



Bodleian Libraries

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

This book is part of the collection held by the Bodleian Libraries and scanned by Google, Inc. for the Google Books Library Project.

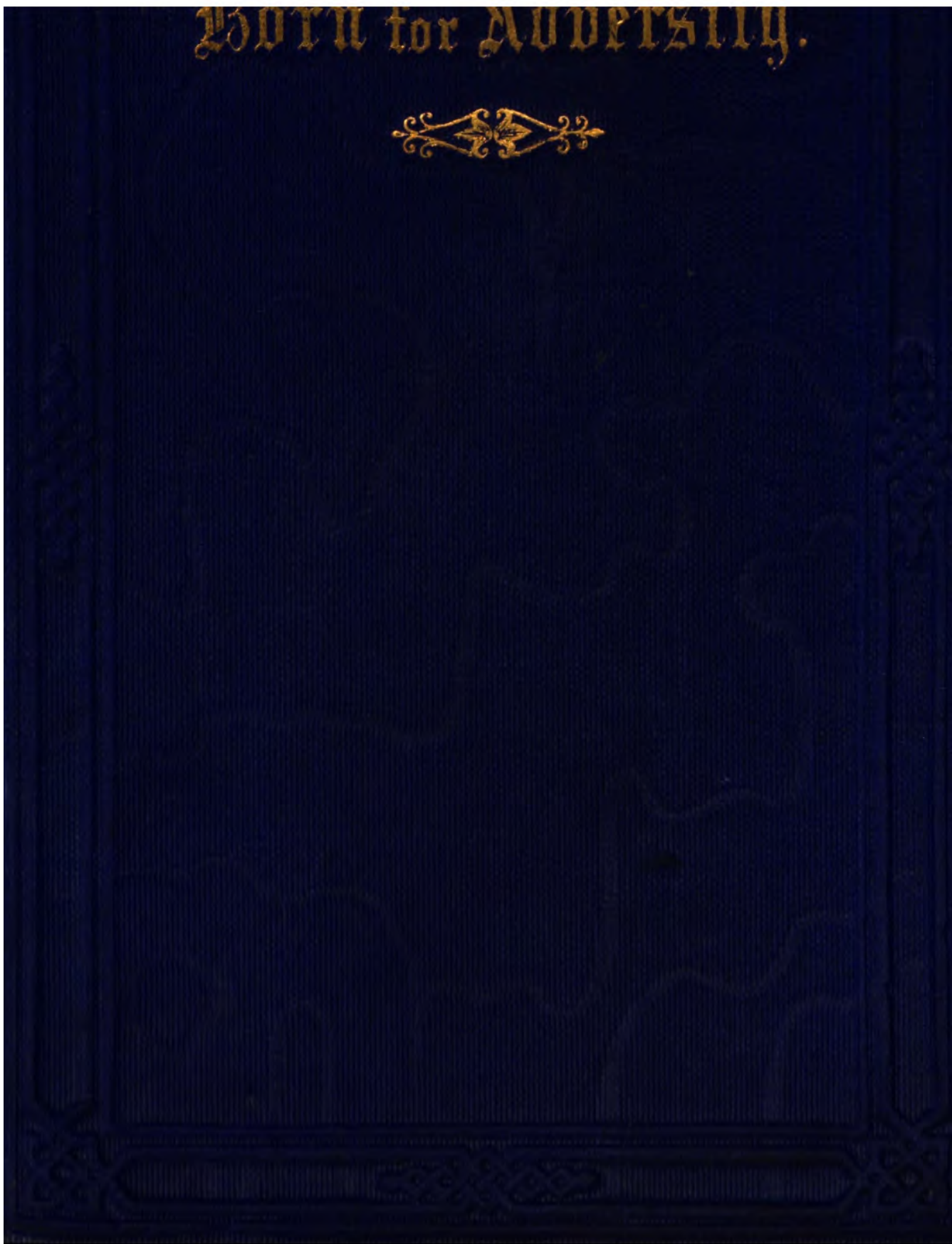
For more information see:

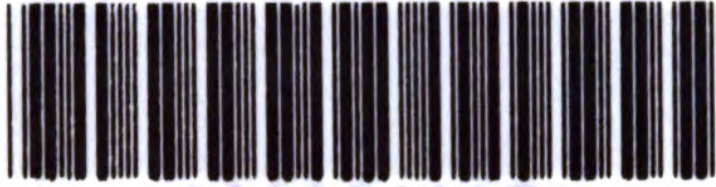
<http://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/dbooks>



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 2.0 UK: England & Wales (CC BY-NC-SA 2.0) licence.

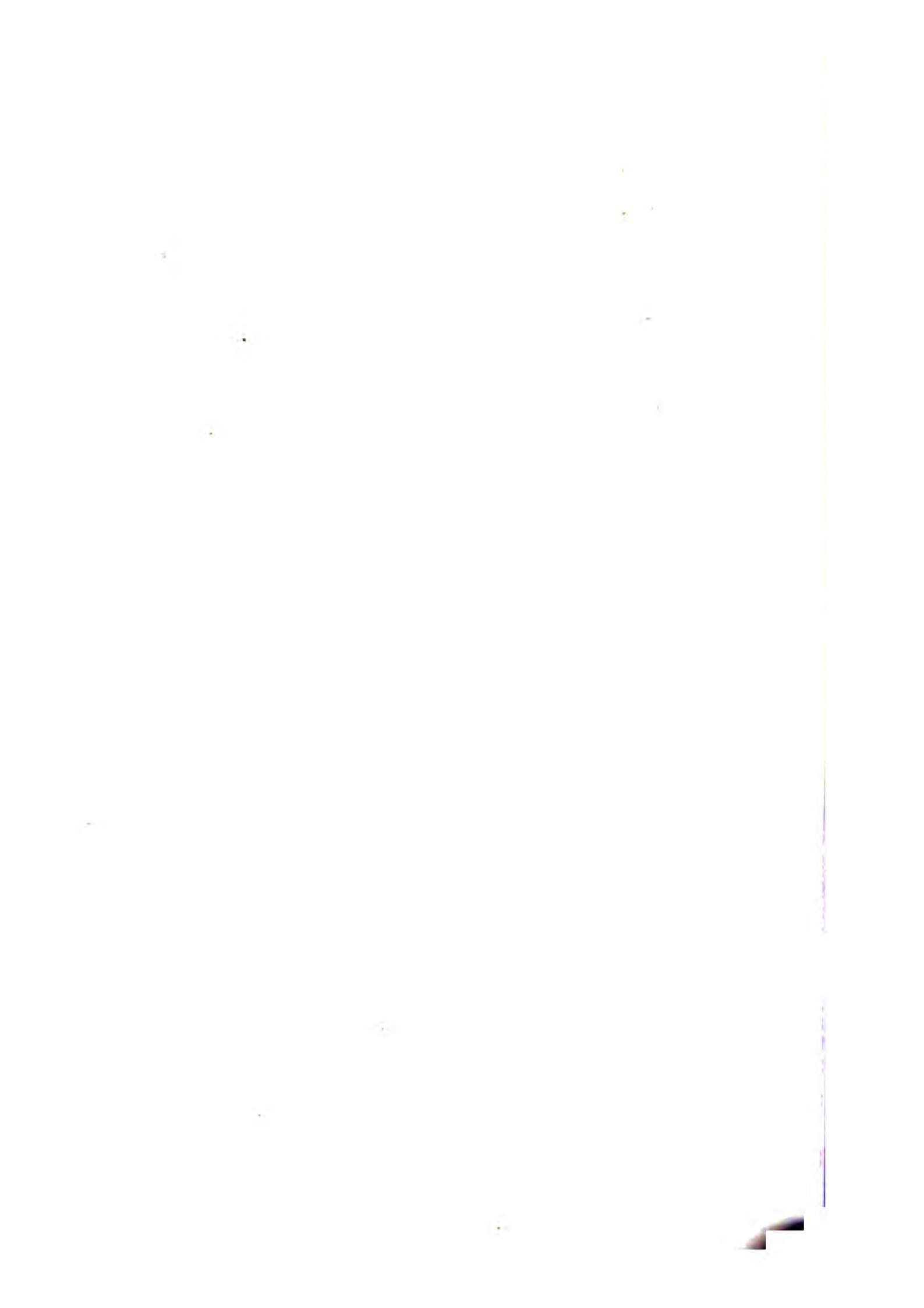
PORTA for ADVERTISING.

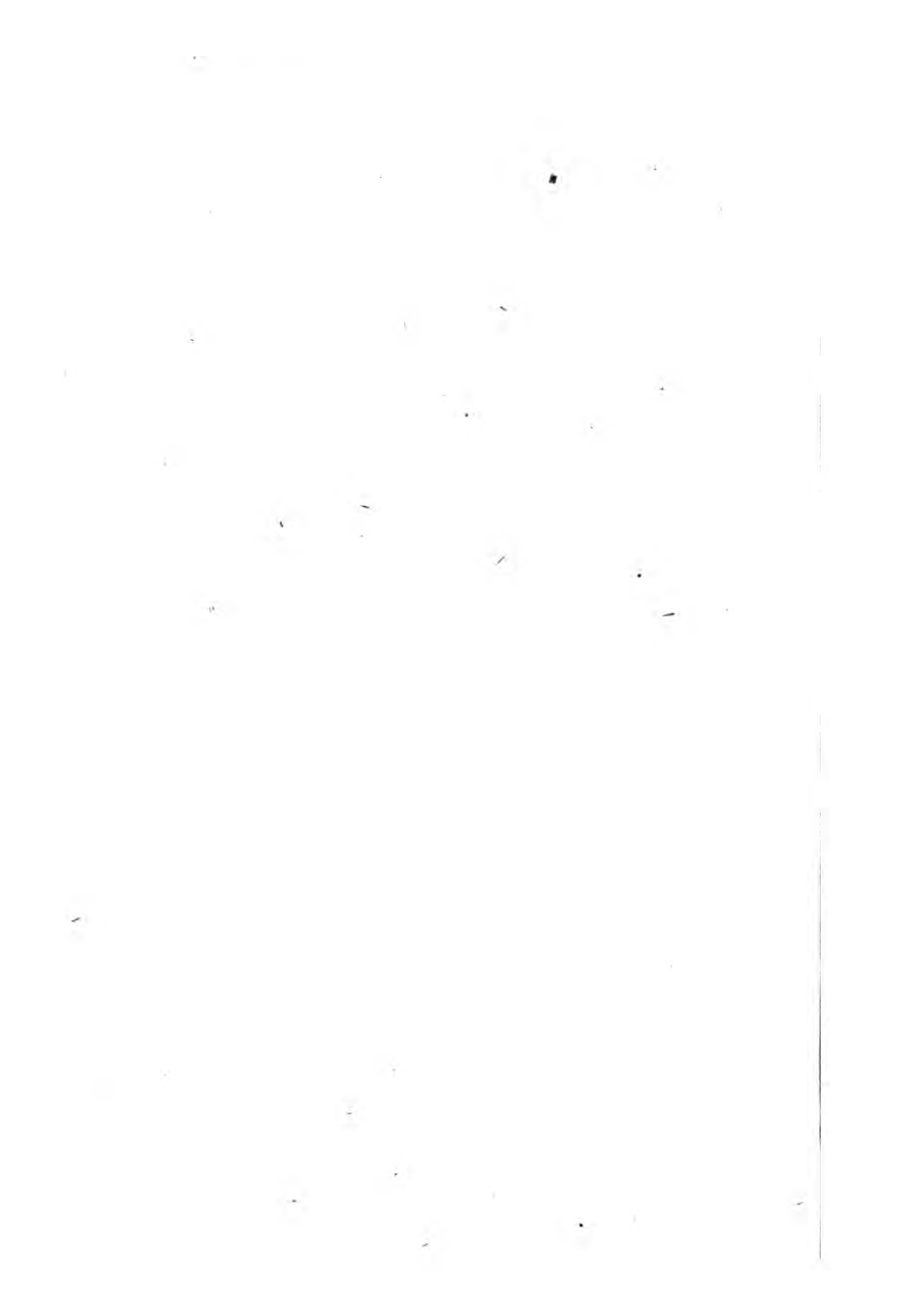




6000939970







THE BROTHER
BORN FOR ADVERSITY;

OR,

THE SIMILARITY OF THE
SAVIOUR'S SORROWS AND SUFFERINGS

TO

THOSE OF HIS FOLLOWERS:

Christ

“ In the world ye shall have tribulation, but in Me ye shall have peace.”—JOHN xvi. 33.

LONDON :
JOHN SNOW, PATERNOSTER ROW

1855.
107. d. 140.

P R E F A C E .



THE greater part of this little work appeared a few months ago in the *Christian Witness*, and it is chiefly owing to its having there excited some attention, and met with some approval, that it has been reproduced in its present form. It has struck the Author as a somewhat singular circumstance, that in the whole range of Christian theology, so far as he is acquainted with it, the identity of the Sorrows and Sufferings of the Saviour with those of his Followers has never been dwelt upon, or prominently brought out. It is a blessed theme, and one to which he trusts this unpretending publication may

least expected. At times they come singly; at other times they come like a flood. In one form or other every saint of God is constantly reminded, from painful experience, that while on earth he is in a vale of tears. In circumstances such as these, it is well that the believer in Jesus should remember that no new thing has happened to him. He but treads the path in which he can distinctly trace the footprints of those of God's people who have preceded him in the road to heaven. In the presence of this fact, his heart is greatly comforted. When he remembers, in the midst of all his troubles, that his experiences are essentially the same as those of the saints who have gone to glory before him—that he is but bearing the same heavy burden, and but drinking the same bitter cup of suffering and sorrow as they bore and drank on their heavenward way—he derives from the consideration no small measure of comfort. He looks forward, in bright and blessed anticipations, to the advent of that period when he, like them, shall come off victorious over all the ills which are in-

cident to the present state of existence, and be numbered among the happy throng who are now made partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.

But if it be the source of great consolation to the people of God, amid all their troubles and trials on earth, to know that their experience resembles, in all its essential features, that of the saints in every previous age of the world, how much more adapted must it be to minister consolation to the mind of the believer in Christ, to know that his adorable Redeemer, when he sojourned on earth, had to pass through the same sea of troubles as that on which his followers are tempest-tossed while prosecuting their voyage to that happy haven on the shores of eternity, to which they are all so wistfully looking forward, and which, sooner or later, they shall all most surely reach. And even the latest will not be long. A few fleeting years, at most, will suffice to see all the saints of God, now buffeted by the billows of temptation and trouble, "safe landed" on that "fair Canaan's

coast" on which, with the eye of faith, they are steadfastly and fondly gazing. As we fix our contemplations on the sufferings and sorrows of our Lord, during the season of his public ministry on earth, we can discern a special sweetness and peculiar propriety in that portion of his heavenly teachings in which he says, "In the world"—or "though in the world," for that is the right rendering of the passage—"ye shall have tribulation, in me ye shall have peace. Be of good cheer, for I have overcome the world." How inexpressibly blessed to know, not only that the sufferings and sorrows of Jesus, when on earth, bore a remarkable resemblance to ours—were, indeed, in all essential respects the same; but that as surely as he escaped unscathed by the tremendous surges which swept over his head, so surely will every disciple of his come off more than a conqueror in every contest in which he may have to engage.

Man's life is like a troubled sea,
 When winds do blow and waves do roar;
 'Tis vain to seek for rest till He
 Has brought us safe to Canaan's shore.

The striking similarity between the sufferings which our Saviour experienced, and the sorrows which he endured when on earth, to the sufferings and sorrows which fall to the lot of the saints of God, is a subject so full of sweetness and so eminently adapted to sustain the soul, amidst the trials and troubles of life, that we may well hope it will prove both pleasing and profitable to us to turn our attention to the subject somewhat in detail. What can be more—what can be so much—calculated to soothe our own sorrows as to meditate closely and constantly on the experiences of him who was emphatically “The Man of Sorrows?” What more adapted to assuage our own grief than to keep unceasingly before the eye of our minds the scenes through which he had to pass, of whom it could with a special propriety be said that he “was acquainted with grief.” It was partly in order that Jesus might be able to enter into our feelings when overwhelmed with grief, and to sympathise with us when submerged in the deep waters of sorrow, that he was made in all points like as

we are, with the one exception of sin. Few passages of God's Word are dearer to the tempted and tried believer than those in which the perfect humanity of our Lord is clearly unfolded. It is unspeakably blessed to be assured that as "the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself took part of the same." "Verily, he took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham, that in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren." "We have not an high priest who cannot be touched with a feeling of our infirmities, but one who was, in all points, tempted like as we are, though without sin;" and "therefore, he is able and willing to succour them who are tempted." Jesus is, in one word, "The Brother Born for Adversity." How endearing this character to those whose daily and hourly experience reminds them that this is not their rest, but that it is through much tribulation they must enter into the kingdom of God.

The subject may be divided into three

heads. The similarity of the Saviour's experience to that of his disciples admits of being shown, with equal conclusiveness, with regard to the **PHYSICAL**, the **MENTAL**, and the **SPIRITUAL** aspects of his and their life. Let us dwell for a brief period on each of these aspects of the Christian's experience, as compared with that of his Lord and Master when he sojourned on earth.

CHAPTER II.

PHYSICAL EXPERIENCES.

How sweet, 'mid all the ills of life,
To think on Him—the Brother born ;
To soothe our souls when sorrow's rife,
To heal our hearts with anguish torn.

Bless'd sympathetic Saviour, I
To Thee would ever upward look ;
Oh, be Thy presence ever nigh,
In parched lands, a living brook.

FIRST of all, the far larger number of the followers of Christ are either in *deep poverty*, or in *straitened circumstances*. This is an evil, partly physical and partly mental. It always has been—always will be so. Many of God's people who are obliged to make what is called an appearance in society especially know, in their painful experience, what it is to struggle with limited means. They are indeed more legitimate objects of commiseration than those who are clothed in rags, and live in the most

humble dwellings. Their education and position in society give a point and pungency to the privations which they have to endure, to which those who have been born and bred in the lowlier spheres of life are strangers, because devoid of the same susceptibilities of feeling.

To both classes of sufferers, it must prove the source of strong consolation to feel, that Jesus, from his own experience, knows what their privations and sufferings are. He was the offspring of parents sunk in the depths of poverty. He was born in a stable, and laid in a manger. His infancy, his boyhood, his manhood, his public ministry, were severally marked by his want of even the necessaries of life. The foxes had holes, and the birds of the air had nests, but the Son of Man had not where to lay his head.

Amazing thought that God's own Son,
Who, with his Father, always one,
Did in his glory share,
Should come from Heaven to lowest earth,
Submit to be of meanest birth,
And brought into a world of care.

He travelled on foot from city to city, and from village to village, without even the smallest coin of the country in his pocket. The touching story of his being unable to pay the small sum of a penny, when exacted as tribute to Cæsar, and of his laying a fish under contribution for the amount, affords conclusive proof of this. Indeed, the presumption is, that after Jesus had commenced his public ministry, he never had any money at all; for we have no reason to suppose that he would have accepted money from any one; while we are morally certain that he never solicited pecuniary gifts. The supposition that Jesus was, from first to last, during the years of his public ministry, entirely destitute of money, is strengthened, if not established, by the fact, that when his enemies sought to trepan him into saying something against the existing government, he asked them to show him a penny, in order that he might confound and silence them by pointing out the superscription of Cæsar, and then telling them that they were to render unto Cæsar the things

that were Cæsar's, while they were to render to God the things that were God's. It is all but certain that he had not at this time a penny in his possession; because if he had, its being produced would have sufficed for the purpose of inculcating the doctrine which he wished to illustrate and enforce, instead of having to ask those who thought to entrap him, for the temporary use of a penny. The fact that Jesus never was possessed of any money, not even of the smallest coin of the realm, may be inferred from the circumstance of his instructing his apostles, when sending them out on their mission of mercy to mankind, not to take with them gold, or silver, or copper, or scrip, but to trust in God for the daily supply of their daily wants. We may be very sure of this, that what Christ commanded his disciples to do, he did himself. If it was his will that they should be without money, we may feel certain that he himself did not possess a farthing.

As regards, therefore, the money of this world, the Lord Jesus was worse off than any

of his disciples, for however poor they may be, it would not be easy to meet with one who is not at times the possessor of at least the smallest coin of the realm.

Think of this, ye followers of Jesus, who, though poor in this world, are rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom. Your Saviour can and does sympathize with you in your destitution, having himself, all his life, at least during the period of his public ministry, been immersed in the very depths of poverty, though Lord of heaven and earth,—the Maker and Monarch of all worlds.

You feel the stern gripe of poverty. You may not, at this moment, know when or whence is to come your next morsel of bread; and you may be in want of fuel and clothing as well as of food, because you are entirely destitute of the means wherewith to procure either. Yours is a painful case. It is a hard destiny, made harder still by the reflection that as you look forward through the vista of the future, there is not, so far as earthly considerations are concerned, one single ray of

hope to dispel, even partially, the darkness in which that future is enveloped. Even so, there are for you sources of comfort. You are but in the condition in which your Lord was all his life long placed. Never did human being know more sensibly, from experience, the ills of poverty, than did your adorable Redeemer. And if he bore them all so patiently, so submissively, will not you also bear those privations which spring from your deep poverty, with cheerfulness, saying in this, as in all other respects, "Not as I will, O Lord, but as thou wilt."

Believer in Jesus, though poor here below,

In faith ye are rich—your portion is God ;

Let this be your solace as onward ye go,

Along the sad stages of life's rugged road,

To your home in Heaven—your seat in the skies,

Where, ever released from the rude gripe of want,

Your hosannahs to God shall unceasingly rise,

Possessing those treasures for which your souls pant.

And as Jesus was, in regard to poverty, in life, so was he in his death. He was indebted to a secret disciple, not only for the grave, but for the clothes in which his body was wrapped,

previous to being placed in the coffin. But for Joseph of Arimathea, he would not, so far as we know, have received the usual rites of sepulture. So that the circumstances, in regard to this world's goods, in which the Saviour died, were in the strictest keeping with the life of extreme poverty which he lived. Those, therefore, of his poverty-stricken followers who have every reason to suppose that they will die in comparative destitution—it may be in a workhouse—as they have hitherto lived a life of privation—cannot fail to derive comfort from the consideration, that their circumstances in this respect, in their death as in their life, will be no worse than were those of their Lord and Master, when he came to the closing scene of his earthly existence.

The similarity between those experiences of Christ and his disciples, when the Saviour dwelt in our world, which are partly mental and partly physical, is no less remarkable than the resemblance between those of his and their experiences, which are *purely physical or*

bodily. The people of God have to endure, with the world in general, evils of a secular kind. Their regeneration by the Holy Spirit, and the renovation of their moral nature, do not affect their physical constitution in the slightest degree. They are as accessible to uneasiness, feebleness, and exhaustion, and as susceptible of pain, as they were before they underwent the great moral change. Conversion, in these respects, leaves them just where they were, and as they were. But if they are not less accessible to pain from physical causes than the rest of the world, it is a great thing for them to feel that they have sources of support and of consolation under those sufferings which spring from physical causes, to which the men of the world are entire strangers. And no consideration conduces more to their comfort, or is more calculated to nerve them to the patient endurance of that which they are called to bear, than the fact that their Saviour experienced essentially the same physical ills which fall to their lot. Are they wearied and

exhausted from excessive labour, or great physical effort, in any way? So was He. What saint of God, what believer in Christ, can ever forget the touching incidents connected with the Redeemer's meeting with the woman of Samaria, at Jacob's Well? Wearied with a long journey, probably over a rough and craggy road, he sat down on the side of the well, to rest his exhausted frame. And not only was he worn out with fatigue, but he was thirsty, and asked of the woman water to drink. How refreshing to the spirit of the Christian, to know that his Lord and Master can sympathise with him, even as regards the most common ills of life, because he himself experienced them all in their severest forms.

And as Jesus suffered thirst, so he often endured the pains of hunger. We read distinctly of his being hungry, after the protracted temptation in the wilderness. During the forty days he was subjected to that sore and uninterrupted temptation, he partook of no food. That he could have lived so long

without sustenance, is only to be accounted for from the fact, that he was divinely supported. After the end of the forty days, he was hungry, a circumstance which Satan did not fail to turn to account, by making it the means of a renewed temptation. He called on the Saviour, if he was the Son of God, to command that these stones be made bread. See in this incident of the Saviour's history, with what consummate skill and cunning Satan adapts his temptations to the peculiar circumstances, at the particular moment, of those whom he harasses, when he knows that it is not in his power to destroy them. Christ was at this time enduring the gnawings of hunger, and Satan reproachfully called on him to convert the stones into bread. And you, believer in Christ, will ever find your great enemy availing himself of whatever means he thinks will lead you into the greatest guilt, and cause you the greatest misery. But resist him as Jesus did. Resist him by faith and prayer, and you also will eventually triumph over him. But this is not the only

instance in which the Redeemer was hungry. When he came to the barren fig-tree, he was hungry, and would have eaten off that tree if it had been fruitful. Nor can there be any doubt that as Jesus shared the scanty fare of his disciples, he was no less hungry than they, when they plucked the ears of the corn. And it may also be regarded as morally certain, that he experienced the gnawings of hunger, when he replied to the question of his disciples, "Has he anything to eat?"—"I have meat to eat which ye know not of." So that those poor followers of Jesus, who have oftentimes to endure the unpleasant sensations caused by the want of food, are but partaking of the lot of their Lord when on earth. And as his experience was, in this respect, the same as theirs, he can enter fully into their circumstances, and impart to them the needed strength to bear that peculiar form of trial.

Wonder, ye worlds, while in your ears,
God's oracles the truth proclaim—
That He who, to dispel our fears
And save our souls, from glory came,

Had not, although of Heaven the King,
Whereon to rest his weary head.
The hosts on high his praises sing,
Yet here on earth he wanted bread.

The exhaustion of the physical frame of Jesus was no less strikingly illustrated on that other touching occasion, when he fell asleep on the hard and rude deck of the tempest-tossed vessel on the sea of Galilee. The extreme fatigue of our Saviour on that occasion, may be inferred from the fact, that even the raging storm, which filled the minds of his disciples with the utmost alarm for their safety, failed to awake him. It were impossible for anything to prove more conclusively the perfect humanity of our Lord, than the fact of his having been so completely exhausted by his previous labours, that he could soundly repose in the midst of a storm which threatened to engulf the vessel, or dash it to pieces. When we, therefore, are greatly fatigued, either in the service of God or of our fellow-men, or when labouring to support ourselves and families, it ought to

refresh our spirits to know that we are but experiencing that which our Saviour so largely experienced before us.

Wearied and worn, from day to day,
 With toilsome steps He trod the way,
 A stranger to repose.
 His frame with labours hard oppressed,
 Knew not a moment's real rest,
 Till death his eyes did close.

It may, indeed, be doubted whether the whole of Jesus' life was not emphatically a life of labour and of toil; more so, perhaps, than falls to the lot even of the majority of those who are known to spend their days in the most fatiguing occupations. During the period of his public ministry, we know that his life was pre-eminently a life of hard and incessant labour. He went about doing good. He took no more rest than the absolute requirements of his human nature rendered indispensable. He rose early and laboured late. He was every moment about his Father's business—in other words, engaged in working out the salvation of a ruined race. He often

deprived himself of that rest at night which the infirmities of nature needed. We read of the Saviour spending his nights amid the bleak and sombre mountains of Judea, and that too, at all seasons of the year.

This must have been extremely exhausting to his physical frame. To you, the sons of toil, who are bodily weary and heavy laden, but can trace your saving relationship to Christ, it must prove the source of rich consolation to know that your lot is no worse than was that of your Lord, and that he can and does, in that, as in all other respects, tenderly sympathise with you, and will impart to you the needed solace and support. Meditate much on this, and you will derive abounding comfort from it.

CHAPTER III.

MENTAL EXPERIENCES.

Christian, the sorrows of the mind
Are very hard to bear :
Jesus at times you think unkind,
Unkind because not near

To free you from your troubles sore.
Mistaken soul, your Lord—
Blessed truth—is with you evermore ;
For this you have his word.

He's with you always to impart
The strength you so much need :
He has a sympathising heart,
He is a Friend indeed.

Your sorrows once were all his own,
He knows your every grief ;
And from His seat on Glory's Throne,
He'll surely send relief.

THE people of God suffer also from MENTAL causes. They are all, more or less, destined in this world to suffer *persecution* because of their profession of faith in Christ, and their

desire to act in conformity with his revealed will. In that respect, also, they but share the fate of their Redeemer, when he sojourned in our world. He forewarned his disciples that persecution would be their portion here on earth. "If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you." He prepared them to expect the hatred of all men, and to be scourged and maltreated in every possible way; but then he reminded them that such was his own destiny, and sought to impress upon them that the disciple must not expect to be above his Master, nor the servant above his Lord. It was enough, he added, that the disciple be as his Master, and the servant as his Lord. The followers of Jesus in the present day, at least in this country, have not to encounter the same kind of persecution as the first disciples were fated to endure. They are not imprisoned nor brought before the magistrates; neither are they in any way personally maltreated, because of avowed attachment to the cause of Christ; but they are still, in a greater or less measure, persecuted

by the people of the world. Their opinions are the objects of aversion to the ungodly; and they are personally hated, because their principles and conduct are in such decided and constant antagonism to the principles and conduct of the unconverted with whom they are obliged to associate. The believing children of unbelieving parents, or a Christian sister or brother in a family where the rest of its members are unconverted, are often subjected to an amount of persecution for righteousness' sake, of which none but themselves can form any idea. So, too, is it with servants in families, where the other servants are living for and to the world; and with pious workmen in establishments where the rest of the persons employed, or the great bulk of them, are hostile to religion. Little do those followers of Jesus, who have never been so circumstanced, know the persecutions to which their brethren and sisters in Christ are subjected, when all or nearly all of those with whom, from their situation in life, they are obliged to be in constant association, are hostile to every-

thing that is holy, or that bears the name of religion. Poor persecuted followers of your Lord,—yours is a case for the deep and tender sympathies of all who are partakers of the same heavenly calling. You *do* enjoy the sympathies of the majority of those of God's children who happen to be acquainted with the circumstances in which you are placed. That may and must prove to you the source of some consolation; but be of good cheer, you have more tender and better sympathies, by far. You have the cordial sympathy of your Lord himself. He knows fully and at all times, what your persecutions are, and from the deepest recesses of his loving heart he feels for you. He enters into all you endure, because he not only himself endured the same, but infinitely more than you ever can experience. The dislike with which he was regarded, when on earth, by the very men he came from heaven to save, was incomparably greater than any which ever has been, or ever can be, felt towards you. In like manner, your persecution, as the manifestation of the

world's hostility, bears no comparison to that persecution to which he was subjected, as the exhibition or proof of the inveterate hatred with which he was regarded. No one seeks to lay violent hands on you; the people in Christ's day did seek to lay violent hands on him, and eventually they succeeded. Your fellow-men do not go out against you with swords and with staves to put you to death, as they did in the case of Jesus; neither have you been obliged to hide yourselves to save your life, as he was. You live in no apprehension, either of death, or of bodily violence in any form, at the hands of your fellow-men; yet the grossest maltreatment, and a cruel and ignominious death, were, you know, the fate of your Lord.

Let not, then, your hearts be unduly discouraged by any measure of hatred of which you may be the objects, at the instance of your fellow-men; nor at any amount of persecution which your faithful adherence to the cause of Christ, and your avowal of discipleship to him, may bring upon you. You are, in these re-

spects, only in part partakers of the sufferings of Jesus. Remember, too, that he tenderly feels for you; you are the objects of his warmest sympathies; and for your special succour and support, he is addressing you from off his throne in glory, in the same words, and in accents no less loving, as when he spake to his disciples on earth, saying, "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake; rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven; for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you." Let these gracious words be as music to your ears. Keep them ever present to your minds, and you will find them inexpressibly sweet to your taste. They will prove an overflowing and unceasing fountain of joy.

The people of God are also exposed to the *ridicule and mockery* of the world. Their avowal of attachment to the cause of Christ renders them the butt of those who have never themselves known the power of Divine grace. They are spoken of as if they were fools or

fanatics, and unfit to associate with men of intelligence and judgment. This is very difficult to bear. Many a Christian, especially before he has had much experience in the Divine life, has felt as if he would be laughed or ridiculed out of his religion. And many a person who had begun to give his serious attention to the things of God and eternity, and who, humanly speaking, was at the very gate of regeneration, has been literally laughed back into the world by his friends and companions. Ridicule is often more difficult to bear than positive persecution, in the form which has just been adverted to. Many persons could, without comparatively costing themselves an effort, submit to great personal sacrifices, either as regards position in life or pecuniary circumstances, for their principles as Christians, who find it all but impossible to bear up against the ridicule with which they are assailed. But though the struggle is often hard, grace enables them to triumph, and to hold fast the profession of their faith. It would not be possible to mention anything

more conducive to this end than the assurance that in this, as in every other trial they are appointed to endure, they possess the sympathy, and will receive the support of their Saviour, inasmuch as he himself was, every hour of his public ministry, exposed to the piercing shafts of ridicule. He was spoken of contemptuously in the early part of his public career, as "the carpenter's son," and treated with so much derision, as to call from him the reproof that a prophet is not without honour, save in his own country. It was the same spirit of derision that prompted the description which his enemies gave of him, as the friend of publicans and sinners. This last is a most precious truth. Jesus *is* emphatically the friend of publicans and of sinners, though in a sense very different from that which the words were meant to convey by those who first employed them. Another memorable instance of the derision with which Christ was regarded, is recorded in that portion of his history which relates to the incident in the house of Jairus, when, on remarking, as he looked on the maid

lying on her bier, that she was not dead, but asleep, "he was laughed to scorn." But the ridicule with which our Lord was assailed during the period of his public ministry, became most marked of all, just as he approached the closing scene of his earthly existence. The powers of ridicule or mockery possessed by his enemies, seemed then to have been exhausted. The Scripture narrative, though brief on the point, contains enough to enable us to form an opinion of what our Redeemer must have suffered from this source. To ridicule practically, as well as in words, the representation which had been made, that he regarded himself as King of the Jews, they determined on dealing with him as a mock King; and with that view the soldiers, after they had scourged Jesus, took him into the Common Hall—Pilate having previously given him into the hands of those who were leagued against him—and stripped him, and put on him a scarlet robe. "And when they had plaited a crown of thorns, they put it on his head, and a reed in his right hand, and they bowed the

knee before him, saying, 'Hail, King of the Jews!' And they spat upon him, and took the reed and smote him on the head, and after that they had mocked him, they took the robe off from him, and put his own raiment on him, and led him away to crucify him." Nor did the ridicule and mockery to which he was subjected, cease with the scenes and circumstances which immediately preceded his crucifixion: even in the article of death, and up till the very moment when he uttered his expiring groan, and drew his last breath, he was assailed by the ridicule and the mockery, not only of the men who imbrued their hands in his blood, but even of the spectators who had been drawn by curiosity to the scene, and of those who were accidentally passing by while the terrible tragedy on the Cross was being enacted. It was in awful ridicule that, as we are told in the Scripture narrative, they "set up over his head his accusation, written, 'This is Jesus, the King of the Jews.' Then were there two thieves crucified with him, one on the right hand, and another on the left. And they that

passed by reviled him, wagging their heads, and saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross. Likewise also the chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said, He saved others: himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God." Even the very thieves who were crucified with him, joined in the general ridicule and mockery of our Lord. "The thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth." What a spectacle, to see the very criminals who were doomed to the same ignominious and excruciating death, forgetting for the moment their own ignominy and agonies, in their virulence against Christ, and their anxiety to join the crowd in reviling and mocking him, who but a few minutes afterwards rescued one of them from perdition, and brought him to glory. Who can

help pausing here for a moment, by way of parenthesis, to admire and adore the riches of the Redeemer's mercy, who returned all the reproaches and relentless hostility of one of the thieves, by telling him that he should that day be with him in paradise !

Christian reader, however much you may, in the providence of God, have been, and may still be, subjected to ridicule and reproaches, because of your faithful adherence to the cause of your Lord, your experience, in this respect, cannot bear a moment's comparison with his, when, like you, he trod this earth. No Christian in this country has, in our day, the seclusion of the dying chamber invaded by the ridicule and mockery of the enemies of Christ and of his religion. The closing scene of the believer's existence on earth is sacred from such intrusion. Ridicule and mockery may follow him far on his journey towards the grave, but as soon as it is believed that he is about to enter the dark valley and shadow of death, they halt. They proceed no farther.

What an overflowing source of consolation

to the believer in Christ, to know that when destined to suffer ridicule and mockery in, it may be, every variety of form, he but shares the fate of his Lord and Master, and even that in an immeasurably less degree. And how delightful the thought, that inasmuch as Jesus had to encounter all the ridicule which the Scripture tells us he endured, he has a fellow-feeling with his disciples, when passing through essentially the same scenes of mental suffering. And, besides, what sincere disciple of Christ, what faithful follower of Jesus can, in such circumstances, fail to derive unspeakable consolation from the reflection, that he is suffering for his Saviour, who endured all the ridicule and mockery with which he was assailed when on earth, for his people. So far from shrinking from the ridicule and reproaches of the world, because we profess to be the followers of Jesus, we ought to rejoice in being counted worthy to suffer, in that way, for his name's sake. The believer ought ever to feel that he has no greater ground of glorying than in the Cross of Christ,

of which the heaviest part to bear is often found to be the derision, the jeers, the reproaches, which he has to meet with because of his discipleship to Jesus. Christ was not ashamed of us; surely, then, we will not be ashamed of him. He never shrank from owning us; let us not shrink from owning him, whatever may be the amount of ridicule and reproach which our avowal of attachment to himself and his cause may bring upon us.

Jesus, the lovely lamb of God,
 Didst come to save a rebel race;
 For them He shed his precious blood;
 How great the glory of His grace!

Yet in return for all this love,
 He only with men's mockeries met;
 Pity, their hearts not once did move,
 They ridiculed without regret.

Shall we, then, from reproaches shrink?
 From jeers and scoffs recoil?
 Nay, rather let us meekly drink
 The bitter cup for a brief while.

The saints of God have often to complain of their *characters being traduced*. Charges, which are wholly groundless, are preferred

against them. This is to them a great trial, and all the greater, because the injurious representations are utterly unjust; for the innocent man is always more susceptible on the point of character, than he whose conduct is open to censure. It is inexpressibly painful to have, as Christians frequently have, their very motives misrepresented, as well as their actions misconstrued. How often are the best deeds of the believer ascribed by the world to the worst motives. Do what he will, strive as he may to prevent it, his good is evil spoken of. This is very hard; but it will help the Christian to bear up under groundless charges and gross misrepresentations, when he remembers that his Saviour, when tabernacling here below, experienced precisely the same treatment. He was accused of setting up claims, in opposition to Cæsar, to be the King of Judea: the accusation was utterly groundless. He was held up to the scorn of those he came from heaven to save, by being represented as a wine-bibber and a gluttonous person; there never was the shadow of a founda-

tion for either charge. But far worse charges than these were preferred against him—charges such as were never brought against any reader of this little work. You may be charged with hypocrisy, and your motives, with regard to the most commendable actions you perform, may be grievously misrepresented; but you never have had the same motives ascribed to you as were attributed to him. You never have been charged with having a devil; your Lord and Master was. “He hath a devil,” and in accordance with that charge, he was represented as casting out devils by Beelzebub, the prince of the devils.

The saints of God have abundant cause to complain of the *ingratitude* which they meet with from the world, in return for their efforts to do good to their fellow-men. This is difficult to endure, but it is not only part of the Cross which the followers of Jesus must bear, but what they were warned by their Lord to expect. It is not necessary to quote passages from Scripture to prove this. They are so numerous and so explicit that every one ac-

quainted with his Bible will at once recall to his mind many portions of the holy oracles, confirmatory and illustrative of the fact. But why should the believer be cast down, when he meets with the greatest ingratitude, in return for his earnest and disinterested efforts to promote the best interests of his fellow-men? Only let him remember the experience, in this respect, of his blessed Lord. What more striking instance of ingratitude for services of the most valuable kind could be given, than is furnished in the case of the lepers whom he cured? “Were not ten healed, but where are the nine?” What an exhibition of ingratitude! Ten cured of so dreadful a disease—the most dreadful, perhaps, that could befall humanity—and yet only one out of the ten returned to give glory to God! Be not, then, discouraged,—you who are believers in Christ, when your best, and even successful efforts to bless your fellow-men, are met with ingratitude. You but experience the return which your Saviour met with when on earth. He sympathises with

you, and would have you take comfort from the fact, that you are only in this respect what he was.

But the people of God often find *the unfriendly and unsympathising conduct of their fellow-saints* still more painful to their feelings, and more difficult to bear, than even the worst ingratitude which they can receive at the hands of the men of the world. Feeling himself to be a partaker of the same heavenly calling, redeemed by the same most precious blood, regenerated and sanctified by the same Spirit, experiencing the same spiritual sorrows and joys, exposed to the same hostility and ridicule from the world, cheered by the same prospects, and fellow-travellers to the same heavenly home, where he and they shall dwell together through all eternity,—it does cut the saint of God to the quick, when he has to encounter from his fellow-saints the cold look, or the look of indifference, and a manifest want of sympathy in his seasons of sorrow, arising from his humble position in life, his reduced circumstances, the loss of friends, or other

troubles springing from other sources. Little does the saint of God know how deeply, by his unkind manner, he wounds the feelings of some brother-believer in Christ. The same conduct which pains so deeply his spirit, coming from a child of God, would hardly cause him a moment's uneasiness, coming from the ungodly. "For it was not an enemy that reproached me; then I could have borne it; neither was it he that hated me that did magnify himself against me; then I would have hid myself; but it was thou, a man mine equal and my acquaintance. We took sweet counsel together, and walked to the house of God in company." It is lamentable it should so often happen that the saints of God fail to fulfil the revealed will of their Lord—that they should bear each other's burthens. It is distressing to reflect that there is, in many instances, so manifest a want of sympathy between the disciples of Christ. It ought to be the reverse. When one member of the Redeemer's mystical body suffers, all the members ought to suffer with

it. Unhappily, it is far otherwise. Many saints treat their suffering fellow-saints with coldness and indifference. You who are, from this cause, the tried disciples of Christ, remember that you are only meeting with what your Lord had to experience when he was in your nature on earth. Instead of, on one memorable occasion, sympathising with Jesus in his toils and troubles, in the arduous work which lay before him, his apostles fell into keen contentions as to who among them should be the greatest in his kingdom. This must have deeply grieved his sensitive soul. On another memorable occasion, when he needed all the comfort which their presence and sympathy could have given him, on his retiring into a solitary place to pour out his soul in prayer to God, the three disciples whom he took with him that they might be witnesses of his sorrows, fell asleep, and were unconscious of his mental agonies and earnest wrestling with his Father. No doubt they were greatly fatigued; but had they felt that attachment to their Lord, which they ought

to have felt, and taken that profound interest in his experiences and his work which they ought to have taken—knowing, as they did, how overwhelmed his soul was with sorrow, because of what he was enduring, and the appalling scenes which were before him—they would not have resigned themselves to slumber at such a crisis in his history. How deeply he felt, amidst all his other sorrows, their want of sympathy with him, in the terrible circumstances in which he was placed, may be inferred from the touching terms in which he upbraided them on the occasion, and which, it may be supposed, must have gone to their very hearts: “What, could ye not watch with me one hour? Sleep on now, and take your rest: for behold the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.” The conduct of Peter, when he denied his Master, is another case in point. Instead of sympathising with him, and boldly, and in the spirit of a true friend, standing by him, at a time when he so much needed all the assistance and support which the open

friendship of his disciples could minister to him, Peter showed that he was ashamed of his Lord, and would not, if he could help it, suffer in any way for his sake. Not contented with simply denying that he knew anything of Christ, he must needs, in the vehemence of his determination not to be taken for one of his disciples, deny him with oaths and with cursings. And here, it may be remarked for the comfort of God's people, who are not only regarded, in the season of sorrow, with indifference, but even unkindly treated, by some of their fellow-saints who had before expressed their sympathy and promised their friendship—that Jesus met with similar treatment, in this very instance, at the hands of Peter; for, but a very short time before, probably only an hour or two, Peter had made the greatest professions of friendship for his Lord. When forewarned by Jesus, who knew all things, that he would deny him, he protested with a vehemence scarcely less great than that with which he soon after did deny Christ, that so far from denying him, he was prepared to

meet death for him. "Though I die with thee, yet will I not deny thee." Nor were the other disciples much better than Peter. After he had so energetically protested that he would never deny his Lord, we are told that all the disciples said the same. And yet every one of them, in a few hours thereafter, proved unfaithful to their Master; and though not in words, they, like Peter, in conduct denied him. In the last and most trying scene of all, when more than ever he needed the presence, the sympathy, and support of his disciples, every one of them disowned their Lord. They all forsook him and fled. Not one remained in the neighbourhood of the spot where the last awful act in the terrible drama of the Saviour's life was performed. And shall you, then, who are his disciples now, be unduly dejected, because some, it may be many, of your fellow-saints, prove unfeeling and unfaithful in your seasons of deep emergency? Surely not, when you remember that your Lord was treated in the same manner by his followers. He tenderly

sympathises with you. And never forget, when pained by the coldness of the saints, and by their withholding their counsel and aid when most you need them, that Jesus was not only placed in the same circumstances, and experienced the same treatment, but that his case was much worse than yours; for, it may be doubted whether there is on earth a single tried child of God that has not some sympathising friend in God's family; but our Saviour had none in his last and most trying moments. He literally stood alone. "Of the people"—his own people—"there were none with him." They all forsook him and fled.

Sorely feel the saints of God,
The chilling look, the unkind word,
Of pilgrims on the heavenward road,
The followers of one common Lord.

At this let no one feel surprise,
For such, too, was the Saviour's fate;
Forsaken by his friends, he cries,
"Will ye not stay?"—still they retreat.

The want of success which so often attends the endeavours of the saints of God, to promote the present and eternal interests of their fellow-

men, is to them the source of great grief. They labour at great personal sacrifices to awaken the careless among whom they move, to a sense of their guilt and danger, in the contemplation of the world to come; and yet they can discern no indications that their efforts are, even in a limited measure, crowned with success. But let them not be immoderately disquieted at this; least of all, let them not be deterred by it from their efforts to do good. Their experience is but the same as the experience of all the messengers of mercy in every age. "Lord, who hath believed our report?" was the disconsolate language of the greatest of all the prophets. And had not our Saviour himself to complain of the same thing? "Ye will not come to me that ye might have light," was the plaintive language which he had to employ. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thee together as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, but ye would not." And did not the evangelists have to record of him, that he came to his own, but that his own received

him not? Not only was the Redeemer's message of mercy rejected, but he himself was repelled by those very persons to whom he addressed himself in accents of love, and among whom he wrought his most beneficent works. They sought to expel him from their land. The Gadarenes besought him that he might depart from their coasts; and in the end, the very people whom he specially came to save—the lost sheep of the house of Israel—not only rejected his message, but put himself to an ignominious and excruciating death, because of the earnestness and perseverance with which he pressed the Gospel of salvation on their acceptance.

Amazing sight! Behold God's Son
Weeping o'er sinners all undone.
Their soul's best interests they neglect,
Salvation's offer they reject.
What precious gems—those gushing tears,
Shed for the guilt of many years—
For those whose bosoms never felt
For that which made the Saviour's melt.
Great was Christ's anguish—deep his grief,
That they would not accept relief
From all their sins, from all their woes,
From fell perdition's direful throes.

None of you, ye saints of God, have ever met, or expect to meet, with such a reception as Jesus experienced in his endeavours to save souls, in your efforts to benefit and bless your fellow-men. In this respect you are not as your Lord; for you are incomparably better off than he was. But amid all your regrets and griefs that your success is not greater, let this reflection prove the source of consolation to you—that as Jesus, notwithstanding the general rejection of himself and his message, was welcomed by a goodly number of those whom he came to save, so your labour shall not be altogether in vain in the Lord. Of that be thoroughly assured. Though you will not be able to do all that you could wish, yet you will be able to do something for the salvation of sinners. *That* something may be only partially known to you in this world, but it will be revealed to you in the world to come. The day will declare it; and then it will be to you a crown of joy and rejoicing through all eternity. Many a glorified saint is now exulting in the discoveries which

he has made in the world of spirits, of the good he was made the instrument of accomplishing when on earth, but of which, while here below, he had not the least idea. And you, too, who may now be deeply depressed in your minds because you can trace so little spiritual benefit to your fellow-men, though you have prayed earnestly and laboured hard on their behalf,—will find, the moment you have crossed the threshold of glory, how true in this, as in other respects, are the words, “What ye know not now, ye shall know hereafter.” The instrumentality which every Christian employs for the conversion of those around him, is the same as God has in all past ages owned and blessed; and there is no reason to suppose that it ever will be superseded by any other instrumentality,—only that in the latter days God will more signally accompany it with the outpourings of his Spirit, and consequently will render it incomparably more effectual than it has ever yet proved.

Believers in Christ are often immersed in

the waters of affliction by reason of *heavy family bereavements* or through *the loss of friends they dearly loved*. The Gospel does not blunt the susceptibilities of those who have cordially embraced its truths. On the contrary, it gives them a keener edge. There is no one who has so sensitive a mind or so feeling a heart as the sincere Christian. So far from creating or encouraging Stoicism, it destroys it wherever it exists. The true followers of Jesus are remarkable for the largeness of their hearts and the warmth of their affections. None can love so strongly or feel so deeply as they. And just in proportion to the sincerity and ardour of their affections for relatives or friends, is their grief when the hand of death has been put forth, and taken from them those they most tenderly loved. What a comfort to know that in this, as in all other respects, the Lord Jesus has a fellow-feeling with them—that he cherishes towards them the purest and most cordial sympathy. He passed through similar scenes of sorrow. He wept over the grave of Lazarus. In that one incident,—in

those blessed words, the true follower of Jesus ought ever to find an abundant source of solace, an unfailing spring of support amidst the heaviest of those dispensations of Divine Providence which come to us in the shape of the deaths of our dearest relatives and friends. Jesus wept! Blessed incident. Precious tears. Let the thought dry up the tears of those of his disciples who may have been giving themselves up to overmuch sorrow—whose hearts have been wrung with anguish because those they most tenderly loved on earth are now, like Lazarus before his resurrection, lying low in their graves.

CHAPTER IV.

SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCES.

How great the sorrows of the soul !
Compared with them, the body's pains
Are slight. As years do onward roll,
This truth new strength unceasing gains.

Jesus, the sorrows of the heart
Did know and feel much more than we ;
He bore of griefs the heaviest part,
Heavier than ours can ever be.

THE believer's painful experiences in life are not confined to those which spring merely from physical and mental causes, or causes partly physical and partly mental ; his greatest sorrows have their source in a SPIRITUAL region. The sorrows of the soul are incomparably the heaviest which the Christian has to bear. The spirit of a man may bear his infirmities, but a wounded spirit who can bear ? The primary meaning of the words may relate to the person whose mind is the subject of deep remorse on

account of sin, but they manifestly may be also used as signifying that the spiritual sorrows of the follower of Christ are, of all his burdens, the most difficult to be borne. The *temptations* by which the disciples of Christ are assailed, and by which they are, at times, apprehensive they will be overcome, and thereby dishonour and displease their Father in heaven, press heavily upon their hearts. They fear that they shall one day fall into the hands of their grand enemy, even Satan himself. None but a believer, whose mind has been enlightened to see, in some measure, the frightful enormity of sin, and who is conscious, from the inherent and deep depravity of his nature, of his proneness to fall into fresh acts of guilt, can have any idea what a source of unhappiness this is to the saint of God. He feels that Satan is ever at his right hand to resist him in whatever is holy and pleasing to God. He knows that the prince of the power of the air is seeking to have him ; and that, if he cannot devour, he may molest and harass him in every possible variety of way. How grati-

fyng and grateful to the Christian's heart to know in his seasons of deep trial, arising from the temptations of the devil, that his Lord is well acquainted, from his own experience, with all the devices of the evil one. Though our Lord's great temptation in the wilderness is the only one which is prominently brought before us in Scripture history, yet we may conclude, from the express assurance of the apostle, that in *all* points he was tempted like as we are,—that he was exposed to temptations in all their diversified forms. Let, therefore, every follower of the Lamb lay this precious truth to his heart. Let him keep it closely there, and let him never for one moment forget that Christ, having himself thus suffered from the assaults of Satan in all their varied forms, deeply sympathises with, and will succour and support all his people who are similarly tempted. Console yourself, Christian reader, with the blessed certainty of this—that if your case often resembles that of Peter, whom Satan desired to have, that he might sift him as wheat, the resemblance shall no less

strikingly and blessedly hold good with regard to the assurance which Jesus gave to Peter, when he added, "But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." And whatever Christ prays for is, the moment the petition is offered up, as good as granted; for God heareth him alway. Christ never yet prayed, and never can pray to the Father, in vain. Let, then, this consideration comfort your minds in your seasons of temptation; and pray that the Holy Spirit may write on your hearts, as with the pen of a diamond, that as surely as Jesus finally and completely triumphed over all the temptations by which Satan assailed him, so surely will all his followers come off victorious in the end over the great enemy of souls.

One of the principal and perpetual sources of sorrow to the believer in Christ, is a *sense of sin*. The very best of God's saints find sin to be a heavy burden. Under its pressure they feel at times as if about to be utterly and hopelessly overwhelmed. It fills their hearts with grief and their eyes with tears. There is no agony at all to be compared to that

which the follower of Jesus experiences from a consciousness of guilt, when the Holy Spirit has enlightened his mind to discern, in some measure, the enormous evil of sin. Some feel more sensibly than others sorrow of soul arising from deep convictions of sin; but all believers experience it more or less. They groan, being burdened. What Paul so strongly felt and so forcibly expressed, when he exclaimed, "Oh! wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" all the saints of God experience, though not all in the same degree. And so they will, until their present state of imperfection has been exchanged for one of perfection. Many of God's saints, now with himself in glory, have died with the words on their lips and the feeling in their hearts, "God be merciful to me a sinner." At the last moment of their earthly experience, as at every stage of their Christian journey, they often have such vivid views of the sinfulness of sin and the greatness of their own guilt, that but for the assurance that the blood of Jesus Christ

cleanseth from all sin, and the blessed consciousness that they are interested by faith in his finished work, they would even then—however exemplary their course through life since the days of their regeneracy may have been—become the victims of despair. Believer in Christ, you must not expect, for assuredly you will not obtain, deliverance from the indwelling of sin in this world. That happy consummation must be reserved until you are presented by your Saviour faultless before the throne of his Father's glory. While here below you will have your conflict with the corruptions of your nature to maintain—war with the powers of darkness unceasingly to wage; and the partial and temporary triumphs of sin within you to deplore. But how it ought to encourage your heart to reflect, that the Captain of your salvation having had also to experience the burden of sin—not sins of his own, but the guilt imputed to him—can sympathise with and succour you, in your seasons of deep distress because of the presence and power of sin within you. Though

Christ, being perfectly holy, could know nothing of sin in the sense in which the people of God do, as dwelling in and pervading their nature, yet our guilt being transferred to him, he experienced, in the same sense as his followers do, the sorrow of soul which is the necessary consequence of moral guilt. When we read of his retiring into desert places to pour out his heart to God, and, in the depths of his distress, falling on his face on the ground, it was because of the weight of that sin—not his own but ours—which pressed with such crushing effect on both soul and body. It was the burden of sin which, immediately before his crucifixion, extorted from him the words, “My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.” It was from the same cause that the great drops of blood oozed out from his body, in the climax of his agony in the Garden of Gethsemane. It was because “the iniquities of us all” constituted a load too heavy for his human nature to bear, that the prayer was for a moment extorted from him, “Father, if it

be possible, let this cup pass from me." Believers have their seasons of overpowering sorrow because of their consciousness of sin; but no human being ever has felt, or ever can feel, the guilt of sin so intensely as it was felt by our Lord. How solacing to the spirit in its sufferings and sorrows arising from this source, is this reflection! May we all more and more sensibly derive consolation and support, when groaning under the burden of sin, from the recollection of what our Saviour had to suffer from the same source.

The withholding of the sensible manifestations of God's gracious presence is another prolific source of sorrow to the soul of the believer in Christ. There are some of the followers of Jesus who assure us, that they have not for years lost, for one single moment, a perfect confidence of their saving interest in Him, nor the enjoyment of the Divine favour as the children of God. It would not be right to doubt in any way the representations made by those whose assurance of faith is so clear, so continuous, so strong; but this may be safely

said, that their experience is not the usual experience of the saints of God. The majority of believers in Christ, if we may judge from Scripture testimony, and the biographies of those who have been most eminent in modern times for their spirituality of mind and holiness of life, have had their moments of doubt and darkness. They have fancied themselves forsaken by God, and have been driven to the very verge of despair. It cannot, indeed, have escaped the observation of any reflecting Christian who reads the biographies of deceased saints of God, or is acquainted with the experiences of living believers in Christ, that the most deeply spiritually-minded Christians are often those who are most largely, at particular times, assailed with doubts and fears respecting their condition in the sight of God. They—much more than less advanced believers—are the subjects of darkness and dejection. Nor is the fact difficult of explanation. Such persons have the most vivid views of the evils of sin, and of the enormity of their own individual guilt. It

was so in Old Testament times. Job was an eminent saint; we all know how dense was the darkness in which his soul was at times enveloped. There was an amount of meaning which none but those who have been the subjects of similar spiritual darkness and desolation can fully comprehend, when he cried out with so much emphasis, "Oh, that it were with me as in months past, when the candle of the Lord shone upon me." The Psalms abound with revelations of the sorrow of soul which David experienced when he was the subject of doubts and darkness. The withdrawal of the light of God's countenance, and the occasional loss of the habitual sense which he had of the Divine favour, plunged him into an abyss of misery of which none but those who have been similarly tried can have any conception. The intense disquietude of his spirit in his seasons of imagined desertion by God, could not be expressed by any words which he could employ. The strongest of all the expressions he used in giving utterance to the sorrow, almost bordering on despair, which

his soul experienced when labouring under the conviction that God had withdrawn his gracious presence from him, is to be found in the first verse of the twenty-second Psalm, where he cries out in agony of spirit, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Doubtless, David, when he thus expressed himself, sustained the character of a type of Christ; but there is every reason to believe, that he, at the same time, no less expressed his own painful emotions while labouring under the conviction that God had withdrawn his gracious presence from him; for it is evident, from numerous other Psalms, that his heart was often overwhelmed within him, because he had temporarily lost the sense of the Divine favour: "Has God forgotten to be gracious? Is his mercy clean gone for ever? Will he keep his anger for evermore?" "He hid his face from me, and I was troubled." Jeremiah, too, experienced similar emotions of inexpressible sorrow from the same cause. His was peculiarly a life of spiritual darkness. His "Lamentations" have their chief origin

in that source. But it is not necessary to refer to the experiences, in this respect, of God's saints as recorded in the Scriptures. Almost every Christian can set his seal, from what he himself has felt, to the truth, that doubts and darkness as to his condition in the sight of God, and a consequent sorrow of soul almost amounting to despair, are, at particular seasons, more or less sensibly the portion of the followers of the Lamb while on this side the eternal world. How blessed is it for you who suffer and sorrow from this source, to know that you are, in this regard, but treading in the footsteps of your Lord. What you feel, he felt. Just only reflect on what must have been the terrible desolation which reigned in his soul, arising from the supposition that God had deserted him, when he exclaimed in the words already quoted as the experience of David also, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

When from his people God withdraws
The shinings of his face,
Deeply distress'd they ask the cause,
Fearing they're lost to grace.

Oh, fear ye not, God's favour'd flock,
 He'll never you forsake ;
 Firm stands that promise as a rock—
 From it sweet comfort take.

Jesus did once, like you, complain,
 In darkness deep and dense ;
 But soon the light return'd again,
 No longer lost to sense.

Christ by his Father ne'er was left—
 'Twas all a groundless fear :
 He of God's love was not bereft,
 That love to him so dear.

You, Christian reader, never felt sorrow at all approaching to that which your Saviour experienced when the words last quoted were uttered by him. Let that thought sustain you in all your sorrows springing from the same source. And, Oh ! never forget this unspeakably delightful fact, that as God had *not* forsaken his Son at this awful and momentous crisis, so neither does he ever forsake you. You are firmly persuaded that Jesus never was more the object of the Father's love than he was at the moment he uttered the words which have been quoted ; and you are bound

no less entirely to believe, that in your darkest moments, your seasons of fancied desertion by God, you are as intensely loved by him as you were when you were first chosen in the counsels of eternity—as you were when called by him in time—or will be when you are in his presence beholding his glory, and enjoying perfect happiness in heaven.

“The Man of Sorrows” was Christ’s name,
 While here on earth he did sojourn ;
 He lived a life of pain and shame,
 “His heart with bitter anguish torn.”

But, Oh ! by far his heaviest load
 Was when he thought himself to be
 Forsaken by his Father-God,
 When nailed to the accursed tree.

Yet, blessed thought, in that dark hour
 His Father’s love was full as great
 As when, in heaven, he had all power,
 And sat enthron’d on glory’s seat.

And so with all God’s people now—
 Whate’er their fears, whate’er their dread—
 Let the assurance firmly grow,
 God is their God, as Christ’s their head.

The great majority of God’s people are at times much distressed *in the prospect of death.*

Paul speaks of some believers, who, in his time, were, "through fear of death, all their life-time subject to bondage." And so it is in our day. Many Christians, of whose safety none can doubt, are perpetually the subjects of much disquietude in the contemplation of a dying hour. Believers are but men after all. Grace renews our nature, but does not change it. While in the body we are still but human, and subject, more or less, to all its infirmities. There is something in the very constitution of our minds and frames that makes us recoil at the thought of entering the dark valley. The consignment of our bodies to the dark and lonely grave, our severance from friends we dearly loved on earth, and the closing of our connection completely and for ever with a world in which we had lived so long, and with many of whose objects and occupations our hearts' affections had been so intimately interwoven,—are all circumstances which, constituted as we are at present, naturally make us shrink from being brought into con-

tact with the stern and icy hand of death. In this respect, also, the Christian derives abounding comfort from the fact that there exists a wonderful similarity between his feelings in the anticipation of the article of death, and those of his Saviour. "I have," said Jesus, "a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened until it be accomplished." This, no doubt, partly referred to the atoning sacrifice which he was about to offer up for the sins of the world; but it is no less manifest, that death in itself was an object of repugnance to his human nature. In the same sense are to be understood the words, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." It was not merely from the ignominy and agony of the sufferings which awaited him that he recoiled; he shrank also as man from the event of death itself. Your experience, therefore, ye followers of Jesus, is at the last, as through the whole of your Christian course, substantially the same as that of your Lord. In this

reflection you must find a spring of great comfort, a source of much support, as you become conscious that you are approaching the banks of the Jordan.

Why should we dread the approach of death,
 Why tremble at his touch,
 Why fear to yield our latest breath?
 Our loss will not be much.

While, on the other hand, our gain
 Will be beyond compare,
 We go to glory,—there to reign
 In regions rich and rare.

There ever see our Saviour's face,
 There hear his blessed voice,
 Enjoy the fruits of sovereign grace,
 And in our God rejoice.

Christ, too, our Lord and living head,
 Once lay in the dark tomb,
 And by his presence has it made
 A place of sweet perfume.

It is hoped that the effect of this endeavour to trace out the remarkable similarity which exists between the experiences of Jesus when on earth, and the experiences of his people now, will be to produce a deep and

lasting conviction on the mind of the reader,—that a wondrous and most blessed similarity *does* exist between the experiences of Jesus in the days of his flesh and those of his disciples in all ages and in all nations. The character of the Saviour is often but imperfectly comprehended even by his own most devoted disciples. We are all too apt to dwell on particular aspects of his character, either to the exclusion of other features in it, or to their partial oversight. This ought not to be. We should ever look at Jesus in all his offices, and meditate on all that he felt, and suffered, and did when on earth. While the believer ought never to withdraw his eye from Christ as an atoning sacrifice, nor from his perfect obedience and his holy example as our great pattern, he ought not to forget that we are called to keep him ever before our minds as our Elder Brother—as “The Brother Born for Adversity,” the “Friend that sticketh closer than a brother,”—as our faithful, merciful, and sympathising High Priest, having, in order that he might be in a posi-

tion to sustain the character, been made in "all things like unto his brethren." "*All things!*" How unutterably precious the word "all." The Christian would not have it struck out from the passage in which it is placed, for ten thousand worlds. How sweet to think that there is no position, no class of circumstances in which the believer can possibly be placed, in which his adorable Redeemer was not placed before him!—no suffering or sorrow, physical, mental, or spiritual, which the Saviour did not experience when here below! Surely this is one of the most delightful considerations on which it were possible for the believer to dwell.

There is a word of admonition in connection with this point which many of the followers of Jesus need. Each of us must, more or less sensibly, have felt at times a disposition to suppose, that while we admire and adore the wondrous tenderness of heart and the perfect sympathy which the Saviour manifested towards his disciples when on earth, he does not regard them now that he

is exalted at the right hand of God, with the same sympathy, affection, and unceasing solicitude. No believer will deliberately express this opinion, because a moment's reflection would serve to show how erroneous it is; and yet we have only to consult our own hearts, and recall to mind our past experience to be compelled to admit that such a feeling has existed within us. Let this be so no longer. Let no such feeling ever again have a moment's habitation in our minds. It is dishonouring to the Redeemer, and destructive of our own comfort. To suppose that Jesus is not now, in his glorified state, precisely the same to his followers as he was to his disciples when he sojourned in this world, would be doing him a great injustice. He has taken our nature with him into heaven. That nature he still wears in the presence of his Father and of all the angels. And from his throne in glory, he still thinks as constantly of us—is still as solicitous for our happiness here and hereafter—and as sympathising as he was in the days of his public ministry,

when he eat, drank, conversed, and lived with his twelve apostles—his first avowed disciples. What could more strikingly or sweetly set forth the Saviour's tender love, solicitude, and sympathy, than those portions of God's word in which we are told by Jesus himself, that he is always with us, and will be, even to the end of the world—that he ever liveth to make intercession for us—and that our names are written on the palms of his hands? That feeling of profound sympathy for his suffering people which was so beautifully and forcibly expressed, when, in the language of parable, he spoke those memorable words, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren ye have have done it unto me,"—still animates his bosom, now that he is seated on a throne of glory on the right hand of his Father. All his people are united to him by faith, as the branches are to the vine; and there is consequently a perfect community of feeling between them and him. They are the "members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones;" and,

as so close and tender a relationship exists between him and them, there must needs be the liveliest sympathy of their Lord in their sorrows and sufferings. With sources of support so great and so manifold, what Christian is there who will not be resigned to the adverse appointments of God's providence? And who can fail, in seasons of deep spiritual sorrow, caused by a profound sense of the evil of sin and of one's own guiltiness, to derive abundant comfort from the contemplation of the sufferings, sorrows, and sympathies of the Saviour?

CHAPTER V.

PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

In heaven our Lord already reigns,
 Soon there we all shall be,
 To share his bliss, and join the strains
 Of ransomed souls set free.

Oh! precious prospect, cheering hope,
 Hasten, thou wheels of time,
 The hour when Glory's gates shall ope,
 On a celestial clime.

WHAT an inexhaustible fountain of consolation ought it to be to the believer in Christ to reflect, that the parallel between his Redeemer's experiences and his own, during the time of Christ's sojourn on earth, does not terminate with the tomb. The parallel has been proved to be complete until Jesus and his followers pass through the dark valley and shadow of death. It will hold no less good from that hour till the remotest ages of eternity. Jesus rose from his grave, and so

will all his disciples. In this respect, indeed, there is a parallel between Christ and all men; for as he rose from the dead, so will all mankind. But there the parallel between him and those who were not his followers ends. He rose that he might, after a brief sojourn on earth, ascend up into glory; his rejecters will rise also,—only it will be to be hurled into eternal perdition; while the resurrection of Christ's followers, like that of their Master, will be to eternal glory.

Nor will the parallel terminate even here. It will, as has been just remarked, hold equally good throughout the ceaseless ages of eternity. Christ's disciples will be blessed even as he is blessed. As they suffered with him on earth, they will reign with him in heaven. They will sustain, in a secondary sense, the same characters as those in which he appears. As he sustains the character of a conqueror, so will they. Then will they comprehend and feel, in a sense they never did on earth, the force of the words of the apostle, "*More than conquerors through him that loved us.*"

The palm of victory shall be seen in every hand, and the song of triumph will gush forth from every heart, in tones loud enough to be heard through heaven's remotest regions. They shall be kings and priests, even as he is a King and Priest. They shall not only have harps in their hands, but crowns on their heads, even as the head of their Lord will be encircled by a glorious diadem. They shall not only sit on thrones, but they shall sit on *his* throne. Wondrous truth! How deeply touching! How infinite the condescension of their Lord, to make his disciples the sharers of his own throne! Then will the prayer of Jesus be fulfilled in a sense in which it never could be on earth; then will there be seen a meaning and a blessedness in that prayer, which none could discern in it in their militant state,—“Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me may be with me to behold my glory.” And, it may be added, to share his glory too—that glory which he had with the Father before the world was; for then the words will receive a verification which they

never did or could do on earth, "The glory which thou gavest me I have given them."

Here let me make one more observation, which may prove the means of ministering comfort to those of God's people who are at present greatly cast down by reason of the way. The observation is this—that the tender relationship on which we have sought to dwell as existing between Christ and his disciples on earth, will survive the grave, and exist, so far as we are concerned, in greater vigour than ever, through all eternity, in heaven. Jesus will be their Brother there. He will not, it is true, any longer sustain the character of "The Brother Born for Adversity," because there will be no adversity in the mansions of bliss. But still he will be their Brother—their Brother, to sympathise in all their joys, as he did in all their sorrows below. And who can say how much of heaven's happiness will spring from this source. The sympathy of their Saviour was the grand spring of their solace and support amid their heaviest troubles in this world,

and his sympathies with them in their perfect bliss in the brighter and better world above, will be one of the main elements of their highest happiness through eternity's unending ages. On earth, even the best of God's people—those who love their Saviour the most, and rejoice with surpassing joy in the contemplation of the identity of his nature with theirs—often lose sight, in seasons of darkness or indifference, of the blessed truth, that in heaven the same relationship will for ever exist, and be perpetually present to the mind. In that glorious and gracious relationship they will ever rejoice with unspeakable joy; and well they may, for it is the highest, the holiest, and happiest that it were possible for creatures to sustain. Inexpressibly precious to them will be the term "Brother," as applied to Jesus. It is a relationship which angels cannot claim. Jesus is not *their* Brother. He took not on him the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham. It will be in our nature, not theirs, that Christ will ever appear in heaven. What a dignity that will give to

our natures, then 'glorified and made like to his. And how ought the followers of the Lamb to rejoice even now, in the prospect of, ere long, being made higher than even the angels, inasmuch as he who now is and ever will be far above all principalities and powers in heavenly places, will appear in the presence of seraphim and cherubim, and all their kindred hosts, in the nature of those whose redemption he purchased at the price of his own blood.

On highest heights of Heaven's throne,
Behold your Saviour-king,
Angels, and saints to glory gone,
Loud anthems to him sing!

Soon shall we join the happy throng,
Soon worship at his feet,
Be with our blessed Lord ere long,
And praise him as is meet.

What though with Him we suffer loss,
Who from the skies came down?
If here we have to bear the cross,
We there shall wear the crown.

Thrice happy day! when will it come?
When with our Saviour be?
When will we reach our heavenly home?
When all its glories see?

All tears from off our moistened eyes
 Shall then be wiped away ;
 No more be heard the soul's sad sighs,
 In realms of endless day.
 The glorious world to which we go,
 Our happy home with God,
 More blessed will be for all below
 We felt of sorrow's load.

With, then, Christian reader, such great and manifold sources of consolation in this vale of tears—with the perfect conviction that your Lord is intimately acquainted with your various troubles, tenderly sympathises with you in them all, and is, in accordance with his own gracious promise, “Lo, I am with you alway,” ever present to succour and sustain,—surely you will not be overwhelmed by those floods of sorrow through which you may have to pass. What more could you wish, than that conjoined with this certainty of present sympathy and support from your Saviour, you have the sure and certain hope of a happy eternity when a few more fleeting years have passed away?

