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'THEY SHALL BE MINE, SAITH THE LORD'

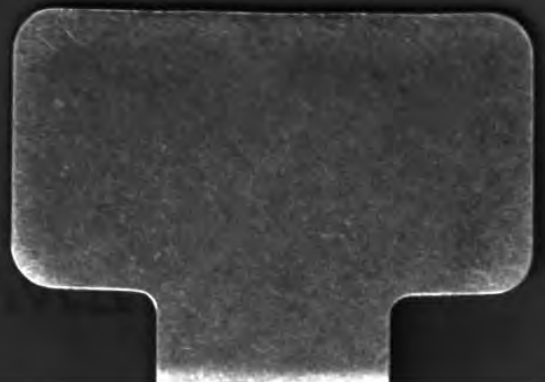
A MEMORIAL OF
M. A. O.

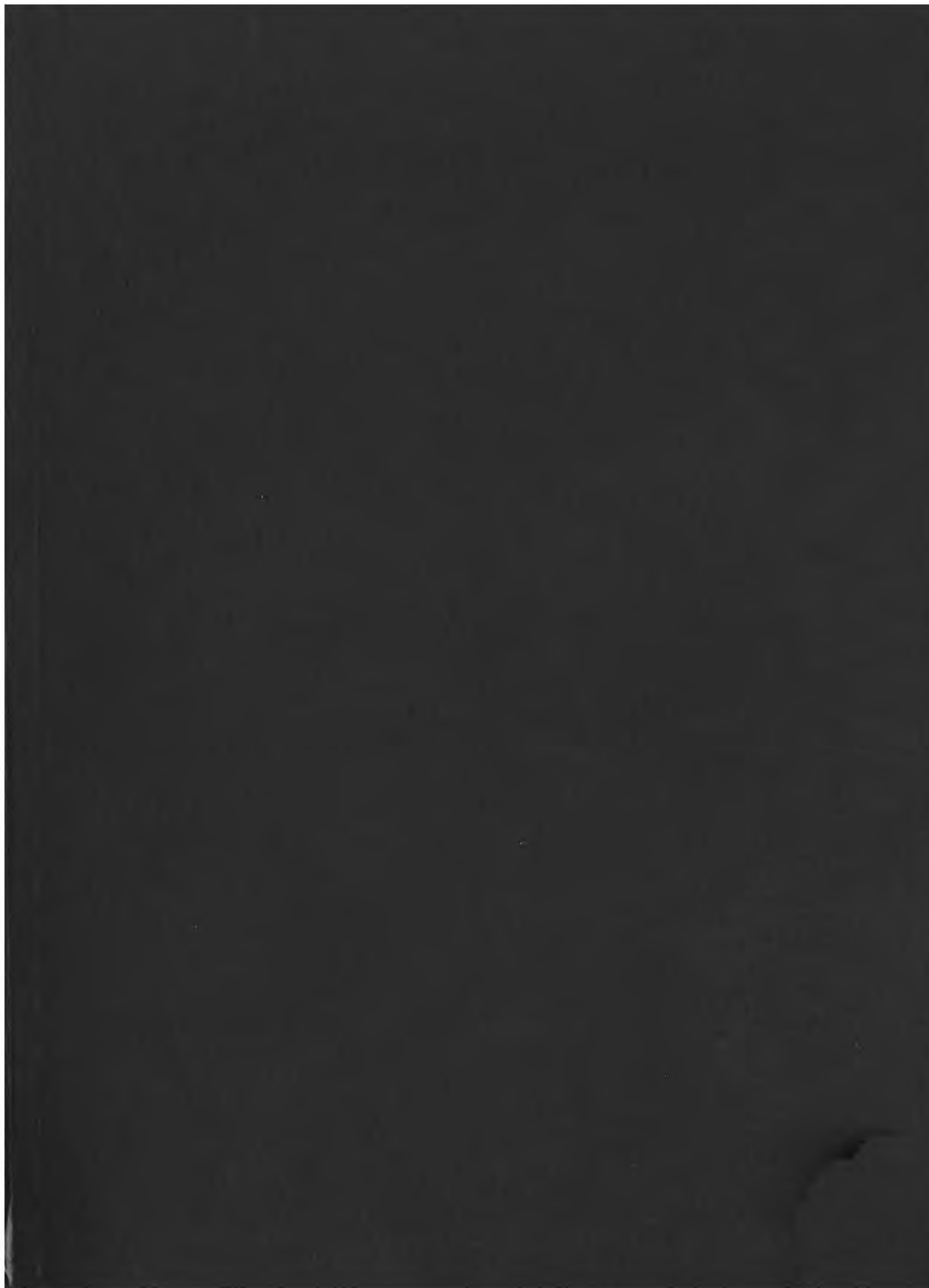
BY THE
REV. HENRY SMITH, M.A.

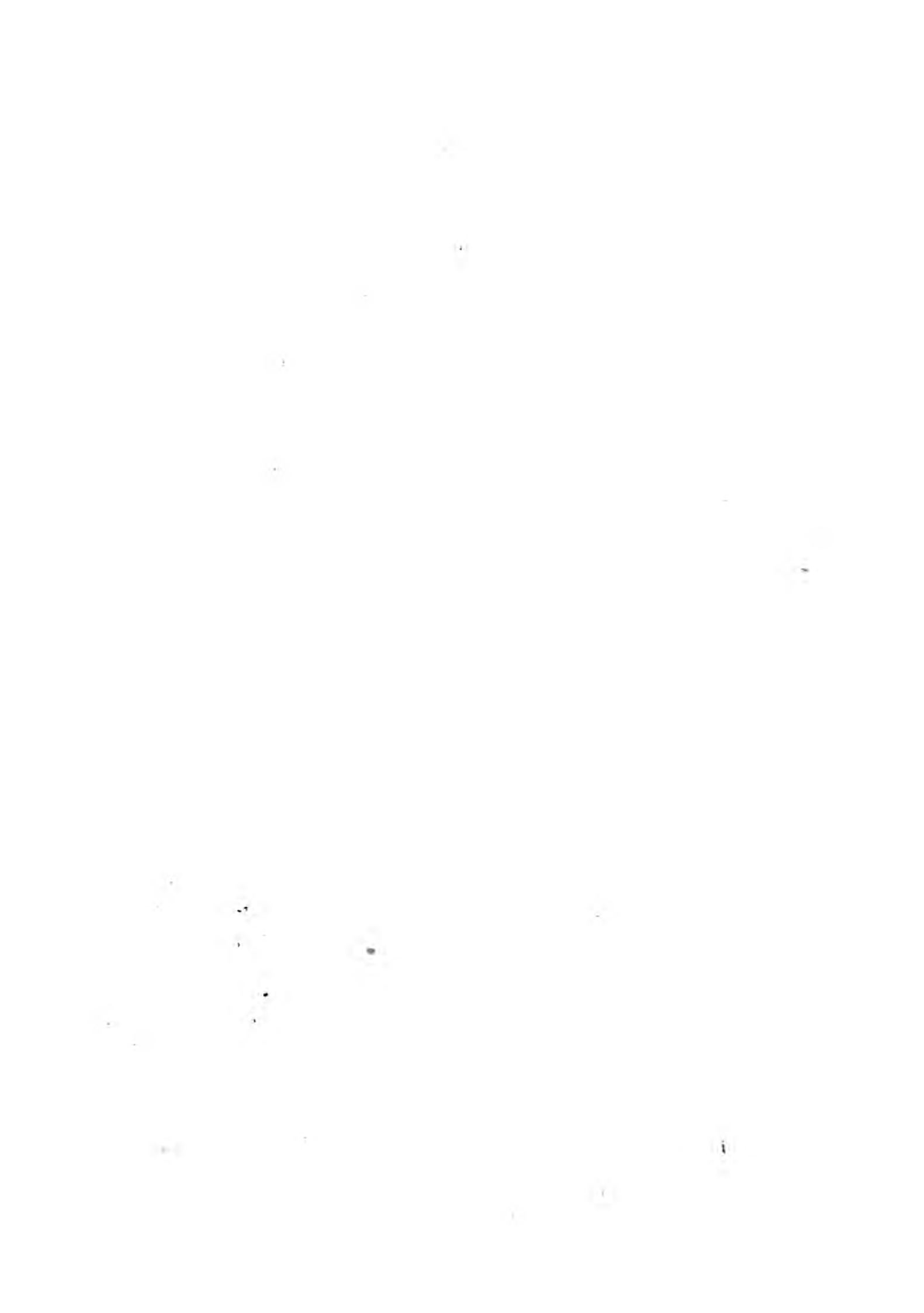


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A MEMORIAL
TO







“They shall be Mine, saith the Lord.”

A SIMPLE MEMORIAL OF
M. A. O.

A SEQUEL TO
“FIRST FRUITS UNTO THE LORD,”

BY THE
REV. HENRY SMITH, M.A.,
Incumbent of Christ Church, St. Alban's.
Late Scholar of Sydney Sussex College, Cambridge.

“An example of suffering affliction, and of patience.”—
JAMES V. 10.

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P R E F A C E .

HER wish was, "that God alone should have the glory." With these words a few manuscripts of M. A. O. were put into my hands, by her sister, soon after her decease. It might reasonably be expected that, as her minister, I should desire to make some reference to her on the Sunday following her funeral: but I venture to think that there are in her own narrative, letters and papers, simple though they be, materials sufficient to form a more permanent memorial of her religious history. And this I now undertake, conscious that it will be very imperfect; yet desiring that her wish may be fulfilled, "that God alone should have the glory," and that others may be led to enter upon, and persevere to the end in, the way of the Lord, "who would have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth."

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“THEY SHALL BE MINE, SAITH THE LORD.”



CHAPTER I.

A GENERAL STATEMENT OF HER CHARACTER—LETTER
GIVING SOME ACCOUNT OF HER CONVERSION.

M. A. O. was one of those who happily entered early in life upon the service of our Lord and Master, and it was the writer's privilege to watch her progress in the Divine life from the time of her conversion till her departure from this world at the age of thirty-one: not far advanced in years, but grown and matured in grace. Truly he may say that during those eleven years her course was that of a cheerful and happy Christian. At the Bible class, which was held upon

the opening of Christ Church, she soon became an intelligent and interested scholar, and after a time showed great knowledge of the Scriptures. She was one who came to be prepared for Confirmation at the earliest opportunity, having already been led to come to the Lord's Table by a sermon preached on May 24th, 1860, from Isaiah xxv. 6: "In this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined."

She was deeply concerned for the salvation of others, and took great pleasure in being a teacher in the Sunday School, and sought out constantly one or more sick to visit, till she became herself too much afflicted for these efforts; then she had need of long patience. I believe it may be truly said of her that she sought, by all means in her power, not only the growth of grace in herself, but the good of others; by a uniform Christian demeanour "seeking to adorn the doctrine of God her Saviour in all things,"

and manifesting to others that she had not "received the grace of God in vain." For some months, if not years, she had to learn that most difficult lesson, of suffering with resignation to God's will; but to the end she continued cleaving to her Saviour, and "speaking good of His name." She related to the writer, during her last illness, the circumstances of her conversion; but it may be well to give *her own account*, in a letter written previously.

June 2nd, 1867.

DEAR SIR,

I have never told you the way in which the Lord has led me to Himself, only that I mentioned it was by affliction first. May He help me to do so now for His glory, not to please myself. I do not wish you to make use of this, except you should meet with any having the same experience, and you think it might encourage them to persevere, then you may do so. When at the age of nineteen, it pleased God to lay me on a bed of affliction for some

little time,—and oh, I would bless His holy name, for I can see very plainly that it was to lead me to consider my ways,—I was careless and thoughtless about my soul, and if it had not been for the grace of God, and my parents' watchfulness over me, I do not know what I might have been for *this* life. I have felt thankful that my ——— was strict. During that sickness, as I lay on my bed, I was very ill one night; an aunt, whom I have lately lost, was sitting up with me, and was obliged to put something to my lips very often to keep me from sinking too low in body: but oh, the agony of my soul! I never shall forget it, nor do I ever wish. The parable of the rich man and Lazarus came into my mind, and I felt that the doom of that rich man would be mine if I had died, as I thought I should then, and I thought only of lifting up my eyes in hell, being in torments, and begging for a drop of water to cool my tongue.

Dear Sir, after that I did earnestly desire to

lead a new life, but I found there were difficulties I never thought of before. I found that I had an evil heart to contend with,—that when I would do good evil was present with me. The Lord raised me up again: oh, how thankful I felt to go to His house! but I did not then put my trust in the Lord fully. I set to work to establish my own righteousness, not submitting myself unto the righteousness of God. But vain and fruitless were my endeavours,—reading God's Word, and going to His house with no higher object than to establish my own righteousness. I was no nearer happiness than I was before it made me miserable. So I began to get careless again, I thought I could mix a little with the world, and seek pleasure, and yet think a little of God. I found *that* too was vain: but oh, the mercy of God towards me! He did not leave me to perish: how can my poor heart thank Him enough! Christ Church was opened a little time after this, and I came the first Sunday, and I felt that you cared for my soul.

You said, morning and evening, "Is there any poor sinner here?" and I remember no more, not even the text, but I know it seemed as if you wished to do us good. I came and asked you about a Bible Class, and you sent us (myself and my sister, and dear Emma Rance) to Miss R——, which I found a means of strengthening to my soul. But I did not decide then entirely to give up my soul to Jesus; I halted between two opinions so long. How often has Miss R—— said (and I felt it was all for me), "How long halt ye," etc., and "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve;" until at length I felt I should like to join with God's people: but thought I was not fit. Dear Emma, how kind she was to me, and how she used to talk to me, so anxious was she for me and my dear sister. I had great temptations to battle with in my soul, and things without; I was tempted to believe there was no God, and that scarcely anything was true: it well-nigh overwhelmed me. But, thanks be unto God who

giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ, for He did enable me to cling to Him. How often that little hymn,—

“Come, humble sinner, in whose breast
A thousand thoughts revolve,
Come, with your guilt and fear opprest,
And firmly thus resolve :

“I’ll go to Jesus, though my sins
Oft like a mountain rose :
I know his courts,—I’ll enter in,
Whatever may oppose.

“I can but perish if I go :
I am resolved to try ;
For if I stay away, I know
I must for ever die.”

How often has this made me go to Him.

Dear Sir, you know something of the rest: how I received good under your ministry. I cannot thank you as I ought, but may the Lord bless you far more than I can ask or think. I think I may truly say, “Lord, I have loved the habitation of thine house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth.” What precious Sabbaths I

have spent there, the hours seemed to pass too quickly: my soul thirsteth for Jesus, my flesh longeth for Him; oh, when shall I reach perfection, when shall I see Him without a veil between, without sin to mar the communion with Him, being one with Christ (as our Communion Service says), and He one with me! Dear Sir, as the Lord had given me that joy which I spoke of to you in my letter, I thought to myself what has He given it for, if it is not that I may go and say to others what the Lord has done for my soul, and point others to Him. I asked the Lord to help me to consecrate myself to His Service, that I might go in gratitude to Him. Dear Sir, do pardon the liberty I have taken in again writing to you: only I never had told you the way I had been led. I feel that you take an interest in our souls, or I would not have done it. I must now say, farewell.

Your humble friend,

M. A. O.

CHAPTER II.

PROGRESS IN GRACE—HAPPY MEETING OF CONVERTS—A
LETTER WHICH FOLLOWED—THE VALUE OF RELIGIOUS
APPEAL TO THE YOUNG.

IT is right, I think, to mention that the letter in the preceding chapter was not written till some years after M. A. O.—'s conversion, and it was not received by her Minister till more than a twelvemonth after it had been penned; the writer having kept it back from a feeling of diffidence, and then only forwarding it in compliance with the wish that she would record some of the Lord's early dealings with her, for infirmity had begun to fasten upon her, and she could only with difficulty walk to the house of God. An earlier letter is there referred to, however, which may be introduced here, as it

shows her progress in spiritual things and profiting under the preached Word :—

DEAR SIR,

Please to pardon the liberty I have taken in writing these few lines to you. I have felt constrained to do so, having had it on my mind so long, to tell you God has been pleased, in His great love and mercy, to give me a humble hope in Jesus, as my Surety and the Rock of my refuge. Oh, to know more of Him! I want a living loving faith in Him. Sometimes I feel tied and bound with the chain of my sins. Oh, may the pitifulness of His great mercy loose me! Dear Sir, you cannot tell how thankful I felt last evening,* when you preached from the words, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ," to think that I was still among the living to praise Him: I might have been among those who are awaiting their awful doom. Oh, Sir, it made me go afresh to

* At the close of the year 1866.

Jesus, and cast myself at His feet as my only hope and Saviour; disowning all merit of my own, feeling a bankrupt and having nothing to pay; and oh, what sweet peace He gives to our souls when we go to Him thus: it seems to flow as a river. Dear Sir, although it was God's afflicting hand I believe first led me to Himself, yet still you are and have been an instrument in His hands of bringing me nearer. Oh, how often have I sat, while you were preaching, and felt as if my inmost soul was being searched through and through by the Spirit of God! I have sometimes feared "perhaps I am deceiving myself with false hopes," and yet I dare not say "I am none of His;" but there are dear ones belonging to me whom I have longed to see belonging to Jesus, from whom I have felt I could not bear to be separated at that awful day: it has seemed too much to bear, and yet I cannot speak to them as I would. God knows how I have longed to speak and could not. Dear Sir, pray that I may be enabled to

do all for the glory of God, so that if engaged in teaching the dear children at the Sunday-school I may strive to bring them to Jesus, or in speaking to my dear friends I may speak faithfully and affectionately. With my best wishes I trust for the spiritual welfare of you and yours.

I am, respectfully yours,

M. A. O.

Before introducing the next letter, written a few months after the foregoing, the writer may explain that it refers to a happy meeting of converts at the Parsonage, May 29th, 1867. The following are a few notes of the words addressed to them on that occasion:—

“Dear Christian Friends, I have invited to-day a few to meet here of those who attend Christ Church, and in whom I trust there has been wrought a good work of grace. I have thought it might be profitable that we should enjoy together the communion of saints in this manner,

as well as in God's house. May Jesus meet with us, and our hearts burn within us while He opens to us the Scriptures, then will it be a sweet season to our souls; we may have but few such on earth, let us try to make the most of them, and remember that still more delightful gatherings are in reserve for us in heaven. I desire to meet you in an humble, prayerful, thankful spirit; for if any good has been done, any work of grace wrought in your souls, it is God's work, and He shall have the praise.

“ I propose to sing the following hymn,—

‘ Great the joy when Christians meet :
 Christian fellowship how sweet,
 When, their theme of praise the same,
 They exalt Jehovah's name.

‘ Forgotten be each worldly theme
 When Christians see each other thus :
 We only wish to speak of Him
 Who lived and died and reigns for us.

‘ Thus, as the moments pass away,
 We 'll love and wonder and adore,
 And hasten on the glorious day
 When we shall meet to part no more.’

But first let prayer go up from your hearts, that we may meet together here with suitable feelings ; that God may recognize and smile on our effort here to praise and magnify His holy Name.”

After prayer and singing, the passage of Scripture read was, 1 Cor. ii., iii. 1—9, 21—23, ending with the words, “all things are yours, and ye are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s.” And it was added,—“The thought fills my soul with joy that I have before me some of God’s dear children, to whom I have been permitted so constantly to minister the bread of Life ; for may I not speak of some here present, not only as giving evidence of true conversion to God, but, as St. Paul does in the next chapter (iv. 15), as spiritual children, and may I not gratefully say, ‘In Christ Jesus, I have begotten you again through the Gospel.’ When I look back upon these eight years spent among you, it must be with gratitude to God if any real good has been effected ; and with deep humiliation, because I have laboured so little, and that all has been

mixed with so much imperfection. When I look back upon my own inconsistencies and shortcomings, I can only wonder that the Lord should own His Word at all by me; but He has wrought for His own Name sake, and caused you to love Him and to serve Him. Alas, to how many others is the preaching of the Gospel still foolishness! Oh, bless God if it has not been so to us, but the power of God unto salvation. Let us pray God to open a way for His truth to prosper in more hearts; and for ourselves, let us this day stir up one another to take a firmer grasp of those gracious promises on which He has taught us to hope. We cannot thus meet together in Christian fellowship and communion without at once lifting up our hearts to Him who saves us from our sins, whose 'Name is as ointment poured forth;' and so too, must every child of His grace be *dear* to us, because they bear His image. And does it not cheer our hearts when any new converts are seen evidently giving themselves to the Lord: the fragrance of a

renewed life cannot be hid. And again, can we meet thus together in Christian fellowship and not think of some who are *gone*? 'The memory of the just is blessed:' many a flower diffuses a sweet scent long after it is plucked, and gathered, and dried, yes,—it may be even through all the lone winter. I shall not trust myself to speak of that dear partner of my life, taken from this home; but I have made mention of more than one in the little book, 'First Fruits unto the Lord,' called from our midst here at Christ Church to enter upon the Heavenly rest, and for whom I desire to thank God: they have left behind them a sweet savour of His grace, which is still present to us who survive them. Some of you witnessed the support granted to them, even to a dying hour, and I trust it will be to you a sweet encouraging instance that God will keep the feet of His saints.

"Oh, what a Saviour is ours, not only to have died for us, but to be ever with us by His Spirit, even in the swellings of Jordan. Others, besides

myself, have lost dear relatives, who are gone before : do they not think of us, love us, wait for us ? Oh, to see them standing on the shores of eternal life to welcome us ! What a welcome : more than our present nature could bear. What manner of persons then ought we to be ? While we are here, may heaven be growing in our hearts. Has more of Christ's Spirit been seen in us since they took leave of us ? Are we more prepared for that blessed world ? Have we more of the humility, love and holiness of heaven than when they were on earth ?

“ O merciful High Priest, who knowest our frame, and rememberest that we are but dust ; plead for us now. Since Thou hast been pleased to continue here the bounds of our habitation, we cannot doubt it is to answer some good purpose. Let that be accomplished : make us blessings to our fellow sinners, and in watering others may these Thy servants be watered themselves.

“ Dear friends, it is perhaps hardly needful for

me to point out to you one way by which good may be done : *viz.*, by observing in all families the regular reading of God's Word, and prayer. How needful that the young should be trained up to habits of godliness ! Some of us have children, others have those that are near and dear to them, and we want to have *them* so taught that they may be able to teach others also. One of the greatest blessings for our children is that they should be early engaged in instructing others : to do good to others is a sure way of doing good to ourselves. What may not result from being truly and early converted to God ! Such shall be blessings to all around ; the influence for good may be felt through descending generations, words spoken and deeds done from love to God and to our neighbours, may hereafter benefit thousands yet unborn, bear fruit in other times and even distant lands, to the salvation of souls and the glory of God. I am thankful for the Spirit of liberality manifested in contributing towards the spread of the Gospel, all the

world over, by means of the Church Missionary and other societies. But those who have tasted the blessedness of forgiveness, and the consolations of the Gospel, will not be satisfied with giving a little of their earnings to make it known; they will desire to be instrumental themselves in pointing others to the Saviour.

“Dear friends, God has called you by His grace, and kept you from the error of those who make religion to consist merely in forms and ceremonies. Oh, what a satisfaction it is that you have been kept from that delusion,—that your minds are intent upon the spirituality of the religion of Jesus. It is this which, founded on the doctrines of the cross and exemplified forcibly in the life, shows the excellency of Christianity. Since God has thus called you to the knowledge of His grace and to faith in Him, I hope you will lay yourselves out humbly, prayerfully, and resolutely to save souls. To be useful to one soul is better than all worldly honour and riches. Consider what wonderful favour has

been shown towards you : while many others have been living or dying strangers to God in Christ, He has revealed Himself to you, shown to you His glory, drawn your hearts from the world to Himself. Oh, let us love, and admire, and adore ! With what singleness of aim, and holiness of life, and diligence of labour should we press towards the mark. We should not wish to go to heaven except in our Saviour's own way, doing or suffering according to the will of God. May our lives, prolonged to this day, be renewed in the best sense ; may you and I serve God with greater zeal and love, and in all His dealings with us may we yield ourselves entirely to His will. Now I think we may, on the review of God's mercies, not only desire to thank God in general terms for His goodness, but to notice some of those mercies more in detail. I would have you, as you think best, mention any mercies in particular to your fellow Christian here now in happy fellowship."

This was responded to by some who were

present, in a way that led our departed sister to write,—

May 30th, 1867.

DEAR AND BELOVED MINISTER OF CHRIST,

I must tell you how much I enjoyed the meeting together of our dear Christian friends : I felt it good to meet and hear what the Lord is doing for our souls. I could not trust myself to speak, my heart seemed too full ; but it led me to look back over my life since I first felt the strivings of God's Spirit in my soul ; and when I saw the long-suffering mercy of God in bearing with my wilful wandering heart, when He might have said to me, like as to Ephraim of old, "He is joined to idols, let him alone,"—did He do so ? No : His language concerning me was, How can I give thee up ? "Bless the Lord O my soul, and all that is within me bless His holy Name." Dear Sir, the Lord so filled me with joy in the night, that I was obliged to arise and fall

down on my knees, for I could do nothing but praise Him.

“ Oh, for a closer walk with God !
A calm and heavenly frame ;
A light to shine upon the road
That leads me to the Lamb.”

“ But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us.”

[The following part of this letter was quoted in a sermon after her funeral.]

Dear Sir, exhort the young to give their hearts to Jesus in their best days, while their hearts are tender ; and not to put it off till a dying hour, thinking to give Him the dregs of a life : for they know not whether they may have the power then. Tell them that it is the testimony of one who has felt that the peace which God giveth is a peace which passeth all understanding : it is more,—it is joy unspeakable and full of glory ; and who feels that *this* is the greatest mercy God can give : *viz.*, to lead us to cast our sins

and souls on Jesus. Dear Sir, I desire to speak this with an earnest desire that it may do some good, and for the glory of God; and may God bless you in your own soul and in the souls of your dear children, and all who are under your charge, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

Yours respectfully,

M. A. O.



CHAPTER III.

**EFFORTS TO DO GOOD TO THE SOULS OF OTHERS—LETTER
TO THE TEACHER OF THE BIBLE CLASS—TO HER PASTOR,
AFTER THE DEATH OF A SICK FRIEND.**

M. A. O—'s benevolence did not terminate in prayers and good wishes, she endeavoured to do her part to win souls to Christ by more practical efforts. Though her circumstances only permitted her to take in hand a single case at once, or two or three at the most,—yet these called forth all her Christian sympathy and interest as may be seen by the following letter.

DEAR SIR,

Pardon the liberty I have taken of writing to you, but I do wish to thank you for your kindness in requesting prayer for those two poor

sick ones.* I went to see Mrs. — on Sunday : she was better than I expected to find her, and I do not think her so near death as I was led to understand, but her mind is very dark ; oh, may the Lord open her eyes to see wondrous things out of His law. Dear Sir, I am afraid there is no change of heart in her, and very little desire (for grace), if any. I think I told you some time ago that I had been to read to her : I felt called in a special manner to go. I had been very anxious about her soul ; but I did not know what to do in the matter, feeling afraid to go, till I went to a service one evening and heard it said, “ My dear friends, if any of you feel to be called to do any work for the Lord, do it at once.”

I felt it was a message sent to me : so by God’s help I went, and she heard me, and seemed to like me to go ; but after a few times she would not let me : I felt it a great discouragement. But

* This was at a Saturday evening Prayer Meeting.

now she is laid on a bed of sickness. Dear Sir, remember me at a throne of grace, that I may have love for souls that are perishing, and may have the assurance that my own sins are washed in His precious blood ; for oh, when I try to speak to others, I see more of what there is in my own heart that needs washing away : how much of spiritual pride. Oh, I want a humble, lowly, contrite heart : to be more like Jesus ! I want Him to come and dwell there. I often times fear I may be deceiving myself. O God, forbid it ! scatter my unbelief, increase my faith and make me thine own child.

I went to see that poor man in the London road this morning : I found him much the same, in body and mind. I felt rather discouraged : but may I remember Jesus, what He did to save souls, and labour on by His grace. Dear Sir, forgive what I have said wrong and for troubling you, but I feel that you take an interest in our souls' welfare, and pray that

God may bless you and make you a blessing to poor lost souls.

M. A. O.

The following letter was sent to the lady who took charge of the Bible class held in the vestry on Sunday afternoons, and who was then on a visit in Wales.

St. Alban's, April 22nd, 1868.

MY DEAR TEACHER,

Mr. S—— kindly gave me your address, if I would like to write, and I felt I should, if you would not think it too great a liberty. We have wished you with us, to go over the sermons again on Sunday afternoon: it does seem so nice to talk them over again together; I feel that it makes a deeper impression. Dear Teacher, I dare say you know what they have been about: last Sunday the sermon was on the love of Christ. (Cant. viii. part of the 6th verse.) We sang that beautiful hymn,—

“O Love Divine, my joy thou art !
 When shall I find my willing heart
 All taken up by Thee !”

Oh, I feel I want what that hymn implies
 more in my heart :

“My thirsty spirit pants to prove
 The greatness of Redeeming Love,—
 The love of Christ to me.”

Dear Teacher, when I look back into the past, and see how God has borne with me, how I have resisted His love, and yet how unwearied it has followed me, oh, it seems wonderful, it is past knowledge : and He bears with me still. How I fall into sin, even after I have prayed for grace to overcome it. What a precious privilege it is that we may go and tell Jesus all ! Oh, my God, help me to praise Thee as I ought, for all Thy matchless love. Dear Teacher, I trust you are well and happy. I think I am better in myself, but I cannot get much strength, yet God has led me to see that He is doing all things well, and if He keeps me in the furnace, it is that He

may bring me out purified. Oh, I desire to thank Him for His love in this also! He has shown me more of my own heart—the evil within—and drawn me to closer communion with Himself, and given me such glimpses of His love that I cannot help praising Him. Dear Teacher, I have not seen any of the class since Sunday; but I know I may for them wish you every blessing, and a safe and speedy return. Oh, may the Lord be with you in every little work you may undertake for Him, and His blessing attend it. Mr. S. read part of your letter to me, and I could not help thinking that perhaps you were sent to be a blessing to that poor woman's soul. There was a need in Jesus going through Samaria, who can say but there may be one for you where you are. My dear — has had another attack, but she is getting better now: God tries the faith He gives; oh, may she cling close to Him. I feel afraid sometimes the cares of the world should have a deadening effect upon her soul; I tell you this, dear

teacher, because I know you will feel that that will be worse than all the trials she can have. I pray that it may not be so. I must now conclude, with best wishes for you, and all who are near and dear to you, and may the Lord bless both your going out and your coming in.

Your humble servant,

M. A. O.

Please to forgive me if I have written too long a letter.

The following letter to her Pastor gives some account of the death of a young woman, a Mrs. K——, who was a communicant at the same Church with M. A. O.

November 9th 1868.

DEAR SIR,

In compliance with your request, I will try to tell you what I can of the dear Christian friend who has now departed this life a week ago. It is more than a year and a half since I

first called upon her at your request, and I went feeling my own weakness, not being accustomed to visiting strangers, and asking the Lord to go with me and help me to speak for Him ; and it has been my happy *privilege* to converse with her many times since then. My first impression of her was that she was a true Christian, although a timid one. I thought it was an evidence of her conversion to God, that as soon as she received the truth herself she became anxious for the souls of those dear to her. I was much impressed with her cheerful submission to the will of God in the affairs of this life. I believe she had been often perplexed (as she was threatened by consumption), to know what she should do in time of sickness, having a family of little children ; but she spoke of God being better than her fears, for when she feared the most, He provided for them by sending them friends to help in ways unlooked for. Sometimes when I have been to see her I have come away refreshed with our

meeting together, and I trust those meetings have not been in vain. We have read together a portion of the Word of God, and united at the throne of grace; making known our wants and pleading for His favour for the time to come, and we have felt it good thus to meet, I trust. Dear Sir, I feel that her's was a true resignation in her last illness, not a mere resignation to fate, to something that could not be avoided, for she seemed to be able to say from her heart, "Thy will be done," whether by life or by death. When harassed by temptation, she was cheered by the love of her Saviour. One of Mr. K——'s neighbours remarked to me that it showed the reality of religion, since it enabled one like her to rejoice in the prospect of death, and to leave those dear to her so cheerfully. Dear Sir, be not cast down, nor think your labour in vain; I believe that you were the means, under God, of leading the dear departed one to peace in Jesus. May many more be your crown of rejoicing, when your labours on earth are ended

and you and they shall meet together around the throne to sing the song of Moses and the Lamb.

Yours respectfully,
M. A. O.

I may here mention that the husband of the young woman above spoken of, called upon me soon after her death, and brought me a pencilled note nearly illegible, which his wife had written to me but never sent. The sermon that first awakened her mind he said, was in Sept. 1866, from the words, "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature:" but she alludes to a sermon in the last month of that year as having been the means of bringing her to enjoy peace and comfort of soul, in the following note. She said:—

DEAR SIR,

Many times I have thought I should like to tell you my thoughts and feelings. This is

the third time I have begun to write to you, but through weakness before I have not been able to finish: I hope with God's help I shall be able to do so this time. I have much to be thankful for. Many times I have been to church and thought the sermon was all upon me; many a time my heart has felt ready to break, there seemed something to [here the writing was obliterated, but perhaps the word was *comfort*] me; but still I felt very unhappy up to the time I heard the sermon on the words, "the unsearchable riches of Christ." Oh, how happy I then was! I never shall forget what I felt that night: I felt so happy that I could hardly do anything else but sing and pray all night. I was obliged to call in a pious friend and neighbour before I went to rest, to tell out my joy: she said to me, "You remind me of Peter and John,—I think you are on the Mount now." Dear Sir, your sermons morning and evening last Sunday made me form new resolutions, for you said it would not do to go *back*: I felt rather hurt, I think you have

supposed that that was the case with me ; but no, I hope that it never will be,—the Lord has been so good to me. I often forget Him, but He never forgets me. I have felt wrong for not writing to you before, I feel it will be more satisfaction to you

Here the note after all was left unfinished, but Mrs. K—— ever after that time of joyful acceptance of the Saviour and His riches, seemed to have a great thirst for all God's ordinances, and much enjoyment in them.

She was indeed a joyful Christian, and in visiting her in her last illness in the year 1868, she said, "I have felt great happiness in religion ; have loved the services at Christ Church, and especially to be present at the Lord's Table, but I never felt so *assured* of my safety as last Sunday. I was happy in religion before, yet if any one had asked me, I could not have said, I was quite sure (*i.e.*, of salvation) ; now I felt if I died, it would be all well indeed." Again she had

called in her neighbour to tell her, not only of the riches of Christ, but how she enjoyed the assurance of her safety in Him. I administered the sacrament of the Lord's Supper to her, and to five neighbours who were around her bed. She spoke too in her illness, of the danger she felt that many were exposed to, because of their neglecting repentance in the time of health ; and added, "if I had put it off till now the great work would not have been done." When the doctor said that there was no hope of her recovery, and all she had to do was to prepare for another world : she replied, "I have done that already."



CHAPTER IV.

LETTERS TO HER FRIENDS.

To return to our narrative: the following letters of M. A. O., to her friends, show how she endeavoured to speak words in season, of Christian counsel and encouragement.

St. Alban's, April, 1864.

MY DEAR F——,

I now take my pen to answer your kind little note. This will greet you too, on the Sabbath: may it be to your soul a holy day, a day on which you can hold sweet communion with Jesus, as your dying, risen, and interceding Saviour; but I know myself when I would commune with Him even in His house, how my thoughts wander far away. Dear

F——, may you know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and be made in all things conformable to His will. May the Lord bless you in all your work of faith and labour of love, even in your little class may you be made a blessing in leading if it is only one little lamb to Jesus' fold. It will repay you for all your toil for Him, all your self-denial, if on the other side you should hear one say, "Teacher, it was you that led me to Jesus, it was you that told me of His dying love, it was you that pointed to His precious blood, and cried, 'Behold the way to God!'" Oh, let us be earnest for Him, ever looking unto Him, ever cleaving to Him with all our heart, and not with that coldness and indifference which are too often there, at least in mine, even at the mercy-seat. Oh, for grace to trust, where I cannot trace Him, to look away from self, and more constantly at Him, to have fellowship with Him by His Holy Spirit, for Jesus' sake. May we ever pray for this for one another.

“ Look up, ye saints, and while ye gaze
 Forget all earthly things ;
 Unite to sing the Saviour’s praise,
 And crown Him ‘ King of kings.’ ”

“ We hope ere long beyond those clouds
 To tune celestial strings,
 And join with heaven’s exulting crowds
 To crown Him ‘ King of kings.’ ”

Good-bye dear F——. May God bless you
 with His best gifts.

M. A. O.

In another note she says, “ Dear F——, we had a nice sermon on Sunday morning ; it was upon Moses’ death on the Mount, and Mr. S—— said, “ that if sin was so hateful to God that He could not overlook it in Moses, how could He do so with us ? ” and then he spoke of His walking up the Mount to die, and viewing the promised land, and then closing his eyes to all the scenes of earth, and so departing. Oh, may our last end be like His : reconciled to God,—a going home to God. But is my life like his ? We see

there is mercy for all who seek it: I may go to Jesus—

“As I am : without one plea,
But that His blood was shed for me,
And that He bids me come.”

But oh, dear F——, I do not know the depths of my own heart's sin and need, nor the *love* of Christ; and not even in that better world (should I reach it), shall I know all the fulness of that love. Jesus, prepare us for it: let me thank Him for what I do know. Dear F——, your children have been very fairly good, we cannot expect much from ones so young, putting ourselves in their place. Now I must conclude, wishing you a delightful time in body and soul, and a safe return back by the grace of God. I can picture you on that shore (her friend was at Margate). You say the sea reminds you of the Bible: no doubt it does. I should like to see it very much indeed, I may some day if I am spared; we must talk about it, please God: but if I do not, I hope we may be together,

with our Father on the heavenly shore, and reign with Him always. Love from all the girls of the Bible class. May God bless you wherever you go, for Jesus' sake.

From your loving friend,

M. A.

Q——n Bucks, July 4th, 1864.

DEAR F——,

I heard from home that poor Mrs. F—— was dead: I trust that she has gone home to Jesus, and has joined that company of God's people in heaven, who are singing the praises of God and the Lamb. Give my love and sympathy to poor Emma F——, and tell her that God has promised to give strength according to our day. Dear F——, we have been on the hills and enjoyed it very much; it brought to my mind many thoughts of Jesus, for you know that once He went up to a cold mountain all night, and then again He was transfigured on a mountain; and when He shall come again, we read, his "feet shall stand on Mount Zion." It

seems to impress you very much with the greatness of God being in such a place, and God seems to be all round you, but He cannot be too near to the Christian.

She then tells of the Sunday services she attended, and concludes, "May the Lord bless you all with every blessing in Christ Jesus. Pray for this place when you meet on Wednesday, that God's Spirit may attend the preaching of the Gospel, for they have been sadly neglected here.

"There is a spot where spirits blend,
And friend holds fellowship with friend :
Though sundered far, by faith they meet
Around one common mercy-seat."

In another letter, dated 1862, she alludes to one of the Bible class, whose death is spoken of in the little book entitled "First Fruits to the Lord." "Martha and I are pretty well in health now, but we know not how soon we may have to die, or lie on a bed of sickness, like poor Emily : the bell has tolled for her, and God in

His wisdom has consigned her to an early grave. I sat with her one night, and I thought about half-past one she was dying: she said she was going to her Father. I took hold of her hand, and she begged me to repeat the twenty-third Psalm: I did as well as I could, but it seemed touching to see her. I asked her if she felt that the Lord was *her* Shepherd? She said, Yes; and was glad still to hear anything read to her. She lingered two more days. May the Lord make us, dear F——, meet to follow her. I will take your class of children till you come back; may I have patience and love for the work, to try, by His help, to lead their hearts to Jesus.

“From your friend, who is up on the mountain and down in the valley so often.

“M. A. O.”

DEAR F——,

I now write to you, but I think the contents of this little note will be about the sermon yesterday morning. When Mr. S——

spoke, he little thought that there was one there who had gone through nearly all that he spoke of in the first place : *viz.*, of losing that rapturous joy which I first experienced,—that sweet but overpowering sight of His love and patience with me. Dear F——, I should like to tell you what Dr. Cumming says upon this subject. “Do I address one who, when first made acquainted with the Gospel, had unspeakable joy and experienced a peace which he thought never would be disturbed : and are you now cast down because that peace is not yours,—because that sunshine is not now upon you ? Be not cast down, be not disquieted. The first emotion on emerging from a subterranean mine into sunshine is vivid : the splendour is almost intolerable, and you must expect that the first emotion of a Christian on seeing the awful *death* that he has escaped, the glorious *life* into which he has been emancipated, will be highly exciting ; but it is well *that* excitement should not be for ever : you could not bear it ;

and besides God often withdraws His *comforting* presence, but He never withdraws His *supporting* presence. Our blessed Lord Himself exclaimed, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' but God's supporting presence was not gone, for faith still exclaims, '*My God, my God!*'"

Dear F——, at those times when the enemy comes in like a flood, when our sky seems all dark, when scarcely a star appears to light up our souls, when we grope after Jesus, when we can do nothing but cling to Him, as the shipwrecked sailor clings to the broken piece of the vessel as his only hope of getting safe to shore,—yet with only this we are safe. Oh, what love to leave us even *this*, notwithstanding our doubts and fears and ingratitude! let us therefore only have faith in God.

“Man's wisdom is to seek
 His strength from God alone :
 And e'en an angel would be weak
 Who trusted in His own.

“ From strength to strength go on :
Wrestle and fight and pray ;
Tread all the powers of darkness down,
And win the well fought day.”

Letters to the same friend, on the loss of two of her sisters.

“ Forgive my writing this to you now you are in such deep trials, but it is with the love and sympathy of a friend, not to intrude upon your sorrows. Dear F——, it pleases the Lord to put you in the furnace, that you may come out like ‘ gold purified seven times in the fire.’ Try to realize, if you can, that God has in His love and mercy taken your dear ones from all the evil of this sinful world, from pain and sorrow, to enter that bright place, ‘ where all tears are wiped away :’ ‘ to go no more out ;’ ‘ to sit down at the marriage supper of the Lamb :’ to hear His blessed voice, saying, ‘ Come in, thou blessed of the Lord, why standest thou without ?’ O, Dear F——, we cannot help weeping when such dear ones are taken away, and it is not wrong, for Jesus wept ; but oh,

if we knew what they are perhaps taken from, we should rather rejoice. Your sister is gone 'where the wicked cease from troubling, and where the weary are at rest.' Dear F——, look to Jesus : stay your soul upon Him. He promises to help all that call upon Him in the day of trouble. May this loss of your dear sisters and of our loving friend be sanctified to all our hearts, for Jesus' sake, that when our call shall come, we may be ready to go. Good-bye : may the Lord be with you all. I felt I could not help writing these few lines.

“Dear F——, I thought I would write a few lines to you, for you seemed very dull when you went away that day. Dear F——, try to look at the bright side. I know your trials are very great, and that it is very hard sometimes to look through them and see that God is doing all things well,—but oh, think what great trials Jesus had, and He went through them all ! ‘He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.’

“I was very much struck with the collect on Sunday. It was that God would ‘take away from us all hurtful things, and give us such things as be profitable to us;’ and it struck me, dear F——, that ‘the hurtful things,’ might be such things as we most enjoyed on earth, such things as we most wished for, such as our natural and carnal heart is always coveting; and ‘the profitable things,’ perhaps the very things *we* least desired, but which God sees fit to lay upon us,—such as sorrow and trials upon trials: these are often His profitable things. May you and I have to rejoice in that better land, though it may be brought there ‘through much tribulation,’ that we were lead to Jesus and washed in His precious blood; we shall bless Him for our trials throughout eternity.

‘Trials make the promise sweet,
Trials give new life to prayer,
Trials bring me to His feet;
Lay me low, and keep me there.’”

To her friend, on going to be employed for a short time as a Bible woman.

“I now take up my pen, to try by God’s help to write a few lines to cheer you on in the work you have undertaken for Him. I trust you will be made instrumental in turning poor souls from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God. There is no doubt you will meet with many discouragements; Jesus has never told you that you shall have all smooth, so you must not expect it. Dear F——, I shall miss you very much, although I am not with you so much as Emma was. God seems to be stripping us of all our dear friends one by one; no doubt there is some wise purpose in it, not known to our finite minds; but He is infinite and can make ‘all things work together for good.’ He seems to be saying to us, ‘Be still, and know that I am God! You have had your time of peace, when there was nothing to harass or disturb, now it is my time to work with you. If you will be my children you must take your

lot with them, must drink of the cup that I drink of; I will hold up my rod and you must pass under it.' But oh, it is in love! therefore, O our God, give us grace and patience to submit, and wait for a glorious meeting when we shall part no more. Dear F——, I trust you will have a word for the weary and the sick and the poor lost one, and the backslider filled with his own ways,—that you may point them to Jesus, 'the Way, the Truth, and the Life.' Dear F——, may God keep you in health and peace in Him, with my kindest love.

"I am yours,
"M. A. O."

Letter to another friend, who seemed to be cast down.

DEAR S——,

I now try and write a note to you, as I thought you were cast down because of the way God is leading you. He often leads His

people by rough paths to try us. But be not discouraged : if you are in the furnace, Zion's God is by. He will not heat the furnace more than is necessary : may He bring you out purified. Or perhaps you are fearing that all is not well between your soul and God. Oh, cast yourself unreservedly at the foot of the cross ! Oh, tell Him that you need His mercy,—that in yourself you are lost and helpless ; and He will not cast you out. It is, dear S——, because I have felt all this myself, that I tell it to you ; because He has been pleased to refresh my own soul by leading me in this way. May He help me to try and comfort you. Let us examine ourselves, to see what it is which keeps us from enjoying that peace which He gives. Is it not that we are often trying to find something in ourselves, instead of looking to Jesus as a sufficient Sacrifice for our sins ? Oh, dear S——, it is not that I am without fears myself, that I say this. I have felt my sins pursuing me at every step : but oh, I do not think God would lead us thus far to

disappoint our hope. Oh, let us humbly trust Him still. May He plant holy fear in our hearts, that we may fear to sin against Him ; and reverent love, that we may look up with confidence and say, " Abba, Father." He who hath " begun a good work in you will perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ." May God bless you, is the prayer of your friend,

M. A. O.



CHAPTER V.

NOTES FROM A JOURNAL OF M. A. O.

Jan. 13th. 1867. Heard our Pastor preach from Rom. v. 1. Felt that peace which passeth all understanding, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Jan. 20th. Mr. B—— preached for the Jews' Society. Thought much of that glorious time when all shall know the Lord, Jew and Gentile. Oh, that all who are near and dear to me may know Him too!

Jan. 27th. The Sabbath: I longed for it to come, to lay aside the world and hear of God's love to us. Morning text: Rom. viii. 16. Prayed that I might be among the true disciples of Jesus: that He would wash me from all sin. I thank Him for all good desires.

Evening: Rev. vii. 9, 10. Felt that the blood of Jesus alone can make me fit for heaven. I need no other way: Lord, let me never try to go, save only by that blood of the Lamb. May the Lord wash me, and clothe me in His righteousness, for I have none of my own.

Jan. 28th. Began the week again, feeling very sinful and weak. I have no power of my own: Lord, fit me for the trials and cares of this world, and the spiritual trials that may come upon me. Let me never disown my Lord and Saviour, but manfully fight under His banner.

Jan. 31st. Read a portion of Rom. ix. I want more of the spirit of St. Paul,—more love for the souls of my kindred according to the flesh. Feel cast down on account of sin: the sins of my life. O Lord, let Thy mercy hide me now in the Rock of ages, that I may stand when Thou dost appear.

Feb. 3rd. The Sabbath: a blessed day of rest

from all our worldly care. Morning text : Song ii. 4. Oh, how I longed for that feast of love : felt myself unworthy to partake, yet thankful I could go through Jesus. Evening text, on pride in the heart. Lord I feel my besetting sin is this. Oh, help me ever to bring it to Thy feet, to be be cleansed from it and all sin.

Feb. 14th.

“ My Father’s house on high,—
 Home of my soul ! how near,
 At times, to faith’s illumined eye,
 Thy golden gates appear !
 At times clouds intervene,
 And the bright vision flies :
 Like Noah’s dove, I flit between
 Rough seas and stormy skies.”

Feb. 5th. Read the 1 Cor. iii., “ of being labourers together with God,” and our work being tried with fire. “ Lord, will mine stand the fire ? ” It is a solemn question : can I answer it ? Oh, let me do all for Thy glory, and for the good of souls. Oh, subdue self and sin in me, that Jesus may be all in all !

“Be Thou my Guide while life shall last :
In death my constant Friend.”

Feb. 24th. The morning text, Luke viii. 18 :
“Take heed how ye hear.” A solemn sermon.
Lord help me ever to hear Thy Word in all hu-
mility, and to receive it in the love of it.

Feb. 28th. Went to visit a stranger to me,
but I trust she is no stranger to Jesus. Went,
feeling my own weakness, but asking the Lord
to help me, and He gave me I trust a word in
season. Lord, help me to work for Thee, and
with a single eye to Thy glory in all I do or say.

March 2nd. Eve of the Sabbath. Thinking
of going to the Lord’s Table on the morrow.
May God prepare my heart for it, and give me
a steadfast faith and thankful spirit; that, re-
ceiving that Holy Sacrament in true penitence,
I may dwell in Christ and Christ in me.

March 3rd. Rev. xxii. 17. Felt that I was
not worthy to go to His Holy Table in myself :
yet I was a thirsty one, and as such, I was in-

vited to come. Wanted to realize my oneness with Jesus: to know more of Him. Lord, increase my faith.

Evening. 1 Cor. x. 12. A solemn sermon. How sweet it is to go to His house and feast upon His Word: how swiftly the hours fly by. Lord, help me ever to hear Thy Word humbly; feeling my own sinfulness, and seeking grace to lead a new life.

Dec. 31st. The last day in the year. O Lord, help me to examine my heart. Have I grown in grace, and in the knowledge of Jesus? Is He more precious to me? I feel how cold my love is, how little I do for Him. Lord, help me to realize Thy presence more, and to live above the world.

1868. A New Year has dawned upon us. I desire to thank Thee, O Lord, for all Thy mercies to me. Though Thou hast afflicted me with great weakness, so that I cannot do as I did, yet how many comforts Thou hast spared me still. Oh,

let me value these mercies more, but let Thy Holy Word be my chief delight,—

“ By day to read its wonders o’er, and meditate by night :
Here would I learn how Christ has died to save my soul
from hell.

Not all the books on earth beside such heavenly wonders
tell.”

Jan. 5th. Sabbath morning. Lord, let Thy presence be with me : though not at Thy house, nor joining with Thy people in meeting around Thy Table, yet let me have an interest in Thy blood : let me feel that Thou art my Saviour. O Jesus, let me cling to Thee for life and salvation, and all I need. Have mercy upon me, Lord, and forgive all my unbelief, and hardness of heart, and wandering from Thee. I feel how weak my faith is, how cold my love, what feeble desires I have, and an evil heart murmuring and repining at Thy dealings with me in laying Thy hand upon me. Lead me to say, “ Thy will be done,” and look up to Thee in faith, and know that Thou doest all things well.

“When all created streams are dried Thy fulness is the same :

May I with this be satisfied, and glory in Thy Name.”

I hear the church bell calling Thy people to the house of prayer. Be with Thy servant who shall preach : give Him a message to every soul. Yet I thank Thee that Thou wilt be with those who are prevented from going to Thy house. Jesus be present with me : let me be one with Thee now, and one with Thee above.

Jan. 19th. I thank God for enabling me to go to His house again, to hear of Him and learn the way to heaven. The sermon was upon “sanctification,”—(1) in our being set apart for God ; (2) as progressive : till we are sanctified wholly, body, soul, and spirit for the Lord.

Jan. 27th. Oh, may I ever esteem it one of my highest privileges to attend the means of grace. I thank Thee, O Lord, for kind friends who care for me now I am weak ; but let me love Thee supremely, trusting in Jesus for all I need, both for time and eternity.

Feb. 2nd. Rev. iii. 8. "Behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it." The door of God's house is open to all who will enter in on the Sabbath; but some will not enter, they make excuses. (2) There is the open door of God's promises; (3) the open door of prayer; (4) the open door of usefulness. The humblest may serve God by trying to speak a word for Him at home, or scattering some of His words by the way-side, or by a consistent walk with God. Lastly, the door opened to heaven,—the company of Apostles, Prophets, Martyrs, and the whole number of the redeemed.

Feb. 23rd. The Sabbath. Heard our Minister preach from Acts xxvi., on repentance. Felt I wanted a godly sorrow for sin, a deeper knowledge of my sin as against a Holy God, a mourning that I pierced the Lord; yet felt also that there is no true happiness out of Christ, that though we may endure many conflicts with sin and Satan, yet wisdom's ways

are ways of pleasantness and all her paths are peace. Felt something of a longing to go to be with Jesus for ever. Lord, prepare me by Thy grace for that home above.

“Led by a Father’s gentle hand
Through this dark wilderness of woe,
We long to reach that peaceful land
Where streams of lasting comfort flow.”

March 16th. O my soul, look back on all the way in which thy God has led thee. O Lord, when I see Thy matchless love to me,—how Thou hast borne with all my manners in the wilderness, how I have resisted Thy love,—my soul is led to adore and praise Thy Holy Name. Oh, there is much to humble me: but I am lost in wonder, love, and praise. I must be driven out of all my refuges, and God must reign supreme. Every idol must be cast down. Jesus, my soul hangs her hope upon Thee, it has no other refuge.

Tried to speak a word for God, to induce a

relative to go to God's house: told her it was in love to her soul that I spoke to her; that God would not give His blessing unless we sought to obey His commandments. She thinks she does as well at home,—seemed displeased with me for speaking. But I am content to have my name cast out as evil, only let me speak, Lord, for *Thy* glory.

March 22nd. Text: Psalm lxxi. 16. The divisions were: (1) a sense of need; (2) a blessed resolve. (1) We have no strength of our own, it must come from the Lord; all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags. (2) The blessed resolve, I will make mention of Thy righteousness only. O Lord, Thou knowest my desires, help me to walk humbly with Thee.

April 12th. Easter day. Heb. xiii. 20, 21. Heads: (1) the God of peace; (2) the God of power, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus. Jews could not hold Him in the tomb: their watch and seal were vain. The

women go to His empty grave. "Why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? would'st thou detain Him there? He is not here, He is risen." (3) That *great* Shepherd of the sheep: He seeks out those who are lost and wandering, and brings them to the fold, and no man is able to pluck them out of His hand. (4) He is a covenant keeping God. Through the blood, etc. We must enter in by the blood: if we have any peace save in God's own way, it is a false peace. And, lastly, all this God does in order to work in us that which is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ our Lord; and then how the Apostle breaks out, after the prayer, in an ascription of praise to Him who liveth for ever and ever. So if we love Him, we shall ever mingle praise with our prayers for all He has done for us.



CHAPTER VI.

CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE AND SUFFERING—SOME PAPERS
OF M. A. O. ON AFFLICTION AND HEARING THE WORD.

HEALTH was now failing ; and having, as long as she was able, visited her sick neighbours and friends, M. A. O. was gradually obliged to succumb to a painful spinal complaint connected with an enlarged throat. It became very trying for her, for some months before she gave it up, to walk to Church, and it was a privilege to offer to her the rest of the Parsonage on Sunday between the services : hence the following, dated April 12th, 1869, written during the absence of her pastor, and breathing a grateful spirit :—

DEAR SIR,

I now take this opportunity of offering you my sincere thanks for the many many acts of kindness you have shown me. I have many times wished to thank you, but could not: words have failed me. I can never repay you, but my earnest prayer is, that the *Lord* may; that He may bless in body and soul both you and all who are dear to you, that he may grant you your heart's desire,—even to see all who are dear to you walking in wisdom's way.

Dear Sir, the Lord has laid upon me His afflicting hand, and my natural feelings sometimes seem against it, but grace enables me to say, "It is the Lord, let Him do what seemeth Him good." It may seem a rough way, but I feel it cannot be a wrong way. Does He not do it, to humble me, and to prove me, and to know what is in my heart. The enemy of my soul would try to persuade me that it is no use *my* going to God, such a poor guilty sinner as I

am. But God's grace, which enabled me first to go and cast myself at Jesus' feet, encourages me to go again and again ; for it is "not the righteous, but sinners Jesus came to call." Oh, dear Sir, when I think of God's wisdom and love in seeking out a poor wandering sheep like me, and never resting till He had brought me to His fold, it seems wonderful indeed to me : and since He has brought me there, how much heart-sin there has been ; how little love for Jesus : such coldness and deadness of heart, so much evil to deplore, that I ask myself sometimes, "Is there another heart like mine?" O, Lord Jesus, wash me : make me Thine, and help me to live for Thy glory, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

If pining sickness waste away
My strength, in premature decay ;
My Father, still I'll strive to say,
"Thy will be done !"

Yours, with grateful thanks,

M. A. O.

One evening she said to me, during a visit, "I think God gave me a season of much joy at the end of *last* year, perhaps to prepare for a time of suffering now." She pointed out a passage in the life of Mrs. Winslow, which had been lent to her, as descriptive of an experience similar to her own :—

"A little more than twelvemonths ago, the Lord led me up into the mount, and showed me in a measure His glory, and caused His goodness to pass before me. My soul was happy: oh, how happy! I felt I was with God, and that God was with me,—was permitted to talk with Him as a friend talketh with a friend,—perceived in Christ a fulness I had no conception of, and it was but, 'Ask and ye shall receive.' Shall I ever forget that most precious season of Divine love? Oh, never: never may it be blotted out of my mind for one moment! But how is it now with thee, O my soul! what has thy God been showing thee of late? He has been showing me more of the hidden evil of my

heart, and calling me to sore conflicts with the world, the flesh, and the devil. With this three-fold troop I have had much to do lately ; but, thanks be to God, my Saviour is not out of sight, and He has engaged to bring me off more than conqueror." (P. 82.)

The delight she had in attending upon God's ordinances was manifest to all who saw her toiling to the house of prayer, and coming to the Lord's Table as long as she was able to draw herself there, and afterwards she was brought in a chair. It will not soon be forgotten, by many who attended Christ Church, what a trial it was to her to get up the steps at the entrance, assisted as she often was by some kind Christian friend. What a condemnation was her example to the many around, who make little or no effort to be present at the means of grace : nor was she one of those who seem disposed to argue, that since she had learned the way of salvation she might dispense with the constant attendance upon those ordinances. No :

how much she loved the habitation of God's house, and all the meetings for prayer and the promotion of Christian work, must have struck every one of her fellow worshippers. As long as it was possible for her to be there, she was found at her class in the Sunday-school,—at the Saturday Evening Prayer Meeting, and at the Monthly Missionary Working Party. In her last illness, she said, "I have often gone to church and been satisfied there, as with marrow and fatness;" and she reminded her pastor that the last Sunday she was there, the sermon was from the text, "Arise and eat, because the journey is too great for thee." She added, "I did not think *then* I had this journey before me:" alluding to the suffering she had gone through. "Ah, how should I be if I had to seek a Saviour now? I could never do it," she continued. "One text you spoke to me when I first came to the Bible class has often been a comfort to me: you said, 'I am glad to see you coming to join us here, and I feel sure that He who has

begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Christ.’”

That she was one of those who are able also to admonish one another, will be seen by the papers which follow. The first is upon hearing the Word: which she entitles,

“A few thoughts on St. Luke vi. 47—49.

“Jesus had been preaching His sermon on the mount: that being brought to a close, He applies it to them, in these words, ‘Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them, I will show you to whom he is like. He is like a man which built an house and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock; and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it, for it was founded upon a rock. But he that heareth and doeth not, is like a man that without a foundation built an house upon the earth, against which the stream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell, and the ruin of that house was great.’

“ We have here plainly shown to us two distinct characters sitting under the preached Word: both alike hearers. But hearing the Word is followed by different results: the one, hearing and *doing*; the other, hearing and doing not. St. James says the man that is a doer of the Word is blessed: but those who do it not deceive their own selves. (James i. 23, 25.)

“ Jesus, whose eyes are as a flame of fire, looked round on that company gathered before Him, and knew which of them would profit by His teachings, and who would not. There were a multitude of people listening to Him, and St. Matthew tells us, they were astonished at His doctrine. But how many of that number would lay to heart His sayings, and go and act upon them? Perhaps there could be seen among them the eager intense *listener* drinking in every word. Then, again, there might be many who went out of mere curiosity to hear this new preacher: they perhaps had heard much about Jesus of Nazareth, now they could hear Him for them-

selves. And there might be many who were very indifferent and careless, having very little concern either to hear or do. But there were a few gathered round Him who would *follow* Him, and listen to His voice. They had left their earthly callings and friends, they would ponder these things in their hearts, and seek for grace to act upon them. Now, to what were these two characters compared? The one who heard and acted was called wise, the other was called foolish. The first one, we are told, is like a man that built his house upon a rock: he digged deep, secured a good foundation. He did not hear ignorantly or carelessly, but he digged deep: he wanted to be well satisfied in his mind that it was even as the preacher declared; and being convinced by the Spirit that it was so, he laid hold of that truth with a firm grasp, became established in it as on a rock. We learn too from this something more. That holding fast the truth and believing in Christ, does not prevent us from experiencing trials and difficulty:

for we are told that the flood arose, and the stream pressed vehemently upon that house. The other foolish man, who built his house upon the earth, or sand, experienced the same trials. They were both alike in this, but there was a great difference in the result of these trials. What was the result? The answer to this is, that all the ills of life may combine, yet if the hope of a man is firmly laid upon *Christ* and built upon His word, they fail to shake that man's hope. Why? 'for it is founded upon a Rock,' and that Rock is Christ. But how different is it with those whose only hope is in the world, and the things of time! When trouble, or sickness, or losses, or perhaps death comes,—they have no stay, no firm abiding place, and they fall, and the ruin of that house is great: how great, none but a lost soul knows, and God, who knows all things; and He has not only revealed to us in His Word something of what that ruin is, as a warning, but also that He has provided a remedy in

Christ. For, blessed be God, He would have all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth."

On going in to see her one day, after she became unable to meet with us at church, she said, "I have been repeating the verses (a little altered to suit my case) of one of my favourite hymns :—

"Sanctify me, Lord, and bless :
Breathe Thy Spirit, give Thy peace ;
Come and dwell within my heart :
Life and light and joy impart.

"Make me now in Thee complete,
Make me now for glory meet,—
Meet to stand before Thy sight,
Partner with the saints in light."

The following paper, which she wrote *on affliction*, was remarkably illustrated in her own experience.

"Affliction has been rightly termed a school : it is a school where there are many lessons to be learned. What are they ? First, a lesson

of patience : we have need of patience to bear with all the weakness and weariness that attends affliction. Secondly, a lesson of *humility* : feeling that we are but dust, and that the strength God has given us He can by a word, a breath remove ; and that therefore it is vain to boast of our strength, or anything we possess below. Is it friends ? He can strip us of all. Is it health or vigour ? He can make it perfect weakness. Is it riches ? The silver and the gold are His, and He can take them away. Thirdly, a lesson of our own nothingness, and misery, and sinfulness.

“ When God lays His hand upon us, and draws us aside from the world by any trial, He sometimes lifts the veil, and then tells us, ‘ Ah, if I had not given you this trial, you would have wandered far from Me, in forbidden paths : the world and its pleasures and sin were getting too strong a hold upon you. The faith, the hope, the joy you once possessed, your peace in Christ was marred, and dim through your

own unbelief; and had I not stretched out my hand and held the rod, and caused you to pass under it, it would have been far worse with you. But, in love to your soul, I drew you aside, and showed you the deceitfulness of your heart, how utterly unable you were to think one good thought, or do one good action.' It is thus affliction is sanctified to us when it is the means of bringing us nearer to Himself. He shows us it is a Father's hand that holds the rod: 'Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth,' etc. I will cause you to pass under the rod, and bring you into the bond of the covenant. It has been said it is not that our afflictions are light in themselves, but only when they are compared with the eternal weight of glory. It is sweet to be able to look up in child-like confidence, and say, 'Father, not my will but Thine be done;' and if accepted in Christ, nothing can effectually shake the faith of the child of God. Is Christ not true to His word? Does He promise then that all shall be smooth and bright with us?

No: He says, In the world ye shall have tribulation, but in Me ye shall have peace: 'Shall we receive good at the hand of the Lord, and shall we not receive evil,' and shall we murmur, because He is as good as His word when He says, 'In the world ye shall have tribulation'? O Lord, help us to grow in grace, and learn obedience in suffering, to be made holy, like Thee. Let Thy will be done in me and by me. Help me to be an example of submission and patience, that those who are dear to me may be constrained to follow Jesus,—to serve Him.

'Trials make the promise sweet,
Trials give new life to prayer,
Trials bring me to His feet,—
Lay me low, and keep me there.

'Worldlings may escape the rod,—
Sunk in earthly vain delight;
But the true born child of God
Must not, would not, if he might.'

“ Lastly, let it be a means of preparing me for

heaven: there shall not enter *there* any affliction or trial of any kind whatever. There, the tried and tempted follower of Jesus shall enjoy an eternal rest; there 'the inhabitants shall not say, I am sick,' for all of that great multitude 'have come *out* of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.'

'No cloud those blissful regions know,
For ever bright and fair ;
For sin, the source of mortal woe,
Can never enter there.

'Oh, may the heavenly prospect fire
Our hearts with ardent love,
Till wings of faith and strong desire
Bear every thought above.'"

To this paper on affliction were added the following well-known lines, which seem to have accorded with her own feelings at that time.

THE CUP.

“The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?”—JOHN xviii. 11.

Musing o'er all my Father's love,—
 How sweet it is !
 Methought I heard a gentle voice,—
 “Child, here's a cup ;
 I've mixed it : drink it up.”
 My heart did sink : I could no more rejoice.

“O Father, dost Thou love Thy child ?
 Then why this cup ?”

“One day, my child, I said to thee,
 Here is a flower
 Pluck't from a beauteous bower :
 Did you complain, or take it thankfully ?

“One day I gave thee pleasant fruit
 From a choice tree :
 How pleased, how grateful you did seem !
 You said, ‘I love
 Thee : faithful may I prove.’
 Your heart was full : with joy your eyes did beam.

“That flower was mine, that fruit was mine,
 This cup is mine,
 And all that's in it comes from Me !”
 “Father, I'm still :
 Forgive my naughty will.
 But what's this cup : may I look in and see ?”

"You see? my child! You *must* not see:
 Christ only saw
 His destined cup of bitter gall.
 No, child: believe!
 Meekly the cup receive,
 And know that love and mercy mixed it all."

"O Father, must it be?"
 "Yes child, it must!"
 "Then give the needed medicine.
 Be by my side:
 Only Thy face don't hide,—
 I'll drink it *all!* It must be good: 'tis Thine."

But the time of her departure from us was now drawing near; and the following lines, which she wrote, though they may be thought simple and poor as to their poetry, yet truly represent the calm submission, the peace and hope which she enjoyed through her illness.

"YET A LITTLE WHILE."

"Yet a little while," the Saviour once did say,
 "My face you shall not see, because I go away;
 But if I thus depart, my spirit shall descend
 To teach and comfort you, and guide you to the end.

“ Yet a little while, thou tried and tempted one,
Satan no more shall vex, for he shall be cast down.
Meekly take up thy cross, and bear it after Me ;
Thus to the end endure : thou soon my face shalt see.

“ Yet a little while, and all my children here
That mourn on earth, shall there in bliss with Me appear :
For in that land of love partings shall be unknown,
And all the dead in Christ shall meet around His throne.”

Yet a little while, my life will then be o'er,
The place that knows me now will know me then no more ;
And this frail tenement I to the grave will trust,
Till the Archangel's trump shall wake my slumbering dust.

.
O Saviour, bid me now follow where Thou dost lead,
And ever hear Thy voice, and in Thy footsteps tread :
Then in a little while, Lord Jesus, Thou wilt come,
And suffering be exchanged for an eternal home.



CHAPTER VII.

SOME ACCOUNT OF M. A. O.'S LAST SICKNESS AND DEATH
—EXTRACT FROM THE FUNERAL SERMON.

The following letter not only illustrates her Christian character, but supplies some particulars respecting her last illness and death, and is also a touching record of her patience under suffering.

SIR,

At your request I write what few recollections I have of our dear departed friend, M. A. O. I have known her intimately since the time of her conversion, which is now eleven years ago, and I never remember seeing her in an unchristian temper. For her meekness I almost envied her, and yet she was not fearful in speaking the

truth, or in reproof faithfully when she saw a reason; she would gently say, "I am sorry to see you act or hear you speak in such a spirit: it is not the spirit a Christian should show." Not that she thought highly of herself: far from that. She often confessed how sinful her heart was, and how depraved her nature. In prayer, she seemed like a child pleading with a father, meek and lowly in heart: many times repeating, "For Jesus Christ's sake I ask this:" feeling afraid, I think, lest she should presume on the mercy of God without often making mention of the only Name given under heaven among men, whereby we may find acceptance with God. In her daily walk and conversation she adorned the doctrine of God her Saviour, I think I may say, in *all* things; ever anxious to speak a word in season to those she came in contact with. She visited the sick when able, and read and conversed with the aged women in the almshouses near her home, once a week. I mention this because she was one of the quiet ones of

the land, and it shows, although we may be weak we may still do some little work for God.

I visited her in her last illness, and found her patient and perfectly submissive to the will of God. Calling to see her one day, she asked me to read a hymn; when I had read it she said, "Is not that a beautiful hymn?" I said, "Yes, when we can say *that*." She said, "I can: I can from my heart. That expresses my feelings exactly." The hymn spoke of losing our will in God's; and of placing all things in His hands, —our life, our death, our sufferings; and *her* sufferings were very great. * * *

About a fortnight before her death, she and all around her thought her dying; she called her parents and other relatives to her bedside, and spoke earnestly and affectionately to each separately, and kissing them, bade them "farewell," as we all thought for the last time, and she said, "Oh, I am so happy: bless the Lord!" Seeing her lips move, I said, "Did you speak?" She replied, "I was asking the Lord to give me

strength to bear this peace and joy: it is more than I can bear. I asked for *peace*, and now I have more than this poor weak body can bear, unless the Lord strengthens me. I have not a doubt, not a fear." She wished to see the doctor. When he came, she said, "Am I dying? You need not be afraid to tell me: I am not afraid." She thanked him for his kindness, and all who waited on her; but fearful lest she might have spoken harshly to any of them, she asked each to forgive her if she had, as she only wished to speak for their soul's good, and for the glory of God. She revived; but I think after this until her death, it was a quiet waiting for her summons.

On the Sunday before she died [on Monday], I shall never forget her calm waiting look. [Another correspondent alludes to this below.] She tried to find a piece for me to read, upon the words, "Look up," but her weak hands could not hold the book.* She said to her mother in

* See Hymn p. 39.

the night, "The Lord will never leave us nor forsake us." Her's was a quiet passing away ; she was unable to speak from six o'clock on Monday morning until she died. "A gentle sigh her fetters broke," and she is now, I have not the least doubt, among the ransomed of the Lord. E——.

Another friend writes as follows. "I called to see her about a fortnight before she died, when she told me that she had at times doubted whether she was really a child of God ; but she had been enabled by God's grace to cling to Christ, although her faith had been weak ; and she said that the following words had come to her mind with much sweetness : 'I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not.' She felt how good it was of Christ to pray for her. The last time I saw her, about three days before she died, she was meditating on the words, 'My soul waiteth for Thee, more than they who watch for the morning.' Oh, we must rejoice for her ! she has

entered into rest, and all her pains and sufferings are over. May I follow her as she followed Christ, and be ever at His feet listening, like Mary of old, to His Word. May God, who in His mercy has enabled us to choose the good part, keep us to the end.

“M. A. H——.”

Another writes. “One thing is particularly impressed upon my mind in looking back upon her Christian course: *viz.*, readiness to own herself in a fault. She would be sure to ask me to forgive her, when perhaps I was most in fault; and would say, ‘It was very wrong of me: will you forgive me?’

“One Thursday evening I found her in tears because she could not go to God’s house.”

Thus she sank calmly to her rest, October 19, 1869, after some hours of unconsciousness.

The following was received by her Pastor soon after her decease: written by one of her friends of the first mentioned Bible class.

DEAR SIR,

I feel in losing M. A. O—— I have lost a dear Christian friend. I do not wish her back again, but I did think I should have liked her to have lived a little longer: still I trust I can say, Not my will, but Thine, O Lord, be done. I know my loss is her gain. We have been united together in Christian fellowship for some few years; we have had much close conversation together,—so close as I never had with any other friend. This makes me miss her all the more. She was one I could tell all my trouble to. The Word of God says, “Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ;” and truly she did. She has been a great help to me in my little work,* for though we could not always go out together on account of her health, yet she would stop at home and pray while I went out.

I remember, on one occasion, I was longing to get into a house where there was a poor woman ill; I tried and tried again, and could not. I

* *i. e.*, Visiting the poor and sick.

went to M. A. O., and asked her to pray for me ; and while she was praying God was answering, —the door was opened, and I was received. She was one who loved to make known the Saviour to all around her, though in a quiet way. Oh, pray for me, dear Pastor, that I may have more of that meek and lowly spirit which she possessed ; and as she followed in the steps of Jesus, so I may follow in hers. And may the time soon come, when all God's beloved children shall be gathered together in their heavenly home.

“Oh, glorious hour ! Oh, blest abode !
We shall be near and like our God,
And flesh and sin no more control
The sacred pleasures of the soul.”

Dear Pastor, be not weary in well-doing, for in due season you shall reap if you faint not. Pardon the liberty I have taken in writing to you.

F. R——.

I will conclude with an extract from a sermon preached after the funeral of M. A. O., from the text, "And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him." (Mal. iii. 17.) To be real Christians now, may appear a small matter in the eyes of many,—but how will it appear in that day when Christ makes up His jewels; and when we behold the distinction which Christ puts between His faithful followers and others? If we have any real wisdom, let us see now that we join ourselves to the people of God. In the words before the text there are marks by which the people of God may be known: let me first point them out.

The first description given of them is, that they fear the Lord.

The second: they think upon His Name.

The third: they speak often one to another of Him.

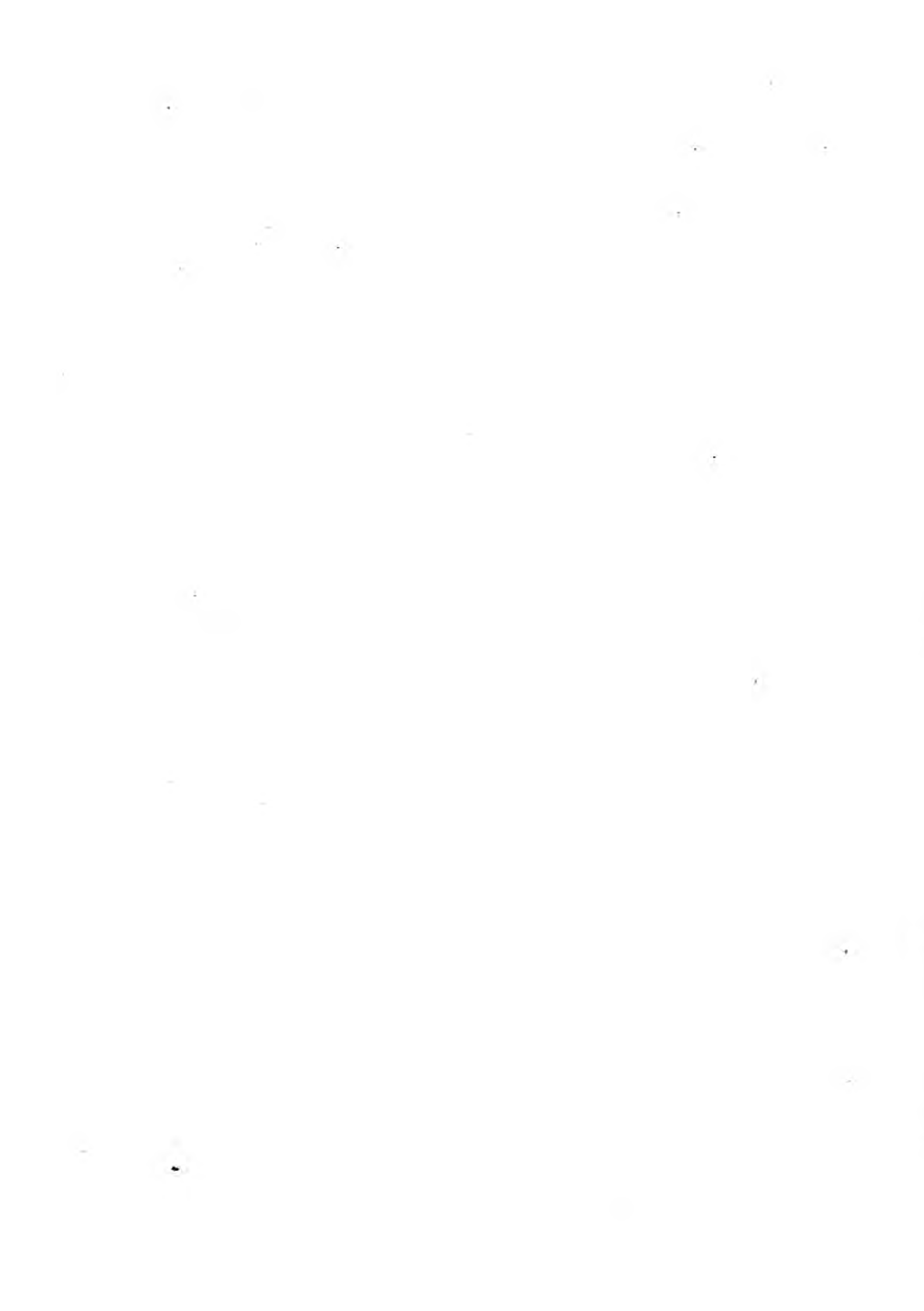
Then there follows the Lord's *promise* to them:

for "He who seeth in secret will reward them openly." He is continually taking them home one by one: He first prepares them by a thousand trials; by the furnace of affliction faith is tried, and every grace; and when He has finished His work He removes them. Thus some are frequently called from among us to enter into rest. I do from my heart believe that the one lately departed was one of the Lord's jewels, for she had all the marks of which I have been speaking; and now we may rejoice for her, that her sufferings are all over for ever, and fully believe that she is in the presence of her Saviour. But in that day called "the day of Christ," God will gather *all* His saints together from all parts of the earth; when Christ comes they will form, so to speak, the jewels of His crown. Then will it be fully known what the happiness of the Christian really is. And they shall be *Mine*, saith the Lord. Oh, what an honour to have it said to us, "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the

beginning of the world :” to have laboured and not fainted, and then to be called to enter the joy of our Lord.

Now, dear brethren, when some are taken away from us and we feel their loss, may we see others beginning to fear the Lord, to think and speak good of His Name. I invite you all in Christ’s Name to join His standard : to come and accept His offered salvation. I ask, Who among us will this day consecrate themselves unto the Lord, as those that are baptized for the dead? Let me entreat you all to give up yourselves to Him now! for remember, that Christ will soon come to make up His jewels, and then (as it was the desire of the departed, that God alone should have the glory), oh, then may He be glorified in your salvation and mine, and so shall we “rejoice in the day of Christ, that we have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain.”

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PREFACE.

HAVING reason to believe, from the testimony of many, that several of the papers in the little book called "Earnest Words," have been honoured by God, and made useful to souls, I have determined to prepare a new edition. In it I have retained the articles which I think the Lord has been pleased to bless; altering and adding to them, however, so as in my judgment to improve their likelihood of general usefulness: and in the place of some of the old papers, I have substituted new. I have also to the end of every chapter, in this edition, added a text and a little prayer, and have added a seventh to my "Six Short Rules for Christians."

My object in preparing this edition has been to produce a comprehensive, plain-spoken, yet cheap book, suited for circulation amongst all classes: a book having that in it which, under God's blessing, might awaken the careless, instruct the anxious, and even feed the Christian; and knowing that whatever the new matter may do, the old has already been made effectual for all these things, I am anxious that this edition should be very extensively circulated. I have written no book that I would rather see in the hands of the multitude, because I have written no book which I believe more likely to be generally useful.

I have communicated my wishes on this subject to my publishers, Messrs. WILLIAM HUNT AND COMPANY, to whom this edition of "Earnest Words" belongs; and to whom applications may be made for copies on special terms, for gratuitous distribution.

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