shall find rest to your souls." Is repentance really a thing to be dreaded and feared and disliked? Is it not the only way to have happiness, and joy, and peace? Why, then, should we complain when called to it, as if it were some disagreeable duty? A cutting off a right hand, and a plucking out a right eye it assuredly is, but this is better far than that soul and body should be cast into hell. Repentance is attended with sorrow, but it is not a torment. Sin, and sin alone, is the only torment which encompasses us here. Oh, then, let us willingly give up our sins that Christ may destroy them—that thus we may be delivered from the only true torment here, and from the eternal torments that are the fruit of it hereafter.

4. And very shortly. The last part of Satan's address to Christ was—"I know thee, who thou art—the Holy One of God." And good cause had he to know Him, for he had felt the power of His almighty arm, and also of His righteous vengeance. And therefore it is that "the devils believe and tremble." Here also we see the testimony that even Belial is forced to give to Christ, that He is the "Holy One of God." At verse 41 we read that this was even the case, for "devils also came out of many, crying out and saying, 'Thou art Christ the Son of God.'" How true, then, is it that God maketh not only the

wrath of man, but even the *wrath of devils* to praise Him.

What a lesson, therefore, does this teach us? If even devils testify that Christ is holy—if even Satan is a witness for the Saviour—how certain is it that He must be worthy of all acceptance. Satan would have denied Him if there had been the slightest ground for a denial. But no; he also sets to his seal to the excellence of Jesus, even when he blasphemes Him. And shall we deny Him? Surely we will do so no longer—for then, in this view, we should be worse than even the wicked one himself.

But considering the language before us as the language of sinners—even they also must acknowledge the holiness and the excellence of Jesus. But how awful is it to do so, and yet to say, “Let us alone, what have we to do with thee?” How dreadful to confess Him as the Saviour, and yet to refuse His salvation. Oh, shall we not bethink ourselves? Shall we join ourselves to devils who can never be saved, who see that there is salvation, but not for them? No interest in Christ is offered to them; but such an interest *is* offered to us, offered fully and freely with infinite love. Oh, then, let us come unto Him whom we cannot deny to be the only Saviour. Instead of any longer acting on the impious language of the text, let us reverse it, and cry aloud in prayer continually, “Come, Lord Jesus, and never let us alone till thou hast cast forth the evil spirit from us and brought us like Legion clothed to our right mind. We will have

to do with thee and thee only. Work thou in us and for us, thou Jesus of Nazareth. We know thee who thou art with the hearing of the ear, make us to know thee with that knowledge which is life everlasting. Thou art come to save us, but to destroy our sins ; let it be even so, and to thy name be praise for ever." Amen.



SERMON 2.

“ Behold, I have given Him for a witness to the people.”—Isaiah lv. 4.

IN this chapter we have one of the fullest and freest offers of salvation to be met with in the Bible—though every invitation there is full and free. The invitation is to all—“ Ho, *every one* that thirsteth,”—none is to stand back on account of his unworthiness—“ he that hath no money, come.” The invitation is repeated again and again, and urged with all the force of earnest entreaty. And then, in order to persuade the sinner, the Spirit of God sets before him the reasons most fitted to overcome our carelessness and sloth ; the excellence of the wine and milk, in which the soul may delight itself in fatness ; the freeness of its acquirement, without money and without price ; the folly of spending labour for that which satisfieth not ; and the sureness of the everlasting covenant of mercy by which salvation is provided.

The next argument of persuasion used by the Spirit of God is that contained in our text, viz., a setting forth of the character, work, and excellency of Christ as the Saviour, and the free grace by which He has

been given for that end unto sinners. That the text applies to Jesus Christ there can be no doubt. The substance and scope of the whole passage proves it. The previous verse especially mentions Him by name, for it is said that God's covenant for salvation is "the sure mercies of David"—*David* being a name by which Christ is designated over and over again in the Old Testament prophecy. In the New Testament Christ is often called the witness, the leader, the commander of His people, thus applying to Him the very language of the text ; while, to confirm the whole, we find that Paul, preaching at Antioch, expressly quoted the passage before us in his sermon, declaring it to be a descriptive prophecy of Christ Jesus the Lord.

I. Wherefore, Let us consider the Saviour as "*a witness*" to the people. He is a witness *to* the people, but *from* whom and *for* what is He a witness? He is a witness *from* God, to testify and to prove the truth of all that God hath spoken ; for this is His name, "the Amen, the faithful and true *Witness*, the beginning of the creation of God."

But why is it necessary that God should require to have a witness for Himself to the sons of men? It is because of man's unbelief. There is no occasion to bring forward a witness to bear testimony and give evidence upon any subject, unless the truth of that matter be called in question. But when the truth is denied—while it is most necessary that that truth should be believed—then it is that the evidence is produced and proof is given that the truth may be

vindicated, and that men may believe it. Such is the case here. It is most necessary that men should believe all that the Lord hath spoken of Himself, of themselves, of life, of death, of heaven, and of hell. But men will not believe. In the words of the Apostle, they call God a liar. And hence the Almighty, in His love for sinners, and in vindication of His own most faithful word, hath provided evidence for the proof of all that He hath spoken, so that the faith of believers may be confirmed on a sure foundation, the unbelief of sinners rendered without excuse, and the great Jehovah may be seen to be true though every man be a liar. What the Almighty says, He proves, and that by a testimony that cannot be gainsayed.

Now, there are many witnesses for God, and all of them faithful ones, if we would only read their testimony aright. The sky above is a witness for God—“The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth forth His handiwork.” The earth below is a witness for God, and gives manifold evidence of the wisdom, and power, and love of its Creator. All creation, even the meanest part of it, is just another and another testimony to the character of the Lord of all. Every day is a witness for God, and reveals more and more of His glory; for “day unto day utters speech, and night unto night teacheth knowledge” of Him. Man himself is a special witness for God, one of the most conspicuous proofs in all that he is, in all that he has gotten, in all that he is reserved for, of Him by whom he exists, who sustains him every

moment, and hath destined him for eternity. Angels in heaven are God's witnesses, they declare throughout heaven His glory. The redeemed above are witnesses for God, they testify of His grace and sing His praise, and their being in heaven is one of the brightest proofs of His love. Yea, the lost spirits that are in outer darkness are witnesses for God, they are proofs of His truth, dreadful monuments of His wrath and vengeance.

But when we look to the economy of grace—the scheme of redemption—it is there we chiefly behold witnesses for God. From the first of the world such witnesses have been. God witnessed to Adam concerning himself personally face to face before he fell, and when he fell. Since then He continuously raised up men to testify concerning Him. Moses and all the prophets bore testimony to the truth of God. Every servant whom God employed to work His will did the same; and when perverse man would not hear their testimony, but spitefully entreated and slew them, the Lord raised up another witness greater than all, a witness to confirm all that the others had testified, and to increase the proof unto the very utmost, even Christ the Lord. He said, "They will reverence my Son," let them hear Him. Yes, men and miracles, living and dead, angels and devils, are all witnesses for God; but the witness nobler still is His own Son from heaven. And God's grace to poor sinners that resisted every other evidence was such, that He spared not Him, but gave Him freely "for a witness to the people."

But, indeed, though the whole scheme of grace affords in every part, as it were, a distinct witness for God, yet, in point of fact, it is Christ that witnesses in all these parts. For instance, in the Old Testament Scriptures, while the prophets and holy men of God who spake and wrote the truth were separate witnesses, yet it was the Son of God, who, dwelling in them, really bore the testimony. It was He that witnessed from Sinai; He that witnessed from the bush; He that witnessed in Egypt, the desert, and the promised land, by means of Moses, and Samuel, and David, and Ezra: so that Christ was a witness to the people, testifying to them of God before He came in the flesh, and from the creation itself. But then, how much more distinct was the testimony and evidence when He took upon Him our nature. His so coming was itself a witnessing for the truth—every hour He lived, every miracle He performed, every word He spoke, every suffering He endured, was another and another evidence for the truth, so strong that it seems marvellous indeed how any one can disbelieve it longer. And then, when we come to His death and agony on the Cross! Oh, what was that but just *sealing* all the other evidence with His blood, that it might be sure and certain indeed; what was that but just what Paul says it was: “witnessing a good confession before Pontius Pilate”; or what Jesus Himself says it was, when He stood before that ruler: “To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that *I should bear witness* unto the truth.” Yes, how

often does He declare that this was His whole object in living and in dying—to declare, and to prove, and to make manifest all the words of grace that had ever been spoken ; or, as Paul expresses it, “ Now, I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision *for the truth of God, to confirm the promises* made unto the fathers.” I say Christ’s death and resurrection hath sealed the evidence of God’s grace ; yea, and even more than this—He lives and reigns at God’s right hand as a *witness* from God to sinners still. And, how He is a witness now, you surely can clearly see. From on high, He now sends down His Spirit into believers’ hearts for this purpose : “ to witness with their spirits.” As the Saviour He is giving His people, daily, the best *evidence* of the truth—by giving them the *experience* of the truth. He now *proves* God’s grace by *imparting* that grace. He makes evident God’s love by making them to *taste* of that love. He shows to believers the truth and value of salvation by *filling* them with salvation. Yea, He proves that God *offers* them heaven by bringing them into heaven. He is still there, a witness unto the people ; yea, and will be, till the fulness of the elect be come in. And there *His* pierced body along with *their* glorious crowns shall be witnesses of salvation throughout eternity.

II. But, having thus shown in a general manner how Jesus Christ is a witness for God unto the people, through every stage of His mediatorial office, I come now more particularly to consider *in what way* He

witnesses for the truth, or what are the truths which in the work of redemption He bears witness to. Here I would divide the subject into some particulars.

1. Christ in His mediatorial work is a witness to the people of *God's power*. Yes, every work of God is an evidence of His power, but the work of redemption through Christ is a special and marvellous witness of it. Abstractly considered, salvation seems a thing impossible. Keep Christ out of view, and the escape of one single soul from hell is a thing beyond the compass of possibility. Every soul is a sinner. God hath said, "The soul that sinneth it shall die." His justice, His truth, His vengeance, demand, therefore, the destruction of that soul. What power can prevail against God, to pluck that soul out of God's hands, to save it from His wrath? "Though hand join in hand," he tells us, it shall not be. Can God's justice and vengeance be otherwise satisfied? The riches of a world—yea, ten thousand worlds—cannot be ransom sufficient to appease His anger. Yea, His *own* power, and that *alone*, formed the ransom; and it was by sending Christ to take the sinner's place, and bear the wrath due to the sinner, that the sinner might go free. Was there power then in *creating* man, and is it not much more displayed in *saving* man? Is not Christ the witness of His power—His redeeming power—a power sufficient to save to the uttermost, when every other conceivable power was absolutely nothing?

2. Christ is a witness to the people of *God's wisdom*. There is infinite wisdom displayed in the heavens

above, and in the earth below. There is inscrutable wisdom in every work of God to which we can turn our eye. But especially when we look at Christ and the Cross do we have evidence thereof, and are constrained to exclaim with Paul, "Oh, the depth of the riches both of the *wisdom* and knowledge of God, how unsearchable are His judgments!" God's truth demands the sinner's destruction, and will not go without its demand. Oh, would it not be extraordinary wisdom which could devise a plan which would make that very demand for vengeance a demand for the sinner's salvation? It would indeed—so extraordinary would that wisdom be, that if we did not see Christ we should say it was impossible to find it. But here is the wisdom of God displayed in Christ—that the cry for vengeance becomes a cry for mercy, without any change whatever of God's attributes, or one jot of abatement of His demands. Divine justice can slay the guilty and spare the innocent; but Christ steps in and takes our guilt upon Him and He is slain—our guilt being taken away, we are left as innocent, and therefore we are spared, and God's justice ensures our salvation. There is wisdom in all God's works, but in saving the sinner in particular, just because in this work, and in this alone, some of God's attributes forbid it and demand the opposite; and yet salvation is achieved, and these attributes that forbid are perfectly satisfied. Yea, *so* perfectly, that through Christ they demand what they, without Christ, forbade. Surely Christ is a witness for the wisdom of God.

3. From all this, is it not equally obvious that Christ is a special witness for the *justice* of God? The justice of God is oftentimes most clearly manifested in its overtaking the sinner with His wrath in the present life, and His sure word bears witness that if it overtake not the impenitent now, it will hereafter. Every work and way of God, when properly observed and contemplated, must make us cry out, "Just and true are thy ways, O thou King of saints." But Christ is the grand evidence and witness of His justice. So just is God that He did not spare Christ one pang due for all the guilt that was laid upon Him. Though His own well-beloved Son, He did not abate one jot of infinite wrath, which, as the sinner's substitute, He volunteered to bear. Yes, it is in Christ that the full extent of God's justice is beheld, when His blessed body was burdened, and His spotless soul agonised by all the fulness of the curse which Divine justice out-poured against sin. Oh, will not the evidence of the Cross convince us of this—that God's justice must have its way? Shall we still think to live on in sin, and escape God's justice after all, when even the blessed Jesus did not escape the full cup of it? If He spared not Him when He was in the room of sinners, will He spare us if we persist in our determination to remain sinners, and just to take our chance for ourselves, and by ourselves, without fleeing to Christ? Oh, what is the madness of those who trust to God's forgetting His position, and passing by all His demands against them. Oh, let Christ,

having to meet God's justice and satisfy it, be the witness and the proof to us that we have to meet it and satisfy it too. And, oh, how shall we meet it, how can we satisfy it, if we accept not of Christ as our advocate, to show that He hath satisfied it for us, if we do not cast ourselves upon His finished work, and accept of His finished salvation? Let us be convinced of this, and persuaded unto this, by Christ, the true witness.

4. Christ is given to the people as the witness of God's *mercy and love*. Every day as it passes is a new witness, giving us new practical proofs of God's mercy, that He is waiting to be gracious, that He is long-suffering and slow to wrath, that He is loading us with marks of a father's love. Every spiritual privilege is a special witness of the same import—testifying that God desires and beseeches us to accept of life, and peace, and joy, and salvation. Every verse in the Bible is such a witness—every means of grace is such an one—every Sabbath that comes round—every striving of the Spirit during every moment that we breathe. Why is it, then, that we do not believe in God's grace, and show our faith by accepting that grace? Is it because we still doubt it?—because we need more proof?—because the existence in infinity of God's love for us is not sufficiently certain or not clear enough to our eyes? What further proof shall God give of His love? What more credible witness shall He send to convince us of it than His own pledged word that cannot pass away? Is there any

evidence stronger than this that we could look for? Surely no; and yet God has given us a stronger when we could not look for it—yea, when we could not conceive it. He hath sent His own Son from heaven to be the witness. Surely it needs nothing more than His *word* to convince us. Surely that will be enough. Nay, even more is given—He *died* to make manifest Jehovah's love. Ah, this is a proof of Divine love indeed; the Lord of Glory crucified that sinners may be saved. Can it really be true? Did the Son of God actually come to die on a cursed tree, to be the evidence of God's grace? Be astonished, ye heavens; be amazed, O earth—it is most true. Oh what, then, can be truer than that God is gracious indeed? Surely none now can doubt it! And yet be still more astonished, O heavens—be still more amazed, O earth; sinners disbelieve it still. Oh, brethren, our disbelieving Christ after He hath shed His blood to seal His testimony is absolutely enough to make the very devils in darkness amazed at our folly. Will we disbelieve any longer? Are we so besotted that nothing will move us? Ah, if we believe not Christ's blood that cries to us, we will one day be made to believe by the blood of our own souls, when such believing will be too late. Will we, then, believe our own foolish hearts and the devices of Satan instead of Christ, the faithful and true witness? Surely no. May God give us hearts to believe, by looking to Jesus. Yes, it is by looking to Calvary—to the agony of the Cross—that faith is stirred up. Where-

fore contemplate, I beseech you, the crucified Jesus ; look to His testimony ; hear the voice of His blood that witnesses *unto us* now, lest it witness *against us* at last.

5. But again. Christ is a witness to the people of the *evil of sin*. This, too, is a truth of which we have evidence every day from countless witnesses. The wide world itself, and all that is within it, is one vast proof of the fatal malignity of sin. Man is himself a living—yea, a dying—proof of this one thing above all others, that sin is exceeding sinful. Every grave outside this church is a witness of sin's evil—every tear we shed—every pang we feel—every evil we endure—and every calamity we fear. Look where we will—turn where we may—sin's evil meets us—is within us—is before us—is around us. But there is a voice that comes from the cross of Christ—from the victim who hung in agony there—that is the loudest of all in proclaiming this much-forgotten truth. Sin's evil is measured by God's hatred of it and God's wrath against it, and where shall we see that hatred and wrath against sin depicted in all its infinite extent but on Mount Calvary? It was there, on Christ's blessed head, that the full and bitter cup of God's fury against it was poured out, even to the dregs. Its evil is seen in its destroying the bodies—yea, and destroying the souls—of men ; but how much more in its marring, more than any man's, the face of Christ—in making His soul exceeding sorrowful, even unto death—in crucifying the Lord of Glory—and in mak-

ing Him, who was not a mere man, but in whom dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, to exclaim in the day of His astonishment, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" With such an evidence—with such a witness as this before us—how can it be that men will love sin, and practise sin, and roll it as a sweet morsel under their tongue? Think of thy folly, O sinner, whoever thou art, that livest in sin as if it were harmless, and disregardest it as if it were of no account. It slew Christ; thinkest thou it has no power to slay thee? Did Christ die to destroy it? and wilt thou live to make it abound? Oh will you not be persuaded to flee from it, and hate it, and abhor it, even when the blood of Christ bears witness unto thee that the wages of it is death?

6. Christ is a witness to the people of the *value of the soul* and of *salvation*. Yes, while Christ's death is a witness against us that we are sinners—the most atrocious and ungrateful sinners—it also vouches to us that we are nevertheless most precious in the Almighty's sight—so precious that He hath parted with His own Son and given Him up to death to save us. Will we not take His word for it who best knows the value of the soul, and believe it to be valuable indeed? Christ's blood is the price of it, but then what is the price of Christ's blood? It passeth comprehension; and therefore it is that while Christ is the Father's "unspeakable gift," our own souls, and the salvation purchased for these souls, are an unspeakable treasure committed to us, and an unspeakable treasure offered

to us. Surely on such evidence as this men must value their souls above all the world, and seek salvation as their chiefest joy. But no; alas! sinners sacrifice their souls for a mess of pottage, and instead of seeking salvation, despise and refuse it when it is freely offered. Oh surely then, among all His other characteristics, Christ is a witness convicting us of madness—proving to a demonstration that we are beside ourselves in rejecting Him and following hard after iniquity. Oh let us be wise in time—let us open our eyes to look at Christ, and open our ears to hear Him when He witnesses and proves to us how precious His salvation is, and when He also declares how fully and freely it is offered—“Ho, every one that thirsteth,” &c.

I might show how Christ witnesses to the people:—

1. The excellency of Godliness.
2. The truth of the promises.
3. Is an example of the power of strengthening grace.

III. That He is our witness now in beholding all our goings.

IV. That He will witness against us at last—even when He is our judge—if we repent not.

I might also show how we, ourselves, are fellow-witnesses with Christ of the truth of God.—Isaiah xliii. 10–12.

That we must be so at the last day.

Wherefore let us witness for Christ. Put to our seal and testimony that He is the true Saviour.

SERMON 3.

“But I am poor and needy, yet the Lord thinketh upon me : Thou art my help and my deliverer, make no tarrying, O my God.”—Psalm xl. 17.

THERE can be no doubt that the Lord Jesus Christ is throughout this psalm speaking in prophecy concerning Himself. I am not at present, however, at all to touch upon this view of the subject ; for there can be as little doubt that the Psalmist is here pouring forth the longings of his *own* soul also, and the verses around my text are just the earnest cry of every burdened soul that is thirsting for the living God.

Now, I would have you to remark at the outset that the continuously recurring meditations of the true believer are oftentimes just the same as those of the newly-awakened sinner : that the communings of his soul within him are, as it were, an *abridgement* of the way by which the Lord had previously led him, in bringing him to Christ at the first. I would fain hope that there are not a few here whose daily experience is ever verifying this remark ; that your spirits are still often filled with the same feelings as those by which you were overpowered when you were at first

brought to awakening, and to conviction, and to conversion, and to peace in believing ; that the same sins grieve you, the same grace astonishes you, the same love constrains you, with a similar and yet with a newer and deeper effect.

I mean not from this that the same work has to be done over and over again in the gracious soul, as if the first doing of it was of no effect, but I mean that when the furrows are once made, they are continuously deepened by the same plough ; that more and more of the self-same seed is sown by the same hand, that more and more of the self-same precious dew falls refreshing from the same heaven, and that more of the self-same blade and ear springs up increasingly with the believer's growth in grace. So that if any anxious soul be overtaken with new conviction, it is not on that account alone to be cast down under the supposition that it never knew the truth before ; or if it receives some clear and gracious view of Jesus more than ordinary, that does not of itself form a ground for concluding that it had heretofore been altogether ignorant of His grace. On the contrary, let me again repeat, that the firmest believer's soul *often* goes through the very same process by which it was led *at the first* to the hope set before it in the gospel.

I make these commonplace observations chiefly in reference to the passage before us, because we may take the text either as a view of the Spirit's working upon the soul of one who has been newly awakened, or as the substance of the true believer's continual

communings with God and his own soul. There are obvious and well-defined steps in the process. The convicted sinner is first led to cry, "I am poor and needy." Then after being burdened with a sense of this truth for a time, and perhaps for a *long* time, he gets great relief by being enabled to see and to feel this other truth—"Yet the Lord thinketh upon me." Then by and bye his faith increases, and he waxes so confident in his Saviour as to say to Him, "Thou art my help and my deliverer." And then at last his thirst after Him is so eager that his whole soul ceases not to pour forth itself in the wrestling entreaty, "Make no tarrying, O my God." It may be weeks, or months, or even years before the newly awakened sinner can go through the whole of the text. He may linger long at the first clause, trembling as yet to apply to himself the rest. But He who begins the work will perform it and carry him through the whole, till he can look to Jehovah and say of Him indeed, "my God." But still after that he will be always beginning the text over again, he will be continually going through it clause by clause. He will be delighted in the various clauses following each other through his soul in quicker and quicker succession; viewing them severally as if they were all one grand whole, even as David did; his apprehension of one just quickening his apprehension of the other, so that he exclaims at one burst and with one breath, "I am poor and needy, but the Lord thinketh upon me: thou art my help and my deliverer, make no tarrying, O my God."

Wherefore, let us consider the text clause by clause, in this double view of it, as the process by which the awakened sinner is led on and on, and also as the general workings of the true believer's soul within him.

I. "I am poor and needy." We must, of course, understand these words in their spiritual acceptation, for David, as king of Israel, had all the wealth and substance that the world could give. But all that he accounted nothing in comparison of the true riches. Spiritual treasure was what he desired to possess, and of which he felt that he naturally possessed none.

Now, when any sinner is awakened by the Spirit of God to a true sense of his Christless condition, the first thing that strikes and alarms him is his own utter worthlessness and complete destitution. Before this he had set his heart upon worldly goods, and sought to fill himself with worldly vanities ; but now his eyes are beginning to open, and he sees somewhat of his emptiness and his nakedness. He now begins to see the force of that most striking text, "What shall it profit a man though he gain the whole world and lose his own soul ; or, what shall a man give in exchange for his soul ?" He now begins to see that the "things seen are temporal," that "they perish with the using," that they all are "vanity and vexation of spirit," and that he has been casting away "the pearl of great price," the treasure that "no thief can break through to steal," in madly following after these empty nothings. He looks within, and in his bitterness

exclaims, "I have been spending my money for that which is not bread, and my labour for that which satisfieth not;" and so he comes, almost in an agony, to bemoan himself in the words of the text, so few, yet so full of meaning—"I am poor."

Or it may be that the sinner has heretofore been satisfying himself with a lifeless round of mere outwardly Christian duties, and, like Laodicea, has been flattering himself, "I am rich and increased with goods." But all at once he sees the folly of trying to be his own saviour, and resting satisfied with having a mere name to live while he is dead. All at once he sees that his treasure is only of his own false coinage; that it is but dross to himself, and an abomination before God; that however full of spiritual wealth he may appear to men, or may have appeared to himself, he is yet in truth "poor and miserable, and blind and naked," even with a poverty of which he cannot fathom the depth, and a nakedness of which he cannot sufficiently abhor the shame. Oh, how does he then loathe himself in dust and ashes. The feeling of the man who goes to sleep at night wallowing in riches, and awakens in the morning a penniless beggar, is nothing to his when he sees and feels in his own person that his soul is empty, when God Himself reveals to him his load of debt, and that he hath nothing to pay, and when his own conscience confirms the dismal truth, "I am poor."

But this is not all. The awakened sinner not only feels himself *poor*, but *needy* also; in other words, he

becomes not only aware of his having nothing, but he becomes also alive to the imperative necessity of having his wants supplied. In the social world a beggar may be perfectly aware of his penury, and yet see no necessity, and entertain no desire, for having riches. Now, there is also something at least akin to this in the spiritual world. I do not mean to say that any sinner can be fully alive to his spiritual poverty when he is without God and without hope in the world, and yet have no desire to be delivered from this state and be enriched with grace. But I do say that there are many, many sinners, who if not really sensible of their spiritual poverty, do at least acknowledge it, nay, boast of it and make a jest of it, at the same time expressing their determination to remain as they are, and laugh at the bare idea of seeking anything from Him "who for our sakes became poor, that we through His poverty might be made rich." Now, here is the character of the truly-awakened sinner, not only that he acknowledges his *want*, but that he also feels his *need*. He is not contented with merely confessing "I am *poor*," but he goes to his Maker and also tells Him "I am *needy*;" not that he may inform the Giver of all good of his *state*, but that he may declare before Him his *desire* to be enriched with the treasures of His grace, with those good and perfect gifts which can come alone from the Father of lights above. Yea, now the sinner can really never know his poverty aright, though he confess it as much as he pleases, unless his sense thereof leads him to hunger

and thirst after all the fulness of God in Christ, and to covet earnestly the best gifts. While he bemoans "I have nothing," he longs earnestly, "I need all things." Not only does he feel that he has not Christ, but he also feels that he cannot do without Christ. And that is just the very thing that sets him, like the Psalmist, to pray as in the text before us, "I am poor and needy." Oh, surely this is a most hopeful state for a sinner to be in, to feel that of himself he is lost, and yet to be longing for salvation. This is the beginning of the true work of grace, this is the first pricking to the heart of the sharp sword of the Spirit, this is the Law doing the work of a schoolmaster to bring souls unto Christ.

But still, as I remarked, when souls really have been brought to Christ, and even when they have advanced highest in grace, they will not cease exclaiming, "I am poor and needy."

I say, even the most gracious soul, he who is most filled with the Spirit, will still mourn that he is so poor. Yea, the more advanced the believer is, the more will he become aware of his nothingness, and be crying out, "my leanness, my leanness." Let it not be supposed from this, however, that he will at all undervalue the grace with which he hath already been enriched. Far from it: that will ever be the subject of his most earnest thanksgiving, after the example of Paul, "By the grace of God I am what I am." His sense of his poverty makes him humble and self-condemned, not because he has found God's grace in-

sufficient for him, but because he has so much "received that grace of God in vain." His declaration of his poverty is not a charging God with a withholding of grace, but a charging himself with want of receiving grace. His language is just that of a servant of God who once quaintly but pithily said, "God hath poured out such grace upon me that I might have been full, but I am like a leaky vessel, for oh, how little have I retained of the full measure that was running over."

And that is just the reason why the believer adds, "I am also *needy*." He never rests satisfied with what he has received, he is thirsting for more of the true riches. He is ever saying, Oh, how far short am I of what I ought to be, and of what I desire to be. I count not myself to have apprehended—I will never rest on bygone things—not [even on bygone grace, but I will forget the things that are behind, and stretch forward to the things that are before—for I desire to bear the very image of God himself—and when I think of my infinite distance from such a consummation, I must perforce lay my hand on my mouth and my mouth in the dust, and cry out "Unclean, unclean, I am poor and needy."

Yes, brethren, the true believer will ever be thus humbly and meekly mourning his emptiness, his unfruitfulness, his spiritual poverty; he will be always feeling that he lacks much and that he needs much. While he will be always saying, "Come, hear, all ye that fear God, and I will tell what He hath done for my soul;" he will also be continually bemoaning how

little he has of spirituality, and love, and faith, and be always more and more hungering and thirsting after righteousness. And this is just the way by which the believer increaseth in riches, because he is continually panting after them.

And now let me ask every one now hearing me, is this your heartfelt verdict concerning yourself, "I am poor and needy"? Is it really possible that any one of us (whether believer or unbeliever) can be saying or thinking "I am rich and increased with goods and stand in need of nothing"? Can we suppose that Christ has no need to say to us, "Yet one thing thou lackest." Ah, there are many things that we lack; if we do not absolutely lack all things, we at least lack most of all things. And are there not many here who have really and truly nothing? Why, brethren, I would just ask this question—If there is any one here who thinketh that he hath enough of the true riches, who thinketh that he hath no need of more grace, what brought that person here this day? upon what errand did he come? Have we not all by outward profession come seeking something, seeking the Lord, seeking salvation from the Lord? Our very coming here, therefore, is just a practical condemnation and contradiction of the language and thoughts of those who are resting satisfied to be as they are. And yet how many are there such, many who are quite contented to live as they are, and to die as they are, although in truth they are as yet brands unplucked from the burning, yet the children of the wicked one, yet heirs of

wrath and fitted for destruction! Can it be that there is anyone who has come here this day not professing to seek anything from God at all? Then, again, I ask—What brought you hither? Was it that you might declare your riches before men and your perfection before God? Oh, is it really true that any of us can stand up in the presence of the great Searcher of hearts, and, like the Pharisee in the parable, proclaim before Him, “I thank thee that I am not as other men are, or even as this publican”? Surely none of us will be guilty of such presumptuous audacity, of such blinded insanity. And yet I fear that there may be many here who are just as well pleased with themselves as if they actually did so, or as if they said with that man in another parable, “Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years, take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.” Oh, think on this, lest that word be ready to go forth, “Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee.” And, brethren, are you quite ready and willing that this should be the case, to meet your God in your fancied riches, in your supposed standing in need of nothing? For let me remind you of this—If you really stand in need of nothing more, you are ready to depart, you are a ripe harvest, and you know what the Bible says, that when the harvest is ripe God will give commandment to him that hath the sharpest sickle to thrust in and reap, for He will not delay gathering in His ripe saints into His garner. Are you then such ripe saints, you that are contented with yourselves and seeking nothing? Oh, is it not

rather a proof that you still need many things, if not all things, that you are still spared here? Is not your being alive and upon praying ground, just God's own testimony that you are still poor and needy, that you still require to be delivered from a body of sin and of death? Oh, then, will you not believe God's own word for it, and be taking advantage of God's mercy, and be going unto Him and saying, "I am poor and needy"?

Let me make, therefore, the supposition that there is indeed no one here actually saying, "I am rich and increased with goods, standing in need of nothing," but that all are at least outwardly confessing "I am poor and needy." I would now ask in what spirit is that confession made. Is it from a full and powerful sense of the truth of the confession? Is any newly awakened sinner breathing these words, because he loathes his sins, and really longs to be filled with the riches of Christ's grace? Are those who have already tasted of grace breathing the words from their inmost hearts, because they pant after tasting more and feasting upon the full provision of Jesus' love? Are you saying, I am poor and needy, for I have little love and need more, I have little faith and need more, I have little strength and need more, I have little spiritual life and desire with all my soul that Christ would fully reign in me, and live in me, and be formed in me the hope of glory? Oh, brethren, let no man deceive himself, for the Searcher of hearts cannot be deceived. And so let me give you one test by which to try your-

selves in this momentous matter. If you be really adopting the clause of the text before us as your own, as the Psalmist did, you will be doing so with much humility and self-abandonment of spirit. And so let me ask while you say, "I am poor," can you also truly say, "I am poor in spirit"? Oh, remember that a true sense of poverty cannot be disjoined from poorness of spirit or deep humility. In such a case only can your confession be real, and then only can you experience the blessedness of that word, "Blessed are ye poor." For need I remind you of the Saviour's words, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven"?

II. "Yet the Lord thinketh upon me." Highly exalted as David was as king of God's own chosen people, he considered it as a miracle of Divine mercy that the Lord should so much as even think upon him. But this is one of the glories of Jehovah, that though He be high and highly exalted, He yet condescendeth unto men of low estate, for His delights are with the sons of men. This is a truth which may well excite wonder through the universe of God. Well may every one take up the Psalmist's language, "When I consider the heavens which thou hast made, the moon and stars which were ordained by thee, then say I, What is man that thou art mindful of him, or the son of man that thou visitest him?"

Above all, the newly-awakened sinner stands amazed when he is first enlightened to the apprehen-

sion of this truth. He sees one marvel that he never before beheld when he gets a view of his sins ; and he sees another marvel equally new to him when he gets a view of God's infinite grace. Both seem so mysterious in their character that he finds it difficult which to wonder at the most ; and the mysterious marvellousness of the one just increases the mysterious marvellousness of the other. "Can it be really possible," he is ready to exclaim, "that the infinite and eternal God should even spend a thought upon so insignificant a worm as me? Can it be true that the pure and sin-hating Jehovah should bear one tittle of love to so abominable a sinner as myself, to a wretch so utterly worthless, so rebellious, so impiously trampling under foot His love ; to one who has sinned against such excellence, such majesty, such authority, such grace? Is it true that I am not already a monument of His vengeance? Is He not only sparing me—but is He actually waiting to be gracious—loading me daily with His benefits, and striving with me to accept of salvation and of glory without money and without price? I can hardly believe it, and still I see and feel that it is most true. Yes, even yet the Lord thinketh upon me, upon me the veriest miscreant, the chief of sinners ; and His thoughts are thoughts of love. O blessed, for ever blessed be His holy name ; praise, eternal praise to His unspeakable grace."

Now it is that the sinner having an apprehension of God's mercy in the Saviour, as well as an apprehen-

sion of his own foul iniquity, is filled with hope and gladness. Without this second step in the process he would lie down in despair. There would be a fearful emphasis in his uttering the language of the 12th verse, "Innumerable evils have compassed me about : mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up ; they are more than the hairs of mine head, therefore my heart faileth me." But now when he looks with enlightenment to two quarters—to God as well as to himself—the failing of his heart abates. He sees God's character everywhere displayed as a God of kindness and mercy ; above all he sees this description of Him written on every page, on every line of the history of redemption: "God is love." He sees that the Lord hath thought upon sinners from all eternity, and planned salvation for them. He sees that God has thought upon sinners in the mysterious accomplishment of salvation by the cross of Christ. He sees that God thinketh upon sinners still, as He sits on His heavenly throne, pleading and striving with sinners to accept of life even when they seem determined to follow death, and entreating them, yea praying them to receive that very Saviour whom they are crucifying afresh by their transgressions, and whose blessed blood they are actually accounting as an unholy thing. Here is a new world, an actual paradise opened up to the awakened sinner. The rent veil of the Redeemer's flesh opens it up. And through that rent veil he not only sees that God has thought and is thinking upon sinners, yea yearning over them

with bowels of redeeming mercy : but he has also his own personal interest in these thoughts of mercy and love ; so that he is enabled to say “ The Lord thinketh *upon me*,” and says unto me myself, “ Unto you, O man, do I call ; even you coming unto me I will in no wise cast out, but rather will rejoice over as a prodigal that was lost and now is found. Oh, the height and depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God ; how can I ever cease my amazement that where sin abounded, grace doth much more abound ; how can I longer resist such marvellous love ; how can I keep away from the Saviour since the Lord thinketh upon me. Truly, I will arise and go to my Father, and no longer withstand and trample on His infinite love.”

But this first outburst of the awakened sinner’s joy in the view of the Saviour is not short-lived, or at all confined to his first awakening. “ The Lord thinketh upon me,” is that most delightful of all themes upon which the believer continually and most rapturously dwells. Recurrence to the contemplation of the love of Christ is his constant business, his constant pleasure ; for he finds that in it he has a sure refuge from every care, an antidote to every sorrow, a certain anchor, sure and stedfast, from every billow of every trouble. He is never satisfied with pondering over it, for it passeth knowledge ; and he is never satisfied with declaring its preciousness, for eternity is too short to utter all its praises. Does he say and feel, “ My temptations are many and strong.” He has this

resource, "The Lord knoweth the frailty of my frame, He remembers that I am dust, He thinketh upon me." Does he say and feel, "Enemies encamp against me, they are ready to prevail, and I am well-nigh become their prey;" he has still the sure refuge, "Yet greater is He that is for me than all that can be against me, for the Lord thinketh upon me." Is he cast down by this complaint, "Oh, the coldness of my love to Christ"; he is supported by this encouragement, "Oh, the greatness of Christ's love to me, for He thinketh on me." Is he overcome by affliction or trial or distress, so as for a time to give way to the murmur, "Hath the Lord forgotten to be gracious, is His mercy clean gone for ever;" will he not be abundantly revived as he expostulates with himself, "Nay, but this is mine infirmity, and I will remember the days of the right hand of the Most High; and even yet amidst these deep waters the Lord thinketh upon me, and most assuredly will remember His promise, 'I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.'" Look at the believer in any circumstances, brethren, and say are not the few words before us a sheet-anchor for him, a rock against which the very gates of hell shall not be able to prevail. It was this that made Paul to "glory even in tribulation also;" and it was this that made Job to exclaim, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him," for doubtless he could say, "Yet the Lord will think upon me still." And look at the believer at the last trying hour of death, when heart and flesh do faint and fail him. Take an example

(Dr. Dickson).* Oh, brethren, is not this a most blessed persuasion, and I ask is the persuasion false? Can the Lord ever forget His own, that He should cease to think upon them? Hear what the Saviour says. "Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; can the mother forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget

* The following account of the deathbed of David Dickson is probably that to which Dr. Miller referred.—T.S.:—

"Mr. Dickson continued at Edinburgh, discharging his great trust (the professorship of Divinity) with faithfulness and diligence, until the melancholy turn by the restoration of Prelacy upon King Charles's return, when, for refusing the Oath of Supremacy, he was, with many other worthies, turned out. His heart was broken with the heavy change on the beautiful face of this reformed church. He was then well stricken in years, his labour and work was over, and he ripe for his glorious reward.

"Accordingly in December 1662, he felt extremely weak. Mr. John Livingston, now suffering for the same cause with him, under a sentence of banishment for refusing the foresaid oath, came to visit Mr. Dickson on his deathbed. They had been intimate friends near fifty years, and now rejoiced together as fellow-confessors. When Mr. Livingston asked the professor how he found himself, his answer was, 'I have taken all my good deeds and all my bad deeds, and cast them through each other in a heap before the Lord, and fled from both and betaken myself to the Lord Jesus Christ, and in Him I have sweet peace.' Mr. Dickson's youngest son gave my informer, a worthy member yet alive, this account of his father's death. Having been very weak and low for some days, he called the family together, and spoke in particular to each of them, and when he had gone through them all, he pronounced the words of the apostolical blessing, 2 Cor. xiii. 14, with much gravity and solemnity, and then put up his hand and closed his own eyes, and without any struggle or apparent pain, immediately expired in the arms of his son, my brother's informer."

thee." "When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee, &c."

And now I would entreat every soul now hearing me faithfully to consider his personal interest in this question. What ground have I to take comfort in uttering the words, "The Lord thinketh upon me"? Perhaps there may be some here who seldom or never think upon themselves and the salvation of their own souls, who may be ready to excuse themselves thus—"It is the less necessary for us to do so; we may be the less anxious about this, inasmuch as the Lord thinketh upon us, and so we are in better hands than our own." Now, O sinner, yea, O madman, let me assure you that it is most true that the Lord thinketh upon you; but what if it should so be that the Lord was even now thinking upon you, to cut you off and eternally destroy you, forasmuch as you will not think upon yourself, nor upon Him and the salvation which He offers? Think of this, I beseech you, and let that lead you to think of Jesus, to think of sin, to think of judgment, to think of eternity. And yet, O sinner, thou art in so far in the right. The Lord still thinketh upon you with thoughts of love; for even although at this very moment His hand were ready to smite you down as a cumberer of the ground, the yearnings of His mercy are over you so long as you are not smitten. Only turn unto Him and He will not turn against you. Only lay hold upon Him and He will yet stay His hand. But remember you have no time to lose. He will not think any more upon you in love, if death

overtake you without your having taken advantage of these thoughts of love. Ah, then He will swear in His wrath that ye shall not enter into His rest. Now, then, is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation. Harden not your hearts. Do not tempt Him to forego and quench all His thoughts of love, or to say unto you concerning His salvation—"I thought to do this unto thee, but ye would not." Oh, be wise in time. Cast not away precious time. Cast not away precious grace. Trample not on a precious Saviour. He is yet willing to be your Saviour. Will you not be His redeemed people? Oh, how sad will it be for eternal outcasts to be saying, "The Lord thinketh upon me no more, He hath now in very deed forgotten to be gracious;" and oh, how dreadful would it be for any one here to be forced to utter that bitter and that useless cry. Now is the time for its being prevented, for it is God's grace alone that can do it, and this is the season of grace. Let me, therefore, most affectionately plead with thee, O sinner, as though God did beseech you by me; I pray you be reconciled unto God.

Or again. Is there any backslider now hearing me, anyone who seems determined to make shipwreck of faith and of a good conscience, by casting aside his many solemn vows, and going back to the world from which he had separated himself by giving himself to the Lord in a perpetual covenant that he promised never to break? Let me remind such a one that the Lord thinketh upon him also. But how? Is it with

complacency and approval? Nay, it cannot be, for the Lord abhorreth the very appearance of evil. Or does the Lord think upon you with many excuses and palliations and allowances for your backslidings, as alas, you may think upon yourselves? No, neither can this thing be. But know thou this, O backslider, that the Lord thinketh upon thee and thy transgressions with anger, for He is angry with the sinner every day. The Lord thinketh upon thee with a vexed and a grieved spirit. And oh, therefore, will you not think upon yourselves with shame? Will you not think upon the Lord's past grace, on His present forbearance, on His yet offered forgiveness? Will you not think upon your own sins and broken vows, and mourn in dust and ashes, lest ye be like those who draw back unto perdition, and of whom the Lord shall say, "My soul hath no pleasure in them"? Ah, you have wandered far from God; will you not return? For is He not still saying, "I will forgive your iniquities, and I will heal your backslidings; I will receive you graciously and love you freely"? And can you answer that affectionate message by declaring, "We will continue in sin because grace doth abound"? Surely not. Be persuaded, then, to return to the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.

Again, my dear brethren, let me ask you all, do you live under the persuasion that the Lord is ever thinking upon you, and marking all your goings, and taking knowledge of all your thoughts, and words, and deeds? Are you ever conducting yourselves as in the

presence of an unseen but all-seeing God? Does God's thinking upon you leaven and mould all your thoughts? Most true it is that whether you remember the fact or not, He cannot forget you; and more than that, He cannot forget one thought, word, or deed of yours; they are all recorded in the book of His remembrance; not one of them shall be found amissing at the judgment day, unless they be blotted out and washed away by the blood of Jesus that cleanseth from all sin. See to it then that ye walk in the world as under the constant and vigilant knowledge and inspection of a jealous God, who will by no means pass by the guilty.

Be, therefore, you on the watch, striving against sin. When any temptation allures, commune thus with yourselves, like Hagar—"Thou, God, seest me." When sinners entice thee consent thou not, and be ever ready with this word to withstand them—"The Lord thinketh upon me, and taketh knowledge of all my steps; how, then, shall I do this great iniquity and sin against God?" And if at any time ye feel weak to withstand and ready to fall, also take this assurance: The Lord thinketh upon me, He is, therefore, ready to hear me and answer me, and send me help in this my extremity; Lord, make thy grace sufficient for me, perfect thou thy strength in my weakness.

Wherefore, to conclude, since the Lord thinketh upon us, let us see to it that we think upon Him. But, alas, how true is it that He is not in all our thoughts, that we often forget Him, though He never forgetteth us. Ah, these things ought not so to be. Our whole

thoughts, ay and our whole hearts also, should be stayed on God. What could we expect but that He should forget us for ever, if we forget Him, or only now and then call Him and His wondrous love to remembrance? Surely, then, it behoves us to think of Him who thinketh on us ; just as it behoves us to love Him who hath first loved us, and who is proving that He is loving us still, by still keeping us in being and still holding forth to us salvation. Oh, then, let the love of Christ constrain us. Let us ever be looking and waiting for Him, whose thoughts to usward are thoughts of love, whose words are words of love, and above all whose deeds are deeds of love, infinite love. And oh, let us be taking advantage of these thoughts and words and deeds of love while yet it is in our power, and thus shall we be made rich and increased with goods indeed, in that blessed place where we shall no more say, "I am poor and needy;" but where we shall be filled with unspeakable glory by the Lord that thinketh on us. Amen.

SERMON 4.

“When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream. Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing: then said they among the heathen, The Lord hath done great things for them. The Lord hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad. Turn again our captivity, O Lord, as the streams in the south. They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.”—Psalm cxxvi.

IT is not my intention at present to give any formal exposition of this exquisitely beautiful psalm. Nor shall I attempt a systematic application of its contents to our present position as a Church of Christ; although they are so manifestly and strikingly capable of it, in all their details. I mean, in this discourse, rather to content myself with a few simple observations on the three cognate subjects which pervade the whole song, and which have been quaintly but well designated “the *praise*, the *prayer*, and the *pains* of a revived and reviving Church.” “The Lord hath done great things for us”—this is the subject-matter of *praise*. “Turn again our captivity, O Lord”—this is the object which is wrestled for in *prayer*. “Sow in tears,” in order to “reap in joy”—this is the peculiar work demanding

the *pains* and constant labour of us all. And it certainly appears to me, that these are just the three topics which ought to engross our attention on a day like this, set apart for solemn humiliation before God; while the order in which they occur, seems the order in which our minds and hearts should be engaged with them, if we are exercised aright in such godly humiliation. First of all, *thanksgiving* stands foremost and conspicuous in the list; for it ever seeks to be uppermost in the gracious and God-glorifying soul. Many scriptural examples have we of the humiliation-exercises of God's saints of old; and one and all of these commence with expatiating at large on the wondrous goodness of the Lord, by which depth and intensity are given to lowliest self-abasement before him. The rationale of this is obvious; for, on the one hand, the *fact* of God's marvellous grace unspeakably augments and aggravates the guilt of our unnumbered transgressions against Him; and, on the other hand, our *sense* of that grace melts the soul to truest confession in humiliation, according to the apostle's principle—"O man, despisest thou the riches of His goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering; not knowing that *the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?*" Then, in the second place, comes earnest *supplication*, as the natural result of that thanksgiving, which lays us down self-emptied in the dust. If the grace of God be really prized by our grateful hearts, our thirsting spirits will cry for a greater and greater outpouring of it. Just as the Psalmist, when he anxiously inquired,

“What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward me?” found, that the fit answer to his own question was to give utterance, forthwith, to the double resolution to *praise* and to *pray*; so others, in like circumstances with him, must declare, “I will offer unto thee the sacrifice of *thanksgiving*, and will *call* upon the name of the Lord.” Surely they that can testify “the Lord *hath* already turned our captivity,” are mightily encouraged to beseech Him that He would “turn their captivity again.” And hence we find, in another psalm (lxxxv.), most similar to that which is before us, that, while the sons of Korah began it with, “Lord, thou hast been favourable unto thy land; thou *hast brought back the captivity* of Jacob,” the burden of their song which followed, was such as this, “Turn us, O God of our salvation!”—“Wilt thou not revive us again, that thy people may rejoice in thee?”—“Show us thy mercy, O Lord, and grant us thy salvation.” Then follows, in the third and last place, the recognition of the Church’s *work*, as the necessary and obvious sequel of all that went before. To this work we are *doubly* shut up by the previous considerations. The matter of *thanksgiving* calls us *to it*—the object of *supplication* fits us *for it*. If “the Lord hath done great things for us,” it is peculiarly incumbent upon us to give ourselves to the work of labouring for the ingathering of that harvest by which He is to be glorified; and if we are to rejoice in the answer of our prayers to be “revived yet again,” that reviving shall be vouchsafed for the very purpose of

anointing and strengthening us for the undertaking. The twofold feeling of the renewed soul is this—the Lord hath blessed me *much*, therefore I must work for Him ; I plead with Him to bless me yet *more*, and so shall I work with effect. For assuredly this is as much Jehovah's monition to us, as it was to His people of old from Hosea's mouth—"Also, O Judah, he hath set an *harvest for thee, when I returned the captivity of my people.*"

I proceed, therefore, to take up one by one the topics thus indicated ; praying that God would use the weak instrumentality of my handling them as a means by which Himself to impress and quicken the spirits of us all ; and trusting that He will answer the prayers of fathers, and brethren, and the Church at large, offered in Christ's name during these past days, by being in the midst of us now to bless us, and to make it manifest to all, that His own truth, committed to the most earthen vessel, is nevertheless, by the Spirit, the mighty power of God.

I. The theme of the Church's praise,—“The Lord turned again the captivity of Zion,”—“The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad.”

1. And in illustration of this, we at least know where to begin, if we know not where to end. In rehearsing the “great things” which the Lord hath done, the great work of redemption by the blood of Christ demands the forefront of the wondrous catalogue. That blessed work of Jesus was indeed a “turning again the captivity of Zion.” None of

all God's glorious deliverances of His people can be compared to it for a moment. They may be true types and emblems of it, but they are faint shadows at the best. For instance, that turning of Judah's captivity, primarily referred to in the text, when Cyrus took Babylon and let the oppressed go free, though it did "fill their mouths with laughter, and their tongues with singing," was still a feeble emblem of "the great salvation" achieved for men by the better Cyrus, even by Christ Jesus the Lord, who came down from His holy heaven into our Babylon of death, and then, having broken its bonds and released its prisoners, "ascended up on high, *led captivity captive*, and received gifts for men, yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them." Truly, the Lord "did great things for us," when He gave His only-begotten and well-beloved Son to be our Saviour; and that Son did "great things for us," when He gave Himself a ransom for sinners; and of all this we may well "be glad," when we remember that hereby, though heirs of hell, and fit only for it, we can be made meet for heaven, and joint heirs with Christ of eternal glory. If we regard our natural estate as one of captivity to the wicked one, the "strong man armed," who holds men's souls as "lawful captives," and keeps them as his own peculiar "goods," in the peace of spiritual death: see how Jesus has turned again that captivity, by consenting personally to enter the prison-house for a season, "that through death He might overcome death and him that hath the

power of death, that is the devil," approving Himself to the strong man, as "a stronger than he," by spoiling thus his house, and rescuing the trembling prey from the destroyer's jaws. Yea, much more, when we regard our lost condition, as indeed it is, one in which we are, by reason of transgression, captive in the hands of Divine justice which *will* not—because it *can* not—let us go free, until, on our part, has been paid the very last mite ; see how Jesus has turned again a captivity, even such as this, by meeting the demands of His Father's law on our behalf, to the uttermost farthing of its penalty and its curse, as well as of its obedience unto perfection ; so that now, even the very justice of God sets every prisoner free, for whom the Lord Jesus hath done this. And for whom has He done it? that we may know who can rightfully, and in its fullest sense, take up the language of the text, "The Lord hath done great things *for us.*" Paul gives the answer : "Christ loved *the Church*, and gave Himself *for it*, that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word ; that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing." And, if we are individually members of that Church, not by virtue of our being ministers or members of His visible kingdom upon earth, but by spiritual union to Jesus, in the exercise of living faith, and by the quickening of the Spirit made living "members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones," then must we also testify that the Lord hath done great things *in us*, as well as



for us, that He may be glorified. Yes, this “great thing” is nothing less than bringing a clean thing out of an unclean, changing the Ethiopian’s skin and the leopard’s spots, more marvellous than making “the lion eat straw like the ox, or the leopard lie down with the kid;” for it is raising the dead to life, and quickening enemies to the love of God. So great a thing is this, that the Scripture describes it as “the *exceeding greatness* of His power to usward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places;” for, assuredly, the operation of this blessed power shall in nowise cease, until all men who are the subjects of it shall be like the Lord Jesus, and reign with Him in glory. Unfallen angels and seraphim above sing for ever the “great things” which God hath done for *them*; but even still more reason have the ransomed from the earth to re-echo evermore “the song of Moses and of the Lamb, saying, *Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty;*” and *the greatest* and most marvellous of them all is this—that thou hast saved *us* in the Lord with an everlasting salvation.

I first of all insist, thus briefly, on this finished work of Christ as the subject of our thanksgiving, inasmuch as it is the chiefest verification of the text, and is, moreover that *one* “great thing,” in which, or on account of which, *all other* “great things for us” are done. This is the truth which we, *as witnesses* for

Christ, have constantly to testify; and we will rejoice to do so if we, *as believers*, continually realize it. It is, I trust, the subject of our daily meditation and thanksgiving, as well as the continual utterance of our professional voice. It is, therefore, a *common* subject, but surely it is not a *trite* one, either to gospel ministers or private disciples. On such a subject as this, at least, to speak and hear the same things to us is "not grievous," and for all it is most assuredly "safe." Besides, I am thoroughly convinced that if, insisting on such a theme as the work and love of God to souls in Christ, I strike no chord in my hearers' hearts that shall vibrate with thrilling gratitude to Him who "hath so loved us as to give Himself for us," I need scarcely go on to other exhibitions of the "great things" which the Lord has done, in the hope thereby to awaken either myself or others to thanksgiving and praise. There can be no gratitude for any other mercy, when there is none for Christ the Saviour of the world. If we have no heart to cry out with the apostle, "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift," on all other benefits, however numerous and demonstrative of Jehovah's goodness to our souls, even the tongue of an archangel will appeal to us in vain.

2. Trusting, therefore, that we have at least some right appreciation of the gift of Him in whom "all fulness dwells," consider what "great things" in Christ Jesus the Lord has done for us *as a Church and people*. Time would fail me to run over the bare catalogue of these unmerited mercies; but can we forget how, half

a century ago, this Church began to experience the "turning of captivity" spoken of in the text? or, as Ezra words it, "Our God gave us a little reviving in our bondage." All this was a gracious preparation for the crisis that was approaching, unthought of by all, but now a fact of imperishable history; for, if there had been no spiritual and increasing reviving in the Church, the event of 1843 had never taken place. And, as that event drew nigh, how graciously did God make clear the path of duty, when all earthly wisdom strove to seek out some other way! Shut up to that path, and to that alone, was it not the Lord's ministering hand that gave good courage to make the sacrifices that were then imperative, with a cheerful heart! *We* did no "great things," though many heedlessly flattered us that we did; we only discharged a duty from which we dared not, without treason to our Lord, have resiled. But He "did great things for us" at that trying time; so that, in what view soever we regard the exodus that ensued (and doubtless, in one sense, it was a token of Divine rebuke), we still can adopt, in regard to it, King David's praise, "I will sing of *mercy* and of *judgment*; unto thee, O Lord, will I sing." In tenderly alluring and bringing our Zion into the wilderness, he fulfilled to us the prophecy, "I will speak comfortably unto her, and I will give her vineyards from thence;" and He made even the "valley of Achor a door of hope," so that, instead of *weeping*, she *sang* there as in the days of her youth. And good reason had we; for the Lord opened up to us a mar-

vellous entrance in among the people, and gave us “a good name that is better than great riches;” He brought to us the countenance, and stirred up for us the prayers of His own dearest people throughout the world; and He supported us with outward and with inward help, even in spite of our own great unbelief. When the storm was at the fiercest, and the hearts of the disciples quailed the most, His cheering cry was heard, “It is I, be not afraid;” and, after the turmoil was over, how often has He reprovably encouraged our fainting hearts with “O ye of little faith, why are you fearful, and wherefore did you doubt?” Nor is the Lord’s good hand upon us less obvious in what the unthinking world would say we have done for ourselves. The measure of success which has attended our exertions, in erecting and ordering the external framework of our Church, is wholly of the Lord; and, in respect of this, we have ever increasing cause to bless the Lord, as David blessed Him, “before all the congregation,” who “rejoiced for that they offered willingly,” saying, “Now, therefore, our God, we thank *thee* and praise *thy* glorious name. But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee.” Yea, the very toleration that we now enjoy at the hands of those who most strenuously opposed us, when they forbade God’s people to worship on a spot of God’s green earth, and marked out every adherent to our cause for proscription throughout their domain, is most certainly

a manifest interposition of the Almighty's power, restraining "the remainder of wrath," even though it be not—as we fondly but humbly believe it is—a gracious fulfilment to usward of the faithful Scripture, "When a man's ways please the Lord, He maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him." And let us also acknowledge, to the praise of God's grace, the unity of spirit and harmony of operation which have been conspicuous within our borders. No doubt there have been divers opinions, on different momentous subjects, freely propounded and as freely canvassed. This is *inevitable* among earnest men, whose mental constitutions are not all fitted into the self-same mould, though their heart's desire and aim are one. And it seems as *desirable* as it is inevitable, when rightly managed, and for a worthy end; for it is thus that truth is elicited, and a deeper foundation is thereby laid for a still more thorough and intelligent harmony, both in principle and in action. We have heretofore had no reason to regret, and we shall in time to come have no cause to fear, any free discussion, or even stiff debate—the main object of all engaging in it being to seek the path wherein God shall most be glorified by us, and to search for that path in the spirit of Him who cried, "Let brotherly love continue." Blessed be God, we have not "fallen out by the way;" for it is He who hath enabled us to "love as brethren."

But amidst all the "great things" which "the Lord hath done for us" as a Church, the chief question yet

remains, What souls has He “given us for a prey”? It becomes us to speak with solemn caution and self-abasement here; yet, to be altogether silent, would be to refuse to give the glory due to Jehovah’s name. *Souls have been given.* We have not failed to recognise the goodness of the Lord in beginning to give us fruit from the shores of India and our other mission fields, from the very moment when we were brought into our present ecclesiastical position for conscience sake; a token from on high on account whereof to “thank God and take courage.” We have seen in the face some of the fruit-gatherers and their converts with them—devoted “spies,” bearing goodly “clusters of Eschol;” and our exercise has been somewhat like that of the men of David, when the spoils of Amalek were brought in—they that “went forth to the battle” on the high places of the field, and “they that tarried by the stuff,” have “shared alike” in gratitude to God, and rejoiced together. As for the ingathering of souls at home, amid all our privileges and comparative wealth of gospel ordinances, alas! alas! that so few believe our report, even among those who are most exemplary in listening to it; and that the truly living, gathered from all our congregations, are still, as of old, but a “little flock.” But this is that which brings to us, and to us only, “shame and confusion of face as at this day;” for the Lord is challenging us as witnesses to tell, “What could have been done more to my vineyard, that *I have not done* in it?” Oh, that we had one heart and voice to testify before Him, and to testify

continually, that *the one* "great thing" on which our hearts are set is, that He would crown all the other "great things He has done," by giving us a harvest of souls, that He might be truly glorified. That we may be encouraged to hope and wrestle for this, we must not be *all* lamentation, as if there were *no* fruit gathered. The full shower of blessing may not have been experienced, but, ever and anon, there have been "drops from heaven falling;" and "who hath despised the day of small things," save the ungrateful and the unbelieving? If there be "joy in heaven even over *one* sinner that repenteth," should there not also be gladness on the earth, recognising it as a special sign that verily the Lord hath not left us altogether lifeless, and is waiting to be gracious in giving us yet much life from the dead?

3. Since, then, it is so true that the "Lord hath done great things for us," is the next clause as truly descriptive of our state—"whereof we are glad"? We surely can neither be wholly ungrateful for the "doings of the Lord" for us during the past years, nor remain altogether unmoved by His kindness to us still. We cannot help being "glad." Even carnal, human nature is gladdened by many of the great things which God hath done. But the question is, "Whereof—*of what*—are we glad?" Do we only rejoice in the possession of bestowed *gifts*; or do we exercise the heaven-taught grace of rejoicing in Him who is the *Giver*? Mere natural gladness on account of the gifts may consist with the grossest ingratitude; and, when

the gifts rejoiced in are only those temporal advantages of which the flesh is greedy, it speedily degenerates into impious murmuring, because these objects of desire are not greatly more abundant. We fear lest there be somewhat—nay, much—of this amongst us. We tremble lest we be losing the spiritual skill to comply with the apostle's command, "Rejoice *in the Lord* alway, and again I say rejoice," whether He bestows or withholds the bounties of His hand. When we resolved to take the step which, eight years ago, we took, there was—we will assert it, for 'tis truth—*there was* amongst us at least *some* groping after Habakkuk's spirit—"Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: *Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.*" And shall it be told in Gath, or proclaimed in the streets of Askelon, that *now*, when the Lord has graciously disappointed our manifold forebodings, so that we are indeed "like them that dream," by reason of all our unexpected supply—that *now*, I say, our hearts are waxen cold, "our mouth" not "filled with laughter," nor "our tongue with singing"? Yes, to God's praise let it be recorded, there was, in the times of the peculiar trying of our faith a few years ago, some measure of "counting it *all joy*" when we fell into "divers temptations;" and patience had somewhat of her perfect work when men "took *joyfully* the

spoiling of their goods” for the sake of Christ’s truth and crown; and shall our lips be silent *now*, when God has so marvellously “brought us through fire and water into a wealthy place;” shall there be few amongst us found lifting up their grateful song, “Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what He hath done” for me and mine? Nay, fathers and brethren, let it not be so, else the very heathen shall cry out *shame* upon us; for “thus said they” —and still say they—“among the heathen, The Lord hath done great things for them.” At first, the scorner’s cry was that of Sanballat, when “he was wroth, and took great indignation, and mocked” the builders of the wall—“What do these feeble Jews? will they fortify themselves? will they make an end in a day? will they revive the stones out of the heaps of the rubbish?” but speedily, and perhaps unwillingly, were they perforce constrained to change their tone to an echo of the testimony of the son of Besor, “Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel; according to this time shall it be said of them, What hath God wrought?” And shall *we* be speechless, whose mouths ought most of all to “perfect praise”? The Lord has done these things *for us*—even *for us* so unworthy of it. Let us go in with David, and sit in lowliness before the Lord, and say, “Who are we, O Lord God, and what is our house, that thou hast brought us hitherto?”

How manifestly is boasting excluded in all this,—

alike by the sovereign grace which hath done the “great things,” and by “the law of faith” that realizes their origin! And yet, vain man, even the “old man” within us, *will* be boastful! We have boasted of our leading men, as if *their* right arm had achieved for us our blessings; and, although our manifold bereavements of these sainted worthies have loudly summoned us to “cease from man whose breath is in his nostrils,” and glorify only Him whose instruments they were, the simple lesson to have done with making “flesh our arm” has yet in great measure to be learned. If we have not positively parodied our text into “We have done great things for God whereof we may boast,”* we have too much ascribed the *doing* to the Lord and the *credit* to ourselves, by such a paraphrase as this,—“The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we have been deserving.” Foul shame on this most sinful and God-dishonouring self-complacency! towards the production and establishment of which, the well-meant but all too laudatory gratulations, or rather commendations, of evangelic friends all over Christendom have not a little contributed. True it is, that the Lord has signally blessed us in our feeble attempts to follow Him. But surely the attempt to walk in the paths on which He “drops fatness,” is not the procuring or meritorious cause of that fatness dropping down. Let us distinguish between those things which differ. We have only been following the cloudy pillar whereby Israel was led through the wilderness; seeking thus to

* Referring to a sentence in the Moderator’s Opening Address.

be in the *way of receiving*, not in the *work of earning*, a blessing from its ample bosom. Not a few gracious drops have reached us from it, though our laggard steps and tottering feet have kept us loitering far behind it. Oh, had we followed close up to the ark, and could we now speed on till right beneath the cloud, we would have been, we still would be, the joyous congregation refreshed of God, by dwelling in the "plenteous rain" which He doth send to "confirm his heritage when it is weary." High time it is to cast all boasting far away;—the more, that Israel's God is dealing now with us, as aforetime He dealt with them, even to *test* and *try* us, and for the self-same end, even to *lay us low*. We are on our trial still, and more solemnly than ever. God smote and healed Israel; He afflicted and blessed them; He suffered them to hunger, and then fed them to the full with bread from heaven;—thus changing His procedure, but not His purpose, towards them; and that purpose, as Moses tells, was this, "to *humble* thee and to *prove* thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldst keep His commandments or no." And so with us: God brought us into deep waters, and then saved us from their swelling waves; in *both* cases "to *prove* us," and by *both* dealings "to *humble* us,"—to bring us to His feet and keep us there. How doubly-guilty and twice-condemned shall we be, if all these tribulations leave our hearts still hard, and all these mercies only serve "to heap up coals of fire upon our heads!"

4. But, after all, the true and practical way of testing our gratitude for the "great things" which "the Lord has done for us," is not to rest satisfied with either the heartiness or the humility of the mere utterance, "whereof we are glad;" but to proceed from the investigation of *that* to a thorough searching of ourselves as to whether we are diligently using the blessings bestowed for the *promotion of that great end* for which God has bestowed them. Now, looking at the text in its original reference to God's deliverance of His people from Babylon, the immediate end to the promotion of which they were called gratefully to devote their liberty and their blessings was the rebuilding of Zion and the temple of Jerusalem, unto their Deliverer's praise. On this point, the statements of Scripture are too plain to require any comment. But surely it is just as plain that the building up of the Gospel Zion, for the glory of Zion's King, is the work of thanksgiving which lies with peculiar obligation upon us. No doubt, the first words of the very next psalm follow up our text, as we would judge of set purpose, to remind us that this is a work too great for man to accomplish; for, "except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it." Our solemn conviction of this weighty truth will shut us up to roll over the work upon Jehovah's almighty arm, according to the son of Jesse's prayer, "Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion, *build thou* the walls of Jerusalem." But, still, faith knows full well that God works by means, and *by men*, as a living and active instrumen-

tality. The means and men employed as this instrumentality, for building up Jerusalem in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah, are just the means and the men whom God uses still. These were and are *the returned captives*, which we profess and thankfully own ourselves to be; the *poor and feeble* in the world's estimation and their own experience, as we without question are; and labourers *amid much opposition*, such as we and every one else must expect to encounter, in setting ourselves to the resolute discharge of such a work of God. Yet, by such men, and in such circumstances as these, did the Lord build again His ruined Zion of old, "till the headstone was brought forth with shoutings of 'Grace, grace unto it;'"—while, for our encouragement, in these latter days, to labour in the self-same holy enterprise, be it remembered that Daniel's prophecy, which foretold success to Judah's exertions then, is not exhausted,—nay, rather waits its yet fullest accomplishment, "the street shall be built again, and the wall, *even in troublous times.*"

The question, therefore, with regard to us must be, How far is our gratitude for God's doing "great things for us" borne witness to by such an evidence as this? What have *we* done in the upbuilding of the Lord's own Zion? or what laborious zeal are we manifesting for the upbuilding of it? As already noticed, some small progress has, by God's help, been made, in up-rearing and even extending the merely external fabric of the Church of Christ in the midst of us. But much yet abides undone, and much land has yet to be pos-

sessed. In what *has* been accomplished by us, our own personal interests have had no inconsiderable influence in concentrating our efforts upon the work,—more influence, it is to be feared, than the higher and holier motive of seeking the honour of our God, and the eternal good of men. But, even although vastly more had been achieved in this purely preliminary undertaking, Zion would still remain to be built in the only true and scriptural sense of the expression ; inasmuch as the perfected equipments of an organized evangelistic machinery are not the fulfilment of this glorious *end*, but only the *means* towards that most desirable consummation. The true Zion is a *spiritual* building, made up of “lively stones,” vitally united to the great “living Stone,” who is alike the one “sure foundation,” and the “head of the corner ;” and in order to raise her ruined wall, and “repair the desolations of many generations,” we must be instrumental in bringing to Jesus immortal souls “from the rock from whence they are hewn, and from the hole of the pit whence they are digged,” that in Him they may be “polished after the similitude of a palace,” as a fitting temple for the Lord to dwell in. This work is to be done now, as it was done by the builders who returned from the rivers of Babylon,—“every one with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other hand held a weapon.” But, in our case, the implement for the work and the weapon for defence are one and the same,—even “the hammer” of the Word, and “the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.”

Oh that, not unmindful of Nehemiah's prayers,—themselves the mightiest implements of all,—we had both hearts and hands devoted, with all humble and believing energy, to this glorious enterprise; resolving with the psalmist, or rather with that better David, whom in this he manifestly prefigured, “I will not give sleep to mine eyes, or slumber to mine eyelids, until I find a place for the Lord, an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob!”

But such an heart is only of the Lord's own giving; and hence I am brought to consider, as proposed,

II. The blessing sought for,—“Turn again our captivity, O Lord, as the streams in the south.”

I. “Our captivity,”—what is it? Do we really need to ask, as if we knew it not, and felt it not? Can it be true that, under it, we do not “groan, being burdened”? Look to the Church at large, and search into our own hearts, and there we shall too clearly see how similar is our state to that of Judah after the seventy years' captivity, when the wall, so well begun, lay so long unfinished. Read the 9th chapter of Ezra, the 9th of Nehemiah, and other contemporaneous Scriptures, and learn from thence that the bondage of God's people, then still unrecalled, was *worldliness of spirit, and conformity to the life of the people still lying in the wicked one*. And this is just the bondage under which *we* labour. God has been doing much during these late years, and in a manner very evident to all, to make us a peculiar and a *separate* people, while we have only *in some sort* listened to his voice, “Come

out from among them, and be ye separate." He would have us to be "a people that dwell alone" from all the worldliness around us. His present most sifting providences throughout the nations, are all to the end that His Church may be winnowed out from the world, lest it be condemned therewith. Yet we cling to the earth because we love it, and do not cast in our lot with the city that is dissociated from it, because we can with so little truth declare, "Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if *I prefer not Jerusalem* above my chief joy." Yet we, above all other Churches, on account of our special calls to such separation, and the special professions which we have made of it, come under Israel's condemnation—"Ephraim, he hath mixed himself among the people; Ephraim is a cake not turned." As a necessary result of this worldly-mindedness, our people are, like those whom Haggai was commissioned to reprove, contented with what measure of blessing they have already received, notwithstanding that "the house of God lieth waste." If many poor souls all around us are at ease while *out* of Zion, how many in the very midst of us are "at ease *in* Zion," dwelling in "ceiled houses" of worldly contentedness! If our "captivity" were wholly "returned," and we were "free indeed," we could not hear with such apathy the command of God, which came of old through Hezekiah's mouth, "Now ye have *consecrated yourselves* unto the Lord, come near, and bring sacrifices and thank offerings into the house of the Lord." If "consecrated" ourselves, the issue, as

in that case of yore, would be, "and the congregation brought in sacrifices and thank-offerings, and, as many *as were of a free heart*, burnt-offerings." Yes, though called a *free Church*, it is this "*free heart*" that we need. We much require experimentally to realize the text, to the exposition of which we so lately listened,* "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." Thus should "the Son make us free" from every spirit of earthly-mindedness. It were even some token of our captivity returning, that we felt our bondage, crying, "My soul cleaveth unto the dust; quicken thou me according to thy word;" for, in that case, we should not be long in adding, with hopeful confidence, "I will run the way of thy commandments, when thou shalt enlarge (or set free) my heart."

The turning again of such captivity as this, is just the blessing which we ministers, in especial, require. Surely we are all ready to confess, if we do not all in bitterness bemoan, the lean spirituality, nay, the prevalent and downright worldliness, of our own souls, as the prison-house which bars our free forth-going to the work of the Lord. Are we not painfully conscious of this, in our striving to *plead with souls for God*? Charged with an embassy from Heaven to dying men, does not each one of us experience his similarity to Paul, only in a more lamentable sense, when he owned himself "an ambassador *in bonds*"? Would God we were also like him, when he said, "O ye Corinthians, our mouth is open unto you, our heart is

* Referring to the Moderator's Opening Sermon.

enlarged." Instead of this, how often, in standing before the people to proclaim the tidings of salvation, do we go through the routine of duty, as if we were drudging the round of a yoked beast of burden; with no feeling that that yoke is the "yoke of Christ, which is easy," but rather the galling drag-load of a bondsman's toil; and with no joyous feeling, that the golden chains which attach us to it are the "bands of love" to Christ and the souls of men, but rather the iron fetters of necessity, or mere professional obligation at the best. Nor are we oftentimes more enlarged and at liberty in *pleading for souls with God*. "We have not because we ask not;" and "when we ask we receive not, because we ask amiss," even in the "spirit of bondage." We are straitened in prayer,—"straitened," not in Christ, but "in our bowels." If we but "knew the gift of God," and the *givingness* of God, it would not be so. Well may we cry, "O Lord of hosts, how long wilt thou be angry against the prayer of thy people?" And, knowing that the answer, though *not recorded*, must be, So long as prayer has no full, free forth-going, it well befits us to take up the supplications that, following up that question, *are recorded* for our use: "Turn us again, O Lord of hosts;" "quicken us, *and we will call upon thy name*." "Quickened" unto such a pleading, we would be "delivered from the bondage of corruption," and go in before the Lord with power for our people; not in "the spirit of bondage" unto slavish "fear," but in the confident and the prevailing "spirit



of adoption, crying, Abba, Father." For it is just because we can, with so little heart, appropriate in prayer the very first words of the form our Saviour taught us, "*Our Father* which art in heaven," that we have so little power in pouring forth the supplication, "Thy kingdom come," and so little energy in urging the plea, "For thine is the kingdom." No marvel, then, that there is amongst us such cold contentedness to labour without *much* fruit, and even to be without *any*. If we rest satisfied as to ourselves with duly going through our stated forms of duty, we will also be pleased enough if our people go, with mere outward formalism, through theirs; a sore and soul-destroying "captivity" is this, which none but God Himself can "turn again." Why have we so little spiritual avarice for souls, which shall be for ourselves a "glory" and a "crown"? Why, but because we have so little longing in our captive hearts for these souls, as treasure-trove from death, to be jewels gloriously shining in Christ's mediatorial diadem! Hence all our sloth and dull inanimate indifference, not half awake from the slumber which steeps contented captives within their prison cell; a slumber all the more condemning, because we *do* know something of the stirring and eventful crisis in which our lot is cast, and because we do feel warned by many thickening providences that we have been brought into our present position, as Esther was brought to the kingdom, "for such a time as this." We know that the hostile legions muster strong, and fierce, and multitudinous; and shall we, instead of

leading forth God's hosts, and doing valiantly, like Barak and Deborah, flee, like vanquished Sisera, and hide, yea slumber, in the very keeping of our foes, while more are breathing in hard and hot pursuit upon our heels, certain in such a case to be nailed, by even a feeble hand, to that earth on which we lie recumbent? We profess ourselves to be of David's company; is ours the part of the usurper, Ishbosheth, to go into our "tent to sleep at noon," high noon, which calls us forth "to bear the burden and heat of the day;" heedless lest some Rechab or Baanah steal in to "smite us under the fifth rib," and shed the life-blood of all remaining vital godliness that lingers in the midst of us? "Awake, awake, put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem." "Shake thyself from the dust, loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion." And seeing that these bands are all too strong for thy poor hand to wrench asunder, cry, cry and cease not, "Turn again our captivity, O Lord, as the streams in the south."

2. But since, as we have seen, God ever works by means, what are the means to be employed by us, in the use of which we may expect that He will turn again this captivity from our souls? We need not here to ply some secret device, or contrive some new expedients; but only to "ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein." I mention only three; and—

First of all: confessing our guiltiness and bemoan-

ing our captivity before God, as those who long with all their hearts to be delivered from them, is the first precursor of enlargement. Such was the exercise of Judah, when on the brink of their deliverance from the "strange land;" for they "hanged their harps upon the willows in the midst thereof," and cried. "By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down; yea, we wept when we remembered Zion." And such was also their exercise, after that latter exodus, in paving the way to their spiritual reviving, when settled in Jerusalem once more, as the Scripture record in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah instructively attests. A like exercise on our part would doubtless be followed by a like result; and, therefore, it now behoveth us to seek an abasing sense of the grievous bondage which afflicts us, not by comparing ourselves with others around us, or even contrasting ourselves with what we were or would wish to be; but by pondering well how sadly different we are from what the Lord would have us to be. Then should we cordially loathe the paltry lusts that bind us, and protest concerning each of them, with heartfelt fervency, "Happy shall he be that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones;" for these worldly influences *are* all "little ones" indeed (and herein is our condemnation), in comparison of the momentous interests of the heavenly Jerusalem which ought, in preference, to lead us captive to the obedience of Christ. It were well if each minister, in the first instance, searched out resolutely, and with all honest earnestness, concerning himself—

Am I the Achan who troubleth the camp of Israel? and what Babylonish garment abideth hid with me, to stay the Lord's victorious arm from being manifested within my sphere of influence? Instead of this, we have been prone to point out and denounce the mote conspicuous in our brother's eye, forgetful of the beam which lies embedded in our own. If we are alive to the *Erastian captivity* from which we have escaped, it is doubly perillous to be indifferent to, or perhaps altogether unwitting of, the *spiritual captivity* which may enthrall us still. Holding fast all soundness in the faith, let us seriously reflect that Satan has scarcely a more subtle temptation wherewith to entangle us to our destruction, than persuading us that *maintaining dogmatic truth* is one and the same with *living under its transforming power*. Such searchings of heart, leading to deeply-felt confessions among *the ministers* and office-bearers of the Church, might, if generally prevalent, be a blessed means of bringing *the people* at large to go and do likewise. A result so desirable has been so produced ere now, and would, by God's grace, be so produced again. I take one memorable instance, from the time when our text was written, "Now when Ezra had prayed, and *when he had confessed*, weeping and casting himself down before the house of God, there assembled unto him out of Israel *a very great congregation* of men and women and children: for *the people wept very sore*. And Shechaniah the son of Jehiel, one of the sons of Elam" (clearly as spokesman for the rest), "answered, and said unto Ezra, *We have*

trespassed against our God;" and it was not long before it could be added, "*now* there is hope in Israel concerning this thing." Were such a scene beheld among ourselves, and "*now*," this would be a day of "hope" indeed. Why should it not be so? If each member of the Church were brought to such godly humiliation in his own soul, and with his family, we should behold at least one of the sure signs of that great reviving foretold by Zechariah, "*The land shall mourn*, every family apart; the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Levi apart, and their wives apart; the family of Shimei apart, and their wives apart; *all the families* that remain, every family apart, and their wives apart." And then would come to pass the remainder of that sure word of prophecy, "*In that day* I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem." . . . "I will cut off the names of the idols out of the land." . . . "I will say, It is my people; and they shall say, The Lord is my God." But we cannot expect such "times of refreshing," if men refuse to "afflict their souls;" for, in another prophecy, God hath as surely written, "I will go and return to my place, *till they acknowledge their offence*, and seek my face; in their affliction they will seek me early."

But this last quoted passage clearly indicates the *second* means of reviving, which we must ever make the faithful associate of the first, viz., our earnest

and unremitting siege of the throne of grace. It is indispensable that we seek to stir up each other by mutual conference and such like appliances ; for, " as iron sharpeneth iron, so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend." But our main resource must ever be to go together and beseech the Lord to stir up and sharpen us. When " they that fear the Lord speak often one to another," it is still *the Lord* who " hearkens and hears it." We must wrestle with Him for the reviving, ready to welcome whatsoever dealing He may employ to accomplish it ; and, should that dealing be the correction which He employs so often, and which we have so richly merited, our duty and our privilege must lie in submissively crying out before His throne, " O Lord, correct me, but with judgment ; not in thine anger, lest thou bring me to nothing." Thus, in the days referred to in the text, as Haggai records, " The people did fear before the Lord. And the Lord *stirred up the spirit* of Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel the governor of Judah (the civil rulers), and the spirit of Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest (the ecclesiastical functionaries), and the spirit of *all the remnant* of the people ; and they came and did work in the house of the Lord of hosts, their God." Surely we have good encouragement to seek for a like upstirring of our own spirits at the present juncture. Since " we have heard with our ears, and our fathers have told us, what work God did in their days, in the times of old ;" yea, since we have ourselves beheld in *our* days that He is the same God

still who "hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad;" how appropriate is it for us to carry out the spirit of the psalm just quoted, by importunately pleading, "Thou art my king, O God; command deliverances for Jacob!" The Lord taketh pleasure in so glorifying His Son, in the revival of His people. Nay more, He hath covenantedly *promised* the very blessing which we need: "The heathen that are left round about you shall know that I the Lord build the ruined places, and plant that which was desolate; I the Lord have spoken it, *and I will do it.*" But, can we forget that the very next verse declares the indissoluble connection between God's promise and His people's prayer, "Thus saith the Lord, I will yet *for this be inquired of* by the house of Israel, to do it for them"? O, let us, in believing supplication, insist upon the promise, and we shall find it to be in Christ "yea and amen, unto the glory of God by us." And not "by *us*" alone; for others shall participate in the blessing, when our prayers are pervaded by the spirit of the psalmist's cry, "Restore unto me the joys of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit. *Then shall I teach transgressors thy ways, and sinners shall be converted unto thee.*" Nay, the hallowed influence will be even wider still, "God be merciful to *us*, and bless *us*, and cause His face to shine upon *us*; that thy way may be known upon *the earth*, thy saving health among *all nations.*" Wherefore, let us act out the Saviour's injunction, "I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace

day nor night; ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence; and give Him no rest till He establish, and till He make Jerusalem a praise in the earth;” remembering, with confidence and joy, that He who presents these supplications, redolent with the incense of His meritorious death, has declared His gracious purpose to blend therewith His own prevailing advocacy: “For Zion’s sake I will not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem’s sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth.”

A *third* means of quickening, which must be faithfully employed by us along with the other two, is laborious diligence in the work of the Lord. If it is indispensable to be the subjects of a true spiritual revival, in order heartily to engage in the service to which Jehovah summons us; it is, contrariwise, equally indispensable for us to be found actively engaged in the services of our heavenly calling, in order thus to seek and wait for the expected revival. It should never be forgotten, that the path of duty is always the place of blessing. If this unfailing maxim be practically disregarded by us, our mourning over our lack of spiritual liveliness, and all our prayers for divine quickening, are only gross hypocrisy. We must not idly wait until the first shower descend, else we dare not hope that it will ever come. The command to “the daughters of Jerusalem” is on this wise, “Rise up, ye women that are at ease; hear my voice, ye careless daughters, . . . until the Spirit be poured

out from on high." We must be "standing up," like Peter, and labouring in the vineyard, "whatsoever our hand findeth to do" doing it "with our might," if we would reasonably hope for a Pentecostal effusion of the Holy Ghost upon the multitudes. The labourer *himself* is also thus revived. God "muzzles not the ox that treadeth out the corn;" so that, when busily occupied in seeking to give the bread of life to others, we are in the likeliest attitude to be ourselves fed full with "the finest of the wheat." We read that Job of old had his captivity *much* turned, when he abhorred himself in dust and ashes; it was turned still *more*, when he cast himself, with prayerful unreservedness, upon the Lord's sovereign mercy; but it was turned *most of all*, when he set himself to evangelistic labour; "and the Lord turned the captivity of Job, *when he prayed for his friends*; also the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before." Most hopeful would it be, if not only all *ministers*, but also all *members* of the Church, laid this example seriously to heart, and strove to copy it. Thus would our limited and feeble spirituality be mightily extended and invigorated. For divine grace in the heart, even like a mental faculty, is, though of far higher name, increased by exercising it. Or, rather, according to Christ's doctrine in exposition of God's method of procedure with partakers of His grace, "he that is faithful in least" gets opportunity to be also "faithful in much;" because "unto him that hath," and uses it aright, "shall be given" many talents more, "and he shall have abundance;"

while from him that "hath not" made such a use of his gifts and privileges, "shall be taken away even that which he seemeth to have." We must have done with the foolish imagination of mere sentimental religionists, who flatter themselves that there can be an idle contemplative *living upon God*, without an active *living unto God*—a delusion which, it is to be feared, is ruining the souls of many loud professors in every denomination of Christians. Let it be known that this is the promise from the beginning, and that it abides unaltered to the end: "It shall come to pass, when thou shalt return unto the Lord thy God, and shalt *obey* His voice, according to *all that I command thee* this day, thou and thy children, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that *then* the Lord thy God will *turn thy captivity* and have compassion upon thee."

But what of this day's service, in connection with our captivity and its returning? Is it an *exponent* of our reviving; or is it a *means* towards it? Would God that it were both! It is surely the exponent of a *little* life in *some*, though not of *much* in *all* of us. Shall we speak truth in venturing to characterise it as the index of, at least, our generally felt need of quickening? That would be verily something to be thankful for, though not to rest satisfied with. Or is this, with many of us, a really formal exercise, the exponent of nothing but a heartless hypocrisy? Ah! then, how fearfully peals forth that trumpet sound—for us, although we hear it not—" *Treacherous Judah hath not*

turned unto me with her whole heart, *but feignedly*, saith the Lord." But is it not our unanimous desire, that the solemn work in which we are on this day of humiliation engaged, should be to all of us *a means* of special quickening? God grant it may kindle at least some sparks of spiritual life in every heart, and fan the smoking flax until it burst into such a flame, that the zeal of the Lord's house shall eat us up, and make our Church a burning and a shining light. But let us also fear lest it turn out a searing ordeal—the savour of death unto death—a lullaby to sing our souls asleep. If such it prove to be, then shall we be more condemned than those who never think of making our present profession of abasement; and the Almighty, whom we have mocked but not deceived, will lift up His voice against us once again, and the trumpet's second awful blast shall be—"The backsliding Israel hath justified herself more than treacherous Judah."

3. But I must have a word or two on the similitude in the prayer of our text, to the effect that the returning of Zion's captivity may be "*like the streams in the south.*" And here I would insist, for a moment, upon the value of the lesson taught, rather than on the beauty of the figure teaching it.

The initial portion of the lesson is a revelation of the dead formality and utter barrenness of a soul or land on which the quickening Spirit is not shed. Ministers and individual Christians, who are set to be their "brothers' keepers," and witnesses for God in the world, are indeed, when themselves unvisited by the

refreshing rain of the Spirit of God, desolate and dry as the channel of a southern stream, which the parching fervency of summer's drought has left in evaporated emptiness. The thirsting flocks which "pant and bray" for water resort to them in vain. Along their brink, and all within the sphere of their withering influence, the grass of the field is burnt up, the pleasant flowers decay, the hopeful blossoms die, and even the goodly trees, whose roots strike down the deepest, are languishing and fruitless. The unlively professor is as "a well without water," whose influence for evil is felt far and wide. And there are numberless hosts of such amongst us. What need have we, like Achsah the daughter of Caleb, when pleading with her father, to cry before the Lord, "Give me a blessing; for thou hast given me a south land;"—since our "field," however fair and lying to the sun, is naught, if unrefreshed, wherefore—"give me also springs of water." And if Caleb hearkened to her voice, and "gave her the upper springs and the nether springs," shall not our God hear us, and bestow the "upper springs" of the Spirit's grace upon ourselves, that we may prove "the nether springs" of blessing unto others, when "the rain also filleth the pools;" for "if fathers know how to give good gifts unto their children, much more will not our Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit unto them that ask him?" It doubtless must be so, since this is His faithful promise, "When the poor and needy seek water and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the

Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them. I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys ; I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water.”

Then shall be learned the counterpart of the previous lesson, in the rich fulness resulting from the replenished streams. Sometimes the Spirit's grace descends like dew upon the earth. Distilled at night, it oft falls thickest even in silent and unhopeful darkness,—unseen and almost unfelt, as every pearly drop clings to the “mown grass,” but glistening before the rising sun when he reveals the revived herbage, each leaf of which reflects his morning glories. Faint type of the Spirit of God's unnoticed workings ! But even this reviving, precious as it is, realizes not the full outpoured blessing which the text describes ; nor will the truly thirsting Church be satisfied without a pentecostal flood more copious still. For know we not that the same God who hath promised, “ I will be *as the dew* unto Israel,” hath also sworn, “ I will *pour water* upon him that is thirsty, and *floods* upon the dry ground ; I will pour *my Spirit* upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring ; and they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water courses.” And this prediction may be now again fulfilled, as in times past it has been, when the heavens above were as brass and the earth as iron beneath us. These heavens have already begun to gather blackness. The cloud, at first descried no bigger than a man's hand, is dark-

ening quickly over all our spiritual sky. Already the muttering thunder hurtles from afar,—yea, is crashing near us. The lightning gleams athwart the whole horizon, as if betokening the speedy coming of the Son of Man with power. Perhaps it may be so; and all these heavy clouds may burst, surcharged with floods of blessing. Then shall Siloam's almost empty well flow out in fulness from the temple of the Lord; and Kedron's tiny brook become that brimming "river, the streams whereof make glad the city of our God." Then shall those "living waters" flow swiftly on, and ever wax in flowing,—reaching "to the ankles," and thereafter swelling "to the loins," till at last they become "waters to swim in, a river that cannot be passed over." And what is then the issue? The fainting flocks have their sore thirst assuaged; the grass of the field grows up luxuriantly; the trees of the forest clap their hands; "the little hills rejoice on every side; the pastures are clothed with flocks; the valleys also are covered over with corn; they shout for joy, they also sing."

But this is the consummation of which, while the reviving Spirit of God shed down upon the Church is the producing cause of it, we shall not see the advent, without laborious working in the vineyard. I am, therefore, necessarily brought to consider the

III. Third great division of our subject, viz., the Church's work, as indicated by these weighty sentences, "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed,

shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him."

1. Here let us, from the very *beginning*, set our hearts upon the *end*, crying for "sheaves, sheaves!" In this spiritual husbandry, sowing and reaping, seed-time and harvest, must be always intermingled; and, according to God's prophecy, we may expect that both shall prosper together, for it is said the Lord "will cause to come down upon us the rain, the *former rain* and the *latter rain*, even in the *first month*." A gracious promise! Why should our unbelief impede its accomplishment? Let us labour for fruit from the very first; because, not from us, but "from God is our fruit found." The harvest is the Lord's; and He will bless the working of our hands when we seek, for His glory, to fill with sheaves the garner. The fields are "already white unto the harvest." O that we, "as labourers sent forth into His harvest," had skill and energy to "thrust in the sickle," and reap it; realizing it to be our solemn duty, our highest privilege, our chiefest pleasure, to gather precious souls to Christ, "compelling them" from all the highways and the hedges to come in, that His floor may be filled, and His table "furnished with guests!" But how goes this harvest? What sheaves are being bound up in the bundle of life with Jesus? Alas! that we must confess them to be as those "wherewith the mower filleth not his hand, nor he that bindeth sheaves his bosom;" forasmuch as the stunted growth of living souls amongst us is only "as the grass upon the

house-tops, which withereth afore it groweth up." But why is this? Sin lieth at *our* door. "Be ashamed, O ye husbandmen; howl, O ye vine-dressers, for the wheat and for the barley; because the harvest of the earth is perished. Gird yourselves and lament, ye priests; howl, ye ministers of the altar; come, lie all night in sackcloth, ye ministers of my God." Yes, it is through our neglect that this old word of prophecy has a new meaning and peculiar emphasis, as addressed to us. As spiritual husbandmen, we have not laid to heart that proverb of axiomatic wisdom, "He that gathereth in summer is a wise son; but he that *sleepeth in harvest* is a son that causeth shame." Unless we now bestir ourselves, while yet it is sowing and reaping time, "the harvest will pass" and the "summer be ended," and souls shall not be saved.

But sowing seed, in the order of nature, precedes reaping sheaves. Let us remember this, that we may be stirred up to "sow beside all waters." Fixing our peculiar attention, and exercising all our prayerful diligence, upon the sower's duty, will be the more successful, as, strange to tell, it is by the selfsame instrumentality that seed is sown, the tender blade is nourished, and ripened sheaves are reaped. That instrumentality is the ministration of the "precious seed" of the Word of God, which is alike "sharper than a two-edged sword" to pierce the heart,—the means of implanting the incorruptible seed of grace in the soul thus opened up,—"profitable for correction and instruction in righteousness," and "able to build us up,

and to give us an inheritance among all them which are sanctified." Wherefore—

2. Ponder well the work of the true husbandman, as figuratively "bearing," or, as it might be translated, *drawing forth* "precious seed." "Now, the parable is this, the *seed* is the *Word of God*." And it is indeed most "precious,"—"more precious than gold, yea, than much fine gold." Could we only get a full, or at least an increasingly adequate sense of this,—by ourselves esteeming it as "sweeter than the honey and the honeycomb," and by ourselves rejoicing in the personal reception of it, as those that "find great spoil,"—we should be somewhat furnished forth for sowing it, with earnest commendation of its value, in every corner of the "field, which is the world," to which our arm can reach. We should not, in such a case, saunter listlessly over the ground, letting the precious "bread-corn" slip heedlessly through our fingers, as if it were a thing of little concernment, and the sowing of it a matter of supreme indifference. But we should carefully seek to bury in the furrowed soil every several grain, as if it were a "pearl of great price," from which might spring an hundredfold of still more precious increase. How little is this descriptive of the ministrations of most or all of us! It is because we so little realize the vast responsibility of "bearing"—of having intrusted to us—this sacred deposit. And yet no consideration is more fitted to humble us in the dust than the reflection that unto us is "committed the ministry of reconciliation,"—"unto us, who are less than the least of all

saints, is this grace given," that we should preach unto the world the unsearchable riches of Christ. Were it not for promised grace, the thought would absolutely overwhelm us, that *such men as we* are set to be "ambassadors for Christ;" for "who is sufficient for these things?" But "our sufficiency is of the Lord."

Now, in seeking, through the strength of the Lord, to meet the responsible duty of "drawing forth" the "precious seed," we must see to it, first of all, that we *have got it* to draw forth. Our bosoms must be laden therewith, in order that we may have copious handfuls to sow broad-cast up and down. How, then, are we to procure the seed for sowing in such generous abundance? The Bible is ever at hand, as an inexhaustible storehouse; but is this enough? We must have spiritual access to its treasures; and, for this end, we, as individual labourers, need that divine quickening of soul of which we have already spoken. It is when "the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud," that the blessed result is sure to follow, of there being furnished such "seed to the sower" as shall prove "bread to the eater," so that God's Word shall not "return unto him void," but "prosper in the thing whereunto He sent it." Then would every evangelist of our number be as "a scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven, and like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth *forth out of his treasure* things new and old." Out of the fulness of our hearts our mouths

would speak, with gushing fervency. The more "precious" that we esteemed and felt the "seed" to be, the more profusely would we scatter it. Again and again would we cast it with liberal prodigality on the ungenial soils where it had been heretofore withered up, or where the birds of the air had devoured it; and, lest its precious ministration should be again "received in vain," we would incessantly conjure all our hearers, "Break up your fallow ground; for it is time to seek the Lord, till He come and rain righteousness upon you."

3. But we must "*go forth*" bearing this "precious seed," in order to the ingathering of the promised harvest. This expression seems replete with a meaning, of which it is not difficult to catch at least the general import. The going forth must be *from* one point *to* another.

We must "go forth" from the *sloth*, and lethargy, and seeking of personal comforts, which have hitherto detained us as captives from devoted labouring. The returning of our captivity from the lands of the enemy is graciously vouchsafed, just that we may, with hearts free yet self-denied, forsake all and follow our great Captain, to "endure hardness, as good soldiers of Jesus Christ." We must "go forth" from our *studies*, where we have sought carefully to prepare the "beaten oil" which is demanded for the use of the sanctuary's lamps; for how mischievous to others, and condemning to ourselves, is it to abuse that good gift of God—a ready utterance, as if the unpremeditated exercise of

it were the worthless end for which God has given it. And we must "go forth" from our *closets*, where we have been with God. Our studies and our closets must be one and the same. If—following out the figure in the text—our studies are to be the *threshing-floors*, where we are to get and prepare the precious seed, each one of them must be dealt with as the threshing-floor of Ornan. As there David met with God, and offered up to Him the oxen treading out the corn, with all their yokes and threshing instruments; so the studious treader of the sheaves must offer up himself to God, and make all his implements and means of study a dedicated sacrifice, if he would prosper in his work. Thus would we "go forth" in sanctified array, not *from* God, but *with* God, to our various fields of duty; like Robert Bruce of Edinburgh, as wrestling Israels, to testify before Him that we *will* not go with hope, for we *can* not go with power, unless Himself go with us. Ay, this would be Ezekiel's exercise, when sent to preach the kingdom, most sure to realize Ezekiel's blessing—"And the hand of the Lord was there upon me; and He said unto me, Arise, *go forth* into the plain, and I will there talk with thee. Then I arose and went forth into the plain; and, behold, the glory of the Lord stood there."

What matter, then, although our forthgoing be against a "rebellious house"? We should "go forth" *aggressively*, but not *despondingly*, against the slumbering formalists in all our congregations, and give them no time to slumber. So panoplied of God "against

their faces," we could not listen to their voice, "Speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits, cause the Holy one of Israel to cease from before us;" but should rather prevail with hearts as hard as Nineveh to hear our testimony, when we speak for Him who says, "Preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee." We would "go forth" in more than human might against the outfield masses festering in our midst, in ignorance, and infidelity, and drunkenness, and Sabbath profanation, and every other type of reckless godlessness. In such an enterprise, is it some slight betokening that God, in this our day, designs to visit Zion, and "that the time to favour her, yea, the set time, has come; *for* His servants take pleasure in her stones, and favour the dust thereof," seeking to retrieve to God some precious jewels from even the filthiest rubbish? If it were so indeed, the reviving would not be confined to the professing Zion only; for thus it has been written by Him whose word is truth, "So *the heathen* shall fear the name of the Lord, and all the kings of the earth thy glory." *Home* mission effort would tell upon the *foreign* field. We would "go forth" upon the world at large—on Jew and Gentile, and all the holds of heathendom; and our being "glad" of the "great things" which the Lord hath "done for us," would not be manifested only "in the courts of the Lord's house, in the midst of thee, O Jerusalem," but, as recorded in another psalm, the Church's song and work would be, "It is God that subdueth the people under me;"

therefore will I confess thy name, O Lord, *among the heathen*, and sing praises unto thy name ;” until even they should learn to sing His praises too.

4. But the manner in which it behoveth us to “go forth” successfully is memorable, and is indicated by these expressions, twice repeated to attract peculiar notice :—“They that sow *in tears*”—“He that goeth forth *and weepeth*.” And truly there is cause enough for sorest weeping ; although, alas ! few tears, wrung from us by that cause, are shed.

What need for tears over countless precious souls that *have perished*, and are now forever lost ! An awful consideration this, in *any* sense, yea, in *every* sense, to us who still are spared amidst the means of grace, as stewards of it ! But surely it is specially so, if these undying souls have perished through our neglect. Undoubtedly, with respect to not a few of them, that God, whose we are, and whom we have professed to serve in the saving gospel of His Son, commanded and proclaimed, “If thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity ; but his blood will I require at thine hand.” How have we discharged that solemn obligation ? How have we disregarded that tremendously fearful warning ? Dare we inquire ? If not, how shall we meet the dreadful revelations which the judgment-day shall make, when pastors and people shall stand together, with every thought, and word, and deed disclosed, before the same tribunal ? Were we only living now, as if in sight of the judgment-seat

of Christ, realizing its business and its dooms as “nigh, even at the doors,”—how would we agonize for souls, and give neither God nor them any rest day nor night! Surely, O surely, we would each one be up and doing, instant “in season and out of season” in a twofold exercise:—*First*, our never-ceasing prayer would be with David, “Deliver us from blood-guiltiness, O God, thou God of our salvation;” for if upon our souls is chargeable alike the blood of souls and of the Lord of glory, and if the blood of Christ can purge the guilt of His own death away from us, that “blood of sprinkling” shall wash—as it alone *can* wash—the guiltiness of the blood of souls for ever from us also. But, while we lie beside the cleansing fountain, will we not, *Secondly*, arise in practical repentance from our sin in which we grovel so supinely; that even a far more faithful witness still than Paul may say of us, “Behold this self-same thing, that we sorrowed after a godly sort; what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! In all things ye have proved yourselves to be clear in this matter.” But how can we be “clear” in it, unless our “indignation” and “revenge” burn deep against besetting sloth and carelessness; and unless our “zeal” and “vehement desire” go forth unquenchably in pleading for and with the lost? Behold, for our encouragement, the case of Paul, once deeply stained with this same blood of souls, yet afterwards, through grace, a mighty instrument of winning them

to Christ. Even he who, before Agrippa, was constrained by truth to own, "I compelled men to blaspheme," could thus address the elders of the Church of Ephesus—"I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men," not merely because, on the one hand, he had fled for pardon to the cross of Christ; but because, on the other hand, he could also say, "I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God," and "ceased not to warn every one, night and day, *with tears.*" Surely these tears of his came welling freshly from his heart, because, deep-graven there, was found a humbling sense of how "injurious" he once had been to souls, now lost for ever!

Nor will this be the only key to unlock the fount of weeping. Floods of such tears, melted from the icy Lebanon of our hearts, will flow for souls that *are perishing*, as well as at the recollection of those who *have perished*, when "the Lord turns again our captivity as the streams in the south." Here we may well attach a spiritual import to these words of him who has been called the weeping prophet—"Weep ye not for the dead, neither bemoan him," for he is beyond such influence; "but weep sore for him that goeth away" to that eternal captivity, "for he shall return no more." Alas, there are untold multitudes of these constantly "going away" from our assembled congregations into an undone eternity, "with a lie in their right hands!" At this *God* is not looking on unheedful, although *we* may be so. It would rather seem as

if He were now begun to "call upon the man clothed with linen, which has the writer's ink-horn by his side," and saying, "Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men *that sigh and that cry* for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof." How many foreheads is he marking, even among the ministers of the everlasting gospel? Is he marking *us*? If not, O who shall countermand the dreadful order given by God to the other five men his fellows, "every man with a slaughter weapon in his hand," "Go ye after him through the city, and smite; let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity; slay utterly old and young, both maids, and little children, and women; but come not near any man upon whom is the mark; *and begin at my sanctuary.*"

Or look we to the world at large, beyond the pale of nominally Christian Zion, where rampant sin holds sway, and many thousands daily perish. Pensive regrets for such a world-wide devastating plague are here and there expressed; but where is godly lamentation at the sight which stirs up all the soul to humble, and chivalrous, and determined effort against the sweeping tide of sin and death? Must echo answer, "Where?" Verily, *we* are not guiltless here. Have we done what we could?—have we made the sacrifices which we might have made?—have we wept before men and God, and borne the "precious seed" which we ourselves rejoice in, to dying thousands at our very doors? Ah, no! "our leanness, our

leanness," and our want of heart to strive, to pray, or even to feel and weep! God send us speedily,—God send us *now*—the spirit of His servant, "O that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that *I might weep day and night* for the slain of the daughter of my people." Let Paul's example move us, who "spared no arrows" against ungodly hearers, saying, "For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you *even weeping*, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ." Alas, we little care to use this melting tenderness! When sinners will not hear us, the "wrath of man that worketh not the righteousness of God" begins its unholy work within our bosoms; or disappointment and vexation rise to mar our holiest zeal and faithfulness. Oh, that we could learn of Him, the "meek and lowly in heart," who, "when reviled, reviled not again," who, "when He suffered, threatened not," who "endured *such* contradiction of sinners against Himself," and who (most melting plea of all!) "beheld Jerusalem and *wept over it*, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things that belong unto thy peace;" for surely it were well to try this argument of tears with men, before the words and means of saving grace are for ever hidden from their eyes. Nor should such mode of pleading be left untried with God. "Blow the trumpet in Zion; sanctify a fast; call a solemn assembly; let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, *weep between the porch and the altar*, and let them say, Spare thy people, O God, and give not thine heritage

to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them ;” for this is the blessed promise wherewith that call is followed and concludes—“ *Then* will the Lord be jealous for His land, and pity His people ; yea, the Lord *will* answer and say unto His people, . . . Fear not, O land ; be glad and rejoice ; for the Lord will do great things,” yes, greater far than all that He has already done, and whereof we shall be supremely and for ever glad. For,

5. Then such sowers of the precious seed “ shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing their sheaves with them.” This is the glorious result which shall accrue ; and yet, before that blessed consummation can be reached, there must be many battles fought, and many foes discomfited, which now are boasting much, and threatening terrible things against the people and the cause of Christ throughout the world.

For instance—there is *Antichrist* girding himself afresh with “ power, and signs, and lying wonders.” That “ mystery of iniquity doth already work ” with more than pristine vigour, and seems about to regain a mastery against the truth, which we had almost thought he had long since lost for ever. But let us not be overmuch “ afraid with any amazement.” Let our assured hope be in the Word which has been written, “ When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him.” But, side by side with this hope in God’s faithful promise, we must not fail to lay up in our

hearts that truth of practical concernment to all whom He has made, like us, to "drink the wine of astonishment,"—"Thou hast given *that* banner to them that fear thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth;" so that we may "rejoice in His salvation, and in the name of our God set up our banners." Then "shall the Lord fulfil all our petitions," and none more signally than that which importunes Him to "plead His own cause," and "turn back His enemies" which rise up against Him. What, then, though Antichrist send forth his legions of blaspheming Rabshakehs, to taunt the Lord's hosts that their God shall not be able to stand against His conquering master? Jehovah may make him, like Sennacherib of old, to hear "a rumour and return to his own land" to perish there, that so the world may be mercifully rid of him for ever. But there be many Antichrists, of which I cannot speak particularly. Nor is it needful, farther than to say that, be they ever so fierce and ever so numerous, the mighty God is greater than them all, and shall make His little band of faithful soldiers to triumph over them. "Greater is He that is for us than all that can be against us." When God returns the captivity of His people, "He that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David shall be as God—as the angel of the Lord before them." The thickening foe shall only drive believers near to God, to cry, like Jehoshaphat before the throne, "O our God, we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we

what to do; but our eyes are upon thee." So shall some "Jahaziel," heaven-sent to give them courage, revive their hearts, and cry, "Thus saith the Lord unto you, Be not afraid nor dismayed, by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours, but God's." Then who's afraid in going forth *with Him* "against all deadly!" Have we been heretofore overcome in conflict with these legions? Take "heart of grace," and fight once more, yea, never yield. When David strove against his foes in Seir, and knew their strength, and felt their power and cried, "Who will bring me into the strong city? Who will lead me into Edom?" he answered with strong confidence the question which himself had put, "Wilt not thou, O God, which hadst cast us off? And thou, O God, which didst not go out with our armies?" That was faith's *trial* and its *triumph* too. A feeble faith could say, "Thou wilt help again, who hast succoured us before;" but Abraham-like, "against hope he believed in hope," and trusted Him who only *could*, but *had not* battled for him. And so his faith was not ashamed at last; for Israel's God smote Edom, and Israel thus prevailed. And shall not a new "valley of salt" be yet the place of signal rout to all God's enemies? Although they hide themselves "in the cliffs of the rock, and hold the height of the hill," our God shall "bring them down from thence;" for "*their* rock is not as *our* rock," and *theirs* must "become a plain" before *God's* "holy hill." And this shall be, when Christian men learn how to trust and pray, "Give us help from

trouble, for vain is the help of man," and make their rallying and their battle-cry, "Through God we shall do valiantly; for He it is that shall tread down our enemies."

Then what a glorious harvest shall be reaped!—how quickly shall the heavy sheaves be gathered!—how surely shall there be both joy in heaven, and peace on earth! To God alone shall be all the praise. For "he that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again" *to Him*, all laden with the sheaves. Sent forth *from God* to sow and reap, and *with God* to strengthen for the work, we must "come again" *to God*, with whatsoever gathered shocks of corn we have, as a whole thank-offering to His grace. Dare we come empty-handed, and stand sheafless before His throne, when we return from the harvest field? Oh, let us labour now, as fellow-workmen with the Lord, and we shall not "be ashamed" in "rightly dividing" *to men* the "word of truth," and in rendering at last *to God* His own won heritage, saying before the throne, as Jesus says, "Behold me, and the children whom the Lord hath given me." To this end, let us not forget that the feast of *Pentecost* of old was the feast of *sheaves*—is so still, and shall be to the end. The Pentecostal gracious *outpouring* shall arrive, and then the Pentecostal glorious *ingathering* shall accompany it. "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall

melt ; and I will bring again the captivity of my people." Lord, hasten it in thy time !

'Tis true, we may not live to see that blessed harvest ; but come it shall, and we must strive to help it forward. Yea, even now each truly faithful sower is speeding on its coming ; for, though his own eyes see but little fruit of all his toil and tears, it is as true of him as ever it was of Samuel, "The Lord was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground." Fruit *is* produced by faithful sowing, although the sower may not now see and taste it. We must "walk by faith and not by sight," in this as well as other things. Wherefore, beloved fathers and brethren, "be ye steadfast and unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as ye know that your labour *is not* (yes, *is not*) in vain in the Lord." And know for certain, that the time of gracious reward, with joy in seen and gathered sheaves, is coming on apace. Hereafter, if not now, they that sow, and they that reap, and *they that are reaped*, shall rejoice together. Ye may weep on till death arrives, bearing and drawing forth the precious seed ; but that is not the end. "Weeping may endure for a night ; but joy cometh in the morning." Oh, is not that glorious morn worth waiting for, though weeping be our only portion till it dawn ? For, when we all come trooping home, how gladsome *then*, if not before, to bring with us our sheaves,—

"Joyous as when the reapers bear
The harvest treasures home."

“For the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.” Amen.

II.

NOTES OF SERMONS.

A similar provision is made for the N. Y. church.

1. Our public worship not after Example of Temple - but

A. The Synagogue. This plain from Isa. iii. 2, 3:-

Heb. 8. 25: + elsewhere + X^r. Himself set apart men for this - Mark xvi. 15: + Apostles did so: - & took means to transmit the

bleping 2. Tim. ii. 2: + Fruit of Cross Eph. iv. 11, 12:

B. The loss of this means of grace is a judgment for neglecting it. Jer. xxiii. 21, 22: + Amos viii. 11

or as Acts xiii. 46 + Contrariwise - 'tis a bleping to have pastors Is. xxxv. 10: + Jer. iii. 15

How sh^d we prop + use the provision?

2. The function of pastor's just that of err in text +

A. Take God's word - & expound - & impress it. +

More essays utterly valueless. - God's word

err is Jer. xxiii. 28, 32. - Open up the

Scriptures - for the purpose of preaching

X^r: + Hence 2. Cor. iv. 1, 2: - 1. Pet. iv. 11: +

B. Science - if true - to be used as hand-

maid of Gospel - not instead of it. Is on the one hand 1. Cor. v. 20, 21: on the other v. 23, 28.

3. Hence we need equivalents to "schools of prophets": +

A. Our Divinity Halls. + O for best worthy

teachers in them. + I have "trials" before pastor or deined. + Sh^d be stricter. +

Sh^d I trust our new Cop pastor as 1. Cor. iii. 2, 5.

B. But something higher still required. +

What avoids "giving the sense" - if so: xiv. 26 awanting? - O for that

for both teachers taught. + Hence Paul preached + prayed. + So also

did X^r Himself. + Pray for us - 1. Silom in order to 2. Thys. iii. 1. + Acts ii. 17.

(1.)

*Notes of REV. DR. MILLER'S last Communion Sermon,
preached in Free St. Matthew's, on Sabbath 10th April,
1881.*

Daniel ix. 24-27.

THIS is a long passage, with a very great deal in it. I read the whole chapter, for this whole chapter is one of the plainest Old Testament predictions concerning Christ, and Christ's work, and the results of that blessed work. I do observe how strange it is that the Jews do not see Jesus set forth in these verses, and in Isaiah liii. where Christ is set forth equally plainly as in this passage—it is not possible for them to deny it, but the Jews refuse to believe that *that* chapter refers to the Messiah at all—even the very name is given, the date of His coming is set forth, the desolation that followed is set forth, and all has been fulfilled in the person of our blessed Saviour.

1st. Let us illustrate the fact, and that a blessed fact, that the actual coming and work of the Messiah was very different from what the Jews expected of Him. They thought He was to be an earthly King, associating with His reign thoughts of earthly pomp

and national glory; thus did they entirely misunderstand the 72nd Psalm and other such passages; and even after Jesus came, and suffered, and died, how slow of heart were the apostles to believe the truth; when being assembled after His resurrection they asked of Him, saying, "Lord wilt thou, at this time, restore again the Kingdom to Israel?" His kingdom is not of this world, it is not of worldly prosperity, it is a spiritual kingdom, set up in the hearts of men. If only an earthly and temporal kingdom, no soul could be saved, but now salvation is provided for all, through His finished work on the Cross. Salvation is for Jew and Gentile. "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." "The Kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." It is a kingdom of love, for the King is now exalted at God's right hand to grant repentance and remission of sins. The Jews thought that the Mosaic law was to abide, and for this they were offended at Christ, and after Christ's death this was the very ground on which Stephen was stoned, and so became the first New Testament martyr. The Jews held firmly to sacrifice and oblation. They made the gospel in the law a Covenant of works—thus ignoring the doctrine of grace altogether. "For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away any sin; wherefore, when He cometh into the world, He saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest

not, but a body hast thou prepared for me." When sacrifice and oblation were done away with, is it true that Christ came to destroy the law and the prophets? No, but to fulfil. Thus Paul testifies at Antioch. "Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins, and by Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses. Beware therefore lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets: 'Behold ye despisers, and wonder and perish.'" Yes, the sacrifice of Himself was infinitely efficacious for that, and for everything else; infinitely efficacious to take away sin. Christ said, "Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire, mine ears hast thou opened, burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required. I delight to do thy will, oh, my God. I have preached righteousness in the great congregation. I have declared thy faithfulness in the great congregation. I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation." Therefore when the reality came, the shadow of the reality ceased. For "Christ also hath loved us, and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour."

Another feature in which Christ reversed the expectations of the Jews. They had no thought that the Messiah would die. They misinterpreted the 72nd Psalm: "He *shall live*, and to Him shall be given of the gold of Sheba;" and so completely did this idea pervade the minds of all, that when

Jesus spoke to His disciples about His sufferings and death, they were almost in despair, until they realised the meaning of that truth—"He shall see His seed. He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hands." "I am He that liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore." This it was that dispelled the sorrow and despair of the disciples. "Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord;" and we may this day be partakers of that joy, if we by faith are enabled to behold our risen Lord. Hence it is that Messiah shall be cut off. This was needful for the remission of sins, for without the shedding of blood there could be no remission, and that blood was the blood of the Covenant. Therefore, "Awake, oh sword, against my shepherd, against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of Hosts; smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered, and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones." It was the Lord's doing: Behold the sword of God in the hand of man; behold the perfect sacrifice. He was cut off, but not for Himself; He was "cut off out of the land of the living; for the transgression of my people was He stricken." Not for Himself, ah, no. He needed not to make atonement for Himself; but for you and for me, dear brethren. "Forasmuch as ye know, that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, who was manifest in these last times for you, who by Him do believe in God." Of this, dear

brethren, we have a New Testament memorial. Oh, like Paul, to know nothing but Jesus Christ and Him crucified ; so that to-day, when the King sitteth at His table, our spikenard may send forth the smell thereof!

2nd. The great object for which Messiah came and died—1st. It was to seal up the vision and prophecy. To seal up these was just to make an end of them. To seal up, is the very word in the original, which is before translated “to make an end of.” The vision is made an end of when fulfilled—the prophecy when fulfilled. We have these realised in Christ when He said,—“Labour not for the meat which perisheth,” &c. For Him hath God the Father sealed. The Father set a mark upon Him ; so we have salvation sealed in Him. God poured grace into His lips, in order that He may pour grace into our lips; and so the call alike in the Old Testament time and in the New is even this—“Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth, for I am God, and there is none else.” The glorious work is done, it is finished ; it is sealed by Him who said—“I have glorified thee on the earth ; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.” 2nd. To anoint the Most Holy. When our Lord Jesus came, He was anointed the Most Holy. The Baptist recognized that this was He of whom he was the forerunner. He was always filled with the Holy Spirit without measure, but at His baptism He began His public ministry, and here was the proclamation of it. He was anointed as the Most Holy,—that implies His

Godhead—and the most holy of men also, as He said, “Which of you convinceth me of sin?” He was anointed to the most holy of work, as a prophet, as a priest, and as a king; therefore, the accepted of God. We can do no holy work unless it is through Christ the accepted. Oh, why should He be rejected of men? Will ye not accept of Him now, and say, How excellent is thy loving-kindness, therefore the sons of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings. But there was another anointing after His death. “Thou wilt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.” For Christ also hath once suffered for sins—the just for the unjust—that He might bring us to God: being put to death in the flesh, but quickened in the spirit, He was anointed with the oil of gladness above His fellows when quickened by the Spirit. “Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion. Ask of me and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance.”

3rd. The great work which Christ accomplished. Causing the oblation to cease, to finish transgression, to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness. Notice three words here used to characterize man's guilt;—sin, iniquity, and transgression. When the Lord revealed Himself to Moses, He spake these words—“The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin.” In the 32nd Psalm we read of the blessedness of the man whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered, and unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity. The

grand truth being—Jesus hath taken away *all* sin by His obedience unto death. An end of *sins*; it is in the plural, *sins*. The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin. “Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God; speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and say unto her that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned, for she hath received of the Lord’s hand double for all her sins.” Made an end of sin, is also translated sealed up. Job, said the Lord, had sealed up his transgressions in a bag; he was afraid it would be opened. Here how different is the case. The Lord seals them up and casts them into the bottom of the sea—in Himself, in Christ. Finish transgression: the word in the original literally means to restrain transgression. It is something more than delivering the soul from condemnation; it is also delivering the soul from the power of sin, and leading a poor sinner into the obedience of the gospel. “The blood of Christ, who, through the Eternal Spirit, offered Himself without spot unto God, shall purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God.” “Therefore if any man be in Christ Jesus he is a new creature.” We must be made new creatures, quickened unto new obedience. Christ has no half measures; it must be a whole salvation or none at all. Not only deliverance from condemnation, but from the power of indwelling sin—reconciliation for iniquity. This implies no change on God’s side. Wrath is taken away because sin is taken away; the enmity of the carnal heart removed because of the power of restraining grace;

the soul quickened to live to His glory. All on this principle ; we love Him because He first loved us. To bring in everlasting righteousness. Christ brought it in ; it cannot change ; it is divine. The first Adam was tempted of the devil, and yielded to the temptation, and his righteousness was destroyed. Satan tried hard to destroy Christ's righteousness, but was utterly foiled ; and he would fain do it to his people too, but he is not able. And why ? Because Christ is our righteousness. His name is Jehovah our righteousness. He hath made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. See that we are in Him, as the Lord our righteousness ; in Him as the Lord is our strength. Then is that word verified to you : "Israel shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation." How are we to be in Him ? By accepting Him and yielding ourselves to Him ; by faith through the power of the Holy Ghost. Who of God is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. Now, brethren, this is all the doctrine, but let us realise it as a fact, by opening our hearts to receive Him, and our lips to confess Him. Is He indeed the Lord our righteousness, the Lord our strength, then all is safe ; for in Him there is eternal salvation, and with Him abiding communion. "Behold I stand at the door and knock. If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in and sup with him and he with me."

Fencing the Lord's Table.—Daniel got a revelation of the world's future, in the eighth chapter, which he

did not understand, and at the end he asked the interpretation thereof, but he did not get it, but here he got a great revelation of Christ, and he did not complain that he did not understand that, and it is such a revelation that you and I need. Oh that we may get it at the Lord's table, His revealing himself there, as He did to his disciples at Emmaus in the breaking of bread! How often is He revealed to His people at His table; but it is not always the case, only to those who are exercised as Daniel was. Daniel was exercised first in the confession of sin. How often he does it in verse 4 and on and on—all this confession of sin, in these oft-repeated verses, showing how deeply troubled he was before God. Do we want at the table to get a nearer view of Christ than ever? He giveth grace. What is that? A fuller conviction of sin, it is the sin-burdened soul, that has his eyes opened to behold Christ's glory, and when he does get it, does he cease to be humble? Ah, no; it humbles him still more, he is rather exercised like Isaiah when he got a view of the Lord in his glory, saying, "Woe is me, for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips; and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips, for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts." 2. Daniel was exercised in praise and thanksgiving to God; that is seen all through. He gave thanks for the great exodus from Egypt, and he was at this time in bondage in Babylon, but was sure that the Lord would deliver him. Our going to the Lord's table is an outward proclamation of thanksgiving and praise, but it

is not a real thanksgiving unless we give ourselves. Let your sacrament this day be a true eucharistic service, by yielding yourselves, soul and body and spirit, unreservedly to God. 3. Daniel in all this exercise conducted it as an exercise of faith. It was so throughout the whole of the prophet's life, strong in faith, giving glory to God, even in the den of lions. Darius testified concerning it; and he was one with the three children in spirit and in faith. Confess your sins, and like Daniel exercise faith. To Him belong mercies though we have rebelled against Him. Without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he that cometh to God must believe that He is. 4. In all this it was accompanied with prayer. "I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications," and he ends it, "O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not for thine own sake, O my God," and his prayer was answered very swiftly too—verse 23—"At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to shew thee, for thou are greatly beloved." And perhaps you are saying, Oh I can't expect that I should be called greatly beloved. Why not? God's love is freely offered to every one of us, and we have it if we grasp Christ; and then believing souls can say, I am my Beloved's and my Beloved is mine. None but believing souls can say, My Beloved. Now we do say this if we go to the Lord's table. That they may know, that I have loved thee, as thou hast loved me. Christ puts the question to us all, "Lovest thou me?"

Table Service (verse 27th)—“He shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week He shall cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease”; confirming the covenant made between God and Christ from everlasting. When Christ came He confirmed it; He confirmed it for one week. “Lo I come—In the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God, yea, thy law is within my heart.” He confirmed it in His birth and in His life, the first part of the week, and in the midst of the week He caused the sacrifice and oblation to cease by His death, thereby confirming the covenant with many. But what of the other half of the week? Fifty days after Christ’s resurrection the covenant was confirmed, when the promise of the Father was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost, when three thousand were converted, and after that five thousand, and afterwards, multitudes both of men and women were added to the church of such as should be saved.

Concluding Address.—We have already seen from this passage, Christ’s predicted coming, and His predicted finished work, and its blessed fruit and precious results. The Lord Jesus, in His coming, caused the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and they have ceased. After Christ’s coming, the Old Testament ritual was to cease; and that ritual must necessarily cease when the reality came, and that we are to trust in the reality alone, to trust in Christ the true atonement for sin, and so a completed salva-

tion ; for if we refuse to trust in that, then, we are told, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation. The sacrifice and the oblation are united in the text. The oblation must be constantly offered. That oblation is the offering of ourselves, but the New Testament ritual must not be trusted in. The reading of the Word, the observance of sacraments, oh, how many trust in these, and not in the great sacrifice Himself. There are many legalists among us, who think they can live by that craft. God is a spirit, and must be worshipped in spirit and in truth. The second clause names the Messiah the Prince, He came as such and He died as such, and God overruled the title on the Cross which Pilate wrote—"Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews," Pilate brought forth Jesus. Behold your King. Ah! there is a higher than Pilate saying, Behold your King, Behold Him crucified and raised again. Is He indeed your King? You have said that He is—let us see to it, that we deal with Him as our King. When Pilate asked, Art thou a King? Jesus answered, "Thou sayest that I am a King; to this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice." It is only in serving Him we show that we are of that Kingdom. As a King His sceptre is a sceptre of righteousness; it is more, it is a sceptre of love, Divine love in ruling us, even in withholding from us those things that would not profit; it is a reign of love,

and our service should be a service of love. "If ye love me, keep my commandments." "The troublous times." How all this is solemnly enforced upon us by the fate of the nations that refused the Messiah, and this is the fate of the nation that refused Christ, saying, "His blood be upon us." God's dealing with nations and His dealing with individuals is one and the same. But those "mine enemies," which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither and slay them before me. Listen to the words of Jesus, when He beheld the city and wept over it, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets," &c. Surely that exhibited His love and grace over them that refused Him, and when in a plaintive lamentation of Christ over sinners He said, "Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life." Remember the twofold alternative in Psalm xxxiv. 21, "Evil shall slay the wicked, and they that hate the righteous shall be *desolate*. The Lord redeemeth the soul of His servants, and none of them that trust in Him shall be *desolate*."

One clause more. "The street shall be built again." This must be understood as the spiritual Zion, the spiritual Jerusalem. Alas, many professedly in it shall be desolate, but many true believers shall be built up in Christ Jesus. Remember this, Mount Zion which thou hast redeemed, it must be built on the one foundation Christ Jesus. Upon this Rock do I build my Church. How is it to be built? Stone by stone laid on, individual soul by soul gathered in and

built up. "Behold I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation. He that believeth shall not make haste." "To whom coming as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God and precious, ye also as lively stones are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Ye become holy and acceptable, being laid on the altar, Christ. This building was to take place in troublous times. In Daniel's time it was troublous times. We have no outward persecution now, but yet, are we not passing through a great deal of spiritual trouble with those in our midst who attempt to put away the foundation altogether, to disparage the word of God, saying, Moses did not write Deuteronomy? What is that, but putting away the foundation altogether? "Whom resist steadfast in the faith." They say Joshua is a mere fable; Christ tells us something different. Oh, hold fast by Christ's word, as well as hold fast by Christ. We cannot now hold on the foundation without fighting with the other. There are troublous times always in our own hearts, whom resist steadfast in the faith, see that ye be on the sure foundation. 2. Ye cannot build up of yourselves. God is the builder. Through the Spirit we have much to do in this building. "But ye, beloved, building up yourselves in your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life."

(2.)

NOTES of *Sermon preached by* DR. MILLER, *October, 1876.*

“To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all that mourn.”—Isaiah lxi. 2.

THE prophet in the whole passage chooses a series of metaphors, showing that it must be interpreted in a spiritual manner; in which he describes, first of all, Christ's work, and then His people's blessing.

Verse 2nd seems almost a repetition of verse 1st, only in another form, with some precious additions which, rightly understood, give precious instruction.

1st clause. To proclaim the acceptable year of our Lord. What a comprehensive clause—the meaning of which is, that our Lord came to fulfil the time of blessing predicted in prophecy. In other words, He came to do Messiah's work.

It was for this time of blessing that Mary gave thanks, saying, “My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour, for He that is mighty hath done to me great things, and holy is His name.” Zacharias likewise was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, “Blessed be the Lord

God of Israel, for He hath visited and redeemed His people, and hath raised up an horn of salvation for me in the house of His servant David." Aged Simeon, who waited for the consolation of Israel, blessed God and said, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace according to thy word, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people." Anna also, the prophetess, coming in at that instant, gave thanks unto the Lord, and spoke of Him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem. The dispensation of grace had come, ay, the final dispensation. For "when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law." The fulness of time is the acceptable year. This expression is used to represent the time, namely—the year of Jubilee, which pointed to the year of liberty or the year of release. Now that year was distinguished on account of three things. First of all, In this year all debts were cancelled. Oh, what a blessed cancelling, for Christ hath come and fulfilled all righteousness, and paid the whole debt, that we through Him might be freely pardoned. Secondly, This year was characterised as one in which all captives were released. "Thou hast ascended up on high, thou hast led captivity captive." Thirdly, In the year of Jubilee there was a complete restoration of possessions. Is not this our case? By sin we have sold ourselves for nought and in vain, and have forfeited all, but Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, and

through Him our souls may be brought back into the full possession of the love and favour of God. But why acceptable year? The phrase tells us the very ground of the Jubilee. Christ's finished work is acceptable; accepted of God the Father who hath said, "This is my Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," and again in prophecy, Isaiah xlix, "In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee, and I will preserve thee and give thee for a covenant to the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages, that thou mayest say to the prisoners, Go forth, to them that are in darkness, Shew yourselves. They shall feed in the ways, and their pastures shall be in all high places." And, oh, when Christ comes to do His work, and His work as here described was acceptable, and He Himself accepted. This it was that helped Him when He prayed—Psalm lxix., "But as for me, my prayer is unto thee, O Lord, in an acceptable time: O God, in the multitude of thy mercy hear me, in the truth of thy salvation." Another reason why it is said to be acceptable. Christ Himself says that all who are identified with Him are acceptable and accepted. You remember how the apostle puts it, "Accepted in the Beloved;" and this after we receive the gospel. "In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise." Surely, then, this is a faithful saying. Christ's proclamation of it was acceptable, and our

hearing of it is also acceptable, for "there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth."

What a blessed thing it is that it is not confined to one year; it is a season—a season of mercy—one in which we are now living. Hence the apostle Paul, beseeching the Corinthian Church that they receive not the grace of God in vain, says, "Behold, now is the day of salvation." A time, but a time that is passing; a time that will soon come to an end to all of us: hence the exhortation of the psalmist—Psalm xcv.—"To-day if ye will hear His voice harden not your hearts." Let us fear lest verse 11th of that Psalm should be verified in the case of any of us. "Unto whom I swear in my wrath that they shall not enter into my rest." For Christ goes on to proclaim the day of vengeance.

This then is the second part of the text, "The day of vengeance." Christ himself says that He never hath concealed God's righteousness. He came to *re-declare* this truth, for it had been proclaimed before. Some would like *mercy* but not *vengeance*.

It cannot be; we must lay hold of Jesus as the only sacrifice for sin, and if we do not, then there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin, but a certain fearful looking-for of judgment. And Jesus has come not only to re-declare it, but to execute it. What? Did not Christ come, *not* to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved? Nevertheless, to Him is committed the execution of vengeance as the anointed of God. Did He not himself declare—

“These mine enemies, that would not that I should reign over them, bring them hither and slay them before me”? Many foolishly fancy that there is no vengeance in Jesus. Fatal mistake. Do we not read of those who shall call on the rocks to fall on them, and on the mountains to cover them, and to hide them from the wrath of God and of the Lamb? Oh, for a quickened soul to cry to Jesus for mercy, for who shall be able to stand if once He is angry. “Therefore will I number you to the sword, and ye shall all bow down to the slaughter, because when I called ye did not answer, when I spake ye did not hear, but did evil before mine eyes, and did choose that wherein I delighted not.”

What a strong union there is between these two things—“Acceptable year;” “Day of vengeance.” It is almost like an identification. Can we explain it? Yes. Mercy can only have free course and come to us because wrath has been poured out; poured out it was on that day when Jesus hung agonising on the Cross. That is why mercy can come. He drank the bitter cup of wrath in order that the acceptable day and the acceptable cup of salvation might be put into our hands. He was made perfect through suffering, and that is why the Jubilee shall be proclaimed. This was the law of the Jubilee—“Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the Jubilee to sound, on the tenth day of the seventh month, in the day of atonement shall thou make the trumpet sound throughout all your land.”

It was on the great day of atonement on Calvary,

and because of it that the trumpet sounded forth, "liberty to the captive and the opening of the prison to them that are bound." Whenever a soul accepted the good tidings, then instantly vengeance is to be executed on sin in himself. When Christ is received, sin and corruption are smitten in the heart, that is the time of favour. He destroys sin because it is our great foe and His. You remember how David constantly cried for this. This is how the Old Testament ends—Malachi iv. 1, 2, 3, In order to escape the day of vengeance, everlasting vengeance, we must accept the acceptable year. "If these things were done in the green tree what shall be done in the dry." "The Lord shall be revealed from heaven in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ."

We must not shelter any sin in order to prevent Jesus taking vengeance on it. "They that are Christ's do crucify the flesh." "If ye through the spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." Not otherwise.

Third clause—"To comfort them that mourn." Has not this been said already in the words, "To bind up the broken hearted." Yes; but He says it again, and it is a blessed thing that He does. In describing this great work ten clauses are employed, and five of these clauses speak about comforting. He delights to comfort; this was the very end of His great work. To relieve the wretched. Many in this world mourn from a variety of reasons, loss of health, loss of friends, loss

of property. There are many causes of sorrow in this vale of tears, and how apt are we, at such a time, to flee for solace to everything but Christ, only to find in each and all of them, like Job of old, "Miserable comforters are ye all." But the deepest mourning and the true cause of it is sin. That is the root cause of it. Christ Jesus will give the cure if we but come to Him. If we refuse we cannot get the comfort which He alone bestows. Remember His own words in His Sermon on the Mount, "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted." All indicating that whatever is the sorrow He will heal the seeking soul, not perhaps by restoring the lost temporal blessing, be it loss of health, possessions, or friends, but by destroying the sin. If we are experimentally delivered from sin, we shall rejoice in the Lord even when we are losing all else. "Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees; say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not, behold your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense; He will come and save you." Isaiah xxxv. 3, 4, also Isaiah lxvi. 13, 14. Here also is a precious lesson. We all have sorrow from a variety of causes, but the root of all is sin. Let us tremble lest we be like those spoken of in Job xxxv. 10, "But none saith, where is God my Maker, who giveth songs in the night!" Rather let us seek to be like those spoken of by Paul, "Sorrowing yet always rejoicing;" for it is to such our blessed Saviour says, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." How

heavily laden was He when He bore our sins and carried our sorrows. He gives us rest from that load. Was He not peculiarly the Man of Sorrows? Yes; our exalted Lord, our merciful and faithful High Priest, hath suffered, being tempted, and is able to succour them that are tempted. Where there is sin there will also be sorrow in a godly spirit; then sorrow over sin leads to rejoicing. This is a valley of tears, but it is through the valley of weeping that men go up to Zion seeking the Lord. Thus saith the Lord, "With weeping and with supplications will I lead them, and will bring them to Zion." He who said, "Because I have spoken these words sorrow hath filled your heart," said also, "Your joy no man taketh from you."

Thus through living in communion with Christ an hour of sorrow may become an hour of joy, and although our sufferings may abound, our consolation shall also abound by Christ Jesus. God grant that it may be so in the experience of each and all of us. Amen.

(3.)

NOTES of Sermon preached by DR. MILLER, *January*, 1879.

“ He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from Him; He was despised, and we esteemed Him not.”—Isaiah liii. 2, 3.

IN the first clause of this verse there are obviously two persons spoken of—1st, *He* shall grow up, &c., which evidently refers to the “*Arm of the Lord*” mentioned v. 1, and *that*, again, is identified with v. 13 of previous chapter. “*He* shall be exalted and extolled,” &c. (2nd person) “before *Him* ;” obviously, again, “*The Lord*,” v. 1, who is also identified with the Lord in chapter lii. 13, who says, “*My servant*.” Yea, this is obviously Jehovah who speaks—*Jehovah* who comforteth His people—*Jehovah* who redeems His people—*He* who by His Servant hath made bare His holy arm, so that all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of God. Thus, taking the whole together along with the second verse, we have—*Christ’s humiliation* as our subject to-day: The Son of God,

equal with God, becoming man. We have here two views of Christ's humiliation—

1st. His humiliation as before God ;

2nd. His humiliation as in the sight of men. As before God—*accepted*.

As in the sight of men, *despised and rejected*. Let us, in this discourse, look at these two things :

1st. As accepted before God—"Behold mine elect in whom my soul delighteth."

Now this acceptable, while humbled Saviour, is here described as a "tender plant"—planted in the desert, the Holy One in a sin-cursed world.

He should have been hailed by us with gratitude, but oh, how different was the case—"Foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests; *but* the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head." He was forty days and forty nights in the wilderness with wild beasts: He was all His life in this wilderness world with wicked men. It was as the *surety* of His people that He endured not only the *blast* of men but the *storm* of *heaven*, that on this tender plant the wrath of God was poured forth: It was of *Him* the word went forth—"Smite the shepherd, &c., and I will turn my hand upon the little ones." "*He* was wounded for *our* transgressions, *He* was bruised for *our* iniquities." God looks upon all this as *acceptable*. From all eternity His Father delighted in Him. "I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, ere ever the earth was," &c.—v. 30, "*Then* was I by Him, as one brought up with Him, and *I* was daily His de-

light, rejoicing always before Him." When he came to earth the Father testified of the Son. "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased," and why? Because He was doing the will of God. "I delight to do Thy will, O my God." "*Thy will*," even in His death—for is it not written—"Who gave Himself for our sins, &c., according to *the will of God and our Father*."

The further description of Jesus,—“A root out of a dry ground.” What was His extraction? “And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of His roots.” He was David’s Son and David’s Lord. The Son of David a sinful man—“Though my house be not so with God, yet hath He made with me an everlasting covenant,” &c. Yea, He was *peculiarly* the seed of the woman who was first in the transgression. *He* was the sinless Holy One, yet of the seed of sinners. How else could He be the substitute of His people. God cannot die, but “we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour.” “In all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.” “A root out of a *dry ground*” but not a *dry root*. “In that day shall the branch of the Lord be beautiful and glorious.” *This* is the plant of renown, this is the *vine* that shall fill the whole earth spoken of in Psalm lxxx.

“He shall grow up,” &c., and He did grow. Although divine, His humanity was like our humanity. After the little child was brought out of Egypt, we read—“And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon Him.” Again, when twelve years of age, having tarried for a time at Jerusalem, He returned again to Nazareth with His parents, we read—“Jesus increased in wisdom and stature and in favour with God and man.” Thus He grew, and the growth perfected in His humanity for thirty years. Then He went forth to finish the glorious work, and He *did* it so that at its close He could say,—“I have glorified Thee on the earth, I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do.” Yes, that growth of the Lord Jesus was consummated in His death. “Behold the man whose name is the Branch, He shall *grow* up out of His place, and He shall build the temple of the Lord; even He shall build the temple of the Lord and He shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon His throne, and He shall be a *priest* upon His throne, and the counsel of peace shall be between them both.” He grew; and He grew in a bare desert, and certainly He was not nourished by *it* although made perfect by the things which He suffered. He was nourished by the heavenly dews of the Holy Spirit given not by measure unto Him. *This* is the Tree for shelter and for nourishment, it is of *Him* that the believer says,—“I sat under His shadow with great delight, and His fruit was sweet to

my taste." He was cut down but then sprang up again, revived and beautiful and glorious. *He* is the Tree of Life spoken of in Revelations, whose leaves are for the healing of the nations. Thus, we see the meaning of the initial word "*For.*" The *manifestation* of the arm of the Lord,—His *power* manifested by His miracles, by His *teaching* and by His *resurrection*, "Manifested to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection of Jesus from the dead." But chiefly and mainly by His *death*, for by that alone could a branch be plucked from the burning, *in* that we see Him bearing away sin and bearing away the curse, and so Christ became the *power* of God and the *wisdom* of God. *This* is the *arm* of the Lord crucified in weakness but raised up in *power*, that we also might be raised up from the grave of sin to live in newness of life. All power is committed unto Him, and will be given to all who are grafted into Him. As unto Paul so unto all believers will the promise be made good—"I will perfect strength in your weakness;" and then is verified that word—"Thus saith the Lord, I will take the highest branch of the high cedar and will set it, I will crop off from the top of His young twigs a tender one, and will plant it in a high mountain and eminent; in the mountain of the height of Israel will I plant it: and it shall bring forth boughs, and bear fruit, and be a goodly cedar: and under it shall dwell all fowl of every wing; in the shadow of the branches thereof shall they dwell. And all the trees of the field shall know that I the

Lord have brought down the high tree, have exalted the low tree, have dried up the green tree, and have made the dry tree to flourish: I the Lord have spoken it and have done it."—*In Christ.*

2. Christ's humiliation failing to be attractive to man. He came not in regal estate, and the *people* said, "Is not this the carpenter;" the *rulers* also proclaimed, "As for this fellow we know not whence He is." He *is* the root out of the dry ground, but He is also the top of the goodly cedar although they did not recognise Him. Pilate said, "Behold the Man"—nothing more. "His visage was so marred more than any man, and His countenance more than the sons of men." If they had only had eyes to see it that "*marring*" was very precious. They put on Him a crown of thorns and said, "Hail, King of the Jews." *King* He *was*, and king He *is*, and king He *ever shall* be. Alas, although now upon the throne He is still despised and rejected. The name that is above every name is still despised. Comeliness there was in Him, but it was not seen because it was the beauty of holiness and of grace that shone forth. It is only the believing soul that can say, "He is chiefest among ten thousand and altogether lovely." The poor sinner by nature sees no beauty in the holiness of Jesus, although it is only through the comeliness of Jesus put upon him that he can be made perfect.

Had Jesus come in His full divine comeliness, man would have been destroyed, for no man can see God and live. When Peter and John got a glimpse of the

glory on the Mount of Transfiguration they "fell on their face and were sore afraid." When Saul of Tarsus came into close contact with it, he, too, was smitten to the ground, and likewise John in Patmos, when he saw *Him* fell at His feet as one dead. Jesus veiled His glory just that we might not be smitten down and destroyed, but might come to *Him* as unto a brother. He says to us like Joseph of old, "Come *near* to me, I pray you. I am your brother whom ye sold." The Brother born for adversity through whom we shall get at last into the glory spoken of by Jesus when He said, "I will that they whom thou hast given me be with me where I am that they may behold my glory." When men saw Him they recognised not His beauty. "He came into the world and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not." They had not eyes to see Him, no spiritual vision. Would that the Lord might open *our* eyes. This is what they testified who saw Him on earth with opened eyes—"And we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

The Pharisees said they saw Him, but *they* saw no comeliness in Him, and there are many such to whom Christ must say as to them, "Now ye say ye see, therefore your sin remaineth." There are multitudes who say they *see* but are not quickened to *desire* Jesus. Pilate and Herod saw *no* fault in Him, yet condemned Him. Judas Iscariot got into the nearer circle and saw much more of Jesus than either Pilate or Herod, yet he esteemed thirty pieces of silver as

more desirable than the Saviour; his case is not singular, for the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine into them.

Have we spiritual desire for pardon, life, holiness? then do we desire Jesus. Do we desire with open eyes to behold the wondrous grace that is in Jesus? *then* do we see somewhat the comeliness of Jesus. And what *glory*, because what *grace*, is disclosed, so that the soul is constrained to exclaim, "How great is His goodness, and how great is His *beauty*." "No beauty," &c. This expression of the text urges home two questions. 1st. As regards Christ. 2nd. As regards ourselves.

1st. As regards Christ. Is there no *beauty* visible in this tender plant? Look at His person, "Emmanuel, God with us." Is not His *humanity* spotless and His *divinity* glorious? Is He not *lovely* because *loving*? "Herein, indeed, is love, not that we loved Him but that He loved us." Oh, that we could get such a view as did Peter on the Mount when he said, "It is good for me to be here," or like Paul on the way to Damascus when he breathed forth the prayer, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" or like John in Patmos when he heard the voice saying, "Fear not, I am the first and the last. I am He that liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore."

We cannot get a *visible*, but what is much better, we can get a *spiritual* sight of Him. In order to do

this let us be exercised as Moses when he prayed, "I beseech thee show me thy glory." Look at His work bringing in a free and full salvation, giving "beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garments of praise for the spirit of heaviness." Not only opening up the way into heaven, but leading poor sinners, yea bearing them on His bosom into the fold. Oh, let us pray for the experience of the eye-salve, that we this day may see Him, *then* will we sing, and sing with joy, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of Him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, thy God reigneth!" Yes, He *is* beautiful; God grant that we may see His beauty and be "changed into the same image from glory to glory even as by the spirit of the Lord." While we pray, "Let the *beauty* of the Lord our God be upon us: and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it."

2nd. As regards ourselves. Do we see, and see so as to *desire* Him? If not, we are in exactly the same position as those who said, "Not this man but Barabbas." Perhaps we are disposed to say, "Oh no, we do desire pardon, peace, life, salvation," but the question is, Do we desire *Him*? How many desire pardon and peace but not *Jesus*. All these things are *in* Him, and *having Him* only can we have these blessings. Let our prayer be, "Lord, open our eyes to *see* and then our hearts will *desire* to receive Him, and

we will experience the fulfilment of the promise, "I will come in to him and will sup with him and he with Me." Are *you* desiring to see Him, or are you shutting your eyes? He is revealed in His word and in His ordinance. Pray God to open your eyes, and then what beauty is disclosed. Do you remember the case of Nathaniel? he thought that there *could* be no beauty in Jesus, that no good thing could come out of Nazareth. The word to him was, "Come and see," and so it is to us, "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest." *Beholding* Him thus and *coming* to Him, we will be like the blind man when the Lord opened his eyes, the first sight he saw was *Jesus*. What an entrancing sight it will be—Jesus my King, Jesus my Saviour! We shall be ready to say like the men to the woman at the well of Sychar, "Now we believe, not because of thy saying, for we have heard Him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world."

Address.—Fencing the Lord's Table.—There is a peculiar and searching power in the first part of verse 3, "He is despised." Here are two facts. A fact concerning man, and a fact concerning God.

The first fact none of us can deny, for we have all despised Him. Nay, even after being quickened by the Holy Spirit to see His beauty, is He not, though now in heaven, still, alas, despised by us on earth. Remember in *our* despising we are far more guilty than the Jews. "He that despised Moses' law died without mercy, of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye,

shall he be thought worthy who hath trodden under foot the Son of God?" "How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation" and so blessed a Saviour stricken, buffeted, condemned, crucified, dying—still despised? Some build on a foundation of their own, and not on the head-corner stone; build on the sand and not on Christ Jesus. We know that we have all been guilty of this. Do we come here this day acknowledging this, and seeking to turn to the Lord? Not merely by making some amendment—we cannot turn ourselves. Let us commit our souls unto Him who "turneth the hearts of the children of men as He turneth the rivers of waters;" let this be our prayer: "Turn thou us and we shall be turned;" take fast hold of Christ. To take the Lord's Supper and not to take Him is rejecting Him. Take heed to *this*, intending communicants. He gave Himself for thee, He gave his back to the smiters for thee, surely many waters cannot quench His love. In view of it can you say with a deeper emotion than ever you have done, "Herein indeed is *love*." Remember the command of our Lord to His disciples—"Preach the gospel, beginning at Jerusalem." He is offering Himself still to Jerusalem, sinners, for "it is a faithful saying and worthy of *all* acceptation that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief." Does this love move you? Can you say, "We love Him because He first loved us"?

His question to us is the one thrice repeated to Simon Peter—"Lovest thou *Me*?" Do this in remem-

branch of *Me*, and out of love to *Me* ; oh, see that it be so to-day.

2nd Fact. *He* is the “Man of *sorrows* ;” not because the man of sin, but the *sinless* man in the midst of evil. He bore our griefs and carried our sorrows. He bore the scorn and the foul load of sin, but not His own. Notice the close connection between these two facts—*He* is *despised* and therefore the “Man of sorrows.” Nothing grieved the Saviour so much as that sinners rejected Him to their own eternal ruin. How often was He grieved because of the hardness of their hearts. He wept at the grave of Lazarus, not merely out of sympathy with the mourners. He wept over Jerusalem saying, “Oh, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thy children, but ye would not.”

Christ Jesus grieved over sinners rejecting Him; do *we* know anything of this sorrow, this “Godly sorrow that worketh repentance unto salvation”? He was acquainted with grief—“reproach hath broken my heart.” Most of all was He acquainted with grief in that awful hour when His Father hid His face, and the cry was uttered, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken Me ;” or that other awful hour in the garden when in His agony and bloody sweat, He prayed, “If it be possible, let this cup pass from me, nevertheless not My will but Thine be done.” How are *we* affected by His strong crying and tears : does this move and melt us in view of our little love? There is no ordinance more calculated to move and melt than this, in which

we are so solemnly reminded of His body broken and His blood shed. He was *exceeding sorrowful*, just in order that He might show unto us the *exceeding riches* of His grace. Let us all this day grasp His exceeding riches. Do you feel your sin exceeding great? His grace abounds yet much more, there is enough and to spare even for you.

These griefs are over now. He is at God's right hand, a Priest upon His throne. We *have* an High Priest who can be touched with a feeling of our infirmities. *Have we?* Have we laid hold of Him? It is not enough that we go to the table and take the symbols, we must take Christ and feed upon Him, and then the Man of *sorrows* will have *joy*, as the shepherd rejoiceth when he beareth home on his shoulders his lost sheep. "In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit." It was for the *joy* set before Him that He endured the cross despising the shame. If we by faith feed upon Him we will give Him this joy, and He will rejoice over us, and we will be glad and rejoice in Him, while unto us He will say, "Eat, Oh friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved."

Closing address.—We have seen from verse 3rd a fact concerning Christ and our connection with it. Is not this latter clause of the verse a repetition? Yes, it is, that the truth may be deeply impressed on our minds. The accusation, "We esteemed Him not," is repeated for the very purpose of laying us low and keeping us low; crying like the publican, "God be merciful to me a sinner." The expression implies, We did

not consider—did not appreciate the value and preciousness of Jesus. How little do we consider our need, how little do we appreciate the riches of His glory to supply that need. Of how many even of God's professed people may it yet be said, "My people doth not consider." Lord give us grace to consider Him who endured. Consider what He is—the Lord of glory ; consider what He became, the Man of sorrows; consider what He has done, and what He is willing to do ; consider the soul, the Saviour, and eternity, and Jesus as the judge. Surely if we did so we would esteem Him, and lay hold of Him for our soul's eternal salvation. What a remarkable thing it is that although we do not esteem *Him* yet He esteems *us*, so precious that He gave Himself for us ; so precious that He is *still* offering Himself to us. "Unto you who believe He is precious ;" and why, because you are delivered from wrath to come. "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things from your vain conversation, and that with the precious blood of Christ as of a lamb, without blemish and without spot." Do we esteem Him thus, do we desire to be so redeemed, to be made holy, and to be kept in the way of holiness ?

There is a peculiarity in this clause distinguishing it from the first clause—"He *is*," and "He *was*." Is this last clause descriptive of us ? There is no doubt about the fact that by nature we *did* despise Him, we did not esteem Him. The question is, do we *now* despise Him, or can we truly take up the language of

the Psalmist, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee." Blessed Saviour, thou *wast* despised, but now it is changed, Lord Jesus I cling to thee. "I have said I would keep thy word." "I made haste and delayed not to keep thy commandments." It is time that we have all said this *outwardly* at the table, yea more than this, "I *esteem* all thy precepts concerning all things to be right, and I hate every false way." A mere profession without the practice is a falsehood. Remember the word of the Lord to Moses and to us—"Take heed unto yourselves lest ye forget the *covenant* of the Lord your God which He made with you." More than that, plead the covenant with thy covenant-keeping God. The Lord thy God is in covenant bound to keep thee in His way; then look, trust, walk with Him. We may, in our unbelief as heretofore, doubt His faithfulness, yet return. "Return unto me, saith the Lord." "Sing, O heavens, and be joyful, O earth; and break forth into singing O mountains, for the Lord hath comforted His people, and will have mercy upon His afflicted." "Can a woman forget her sucking child that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea they may forget, yet will I not forget thee."

(4.)

NOTES of a Sermon preached by REV. DR. MILLER, *Com-
munion Sabbath, January, 1856.*

“ Preserve me, O God : for in thee do I put my trust. O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, thou art my Lord : my goodness extendeth not to thee ; but to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight.”—Psalm xvi. 1-3.

SURELY we know that in this psalm it is Christ who thus speaks. We cannot but remember that Paul preaching at Antioch, in Pisidia, expounds this. We cannot but remember that Peter in the first sermon he ever preached insists much upon it : (Acts ii. 25th to the 28th verses, quoting the latter portion of this psalm, thus showing its application to Christ, or rather taking it for granted that Christ here spoke). We may remember that in both these cases, Paul at Antioch and Peter at Jerusalem, this psalm was quoted to prove that Christ's resurrection from the dead was accomplished. It is plain that this psalm refers to Christ's humiliation, work, and resurrection, when it is done. There is no difficulty in seeing this in the latter part of the psalm ; but in the *early* part is there as clearly a reference to His suffering, His service, His death ? I apprehend there is. I appre-

hend we do not *rightly* understand this psalm if we understand it otherwise. The sentences read speak of Christ's death and its blessed consequences. This view must be taken to the right understanding of the first three verses of the whole psalm, and of salvation in Christ. In expounding this text there are two general heads to be considered—First, Christ's position and His exercise in His humiliation work. "Preserve me," &c. Second, The use and blessed results and consequences of Christ's humiliation work. "But to the saints," &c.

First head.—"O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, thou art my Lord." We begin with this, Christ crying to His Father, looking up, "Thou art my Lord." Observe this is the language of a *creature*, not of a *creator*. This is the language of a subject, yet of Him who thought it "not robbery to be equal with God." He testified all the while, "Thou art my God." Surely this implies a *voluntary*, a *chosen* position as a creature and subject. He made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, that as a servant He might serve, might do God's will. "In the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God." And in the 89th psalm, "Thou art my Father, my God, and the rock of my salvation." And oh, if we look at the humiliation life of Jesus, one of its most striking features is, that as a servant, He owned God continually. Yea, at His very life's end, in the hour and power of darkness, His cry is, "My God, my God, why hast thou

forsaken me?" So here we have set before us His main work as Mediator, the work of the *Man* Christ Jesus. And why did He choose this form of a servant? Ah! *we* ought to have testified, "Thou art my God," but we would not have God to reign over us, so Jesus took our place to be a substitute for our life work; yea, our life suffering too, submitting to the Father too, and all for the great and glorious end that *you* and *I* should once more take up this language, "Thou art my God." Never, brethren, would it have been so, unless Christ had suffered and died to bring us back to God as our God. It behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren, to be a servant in lieu of His brethren, that He as first born, and we as younger sons, might together testify "Thou art my God."

Mark now the danger of this position—it was full of perils; implied in the cry "Preserve me, O God." Is it so, that serving the Lord is a work of danger and peril? No, dear brethren, not in itself; angels and blessed spirits find no peril in serving God, and instead of being perilous for men on the earth, the service of God is the only path of pleasantness and peace. But serving God in the room and stead of men was perilous, and for three reasons:—1st. Where the service was rendered. 2nd. For whom. 3rd. For what end.

1st. Because the service was rendered in this world of sin and sinners, sinners who hated Jesus, who breathed out threatenings and slaughters against

Him, and sought His death continually, and at length with wicked hands did crucify and slay Him. Also He was in peril of Satan's most malignant and determined opposition, for where was the service rendered but in Satan's own kingdom. No wonder than his malice was poured out. And

2nd. For whom was the service rendered? For those who were Satan's victims and prey. No wonder he strove hard to keep them, and used all his fiery darts against *Him*.

3rd. Last of all and worst of all, the service was one of peculiar peril from God's wrath. Christ stood in the room and form of sinners, to do all they should have done, to endure all they should have borne, and for what end? To satisfy Divine justice in all its full and infinite demands. Observe, Christ's exercise in this state of peril was, "In thee do I put my trust." Remember, this work of Christ's was human work. He was crucified. In the epistle to the Hebrews this text is quoted as the language of Christ, "I will put my trust in Him," and in what circumstances? in view of suffering. For in the previous verse we read, "For it became Him for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings."

Thus the death, suffering, and humiliation work of Christ are *twice* stated in this Scripture, Heb. ii., and between is this word, "I will put my trust in Him." And well might He, and why? He might have con-

fidence, because His conscience and His cause were good before God. And God, before whom He stood, *approved* His cause, His confidence. No doubt His trust was much tried ; all His humiliation life He was a " Man of sorrows, acquainted with grief." Yea, and at the hand of the very God whom He trusted, for " It pleased *the Lord to bruise Him.*" No wonder His enemies taunted Him with this, cast it in His teeth. In the 22nd Psalm His cry was " Preserve me." The taunt was, " He trusted in God, let Him deliver Him now if He will have Him." But notwithstanding these taunts, notwithstanding the feebleness of the flesh, notwithstanding His crying, " If it be possible, let this cup pass from me ;" notwithstanding the hiding of the face of His Father and His God, He held His confidence. I *have* put my trust, I *will* put my trust in thee. I *have* prayed, I *will* pray, " Preserve me." Oh, how often in the night seasons when alone did Jesus on the Mount of Olives cry " Preserve me." Literally, symbolically in night seasons! In the night season, in the dark season of adversity, " My reins also instruct me in the night seasons."

Witness His cries from Gethsemane—that was a night season ; from Calvary—that was a midnight season indeed, yet still He held His confidence stedfast. No doubt His cry was " My soul is exceedingly sorrowful," yet He was heard in that He feared. But *was* His trust well placed ? Was He not disappointed ? Here, brethren, I pray you to remember Jesus as surety was not preserved *from* the hatred of men,

from the wrath of devils. He endured all to the utmost limits, yea to the uttermost untold limit of the wrath of an infinite God. But while not preserved *from* these perils, He was preserved *in* them. He set His face as a flint, and was preserved till He could cry, "It is finished." And who preserved Him? The God to whom He cried, in whom He trusted. "Through the Eternal Spirit He offered Himself without spot unto God." You remember in Gethsemane an angel from heaven strengthened Him. He was preserved *in*, not *from* peril. In the whole humiliation work of Jesus God was *in* Christ, so that His very enemies testified "No man can do these miracles except God were with him." And can we say aught else in relation to the greatest miracle of all—Immanuel dying? "No man could do this except God were with him." He set His face as a flint to the work—the dying—and He was preserved *in* it. He gave His back to the smiters; He bore the shame, the spitting; endured the contradiction of sinners against Himself, yet was not moved. He endured the cross, despised the shame, yet was not overborne by the peril, by the evils He underlay. In midst of it all He could say "The Lord is my portion." "I have set the Lord at my right hand therefore I shall not be moved," and moved He was not till the work was done. And yet in one sense more Jesus was preserved from the consequences of the perils which His enemies desired He should endure: He was preserved from the consequences which His

enemies sought in crucifying Him. Their object was to make an end of Him, to destroy Him, to abolish His kingdom and salvation ; but blessed be God, He was preserved. Yea, it was brought to the *very opposite* issue. His work was established, and He exalted a King and Saviour to give repentance and remission of sins. He knew the Lord would save Him from the curse, verse 10th, "For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption." He was not disappointed, He was raised and glorified, realizing the *last* verse of the psalm, "Thou wilt show me the path of life ; in thy presence is fulness of joy ; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." And now the Head is preserved, is safe ; His work is safe, and His merit abides, and the fruit of it preserved. . . .

Second head. Having seen Christ's position, let us look now at its blessed consequences—"My goodness extendeth not to thee," &c.

Observe, Christ describes the use of His humiliation work negatively and positively. First, negatively. "My goodness not to thee," omitting the italics. The word goodness more correctly rendered benefits, practical benefits. "My benefits not to thee." And why does Jesus speak thus ? For this reason—Jesus had been owning Himself as the Lord's servant, and usually a servant is employed to do a work when his master has need of a work, or is profited by it. Not so here. My goodness, O Lord, not to thee ; my work, the benefits of my work, not to thee. Thou

hast no need of them. Thou art not profited thereby. No doubt the work of Jesus vindicates the attributes of God, but this could have been done without Christ's dying, but not in the *salvation of sinners*, without the work of Christ. Brethren, this was not a need on the part of God, but, oh, it was needed on *our* part, for you and me. It will not increase the glory and blessedness of God. Eliphaz the Temanite said, "Is it any pleasure to the Almighty that thou art righteous? or is it gain to Him that thou makest thy ways perfect?" Yes, God employs Jesus to do this work that you and I may profit—that poor sinners accepting these benefits may be saved. No doubt saved sinners glorify God, but only in the way of *showing forth*, not *enhancing*, that glory.

But it is for the pleasure of God though not for His profit. If that voice heard at His baptism, at His transfiguration, in the garden, could have been heard at the very moment of the hiding of His Father's face, it would have been again, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Well pleased with all He has done—with nothing more than this, that He endured the curse.

Next look at the positive side, "My goodness extendeth not to thee, but to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight." This is like the language of 2 Chronicles vi. 41, "Now therefore arise, O Lord God, into thy resting place, thou and the ark of thy strength: let thy priests, O Lord God, be clothed

with salvation, and let thy saints rejoice in goodness." Let thy saints rejoice in goodness, in the benefits accruing to their souls from Jesus, when, His work done, He arising goes to His place at the right hand of God. Yes, Jesus has gone to His own place that He might dispense His benefits to those yet on the earth. These benefits are not applied to those who are already saints, for if applicable only to those who are saints already, they would never be applied to any; never would there have been a saved soul. Another reason, there would be no use for these benefits, for if saints on the earth already, then are they souls blessed for ever. But, blessed be God, there are hundreds of passages which testify that these benefits are bestowed on sinners *as* sinners, and before they are made saints. "Ho, *every one* that thirsteth, come to the waters." Christ Jesus came to save the *chief* of sinners. What then is the meaning? Surely this, that those benefits of Christ Jesus *make* men saints,—make them, constitute them the excellent of the earth. Let us go over some of these benefits. The blood of Christ—the righteousness of Christ—for the covering of the saints so that no spot is seen in them, the Spirit of Christ for their quickening and sanctification, and the whole grace that is in Christ Jesus for sinners to make them saints, to beautify them with His beauty, to render them worthy to receive all blessing and honour and power. Yea, the very glory He now enjoys as Immanuel, is still for the saints, for those who *were* sinners, that they may reign with Him. It is true

they are not saints, who, getting benefit from Christ's death, do not keep them; the *abiding* benefits are for the saints alone. Is it not a benefit to the impenitent sinner that he is yet spared? that he still hears the Gospel? that the Spirit still strives with him? But he will not be a saint if he will not *accept* the gospel invitation, and, oh, then comes in its full extent that awful passage from which I preached to you already:—"I will *curse* their *blessings*." I ask, How is it with your souls, brethren? Do you know what it is to partake of these benefits? Do you *desire* to know anything of them, through partaking of Christ Jesus? If not, your partaking of the elements symbolizing the benefits, is a mockery. "In whom is all my delight," says Christ. Now does Christ say, "In whom is *all* my delight," were it not true, rather, that all His delight was in God, not in the saints? In the days of His flesh He said, "*the Lord* is the portion of mine inheritance;" but, observe, Jesus here speaks of what He delights in *in the earth*. Of the earth, He delights in none but the saints. He has no pleasure in the sinner's sinfulness, and, blessed be God, He has no pleasure in the sinner's *death*. Look at Him weeping over Jerusalem! shedding tears over sinners! The fact that Christ, in the 5th verse, says, "The Lord is my portion," is just the very thing that makes Him say, "His delight is in the saints." Under the Jewish dispensation the Lord was the portion of the Levites, and cities and lands were to be given, but to be conquered first. So the Lord gave

Christ a people—an earthly portion—and because He delighted in Him, so He delighted in the portion He had given Him. “Of them which thou gavest me, I have lost none,” etc. Strange yet true; in the 6th verse:—“The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage.” A poor sinner’s soul: is *that* a pleasant place for Christ to dwell in? There *is joy in heaven over one* sinner that repenteth. “The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty, He will save, He will rejoice over thee with joy; He will rest in His love, He will joy over thee with singing.” He, for the joy set before Him, of getting that portion, endured the cross, despising the shame, that our language might be, “I am my beloved’s, and my beloved is mine.” . . . Yes, Christ delights to apply his benefits to sinners. “To do thy will I take delight.” From eternity, he says, “my delights were with the sons of men.” No doubt the work was not delightful, but the object and end were delightful to Him. Christ delights in mercy. He looks on the sinner and says, I will make thee Hephzibah; He looks on sinners as His portion from eternity; therefore, He loved the Church, and gave Himself for it. And He delights to apply His benefits. As in Israel of old the portion had to be conquered *first*, so in the enemy’s land He must conquer too. And, oh, He delights not to afflict the sinner, to make him tremble, but He delights to send the rod of His strength out of Zion, to make His people willing in the day of His power. And, oh, what confidence you

and I should have in asking Him to apply His benefits, when we remember it gives gladness of heart to Christ. It delights Him more and more when souls submit to Him in an everlasting covenant. The saints of the earth, now beautified by His goodness, are made delightful to Jesus; 1st, because glorifying to God. This is the manner in which He says, "I have glorified thee on the earth; I have finished the work thou gavest me to do." 2nd, Again, the saints are delightful to Jesus, because now they are blessed. It is no pleasure to Jesus to see souls miserable. God is love—benevolence. That nature's desire is fulfilled in seeing souls saved. 3rd, In them are all His delights, because they shall be in heaven, in glory, His joy and crown-jewels, His mediatorial diadem, bringing glory to Himself, to the Father. Strange, that the sons of earth, who crucified and slew Jesus, may, must, *will*, rejoice Jesus for ever and ever! Brethren, shall you and I be of the number? God grant it, and to His name be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

(5.)

NOTES of a Sermon preached by DR. MILLER on the
Communion Sabbath, 4th February, 1849.

“ Lord, remember David, and all his afflictions: how he swore unto the Lord, and vowed unto the mighty God of Jacob; surely I will not come into the tabernacle of my house, nor go up into my bed; I will not give sleep to mine eyes, or slumber to mine eyelids, until I find out a place for the Lord, an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob. Lo, we heard of it at Ephratah: we found it in the fields of the wood.”
 —Psalm cxxxii. 1-6.

THIS psalm altogether refers originally, either to David on the one hand or to Solomon on the other—to David on the occasion of the procession of the ark from the house of Abinadab unto that of Obededom, and from thence to the place David had prepared for it on Mount Zion; or it refers on the other hand to the procession in the days of Solomon, from Mount Zion to the temple on Mount Moriah, to be its resting place continually. Yet I see no reason why this psalm should not be applicable to both of them. We know psalms were written by David, not only for himself, but which also had reference to his son Solomon, for instance the 72nd—“ Give the king thy judgment, O God, and thy righteousness to the king’s

son." But I say no more either of the procession in the days of David or Solomon. I come at once to Him of whom both were types. Christ was the beloved of the Father, and He ought to have been the beloved of men too—Him God the Father loveth alway. The first verse of this psalm decidedly refers to Him—Lord remember Jesus in all His afflictions, how He in eternal covenant swore unto His Father, and vowed unto the mighty God of Jacob. We sinners of mankind heard of these glad tidings at Ephratah; lo, what was better, we found it in the city of the wood.

There are three things I desire to turn your attention to—1st, the prayer; 2nd, the argument; 3rd, the discovery. 1st, The prayer—Lord, remember David and all his afflictions. 2nd, The argument—how he swore unto God in the eternal covenant of grace. 3rd, The discovery—the finding of salvation in Christ Jesus. And 1st, The prayer; look at verse first—Lord, remember David and all his afflictions—Lord, remember *Jesus* and all His afflictions; and, in truth, this is the substance of all prayer—it is the ground on which we lay all our hopes, the *only ground* on which our supplication can be answered—Lord, remember Jesus, for He is the covenanted head of His people; just as Moses on one occasion said, Lord, remember Abraham—another type of Jesus. Dear brethren, it is a goodly prayer this, if we, from the heart, can utter it, Lord, remember me—it is a prayer that is always answered—it was the prayer of the thief on the cross—

Lord, remember me, and that was answered—it was the prayer of Job, in his calamity, Oh, that thou wouldst appoint me a set time and *remember me*—and that was answered too. He commits himself into the hands of Him that judges righteously—a goodly prayer this for every sinner—Lord remember me, that I am a poor sinner; remember me lost, ruined, depraved—wilt thou forget me! that I seek and not find—remember me vile and corrupt—remember me, O Lord, for good. And it is a goodly prayer this, too, for a believer as well as a sinner—Remember me, Lord, in all my afflictions, for oh, they are many—remember me; oh forget me not—remember me, how my soul hateth them that thou hatest—remember me when deep distress weighs down this spirit—and God does remember His people. He puts all their tears into His bottle; He counts their every sigh, and He then supplies their every need. Oh, if it is good to say,—Lord, remember me, it is better still to say—Lord, remember *Jesus*. This is the cry of every true believer—it shows the ground on which his expectations are founded. Believer, it is the Father's Son who hath won and brought thee in. Yes, remember me, by remembering Jesus. Hear my prayer, and see, O God—look on my shield. What does the psalmist cry out?—Look on me, not in myself, but look, O God, on me, in the face of thine anointed One, and for *His sake* remember me; for if we are really one with God, really united to Christ Jesus, it is just remember me. We are members of His body, of His flesh, and of

His bones. God the Father does not merely look on Him as the Head, He looks on Him as a whole; and, therefore, the cry in the 80th psalm is—Let thy hand be still upon the man of thy right hand; let thy hand be still upon me. Lord, remember Jesus, and in remembering Jesus, oh, remember me.

Look now at the 11th verse—The Lord hath sworn in truth unto David, He will not turn from it: Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne. God had sworn that the Lord's body, every member of that body, should be set on high places. Christ remembers His body; He remembers His promises; and, He says, Do as thou hast said—Set them on high, even on my throne; but further still, it is not merely Remember David and all his afflictions, but it is Remember Jesus and all His afflictions. This is the gospel interpretation of this psalm—Yes, remember Jesus and all His afflictions, for there was not one too many for sin. We needed them all. Not merely His last awful sufferings are to be remembered—His death, that is our hope. Yet, we must plead them all—every one of them—and for the sake of all He did, all He endured, and all He bore, must we look for acceptance with the Father. How He was all His life afflicted, for instance, from the moment of His birth to the hour of His death; He went about fulfilling all righteousness, bringing in an everlasting salvation. His work of obedience was a work of suffering and of deep affliction to Him—"Though He were a Son, yet *learned*

He *obedience.*" So when we cry, Lord, remember all His sufferings, another part of the cry must be, Lord, remember all His righteousness. I know I remember it, and, therefore, sure I am thou must—in remembering His righteousness also remember my sins. In remembering His obedience, thou must remember my disobedience: in remembering His spotless purity thou must my vileness, my pollutedness. But I have hope as long as I can cry—Lord, remember Jesus, and all His obedience: Lord, remember Jesus, and all His beauty: Lord, remember Jesus, and all His spotless perfect righteousness; for oh, He is the Lord my Righteousness. Another of Christ's sufferings to be remembered is His work of expiation. When the very curse of God was laid on Him; when He endured more than tongue could express—"I am the man that hath seen sorrow" might well be His word, but such as I am, sure I am, I can say, when I go to God, thou knowest all my sinfulness; thou readest it all; for it is written in thy book. Yet, remember, Lord, the blood of Jesus Christ shed for my righteousness; and wilt thou forget the sufferings, the atoning blood, of Jesus Christ thy Son? Remember it, Lord, remember thou it; remember thou the travail of His soul. Remember that He must see of that travail and be satisfied. Remember that because of these His sufferings, His afflictions, He must be crowned with glory and with honour. Remember thy Son and give Him His reward. Saved souls remember His afflictions, by adding many jewels to His crown; and O,

God, make me one of them. Brethren, this is a goodly prayer, for it shews you and me our only ground of hope—it points out to us our only refuge if we *would* but flee to it. Are you crying to God to remember you? and God is calling on you to remember Jesus; while you are crying on Him to remember you. Sinner, do you *ever* remember Jesus? It is the remembering of Jesus alone that can melt and soften your hard heart. It is the remembering of Jesus alone that can fill you with love and gratitude. Desponding soul, are you remembering Jesus? You can have hope only by remembering Him. You can only obtain joy and peace in believing by remembering all His sufferings. Hearer, are you remembering Jesus?—it is by your continually meditating on His love; by continually bearing in mind His atoning sacrifice, that your soul can be filled with love. Think, how can I sin against and offend the soul of that Jesus who was so deeply afflicted on Calvary for me? O, believer, do you remember Jesus?—it is only by realizing His death you can obtain peace and joy; it is only by continually meditating on Him. What says the Church—“We will remember thy love more than wine.” And the psalmist, too, what says he—“When I do thee upon my bed, remember with delight; and when on thee I meditate, in watches of the night.” And what is the consequence of this—“Even as with marrow and with fat, my soul shall filled be.” Yet at times the face of God is obscured (verse 10)—“For thy servant David’s sake turn not away thy face.” So it is

only for God's servant, Jesus' sake, the believer can plead with God not to turn away His face. Turn away His *face*. What meaneth this? When a soul has been seeking and seeking, and yet never obtaining—when hope departs, and when that face so earnestly longed for is turned away, and that soul is disappointed and cast down, and goes from God's mercy-seat in speechless despair, then, indeed, is God's face turned away. But oh, surely, that word *turned away* implies that it *once* must have been regarding that soul, when it is now away from it—oh, let that soul press on, forward, upward; let that soul's cry be—Look not on me, as I am in myself, who am so vile, so sinful; but I would make this all my warrant, and all my hope. For thy servant David's sake, oh turn not away thy face—this is the argument with which I would fill my mouth.

2nd. We now come to consider the argument—namely, pleading the eternal covenant of grace. It takes up three verses, and well it may. Marvellous, that so much wonderful truth should be all comprised in three. “How he sware unto the Lord, and vowed unto the mighty God of Jacob: I will not come into the tabernacle of my house, nor go up into my bed; I will not give sleep to my eyes, nor slumber to my eyelids, until I find out a place for the Lord, an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob.” This is applicable to King David, for if you read 1 Chronicles xv. 1, you will find that he was not at rest until he had obtained a proper place for the ark to rest. But, oh, this is but a type of the better *Ark*. There are three things in

these verses—1st, Christ's work as Mediator ; 2nd, the covenant fulfilment ; 3rd, it was Christ's work to find out a place for God on earth. And how does He find this out ? By making a church on earth—by creating a people on earth, so to speak, for all eternity. The Father was expelled from His own earth. He knew sin would come, and He cannot dwell with sin. If not expelled from all the earth, He was at least from one part—the heart of man—the seat of every pollution. God is a God of holiness, how could He dwell there ? But Jesus had a zeal for the Father's glory ; He would not suffer the Father's glory to be turned into shame, He would find, and if He could not find, He would make, a place for Him. Such a place is the assembly of saved sinners. Such a place is the true church of God. Here He delights to dwell. Does He not say, I do love it well. He hath chosen Zion, He hath even desired it for His habitation (verse 13). But there was no such place among fallen sinners. Until Jesus came there could be no church, there could be no people. Christ's work was from all eternity, it will be His work for time too. Well may we, when we consider this, cry out as John did when he saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God, Brethren, "the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be their God." You remember how Paul refers to this in 2 Cor. vi. 16, "As God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Ye

are the temples of the living God, wherefore come ye out from amongst them, and be ye separate." Hath, then, the temple of God any agreement with the temple of idols? No; if you be a temple fit for Him to dwell in, ye must be a separate people—God must be your God, then you shall be His people; ye must dwell in God, then shall He dwell in you. But how can any be brought to God—any made His children? Just by Jesus turning away their souls from idols; by Jesus being the way to the Father, they shall indeed be His people. They cannot be God's unless they be separate. They are a chosen people, a sanctified people, sealed unto the day of redemption; and it is Jesus who does all this. What says the psalm? Remember David, how he sware, how he covenanted for a people. He sware—the psalmist David sware, and he performed his vow. The gospel David sware, and he cannot lie. Oh, the covenant is sure, for it is confirmed by two oaths—the oath of the Father and the oath of the Son. David, king of Israel, desired to build an house for the God of Jacob; he was not permitted, but Solomon his son built it. In this both of them were types of Jesus. David was not permitted to build this house, because he had shed much blood, and had been a man of war. The house was not built till he died—this also because of sin. So, the house—the house of living souls—was not built till the better David died. Blood was lying on Him; sin, the sins of others, weighed Him down. There was need for the death of Jesus, and for His triumphant

rising again, before a people could be saved—a living temple built up. King David prepared abundantly for the building of the temple before he died ; Jesus did much ere He died, and does so still, sending down His Holy Spirit to beautify souls. How fully, how freely did Christ perform His part of the work. In the volume of the book—the book of life—the book of eternal election—it is written, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God, if it is thy will ; if it seemeth good unto thee that a house should be built, then, lo, I come ; but I know that thy will, Father, is that a house of righteousness should be built. I know, O Father, it is thy will to punish sinners ; I know, O Father, thou wilt not overlook sin ; I know, O Father, thou wilt punish the guilty. Lo, I come to build this house, to bear all this sin, to receive all this punishment. I know thou canst not dwell in a cursed house—I come to take away the curse, I come to work out all the demands of the law. For thou canst not dwell in an unbeautified house—I come to garnish it for thy reception, lo, I come. This is what Christ undertook to do when He swore to the Father. But, blessed be God, we have it revealed that God the Father swore too (verse 11), “ The Lord hath sworn in truth unto David [unto Jesus], He will not turn from it : Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne.” There is the Father’s promise : My Son, I swear by myself that thy seed shall sit on thy throne. Thy seed ? Who are they ? Thy people ; they are thy sons and daughters. Yes, they shall be made kings and priests

unto God ; they shall reign with Him for ever, they then are His seed (verse 12th), " If thy children will keep my covenant, and my testimony which I shall teach them, their children shall sit on my throne for evermore." Ah, there it is. We have the blessed seal of the covenant before us this day, tokens, testimonies of His pain and His travail.

Verse 3, " Surely I will not come up into my house, nor go up into my bed." Blessed truth ; He came down from His abode, from heaven, to build up this house—to lay the foundation—and go up till it is finished He will not. He left it not till He could say, Father, it is finished. He came from His tabernacle to earth for the doing of this work, He went not back to His glory till it was accomplished. Thou hast seen of the travail of thy soul, thou shalt be satisfied. Thou hast ascended up on high again, and hast received gifts—gifts even for the rebellious. " I will not go up into my bed,"—a figurative expression used by Jesus—I will not rest from my mediatorial work, I will not rest till all is accomplished. Yes, brethren, though He has gone up to heaven, He is building still—still breaking stones harder than the nether mill-stone. He is taking no rest to hew them and to melt them, and He will not go up to His rest till the fullness of the elect is come. Then cometh the end, as Paul reminds us, " when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father." And farther, " I will not sleep," notwithstanding all the trouble, all the pain and anguish it cost Him.

Oh, here's a large subject, but we forbear enlarging on it, a few remarks will suffice concerning His sufferings whilst on earth, and oh, it cost Him many a sleepless night ere this everlasting righteousness was brought in—retiring often after a toilsome, wearisome day to wrestle in prayer with His heavenly Father. Call to remembrance the last sad night He spent on earth. There was no sleep for Him that night. The disciples they slept; He awakened them. They slept again and again, for sorrow had made them heavy. Though their Master endured anguish far more awful, agony unspeakable, yet no sleep for Him. Drops of blood rolled down His agonized features, and when He cried out, "Father, it is enough; if possible let this cup pass from me!" yet no sleep for Him. Oh, what a sleepless, sorrowing night for the Man of Sorrows; and when the morning dawned, when the shadows of that awful night passed away, oh, what a day broke for Him! When He was led from Annas to Caiaphas, and from Caiaphas to that judgment hall, and from the judgment hall to Mount Calvary—throughout the whole of that melancholy day, till the sudden darkness veiled the daylight, proclaiming that all was finished and now an everlasting righteousness was brought in. He slept, but it was the sleep of death. Then a bed for Him, but it was the tomb of a stranger—a grave hewn out in a rock, but not His own, amongst sinners. Oh, it was thus Jesus fulfilled the work which the Father gave Him to do. Even now what tender care does He take over His children.

He watches them with the careful eye of a father by day and by night : His eyes are ever upon them, for, behold, he that sleepeth not nor slumbereth is their keeper. The sun shall not smite on them by day, nor the moon by night, for the Lord, the Shepherd of Israel, preserveth them in their going out and coming in for evermore.

3rd. The discovery. "We found it in the fields of the wood."

Now what is the *it* here spoken of. The ark of the covenant, that is Christ. Yes, Christ Himself is the place for the Church, the abode of the mighty God of Jacob. God hath desired this temple—this body,—yes, blessed truth, this spiritual body. We find salvation in Christ—we find it in Him alone. Ah, dear brethren, it is only when the Ark is found that salvation is found—when the Pearl of great price is possessed that this is possessed. When the ark was in the hands of the Philistines it was a sad, sad time for the whole of Israel ; but when the ark was brought up from Philistia, all Israel rejoiced exceedingly. Yes, wherever the ark is there will be joy and peace. God blessed the house of Obededom. So in like manner are there many souls sad and desolate when the ark Christ is not with them. They mourn and are disconsolate, and well may they cry out, "Oh, that it were with me as in former times, when the candle of the Lord shone bright," but when He does return, it is a glad, joyous day for that soul. It was a glad day among the Israelites when they heard of it

at Ephratah. Ephratah! What place was this? It was not the name of any particular town or village, but it was the name given to a large district where the Philistines brought the ark to the children of Israel. They of Bethshemesh, a district of Ephratah, lifted up their eyes, and when they saw the ark they rejoiced, and they took it and set it down on a large stone, and it was then all Israel heard of it, that God's visible presence had again come among them. But, dear brethren, it is at another part of Ephratah we do hear of this Ark, "But thou Bethlehem (Ephratah), though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto me, that is to be ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been of old from everlasting." Yes, we have heard of these glad tidings at Bethlehem, of the Lord's blessing His people. Ah, brethren, these are indeed glad tidings of great joy to all men, for unto us is born in the city of David a Saviour, even Christ the Lord—a brother born to us in adversity. These are glad tidings, and yet many receive them not as such. When Herod heard of it he was troubled; when Jerusalem heard of that which had happened at Bethlehem—that Jesus was born—it was troubled too. Ah, there be many who go no higher than Jerusalem tidings, though yet they might hear of the Ephratah tidings, but turn a deaf ear. Oh, dear brethren, of which are you? Are you rejoicing and glad of heart to hear the Ephratah tidings, and longing to hear more? Are ye like the Magi travelling about to find Him? When the poor

sinner is trembling, and tossed about on the sea of temptation and affliction, and ready to drop into its whelming waves, ah, he is glad to hear of the Ephratah tidings—verse 6, “He found it in the fields of the woods.” But an expression is chosen applicable to Christ, typical field of the wood, to point out where He was to be found. We read that when Abraham went to offer up Isaac his son, he looked and saw a ram caught in a thicket, literally in the fields of the woods. This is a very remarkable coincidence, and clearly points to Him who bore the sins of His people. When He was come to bear the *one tree*, it might well be called the field of the wood, for it was the accursed tree. We hear of salvation when we hear of Jesus born, lo, we find it when we know Jesus crucified for our sins. When He was born in Bethlehem the covenant was about to be fulfilled; we find it fulfilled when He died on Calvary. Oh, sinner, how can you be thankful enough to hear of the tidings of Ephratah? For, oh, it is only at the Cross He is to be found, nowhere else. Thither, dear brethren, have you gone—whither do you desire to go? Do you desire to take up the song of David, and say, Lo, we heard of it at Ephratah, at Bethlehem—lo, what was better, we found it in the field of the wood, at His cross. We have heard of it with the hearing of our ears, but now, now, we have got a sight of our Jesus. We are told that when Israel saw the ark coming towards them they rejoiced to see it, but, oh, how they lamented when it was removed. But, dear brethren, this blessed

Ark will ever remain with you ; and, oh, what will be your joy when you do find it, when it takes up its abode in you never to depart ?

Fencing of the Tables.—Intending communicants, you surely want to find Jesus. Have you ever sought Him earnestly in secret ? Hearing of the Ephratah tidings, have you, like the Magi, come seeking and searching for the Redeemer as for hidden treasure ? He is to be found then in the Cross—in the field of the wood. Is your eye looking not merely to Jesus, but to Jesus crucified ? That, and that alone, can satisfy you. Have you found Him in ordinances, or, like the bride, are you come seeking Him whom your soul loveth ? Then her blessed experience will be yours also, “You will sit down under His shadow with great delight.” Or, are you seeking Him and not finding Him ? You must not give over, but make use of that blessed prayer, that blessed argument—Lord, remember David, and then remember me ; oh, give me to see my own vileness, and then His purity. You must feel yourself as wretched and quite undone till Jesus makes you whole ; and if such has not been your experience, I fear this ordinance will be a bare and naked ordinance to you, even although an high ordinance. Now look at verse 3rd, “How he sware unto the Lord, and vowed unto the mighty God of Jacob.” When Jesus spoke all this He was speaking for Himself. So, if you are united to Him—a member of His blessed body—He was speaking for you too.

Now, brethren, are you seeking to prepare a place for Him in your hearts—a habitation for the mighty God of Jacob? It is the Divine Spirit alone can accomplish this. Oh, are you seeking, are you calling in the aid of this blessed teacher to enable you to get one glance this day of Jesus? Is yours a cleansed soul? Have you come again and again unto the blood of sprinkling—the blood of Jesus Christ which cleanseth from all sin? Have you taken your iniquities to the Cross, and laid them there, and left them there? Now, what kind of a house does God say He will dwell in? A thirsty soul. Is yours a soul hungering and thirsting after righteousness? Well, it shall be filled, and blessed is that soul. Well, but if you cannot go that length, I ask you once more, what kind of house will God condescend to dwell in? and let us get the prophet Isaiah to answer, “For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity and the praises thereof, I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a humble and contrite spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and the heart of the contrite ones.” Again the same prophet, Isaiah, saith, “To this man will I look, to him that is of a contrite heart,” &c. Is yours a broken heart? Is yours a contrite spirit? If not, it is no duty of yours to come here to this table. Oh, seek a humble spirit, for that is your duty. Jesus when on earth took no rest till He had found a habitation for the mighty God of Jacob—till He had opened up a way for the salvation of sinners. How does it with your body? Did it ever cost you a

sleepless night, and wearisome day, ere you found peace with God? And as to your souls, how does it with them? Can you sleep, sleep securely, before you are sure of your soul's being at peace with God; and, oh, let us remember that God hath prepared a house for Himself—a resting place. You have come into this house. True, you must leave it again; but for us poor wayfarers He hath prepared a house—an ark—we can hide in the secret of the Most High—we can abide under the shadow of the Almighty—we rest under the Plant of Renown—we can be hidden in the secret of His trust, “For a man shall be as an hiding from the wind, a covert from the tempest, as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.” Oh, brethren, this God is our God—this rock is a sure rock. We will also worship at His footstool; but the mere offering of prayer will not do. If you have indeed found Christ you *will* worship at His footstool humbly—laying your soul, laying your prayers, laying your praises all on Jesus. Dear brethren, if when we were travelling through this world—when we were desired to come and sit down at the table of some friend, we must first come into his tent. Oh, why should we always forget this in spiritual things? Oh, how many think that although they come not into the house of Christ yet they can partake of the feast, and be fed with the children's bread. The table is spread inside the house, not on the outside. The cry is, Come, and eat of my bread. Dear brethren, come into this house. It is a blessed shelter.

Oh, come in as children of the house, and ye shall receive the privileges of children. Come, and be one of the blessed family. The psalmist knew this well; he says, "Blessed is the man whom thou chooseth, and causeth to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts; we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple." And what is the result of all this? We shall be satisfied. Ah, let souls remember this—we shall dwell there forever, and though this earthly house is dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Oh, think of this, for it is a comforting thought for us while here below. When we are beneath the shade of this glorious Tent we can lie down in peace and safety without the sun smiting us by day or the moon by night.

Table Service.—When the habitation of God shall have been begun, as, blessed be God, it has already been, I also read this note of invitation, "Come, oh house of Jacob, and let us walk in the light of the Lord." Does not this mean to walk in the light of life, taking our place beneath the glorious Sun of Righteousness; but I also read that the exposition of all this is set down more plainly still when it is added, "Hide thee in the dust," a cry most surely to sinners to betake themselves to a place of refuge ere the fierce anger of the Lord is poured forth on them. But, if a cry to sinners to hide themselves in the secret chamber of the Lord, a cry to believers too. For, oh, surely when they ap-

pear before God, remembering that they are fearfully and wonderfully made, and not less wonderfully redeemed, they can have no hope of being preserved but by hiding in the rock, and that the Rock of Ages. When God passed before Moses on Mount Horeb, he was reminded he could not see His face and live. Even when the Lord was passing before him, proclaiming Himself the Lord—the Lord God merciful and gracious, when in a position to hear all and see all this, Moses had to be put in a cleft of the rock, and God covered him with His hand. And, oh, communicant, when you desire at these tables to see God, ye shall abide in Him, and He shall abide in you. Oh, seek very much in secret prayer to get this desire, if you have it not. Why are there so few who know anything of Jeremiah's wrestling? Why shouldst thou be as a stranger in the land, and as a wayfaring man that turneth aside to tarry for a night, and then departs? Oh, why are so many disappointed when they meet not with God? It is just because they wish Him to be as a wayfaring man; to come for one night, then depart. They wish Him to come with them from the world for a few hours, and then when they return to the world and its pleasures, to go away again at their bidding. Just like Felix, "Go thy way for this time, when I have a more convenient season I will call for thee," yet count it a good sign when there is the desire after God. Would not it be a good token for you if it were all thy desire that He should abide with thee continually? This should be all your

salvation, all your desire. It is very plain that if you really have desired God to make His rest in your soul, you must make Him all your rest. Remember, if your soul is to be God's resting place, you must make Him all your rest. Oh, this is easily remembered. When God says, *This is my rest*, say you concerning Jesus, *This is my rest*, and the *Ark* of my strength. You, dear brethren, are called again to go down to the battle; you have been girding yourselves afresh for the combat. Oh, what made the battle of Ebenezer—the battle with Philistia—so disastrous to Israel? The ark was taken. While it was with them the Philistines were sore afraid. They said, "Woe unto us, who shall deliver us out of the hand of the mighty God?" But the ark was taken. The ark departed from amongst them—Israel was discomfited, and old Eli, the man of God, fell down and died. Although this is God's rest, yet we cannot rest. No rest for us in this world—no, brethren; no rest, till we have finished the good fight of faith. Whilst in this world ye must never rest, never cease fighting—but if Christ the Captain of the Lord's host, which is the Ark, abide continually with us, then we shall conquer—we shall come off more than conquerors. In thy name we will display our banners. We have now again to go down to the world and meet many temptations; and oh, who is sufficient for these things? We have to combat against spiritual wickedness in high places; and, in ourselves, we are nothing. Oh,

come, thou Lord, arise, and the ark of thy strength. Remember David—remember Jesus. How many temptations He bore from within and from without. Arise, and bring thy strength, the ark, with thee, when there is enough and to spare. Oh, we are poor and wretched. We need thy strength. But oh, blessed again, there is abundance to supply all our need: even the fulness of Christ. Then, indeed, will we, like Paul, glory in our infirmities; for when we are weak then are we strong—but strong only through thy strength. We have to endure great fights of afflictions, great dangers, and difficulties; and oh, the least of them is enough to overthrow us. Arise, then, O Lord, and the ark of thy strength. We have to fulfil many a duty. How can we in our own strength—arise, thou Lord, with thy strength. Remember, O brethren, that whilst we are crying to God to arise, He is crying to us to arise. When we cry, Arise Lord, He answers thus—Arise, thou, O sinner; shake thyself from the dust: arise and shine, for thy light is come; and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. And He cries to the believer, also, arise; just as He spake to blind Bartimeus. Jesus stood still and called him, saying—What will ye that I should do unto thee? That was a word of comfort to him. Is it not a word of comfort to you also. He cries—Arise, the Master calleth thee! Arise, and follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth! Arise, O believer, for this is not thy rest! (Verse 9.) There's another prayer for us—"Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness."

Look at verse 16—"I will also clothe her priests with salvation;" a form different from the other: the one being righteousness, the other salvation. But oh, yes, brethren; salvation and righteousness—righteousness and salvation always go together. You remember the word of the believer in Isaiah xli. 10—"I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness." Ah, yes, that's what we should be seeking after—clothed with righteousness and so adorned with salvation. Dear brethren, the word is priests—let thy *priests*. Some people imagine it refers alone to the tribe of Levi—that the prayer is for them—that they may be first clothed with salvation and righteousness, and so be the instruments of conveying it to others. Take it in that view, brethren, if you will; and I will ask something for myself—that *I* may be clothed with righteousness and with salvation, and so shall I be not only blessed in my own soul, but the instrument of conveying it to others. Offer up this prayer in this sense if you will. But I make general application, believing communicant, you are a priest. We have seen already that you are a king. Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon the throne. Yes, you are kings—ah, yes, but priests too unto God and His Father. You must first try to be hid in the cleft of the Rock, Christ. Remember your place—the cleft of the rock. And what meaneth that? The beloved—the dove—buildeth in the cleft of the rock, and

that rock is just Jesus. Yes, that's the beloved's place. We will go into thy tabernacle—it is there we can worship aright! We will enter into the Rock, Christ—"Rock of ages cleft for me," poor sinner. Ah, dear brethren, it is thither that believers flock—as doves to their windows, and there they are sheltered. It is there they are hidden from all danger. Dedicate thyself first of all to Jesus. Now thou hast an opportunity—hide thee likewise in the dust. What meaneth that? Job prays,—Oh that thou wouldest hide me in the grave. Ah, brethren, but it meaneth the grave of Christ. Hide thee in the dust—not of thine own humility—it is needful to be humble—but hide thee in the dust of the Saviour's tomb—buried with Him as He was buried; and shew ye forth this death of His till He come. Oh, it is only by personal regeneration, personal intercourse with Jesus, ye can do this. Know ye aught of this, ye must be born again. Then, nevertheless, notwithstanding all your vileness, you will be accepted. It is only with *such* souls, that what is His becometh theirs. That the communion—the wine—becometh the covenant of the blood of Christ. Believers, trust in this. Make this all your hope, your confidence. And now let me put into your hands the symbols of His dying love.

CONCLUDING ADDRESS.

"Arise, O Lord, into thy rest; thou, and the ark of thy strength."—Psalm cxxxii. 8.

Here is a prayer for us to fill our mouths with when we come before God. Arise, O Lord. I put the

question,—Communicants, have you experienced the Lord with you on this occasion? The Lord is in the midst of His people. Has He been with you? Verily, in the midst of you, when you were at His table? Now, though not called to leave the tabernacle, you are called to leave the table. Is not this, then, a prayer for you! We have been blessed when at thy table. We would have thy company still. We would not part with thee when we arise. Arise, thou; be thou our attendant. Forsake us not. We would walk with thee through the wilderness. Oh, arise Lord; go with us. We know not the path we have to take. Arise, Lord, into thy rest. Lead us; go before us, even as the ark which went before thy people when they were in the wilderness. We are in the wilderness. Arise, Lord, like the pillar of cloud by day. Arise, thou Lord, as the pillar of fire by night. Enable us to say with thy servant of old—The Lord is my light and my salvation: whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid? Communicants, be much exercised as Moses was (Numbers x. 35)—“And it came to pass when the ark set forward, that Moses said: Rise up, Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered,”—for they are our enemies too—“and let them that hate thee flee before thee,”—for if we are thy people they also hate us. And when it rested, He said—“Return, O Lord, unto the many thousands of Israel”; or, communicants, have you not realized in your blessed experience, that the Lord was with you? Well, is

not this the very prayer for you? Lord, thou hast hidden thy face. Arise, out of thy hiding place—unbelief it was that hid thee. Arise, and let that enemy be scattered. Doubts and fears it was that hid thy face. Arise, Lord, and let that enemy be scattered. Worldly-mindedness it was that hid thy face. Arise, Lord, in thy power, and throw that down. We read in prophecy that God complained He was hidden out of sight (Amos ii. 13)—“Behold, I am pressed under you, as a cart is pressed that is full of sheaves.” Why, because it was His people’s fault. They forsook Him. In such a case how prayed the psalmist? Arise, O Lord; return to thy rest. We can do nothing of ourselves. It must be all God’s work (Psalm lxxiv. 22)—“Arise, O Lord, plead thine own cause: remember how the foolish men reproach thee daily.” Yes, God must plead His own cause. We can ourselves do nothing. Arise, O Lord, into thy rest. Meditate much on the word *rest*. God says, this is my *rest* (verse 14)—“Here will I dwell for ever,” the place where He continues to dwell; not a place He merely visits and then departs. No, when God once takes up His abode in the soul, He never leaves that soul—He never forsakes it. O Lord, make our souls thy resting place—yea, thy continual resting place. When we have God continually abiding with us, oh, what have we to fear? That God may be with us continually. Thou shalt not need to be afraid for the terror by night, nor for the arrow that flieth by day. Oh, abide with us. It

is the will of God not to come and then to go again ; but to come and rest for ever. This is God's desire. Bless Him for it. Is it yours too ? Can you say— Arise, O God, into thy rest ; for *I* desire it well. Oh, if your heart is set on it, and God's heart is set on it —and if both your heart and His are alike ; who can come in and frustrate this desire ? For it is thy desire and God's desire ; and we shall reign with Him for ever and ever. Communicants, you profess to be priests of the most high God. The very deed you have just performed at His table this day, was it not offering up yourselves to Him ? And that is a priest's work. And have you not, too, been interceding and pleading for a blessing—that is a priest's work too. Oh, cry that God would indeed clothe you with righteousness and with salvation, that you may be clothed with Jesus. And you have sworn to live by prayer, and that is a priest's work. When I pray, oh, for an acceptable prayer, oh, what need to have Christ, to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven, and let thy saints shout for joy—last clause of the verse, shout for joy—is it your desire to shout for joy, merely to express that joy spoken of in 1 Kings, when the people blessed their king and went to their tents joyful and glad of heart, for all the goodness that the Lord had done for David, and for Israel his people ? It was when the ark was settled in its habitation, when all the work of that memorable day was past, that all the people rejoiced and shouted with great joy. You have had a feast. Is

all your desire merely to shout, to go away because of this feast. When done ye may shout for joy, because of all the great things ye may have seen and heard. But if this communion ends here, ye will soon be sad, soon sorrowful, and crying out, Oh, that it was with me as in former times. Oh, that I might again get a joyful heart, oh, let me have joy in the Lord. This is a goodly prayer to end a communion season with; see that ye make it yours. The children of Israel they found the ark, but how long did it rest with them? All the time they followed, but this following came to an end, and, it is added, all the people were greatly moved. But, dear brethren, it is in your power to follow this Ark continually, you are invited, you are commanded to do so. It is your duty, it is your happiness to do so. In following hard after the Ark you will be shouting for joy the whole time. There is no joy in following lying vanities, in following this world's vain amusements, but in following Christ ye may well be joyful. Yet why is it said, In the world ye shall have tribulation? Ah, yes, dear brethren, but it is immediately added, I have overcome the world, that world. Ye shall have heaviness, ye shall have many sorrows, but still ye shall be joyful even in the midst of them if ye but keep your eye, the eye of faith, on the ark and follow hard after it. This world hated Jesus, it must hate us too. All in it were His enemies, they must be ours too, but still be of good cheer, I have overcome the world. Verse 18. His enemies will I clothe with shame, but upon Him-

self shall the crown flourish. Yes, that is the ground of the believer's hope, of the believer's joy ; it is the consummation of His joy too. The Redeemer's crown shall flourish, He shall collect all His people together, His enemies will He clothe with shame. But here is the believer's joy and confidence, that he follows a King whose crown, whose kingdom, must prosper, and who shall decorate that crown. Dear brethren, every jewel in that flourishing crown is a believing soul. God grant that there may be many amongst us.

(6.)

Communion sermon preached by REV. DR. MILLER,
October, 1849.

“Thou hast known my reproach, and my shame, and my dishonour: mine adversaries are all before thee. Reproach hath broken my heart; and I am full of heaviness: and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none. They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.”
—Psalm lxix., 19-21.

WE came here this day, dear brethren, at least for two ends, if not for more, at least for two. 1st. To discern the Lord's body; and 2nd, to show forth the Lord's death until He come—to see Him sacrificed, and to see Him as the sacrificed, who became once a sacrifice for sin, and then to show forth His death. We cannot possibly do the second without likewise doing the first. There are various ways of seeing the death of Christ, various means through which we may see it. One of these means is the Word of God, another of these means is the sacrament to which you are looking forward to-day. From both of these we may show forth the death of Christ. We may read the Evangelists who give the mere narrative of the life and sufferings of Jesus; simple, very touching, these are, but none more intensely interesting than the text. In

the Gospels we have others describing His sufferings ; in the Psalms we have His own words ; in the Gospels others make mention of the *outward* working ; in the Psalms we have the inner working of His mind laid bare. Who can read the 22nd Psalm, the 38th, the 109th, without immediately recognising the Lord Jesus opening up His very heart to us, the agony and exercise He endured in the hour and power of darkness ? In the Gospels we have the history of the deed, in the Psalms we have recounted the experience. We read of the sufferings and the agony which Jesus endured, but we cannot realise the meaning of them. Nevertheless, let us try, like Moses of old, to draw near. I will draw near and see this great sight—a bush burning, and yet the bush is not consumed.

There are four things in this passage to which I purpose, God helping me, to direct your attention ; and 1st to the intensity of Christ's sufferings—"Reproach hath broken my heart, and I am full of heaviness." 2nd. To the isolation of Christ, or to coin a word, His aloneness, in His sufferings—"I looked for some to take pity, and there was none ; and for comforters, but I found none." 3rd. The culmination, the completion of Christ's sufferings—"They gave me also gall for my meat, and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink." 4th. In our text is put first what we have shown last, the blessed truth, the divine acknowledgement and acceptance of His sufferings—"Thou hast known my reproach."

Then, 1st, The intensity of Christ's sufferings—"Re-

proach hath broke my heart." The Saviour's heart broken, oh, who would *dare* to break it. His was the noblest heart that ever beat within a human bosom. Why should *it* be broken? it beat ever true with zeal to God and love to man; surely they who break it had themselves the hardest of hearts; but it was the Lord who gave up his Son's heart to be broken, ay, and Jesus took it and broke it. His was the mightiest human heart that ever throbbed: that heart was a strong heart, and yet that Scripture was true of Him as of other men, "The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity, but a wounded spirit who can bear?" Yes, brethren, this was as true of Him as of other men. We have been singing of sorrows that filled His soul, and oh, can we not see the intensity of His sufferings in the various ways in which He gave utterance to His anguish in the brokenness of His heart, as "My heart is like wax, it is melted in the midst of my bowels;" or again, "My heart is smitten and withered like grass, so that I forget to eat my bread;" or, "I am broken like a potter's vessel." Yes, God did it. We cannot comprehend this. We know what a broken heart among men means; it is generally brought on by disappointment or self-reproach; not so with Christ, His is a broken heart in one sense, but when the Bible speaks of a broken heart it means the very essence of the heart being broken, and that is sin; enmity against God being broken, and that is a broken heart among men. But it is different with Christ, His heart is love, love to sinners, and that was not broken.

Love to God and love to men ever filled *His* heart and was the very essence of it. In the heart of Jesus was that vase of which the poet sings—

“ Yes, you may dash down the vase if you will,
The scent of the roses will hang round it still.”

So with the heart of Jesus, ever being filled with love, it is even like the alabaster box of precious ointment which Mary took and brought to where Jesus was. Then the perfume filled the air, but when she took and brake the box its fragrance was sweeter and more savoury still. So with the heart of Jesus, the better alabaster. It was *ever* redolent of love to the souls of men ; but when that heart was broken, then, most of all, the fragrance of that love was as ointment poured forth to fill the world—love even for saving the souls of poor sinners, that they should never die. How was the heart of Jesus broken ? (Verse 20)—“ Reproach hath broken my heart.” Yes, by reproach. Many hearts among men are broken by *self*-reproach, but not so with Jesus, and yet by reproach. We read of Christ’s people, that when their enemies reproach them, in the hour of their trial they have God to go to ; and yet, there was no reproach like the reproach which Jesus endured. To quote His own language with regard to this, He says, “ As with a sword in my bones, mine enemies reproach me, while they say daily to me, *Where is thy God?* ” Now, it does seem strange, it *is* strange, that throughout this psalm, again and again, throughout the Old Testament, throughout the New, ay, and throughout the whole Bible, the

thing which broke Jesus' heart is always the hatred of sinners. We would think, and think naturally, too, that the wrath of His Father, the hiding of His face, and the outpouring of His indignation was the worst He had to bear. But no; Christ is ever mentioned as feeling it ill, ill to bear the reproach of sinners for whom He died—"I am a worm and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people." "He is despised and rejected of men," and yet it is recorded that for the joy which was set before Him, He "endured the cross, and despised the shame." Why is it so, that Jesus ever speaks of His soul suffering on account of sinners reproaching Him, when the wrath of God, more dreadful far, was poured out on Him? Why was it so? Just because His heart was so full of love to men, He was mourning in seeing sinners ruining their own souls; besides which, when His Father's wrath was hot against Him, He knew that He was vindicating His own law in His person, but in sinners pouring contempt on Him, He saw them slaying themselves. In the one He acquiesced—namely in God's vindicating and fulfilling His own law—the second He could *not bear*. It broke His heart to see sinners willingly cast themselves down headlong into hell. O brethren, are we not constrained to say, "What manner of love is this?" And now let me remind you, when Jesus says, "Reproach hath broken my heart, and I am *full of heaviness*," He means that it is the sins of mankind that were lying on Him. Yes, He took our sins, and bare

our iniquities. Now turn to the 15th chapter of Romans—"We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves, for even Christ pleased not Himself, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached *thee* fell *on me*." What! sinners reproached God. Surely they will have to bear that sin, and endure the punishment of it. No, says Jesus, let it come on me: I will bear it for them, I will take their sins on me, and thou shalt abhor more and more even those very sins. "O God (verse 5) thou knowest my foolishness, and my sins are not hid from thee," which are just the sins of His own people, and we see Jesus willingly surrendering Himself to bear them all, and cast them all into the depths of the sea. It is no wonder, dear brethren, that in bearing such a load as this Jesus should say He was *full* of heaviness, or "I sink in deep mire, I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me." The word translated *heaviness* has a twofold meaning, not only signifying intense grief, but likewise meaning a *load*. Yes, brethren, Jesus Christ was *full* of grief, just like a vessel. He was surcharged with it, and yet, though it was an ocean of a *living* flood, ay, not a flood of water, but a living flood of His Father's wrath, He held every drop of it. And oh, in holding every drop, no wonder He was full—and, oh, He was full—of that heaviness, just that *we* might be empty of it. That He might empty us He drank a cup, not of wine, to cheer the heart of man, but a full cup for us, yes, full of heavi-

ness—filled with grief—a cup which consisted of man's sin, and God's wrath, and that just that we might drink new wine in the kingdom of heaven with Him. Yes, this load was hanging on Him like a millstone. We read concerning him who offends one of those little ones who believe in Christ "it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were cast into the depths of the sea." This was the case with the Lord Jesus. Yes, there *was* a millstone around *His* neck, and He was cast into the very sea of God's wrath : (verse 14)—" Deliver me out of the mire, let me not sink, let me be delivered from them that hate me, and out of the deep waters ; let not the water-flood overflow me, neither let the deep swallow me up, and let not the pit shut her mouth upon me." But the water-flood did pass over Him, and the pit did close her mouth over Him, and so He had to bear the wrath of God. We are told that in the garden of Gethsemane, " He began to be sorrowful and very heavy," nor was that only the beginning of His heaviness. Oh, no, for we read immediately after, " He prayed, saying, If it be possible let this cup pass from me ; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt," and now on the cross is the cry heard, " My God ! My God ! why hast thou forsaken me ?" This was the fullness of His anguish. In the garden of Gethsemane He had a load to bear, He fell down prostrate on His face ; on the cross He fell down even to the very dust of death ; and thus, like his type Jonah, He " cried out of the belly of hell ; I

cried by reason of my affliction unto the Lord, For thou hadst cast me into the deep, in the midst of the seas, and the floods compassed me about, all thy billows and thy waves passed over me." Oh, brethren, in looking thus at the Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief, and in remembering that all His agonies were out of love to sinners, what emotion ought it to awaken within us? Surely, at least, these two particular graces:—1st, Love to Him who so loved us; and 2nd, the grace of confidence and reliance on Him who hath done such things for us. I suppose every one here knows that when we have injured another, if his heart is stout and hard, we have but little hope that he will forgive us readily; but if it *breaks* his heart, it is surely the broken heart that is the readiest to pardon; and so it is with Jesus. Or, to take another illustration, suppose a wife has sinned against her husband—and, oh, this is the sorest of all trials—is the husband ever ready to pardon and receive her back? Now this is just the case with Christ and His bride. She sinned against Him—it broke His heart. He had covenanted for His people from eternity, but, oh, just because His heart *was* broken for *her*, His is the readiest heart to receive her back again. We have a High Priest who, having once had a broken heart, knows how to bind up the broken hearted. Oh, how comforting! Sinners, the *very chief*, may come and cast themselves on the broken heart of Christ, which is ever gushing with love to them.

Now, 2nd, we come to consider the atonement of

Jesus Christ in His sufferings. "I looked for some to take pity, but there was none, and for comforters, but found none." He wondered if He had got any one near to comfort Him, any one near Him to give at least pity. Can He not look to the soldiers, even those who had bound Him, who had mocked Him, who had scourged Him? There is no pity there, their hands drive the nails. Can He not look to the multitude around; have they no pity? There are many amongst them whom Christ has healed; have they no word of comfort for Him? No, there was none. Well, surely the thieves who were crucified along with Him, one on either side, will compassionate Him? The people mocked Him, saying "Save thyself!" and the thieves cast the same in His teeth. But yonder, outside of the Cross, is a little company of women; they have long bewailed and lamented Him, surely they will go and comfort Him? What comfort can they show, what influence have they amongst a multitude of soldiers and officers? They are like Job's comforters: "miserable comforters are ye all." Yet there is one there, and she is the Virgin Mary, she is the mother of Jesus; oh, surely He looks to her for comfort? Yes, but not even His mother could comfort Him, for now had come to pass that saying: "Yea, a sword shall pierce through thine own soul also." And now, when she cannot comfort Jesus, Jesus needs to comfort her. But when Jesus looks around on all and finds none to comfort Him, will He not look *up* and find comfort there? Yes, He did look up, and there was

a cry heard, but it was this, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" but even to that there was no response heard—yes, there was a response:—"Awake, oh sword, against my Shepherd, against my Son, and against the Man that is my fellow; *smite* the Shepherd." No compassion for Jesus, even from God. Why, and wherefore? Does He not deserve it? Yes, but God has compassion for those, His murderers; in having compassion for them, He can have none for His Son; and Jesus knew this, and therefore the cup He will not refuse. Nay more, Jesus even turned into His own soul to get some sympathy, but He says, "For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up, and, therefore, what my Father hath given me to do, shall I not do it? I set my face as a flint, I have a baptism to be baptised with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished." And now Jesus looks for comfort. He finds none to compassionate, will there be none to comfort? No, there are none. What, not even His own disciples? No, but last night and He spent hours in comforting them—"Let not your hearts be troubled, ye believe in God, believe also in me." Where is Peter? where is John, the beloved disciple who leant on His breast at supper? where are they all? They have all forsaken Him and fled. Then angels on high will be looking down, will they not be comforting Him? We read that on the Mount of Transfiguration, Moses and Elias appeared, talking with Him, and speaking of the decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem. Now, this is Mount

Calvary, where His face, instead of shining, is more marred than that of any man. Where, now, are Moses and Elias? They are not there. The very heavens above Him are darkened, and the company of angels are hiding their faces from the awful scene. Well, but where are those angels, who, on the morning of His birth, appeared unto the Bethlehem shepherds as they watched their flocks by night, and the heavenly host burst into that anthem of praise—"Glory unto God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will towards men." Where are those angels now? They are now struck dumb and silent when He was being crucified. Ay, and yet, brethren, even now the Father is recognising His Son, even as being His well-beloved Son, and He was never more so than now. Even in His agony in the garden, there was sent an angel to strengthen Him, but now, in this the hour and power of darkness, here alone. No angels are near, devils alone are now with Him and cursing Him, and Jesus cries, yea, and Jesus prays (verse 17)—"But as for me, my prayer is at an acceptable time (or time of need), oh God, in the multitude of thy mercy, hear me!" We read, "Cry unto me in the day of trouble, and I will hear thee and deliver thee." And surely Christ might think that if ever there was an acceptable time it is now, and I will cry, but there was no answer; never does this happen with regard to the poor sinner. Oh! there was never yet a poor soul, who, in the day of trouble, raised a cry for mercy, but was heard and answered; and, blessed be God,

there never will; and yet, Jesus is an exception, and so He cries and He prays, and it is all in vain. This was never verified to any sinner; but, oh, the depth of the anguish contained in these verses, 13, 14, 15:—“Hide not thy face from thy servant, for I am in trouble; hear me speedily, and draw nigh to my soul,” and likewise in that bitter exclamation:—“My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” It is seen from those verses the nature of this cry. It was different with Paul: he says that when he first stood before Nero—“At my answer, no man stood with me, but the Lord was with me, and strengthened me.” Jesus also had to say, “At this my answering, no man stood with me.” Paul could add, “But God was with me, and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.” But Jesus was forsaken of God too. Dear brethren, it was blessed, blessed for us that so it was; it is in His bearing all the load, in having poured out on Him the full measure of His Father’s wrath, our hope rests, because there was none else could do it. And yet, blessed truth! in this burning of the bush, it was not consumed; had Jesus not been all alone in these His sufferings, He would not have been the one Saviour. If any one, even an angel, had helped Him in the smallest jot, He would not have been the one Saviour. But now, in His bearing all alone and none with Him, we see and rest on Him as the one Saviour, and the all-sufficient Saviour, and this paved the way whereby there might not be one of His chosen people wanting. And just because He drank that cup,

Jesus now can say to us, because that none did say so to Him—"When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee, and through the floods they shall not overflow thee, when thou walkest through the fire thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee."

In the 3rd place, let us now consider the culmination, the completion, of Christ's sufferings, verse 21:—"They gave me also gall for my meat, and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink!" Jesus here speaks of a draught which was given Him to drink. Now, I wish you particularly to notice that in the New Testament we are told He got two several draughts given to Him when He was on the Cross. In Matthew, we have recorded both these—in verse 36 it is said, "They gave Him vinegar to drink, mingled with gall, and when He had tasted thereof He would not drink." Now, observe this was the first drink—vinegar mixed with gall. Now, look at verse 48—"And straightway one of them ran and took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave Him to drink. Jesus received this, and then yielded up the Ghost." Now, we read the same in Mark xv. 23-36, where the first drink is mentioned; 36th verse for the second giving. In Luke is only mentioned the first, but in John, the second—chap. xix., where Jesus asks for it saying "I thirst." Now, remember that in three places it is said this first draught of gall and vinegar was given to Jesus. Now, what is remarkable about

this? Why, the first thing that strikes us is the peculiar cruelty of adding to the thirst of Jesus when lingering on the Cross. But there is a metaphor contained in this—there is a symbol in it. Now turn to Deut. xxix. 18, and read, “Lest there should be among you man or woman, or family, or tribe, whose heart turneth away this day from the Lord our God ; lest there should be among you a root that beareth gall and wormwood.” There it is, dear brethren, the Lord cometh into His vineyard—He seeketh fruit from it—we give Him vinegar to drink, whose roots are of bitterness and sin. The Lord did much for us in suffering. What more could He have done? and what is ofttime the return sinners make? He can get nothing but vinegar and gall—sin and death ; He has to endure still from the hand of ungrateful sinners—of men. Now let us look for a moment to the nature of the draught first given Him. Now, in ancient times, and in Eastern countries, when any malefactor was being put to death, and if there was *any* feeling of pity for him among the surrounding multitude, when stretched on the cross it was the custom to give him a stupefying draught. Once and again we have reference made to this in the Word of God. I shall only quote one passage in Prov. iii. 11-16, “Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine unto those that be of heavy heart ; let him drink and forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more.” This draught was given to stupefy them, in order to alleviate in some degree

their sufferings ; this was an ordinary act of kindness, which was shown to a malefactor, however bad his crime might have been ; but what in this case did they present to Jesus ? Instead of a stupefying draught they gave Him vinegar and gall. Thus did they make use of a custom which was intended as an act of kindness, in order to show Jesus the more contempt. But we read in Luke xxiii. that when He had tasted thereof He would not drink. He did not ask the draught, and He refused it when offered. When the sinner comes and offers Jesus vinegar and gall—sin and estranged heart—Christ will refuse it, He does not want that ; but if any token of love, however small, be offered, oh, He will *never* refuse to receive that from any sinner. With regard to that Jesus says, “I have eaten my myrrh with my spice. I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey. I have drunk my wine with my milk ; eat, O friends ; drink, yea drink abundantly, O beloved.” He will not drink vinegar ; He will refuse that. The wine He desires to receive is the love of souls to Him. Some love He cannot accept. What He desires is the apples of love and sympathy ; and yet, oh, how often do we think that we will try to give Him vinegar instead of wine. Are we not afraid lest He say of us, “I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat, I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink.” Now, let us turn our attention for a little to the second draught. Now Jesus asked for this—“After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might

be fulfilled, said, I thirst." He did not refuse it now. I must here again remind you of an ancient custom. Not only was a stupefying draught given to a criminal, but it was likewise the custom with regard to notorious criminals to give them a bitter draught just before death ; and this was symbolical of the pouring out of the whole of the wrath on them ; and this second cup was called a cup of travailing, or sometimes a cup of indignation, and was given by the authority of the judge or the officer, as a mark that now they had endured all. This was the second cup, of which Jesus drank, and was part of His sufferings (John xviii. 28), "After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, I thirst." He did not refuse it this time, Jesus knowing that now He had borne the whole load, exhausted the full cup, asked for the seal of its being all exhausted, for the token that He "had drunk of the wrath of God which was poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation," and had endured all, said, "I thirst." I desire that now the whole work shall be completed ; I long to draw the very last dregs out of this cup of trembling, "I thirst." "I have a baptism to be baptised with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished." I thirst—I desire to complete my Father's will ; it is my meat and my drink to do His will. I thirst till all His wrath be poured out. To the Father He spoke these words. It was not His body that was thirsting, it was His soul ; and God overruled the

very cruelty of His enemies to be the very symbol that now Jesus had exhausted all the wrath of God. Now He could cry, "It is finished," and a blessed, blessed cry it was. No more agony ; no more sorrow, and there is the culmination of Christ's sufferings—(verse 21)—"They gave me gall for my meat, and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink," there is the completion of it.

Now there is just one thing more here which we must notice. When Jesus took this second draught He got it on hyssop, and put on a reed. Now I find that with regard to the law for the cleansing of leprosy, two birds were to be taken, and a rod of cedar wood, and scarlet, and hyssop. One of the birds was to be killed, and the other bird he was to take, and the cedar wood, and the scarlet, and the hyssop, and dip them and the living bird in the blood of the one that was slain, and the one that was thus sprinkled with the blood of the other flew away. I cannot help seeing this as typical of the escape of a soul. Jesus Christ sprinkled us full well with His own blood ; and now in His being the sacrifice for us—in His having exhausted all sin of us sinners—this same Jesus, in being the sin-bearer comes back without sin unto salvation. But we cannot help noticing especially the hyssop. In the law for the cleansing of leprosy the priest was to take scarlet and hyssop. Now what does this more especially mean ? Hyssop, dear brethren, is an emblem of faith. Hyssop is a low-growing plant ; so is faith. Hyssop is always

found growing against the rock, striking its tendrils there. So is faith ; it clings fast to Christ, the Rock ; it clasps and grows out of Him ; and whenever I find sacrifice offered, before it was burned on the altar, hyssop was to be cast on it in token that with the acceptable sacrifice to Jesus there must be this faith. From this hyssop Jesus took the vinegar. He accepted of His punishment and even was confident and relying on God. And thus it is, that in the highest point we see faith and love still exhibited in His greatest pangs. He refused not Him whose face was hid, just like a son, a loving confident son, He accepted of the punishment.

Now, 4th and shortly, The divine knowledge of, and acceptance of the Saviour's sufferings, "*Thou hast known my reproach.*" Dear brethren, who else knew them, who else could know them, but God. Jesus appeals to men, to you, and to me, and He says, Was ever sorrow like unto my sorrow ? But poor sinners, you do not know and therefore cannot tell. I will appeal unto God. "*Thou hast known,*" and He it is alone that can know them. We cannot fully realise anything of this wrath, this bitterness endured by Jesus Christ. "*The heart knows its own bitterness.*" Yes, we know not its bitterness, but God knew it. You remember how He mourns in another Psalm, xxxviii, "*Lord, all my desire is before Thee, and my groaning is not hid from thee.*" Alas ! it was hid from sinners, but not from God ; and just according to the intensity of His sufferings, we need to make

mention of, and remember the greatness of our guilt, brethren, if we want to know the depth of iniquity of which we have been guilty. Where shall we see it but in looking at the sufferings of Jesus. And, oh, dear brethren, if God in knowing the sufferings of Jesus and what He must endure, did not spare Him, does this not testify to us of the infinity of God's love? Yes, from a previous eternity God knew what his Son must suffer from the hand of sinners, and yet He gave Him up. Jesus himself, from all eternity, knew all that He would have to endure, and yet He gave himself a willing sacrifice. What love is this which we see moving the Father to send the Son; and the Son, full well knowing all, yet seeing that the Father was willing to send Him, He the Son, was willing to endure all. And why? Just because both were so willing, so anxious to save sinners. Oh, if we could realise more our own sins, we could realise more Christ's sufferings, and comprehend better His love. But chiefly the thing that I would insist on is that which Jesus says, and it is the first gladsome voice in the whole Psalm—"Thou hast known my reproach," thou hast known it all, thou hast known all my suffering, thou hast known all its merits, thou hast known all its completeness. We are told that God has put all the tears of His people into His bottle, and why should this not likewise be applicable to Christ and His sufferings? God cannot forget them, He has put all His tears into His bottle, and it is just on the ground of that that Jesus had consumed all the

Father's wrath. Our ground of hope lies, that Jesus, because of these His sufferings, must have His hire—His reward—saved souls. Yes, brethren, you and I cannot know all His sufferings, but oh, let us seek to learn more. Our great ground of hope is, God knows it all. And yet in the knowing of it all there is pardon for you and for me. And although we know not all these He endured, yet we know we are using a plea which we know somewhat of when we plead His sufferings. Yes, brethren, it is a blessed thing we can say, "Thou knowest that plea to be sufficient, Jesus' merits, Jesus' sufferings, have respect unto thy covenant." It is a blessed argument with which to fill our mouths, and one that will never fail to be heard and answered and the prevalence of which is unailing. Reproach Jesus now shall have none, for that reproach shall be turned into glory and blessing even from among those very sinners of mankind ; those very enemies who before railed on and gnashed their teeth against Him, shall now bless Him for ever and be of His crown—men who had previously loaded Him with shame and dishonour. God knew all that shame, but He shall have glory and honour even from those very souls, He having many from among them as jewels in His mediatorial crown. He shall have praise and glory from them. Oh, brethren, it is a tender, a melting word, when we hear Jesus cry, "Reproach hath broken my heart." But oh, it is an exciting, a gladsome sound, "Thou hast known my reproach." For then we have the token, that He that was the lowest shall be the

highest; He shall have many ransomed souls from among men as His joy and crown of rejoicing, He shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied.

(7.)

NOTES of Sermon preached by REV. MR. MILLER, *Free St. Matthew's, Communion Sabbath, October 1847.*

“I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse: I have gathered my myrrh with my spice; I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey; I have drunk my wine with my milk: eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved.”—Song of Solomon, v. 1.

THE Church is here described first as a garden. “A garden enclosed is my sister, my spouse”—selected and chosen out of the surrounding wilderness, and enclosed by Jesus himself; watered every moment by His Spirit, guarded by His grace, and refreshed by His own warm beams as “the Sun of Righteousness.” A garden where plants should be reared, to be in due time transplanted to the paradise of God. . . . The Church must also be yielding fruit that Christ may “see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied,” and that the Father may be glorified (John xv.). This garden of the Lord is what the garden of Eden was at first—the place of peculiar communion—and there can be no true communion without being *spiritually* in the garden—*united* to Christ Jesus himself. In the garden of the Lord is the tree of life—the Lord Jesus. “God is in the midst of her.” To Adam in the

garden the tree of life was the seal of the covenant : so, in the new covenant, there is the Lord's Supper—the sealing ordinance—the earnest of the inheritance.

The Church is also here called by Christ “My sister.” In His human nature He was bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh ; but only to God's believing people does He reveal Himself as a brother—of the same birth ! born from on high by the regeneration of the Holy Ghost. “For this cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren,” for the Lord Jesus and His people are one family. “*My* Father and *your* Father, *my* God and *your* God.”

Moreover, Christ addressed the Church as “My spouse,” but first “My sister ;” for in order to this union must be holiness and a renewed nature : for Christ could not hold communion with the earthly—light and darkness cannot be united ! . . . “My spouse !” chosen by me—beloved by me with an everlasting love—purchased by me with my blood—wooed in tenderness, and, though denying me long, at last, by my Spirit, made willing to give herself wholly up, and cast herself on my bosom !

So, in the day of effectual calling, when the Lord draws with the cords of love and the bands of a man, souls are betrothed in a covenant well ordered and sure. Being thus united to Christ, they are espoused to Him, betrothed in eternal covenant ; but not on this side the grave is the union consummated, but in the new Jerusalem is the Church styled “The Lamb's wife.” Here believers have often to mourn the Lord's

absence, yet ever and anon are comforted by His gracious presence and visits ; but hereafter there shall be no mourning, for Jesus comes to take her home to Himself, and so shall she "ever be with the Lord." . . . "I am come into my garden"—in other words, "I am come to give *sensible experience* of my presence," for I never leave it. "God in the midst of her doth dwell"—He is the glory in the midst of the garden ; but she is not always sensible of His presence, and often exclaims, "Whither has my beloved gone?"—or asks of the watchmen, "Saw ye Him whom my soul loveth?"—or to Himself, "Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest." But at other times she is made to have experience of His presence : such a time is that spoken of in the text—I am come to give refreshing and reviving to my people—it may be with the north wind as well as with the south, to revive by affliction, or by the gentle dew of the Spirit—it may be to dig about the roots, to prune, to weed out the dearest ties to earth : yet these are reviving visits ; *gracious* ordeals.

Christ also comes into His garden to gather fruits—to accept of His people and their service. But let us look at some visits He formerly made to His garden.

First. He made a pleasant one when He came to Eden, and Adam was sinless, and God rejoiced in him. Then the Lord ate His pleasant fruits, and talked with Adam, and refreshed His soul. . . . Another visit was made to the barren fig-tree. The Lord came seeking fruit and found none. "Where

art thou, Adam?" And Adam hid among the trees of the garden! Already had *he* eaten fruit unto death: a wild boar of the wood had wasted the garden! Yet the Lord lingered and left behind Him the blessed promise that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head.

Another visit the Lord made "in likeness of sinful flesh" to that garden, now wasted and desolate. "He came to His own, and His own received Him not"—there was no room for Him in the inn, and *He was laid in a manger!* The Father had said, "I will send my Son;" but the husbandmen said, "This is the heir, let us kill Him." Such was the bitter fruit He gathered! But He still says, "I will die, and purchase it that it may be doubly mine!" . . .

Yet, dear believer, for *thy* sake He visited another garden. On the Mount of Olives there was a garden, and Jesus oftentimes resorted thither to pray. Ay! and it was in *this* garden, in Gethsemane, the work for *thee* was begun. Judas knew the place, and Jesus knew that now His hour was come and the power of darkness. Well might He say, "I am come to drink wine of bitterness!" "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me—yet not my will but thine be done." *And He drained it dry!* Only by drinking it to the dregs, could He see the travail of His soul, and drink new wine out of His garden in His Father's kingdom! . . . Now, in the place where Jesus was crucified was a garden, and Christ had to visit this garden too. Here, on Calvary, He was nailed to the

cross, and offered drink mingled with myrrh. Spices and myrrh were in that tomb, but the work was finished. Jesus has now ascended, and the garden purchased by His blood, and a way prepared for His visiting and feasting it by His Spirit, even with His own body and blood.

“Eat, O friends, drink; yea drink abundantly, O beloved.”

Look at *Christ* regaled and feasted in the garden. “I have gathered my myrrh with my spice.” The gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit make Christ’s heart rejoice, yet is the myrrh in itself bitter, so is that grace of the Spirit which is godly sorrow and genuine repentance. Yet it is a blessed perfume in the nostrils of the Lord; not because they are given by the believers, but because they are originally Christ’s own. “A bundle of myrrh is my beloved.” The Lord alone can scatter the graces of the Spirit in His garden. Further, the Lord says “I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey.” “Thy lips, my spouse, are as honey.” The words of prayer, adoration, and gratitude from the lips of believers are sweet to the Lord as honey and the honeycomb. His desire is, “Let me hear thy voice, let me hear thy longing, believing, loving desires.” “Behold he prays.” And there is joy in heaven among the angels over *one* repenting sinner! Take with you words—His own precious, comforting words—what else have we to offer to the Lord but *His own*? for nothing else is worthy.

“I have drunk my wine with my milk.” Once, on

the cross, Jesus said "I thirst," and they gave Him vinegar, not wine. Again He says "I thirst," but it is longing desires for the love of His people. Oh! see to it this day that ye offer Him not vinegar instead of wine—the *formality* of an outward approach—for He will not drink it, but let there be milk with the wine, in token of genuine sincerity. This is the "wine that cheereth the heart of God and man." Dear believer, look at the fact that Christ, when He gets a feast, is sure to *give* one more abundantly. "I love them that love me." "Them that honour me I will honour." "Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." But perhaps doubting souls will say "We have nothing to offer Christ." Have ye no *desires*? Oh, brethren, he that useth to Christ's praise what He has given him, will the more get greater and greater talents. Yet you say, "If I never get till I give, I will never get anything." "My son, give me thy *heart*." Dear brethren, the very *desire*, the very *will* to receive Christ is a feast to Him, therefore, no soul can be blessed of Christ without rejoicing Christ's spirit—faith but as a grain of mustard seed will do it!

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Esther provided a banquet of wine for Ahasuerus, and was promised her request, even to the half of the kingdom. But at the table provided to-day you are invited to ask to the whole of the kingdom.

"Eat, such bread as my flesh—living bread. With

honey out of the rock will I satisfy thee, with myself, my word, my promises." "Drink abundantly—ah, such wine! my own blood! the benefits of my own sacrifice!" Yes, dear believer, drink of His love, the Lord Jesus invites you to receive *all* His love. Oh, how apt are we at this feast to say "It is enough." We never say of sin it is enough. Why of grace and love?

"Drink abundantly, beloved," there is more in Christ than ye have yet received. "Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life *freely*." The well is deep—it is unfathomable—a *living* well of *living* water. There is no measure to the love of Jesus; there is measure only to thy desire. "Open thy mouth, then, *wide*, that it may be filled," which the Lord grant to be our blessed experience this day.

(8.)

NOTES of *Sermon preached by* REV. MR. MILLER, *Free St. Matthew's, October, 1847.*

“Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with thy free spirit.”—Psalm li. 12.

OFTEN had David's experience been that of Mary, when she sang “My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.” This is his case, when in the 21st Psalm he exclaims “The king shall joy in thy strength, O Lord; and in thy salvation how greatly shall he rejoice! Thou hast given him his heart's desire, (his *renewed* heart) and hast not withholden the request of his lips.” But days, alas, were changed with him now; it was otherwise with him than when these words were penned. Yet, looking back on the times past gratefully, and into his own heart sorrowfully, when he thought of joys aforesaid possessed, he makes use of the peculiar language of the text, “Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation.”

The experience of David in this psalm is that of many of God's people. No believing soul that has ever known solid, real communion with God, but must also at times have known what it was to lack that joy and comfort, and to exclaim, like Job, “Oh that it were with me as in months past.”

Let us consider the subject under three heads :—

- 1st. How the joy of salvation is sometimes lost.
- 2nd. How it is recovered by God's restoring it.
- 3rd. How it is retained and upheld.

First head. This joy is lost, as David tells us, by sin ; not merely when the soul has sinned, but when the sense of sin is felt and borne in on the soul of the believer, as a grievous and overpowering burden. Many sin presumptuously and lose not their peace, but this must be a false peace, very different from the joy of the text. No joy is lost until the weight of guilt is appreciated by the sinner, until the Holy Spirit has brought it home to his heart. An evil sign it is when the soul sins, and sins, and sins, yet is not laid low in anguish and lamentation over lost peace ; an evil sign of its original peace if a day, an hour of known iniquity does not break it ; while it is a good sign when sin is felt, when on its power coming back joy flees away, and peace departs, until sorrow and godly repentance are vouchsafed, and the soul turned again to God, either by conscience, the Word, or the Spirit striving with it. Because of sin God is angry and joy is gone. Sin grieves the Spirit of God, and when God's Spirit is grieved, it is unbeseeming that *man's* spirit should rejoice. But in order to lose our joy it is not needful to sin presumptuously, as David did in the present case. A day's carelessness, a day's coldness of heart, a day's lukewarmness in the service of God, is sufficient to put an end to our joy ; with these things the Almighty is angry ; these grieve

His Spirit, and it is an evil sign of the soul that can be content under such coldness of heart and hardening of spirit. True joy of soul consists in communion with God, and how can this subsist between God and a prayerless soul waxing colder and colder? Just in proportion as the soul delights in the will of God, and rejoices in His testimonies, and lives near Him in prayer, so will be its joy in Him. And how can the cold, and hardened, and backslidden soul exercise itself thus? Though no flagrant outward sin weighs down the conscience—though it is all unseen by man—it takes away the believer's joy. How then can he exclaim, "Then will I go unto the altar of God, unto God, my exceeding joy."

Another way in which this joy is lost, even by God's people, is by looking at self and neglecting to look at Christ. This is common even among believers, with whom self-examination is a commanded duty, but not alone, or the result will be nothing but sorrow. The soul which is constantly digging in the filthy mire of self will find nothing there to rejoice in, but only what will cause loathing and shame. "In me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing." "O wretched man that I am." This was St. Paul's exercise; and had he continued only looking within would still have been his strain; but looking out of self he triumphantly exclaims, "Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." Part of David's lack of joy in this case was looking at self and not at Christ, for, at the time he

writes, his sin was pardoned. 2 Samuel 12th chapter records the dealing of Nathan, "And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the Lord; and Nathan said unto David, The Lord also hath put away thy sin, thou shalt not die." But dwelling on the remembrance of his own iniquity, he heard not the voice "Thy sins be forgiven thee." Therefore, while self-examination is a blessed exercise, it is but *half* the exercise, while like Job the guilty soul exclaims, "I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes," it must not rest short of "looking unto Jesus" *out* of self; if *we* have *guilt*, *He* has *pardon*; if *we* have *pollution*, *He* has *purity*, grace, strength, comfort.

Another way in which the believer loses his joy is in looking too much inward, but also looking *outward* without looking *upward*. Like the soldier in battle, "Mine enemies are many and they are strong," forgetting that "Greater is He that is for us, than all that are against us." "Why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?" Because thou lookest alone to the oppression of the enemy, and rememberest not "My grace is sufficient for thee." Looking to the Captain of our salvation, though the devil, the world, trials and temptations assail us, yet *in* Him, and leaning on His arm, we will find grace and strength in every need. Psalm xxxv., "Plead my cause, O Lord, with them that strive against me; fight against them that fight against me, and my soul shall be joyful in the Lord; it shall rejoice in His salvation."

And the believer's joy is often lost through ignor-

ance of the way the Lord is leading him ; ignorance of the rightness and graciousness of the providences by which He is dealing with him. This was the case with David in the 42nd Psalm, because difficulties encompassed him, and he saw no outlet ; his joy was lost, for he did not see and recognise the rightness of those dealings, and yet was he sensible of his own error, and three times in the course of this short psalm remonstrated with his soul on its own ignorance, " Why art thou cast down, O my soul, hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise Him," &c. Further, believing people may lose their joy because God for an express and gracious purpose takes it away. " Thou didst hide thy face and I was troubled." But for these withdrawals of spiritual joy the soul would be content and at ease, would think earth no more earth, and would forget that heaven alone is full of joy, therefore He hides His face to remind the soul of a sinful world, through which it must struggle without tarrying or abiding in it. The soul must lay its account with no unmingled uninterrupted joy of salvation while in a body of sin ; but only in a world of spirits shall there be no more sorrow or sighing. Therefore says Jesus of His own coming again, " And ye now therefore have sorrow ; but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you."

Second head. How the joys of salvation are recovered, by God's restoring them.

This is by God's bringing him who has lost his

peace through new convictions of sin—joy having been lost through sin, carelessness, want of realizing that earth is no abiding place, in a word, by unbelief; it must if recovered be by breaking unbelief, quickening and increasing faith, and bringing the soul through “godly sorrow which worketh repentance,” “through fire and through water to a wealthy place.” There can be no peace of conscience at first without conversion, nor can there be restoration of that peace without sorrow and penitence. This was David’s case here. Jeremiah xxxi. 9, “They shall come with weeping.” Isaiah lvii. 17-18, “For the iniquity of his covetousness was I wroth, and smote him; I hid me and was wroth, and he went on frowardly in the way of his heart. I have seen his ways and will heal him; I will lead him also, and restore comforts unto him,” &c.

Gracious ordeal! sanctifying exercises! by which the soul through repentance is brought once more to Christ, and again exultingly exclaims, as in Psalm xiii. 5, “I have trusted in thy mercy; my heart shall *rejoice* in thy salvation. David took the right way of seeking the restoration of his joy, and he obtained it. And what was the right way? To seek the *salvation* first, knowing that the joy would follow. Many souls in their anxious longings for peace seek it first, forgetting that salvation comes, and then peace in its train: David sought the restoration of his joy by seeking that his heart might again be opened to the gospel. Verse 8th, Make me to *hear*—then I am sure that

the bones thou hast broken will rejoice; my sins have caused this lack of joy. First then, Lord, take away my sins, give me forgiveness and reconciliation, and joy will follow; and then I want purity of heart, knowing that blessed and glad only are the pure in heart—holiness being the true origin of joy, therefore I pray, Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me—then recognising that sad lack of communion with God I pray, Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me—then, when these petitions are granted, may I look for the joy being restored.

God restores the joy when the soul is exercised to prayer, to believing, confessing, mourning over sin, and longing after newness and purity of heart.

Third head. How the joy of salvation is retained. David prays for its restoration; he also adds "Uphold me." Observe, he says not "Uphold *it*," but "Uphold *me*." God alone can do it—the Spirit alone. "It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." The Holy Spirit of God must uphold our spirituality, or it withers and decays; faith becomes unbelief, and the soul, falling from God, sinks into the miry clay; the Spirit of God alone can keep us firm on the rock, and put the new song into our mouths. Psalm cxix. 116:—"Uphold me according to thy word, that I may live; hold thou me up and I shall be safe." Thus we see that holy joy is a fruit of the Spirit first, and must be kept alive by the same Divine agency. Hence is it "joy in the Holy Ghost," and hence the peculiar

office of the Spirit as the Comforter. Jude ends his epistle, "Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy," etc., commending believers to God, who, by His Spirit, retains and preserves them. There is, then, no impossibility of retaining and preserving the joy of salvation to a believer's soul, for it is the free Spirit of God which creates and preserves it—a free Spirit promised to all who ask it!

Think, then, of the freeness and fulness of the invitation—"Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, rejoice." Sin only hinders that we do not always rejoice; because we are not living and walking in the Spirit.

A word, in conclusion, to two classes. First, to unbelievers, who know and care nothing for this salvation and its joy. What shall we say to them? If ye despise this salvation, what other do ye seek? "How shall ye escape if ye neglect so great salvation?" Do ye think it brings nothing but melancholy in its train? Know ye not that the joys of earth and sin work heaviness of heart, and that one who tested them in His own experience has left the imperishable record that they are but "vanity and vexation of spirit?" O seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all things shall be added thereto. But will ye choose the pleasures of sin for a season, and suffer the pains of hell for eternity? Will ye not rather sacrifice the so-called joys of sense for the "joy unspeakable

and full of glory," in the world to come? No sinner can partake of these joys; the righteous alone are entreated to be glad, but, thanks be to God, to *every* sinner salvation in Christ is held out.

One word, in conclusion, to those who are in anxiety and concern, saying, "We have been seeking, and we cannot attain unto this joy—we pray for it, night and day, but we do not find it!" Look at the great obstacle—*unbelief*. Let us set our desires on the salvation, *wholly*; the joy will come in God's own time. Jesus, in His last prayer, says, "These things speak I in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves." Do you want Christ's joy, doubting soul? Just go back to the 8th verse—"Make me to hear; make me to hear all His gospel." The joy may not come all at once; sorrow may endure for a night, but joy will come in the morning. "Light is *sown* for the righteous." Fear not, the seed—God's own seed—is sown, and even though the tender blade does not appear, He *will* care for His own. Seek more grace; in due time the full corn in the ear will be visible. Often God's dear children cry, "I refused to be comforted." What sin! what folly for a renewed soul to refuse to rejoice! It is classed in God's word with the hardened sinner refusing to sorrow. Matt. xii.—"We have piped and ye have not danced, we have mourned and ye have not lamented."

Remember, believing soul, "He that goeth forth weeping, bearing precious seed, shall come again with joy, bringing his sheaves with him."



III.

PASTORAL LETTERS.



(1.)

*Pastoral Letter to the Congregation of Free St.
Matthew's Church.*

BRIDGE OF ALLAN, 6th April, 1848.

MY BELOVED FLOCK,—The hand of the Lord is upon me ; and I have no difficulty in discovering *many* reasons why He should thus deal with me. I have much needed this rod, both as a man and as a minister ; and, while doubtless it has come in *judgment*, I cannot but specially recognise in it a manifest token of the faithfulness of the Almighty's *love*. One view of this dispensation has forced itself so often upon me, that I feel constrained to tell you of it. It is this:—In looking back upon the tenor of my ministry among you for these last three years and a half, I am struck with the frequency with which I have been led to speak of affliction as one of God's ordinances for awakening the impenitent, and for quickening them that believe. I was led to this by the *peculiarly large* amount of sickness, tribulation, and death among you during the comparatively short time that I have been your pastor. And yet, during all that time affliction had not once come nigh to

myself! Often, therefore, during these years have I felt—both in the pulpit and by the sick-bed—that I was called to speak of that soul-profiting and God-glorifying use of trouble which I myself scarcely, if at all, realised in my own case. Ministers alone can fully appreciate this state of things. Often have I felt burdened by it, and my mouth almost shut when addressing the sick and languishing, from a feeling of inability to use the apostle's language :—" I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which is preached of me is not after man ; for I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, *but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.*" (Galatians i. 11, 12.) Yes, dear brethren, it has been in speaking of affliction to the afflicted that I have most felt at a loss for *experimental* truth, *fed on by myself*, to deliver unto you. And now the Lord, in infinite loving-kindness, has handed the cup of sickness to me in my turn, just in order that, while drinking it, I may seek to realise in my own case the sweetness of that "wine of consolation" which I have tried to be an instrument of drawing for others out of the gospel wine-fat. I do hope and pray that this dispensation may be thus profitable alike to me and to you—that, if strengthened again to come among you with my Master's message, I may be able, in some measure, to adopt at least the spirit of Paul's grateful testimony to the power of experienced grace—"Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort ; who comforteth us in all our tribulation,

that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God." (2 Cor. i. 3, 4.) Nay, I would ardently covet a still larger blessing than even this—namely, that *in every thing* I might be henceforth enabled to testify for God and His truth in the language and with the spirit of the blessed Jesus Himself—"We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen." (John iii. 11.) I am precluded from dispensing the Supper of the Lord among you at this time. My heart was set on doing it; and I tremble to think that, perhaps, the reason why God has prevented me may be because I could not begin the service as Paul began it—"I received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you." (1 Cor. xi. 23.) And yet, as I write the sentence, I cry "God forbid!"—rather may it be because the dear brethren who officiate for me, having received more from Jesus, are able to bring more out of the good treasure of their heart for your refreshing. I do fondly trust that we are all vessels that hang upon Christ (Isaiah xxii. 24); but do you, dear brethren, give thanks unto His name, if, at this time, instead of pouring out to you from one of the "vessels of cups," He furnish forth to you a flood of the living water from "vessels of flagons." And, oh, above all, remember that Jesus is Himself the fountain-head—the open fountain—full, satisfying, free! And what are ministers—what are ordinances—what are sacraments—but empty wells, if you do not find in them, and seek from them, the rain from

Heaven that filleth the pools? My prayer for you therefore is, that, whether I or any other under-shepherd be the *instrument* of feeding you, the Great Shepherd of the sheep Himself may "make you to lie down in green pastures, and lead you beside the still waters;" and then assuredly you "shall not want."

I write this on the evening of the Fast-day. I trust you have had a time of heart-searching and soul-refreshing from the Lord. I have been endeavouring also to observe the day as one of special prayer for you. How else can I be instrumental of good to you in my present circumstances, but by commending you to God and the word of His grace? I hope, indeed I know, you have been remembering me before the throne; and I trust, also, that your prayers and mine have been ascending together before that throne on behalf of each other, and for a mouth and wisdom to those servants of the Lord who at this time come to break to you the word of eternal life. Doubt not that you will be much upon my spirit at all times, but more especially at this solemn season.

I have been very anxious about those who are to communicate for the first time upon this occasion. I had hoped to deal individually with the conscience of each, preparatory to their sitting down at the table of the Lord. I have been taught, however, and I trust also they have learned, that it is with God Himself, the great examiner of the guests, and searcher of hearts, that they have to do; and I do trust and hope

that God has been dealing personally with all their hearts, and the heart of every other communicant. Oh let me once for all urge the question on each of you—Have you been dealing personally with Him through the one Mediator, and are you dealing *honestly* with Him now in avouching the Lord to be your God and Saviour at His holy table?

I have much to write, but must forbear for the present. I hope to be among you again, if the Lord will, at no distant day. Yet we know not what an hour may bring forth. Meantime let us daily meet together at the throne of grace, for we must soon all meet at the throne of judgment: Oh why not also round the throne of glory?

Your affectionate Pastor,
SAMUEL MILLER.

(2.)

To the Congregation of Free St. Matthew's, Glasgow.

ROSEMOUNT, BY BLAIRGOWRIE, PERTHSHIRE,
23rd June, 1852.

MY DEAR FLOCK,—In the providence of God, I am still detained from the performance of my pastoral duties among you. I had thought that, long ere this, it would have been otherwise. But I am still called upon to wait the Lord's time with submissive patience, in the hope that I may be restored to my place, more fitted in every way for taking the spiritual oversight of you, by having been taught experimentally how

completely we all are in the Lord's hands and at His disposal. I have therefore once more to solicit your further forbearance, as a congregation, with my lack of service ; or rather let me say, I have to counsel you to fall in with the holy will of God in this matter, and seek to profit by it as the ordinance of a gracious Father towards you. I rejoice to believe that you have so regarded this dispensation in times past ; and that, so reviewing the continuance of it still, you shall be in the way of receiving the blessing with which He intends to replenish those who wait upon *Himself*, whatever be the *instrument* He uses in conveying such blessing to the soul.

But I am thankful to learn that the instrument who is, for a season, in great measure, to supply my place, is one who has been found to be generally acceptable to you ; and I take this opportunity of his commencing his labours in St. Matthew's to commend him to your affection and your prayers. Do not expect *too much* from any earthen vessel ; nay, do not expect *anything*, unless you seek with conscientious, fervent, and importunate diligence to hold up his hands before the throne of grace, that he may be made the minister of God for good to yourselves and to all the flock of which you are members. Right glad have I been to learn that you have esteemed very highly in love for his work's sake that servant of Christ who, during these past months, has gone out and in among you ; and now, when he is called to another sphere, and is about to be ordained to the responsible office of the

holy ministry, let me plead with you to remember him still, when you have access to the Hearer of prayer, that the Lord of the vineyard would make him a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, and a teacher of righteousness wise to win souls to Christ.

As for yourselves, I beseech you never to forget that a Paul may plant and an Apollos may water, but it is God Himself who alone giveth the increase. I do not think that you are a people having itching ears, or that you are prone to seek after, or be carried away by, the mere power of intellect or eloquence in the pulpit ; for, if such had been the case, you would not have joined yourselves to my ministry, which is so deficient in these characteristics. I would fain believe that your main desire is to sit under a ministry by which the simple and full gospel of our blessed Lord may be practically commended to you ; and sure I am, if you wait on divine ordinances, like new-born babes desiring the pure milk of the word that you may grow thereby, you are then in the likeliest attitude for being everlastingly profited by *every* message that the Lord shall be pleased to send you, whether it be by the withdrawal of your stated pastor from the midst of you, or by the living voice of whomsoever He is pleased to commission to deliver to you His mind and will. Only let your conversation be as becometh the gospel ; for, if you do not reduce to practice the words of everlasting life, in proportion to your privilege in hearing them, you cannot expect that a privilege misimproved will be continued to you with any

other result than with a corresponding increase of condemnation.

No doubt this summer season will, as in former years, somewhat thin the numbers of Sabbath School teachers and district visitors for a few months. I fondly hope, however, that the work of the Lord in which the congregation is engaged will not suffer loss on that account, but that those who remain at their post will be actuated with a two-fold zeal, and be doubly earnest for a blessing upon their labours of love. It pleases God to save by many or by few—a single word spoken in season, how good is it ; it is not by might nor by power, but by the Spirit of the Lord. And I do trust that those labourers who may be removed for a space from the sphere of their operations may be helpful to you that remain in giving God no rest until He arise, in His mighty grace, to bless the means which you and others are seeking to employ, for reclaiming the outcast and instructing the young in the paths of righteousness.

I purposely make this a short communication ; but I cannot conclude without, on the one hand, commending you all—more especially the afflicted and sorrowful—unto God and the word of His grace ; and, on the other hand, most earnestly requesting every one of you to remember me and mine in your daily prayers, as I have some confidence in believing that you have hitherto affectionately done.

Ever your loving Pastor,

SAMUEL MILLER.

(3.)

Answer to Presentation Address, 1st January, 1861.

23 NEWTON PLACE, 2nd January, 1861.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,—The very handsome tokens of your regard which I yesterday received, and the refreshing terms of the Christian address which accompanied them, have filled me with a deep sense of gratitude for your kindness, and with a humbling sense of my own unworthiness of it.

Believe me, I did not require any such presentation to assure me of your esteem and affection,—I always knew I had a large place in your hearts. During the sixteen years of my ministry among you, I have ever experienced from you, and the rest of my dear people, abundant proofs of your attachment to one who can truly say that he has been “with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling.” But this renewed expression of your love I have received with heartfelt satisfaction; “not because I desire a gift,” but because I take it as an encouragement from the Lord, through your hands, to exercise increased faithfulness and zeal in the work whereto I am called among you. I deceive myself greatly if I cannot say from the heart that “I seek not *yours* but *you*.” May I hopefully anticipate, that having received of “yours” I shall also receive very many of “you” (would God it were *all!*) as seals of my ministry in the day of the Lord?

I labour under a growing conviction of the reason I

have for being humbled on account of my many and great deficiencies as a pastor ; and I would be altogether overwhelmed in consideration of them were it not for the recollection—ever present to my own mind, and I trust also to yours—that it is “not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord.” If, therefore, any souls have spiritually profited under my ministration of the Gospel, it is solely because “God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty ;” for of all men I have reason to feel that “neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth ; but God that giveth the increase.”

Dear Friends,—You have ever been very indulgent to my lack of service among you, in my not being able to overtake all the duties which the pastorate involves ; you have been considerate of my *strength*, in not insisting on my full discharge of these ; and you have been equally considerate of my *feelings*, in not taking offence at the scanty measure of my performance of them. I owe you much gratitude on this account ; and I feel particularly thankful to Almighty God, who, through the means of your generous forbearance, has been graciously pleased to restore me to such health as now fits me for some measure of usefulness. I have read in your address with singular pleasure (though, indeed, I was not ignorant of it before) that you remember me and my work at the Throne of Grace. Let me beseech you to continue thus to hold up my hands and my heart, that, through grace thus

wrestled for, and thus obtained, our mutual hope may be accomplished ; that in each succeeding year during which we may be spared together, the great ends of the Gospel relation between us may be more and more realised in our joint "fellowship with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ."

I do fondly trust that your present kindness to myself is an indication of your desire to honour the *Master* through His unworthy *servant* ; for the one object of my inadequate labours among you is to draw you closely to *Him* and not to *myself*. For this let us labour and pray together. Oh how blessed if *my flock* should also be truly of the *flock of Christ* ! For "what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing ? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming ? For ye are our glory and joy."

Ever believe me to be,
Yours very affectionately in Christ Jesus,
SAMUEL MILLER.

(4.)

DALNAGAIRN, KIRKMICHAEL, 3rd Sept., 1868.

MY DEAR PEOPLE,—After combination for a time with the Free College congregation, you return to worship in your own church on Sabbath first ; and I had earnestly hoped to have been in the midst of you on that occasion to resume my pastoral duties in the

pulpit and otherwise. It has, however, been very strongly urged on me, by my medical advisers and other friends, that I should abstain for a month longer from undertaking these duties, in order that rest and the bracing influence of Highland air may have their full effect in following up the course of treatment which I have lately gone through in Germany. Although very anxious to be again at my post among you, I did not feel warranted to set at nought this advice, lest by so doing I might run the risk of losing the expected benefit to my health likely to accrue from my already protracted absence, by resuming work too prematurely. For I am sure you would deprecate my resuming labour at once, if that course were to endanger the invigoration and strength of body which I may have already attained ; while I know you will fully believe me when I say that I earnestly long for such a measure of health as to enable me to break the bread of life among you for some time longer, if the Lord will. Life and health are naturally desired by all men ; but I trust I do not deceive myself in professing that I desire them *for the Lord's service* in the ministry of the Gospel of the grace of God.

I trust therefore that you will bear with my absence for a month longer, after which I hope and pray that I may be enabled to return to my loved duties in St. Matthew's in the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel, and with strength to discharge them more effectively than for eighteen months past. I am the more hope-

ful of this, as I am, *in some respects*, considerably improved, and am improving in health, for some weeks past. No doubt there are *other respects* in regard to which I cannot speak much of decided progress ; but, as to these symptoms also, I am very hopeful that another month in the country will be blessed to bring relief. While I seek, whatever may be the issue, humbly and trustfully to acquiesce in the will of the Lord, will you give me the benefit of your earnest prayers, that, whatever may be providentially in store for me in the future, all these things may be the means of grace, both for you and me, that our souls may prosper and be in health ?

Meantime, I am thankful to hear, by a weekly communication from my valued assistant, as well as from other friends, that the congregation remembers me tenderly in my absence, and is not suffering from it.

I do trust that, while the under shepherd has been removed for a time, you have been seeking, and have found, the presence and blessing of the *great chief Shepherd Himself*. Looking to Him alone is the exercise to which I have ever sought to stir you up ; and I am very sure that this also has been and will be the great object of him who now occupies my place in dealing with you as an ambassador from God. Nor am I unmindful of how kindly other beloved brethren in Glasgow have from time to time supplied my lack of service, on this as on previous occasions. May the Lord give them all the reward of being honoured

means in His hands of ministering to you the unspeakable riches of His grace in Christ Jesus.

I hear regularly of the cases of affliction and sickness and bereavement that occur among you ; and I need not say that, while I would have wished to be personally present to commend all such cases to the great Healer and Comforter, I seek, as I am able, to remember them before the throne. The Brother born for adversity is ready to be very near to them all. Let Him only be put to the proof, and He will come to each of us whether in health or in sickness, in joy or in sorrow, to pour out a blessing unspeakable. The Lord open all our hearts to thirst for its outpouring, and to receive it when outpoured !

Now may the Lord bless you and keep you, and cause His face to shine upon you, giving you to enjoy the experience of all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.—AMEN.

Ever your affectionate Pastor,

SAMUEL MILLER.

The Congregation of Free St. Matthew's,
Glasgow.

(5.)

CANNES, FRANCE, 21st December, 1874.

MY DEAR FLOCK,—It is now eight months since I have been laid aside from exercising the pastoral

office amongst you. During the first part of that time I continued to entertain the hope that in a few weeks more I should be able to resume my duties as your minister ; but month after month passed away without this expectation being fulfilled, until it became obvious that I must lay my account with undertaking no active work during the winter season. I confess to feeling much disappointment in these circumstances, though recognising the hand of the Lord upon me in His gracious providential dealings. I trust I have been enabled humbly to submit to His will, and to say, " Good is the will of the Lord." If it seem good to Him to restore me to such a measure of health as that I shall again be permitted to break the bread of life among you, I think I shall more than ever estimate the privilege of being called to labour in our Master's vineyard according to my poor ability, and to seek that He may bless my weak endeavours to tell of the riches of His grace to immortal souls. But whatever may be in the future in regard to my ministry, I know that your spiritual wellbeing does not depend on *it*, but on His shedding down on you His Holy Spirit, through the dividing of the word of truth, and the ministration of the ordinances of His grace by whatever human instrumentality He may choose to employ ; and this stirs me up to be ever committing myself and you into His hands, who is Himself the great Shepherd of the sheep, and who is ready in answer to our prayers to accomplish the greatest ends even by the feeblest means, that " no

flesh should glory in His presence," for "it is not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts." I know that you all desire and hope for my speedy restoration to labour among you in the Lord, and that, along with those other means that are necessary thereto, you have followed and do follow me with your prayers. Let me thank you heartily for all your kindness and indulgence, and let me ask earnestly that your forbearance and especially your prayers may be continued to me still. I think I can truly say that I at least attempt to walk in the steps of Paul in his writing to the Ephesians, "We do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God." These lines will reach you about the New Year, when we ought all to be solemnly engaged in recalling the *past* and contemplating the *future*. As to the year which is now closing, while each of us has individual recollections of mercies received and duties neglected, which ought to quicken us to gratitude and humble us before God, there are especially two considerations on which I desire to address to you a few words. They are uppermost in *my own* mind, and perhaps they are so in *yours*. Let me seek to impress them on you and on myself. The

first of these is the faithfulness of God's dealings with us during the past year, in order to bring and to bind us to Himself. Some of us have been afflicted by His hand, and some have enjoyed exemption from the chastening rod, but in *both* cases the gracious end of God has been the same, namely to quicken us to live as the recipients of so many mercies, and to "sing of mercy and of judgment." Not a few of those around us have been called to their last account, while we are still spared. I have been prevented from visiting beds of death and bereaved families, where I would gladly have been found had Providence permitted. But surely the Man of Sorrows, who is now the glorified Brother, born for adversity, has not been an uninvited comforter and upholder in the midst of those dispensations which have been crying to us all, "Acquaint thyself now with God." Yes, acquaint yourselves with Him who both smites and heals. Acquaint yourselves especially with Him as the Saviour of sinners, for all His dealings are meant to drive or draw us to Christ Jesus; and see to it, I pray you, that you acquaint yourselves *now* with Him. Tomorrow may be too late! I trust the various modes in which the Lord has been seeking to impress and exercise our hearts have softened and not hardened us during the past year, but it is a very awful truth that either the one or the other of these effects has been produced: if not softened we have been hardened, or have sung ourselves into a deeper sleep than before! The other consideration to which I feel bound to call

your special attention at this time is this—that seeing God has been doing marvellous works of grace amongst us during the past year, making every reasonable deduction for those who may have been only temporarily impressed, or shown only deceptive signs of conversion, surely a goodly number of never-dying souls have been awakened up to seek the Lord, and to yield themselves to Him in sincerity and truth. Man's converts fail, but God's converts abide steadfast even amidst many falls and backslidings. Have you, dear brethren, received any divine upstirring, while others around you have been "flocking as doves to their windows"? If not, why not? Alas, still the Apostle's words hold true, "Ye have not, because ye ask not, or because ye ask amiss." Ask, seek, knock, and cease not so to ask, seek, and knock, and as God's arm is mighty, and His word is true, the blessing shall come down on *you* also, as the dew on the fleece of Gideon. Or, on the other hand, are you in case humbly to say, that the gale of quickening has not passed by you in vain? O, rest not on what may prove only transient frames and impulsive feelings. Still, as of old, the goodness of self-confident professors resembles the morning cloud and the early dew, which pass away. Be reminded that the truly quickened soul does not *rest* on having found, but presses on seeking more, and is tremblingly alive lest he may be deceiving others, himself, and God, who cannot be mocked. It is most certain that true joy in salvation is ever accompanied with increasing lowliness of

spirit, hatred of sin, broken-heartedness in self-aborrence, and constant pleading for grace and more grace to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour by holiness of life. Let the next year's life prove the anointing received during the last. Thus I pray that all your souls may prosper, and thus do you pray, "Save now, O Lord, I beseech thee ; O Lord, I beseech thee, send *now* prosperity." A petition from the heart of every converted man every day of his life.

Ever your affectionate Pastor,

SAMUEL MILLER.

P.S.—I have now been in this genial clime for six weeks, and I am thankful to say that my general health has materially improved, though my *head* still troubles me, and my voice has not returned.

S. M.

(6.)

To the Congregation of Free St. Matthew's, Glasgow.

4th Sept., 1875.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,—In a matter which so intimately concerns your spiritual and eternal interests, let me earnestly request you to make such arrangements as shall enable you all to be present at the meeting here on the 9th of September. As I am daily more impressed with the conviction that the well-being of my

flock imperatively requires that a colleague should forthwith be associated with me in the pastoral office, I trust that you will do all in your power to carry out to a successful issue the liberty to call an assistant minister granted by the last General Assembly. The first important step towards that very desirable end is a full attendance by you at the congregational meeting which has just been intimated, for one of the chief objects of that meeting is the appointment of a committee of your own number, and chosen by yourselves, to be associated with the office-bearers in looking out for suitable candidates for the proposed colleagueship, in order that the actual election may be conducted intelligently and harmoniously on some not distant day. While I know that you kindly sympathise with me in my own infirmities, and remember me at the throne of grace, let me urgently beseech you also to be much in prayer, that the Lord would over-rule and bless all the steps to be taken in regard to this matter, for providing you with a co-pastor according to His own heart.

Yours ever affectionately,

SAMUEL MILLER.

(7.)

GLASGOW, 9th Sept., 1875.

MY BELOVED FLOCK,—Unable to be present at your meeting to-night, I take this method of addressing to

you a few sentences to express my solicitude for your wise direction in the important business to which you are now called. I feel indeed very grateful for all the kindness you have shown me during my thirty-one years' ministry among you, although I have so inadequately discharged the functions of the pastoral office. During the seventeen months that have elapsed since I last occupied my own pulpit, I have much lamented that your generous forbearance with me should have been put to so severe a trial in the long-continued absence of a stated pastorate ; and I thank God that now you are in the prospect of having a protracted want supplied. For, while I have most earnestly longed for renewed ability to break once more the bread of life among you, and while my medical friends tell me that they see no reason why I may not (by God's blessing on the means) be restored to some measure of strength for duty, I still feel very deeply that, whatever amount of work I may be reinvigorated to undertake, you have need of a younger and a stronger minister, to bear the burden and heat of the day. At present, indeed, my late relapse into illness seems to postpone for a time the fulfilment of my fond expectation of resuming some portion of active labour, but I do not cease to hope that I may at no distant date enjoy again the much-coveted privilege of preaching the gospel of the grace of God. I desire, however, to leave this anticipation to the gracious disposal of the great Head of the Church, committing myself and you into His hands.

The esteemed friend who kindly takes my place among you this evening will explain to you the steps which, according to the law and practice of the Church, you are now called on to take, preparatory to associating with me a colleague in the ministry. I therefore need not say anything here on that subject, except to express my anxious hope that you will obtain grace to act together very harmoniously in all this matter. I trust you will be actuated by the unanimous desire not to insist on individual views or predilections, but to seek to promote the general welfare of a united congregation. You have all an equal right and an equal interest in the naming of the committee to be appointed to-night, and in the election of the co-pastor thereafter, and I trust you will all exercise true brotherly feeling towards each other in seeking to get an answer from on high to this one great question, "Lord, what wilt thou have us to do?" In that case I cannot doubt that the choice which you will be led to make will be owned and blessed by God for promoting the spiritual and eternal interests of your immortal souls. From all that I have experienced at your hands already, I infer that you will be anxious to secure a co-worker who will be personally acceptable to myself as well as to the congregation at large. But let me entreat you not to fetter the conscientious freedom of your own choice by considerations of how I may be affected thereby. I have no right—and most certainly I have no inclination—to interfere between you and your duty to God in this

matter. It is by Him you receive the privilege of a free election of one to minister to you in His name; it is to Him that you must answer for the discharge of this privilege; it is to Him you must look for all guidance in what you are about to do; and it is from Him that you must ask the man whom He shall choose as the under-shepherd to feed you, as sent by the great Shepherd of the sheep. When you receive such an one from the Lord, far be it from me to do anything else than to cordially hail him as a fellow-worker in the vineyard, and to strengthen his hands and encourage his heart, in all his endeavours to do the Master's will and proclaim the Master's message. I shall indeed give thanks and rejoice to be associated with such a brother. May he and I and you be blessed of God together!

And now I commend you to God and the word of His grace—praying that what you do to-night and hereafter in the responsible position in which you are placed may be according to the mind of Him who holdeth the seven stars in His right hand and walketh in the midst of the golden candlesticks.

Ever your affectionate Pastor,

SAMUEL MILLER.

(8.)

CANNES, FRANCE, 20th December, 1875.

MY BELOVED FLOCK,—Each communication from home assures me of what I have never doubted, your

anxiety to learn how it fares with my health, and what prospect there is of my being able to resume my pastoral duties among you. I therefore begin this communication with mentioning, in a spirit, as I trust, of great thankfulness, that my general health has been very much improved since coming to this southern clime, and although my voice is still too feeble to admit of my exercising it in addressing a public audience, I think myself warranted in hoping that it will strengthen in proportion as my bodily vigour increases; for of late it has returned at intervals in such force, that, for a day at a time, I might have been able to preach somewhat audibly, though it again relapsed into its previous huskiness. May God grant that, if it should please Him to restore my voice, I may have my heart so quickened and filled with zeal for Him that out of the abundance of the heart my mouth may speak forth to you the glorious gospel of His grace. Meantime, however, I can only address you through the medium of a letter, such as this, to be read from the pulpit at the close of this year or the beginning of the next; and I seek to take advantage of that solemn season, as I endeavoured to do twelve months ago, to impress upon you that we are all rapidly nearing the eternal world, and that our portion in that near eternity depends on how we use the time and privileges of our pilgrimage journey here, in preparation for the unseen state beyond this passing show. No doubt I shall just repeat what I have often urged before on a like occasion, indeed I cannot do other-

wise, for truth is always the same, and the example of Paul is ever before me when he says, "To write the same thing to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe." It is, alas, one of the alarming characteristics of the present generation, that the world in general, gospel hearers not excepted, are gadding about to change their way, and anxious to tell or to hear some new thing. But there are no novelties, at least none that are *true*, which can be announced as to the relation of sinners and the Saviour; and the two-sided fact on which I must ever insist and call on you to lay to heart, is, that if we are out of Christ we are condemned and lost; but if we are *in Him* we are pardoned, accepted, and saved. The great question therefore for us all is this: Where am I? Am I in Christ, or am I not? And surely this questioning of ourselves, while it should be our *daily* exercise, ought especially to occupy us at this peculiar season, when we remember that another year's life has to be accounted for by us before God. Now, "if any man be in Christ he is a new creature," if we are realizing that we are among the number of those of whom it is gloriously true "There is therefore no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus," it must be verified by our "walking no more after the flesh but after the Spirit." Therefore let me affectionately implore each of you, honestly, and as in the sight of God, to enquire what evidence have I given, or am I giving, that I am a "new creature"? Am I striving more earnestly than I did a year ago to "walk after the

Spirit," being more dead to the world, and taking more delight in the law of the Lord as my chosen rule? Nor are such vastly important questions to be profitably dealt with in a cursory way, or without great searchings of heart. Remember God's call by the pen of David, "Commune with your own heart upon your bed (or when alone with God and shut out from the world) and be still." Not that I expect that any of you, in the retrospect of your past years, or in the introspection of your own spirits at the present hour, will be able to pronounce a favourable verdict upon yourselves, for such self-contentment would assuredly imply self-sufficiency and self-deception, from which fatal delusion the Lord deliver one and all of us! But I do trust that not a few of you may be able to testify that you are getting deeper views of the evil of sin, and of the preciousness of Christ Jesus as the only Saviour from it, which are the two things which, as I hinted above, lie at the root of all true discipleship, and are the essential producers of spiritual life in the souls of men. Many, however, among you may only find it in their hearts to bemoan faithlessness and deadness of spirit; saying before God, and, perhaps, confessing it frankly before men also, "My leanness, my leanness!" and if so, while I must regard that exercise as in the main a wholesome one, I would earnestly entreat such as are under it, not to be occupied with looking at SELF ONLY, but to feel constrained to *look out to Jesus* in all His fulness of grace and truth, that "of His fulness they may all receive,

and grace for grace." I am assured that the Holy Spirit never reveals to us our *great need* without also graciously revealing to us the *open treasure-house* whence that need is fully and freely supplied ; for Jesus Himself has said that His Spirit "reproves" not merely "of sin," but "of righteousness and judgment" too. Is not that enough to beget thanks and joy ? Others, I fear, may be little disposed to entertain, even at this solemn season, any such serious questions at all. Is it because you feel sure you would be made unhappy by doing so, or because you think you have no need to attend to such things just yet ; or because you have reason to consider yourselves as good as others around you ? Believe me, such thoughts as these are temptations of the devil, trying thus to compass the ruin of your souls. Let me beseech you not to neglect for another day to attend to the things that concern your eternal interest, lest you may never have another opportunity. I pray God to make you unhappy in your carelessness, so unhappy as to drive you to Him in whom peace is certainly to be found ; for what will it profit you if you are as others around you, if you and they are still separate from Christ ? Oh delay not an hour in fleeing to Him, for every hour you postpone that decisive step you will be hardening your hearts more and more, and falling into a deeper and deeper slumber, from which you may not awake till the archangel's trumpet summon you to the judgment seat of Christ. And there are some of you who have to look back on the closing year as a time of sore

trial and bereavement. I also am among that number. But I trust not one of us has been permitted to think hard thoughts of God, or write bitter things against Him, the dealings of whose paternal providence have caused the tears of sorrow to flow. It is not forbidden to grieve, but it is both needless and sinful to murmur or repine under God's afflicting hand. Oh, if such trials made us more humble, more watchful, more prayerful, more unreserved in casting ourselves with all our cares and sorrows on the Lord, should we not realize the fulfilment of His promise, "I will keep thee, I will uphold thee with the right arm of my righteousness," so that we should have good reason to confess to His praise, "I know that in faithfulness thou didst it," and hence "it is good for me to have been afflicted." "When I sit in darkness the Lord shall be a light about me." Seeking to be rightly exercised under the chastening which is not joyous but grievous to the flesh, the joy of the Lord, where-with is added no sorrow, will keep our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. God grant it.

A word to the children. We do not forget you, and we hear also that you do not forget us. We cordially thank you for this, and we cease not to plead that you may be "the little ones" of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; growing up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and living on earth, not as those who seek only amusement and pleasure, but as those who are determined to be heirs of the kingdom of God.

Let me say also to the officebearers in the congregation how confidently I look to them in acting as true overseers of the flock, especially among the sick and sorrowful, during my enforced absence from duty. I trust, dear brethren, that you do not find your duties to be irksome, but that you seek grace and get it to discharge your several functions in the church with devoted hearts on your own part, and with profit on the part of the people. Let me say the same thing to the Sabbath school teachers, visitors, &c., and all who are doing any work in the vineyard. Remember to do whatsoever you undertake *for the Lord*, who will not suffer even the giving of a cup of cold water to go unrewarded. How will it encourage you to think that in all your work the great Master is ready to say to you, "Ye did it unto me." I learn that as yet nothing definite has been effected as to calling a colleague pastor. I am not surprised at this; for in such a matter it is a sound maxim to do nothing rashly. I was thankful to hear of your special meetings of the congregation for prayer to be guided aright in all the steps you take on this subject. I also cease not to plead with the great Head of the Church to manifest His grace in giving me an associate and you a pastor chosen and fitted by Himself for the work of the Lord. Let us continue so to plead, in the confidence that he will hear and give us the desire of our heart. And then I trust that my colleague and I, if permitted to labour among you together, will see the pleasure of the Lord prospering in His hand, and through our

instrumentality—while we say to you, as Paul did of old, “And now we live if ye stand fast in the Lord.”

Ever, my beloved Flock,
Your affectionate Pastor,

S. MILLER.

To the Congregation of Free St. Matthew's,
Glasgow.

(9.)

Letter to Young Communicants.

CANNES, 14th Jan., 1875.

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIENDS,—I have been very anxious about you in the prospect of your sitting down to the Lord's Table for the first time, that He Himself would bring you into His banqueting-house, clothing you with the wedding garment, and feeding your souls with all the rich provision of His own fulness of grace. In my enforced absence and inability to deal with you myself in preparation for the ordinance of the Supper, I have sought to commit you to the guidance of the great Shepherd Himself, and besought Him to own and bless the teaching and dealing of those who are kindly supplying my place. For remember it is with Him you have to do in taking this solemn step, and it is from Him you must get the true warrant and welcome in taking it. I know something about the majority of you, and feel deeply interested in you all, yea and will continue to com-

mend you to God and the word of His grace. But, besides this, I gladly avail myself of the opportunity to say a few words to you—very shortly—in the prospect you have before you, which I pray the Lord to use for good to your souls, in showing forth the Lord's death till He come. I confine myself to a few words on three considerations only out of the many so suitable to you at such a time as this.

1st. What are you about to do in partaking of the Supper? You are about to declare publicly, and in the most solemn way, that you are Christ's people—that you have taken Him as your Saviour into your most inmost hearts—that you have given yourselves to Him to be His, separated from the world now and henceforth. It is an awfully condemning thing to profess all this if it be not the real truth, and therefore let me beseech you to examine yourselves faithfully as to your real interest in Christ, and see to it that you truly and humbly dedicate yourselves wholly to Him. But if you have heartily so surrendered yourselves to the Lord, you will rejoice in the opportunity of publicly and sacramentally declaring it—not ashamed of owning Him as your Lord, the choice and the portion of your souls. While thus you confess Christ before men, I am sure that you will be ever confessing yourselves sinners before God, and that you will be much exercised in prayer that He would accept you, great sinners though you be, for Jesus died and rose again for this blessed object; and surely commemorating His death should impress this

glorious truth on your liveliest and most grateful remembrance.

2nd. What is the preparation for acceptably partaking of the Supper? It is to have ourselves clothed with the wedding garment; and that is realised only by our putting on Christ, as Paul expresses it, or, in simpler language still, it is by receiving and resting on Christ Jesus, or exercising faith on Him, and accepting Him as our Righteousness and Strength and Life and Lord. Washing ourselves into a fancied clean condition, or covering ourselves with fancied good works, which are only filthy rags, will not make us acceptable guests at the table; nor dare we rest on the supposed goodness of our wishes and desires and intentions and promises, for all that is looking away from Christ to ourselves, while in us there is no worthiness of anything but of wrath and rejection by God. Look to and rest on Christ only in order that on the ground of His worthiness, trusted in by you, you may be owned and dealt with as God's dear children. If thus, by giving your hearts to the Lord, you are really His friends, He will say to you, "Eat, oh friends, drink, yea drink abundantly, O beloved." Thus, our great question should be, Do I love Him? But we must not build on our love to Him, but on His love to us.

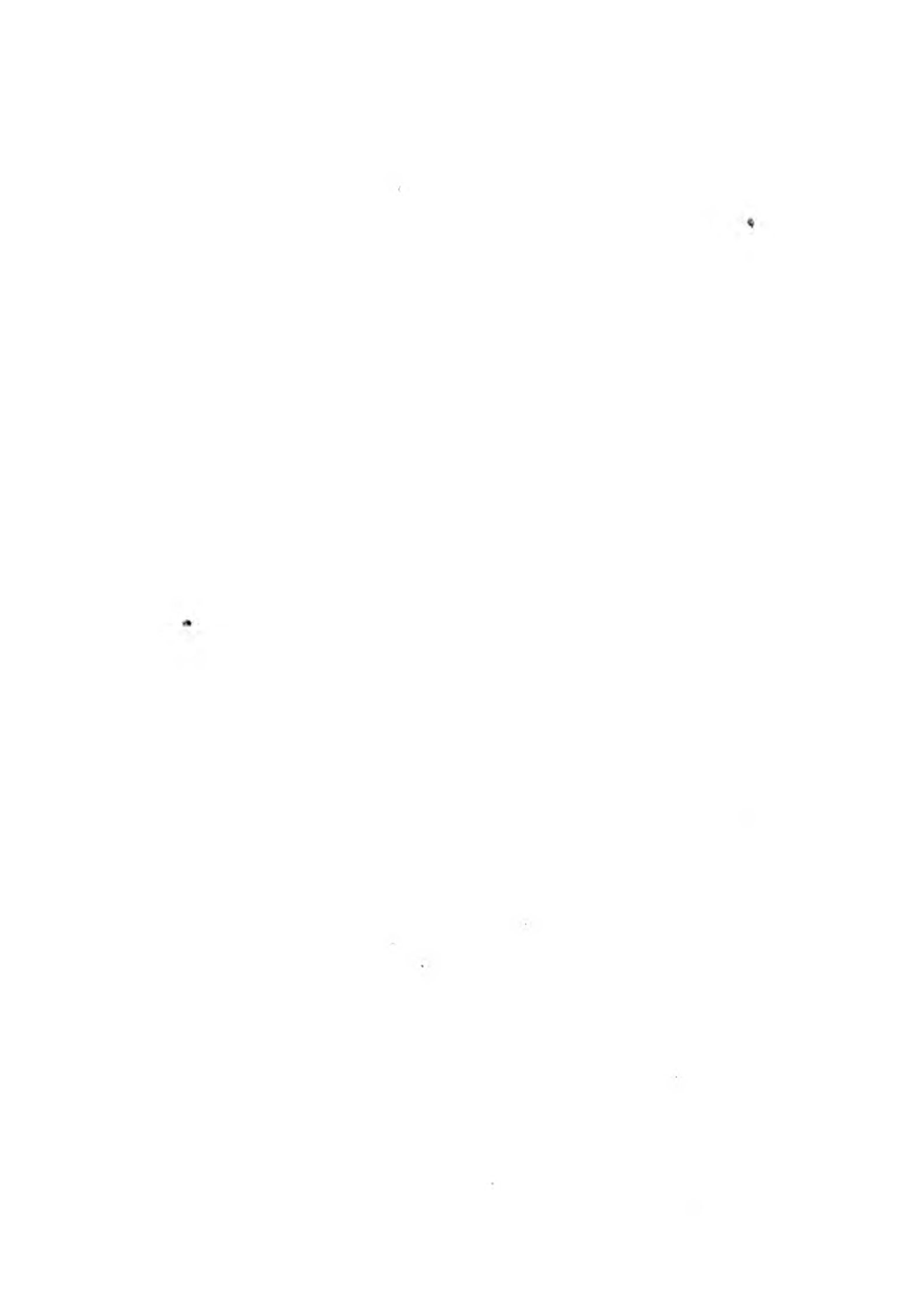
3rd. What good do you expect and desire by partaking of the Supper? I trust it is that you may be now thoroughly bound to Jesus in that precious covenant of grace of which the Supper is a seal for that end. For that end He instituted the ordinance,

to seal to His people all the covenant blessings bestowed by Him, and to minister to His people the grace that is needed for the fulfilling the covenant engagements promised by them. Remember always that He gives grace for the very purpose of our being enabled to render duty in a holy devotedness of life to Him. You may make good resolutions and solemn promises at the table, but the good that you there need is grace to carry out these resolutions and promises in all your future pilgrimage. Are your hearts set on these? Do you desire and long to be holy, and is it the one determination to strive after heart holiness, without which there can be no happiness here or hereafter? If so, the table of communion will be profitably encompassed by you. If not, your doing so will only be a mockery and a sorrow.

May the Lord guide you aright, prays

Your affectionate pastor,

S. MILLER.



IV.

OUTLINES OF SERMONS.

OUTLINES OF SERMONS.

JOHN XX. 29.

“Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast,” &c.

V. 28.—A *simple yet full* expression of *faith*. It says “*my*”—or *appropriates*. “LORD:”—to *save* and to *rule*; “GOD:” to be *trusted* and *worshipped*. § Then it illustrates. Rom. i. 4., and that *slowest* to believe become *decided* in faith. § Then TEXT—owns *that* faith of *his*: and also that of *others*.

I. Take *first clause* ALONE: Christ *owns Thomas' faith*.

1. Yet surely Thomas a real believer *before this*.

α For Jo. vi. 69—and *he* not excepted, v. 70. He was devoted to Christ, Jo. xi. 16. But faith staggered; by *hopes* gone—as Luke xxiv. 21:— And strange news v. 11 THERE. But now *by* SEEING—the *news true*—the *hopes* revived Acts i. 6. So HE too—as Luke xxii. 32.

β Nor was he *singular*:—the *rest* as he Mark xvi. 14. Xt. had to shew THEM also “*His hands and feet*,” &c. Luke xxiv. 38-43. So Xt. gave to Thomas *same as to them* v. 27 here.—Tho' he carried not out his resolution of v. 25:—Xt. *owned* his faith *the more*.

2. Great lesson here as to what *begets*—and *revives faith*.

α Not *sight*—but knowledge of XT. CRUCIFIED.—
Jews tho't this wd. *prevent* faith or *destroy* it. It
did stumble :—only *for a while*. O THIS shews the
WINNING grace :—hence Paul, 1 Cor. ii. 2.

β And XT. RISEN. Jews saw THIS wd. be :—so
to HINDER it Matt. xxvii. 63, 64—and then to HIDE
it Matt. xxviii. 13, 14. So *actually* to “*see*” was
needful THEN. There after “*witnesses*” Acts x.
40, 41. The FACT so settled. Hence argt. of
1 Cor. xv. 14, 17.

§ The DOUBLE *faith-producing* doctrine Acts xxv. 19.

II. Take *both clauses* TOGETHER :—*rebuke of Thomas' unbelief*.

1. While Xt. *simply* owns *his* faith—adds BLESSED *that of others*.

α Not that *his* was NOT “*blessed*”—even *feeble* faith
is so Matt. xvi. 17.—tho' it THEN *failed*—also *at the sea*.
But he had to *rebuke it* to make it FULLY
blessed. For souls so *humbled*—brought to be as
children. So Xt. cherished the *true* and rebuked
the *false*—in *one breath*.

β Yes—even *little* faith is precious Matt. xvii. 20.
But *realised* “*blessedness*” proportionate to its real
exercise. Now that *here* was not *childlike* at first—
demanded great proof and *carnal* one. Xt. *gives it* :
—but IN SO DOING—rebuked it—telling *of FAITH of others*.

2. No doubt Thomas *felt*—and *profited* by this: and
DOUBLY.

α FIRST :—Xt.'s grace in GIVING what others needed not. V. 27 surely *shamed him* : specially “*be NOT FAITHLESS, &c.*” Still more—the grace of Xt. *at once owning* v. 29.—after v. 28. So it ever is.—Xt. in *charging* unbelief—*removing* it—*owning* faith—HUMBLES.

β SECOND :—Xt. adding texts second clause shamed. Thos. wd. feel—“What am *I* to insist on what O.T. saints get not :—I who had so much more than they.”—Doubtless then his confession “I DO believe :—but also *I ABHOR MYSELF.*”

III. Take *second clause* ALONE :—very precious to US—NOW.

1. WE can't SEE Xt. :—but not needful to “*blessed FAITH.*”

α Many still chargeable as Jo. iv. 48. Thousands DID get these—yet *believed not*. SEEING Xt. does *not* surely beget faith. It *comes* by Ro. x. 17. Its essence is Heb. xi. 1. Hence that word v. 31.

β So faith's *exercise* is 2 Cor. iv. 18 :—and its *walk* is 2 Cor. v. 7. So Thomas saw Xt. no more—yet held to faith. So the argt. in 2 Pet. i. 18, 19. And thus realise that grand word 1 Pet. i. 8.

2. I must note a gross misuse of texts latter clause.

α Papistry argues peculiar blessedness to faith in what *contrary* to *sight* and *sense*. So their LIES vindicated, as evoking great faith. But THE question is “What says *God's* WORD?” The Pope's, &c. !!

β Take God's *word* w^hout sight. That is surer than our *sight*—or *reasoning*. The case of “the *woman*”

believing the *word* w^hout *sight*: Luke xxiv. 5, 8.
But the *men* v. 11 then—till John xx. 8.

§ “*Believing*” is “*blessed*” in whatever way ’tis inwrought.

α Long *doubting*—and faith *failing* shd. lay us very low. But if REALLY faith is—God *cherishes* it. And God gives to it *pardon—acceptance—new life—grace* and *glory*. Eph. ii. 8. Wrestle to be as Rom. iv. 20.

β It LANDS in sight.—Till then it upholds Ro. viii. 24, 25. O to be as Moses Heb. xi. 27.—Remember Xt.’s word Jo. xvi. 16. Case of woman again. And tho’ we *not by eye*—yet Jo. xvii. 24.

PSALM VII. 6-8.

“Arise, O Lord, in thine anger, lift up thyself,” &c.

Psalms title. “CUSH” there is BLACKNESS (so name Ethiopia):—thought to be *Shimei*—from his character. But applies to *all* striving agt. *powers of darkness*. § Obs. connexion of verses.—Vs. 6, 7 PRAYER for what in v. 8 he TRUSTS *God will do*. So discuss the PRAYER in light of the TRUST.

I. A soul’s cry for deliverance from spiritual foes, v. 6.

1. “*The rage of mine enemies*:”—the *felt* and dreaded evil.

α. These “enemies” many:—v. 1. “And *strong*”—while we are *feeble*. As Absalom in David’s case they of our *house—yea heart*. They “*rage*”—and wd. destroy.—Drove not to *despond*—but to PRAY.

β. All under *one* head: v. 2:—"prince of *darkness*:"
—for HE a "*lion*" 1 Pet. v. 8. And the "*faith*"
—is in Him who Gen. iii. 15. Trust of v. 8.—
refers in fulness to Jo. xii. 31:—for "*people's*"
deliverance.

2. "*Thine ANGER*" is appealed to—to annul *foes'* "*RAGE*."

α. Sense of God angry wh. *sin* and *Satan's* work in
destroying souls. 'Tis *q. d.* "these *THY foes*—as
well as mine:"—as *so* 'tis declaration of being *on*
GOD'S *side*. If really so—*His ANGER saves*.

β. Seems *STRANGE!*—Yet appeal to His *anger* agt.
our *foes*—is really appealing to His *LOVE* to our
souls. He our *FRIEND* by being *FOE* of *OUR FOE*.
But see that *sin*, &c., *is* held as our foe.—Else
vain.

II. This soul cries for what God has "*commanded*:" v. 6.

1. God HAS "*commanded*" that *sin*, &c. be *destroyed*.

α. 'Tis "*righteous judgt.*" So in "*judging ME*" v. 8.—
it must be by taking *one* *RIGHTEOUSLY* out of Satan's
condn.—The "*MY right's*" is Xt.—wh. *we* "*com-*
manded" to accept. *INVEST* me wh. it and so
"*judge.*"

β. Yea more:—God *commanded Xt.* to break the
power of Satan. He did:—Heb. ii. 14. So the
cry "*for me that judgt.*" is—*APPLY* this *wrought*
judgt. to me. He will v. 8.—*IF I HIS*.

2. Hence note the words—"arise"—"lift up"—"awake."

α. "*Arise—lift up*"—means *put FORTH THY POWER*.
Nothing else will do. "*Thou hast COMMANDED*"

ME to overcome :—but *I can't*—but put THY *power* in me : and so *I shall do*.

β. “*Awake:*”—is stir up thy ZEAL. As if of one who had *slept* :—or one WAITING to be *entreated*. So Ps. xxxv. 22-24. God IS affected by such a cry as Ps. xlv. 23-26.—Is. li. 9-11.

III. An argument to enforce this plea—in v. 7.

1. *Q. d.*—This thy work will be for thy glory also.
 - a. Obs. *had* pled for it on ground of HIS *own* good. God *not* indifferent to *that*. But *now adds* many OTHERS' *good*—and thy glory in them too. As Ps. lxxiv. 23, 24. So THOU wilt *have* US.
 - β. So the *Gospel David* “*judged*” Satan by power of Spt. for *this* END :—*gathering souls* in to God's praise. And each member of Xt. in his degree does the same. So the prayer Song i. 4. O to have such an end in seeking grace Ps. lxxvii. 1, 2.
2. Behold here the *unselfishness* of a believer's prayer.
 - a. Let GOD be glorified in *having much people*. I as saved will promote that. I will be an *example* for others—as Ps. xl. 2, 3. I will be *worker* in gathering them. Ps. cxlii. 6, 7.
 - β. “*Compass Thee.*” So THEY *blessed*—being near God. And GOD *praised* by all “*about Him.*” THEY a “*host:*”—and HE “*Lord.*” Till “*about the throne.*”

IV. And again a return to pleading wh. trust vs. 7, 8.

1. “*Return thou on high:*”—MORE than repeating “*lift up.*”

- α. Foresight of *Gospel plan*:—Xt. *invoked*. The “*return*” implies *coming down*—as Is. lxiv. 1. ’Tis really a *prophecy* of Xt.’s work: as Eph. iv. 9, 10.—’Tis *now* not *prophecy*—but **FACT**.
- β. And “*for their sakes*.” Yes for sinners *came down*—and “*returned*” also Heb. ix. 24. There to *intercede*.—There to *rule*.—But there to **SUBDUE FIRST**.—**SUBMIT!**—Trust Acts v. 31.
2. The fact that Xt. *has* “*returned*” is very solemn one.
- α. He will “*arise*”—for *another* “*judgt.*” wh. is “*commanded*.” And **ALL** people shall “*compass Him about*.”—Who shall stand it? They only who are able truly to plead v. 8.
- β. O what if Xt. should then plead v. 6 as *agt. us!* Not yet.—He is praying—but it is us He conjures—to escape **GOD’S** “*anger*” and give up **OUR** “*rage*.” *Hearken* and *obey*. And *plead the text* for His sake.

ECCLESIASTES III. 8.

“..... A time of war, and a time of peace.

In text *isolated*—a *contrast*. We can’t realize it. The *descriptions* confessedly fail. We shudder—say “*awful*.” § Read text wh. v. 1: wh. applies to whole list of vs. 2-8. “A time for” *each* in **GOD’S** providence: v. 11;—and in **MAN’S** *duty*:—**BUT** v. 17. Thoughts suggested by the text.

- I. There is “a time for *war*:”—in the *twofold view* indicated.

1. In God's providence—"a time for" this terrible scourge.

a. One of God's three *rods* to chasten.—Tho' *legitimate*. To *victors*—and *vanquished*. Thus we shd. own v. 10. Or as 2 Chr. xvi. 9. We judge not *belligerents*. WE *deserve* Luke xiii. 1-4. Shd. FEEL Jer. iv. 19-22.

β. For God uses it to shew *evil of sin*: Jas. iv. 1. *One* terrific experience of God's wrath:—yet it is *small* compared wh. *His sword*.—Shews v. 18 in fullest sense.—To impress souls wh. Is. xxvii. 4.

2. "A time of war"—from which man shd. not shrink.

a. 'Tis not in *every case* sinful. But *it* is—when for *power*—or *territory*—or *revenge*—or *glory*. Never to *propagate* or *extirpate* faith. Yet most wars *are criminal*. How oft in *wantonness* alone.

β. But 'TIS *duty*—if in DEFENCE:—of *life*—*liberty*—*home*—*hearth*. E.g. God's word to David, &c., or Deborah's "*curse Meroz*." To shield *allies*—to restore *friends*. Yet ONLY when *other means fail*. *Last resort*. Rom. xii. 18.—Happy if Judges xi. 27.

II. There is also "a time for PEACE:"—in this double view.

1. A time of peace—*graciously given by GOD*.

a. When *His purposes* by *war fulfilled*. For Ps. lxxvi. 10: saying to *it* Job xxxviii. 11. *Then* we must ask Job xxxiv. 29. When these purposes fulfilled?—If RIGHTS. not learned? Jer. xlvi. 6, 7.

β. Note *when* and *how* He gives it TRULY. He often *stays* it—to draw hearts :—but wars WILL *be* while “*Prince of Peace*” not owned. But THEN Is. ii. 3, 4. O for it! Hence Ps. xlvi. 8, 9.

2. “*A time for peace:*”—to be *made* and *kept* by MEN.

α. KEEP it :—and rather suffer—till *real* cause.—But when *object gained* :—*self defence* effected — and *security* of safety—THEN. God incline to this! For ALL sakes. Folly of *gratuitous slaughter*.

β. Yea :—*Onlookers* and *neighbours* have duty in this. Seems to be *now* :—time for *kindly* intervention—to *stay horrors*. God uses “*neutrals*” for this :—and so Matt. v. 9.

III. The “*times*” of text—shd. be those of *peculiar exercise*.

1. The exercise befitting us in a “*time of war.*”

α. Deep “*searchings of heart*”—as to WHY. Yea—tho’ WE not engaged. In it God calls ALL to *be-think*—*lie low* :—specially to PRAY—staying of HIS hand—and arresting of MAN’S. Ps. lxviii. 30.

β. *Sympathy wh. sufferers. Wounded—starving.* Note v. 3. The *one* time has come : so the OTHER. But the *bereaved!* Who “*heals*” them? God only. Cry to Him.—If *more* doomed Ps. cii. 20.

2. The exercise befitting us in “*a time of peace.*”

α. WE enjoy it :—*gratitude*. In war how we *longed* for peace!—Being *glad*—were we *gratified?* *Are we now?*—And so *using peace*—as to prolong it in God’s favour? ’Tis by Ps. xlvi. 5-7.

β. Cultivate and spread true brotherly love.— All policy—commerce, &c., fail. Real love to man—is founded on LOVE to God. Insist.

IV. Surely text speaks of *spiritual* “war” and “peace.”

1. EVERY time shd. be both of *war* and *peace*—wh. true Xtians.

α. “WAR:”—agt. “Devil—world—flesh.” Not only cease to be *in league*. FIGHT.—THEY cease not: nor shd. *we*.

β. “PEACE:”—wh. GOD. We all HAVE *been* at war. Who have *ceased*? Now is *offered* peace. *Now* MAKE it.

2. Obs. the *conjunction*:—and the *separation* of these “times.”

α. *Conjunction*:—if at peace wh. GOD—must be at war wh. *sin self* &c.—So God on our *side*: and *victory*.

β. Yet in *one* view 1st *war*, 2d *peace*. As agt. foes war *conquers* peace. Fight NOW—peace AT LAST.

LUKE V. 16-17.

With Following Contents.

“And He withdrew Himself into the wilderness, &c.”

Christ's fame now great and attractive, verse 15. People flocked for *two* objects: verse 15. The FIRST was CHRIST's great object—the *second* mainly *in order* to first. Hence—having *great opportunity*. He. verse 16. 'Twas to seek the fulfilling of Is. lxi. 1, 2.

I. Lord Jesus withdrew Himself into the wilderness and prayed, verse 16.

1. Prayer *for* HEARERS Christ's exercise now :—*as* OFTEN *on earth.*

α. "Withdraw" seems at first *forsaking* opportunity. No, but for its *real improvement*. For how many HEARD Him—and not saved!—Also *partook* of *miracles* thus :—*e.g.* *Cana's wine* : "loaves : " "ten lepers." So Matt." xiv. 21-23, 7.

β. None else so grieved—As Is. : xlix. 4.—Hence went to plead that *attracted* and *unprepared*—should be CONVERTED. For though He was God—He also acted a *true man's* part as mediator. Used MEANS—and asked blessings.

γ. Did so in *all* His ministry.—See its close : so *pled* for FRIENDS, Jo. xvii. 9, 20 :—and for *enemies*, Luke xxiii. 34. OBS : Jo. xvii. AFTER teaching of Jo. xvi. 2. So pleading WITH and FOR men. AS PRIEST—*then* and *now* : Heb. vii. 25.

2. Notice His place of prayer :—retired to "*the wilderness.*"

α Similar to His injunction Matt. vi. 6 : for this His "closet." To be *alone* with God :—*undisturbed* by all else—to *wrestle*. There *wrestled* with Satan (and God). So in *Gethsemane*. So after TEMPLE teaching—went to "MOUNT." Would see His PUBLIC—not SECRET work.

β. As a *true man*—needed "*rest awhile.*" Yes HE MUST needed.—So "*weary*"—"sat on well :"—

“PRESSED”—“went into ship.” So *now*—being BURDENED—sought to wilderness.—But NOT IDLE : —REFRESHED—yet WORKING.

II. Christ's *hearers*—and the power present to heal them.

v. 17, 7.

1. Those attracted (v. 7-15), “Pharisees and doctors of law”—v. 17.

α. From Galilee—and Judea—and even Jerusalem. Besides “common people”—THOSE SPECIFIED. Doubtless these had their prejudices, Jo. vii. 52. Perhaps came to *confound*.—Perhaps to *enquire* : as Jo. i. 46 : iii. 1, 2.

β. Now Christ WOULD and DID gather *even these* as trophies. Like care of Acts vi. 7. Christ would now show power in *subduing* the most *prejudiced*. Not merely such as, Jo. vii. 46 :—but to disprove any of, v. 48, them.

γ Had Christ's praying of, v. 16, nothing to do with THIS? Surely it had :—for God had enjoined, Ps. ii. 8.

2. Hence the result was “*power of the Lord present to heal.*”

α. Obs. :—No BODILY disease of theirs noticed :—nor yet SUCH cures. Besides :—the word “to *heal*” not that used in v. 15 :—but one for *moral* healing, also, Matt. xiii. 15. Once more :—“teaching the work and “*healing*” the effect. So 'tis as, 1 Thess. i. 5.

β. Clearly then 'twas *healing of their souls*. To *them* also, Luke iv. 32. So we have proof of Christ's

power over hardest cases : for Pro. xxvi. 11. Yes :
—Even for those to whom He cried “woe”—
there’s hope.

- γ. “POWER PRESENT” is emphatic. Always *another*
“power” present to *prevent* and undo that of
grace :—Even as Matt. xvi. 23, or Luke xxii. 31-32.
And so the case *hopeless*—but for *this fact*, 1 Jo.
iii. 8.

III. This “healing” not instantaneous—as Christ cures.
Lu. v. 18-26.

1. For in that post-context *see their souls* RESISTING IT.

α. “Doctors sitting by”—JUDGED the “*teaching*.”
Now to judge hearing is right—if ’tis as Acts, xvii.
11. But NOT if ’tis by *our own ideas*. Now
Christ’s “*teaching*”—was as always, SALVATION BY
FAITH. “Doctors” taught REVERSE : OF SALVATION
by works. No wonder they *hesitated* NOW.

β. All THIS doctrine of *legalism* natural to ALL :—and
great obstacle to RECEPTION OF CHRIST. PHARISEE
AND PUBLICAN. The natural man set on “DO-DO.”
Hence Christ availed of the case, v. 18, 19 :—(ex-
pound *that* faith), and said, v. 20.—For THIS and
Christ’s teaching,” cf. v. 17.

2. The “doctors” obviously *objected* now the more :—v. 21.

α. G.D. “Not only is *forth* of *law*—but Christ
assumes *God’s prerogative*.” To meet this Christ’s
word proved by *work*, v. 22-25. This PROVED
CHRIST’S POWER : and also *efficacy of faith*. THEN
the result, v. 26.

β. Clearly—SOME of these great *soul-healing*.—O for the same “*power present*” with *Christ’s word*! Why not?—It will be in our *simple hearing*, as Ps. xcv. 7:—and this along with *prayer*. And that just putting *ourselves into Christ’s hands*—to do as, v. 16.

I CORINTHIANS, xiii. 11.

“When I was a child, I SPAKE as a child, I,” &c.

Life of BODY illustrates life of *soul*. 'Tis so *here*—as to *progress*. Whole chapter speaks of *grace* for THAT. Vs. 9, 10 tell its *development completed*; then TEXT as *illustration* of it. Advance on till reach v. 12.

I. The beginning of spiritual life:—“*When I was a child.*”

1. Christian manhood (like natural) not attained at once.

a. Each by a *process*. The *souls* Eph. iv. 11-13. *It* also is begun by BIRTH: John iii. 5.—So at first an infant’s CRY: or as 1 Pet. ii. 2. Hence Paul’s way wh. converts 1 Cor. iii. 1, 2. Tho’ such “*milk*,” ever needed.

β. In *this* view Xt. says Matt. xviii. 1-3:—wh. v. 4 added for MEN. The figure can’t mean “*be pure*,” &c., as some say:—for Ps. li. 5 and lviii. 3. 'Tis—must *begin* a life *quite NEW*. At our conversion 'tis so:—symbolized by Job xxxiii. 24, 25.

2. OTHER points of illustration also—'twixt *babes* and *converts*.

a. Look to *elders* to *teach*—and ASK information. Too little of this:—many think they *know* better.

This really the *old* LIFE in them : and so prove selves BABES indeed :—as not knowing—*selves—God—world &c.* They *totter* and fall till “*Help.*”

β. What SHD. be in children is *diffidence*, and *trusting* to FATHER :—so 1 John ii. 13 : or Luke xv. 17, 18. They *need* FORBEARANCE—PAINS to be “*trained :*” and God so deals Hos. xi. 3 : Yea “*carries on His side*” in order to Luke xviii. 17.

II. The *text's* confession of soul recognizing this: 2ND CLAUSE.

1. Notice *shortly* the *three particulars* here mentioned.

α. “*SPAKE as child.*” Paul got spiritual ripeness *rapidly*. Why. Text the ordinary case. Speak *unadvisedly* :—so “*bewray*” childhood. PAUL FEARING this “*went into wilderness.*” So *Apollos* Acts xviii. 25. Motto shd. be Jas. i. 19. Yet “*Abba.*”

β. “*UNDERSTOOD as child.*” Only SIMPLE *things* at first. Stumbling to *begin* wh. *deep doctrines*. Exercise in *simple* truth leads to RECEIVE (not *comprehend*) all else. Yet note 1 Cor. xiv. 20.

γ. *THOUGHT as child.*” Or “*reasoned.*” Children judge things *as they seem* (reverse of 2 Cor. v. 7) till *the FATHER tells*. REVERSE is NO sign of *manhood*, 1 Cor. viii. 2. So call Isa. i. 18.

2. But *we* may add TWO *more* to Paul's particulars.

α. “*ACTED as child.*”—How *foolishly* :—and thus Prov. xx. 11. How *rashly*—and so *feel*. How

impulsively—so soon *tired*.—How *heedlessly*—so thot. to *handle fire*.—*Complacently*—as if had done great thing. *Self confidently*—*smitten*.

β. “ENDURED as child.” Fathers restraining and chastening—displeas. So hard thots. of God, Jer. xxxi. 18.—Yea *murmur* when He refuses our *wishes*. Child’s *fretfulness* at calls to DO and to *suffer*. What need of Ps. cxxxii. 1, 2.

III. Last clause—“*When I became a man I put away,*” &c.

1. Instead of the *converse of last head*:—some *other* things involved.

α. CREDULITY “put away.” Children can be brot. to believe anything. So wh. *spiritual* “*babes*”—a ROOT of great evil. Hence that word Eph. iv. 14, 15.—But *manly* faith stands on GOD’S TRUTH. Mayhap by “rod.” Ps. xxii. 15.

β. *Trifles*—*toys*—*self-pleasing*—the child’s exercise. So even in *divine* things:—*toys of ritualism* &c., in place of realities:—*outwardism* for *heartism*. But *man* must HAVE *bread*—not *sweetmeats*, &c. And sets self to *hard work*—not child’s play.

β. *Child* recks not of danger: *man* is wary. Not time *yet* for Is. xi. 6-8:—Acts 1. Thess. v. 21. Experience teaches, Heb. v. 14. Then—every step taken will cry for *guidance* and *strength*. Thus the *feeblest* regains BEST things of youth, Ps. ciii. 5.

2. Yea the *manliest* is in *best* SENSE as a child. Gal. iv. 1.

α. “*Quit you LIKE MEN*” &c. But *how?*—2 Tim. ii.

1. “Be of good courage.”—But *how?* Prov.

xiv. 16. "Faint not,"—But *how?*—Is. xl. 30, 31.
Be ever as 1 Kings iii. 7. Or as Jer. i. 6. 2 Cor.
xii. 10.

β. STRONGEST faith—is *simplest*:—as child's. A
clinging to *parents'* love and power. Ever *shy*
of *stranger* till *proved* a friend: Is. x. 5. Even
JESUS ever cried "*Abba.*" And OURS shd. be
same as HIS exercise, Luke xxiii. 46.

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