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“Mercy, mercy, Lord, on poor Cambo.”

1705

GRACE AND GLORY,

OR

THE YOUNG CONVERT INSTRUCTED IN
THE DOCTRINES OF GRACE.

BEING A SEQUEL TO "THE GOSPEL FOUNTAIN."

BY JAMES WOOD, D. D.

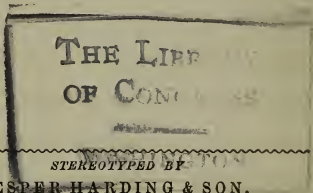


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PREFACE.

THIS volume is designed as a sequel to the "Gospel Fountain," in which, after noticing our fallen and ruined condition, we discussed the doctrines of the atonement, justification by faith, the agency of the Holy Spirit in renewing the heart, sanctification, good works, and the perseverance of the saints. These topics, connected with those which are discussed in the following conversations, form a summary of what are usually styled "the doctrines of grace." Though the two volumes may be profitably read apart, the reader will derive additional advantage by perusing them together. The subjects treated in both are streams from the same gospel fountain—streams which flow through our world to make glad myriads of human

hearts, and which terminate in that ocean of eternal joy where grace is perfected in glory.

Reader, if you have tasted and seen that the Lord is gracious, use your influence to induce others to seek this same privilege for themselves.

The following anecdote, published some years ago, illustrates the blessed effect of christian love and fidelity in addressing our fellow men with reference to their spiritual state: In 1839, a gentleman, on a visit to Saratoga, went one morning to take a draught at Congress Spring, and met a lady there taking her usual draught at the same spring. He asked her, "Have you ever drunk at that Great Fountain?" She coloured, and looked surprised; but turned away without a word of reply. The next winter that gentleman was in Rochester, and attended a prayer-meeting one evening in the Baptist church. A person present invited him to go home with him and see his wife who was very ill. As he entered the room, she looked up and smiled, and said, "Don't you know me?" "No," said he. "Don't you remem-

ber asking a woman at Congress Spring, 'Have you ever drunk at that Great Fountain?' "Yes," he replied. "Well," said she, "I am that person; I thought at first you were very rude, but your words kept ringing in my ears. They followed me to my chamber, to my pillow; I found no rest till I found it in Christ. I expect to die soon, and go to heaven, and you, under God, are the means of my salvation! Be as faithful to others as you have been to me. Never be afraid to talk to strangers on the subject of religion."

As with the volume entitled "The Gospel Fountain," so with this; I respectfully dedicate it to the YOUTH OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, with my earnest desire and prayer that they may all obey the gospel invitation to come to that Great Fountain, and "take the water of life freely."

"Blest are the men whose hearts are set
To find the way to Zion's gate;
All needful grace will God bestow,
And crown that grace with glory too."

CONTENTS.

CONVERSATION I.

	PAGE
Predestination, or Grace in its Origin. . . .	9

CONVERSATION II.

Regeneration, or Grace implanted in the Heart, and manifested in Conversion. . . .	56
--	----

CONVERSATION III.

Repentance, or Grace producing godly sorrow for Sin, and a new and holy Life. . . .	98
---	----

CONVERSATION IV.

Grace abounding, or penitent Sinners welcome to Christ. . . .	139
---	-----

CONVERSATION V.

	PAGE
Adoption, or Grace constituting converted Sinners Children of God.	178

CONVERSATION VI.

Grace and Comfort, or the Doctrines of Grace a source of true Happiness to Believers.	220
--	-----

CONVERSATION VII.

Grace consummated in Glory, or the blessed and glo- rious Issues of Grace in the heavenly World.	269
CONCLUSION.	314

GRACE AND GLORY.

CONVERSATION I.

PREDESTINATION, OR GRACE IN ITS ORIGIN.

AT family worship one evening, Mr. James read the conversation between our Divine Lord and the woman of Samaria, recorded in the fourth chapter of John. The woman having expressed her surprise that Christ should ask drink of her, a woman of Samaria, he said to her, "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldst have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water. The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep, from whence then hast thou that living water?"

On reading this verse, Mr. James remarked,

I do not approve of fanciful interpretations of God's word; but some passages suggest important truth, though when strictly interpreted according to their original intention, they do not teach it. In a volume of popular sermons, by an eloquent and celebrated preacher, one of his discourses was founded on a part of this conversation. From the clause, "Thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep," he deduced this sentiment; viz., that the mystery of godliness, like a deep and unfathomable fountain, cannot be explained or understood by human reason, but must be received by faith in Divine revelation; and that our unbelief, with regard to this mystery, arises from our failure to recognize in the teachings of the gospel, the unerring words of infinite wisdom. This sentiment, said Mr. James, though not designed to be taught by these words, is suggested by them; and it is a truth which ought to be considered much oftener than it is, by readers of the Bible. The gospel is called by Paul a mystery. It is addressed to our faith more than to our intellect;

and our proper course is to seek, with pious and believing hearts, the living water which Christ offers to give us in answer to our request, and not to neglect it, nor cavil at it, because its Divine source is beyond our profoundest researches, or our highest conceptions.

Mr. James intended these remarks in no small degree for his son, Henry, who was asking questions of his father, almost daily, concerning Predestination, and upon which he had told him he would converse on the next Sabbath evening. When the appointed hour arrived, Henry James said to his father, Your remarks about Jacob's well, a few evenings ago, have been running in my thoughts ever since, and they seem to be more applicable to Predestination than to any other doctrine of grace. To me at least, the well is deep, and I have nothing to draw with.

PREDESTINATION NOT CONTRARY TO REASON
—VIEWS OF WILLIAM THE THIRD—ANEC-
DOTE OF HENRY JAMES'S GRANDFATHER.

Mr. James replied, The fact that you are not

able to comprehend this doctrine, is no evidence against its truth. There are many truths which we cannot comprehend, particularly those which relate to God, who is infinite in his nature. "Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?" Considering the infinity of the Divine nature, the reception of this doctrine is attended with less difficulty than its denial. Though the Divine decrees, of which Predestination forms a part, are above our reason, they are so far from being contrary to reason, that the denial of them has often struck the minds of reflecting men as absurd. When King William the Third, of England, was asked whether he could believe in the doctrine of fore-ordination, his reply was, "I cannot help believing it; for I cannot degrade my Maker below the character of a wise man, by thinking that he acted without a plan, and without regarding the consequences of what he did."

Henry James remarked, Grandfather used to reason in a similar manner. He once

said that a pious gentleman had frequent discussions on the subject of Divine decrees with a housebuilder, an Arminian, who was engaged in building him a house. When the house was finished, he accompanied the builder through every apartment, in order to examine the carpenter work, the masonry, and the style of finishing, preparatory to accepting the contract. Every part was constructed agreeably to his expectations. As he was expressing his approbation of the work, he said to the builder, How did you succeed in erecting so mechanical, so well-arranged, and so tasty an edifice? Oh, said he, I drew a plan of the building before I commenced, and always followed that plan. Indeed! responded the owner, You cannot erect a house without previously forming a plan; and yet according to your sentiments, God created the world, and now governs it without a plan! The builder, said my grandfather, was silenced, if not convinced.

Mr. James replied, The reasoning of that gentleman was sound, whether the builder was convinced by it or not. Persons who warmly

commit themselves to a particular side of a controversy, are not easily convinced, even though they may be in error.

“A man convinced against his will,
Is of the same opinion still.”

THE DOCTRINE OF PREDESTINATION STATED,
WITH A CLEAR SCRIPTURE PROOF.

The doctrine of Predestination, continued Mr. James, may be stated thus; *Predestination is God's eternal purpose to save those who will finally be saved.* Though the contemplation of this statement involves thoughts too vast for the full comprehension of limited capacities like ours, the doctrine expressed by it, not only accords with right reason, as I have already said, but also with the holy Scriptures, and with the Christian's own religious experience. No doctrine is taught more explicitly in the Bible than this. At present, I will quote only a single passage—a passage, which I once heard an intelligent merchant repeat with much animation, and at the close, he pronounced it one of the most sublime pas-

sages in the New Testament. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, according as he hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame before him in love. Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will." Eph. i. 3—5. What can be more sublime, exclaimed that gentleman, than this? Strange, that every reader of the Bible cannot perceive it. Further proof of the doctrine will be adduced as I proceed; but this text is sufficient to show how clearly it is taught in the holy Scriptures, and also that the Apostle Paul blessed God for those privileges which flowed to him and to his Christian brethren, as the fruits of this doctrine.

FALSE VIEWS OF PREDESTINATION REFUTED
BY A PIOUS WOMAN.

All who profess to believe the Bible, said

Mr. James, hold to Predestination or Election of some kind ; though many explain it in such a manner, as almost to destroy its scriptural character. Some make it relate only to privileges, and not to salvation. Others understand it as depending on the will of the creature, as much as on the will of God. And others again hold it to be a purpose formed at our birth, or when we believe, and not from eternity. None of these views express the scriptural doctrine on this subject. The reasoning of a pious woman, who was appealed to by two young theologians for her opinion, effectually upsets them all. She said, "If my election had been to privileges only, or even to grace, yet making my salvation dependent on my own strength and faithfulness, I should have no hope ; for without God I can do nothing ; and as to the time, I am sure if God had not elected me before my birth, he would never have done it at all, because there has been nothing good in me since I was born, to be the ground of my election."

The text which I have quoted, states the

time of our election, (if it is proper to call it time,) viz., “before the foundation of the world,” and also the ground of it, viz., not our goodness either possessed or foreseen, but “the good pleasure of his will.” This passage implies, moreover, that election is unto salvation, through holiness as a means, which is asserted in so many words by the same Apostle in another epistle, and with a similar expression of his gratitude to God. “But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth.” 2 Thess. ii. 13.

PREDESTINATION ACCORDS WITH THE CHRISTIAN'S EXPERIENCE—A PERSONAL NARRATIVE.

When I entered the ministry, continued Mr. James, I preached some ten or twelve months in a delightful and romantic valley, in the state of Pennsylvania. There was an extensive revival in that county. About three hundred pro-

fessed religion, one third of whom united with the Presbyterian church. Two young men, brothers, came some fourteen or fifteen miles to converse with me on the subject of religion, especially on the doctrine of Predestination, concerning which they wished to learn my views. One of them was a member of the Presbyterian church, and the other, on whose account the visit was made, had recently, as he hoped, experienced a change of heart. The substance of our conversation was published in a tract, which passed through two editions, containing, both together, several thousand copies. As that tract is now before me, and expresses my present views, you may read the first part of it, and I wish you to notice, as you proceed, how far the experience of this young convert accords with your own. Henry James read as follows:—

PREDESTINATION OR ELECTION, AND REPROBATION.

A conversation between a Presbyterian minister and a young convert.

Convert. Sir, I have called to converse with you on a subject which has frequently occupied my mind, and more especially since I have had reason to believe that I am a child of God, and have felt a desire to make a public profession of religion. My preferences are in favour of the Presbyterian church; but I have been told that you believe in the awful doctrine of Predestination, or, as I have generally heard it expressed, in Election and Reprobation, which circumstance makes me doubtful as to my duty of connecting myself with your church. As I have, however, derived my information chiefly from those not very friendly to your denomination, I desire to have an explanation from your own lips.

Minister. What, sir, are the ideas which they give you of our belief?

C. You believe, say they, that a certain part of mankind, called the elect, were from eternity ordained or predestinated to everlasting life; and that it makes no difference whether they repent, believe, and live holy lives, or not, that their salvation is sure, let

them feel and act as they may. You hold on the other hand, they say, that there is a class called reprobates, whom God from eternity ordained or predestinated to everlasting misery; that they were created for the purpose of being damned; that if they should repent and believe, and turn to God ever so earnestly and sincerely, it would be of no avail; that they are decreed to destruction, and thither they must go, do what they can. You are also charged with believing that there are *infants in hell not a span long*; which I suppose is a part of the same doctrine, the reason of their condemnation being the eternal decree of God.

M. As to the assertion concerning infants, I doubt whether a Presbyterian minister ever expressed himself in this manner, or in any other language which conveys the same idea. This is not the sentiment of Presbyterians. God has revealed little about infants in a future world; but from several passages of Scripture which bear on this subject, our

ministers universally agree, as far as I know, that those dying in infancy are saved.*

The statement which you have made concerning the doctrine of predestination is also a gross misrepresentation of our sentiments. We do indeed believe in personal and eternal election; but not in the way which you have described. In order to give you our views on this subject, permit me to ask you a few questions concerning your own conversion. These questions and accompanying remarks will be such as to indicate what our views are, and your answers will show how far these views correspond with your own experience. My first question is, Who is the author of your conversion?

C. God is the sole author. I am sensible that a change has been wrought in my feelings which I never accomplished myself, and which indeed I never could have accomplished.

M. This accords with the declarations of Scripture: "You hath he quickened who

* See Tract No. 132, "Are Infants saved?" published by the Presbyterian Board.

were dead in trespasses and sins." Eph. ii. 1. "Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." John i. 13. My next question is, What induced God to change your heart? Was it because he saw that you were better than your neighbours who have not experienced this change?

C. Certainly not. I feel myself entirely unworthy of his favour. There was no good thing in me to call forth his kindness, but much to excite his displeasure. I attribute my conversion altogether to his rich and sovereign mercy! As Paul says, "By grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God." Eph. ii. 8.

M. You feel then that God has done more for you than he had done before your conversion.

C. Yes, sir, he has done all for me that I have experienced. Blessed be his name!

M. You are sensible then, I suppose, that God has done more for *you*, than for your unconverted neighbours, who are now in the

same state as you were, prior to your conversion.

C. To be sure. It was not my goodness that has made the difference. I was no better than they, and I was pursuing the same path with them to eternal misery. God has made the difference, and to his name be all the glory. I take no praise to myself.

M. So thought the Apostle Paul, "Who maketh thee to differ from another, and what hast thou that thou didst not receive?" 1 Cor. iv. 7. Would God have showed you any injustice if he had permitted you to go on in your sinful ways, and had sentenced you to destruction?

C. No, sir; his throne would have been for ever guiltless. I deserved wrath, and I consider it a wonder that I was not cut off many years ago. I was pursuing the paths of sin and folly, careless of my spiritual welfare, and when the Holy Spirit strove with me, I did not yield my heart to him, but often resisted his strivings, and went on still in my sinful course. For a while, indeed, I was in-

duced to pray, in order to allay my distress of mind; but I am now convinced that my prayers were not acceptable to God, because they did not proceed from a penitent and believing heart; and hence I ceased praying as soon as my mind was diverted by worldly things. Oh, I have deserved hell a thousand times!

M. Do you not think that your prayers had some influence in gaining the Divine favour?

C. I once thought so, though I felt my prayers to be somewhat defective, yet I imagined they were growing better, and were making me better, and so more worthy of God's regard. But I now perceive that I was mistaken; for, as I have just remarked, my prayers were not acceptable to God, and consequently could have had no influence in obtaining his favour; except, indeed, as a means of grace which he has appointed, and in the use of which he ordinarily meets the sinner. As to any merit, there was none; I never should have attempted to pray at all, unless God had discovered to me my guilt and dan-

ger, and inclined me to seek him. I regard all my experience, as far as it has been of a right character, from my first convictions of sin to the present time, as the effect of God's Spirit upon my heart.

M. Your experience doubtless corresponds in these particulars with that of every true Christian. Though man is not passive in the work of conversion, and hence he is often exhorted in Scripture to "repent," to "believe," to "pray," to "work," agreeably to which commands the Christian, previous to his conversion, made an effort to come to Christ and to do works meet for repentance; yet he is fully persuaded, from a knowledge of his own depravity, that unless he had received special assistance from God, he never would have made a single effort in the way which the gospel requires. He, therefore, fully accords with the Apostle in saying, "By the grace of God, I am what I am." 1 Cor. xv. 10. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of

the Holy Ghost." Titus iii. 5. Now since you are convinced that the author of the change which has been wrought in your heart is God, my next question is, How did it come to pass that God performed this work for you? Was it a mere accident, a dispensation of heavenly favour falling at random, which you had the good fortune to appropriate to yourself, or was it the fruit of God's gracious design towards you?

C. God must certainly have thought of working this change in me before it was produced. Men do not generally act without design, much less God. His merciful design renders him worthy of our gratitude for the favours we receive from his hand. Though a person may do me a great kindness, yet if he did not intend my good, I could not feel grateful to him for the favour. So, though this work be of God, yet if he performed it without design, why should I praise him for what I have experienced? Oh, I am convinced that the work wrought in my heart is not the fruit of blind chance, but the work of an in-

telligent and merciful Being, who, in the bestowment of his heavenly gifts, thought of me, and was pleased to designate me as a trophy of his grace.

M. These ideas are as agreeable to Scripture as to reason. "We love him because he first loved us." 1 John iv. 19. This passage, if analyzed, and its meaning expressed in several particulars, contains the following propositions: 1. There was a time when Christians did not love God. 2. At that time God loved them. 3. If God had not then loved them, they never would have loved God. In other words, their present love to God is the consequence of God's former love to them. Agreeably to this, Christ said to his disciples, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you that you should go and bring forth fruit." John xv. 6. And these words accord with every Christian's experience. All who, like Mary, have chosen Christ for their portion, ascribe their choice of him to the influence of Divine grace upon their hearts.

But when do you suppose God first thought

of you in the manner which you have described? Has God any new thoughts? Does he design anything to-day which he had not designed yesterday, or does he think of that now which he had never thought of before? With God there is no succession of time. He is "from everlasting to everlasting," and as his existence is eternal, "his understanding is infinite." Psalm cxlvii. 5. "He knoweth all things." 1 John iii. 20. "Known unto God are all his works, from the beginning of the world." Acts xv. 18. "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight, but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do." Heb. iv. 13. What God knows and designs now, he must have known and designed from the beginning, *i. e.*, from eternity.

C. I am obliged to subscribe to these sentiments, for they not only accord with Scripture as you have quoted it, but also with my own inward experience. I sometimes look back with wonder and joy, and endeavour to trace the stream of divine mercy which has flowed

into my soul to its original fountain; but I soon find myself lost in contemplating the everlasting love of God.

M. You have now expressed what we mean by predestination, that is, that part of predestination called election. It is simply grace traced back to its divine origin, like a stream traced to its source, or an effect to its cause. In other words, predestination is the design or purpose of God to perform that work of grace in the heart which believers experience at their conversion, and to bring them through progressive sanctification to everlasting life. This design or purpose was eternal, because God is "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever;" and consequently he has no design or purpose now which he did not have before the creation of the world. His design or purpose reaches forward to the salvation of his elect; but not without including their previous preparation for heaven. "Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first born among many brethren.

Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified." Rom. viii. 29, 30. God has not chosen sinners to salvation, in impenitence and unbelief; but through sanctification of the spirit and belief of the truth. 2 Thess. ii. 13. The divine purpose contemplates, first, grace wrought in us; secondly, a holy life, which is the fruit of saving grace in the heart; and thirdly, eternal glory, as the gracious reward of Christian fidelity. These three, grace, holiness, and glory, are the three links which form the golden chain of the sinner's salvation. See Titus, ii. 11—13. Hence though in respect to God, election is unconditional; because there was no good thing foreseen in any, to induce him to ordain them to eternal life rather than others; yet in respect to the elect themselves, their election is, in some sense, conditional; because there is never an election to salvation which does not include a previous work of grace in the heart, and perseverance therein to the end of life. The execution of God's

purpose begins in grace, is carried on in holiness, and terminates in glory. These three links cannot be broken without destroying the sinner's hope of heaven.

C. Your explanation of what you mean by predestination, presents this doctrine in a far different light from that in which I have been accustomed to view it. To a Confession of Faith like this, I could cordially subscribe. Will you now do me the favour to explain that part of the doctrine which is called *reprobation*? This has prejudiced my mind more than election.

M. The term Reprobation is not often employed by Presbyterians; not however because the word itself means any thing contrary to their belief; for it signifies, when properly defined, the act of disapproving. But they do not employ the term, because it is defined by the enemies of their doctrine very differently from the meaning which they themselves attach to it. I will give you our views on this subject, by adverting to what you have al-

ready stated concerning your religious experience.

You have said that you were pursuing, not involuntarily, but willingly, the path to destruction. God offered you a Saviour, but you did not receive him. You heard the gospel preached, but you did not yield obedience to its gracious calls. Your conscience warned you, but you did not give heed to its warning voice. Divine providence admonished you, but you did not properly improve its salutary lessons. And above all, the Holy Spirit strove with you, but you refused to submit your heart to his merciful and gracious influences. You have said also that God would have treated you justly, if he had permitted you to continue in your chosen way till the end of life, and thus incur that wrath which he has denounced against the finally impenitent. Or to express it more nearly in your own words, you are sensible that God was under no obligation to show you favour, that all which he has done for you is mere mercy, that your sins deserve his wrath, and that you could not

complain of injustice, if the penalty of God's law should be inflicted upon you.

Now suppose you had been thus left, your condition would be the same as that of the finally lost. There is no positive decree concerning them, except the general one, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." They being sinners, and not complying with the terms of the gospel, (without which there can be no salvation,) fall of course under this sentence, and reap at last the reward of their iniquity. They are not sentenced to destruction after they repented, nor while they were repenting; but because they would not repent. They are not driven from the cross, where they stand pleading for mercy; for "him that cometh to Christ he will in no wise cast out;" but they perish because they are "enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction." In the language of the Presbyterian Confession of Faith, "they are passed by and ordained to dishonour and wrath *for their sin*, to the praise of God's glorious justice."

By Reprobation then is meant, when the

term is employed by Presbyterians, God's permitting the wicked to remain in that sinful and ruined state into which they were brought by the fall, *i. e.*, disapproved and condemned, or in other words, to pursue their own chosen way to perdition. If God had permitted you thus to perish, you are sensible that he would have done you no injustice, and so of all others who continue in the road to hell. You are conscious of having been under no constraint to continue in sin, except what was implied in your own guilt and folly; that you sinned freely, and that if you had perished, your condemnation would have been owing to your impenitence and unbelief, and not to the Divine decree.

Now if God permits any to perish in their sins, he must have known from eternity the persons who would fall under his everlasting displeasure. The doctrine of Reprobation may therefore be stated in the following propositions. (1.) God had an eternal design or purpose to punish those who should persist in their sins. (2.) Some persons, notwithstand-

ing all the means of grace which he has provided for them, of their own free choice, without compulsion from him, though by his foreknowledge and permission, continue in sin to the end of life. (3.) Such persons, of course, fall under the penalty of God's law, and become the subjects of his eternal wrath; not because he foresaw or decreed it, but because of their rebellion against his authority, and their neglect of the gospel salvation.

All mankind in their fallen state are reprobate, *i. e.*, disapproved and under the curse of God's holy law. It was in view of mankind as thus fallen and self-destroyed, that God formed the gospel plan. Upon some of them he determined, for wise reasons, though not revealed to us, to bestow pardon and salvation, while he left the remainder under the curse justly brought upon them by sin. The charge of partiality which is sometimes brought against this procedure, in that God determined to do more for some than for others, assumes that he made this difference in an arbitrary manner, and without good reasons. This assumption

is false, and hence the objection falls to the ground. With respect to mankind, God's gracious choice of some rather than others, was sovereign, because the moral characters of men by nature are alike, and hence no cause exists in the creature why one should be taken and another left. But to say that God had no reasons for this choice, would be supposing that he acts in a manner, in which intelligent beings never do act; to assert that his reasons were not sufficient, would be to impeach his infinite wisdom. Two criminals may be equally worthy of death, and yet there may be valid reasons why executive clemency should be extended to one of them and not to the other; why one should be pardoned and the other punished, and so in the Divine government. It ought to be sufficient for us to be assured that God formed his designs in relation to his creatures with the best conceivable reasons, though he has not revealed these reasons in his word. It may be, that, in a future state, what now seems mysterious in the dispensa-

tions of his mercy, will be clearly and satisfactorily unfolded to our view.

At this point Mr. James told Henry he might pause; but he desired him to read the remainder of the tract at his leisure, as it contained some counsels and Scripture proofs, which were important for him to consider. To read the whole now, said he, will protract unduly our present conversation.

Henry James remarked, I am much enlightened, father, by this tract, and I shall peruse the remainder with attention. Before you dismiss the tract, please tell me whether the conversation alluded to, had the effect to settle the mind of the young convert.

THE EFFECT OF THAT CONVERSATION ON THE TWO BROTHERS.

Mr. James replied, The young convert who engaged chiefly in that conversation, became soon afterwards, a communicant in the Presbyterian church, and he has ever since been a consistent and useful professor of religion in the same denomination. For several years

he was an active ruling elder in a large and intelligent city church. Some ten or twelve years after that conversation, I met him in New York, where he then resided, and he referred with evident satisfaction to our first interview in the interior of Pennsylvania, and to the lasting benefit he had derived from our conversation at that time. I will also mention a circumstance of some interest concerning his brother; as it shows how strangely a person's mind may be warped on this subject by prejudice. It afforded us some amusement when we met. This brother, who came with him to see me, though a Presbyterian, had mingled much among Arminians, and for several years previous, had seldom attended a Presbyterian church. He joined at first in the conversation, and remarked that he disliked one expression, which he believed was in the Presbyterian Standards, viz., "Who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will;" which he thought should be altered so as to read, "After the counsel of his *fore-knowledge*." I requested him to read the first

chapter of Ephesians. When he came to the 11th verse, and found the exact phraseology which he proposed to change, he was so much embarrassed that he remained a silent listener most of the time afterwards, and appeared to derive as much benefit from the conversation as his brother.

DIVINE FOREKNOWLEDGE INVOLVES PREDESTINATION—ANECDOTE.

Few persons, if any, continued Mr. James, deny God's foreknowledge; and yet the admission of this is a virtual acknowledgment of the doctrine of predestination. Mr. Bonar once related the following dialogue, involving this argument:

"I hope you will not be offended," said a gentleman, "if I declare, I do not, I cannot believe in the doctrine of Predestination."

"And I hope," rejoined Mr. C., "that you will not be offended if I declare, I am quite of opinion you do believe in it."

"I beg, sir," said the other, "you will explain yourself."

“If you will favour me with the short answers of yes, or no, to a few questions,” replied Mr. C., “I have little doubt I can prove what I have affirmed.”

“It will afford me satisfaction,” said the other, “to comply with your request.”

Mr. C. then began: “Are you of opinion that all sinners will be saved?”

“By no means,” said the gentleman.

“But you have no doubt,” added Mr. C., “that it will be formally determined, at the day of judgment, who are to be saved, and who are to perish.”

“Of that I have no doubts,” replied the stranger.

“And is the great God,” continued Mr. C., “under any necessity of waiting till the last awful assizes, in order to know who are the righteous, to be saved, and the wicked, that are to perish?”

“By no means,” said the other, “for he knows already.”

“When do you suppose,” asked Mr. C., “that he *first* knew this?”

Here the gentleman paused a little, but soon answered, "He must have known from all eternity."

"Then it must have been fixed from all eternity," said Mr. C.

"That by no means follows," replied the other.

"Then it follows," added Mr. C., "that he did not know, but only guessed, and happened to guess right; for how can even Omniscience KNOW what is yet uncertain?"

Here the stranger began to perceive his difficulty, and after a short debate, confessed, it must have been fixed from eternity.

"Now one question more," said Mr. C., "will prove that you believe in Predestination, as well as I. You have acknowledged, what can never be disproved, that God could not know from eternity who shall be saved, unless it had been fixed from eternity. If, then, it was fixed, be pleased, sir, to inform me, who fixed it?"

The gentleman candidly acknowledged he had never taken this view before; and said

he believed it was the last time he should attempt to oppose Predestination to eternal life.

TWO OBJECTIONS ANSWERED.

Mr. James remarked further, Many object to Predestination, because, like the young convert referred to in this tract, they entertain erroneous views concerning its nature. In such cases the best reply to their objections is a simple statement of the doctrine as held by its advocates. For instance, a common objection is that Predestination destroys man's free agency, renders second causes of no avail, and hence discourages the use of means. This is founded on a mistaken notion of what Predestination is, as believed by Presbyterians. On the subject of God's Eternal Decree, which includes Predestination, our Confession of Faith reads thus; "God from all eternity did by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass; yet so as thereby neither is God the author of sin; nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures; nor is the liberty

or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established." If, therefore, any imagine that Predestination makes man a machine, &c., it is evident from the language of our Confession, that this doctrine, as it lies in their minds, is the opposite of that which is maintained by the Presbyterian church. In a similar way may be answered the vulgar objection, "If I am to be saved, I shall be saved, do what I will; and if I am to be damned, I shall be damned, do what I can." The Bible doctrine, as understood by Presbyterians, is utterly inconsistent with this view of the matter, and it needs only to be stated correctly, in order to refute this gross caricature of a precious gospel truth.

THE MOST SERIOUS DIFFICULTY ORIGINATES
IN THE HEART.

But the greatest objection of all is one of the heart and not of the intellect; and the mode of relief is not argument, or explanations, or even Scripture proofs, but the saving illumination of the Holy Spirit. I speak from former expe-

rience. Though I perceived the doctrine must be true, if the Bible is true; that it must be true, if reason is not utterly at fault concerning the character and government of God, and his infinite supremacy over his creatures; yet I disliked the doctrine, and rebelled against it in my heart. Why? Because my heart was not reconciled to God, and therefore I could not rejoice in his reign. A person must be a Christian, in order to be a happy Predestinarian. As a coloured man said of Dr. Bellamy, "That his preaching made God appear so big;" Predestination makes God so great, and the creature so small, that the proud and unrenewed heart is uncomfortable and rebellious at this view of the case. It was so with me; but when I became willing, through Divine grace, to humble myself in the dust, and could rejoice in the Lord as the supreme and rightful Governor of the world, my hostility to this doctrine ceased, and most of my difficulties concerning it were removed.

PREDESTINATION A GREAT MERCY.

Mr. James remarked again, Predestination is a great mercy, and is so regarded by those who understand it correctly, and whose hearts are right with God. Either all men will be saved, or all men will be lost, or a part only will be saved. If a part will be saved and not all, those who are saved either save themselves, or they are saved by Divine grace. If God is the author of their salvation, he must have purposed to save them, and this purpose was a merciful and gracious purpose, which is the scriptural import of Predestination. In this view of the case, either Predestination is true, or all men will be eternally lost. Predestination is, therefore, one of the distinguishing mercies of God.

PREDESTINATION A CAUSE FOR THANKSGIVING.

Again, Predestination is one of those forms in which Jehovah exercises his rightful and holy sovereignty over his creatures; in view

of which Jesus Christ rejoiced, and gave thanks to God. "Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight." Luke x. 21. Those, therefore, who deny this doctrine, are not in sympathy with the views and feelings of our Divine Lord. Who is right, Jesus Christ, or these objectors?

Be assured, my son, that all those whose feelings are truly pious and devout, cordially acquiesce in this doctrine, if rightly understood, even when they might be startled at the word Predestination. Where is the genuine Christian who does not adopt with a grateful heart, that sweet hymn, commencing with the verse,

"Hail, sovereign love, that first began
The scheme to rescue fallen man;
Hail, matchless, free, eternal grace,
That gave my soul a hiding-place?"

Or that other delightful hymn, so often sung by thousands, beginning with the words,

“ Grace ! 'Tis a charming sound
Harmonious to mine ear :
Heaven with the echo shall resound,
And all the earth shall hear ?”

Those two hymns contain all the Predestination which I preach or believe, and all which is taught in the Standards of the Presbyterian Church. In other words, they teach it clearly, fully, and comprehensively; I say comprehensively. This is worthy of special notice. The Predestination contained in those hymns includes (what a devotional contemplation of the subject always should) not simply the Divine purpose itself, but the whole series of mercies flowing from it in our redemption by Jesus Christ. In a strictly theological discussion, the purpose alone would be considered; but in its devout contemplation, as in those hymns, it is viewed like the river of Eden, which as it issued forth, “was parted and became into four heads,” and these were the sources of other rivers, whose waters conveyed far and wide the choice properties contained in the original fountain. Thus, also, the doc-

trine of Predestination, as stated in our Confession of Faith, is equally comprehensive. In the same sentence where it teaches God's purpose to save sinners, it asserts that he has also "fore-ordained all the means thereunto." His purpose of salvation is like the river of Eden; "the means thereunto" resemble the other rivers which proceed from it. If then those hymns express your sentiments, your creed is Calvinistic; and, if they accord with your inward feelings, if they rejoice your heart, your belief is far better than a theoretical conviction; it is an experimental, a saving faith. A sound creed is important, but it is not sufficient to save the soul, without a spiritual change. Where this change has been experienced, the doctrines of grace are not only assented to, but rejoiced in, as a theme of devout praise to God. The saints in glory owe their bliss to the practical results of these doctrines, and they continually acknowledge this in anthems of praise and thanksgiving. And why should not we rejoice and praise God in like manner?

“Life, like a fountain rich and free,
Ssprings from the presence of our Lord;
And in his light, our souls shall see
The glories promised in his word.”

THE BENEFICIAL TENDENCY OF PREDESTINATION—CONVERSION OF CAPT. WILSON.

Mr. James now placed in Henry's hand a small volume, published by the Presbyterian Board of Publication, entitled LIFE OF CAPT. JAMES WILSON, which he desired him to peruse; adding, I have marked a few pages of the book for you to read to me, as a suitable close to our present conversation. Capt. Wilson's religious experience is a remarkable instance of the effect of the doctrine of Predestination, when preached in a Scriptural manner, to bring the unconverted to a serious concern about their souls, and to make them, when converted, humble, devout, and zealous Christians. The following is the substance of what Henry then read.

Capt. James Wilson was an Englishman. After residing for a considerable time in the East Indies, and passing through many thrill-

ing scenes, he returned to England, and settled in Horndean, Hampshire. In religion he was a sceptic. His conversion from infidelity, his conviction for sin, his joyful hope in the Redeemer, and his devoted Christian life, were owing, under God, to a SERMON ON PREDESTINATION, preached by the Rev. John Griffin, a Calvinistic minister of Portsea. Capt. Wilson had seldom attended preaching. Having spent part of a day in conversation with Mr. Griffin, on the evidences of Christianity, and being pleased with his courteous and gentlemanly demeanour, he was induced, on the succeeding Sabbath, to attend Mr. Griffin's ministry. Mr. Griffin's text in course (he was preaching a series of sermons on the same chapter) was Rom. viii. 29. "Whom he did foreknow, them he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son." The outlines of the sermon (which are given in this volume) show that it was a full and Scriptural exhibition of this high gospel mystery. Capt. James Wilson listened to the sermon with fixed attention. It drew tears

from those eyes which had seldom wept before. The sentiments of the discourse produced a conflict of feelings in his breast. His memory, reason, conscience, imagination, and passions, were all in agitation. His prejudices for and against the doctrine, his hopes and fears, his love and hatred, his pleasures and disgusts, raised a storm in his soul, resembling the concussion of the elements in a hurricane! While his heart rose in hatred against the sovereignty of God, the events of his whole life appeared before him as incontrovertible evidences of its truth. The painful remembrance of former sins, and the fearful apprehension of futurity, recurred to aggravate this internal conflict. He observed to his niece on their way home, "If what I have heard to day be true, I am a lost man." During the week following he was exceedingly pensive and thoughtful. The Bible and religious books formed his constant and almost only companions. He seemed wholly absorbed in the inquiry, "What shall I do to be saved?"

The two succeeding Sabbaths he attended

Mr. Griffin's preaching; and the discourses were a continuation of the same discussion, in its relation to the image of Christ, contemplated in Predestination, to effectual calling, which describes the way in which this image is produced in the soul, and to justification, showing the method of a sinner's acceptance with God. Capt. Wilson's former convictions were deepened; sin appeared exceedingly sinful, his judgment perceived the fitness, and his conscience felt the force of truth; he saw that Christ was the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth; and that the promise of God to accept the penitent and believing sinner is the ground or warrant of faith.

In a few weeks the load of guilt which had pressed on his spirits was removed, and the gloomy apprehensions which had tormented his mind concerning a future state were dispelled. The horrors of the night were turned into the joy of the morning. He now understood what it was to be translated from darkness into marvellous light. His countenance

which before had indicated the anxious thoughtfulness and desponding apprehensions of his grief-worn spirit, now brightened with cheerfulness, while a radiance of ardent love and gratitude seemed to sparkle in his eye.

Capt. Wilson had served his country faithfully before his conversion. Now he desired to serve Christ with at least equal zeal. The London Missionary Society having been just organized, and having resolved to send missionaries to the South Sea Islands, (the first missionaries to the heathen in modern times,) Capt. James Wilson volunteered his services as the commander of the ship, which it was determined to purchase and fit out for this express purpose. His offer was gratefully accepted by the Directors, and the service performed in a successful and satisfactory manner. The ship, which was called the *Duff*, sailed from London in 1796.

Capt. Wilson's religious feelings, after he went on board the vessel, are expressed in the following extract of a letter to his spiritual father, Mr. Griffin. "Praise be to God for

all his mercies. Were it not for the many precious promises, I know not what I should do; for it is really hard parting from all those we fondly love, and entering into a sea of trouble and perplexity. I look back on my past life with pain, to my pilgrimage I look with fear and trembling; but to that state where we shall all meet, and every tear be wiped from our eyes, I look with a pleasing hope, that I shall be one of that happy number that God in his great mercy has chosen. This cheers my drooping spirits, and causes me to press onward to the prize, forgetting the past and the present, and looking only to the future for real happiness."

After reading this narrative, Henry exclaimed, What a remarkable Christian experience! and what a happy illustration of the truth and power of the doctrine of Predestination! I think I shall love this doctrine hereafter, whatever may have been my former feelings concerning it. I find that, when correctly explained and understood, it is truly a great mercy, and indeed the fountain of all

other mercies. Mr. James assented, and then called the family together for worship, selecting that appropriate hymn, (a favourite of all the family,) which commences with the verse,

“Come, thou fount of every blessing,
Tune my heart to sing thy grace ;
Streams of mercy never ceasing,
Call for songs of loudest praise.”

CONVERSATION II.

REGENERATION, OR GRACE IMPLANTED IN THE HEART, AND MANIFESTED IN CONVERSION.

ON the following Sabbath evening, Henry James said to his father, The question has often occurred to me during the past week, why, in mentioning the doctrines of grace, some three months ago, and in the conversations which followed, you named Predestination last; though God's purpose to save sinners was from eternity, and seems, therefore, to be properly the first topic of conversation. Please tell me, father, what made you consider those doctrines in that particular order; viz., Christ's Mediatorial work on earth, Justification by Faith, Dependence on the Holy Spirit, Sanctification, Good Works, Perseverance of the Saints, and then Predestination.*

* See The Gospel Fountain, or The Anxious Youth

Mr. James replied, I placed Predestination after the others, because I thought you would understand it better, when we had discussed the other doctrines named, especially if, by the Divine blessing on those conversations, you should be brought to the saving knowledge of Christ. I have heard of a pious negro at the South, who exhibited so much good sense, and such an experimental acquaintance with the Bible, that white persons in the neighbourhood sometimes sought opportunities to converse with him on the subject of religion. A gentleman anxious for his soul, called to see the negro, who among other counsels, advised him to read the New Testament through by course, commencing with Matthew. In a day or two he called again, and told the coloured man he had found much difficulty in understanding the doctrine of Predestination.

Where did you find it? said the negro.

In Romans, replied the gentleman.

Ah! said the negro; you have begun to

made Happy; published by The Presbyterian Board of Publication—to which volume the present is a Sequel.

read in the wrong place. If you had begun at Matthew, you would have found, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Please go back, massa, and begin there. When you have settled that matter, you will be able to understand the doctrine of Predestination much better than you can now.*

The course which I took in those conversations, continued Mr. James, seemed to me the best method to prepare the way for you to understand and appreciate the high mystery of Predestination. I did not, however, in that series, discuss fully a number of doctrines which belong to the system of gospel grace; but only alluded to them incidentally, as being involved in those doctrines which I discussed. For instance, in remarking on the work of the Holy Spirit, the doctrine of effectual calling, or regeneration, was briefly explained; and in defining faith, repentance was mentioned as being necessarily implied in saving faith. Repentance was also alluded to in my remarks on Sanctification. In our conversation on

* See *The African Preacher*, published by the Board.

Perseverance, Adoption was named as one proof of it, and its nature was defined in a few words. But these doctrines and one or two others demand a more particular consideration. If you would like to converse further on these topics, Henry, it will afford me pleasure to occupy a few evenings in endeavouring to explain these great Bible truths.

I am glad, father, said Henry James, to hear you make this proposal. There is no kind of knowledge which I am so anxious to acquire as the knowledge of God's word.

Mr. James remarked, I will spend an hour this evening in discoursing on the subject of Regeneration.

This topic is the very one, said Henry, concerning which I have been meditating to-day. My thoughts were turned to it by reading our Lord's conversation with Nicodemus, in the third chapter of John.

Mr. James requested Henry to read again the first ten verses of that chapter. Henry read as follows: "There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the

Jews. The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. Jesus answered, and said to him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh, is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit, is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit. Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be? Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?"

Mr. James remarked, This conversation of our Lord with Nicodemus, contains three principal points of instruction ; viz., the necessity of Regeneration, its nature, and how it is manifested.

THE NECESSITY OF REGENERATION.

The necessity of Regeneration is taught in the words, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Again, "Except a man be born of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Again, "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again." Here you see that Christ asserted three times in succession, the necessity of being born again, in order to our being admitted into the kingdom of God. He does not say, A man *may not* see, or he may not enter the kingdom of God except he be born again, but he *cannot*. And further, he does not say, Ye *ought* to be born again, but ye *must* be, *i. e.*, there is a necessity for this change.

Henry. Please, father, explain what is

meant by "the kingdom of God," referred to by our Lord.

Mr. James replied, The phrase, the kingdom of God, or the kingdom of heaven, sometimes means the gospel dispensation, as distinguished from that of the Old Testament; and at others, the heavenly state, or world of glory, for which Christ's ministry and sacrifice on earth were designed to prepare men. Whether one or the other is intended in a particular passage, must be determined by the connection in which this phrase occurs. In this place it means the heavenly state, or world of glory, as is evident from the words immediately succeeding those which you read. You may read a few verses more.

Henry read as follows: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen, and ye receive not our witness. If I have told you earthly things and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things? And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which

is in heaven. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Mr. James continued, These words obviously relate to eternal life in heaven; and as they were spoken in order to explain and amplify what Christ had previously said, he must have referred to the same thing in both parts of his discourse; otherwise the latter part would have been no explanation of the former. Hence the phrase, "the kingdom of God," must mean the same as was meant in the immediate connection, by the phrase, "eternal" or "everlasting life." What therefore our Lord said to Nicodemus, was as much as to say, Except a man be born again, he cannot go to heaven.

Henry. Why, father, is regeneration necessary?

Mr. James replied, The necessity of regeneration arises from the depravity of our moral nature, on account of which we are unfit for a holy heaven, until we are born again. The divine testimony concerning the human race before the flood was as follows: "The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. And God looked upon the earth, and behold it was corrupt: for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth." Gen. vi. 11, 12. David applies this description to mankind in his day. See Ps. xiv. 2, 3, and liii. 2, 3. "The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one." Paul alludes to the same record, and asserts that both Jews and Gentiles are all under sin. "As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one. There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are

together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre, with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips; whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness. Their feet are swift to shed blood. Destruction and misery are in their ways. And the way of peace have they not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes." Rom. iii. 10—18. What a place would heaven be, if such persons as these should be admitted to it without a change in their characters!

THE NECESSITY OF REGENERATION ILLUSTRATED.

I have read of a preacher, I think it was the celebrated George Whitefield, who in order to show how necessary it is for sinners to experience a thorough change of character before they could enter heaven, and the absurdity of the opposite opinion, supposed the case of a thief, who with his thievish disposition should find his way into that world. What, said he, would he do there? He would embrace the

first opportunity which might be offered, to steal the golden vessels which contain the new wine of the kingdom.

It is very clear, said Henry James, that such wicked characters as are described in the texts of Scripture which you have quoted, must undergo a great change, before they are fit for heaven. But does this necessity extend to those who are moral and upright in their conduct?

Mr. James replied, Though all men are not so grossly wicked as some are, all have wicked hearts, and these must experience a radical change before they can enjoy the holy society and employments of heaven. The Bible says, that "the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." Depraved human nature is the same every where, and except for restraining grace, it would show itself in overt acts of wickedness.

A gentleman was once extolling the virtue of honesty. "Sir," replied his friend, "however excellent the virtue of honesty may be, I fear there are few men in the world that really

possess it." "You surprise me," said the gentleman. His friend responded, "Though I know nothing against your character, sir, I presume it would be no difficult matter to prove even you a dishonest man." "I defy you," said he. "Will you give me leave, then," rejoined his friend, "to ask you a question or two, and promise not to be offended?" "Ask your questions and welcome." "Have you never met with an opportunity of getting gain by unfair means?" The gentleman paused. "I don't ask," said his friend, "whether you have taken advantage of such an opportunity? but, have you ever met with such an opportunity? I myself have, and I believe every body else has." The gentleman then said, "Very probably I may." "How," said his friend, "did you feel your mind affected on such an occasion? Had you no secret desire, no inclination whatever, to seize the advantage which offered?" "I must acknowledge," said the gentleman, "I have not always been absolutely free from every irregular inclination; but—" "Hold,

sir," said his friend, "none of your salvos; you have confessed enough. If you had the desire, though you never proceeded to the act, you were dishonest in heart. This is what the Scriptures call concupiscence. It defiles the soul. It is a breach of the law which requires truth in the inward parts; and unless you are pardoned by the blood of Christ, and regenerated by the Holy Spirit, it will be a just ground of your condemnation, and exclusion from heaven, when 'God shall judge the secrets of men' in the last day."

Sinners, this solemn truth regard ;
Hear, all ye sons of men ;
For Christ, the Saviour, hath declared,
"Ye must be born again."

Whate'er might be your birth or blood ;
The sinner's boast is vain ;
Thus saith the glorious Son of God,
"Ye must be born again."

Our nature's totally depraved ;
The heart a sink of sin ;
Without a change we can't be saved ;
We must be born again.

Those who hold that human nature is not depraved, (*e. g.*, the Unitarians,) talk about Regeneration ; but they explain it as consisting, not in a radical change, but only a development of our religious feelings, which they maintain are feeble in infancy, and must be expanded by proper culture. One of them (Mr. Peabody) has illustrated this development by the change of a caterpillar into a butterfly. The caterpillar has in its body unformed wings, and the butterfly's body is still substantially the body of a caterpillar, though now its wings have become the more prominent part. It is sufficient to say concerning this illustration, that it is founded on a false assumption concerning human nature, an assumption which is contrary both to Scripture and experience. In order to obtain a just conception of the nature of Regeneration, we must embrace scriptural sentiments concerning the deep moral corruption brought upon us by the fall. We must be convinced of the sinfulness of the heart, which is

the polluted source of all outward transgressions.

THE NATURE OF REGENERATION.

Henry James inquired, What, father, is the nature of the change denoted by being born again?

The change is described, said Mr. James, in these words; "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."

1. This change relates to the soul, not to the body. That which is born in the sense of the term Regeneration, is "the spirit," *i. e.*, our spiritual nature, and of course the change must be a spiritual change.

2. The change thus wrought is produced by the Holy Spirit, and hence those who experience it are described as being born of the Spirit, and elsewhere as being born of God. "Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." John i. 13. It consists in the

implantation of a gracious or holy principle in the soul, as the germ of a new and spiritual life.

Henry. I have heard it said, father, that baptism is Regeneration; and a part of the passage just quoted, viz., being born of water, is one of the texts brought to prove it.

Yes, said Mr. James, and there is one or two others relied upon by some for the same purpose. "Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord," Acts xxii. 16. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." Titus iii. 5. But none of these passages prove that baptism is Regeneration. It is not certain that they all refer to the ordinance of baptism; but supposing them to have this reference, then they mean no more than that baptism by water is significant of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, who alone has power to regenerate the depraved soul. If baptism were regeneration, then Simon Magus

was regenerated; which, however, was not the case. Soon after he had been baptized, Peter told him that he was "in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity." Acts viii. 23. The same apostle declares that baptism is "not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God." 1 Peter iii. 21. If baptism is the answer of a good conscience toward God, then a good conscience precedes baptism, and is not produced by it. The evil conscience, which is a part of our evil and depraved moral nature, is first renewed by Divine grace, and in answer to the desires of a conscience thus renewed, and made spiritually good, baptism is administered as a sign and seal of our being engrafted into Christ.

Those who hold to baptismal regeneration, continued Mr. James, commit a similar mistake with that of Nicodemus, who after his first error, of supposing it to be a new physical birth, was corrected, still seemed not to comprehend our Lord's meaning, and inquired with wonder, "How can these things be?" Christ

said to him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?" This question implies that if Nicodemus had understood what was signified by the religious use of water in the Mosaic ritual, he would have comprehended our Lord's language concerning the nature of regeneration. The washing of water under that dispensation was only a sign of spiritual cleansing, in which the Holy Spirit was the efficient agent. This was understood by those who were truly enlightened. Hence in the same prayer in which David says, "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow;" he prays also, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit." David here alluded to the sacred washings, in a similar sense to the allusions made in the New Testament to the water of baptism, viz., as symbolical of the grace of the Holy Spirit, whose

presence he immediately implored. So when Christ says, "Except a man be born of water, and of the spirit," he teaches, under the figure of water, the same truth which is taught without a figure by the term "spirit." The latter word is therefore explanatory of the former.

Henry remarked again, I have heard some persons say, father, that if men break off from gross sins, and live what is commonly called a virtuous life, no other regeneration is required.

Mr. James replied, A thorough reformation will always follow regeneration; but if regeneration consisted in this, then no change at all would be necessary in the case of those who are already moral in their conduct. But the most upright men in the world, if they have not the grace of God in their hearts, are not qualified for heaven. "The carnal mind is enmity against God." Now, how can persons with such a mind as this be happy in heaven, where God's name is continually praised and adored? This enmity must be subdued, the heart must be reconciled to God,

and he must be loved and venerated; otherwise heaven will possess no attractions.

A gentleman not long ago remarked to another, (both are moral men,) If it were not for you and me, there would be no conversation at our table, except about preaching, prayer-meetings, &c. At the same house, only a few days previous to the above remark, an interesting girl, daughter of a pious mother, who was present, appeared at the table for the first time, after an illness of several weeks. A clergyman present congratulated her on her recovery, and expressed a hope, in few words, that she would devote her life to the service of Him who had been so kind to her. Instead of receiving the advice seriously, she smiled; and a young lady on the opposite side of the table, the daughter of another pious lady, sitting near her, was so affected with laughter, that she rose from the table, and left the room. Now do you think that persons in this state of mind, however moral or amiable they may be, could relish the holy employments of the heavenly world? Certainly not. I

may therefore apply the words of our Lord to all men in their natural state, no matter how virtuous externally, "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again." The change required is inward and spiritual—a change of heart—a change in the disposition, in the character, in the affections of the soul. Nothing short of this can restore the moral image of God, which was lost by the fall, and qualify us to enjoy him for ever. And no power less than divine can effect this change.

The sovereign will of God alone
Creates us heirs of grace ;
Born in the image of his Son,
A new, peculiar race.

The Spirit, like some heavenly wind,
Blows on the sons of flesh,
New models all the carnal mind,
And forms the man afresh.

Our quickened souls awake and rise
From the long sleep of death ;
On heavenly things we fix our eyes,
And praise employs our breath.

REGENERATION IS MANIFESTED IN CONVERSION.

Henry James asked his father, What is the difference between Regeneration and Conversion ?

Mr. James replied, The one includes the other ; but, in the order of nature, Regeneration precedes Conversion. Regeneration is grace implanted in the heart ; Conversion is grace manifested in the emotions and character. Regeneration is the principle of spiritual life ; Conversion is the operation of that principle in vital acts, indicating the reality of the life within. Regeneration is the production of a disposition to turn from sin unto God ; Conversion is the actual turning of the soul to him. In a word, Regeneration is the antecedent ; Conversion is the consequent. Hence Conversion is the fruit and evidence of Regeneration. This is indicated by the words of our Lord to Nicodemus, "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and

whither it goeth ; so is every one that is born of the Spirit." By this he means that the reality of Regeneration is known by its effects, just as the presence of the wind is known by the sound which it makes in passing by us. To the same purport are the words of Paul : " If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature, old things are passed away ; behold all things are become new." Here the new creature, or the new creation as it might be rendered, is the same as Regeneration ; and old things passing away and all things becoming new, express the same idea essentially as is meant by Conversion.

There is the same necessity then, father, said Henry, for Conversion as for Regeneration.

To be sure, said Mr. James, and as the necessity of Regeneration extends to all, so also of Conversion. Indeed there is a sense in which regenerated persons sometimes need conversion. See Matt. xviii. 3. But in the sense now intended, the two are simultaneous, and must be experienced by every sinner in

order to his being saved. The reason has already been given. Unconverted persons do not love God, and consequently are not prepared to meet him in peace.

CONVERSION OF A YOUNG LADY.

A good illustration of this point, said Mr. James, is contained in a volume of religious anecdotes which lies before me. Henry took the book and read as follows: Miranda N., says a Christian Minister, was about eighteen years of age, much distinguished for personal beauty, but more for uncommon sweetness of disposition, and great amiableness of deportment. There was not, probably, among all the people of my charge, one whose case would have been more promptly cited, and perhaps none so effectively, to disprove the doctrine of the entire sinfulness of the unregenerate heart. She was deservedly a general favourite. She seemed to entertain the kindest affection towards all, and every one who knew her loved her. One evening at an inquiry meeting, held at my house, I noticed in a full

room, a female in great apparent distress. The disturbance she made by her loud sobs, and frequent and painful interruption of the silence of the room, induced me to pass by others, and go to her at once. On coming to her seat, I was not a little surprised to find myself by the side of Miranda. The first inquiry I put to her was this, "What has brought you here, M.?" With emphasis she replied, "My sins, sir." With a view to test the reality and depth of her convictions, I then said, "But what have you done which makes either your heart or your life appear so heinously sinful?" At this second question she broke out in a voice that reached the extreme part of the room, and thrilled through every heart, for she was known and loved by every person there,—“I hate God, and I know it. I hate my own being. Oh that I had never been born!” As she uttered this acknowledgment, she rose and left the room in irrepressible agony. Deeply as I was interested in her case, I could not follow her, and leave the many with whom I had yet to converse; but conducted her



V. M. H. G. E. N. D. Y. D. E. H.

She dropped the book and exclaimed, "I have found
the Saviour."
Page 81.

across the hall into the opposite room, where Mrs. S. was employed in attendance upon a sick child. The remainder of the narrative I received from Mrs. S.

After a little conversation, as I was informed, between Mrs. S. and Miranda, who was walking the room in great distress, her eye lighted upon a copy of the Village Hymns, which lay upon the sideboard. She eagerly caught it up, and read, at the first page which she opened, these words;

“ There is a fountain filled with blood,
Drawn from Immanuel’s veins ;
And sinners plunged beneath that flood,
Lose all their guilty stains.”

As she finished this verse, she dropped the book and exclaimed, “ I have found my Saviour. This is the Saviour I need. O precious Saviour !” and many other expressions of the same kind. Her enmity to God was gone ; her burden was removed ; Christ was all in all to her.

EVIDENCES OF CONVERSION.

The experience of this young lady, said Mr. James, furnishes at least two evidences of genuine conversion, viz., her faith and love. Her exclamation, "I have found my Saviour, &c," expressed her faith in him; and as might be inferred from this, it is further stated that "her enmity to God was gone." The first act of a truly converted soul is faith in Christ. Conversion consists essentially in turning to him as the only Saviour; and with the eye of the soul thus fixed upon him, Christ is received and rested upon for salvation. Such a sinner is truly converted; he is a believer in Christ.

Again faith in Christ apprehends the Redeemer, not only as able and willing to save, but as infinitely excellent and glorious; and hence it is always accompanied by love. Faith is not the same as love; and yet it does not exist separately from it. The heart which is at enmity with God cannot, from the nature of the case, receive and rest on Christ by faith

until it is regenerated, and the moral state of the soul is changed. When the heart is renewed by the Holy Spirit, the sinner exercises trust in Christ, and in connection with this trust all his affections are kindled into pious emotion, and the Saviour is felt to be exceedingly precious, the chief among ten thousand, the altogether lovely.

Repentance is another evidence of conversion. This too is implied in the experience of that young lady, though not expressed so distinctly as faith and love. She felt a godly sorrow for sin, and a desire to turn from it unto God. Her apprehension of God's mercy in Christ gave a new aspect to her feelings. They were before characterized only by regret, remorse, anguish, but now they were pervaded by that genuine contrition, that true penitence, which not only fills the heart with grief, and the eyes with tears, but which produces a full purpose to lead a new and holy life.

How beautifully, said Henry, are these several evidences expressed in the hymn we sung this morning at family worship! It is

one of my favourite hymns, and I often sing it when alone. Shall I repeat it, father? Being permitted to do so, he repeated the hymn as follows :

Sweet the moments, rich in blessing,
Which before the cross I spend,
Life, and health, and peace possessing,
From the sinner's dying Friend.

Here I'll sit for ever viewing,
Mercy stream in streams of blood ;
Precious drops, my soul bedewing,
Plead and claim my peace with God.

Truly blessed is this station,
Low before his cross to lie ;
While I see divine compassion
Floating in his languid eye.

Here it is I find my heaven,
While upon the cross I gaze ;
Love I much ? I'm much forgiven ;
I'm a miracle of grace.

Love and grief my heart dividing,
With my tears his feet I bathe ;
Constant still in faith abiding,
Life deriving from his death.

Mr. James remarked, This is indeed a

beautiful hymn. I have seen it printed, I think, in some hymn-book, under the title of The Convert's hymn. If a person feels in his heart, all which is here expressed; if he possesses that faith which makes Christ appear precious; if he has love to God, and to his people; if he exercises a true, evangelical repentance for sin, these are scriptural evidences that he is born again, that he is a converted man.

MEANS OF CONVERSION OR REGENERATION.

Henry James inquired, What means ought to be used in order to secure one's own conversion, or regeneration?

Mr. James replied, Your question assumes that means of some kind are requisite. This is true. I have heard sinners sometimes excuse themselves for their indifference, by saying, that they cannot do any thing. They say they would like to experience religion; but that God alone has power to regenerate and convert the soul, and that they must wait God's time, &c. These things are usually

said as a mere pretext for delay, or to pacify their consciences which admonish them of their sin and danger. And though they contain some truth, they contain much error. For the purpose for which they are brought, they are indeed wholly erroneous, viz., as an excuse for neglecting the means of grace.

The Presbyterian Confession of Faith teaches, that in Regeneration the sinner is passive. By this is meant that this change is the work of God; that the sinner does not regenerate himself; but that he is acted upon by the Holy Spirit, who renovates his corrupt and depraved nature. When Divine grace is implanted in the soul, he then begins, and not before, to show by his inward spiritual exercises, and his outward acts, the existence of the vital principle thus implanted. This effect is called Conversion, in which the regenerated person is, of course, active. Conversion and Regeneration, therefore, though not identical, are so closely related to each other, that the means to be used are the same with reference to both.

The fact that God is the author of the change denoted by the terms Regeneration and Conversion, suggests, as one of the means which it is the sinner's duty to employ, humble and earnest prayer. Though he is spiritually dead, and must be quickened by the Holy Spirit, if he ever becomes a new creature, he is not a block, nor a stone, nor a machine, but a free, moral agent, a rational and accountable being, who, with a deep conviction of his dependence on God, should diligently seek his grace.

Again, Peter, speaking of regenerated men, employs the following language: "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." As the word of God is the seed by the implanting and quickening of which, through the Holy Spirit, this great change is produced, God's word ought to be faithfully preached as a means of converting sinners; and sinners themselves ought to employ the diligent hearing and reading of the word, with a sincere endeavour to practise its precepts, as a means for their own conversion.

We should call a man foolish who should neglect to sow his seed, because he is dependent on God to make it vegetate and grow. Equally unreasonable is the sinner who neglects the word of God, or reads it in a careless manner, or with a sceptical or doubting frame of mind, because he cannot give it saving power and vitality. He must diligently attend to the holy Scripture, and endeavour to obey its instructions, and devoutly look to God to make his word effectual to the renewing of his heart.

And further, his waiting upon God in the use of these means must be continued and persevered in. Waiting God's time in the way of indifference and neglect of duty, which some plead for, is highly wicked and foolish. But waiting on the Lord in humble, earnest supplication, in reading his word, and in endeavouring to obey its requirements, and then waiting his time to hear and bless us, is a scriptural and hopeful method of proceeding. Let every sinner try it. Let it be tried sincerely, faith-

fully, perseveringly. Sooner or later, I doubt not, he will obtain the desire of his heart.

Mr. James now handed Henry the Bible, and told him to read the account of the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda, remarking that his case is an apposite illustration of the manner in which sinners ought to use the means of grace.

Henry James read as follows: "Now there is at Jerusalem, by the sheep market, a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue, Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water; whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in, was made whole of whatsoever disease he had. And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years. When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole? The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have

no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool ; but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me. Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk. And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed and walked." John v. 2—9.

Mr. James remarked, The diseased and helpless condition of this impotent man illustrates the moral corruption and weakness of sinners, who are unable of themselves to do any thing spiritually good. And his waiting for the moving of the water, shows the true method which ought to be pursued by sinners with reference to their regeneration or conversion.

1. He was deeply sensible of the misery of his condition.
2. He felt an earnest desire to be restored to health.
3. He placed himself by the side of the pool, whose healing water had proved to be efficacious in all cases where it had been employed.
4. He watched assiduously the moving of

the water, on which its efficacy depended, and sought to place himself in it.

5. Though meeting with hindrances which were very discouraging, he continued to wait, watch, and struggle, hoping that he would ultimately succeed.

6. In this condition our Lord met him, and by his question, disclosed another element which was important to his recovery, viz., his willingness to be made whole on any terms which might be offered, however much his weakness and poverty might be thereby exposed. Said Christ, "Wilt thou be made whole?" His reply was, "I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool." As much as to say, I am helpless, friendless, and penniless. I have no power to apply the remedy myself, I have no friend to assist me, and no money to offer to any one, as an inducement to assist me in getting into the pool.

What a feeling of utter destitution, said Mr. James, did that man disclose in this single sentence! But though he felt thus, the pre-

vious particulars which I have named, show that his mind was fully made up to seek continually until he should find.

Then it was the Saviour interposed for his relief. He need not step into the pool of Bethesda, when there was one present who could heal him by his word. Christ was the "fountain opened for sin and uncleanness," and he graciously communicated its healing water both to the body and soul of this waiting sufferer. The cure was immediate.

The work of regeneration, continued Mr. James, is instantaneous, but the manifestation of this change in conversion is often gradual. If, however, the former is real, the latter will always follow. The principle of grace implanted in the heart will be succeeded by gracious exercises. Grace communicated to the soul possesses a vitality which shows itself in corresponding feelings and conduct. As the impotent man, when he was healed, took up his bed and walked, so the regenerated or converted sinner walks henceforth, in newness of life.

Here, Henry, said Mr. James, is a hymn-book, entitled "Olney Hymns," composed by the Rev. John Newton and Mr. William Cowper. One of the hymns (of which Mr. Newton is the author) is a kind of paraphrase or exposition of this interesting and instructive narrative concerning the pool of Bethesda. I doubt not you will derive satisfaction and profit from reading it.

Henry took the book and read as follows:

Beside the gospel pool
Appointed for the poor,
From year to year my helpless soul
Has waited for a cure.

How often have I seen
The healing waters move ;
And others round me stepping in,
Their efficacy prove !

But my complaints remain,
I feel the very same ;
As full of guilt, and fear, and pain,
As when at first I came.

Oh, would the Lord appear
My malady to heal!
He knows how long I've languished here,
And what distress I feel.

How often have I thought,
Why should I longer lie?
Surely the mercy I have sought
Is not for such as I.

But whither can I go?
There is no other pool
Where streams of sovereign mercy flow
To make a sinner whole.

Here then, from day to day,
I'll wait, and hope, and try;
Can Jesus hear a sinner pray,
Yet suffer him to die?

No! he is full of grace;
He never will permit
A soul that fain would see his face,
To perish at his feet.

Mr. James remarked, These sentiments are very encouraging; and as you now profess to have met with a change of heart, you can

refer to the case of the impotent man, in exhorting others to use the means of grace. Some of your acquaintances are serious. The Holy Spirit is striving with them. The angel of mercy is troubling the water. See to it that your young companions do not perish because of your neglect to help them into the pool.

I should rejoice, said Henry, in being made an instrument of their conversion. But what can I do, father, to assist them in coming to Christ? The gospel fountain is opened, and they are invited to take the water of life freely. If they do not come, it is because their own moral blindness and depravity keep them back; and how can I remedy these difficulties?

Mr. James replied, You cannot convert their souls except instrumentally. I should shudder at the thought of proposing to you to perform the work of the Holy Spirit. But you can ask God to renew their hearts, and you can exhort them to pray for themselves.

You can also teach them, in the light of God's word, and your own religious experience, how to seek the Lord, and can urge upon them their duty and privilege to embrace the present favourable opportunity of coming to Christ, and not to put it off a single day. These are scriptural means, in the faithful use of which you have strong encouragement to hope that your unconverted friends will experience the saving efficacy of the gospel.

When the apostle James instructed the brethren to seek the conversion of those who might "err from the truth," he did not mean that they possessed power to change their hearts; but only that they could employ the appropriate means. Yet he calls this converting them; and he enforces the duty by a most weighty consideration. "Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins!" This great motive exists now, and I trust, my son, it will influence you to employ every scrip-

tural means to bring your young acquaintances and kindred out of their present state of sin and misery into a state of grace and salvation. With these remarks the conversation closed.

CONVERSATION III.

REPENTANCE, OR GRACE PRODUCING GODLY
SORROW FOR SIN, AND A NEW AND HOLY
LIFE.

HENRY JAMES, agreeably to his father's advice at the close of the last conversation, spoke to several of his acquaintances during the following week, on the subject of religion, particularly one whom he knew to be serious, and whom he felt a special desire to lead to Christ. On the succeeding Sabbath evening he said to his father, Joseph B. is very anxious about his soul, but he told me he could not come to Christ until he was more penitent. I was at a loss what I ought to say to him; but I ventured the remark that though repentance is a duty, I thought it was not a means or preparation for exercising faith in Christ,

but rather the fruit of faith, and if so, he must believe first, and not endeavour to prepare himself for coming to Christ by repentance. Was this correct, father?

Mr. James replied, According to my understanding of the Scriptures you stated to him the truth. I have often heard this difficulty presented by inquiring sinners, and my answer has been substantially the same as yours. Repentance, however, is essential to salvation, and its nature ought to be well understood. I will endeavour to explain it, and also to show its relation to faith and a holy life. What is the definition of repentance as given in our Catechism?

Henry repeated the answer as follows: Repentance unto life is a saving grace, whereby a sinner, out of a true sense of his sin, and apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ, doth, with grief and hatred of his sin, turn from it unto God, with full purpose of, and endeavour after, new obedience.

This answer, said Mr. James, is scriptural; and hence you will be aided in understanding

the nature of evangelical repentance by noticing the several clauses contained in it.

REPENTANCE EXPLAINED—IT INVOLVES FAITH
—ILLUSTRATIONS.

1. Repentance requires a true sense of sin.
2. An apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ.
3. Grief and hatred for sin.
4. A turning from sin unto God.
5. A full purpose of, and endeavour after, new obedience.

Why, father, said Henry, is the word *true* employed here to qualify the phrase “sense of sin?” Can there be a sense of sin which is not a true sense?

Mr. James replied, A true sense of sin is that view of sin which accords with its evil nature as described in God’s word; which perceives and feels its turpitude, and acknowledges the justice of the penalty pronounced against it in the divine law. A person may admit that he is a sinner, and yet be disposed

to palliate his guilt, to frame excuses for his sinful feelings and conduct, and to charge God with undue severity in threatening him with eternal wrath. Such a person has not a true sense of sin. He does not view sin as God does, either in its nature or desert.

Henry asked again, What is meant in the Catechism by an apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ?

It means, said Mr. James, that a sinner who is truly penitent, hopes that God will pardon his sins for the sake of Christ who died as his atoning sacrifice. A person who is in complete despair never exercises, while in that state, saving repentance. It is not sufficient, however, for a sinner to rely solely on the general mercy of God without regard to Christ. Though God is good and gracious, he is just also, and Jesus Christ is the only channel through which his mercy can flow to sinners, without conflicting with the claims of justice. Repentance unto life must view God as he reveals himself in the gospel, viz., as "God in Christ reconciling the world unto him-

self, not imputing their trespasses unto them.”

The Rev. Dr. Duff, the distinguished missionary in Calcutta, in referring to the baptism of a Mohammedan, says: “A few days before his baptism, I asked him what was the vital point in which he found Mohammedanism most deficient, and which he felt that Christianity satisfactorily supplied. His prompt reply was, ‘Mohammedanism is full of the mercy of God. While I had no real consciousness of inward guilt as a breaker of God’s law, this satisfied me; but when I felt myself to be guilty before God, and a transgressor of his law, I felt also that it was not with God’s mercy alone, but also God’s justice I had to do. How to meet the claims of God’s justice Mohammedanism has made no provision, but this is the very thing which I have found fully accomplished by the atoning sacrifice of Christ on the cross; and therefore Christianity is now the only adequate religion for me a guilty sinner.’”

Hence evangelical repentance implies faith

in Christ, that faith which renounces every other ground of reliance, and yields the whole heart and soul, with undivided trust, to the Saviour of sinners. Says an English traveller :

In a part of the southern lands of North America, from which the Red Man has now been driven, I once attended a meeting held in the forest. The subject on which the preacher dwelt, and which he illustrated with extreme beauty, was "Christ and him crucified." He spoke of "the good Shepherd," who came into the world to seek and to save the lost. He told how the Saviour met the rude scorn and rough treatment of the heartless soldiers. He spoke of Gethsemane, and of him who wept there. He pointed to him as he hung bleeding on the cross. The congregation wept. Soon there was a slight movement amongst them, and a tall son of the forest, with tears on his cheeks, came near the pulpit, and said, "Did Jesus die for me—die for poor Indian? Me no lands to give to

Jesus—the white man take them away. Me give him my dog and my rifle.”

The minister told him Jesus could not accept these gifts. “Me give Jesus my dog, my rifle, my blanket; poor Indian, he got no more to give—he give Jesus all.” The minister again answered that Jesus could not accept them. The poor, ignorant, and humble child of the forest bent his head in sorrow, and seemed very thoughtful and penitent. He raised his head once more, looked earnestly at the preacher, and said, “Here is poor Indian; will Jesus have *him*?” A thrill of joy ran through the souls of the minister and people, as this poor fierce son of the desert now sat, “in his right mind,” at the feet of Jesus. The Holy Spirit of God had done his work in that precious soul; for it had made him feel the love of Jesus in his heart, and made him willing to yield his body, soul, and spirit unto Him who had loved him and given himself for him.

CONNECTION OF REPENTANCE WITH FAITH
FURTHER EXPLAINED AND ILLUSTRATED.

In this view of the matter, continued Mr. James, you may perceive the connection between Repentance and Faith. Faith receives and rests on Christ alone for salvation, and the look of faith is always accompanied by sorrow for sin. "They shall look on him whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him." Zech. xii. 10. Agreeably to this text, I have heard Repentance defined as "the tear that drops from the eye of faith, when that eye is fixed on the cross." Here is an anecdote, Henry, which you may read, containing a good illustration of this thought. Henry read as follows :

Cambo, a negro, in one of the Southern States, being desired to give some account of his conversion, said, "While in my own country, (Guinea,) me had no knowledge of the being of a God, me thought me should die like the beasts. After me was brought to America, and sold as a slave, as me and another servant

by the name of Bess were working in the field, me began to sing one of my old country songs, 'It is time to go home;' when Bess say to me, 'Cambo, why you sing so for?' Me say, 'Me no sick, me no sorry; why me no sing?' Bess say, 'You better pray to your blessed Lord and Massah, to have mercy on your soul.' Me look 'round, me look up, me see no one to pray to, but the words sound in my ears, 'Better pray to your Lord and Massah!' Bye and bye, me feel bad; sun shine sorry, birds sing sorry, land look sorry, but Cambo sorrier than them. Then me cry out, 'Mercy, mercy, Lord, on poor Cambo!' Bye and bye, water come in my eyes, and glad come in my heart; then sun look gay, woods look gay, birds sing gay, land look gay, but poor Cambo gladder than them all. Me love my Massah some; me want to love him more."

When Henry had read this anecdote, Mr. James remarked further, The true penitent feels grief and hatred for sin. Paul describes repentance as consisting in godly sorrow, and he thus distinguishes it from the sorrow of the

world: "Godly sorrow worketh repentance unto salvation not to be repented of; but the sorrow of the world worketh death." Godly sorrow is that kind of grief for sin which produces hatred of it. God hates sin, and so does the sinner who is truly penitent. A person may have a species of sorrow for sin, based on the fear of misery, and the hope of pardon; but if it has no other foundation, it is spurious. Repentance requires such an apprehension of God's mercy in Christ, as makes us weep over our sins, and abhor ourselves on account of them. "Wherefore," says Job, "I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes!"

And further still, there must be in close connection with these feelings, a turning from sin unto God. The true penitent feels and acts like the prodigal, who said, "I will arise and go to my Father, and I will say unto him, Father, I have sinned." And he no sooner formed the resolution than he arose and went. It is not a sorrow which drives the soul from God, like Cain's, who in his anguish of spirit went out from the presence of the Lord; nor

like that of Judas, who, instead of imploring mercy, went away and hanged himself; but like David's, who in his distress invariably betook himself to the throne of Divine grace, there to implore forgiveness, and ask strength from on high to enable him to walk in the way of righteousness.

REPENTANCE ILLUSTRATED BY THE 130TH
PSALM, AND DR. OWEN'S EXPERIENCE AND
EXPOSITION OF THE SAME.

You may read, said Mr. James, the 130th Psalm, which contains a touching description of the feelings of a true penitent. Henry read as follows: "Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord. Lord, hear my voice: let thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications. If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared. I wait for the Lord, my soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope. My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning: I say, more than they that

watch for the morning. Let Israel hope in the Lord; for with the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption. And he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities.”

When Henry had finished reading, he remarked, I have often read this Psalm with special interest; and I have sometimes sung Dr. Watts’s versification of its sentiments with much satisfaction and profit, particularly three or four verses of the second part.

From deep distress and troubled thoughts,
To thee, my God, I raised my cries;
If thou severely mark our faults,
No flesh can stand before thine eyes.

But thou hast built thy throne of grace,
Free to dispense thy pardons there,
That sinners may approach thy face,
And hope, and love, as well as fear.

Great is his love, and large his grace,
Through the redemption of his Son;
He turns our feet from sinful ways,
And pardons what our hands have done.

Mr. James remarked, One of the richest and most evangelical expositions of this Psalm was composed by Rev. Dr. Owen, who was probably induced to write it, from his own experience of its power to benefit the soul. A young man, under conviction for sin, called upon him for advice. In the course of conversation, Dr. Owen said, "Young man, pray, in what manner do you think to go to God?" The young man replied, "Through the Mediator, sir." "That is easily said," observed Dr. Owen; "but I assure you, it is another thing to go to God through the Mediator, than many who make use of the expression are aware of. I myself preached some years, while I had but very little, if any, acquaintance with access to God through Christ, until the Lord was pleased to visit me with a sore affliction, by which I was brought to the brink of the grave, and under which my mind was filled with horror; but God was graciously pleased to relieve my soul by a powerful application of Psa. cxxx. 4. 'But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.' From this text I

received special light, peace, and comfort, in drawing near to God through the Mediator; and on this text I preached immediately after my recovery."

Mr. James remarked further, Evangelical repentance is accompanied by a full purpose of, and endeavour after, new obedience. The word "repentance" in the original, signifies a change of mind, such a change as is followed by a corresponding change of conduct. There is another Greek word, translated "repent," which has not the same meaning. It signifies that the person regrets what he has done, but does not necessarily so hate his sinful course as to turn from it. Thus Judas repented, in the above sense, of his having betrayed his Lord; but his repentance instead of producing good fruit, had the opposite effect. Not so with evangelical repentance. This kind of repentance produces a thorough reformation. Paul says, "For behold this self-same thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea what indignation, yea, what fear,

yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge!" 2 Cor. vii. 11. These several terms express strongly an entire change of conduct. Sins which are truly repented of, are forsaken. God's law is loved and obeyed. The result, of course, will be the leading of a new and holy life. Have you ever, Henry, had sand blown into your eyes?

Oh yes, said he; but what has this to do, father, with repentance?

No sooner, replied Mr. James, did the grains of sand strike your tender eye-balls, than you began to weep, and your tears gradually carried the sand out of your eyes. So the tears of genuine repentance cleanse the heart, and reform the life. Your eyes were inflamed for a time, so that you could scarcely see, and you suffered considerable pain; but when the cause was removed, you obtained relief, your eyes became healthy, and your sight was as clear as before. So in the process of repentance, there is inward pain: sin troubles the conscience, and fills the mind with fear

and terror. In this state of mingled grief, fear, and hope, the penitent exclaims,

Oh, if my soul was formed for woe,
How would I vent my sighs !
Repentance should like rivers flow
From both my weeping eyes.

And while he gazes at the cross, weeping over his sins, he exclaims again,

Oh ! how I hate those lusts of mine
That crucified my God ;
Those sins that pierced and nailed his flesh
Fast to the fatal wood.

Yes, my Redeemer, they shall die,
My heart has so decreed ;
Nor will I spare the guilty things
That made my Saviour bleed.

While with a melting, broken heart,
My murdered Lord I view,
I'll raise revenge against my sins,
And slay the murderers, too.

REPENTANCE LEADS TO RESTITUTION.

Henry James remarked, I have heard it said,
10 *

father, that if a man truly repents of his sins, he will make restitution to those whom he has injured. If he has defamed their characters, he will confess his error, and if he has defrauded them in business, he will restore what is their just due. Please state your views on this point.

Mr. James replied, The principle on which your statement is founded, accords with the teachings of the Bible. But the particular form in which it is to be carried out in practice, must be determined by circumstances. If a man's reputation is suffering from false reports circulated concerning him, and if you have had an agency in extending or keeping alive those reports, you cannot exercise true repentance, without feeling sorry for the wrong you have done in this particular; and provided your acknowledgment of this wrong will repair the injury done to his character, it ought to be promptly made. But if he would derive no benefit from such an acknowledgment, confession to God is all which the case demands.

With regard to the restitution of property, it ought to be restored with interest, provided the penitent has the pecuniary ability, and the parties are alive from whom it was dishonestly taken. When Zaccheus became a disciple of Christ, he “stood and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him four fold.” This was according to a requirement in the law of Moses, concerning the restoration of goods or money fraudulently taken; and if it could be proved, it might be recovered by legal process. But in the case of Zaccheus, the proposal was made voluntarily, as an expression of his sincere sorrow for sin, and was not extorted from him by the forms of law. Sincere repentance will always produce a desire of the same kind, and when practicable, it will be carried into effect.

AN EXAMPLE OF RESTITUTION.

The following example of restitution is a single instance among many others, which I

might name, showing the effect of genuine repentance for sin. A housekeeper of an English gentleman had in her possession at his decease sixty pounds belonging to her employer. She gave the money to her brother, and requested him to convey it to that gentleman's nephew, who had inherited his uncle's estate. But her brother, instead of paying the money to the rightful owner, appropriated it to his own use. Some twenty years rolled away, when he was brought by divine grace to the saving knowledge of Christ. He then wrote to the gentleman requesting an interview at a certain time and place. When they met, he laid down sixty pounds, saying, This money belongs to you. Being asked for an explanation, he laid down sixty pounds more, and then narrated the circumstances, with the remark that the first sixty pounds was the principal, and the second sixty the interest; which amount "I cheerfully return," said he, "as a proper restitution for money belonging to you;" and "I do assure you," he added,

“that this transaction has removed a very heavy weight from my distressed mind.”

REPENTANCE A SAVING GRACE.

Henry James asked his father why repentance unto life is called in the Catechism a saving grace? Is not repentance the act of the creature? If so, how is it a grace? Is not the calling of it a grace equivalent to saying that it comes from God?

Mr. James replied, Genuine repentance does come from God. By this, however, is not meant that God repents for us, but that he imparts grace to us by which we are inclined and enabled to exercise true sorrow for sin. This is one reason why evangelical repentance is called godly sorrow. It is not only repentance towards God, but is wrought in us by his grace. Christ was exalted to be a Prince and Saviour, to give repentance. His exaltation procured the mission of the Holy Spirit, whose special office it is to renew the heart; and when the heart is regenerated, faith and repentance are invariably exercised,

as the first acts of our new, moral nature. These graces are as really our own acts, and are exercised as freely, as though they were performed without divine aid; and yet this aid is essential to their existence in such a form as to save the soul.

There may be a speculative faith, consisting of an intellectual assent to revealed truth, as the result of historical evidence or logical argument; but this is not saving faith. In like manner, there may be a species of repentance, arising from the convictions of natural conscience, or the apprehension of divine wrath; and yet not be repentance unto life. Remorse is not always accompanied by true penitence. Fear of punishment, as the consequence of sin, is not identical with grief and hatred for sin. Remorse and fear are not indeed to be excluded from a description of true repentance; but when they are wrought by the Holy Spirit, they are so modified in their character, as to make them materially different from those natural emotions which are denoted by these terms; and they are also

accompanied by other exercises which are not found in the unrenewed man, and are produced only by divine grace. In the words of one of our hymns :

Sovereign grace hath power alone,
To subdue a heart of stone ;
And the moment grace is felt,
Then the hardest heart will melt.

Another hymn has this verse :

But power divine can do the deed,
And much to feel that power I need ;
Thy Spirit can from dross refine,
And move, and melt this heart of mine.

Again, the same sentiment is expressed in the form of a prayer :

Dear Saviour, steep this rock of mine
In thine own crimson sea :
None but a bath of blood divine
Can melt the flint away.

I think there is no real Christian of any denomination, who could not cordially adopt these sentiments ; and this fact is a strong

testimony derived from the inward experience of God's people, corroborating the teachings of his word on this important point. Repentance is one of the graces of the Holy Spirit, and is as much a matter for praise and thanksgiving by those who have experienced it, as any other manifestation of divine grace and mercy.

SCRIPTURE PROOF THAT REPENTANCE IS OF
GOD, WITH EXAMPLES OF REPENTANCE
TAKEN FROM THE BIBLE.

Henry James, at his father's request, turned to several texts of Scripture, in which repentance is declared to be from God, particularly the following; "When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life." Acts xi. 18. "In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth." 2 Tim. ii. 25.

Mr. James remarked concerning these two

passages, that the first relates to the preaching of Peter in the house of Cornelius. "And as I began to speak," said he, "the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning." The means employed for bringing them to repentance, was Peter's preaching; but the efficient agent was the Holy Spirit, who produced that change of mind and character denoted by gospel repentance. This change was granted to them and wrought in them as a great privilege, on account of which the apostles and brethren glorified God. The second proof text is a part of Paul's directions to Timothy, how to treat those persons who had fallen into the snare of the devil, and been taken captive by him at his will: *i. e.*, how to treat them with a view to their being recovered from that snare. They must be brought to repentance to the acknowledging of the truth. The means to be used was scriptural instruction, imparted with a gentle, christian spirit; but the power to effect the desired change was in God, who alone could renew their hearts, and enlighten their minds to discern spiritual

things. And so it is in all cases of saving repentance.

You may now, said Mr. James, turn to a few examples of repentance recorded in God's word, in order to illustrate the views which have been given. Henry James, at his father's suggestion, read two examples recorded in the Old Testament, viz., Job and David. Job's language was, "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore, I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes."

You remember, said Mr. James, that Job is spoken of in the beginning of the book, as a "perfect and upright man, who feared God, and eschewed evil." He was greatly afflicted; and for a time he endured his severe trials with extraordinary patience. But at length he cursed his day. His friends chided him, and charged him with hypocrisy. He vindicated himself against these false charges, and maintained his sincerity and piety of heart. Yet his feelings were not in all respects pleasing to God. When their conversation closed,

the Lord addressed him, and by a series of the most remarkable questions ever propounded to mortal man, and accompanied by an influence which none but Jehovah could exert, brought Job to see and confess his error, with the most solemn and profound humility. He abhorred himself, and repented in dust and ashes. It was his proper position, and the one which every intelligent being on earth ought to take, when he comes before God.

To show the character of David's repentance, Henry read the 51st Psalm, which, Mr. James remarked, is sometimes called the penitential Psalm, because David was inspired to write it, as an expression of his penitence in the matter of Uriah, an account of which is found in 2nd Sam. 11th and 12th chapters. That Psalm, he continued, contains all the elements of repentance mentioned in the catechism, viz., a true sense of sin, an apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ, grief and hatred for sin, a turning from sin unto God, and a full purpose of, and endeavour after, new obedience. I notice this fact, in order that you may per-

ceive, by comparing the two together, that the answer in the catechism is founded on the holy Scriptures. Read also the 51st Psalm in the beautiful language of Dr. Watts. I doubt whether you can find a sentiment in his version of that Psalm which is not in harmony with the inspired words; though it does not profess to be an exact translation. The first part of Watts's 51st Psalm has been one of my favourite selections for devotional reading or singing for many years past, and I have often repeated the words inaudibly, to express my inward feelings and desires. It begins,

Show pity, Lord, O Lord, forgive,
Let a repenting rebel live ;
Are not thy mercies large and free ?
May not a sinner trust in thee ?

My crimes are great, but don't surpass
The power and glory of thy grace ;
Great God, thy nature hath no bound,
So let thy pardoning love be found.

WHAT FOLLOWS AND WHAT PRECEDES REPENTANCE. ILLUSTRATIONS OF SORROW AND JOY.

Henry James expressed much satisfaction with his father's remarks on these examples of repentance ; and added, I should be pleased, father, to have an example or two from the New Testament.

Mr. James replied, I have already noticed the repentance of Zaccheus, Luke xix. 1—8 ; and of the Corinthians, 2 Cor. vii. 9. I will however add another to those examples, viz., the repentance of Peter after he denied his Lord. You may read the account in Luke xxii. 54—62. When Henry had read it, Mr. James remarked, Peter's repentance had its origin in the gracious look of Christ. "The Lord turned, and looked upon Peter." And it was characterized by deep and heart-felt sorrow. He "went out and wept bitterly." His subsequent life showed also a thorough reformation. He became, ever after, a bold and persevering preacher and defender of the

Christian faith, and he closed his life with the crown of martyrdom.

Henry remarked, I perceive, father, from these examples, why the apostle Peter connected together repentance and conversion, saying, in one of his discourses, "Repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." Repentance, if genuine, will always be followed by a change of character and conduct, such as is denoted by the word conversion. But there is one thing which I do not so clearly understand. Peter said in another discourse, "Repent and be baptized every one of you for the remission of sins." Did he mean by baptism, in one sermon, the same as he did in the other, by conversion?

Mr. James replied, Your explanation of the connection between repentance and conversion is correct. But it does not follow from this that baptism is to be understood precisely in the same way. The meaning of the two passages is, however, substantially alike. Baptism is a religious ordinance expressing, on the part of a person receiving it, his belief that

he has experienced that change of character, and his solemn purpose to pursue that course of life, which are indicated by the word conversion. There is, therefore, an analogy between them, though the two are not identical. The one is a religious profession; the other is the change which such a profession is designed to signify. The one is the sign and seal of a believer's dedication to God; the other is the state of mind which prompts him to make this dedication.

Mr. James remarked further, As you have noticed the order in which Peter mentions conversion, viz., as immediately succeeding repentance, I will call your attention to the feelings which go before repentance,—I mean distress for sin. The people “were pricked in their hearts, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent,” &c. This sorrow, though requisite as a preparatory work, is not, strictly speaking, repentance itself. Thus Paul says, “Godly sorrow worketh repentance.” A true sense

of sin always precedes evangelical repentance, and hence this is made, in the catechism, a part of the answer to the question, What is repentance unto life? But it is susceptible of being contemplated separately; and this distinction is important, in enabling us to answer the objection, which is sometimes made, that the doctrine of repentance represents the Christian life as one of perpetual grief and gloom.

In a powerful revival of religion, the Rev. Dr. Nettleton once said, "It may be new to some of you that there should be such distress for sin. But there was great distress on the day of Pentecost, when thousands were pricked in the heart, and cried out, 'Men and brethren, what shall we do?' Some of you may, perhaps, be ready to say, 'If this is religion, we wish to have nothing to do with it.' My friends, this is not religion. Religion does not cause its subjects to feel and act thus. These individuals are thus distressed, not because they have religion, but because they have no religion, and have found it out. It was so

on the day of Pentecost. They had made the discovery that they were lost sinners, and that their souls were in jeopardy every hour."

When sinners truly repent, continued Mr. James, their distress of mind is relieved, and they are peaceful and happy. Though, indeed, their whole Christian life is characterized as a succession of repentant feelings, (for Christians find cause for daily repentance,) these feelings are marked by a predominance of happy emotions. An instructor of the deaf and dumb, once asked his pupils, "Which is the most delightful emotion?" One of them wrote on the slate, *Joy*; another, *Hope*; a third, *Gratitude*; a fourth, *Love*. When no further answer seemed to occur to any one, a female pupil, with a countenance full of peace, and yet a tearful eye, wrote, "*Repentance* is the most delightful emotion." The teacher turned to her, and with an expression of wonder, asked her, "Why?" "Oh," said she, in the significant language of looks and gestures, "it is so delightful to be humbled before God!"

EXPERIENCE OF COL. JAMES GARDINER.

Henry James listened with fixed attention, and then said, These illustrations remind me of the remarkable experience of Col. James Gardiner, whose biography I have just finished. If you please, father, I will read some extracts from that Memoir, showing the effect which repentance had on his enjoyment. Mr. James giving his permission, Henry read as follows:

Col. James Gardiner was born in January 1688. His father, Captain Patrick Gardiner, served many years in the army of King William and Queen Ann. His mother instructed him with great tenderness and affection in the principles of the Christian religion. She would have gladly prevailed on him not to engage in military life; but he could not be restrained. He enlisted in the army at an early age, and distinguished himself by his extraordinary courage and bravery. For eleven or twelve years after his enlistment, between the 19th and 30th years of his life, he lived in entire alienation from God, and in the eager

pursuit of sinful pleasures. The account of his conversion, as given by Dr. Doddridge, is to the following effect: Having spent the evening in some gay company, until 11 o'clock, and having a wicked appointment with a companion in sin, whom he was to meet exactly at 12, he entered his chamber in order to spend the intervening hour in perusing some amusing book. But it was so directed in the providence of God that he should take up a religious book, which his pious mother or aunt had, without his knowledge, slipped into his portmanteau. It was entitled, "The Christian soldier, or heaven taken by storm, by Mr. Thomas Watson." Being attracted by the title, he resolved to dip into it; and while he was reading, he thought he saw an unusual blaze of light fall on the book, which he at first imagined might happen by some accident in the candle. But lifting up his eyes, he apprehended to his extreme amazement, that there was before him, as it were suspended in the air, a visible representation of the Lord Jesus Christ upon the cross, surrounded on all

sides with a glory; and he was impressed, as if a voice, or something equivalent to a voice, had come to him to this effect: (whether he was awake, or had suddenly fallen asleep, he could not tell:) "O sinner, did I suffer this for thee, and are these the returns?" Struck with so amazing a phenomenon as this, there remained hardly any life in him, so that he sunk back in the arm chair in which he sat, and continued, he knew not how long, insensible; after which, upon opening his eyes, he saw nothing more than usual.

He passed the remainder of the night, and several which followed, with scarcely any sleep. His mind was continually engaged in reflecting on the divine goodness; the grace which had been proposed to him in the gospel, and which he had rejected; the singular advantages he had enjoyed and abused; and the many favours of Providence which he had received, particularly in rescuing him from so many imminent dangers of death, which he now saw must have been attended with such dreadful and hopeless destruction. The priv-

ileges of his early pious education, which he had so much despised, now lay with an almost insupportable weight upon his mind; and the folly of that career of sinful pleasure, which he had so many years been running with desperate eagerness, now filled him with indignation against himself, and against the great deceiver, by whom, as he said, he had been "so wretchedly and scandalously befooled."

The mind of Col. Gardiner continued from this remarkable time, for more than three months, in as extraordinary a situation as one can well imagine. He knew nothing of the joys arising from a sense of pardon; but, on the contrary, with very short intervals of hope, he took it for granted, that he must, in all probability, quickly perish. Nevertheless, he had such a sense of the evil of sin, of the goodness of the divine Being, and of the admirable tendency of the Christian revelation, that he resolved to spend the remainder of his life, while God continued him out of hell, in as rational and as useful a manner as he could; and to continue casting himself at the

feet of divine mercy, every day, and often in a day, if peradventure there might be hope of pardon, of which all that he could say was, that he did not absolutely despair. He had such a sense of the degeneracy of his own heart, that he hardly durst form any determinate resolution against sin, or pretend to engage himself by any vow in the presence of God; but he was continually crying to him, that he would deliver him from the bondage of corruption. He perceived in himself a most surprising alteration with regard to the dispositions of his heart; so that, though he felt little of the delight of religious duties, he extremely desired opportunities of being engaged in them; and those licentious pleasures, which had before been his delight, were now absolutely his aversion.

Nor was he only delivered from that bondage of corruption, which had been habitual to him for so many years, but he felt in his breast so contrary a disposition, that he was grieved to see human nature, in many around him, prostituted to such low and contemptible pur-

suits. He therefore exerted his natural courage in a new kind of combat, and became an open advocate for religion, in all its principles, so far as he was acquainted with them; and in all its precepts, relating to sobriety, righteousness, and godliness. The continued revilings with which he was received, in almost all companies where he had been most familiar before, did often distress him beyond measure; so that he several times declared, he would much rather have marched up to a battery of the enemy's cannon, than have been obliged, so continually as he was, to face such artillery as this. But like a brave soldier, and by aid of divine grace, he continued resolute, till he turned ridicule and opposition into respect and veneration.

But this sensible triumph over these difficulties was not till his Christian experience had been abundantly advanced, by the blessing of God on the sermons he heard, and on the many hours he spent in devout retirement, pouring out his whole soul before God in prayer. Particularly was the burden of his mind re-

lieved by the powerful impression made upon it by that Scripture, Rom. iii. 25, 26—"Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins, that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." He had used to imagine, that the justice of God required the damnation of so enormous a sinner as he saw himself to be; but now he was made deeply sensible that the divine justice might be not only vindicated, but glorified, in saving him by the blood of Jesus, even that blood which cleanseth us from all sin. Then did he see and feel the riches of redeeming love and grace, in such a manner as not only engaged him, with the utmost pleasure and confidence, to venture his soul upon it, but even swallowed up, as it were, his whole heart in the returns of love, which, from that blessed time, became the genuine principle of his obedience, and animated him, with an enlarged heart, to run the way of God's commandments.

All the terrors of his former state were now

changed into unutterable joy, which kept him almost continually waking for three nights together, and yet refreshed him as the noblest cordials. And though the first ecstasies of it afterwards subsided into a more calm and composed delight, yet were the impressions so deep, and so permanent, that for about seven years after this he enjoyed almost a heaven upon earth. His soul was so continually filled with a sense of the love of God in Christ, that it knew little interruption, but when necessary converse and the duties of his station called off his thoughts for a little time; and when they did so, as soon as he was alone, his heart was rising to God, and triumphing in him; and these thoughts attended him through all the scenes of life, until he closed his earthly course, and entered into eternal joy.

When Henry had read this account, Mr. James remarked, This is indeed "*repentance unto salvation*;"—salvation from sin, and salvation from hell. It is "*repentance unto life*;" to a holy and happy life on earth, and to a glorious and endless life in heaven. I de-

voutly wish and pray, my son, that your religious experience may prove to be as satisfactory, as hopeful, and as full of peace and joy, as that of Col. Gardiner.

The time allotted to this conversation having expired, it was closed with the usual family devotions, including the singing of a hymn which contained the following lines :

Guilty, but with heart relenting,
Overwhelmed with helpless grief,
Prostrate at thy feet repenting,
Send, oh ! send me quick relief.

With thy righteousness and Spirit ;
I am more than angels blest ;
Here with thee, all things inherit,
Peace, and joy, and endless rest.

CONVERSATION IV.

GRACE ABOUNDING, OR PENITENT SINNERS
WELCOME TO CHRIST.

ON the succeeding Sabbath, Mr. James preached a sermon from Luke xv. 2. "And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them." The introductory remarks related to the persons by whom the words were spoken, and the spirit by which they were actuated in giving them utterance. They were spoken by men, whose high standing, and reputation for sanctity, gave them great influence with the people; and they exerted their influence, as far as possible, against Christ. Among other things they alleged, with an accusing, murmuring tone, that he received sinners, intend-

ing thereby the injurious but false insinuation, that he associated with them in such a sense as to imply sympathy with their wickedness; whereas our Lord mingled with them as a physician does with the sick, not to catch the disease, but to cure it; or as a philanthropist converses with criminals, not to express approbation of their conduct, but to reform their character. What they said, therefore, with a view of injuring Christ, was in reality a high commendation. With murmuring lips they uttered a most precious gospel truth, viz., that Christ receives sinners, a truth which ought to be hailed with joy and gratitude by all men. After discussing this subject in its several aspects and connections, Mr. James noticed the gracious and welcome manner in which our Lord receives those who seek his favour, and closed with an earnest invitation to all to come to Christ. The concluding hymn was as follows:

Come, ye sinners, poor and wretched,
Weak and wounded, sick and sore,
Jesus ready stands to save you,
Full of pity, love, and power :
He is able,
He is willing, doubt no more.

Ho ! ye needy, come and welcome,
God's free bounty glorify ;
True belief and true repentance,
Every grace that brings us nigh,
Without money,
Come to Jesus Christ and buy.

Let not conscience make you linger,
Nor of fitness fondly dream ;
All the fitness he requireth,
Is to feel your need of him ;
This he gives you :
'Tis the Spirit's rising beam.

Come, ye weary, heavy laden,
Lost and ruined by the fall ;
If you tarry till you're better,
You will never come at all,
Not the righteous,
Sinners, Jesus came to call.

In the evening Henry James said to his father, Two things struck me to day, as being

very wonderful: one was, that Christ should be so willing to receive sinners; and the other, that the Pharisees and scribes should murmur because he did so.

Mr. James replied, Considering how great Christ is, and how unworthy we are, it is indeed surprising that he should notice us at all. David thought so, when he exclaimed, in view of his promised advent, "What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?" But Jehovah declares, in view of this very matter, that his ways and his thoughts are as much above ours, as the heavens are higher than the earth. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."

On the other hand, the murmuring of the Pharisees and scribes was truly surprising. If their hearts had been as benevolent as Christ's, and if they had entertained right views of the nature and design of his coming into our world, they would have rejoiced in his merciful disposition towards sinners, and have done all they could to induce them to come to him. But they were proud and self-righteous. They regarded the Messiah only as a temporal prince, under whose reign they were to be prime ministers. And they despised those whose characters and stations, according to their mode of estimating these things, were inferior to their own. Hence they were offended when they saw Christ, who claimed to be the Messiah, notice kindly and graciously the lowest and most wicked of the people, not less than those who occupied honourable positions in society, and whose characters were deemed to be respectable and virtuous.

SOME PERSONS NOW FEEL AND ACT IN A WAY SIMILAR TO THOSE PHARISEES—AN ANECDOTE.

But strange as it may appear, and strange as it really was, said Mr. James, some persons now feel and act in a way very similar to those Pharisees. Their spirit and conduct towards those who manifest a desire to become religious, and seek an interest in Christ, are just the opposite of what we ought to expect in such a case. Instead of encouraging them to become Christians, they oppose them, and endeavour to thwart their efforts to forsake their sins and lead pious lives. The hearts of men are wicked. They are opposed to God; especially do they murmur at his displays of distinguishing grace to sinners; and hence they disparage Christ and the way of salvation through him. Their opposition shows itself sometimes in impious expressions against the Lord; and at others, in persecuting his people. From the time of our Lord's sojourn on earth until now, his followers have

frequently been called to endure severe trials and sufferings for his sake, and sometimes to lay down their lives. Persons are found even in Christian lands, who disown their nearest relatives, for no other reason than because they have become followers of Christ; while in some instances they threaten to do so, but are arrested by the merciful hand of God, and become themselves trophies of redeeming grace. This last result it is pleasant to record. Several cases of this kind are contained in a volume which lies before me, one of which you may read.

Henry read as follows: About thirty years ago, a lad in one of the western States, was hopefully converted. His father, who was irreligious and profane, was so displeased with his son's profession of faith in Christ, and especially with his affectionate and earnest entreaties with his father to seek the Lord, that in a fit of rage, he told his son to quit his religion, or leave his father's house, and gave him till the morning to decide the question.

At the time fixed upon, his father inquired whether he had decided what to do. "Yes, father," said the lad, "I am decided to serve God—to serve him as long as I live; and I feel assured that 'when my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up.'"

The father, still firm to his purpose, directed him to the door, saying, "You must leave my house for ever." The son asked permission to pray with his parents, before he bade them a final adieu. So reasonable a request could not be refused. He kneeled down and prayed. His full soul was poured out, and his earnest cries went up to the throne of God. The Holy Spirit descended, and both father and mother were brought under deep conviction for sin.

When the lad arose from his knees, his parents, instead of bidding him farewell, besought him, with trembling hearts, to tell them what they should do to be saved. With the meekness of a Christian, and the affection of a son, he directed them to the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. His

faithful, yet filial, conversations were accompanied by the enlightening and renewing influences of the Holy Spirit. Not long afterwards they both made a public profession of religion, and when this account was penned, they were leading consistent Christian lives.

THE MURMURING OF THE PHARISEES UNREASONABLE.

You may now tell me, Henry, continued Mr. James, what I said in my sermon concerning the murmuring of the Pharisees and scribes.

Henry replied, You said, father, that their murmuring was unreasonable, and that our Lord, with a view of showing this, mentioned the several cases recorded in that chapter. If a man having a hundred sheep, should lose one of them, or if a woman having ten pieces of silver, should lose one piece, great pains would be taken to recover it, and when it was found, there would be great rejoicing; and even the neighbours would be called in to rejoice with them, because the lost sheep, or the

lost piece of silver, was found. And yet what was the value of a sheep, or a piece of silver, compared with an immortal soul? Instead therefore of murmuring, they ought to have rejoiced because Christ received sinners.

You also alluded to the return of the prodigal son to his father's house, and to the cordial welcome he received from his father, who commanded the best robe to be put on him, and the fatted calf to be killed, and a feast to be prepared, because of his son's return. But how opposite, you said, were the feelings of his elder brother, who was angry, and would not enter the house, because his father had received the returning prodigal! The murmuring of the Pharisees, because Christ received sinners, you remarked, was like the conduct of this elder brother, which our Lord alluded to for the purpose of showing that their feelings were very improper, and without excuse. If that brother's conduct was improper, so was theirs.

Mr. James asked Henry, What did I say

about the joy of angels over the repentance of sinners?

Henry replied, You quoted the words of Luke, "Likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance." And again, "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." You then remarked, that the murmuring of the Pharisees and scribes was so contrary to the spirit of heaven, that if the holy angels had been present on that occasion, they would have blushed for their wicked and impious conduct. I think you said little if anything more than this, and I suppose no more was necessary for the purpose you had in view, viz., to illustrate the unreasonableness of those men in murmuring against Christ for showing compassion and mercy to sinners. But I would thank you, father, to explain those words relating to the joy of angels, particularly what Christ meant by saying that "joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that

repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance.”

Mr. James replied, Some suppose our Lord alluded to the self-righteous Pharisees, who, though not really just, imagined themselves to be so, and hence thought they needed no repentance. If this was the meaning of the words, then Christ intended, thereby, to rebuke the Pharisees and scribes for their self-righteous spirit. As though he had said, These publicans and sinners, whose coming to me is the occasion of your complaint, because I receive them into my favour, are noticed in heaven with far more pleasure than you are, who think so highly of yourselves, and despise others. Ye Pharisees, repent of your sinful pride, that angels may rejoice over you.

Others think that Christ alluded to the holy angels, who were really and perfectly just, and had therefore no need of repentance, because they had never committed any sins to repent of. As the finding of a lost child produces a more lively joy in the family to which it belongs, than is felt with regard to the

other children who have never wandered from home ; so the angels in heaven feel a warmer glow of sympathetic delight at the repentance of a sinner, and his recovery to the household of God, than they do with regard to each other, who have always maintained a holy character. I am inclined to the opinion that this is the sense of the passage, and I think that this interpretation accords as fully as the other with Christ's design, viz., to reprove the Pharisees and scribes for murmuring against him.

The number ninety-nine, as compared with one, was not designed to have any specific application, except to complete the verbal analogy suggested by the number of sheep in the flock, which was one hundred, compared with the loss of one. This is evident from the fact that, in the second illustration, this verbal analogy is dropped, though the sense is precisely the same as before. Thus with reference to the finding of one piece of silver, which was lost from a purse containing ten pieces, our Lord simply says, "There is joy

in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth," without making any comparison between the one piece that was found, and the nine pieces which had remained safe in the possession of their owner.

Please to inform me, father, said Henry, why the holy angels rejoice over repenting sinners.

Several reasons may be given, said Mr. James. (1.) When sinners repent, God is glorified in the homage which they pay to him. In this, angels rejoice, because their highest delight is to adore God. (2.) Repenting sinners glorify Christ as their Saviour, who shows his great mercy in receiving them, and his great power and grace in reforming their characters and making them holy. This display of his redeeming love causes joy to the angels, who see in each repenting sinner a new illustration of the glorious work of redemption. (3.) The repentance of sinners provides new instruments for promoting the cause of religion in the world; and this too is a source of pleasure and delight to the angels

of God. (4.) And a further reason still is, that the repentance of sinners is the means of their recovery from ruin and their enjoyment of everlasting happiness, in their way to which angels are their ministering spirits, and in the possession of which they will be their eternal companions.

GREAT SINNERS RECEIVED BY CHRIST—AN
ANECDOTE OF WHITEFIELD.

Mr. James continued, It is highly encouraging to sinners who desire to come to Christ, but who feel a deep sense of their unworthiness, to be assured from the holy Scriptures that the greatest sinners, who repent of their sins, are welcome to him. The apostle Paul says, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief." And after saying that he was the chief of sinners, he adds for the special encouragement of others, "Howbeit, for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all long suffering, for

a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting." Other examples are also recorded. Manasseh, the king, was a flagrant transgressor; but he repented of his sins, and obtained forgiveness. Mary Magdalene was a great sinner; but she came with a broken and contrite spirit to the Lord Jesus, and was graciously received and pardoned. The thief on the cross was a notorious offender, but he prayed with a penitent heart, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom;" and Christ bestowed upon him grace and salvation.

This was wondrous grace indeed,
Grace bestowed in time of need;
Sinners, trust in Jesus' name,
You shall find him still the same.

A small volume, entitled, *Lady Huntingdon and her Friends*, contains an anecdote of the celebrated George Whitefield, which is another illustration of the abounding grace of Christ. You may take the book and read it. Henry read as follows: Some ladies called one Sat-

urday morning to pay a visit to Lady Huntingdon, and during the visit, her ladyship inquired of them if they had ever heard Mr. Whitefield preach. Upon being answered in the negative, she said, "I wish you would hear him; he is to preach to-morrow evening." They promised her ladyship they would certainly attend. They fulfilled their promise; and when they called the next Monday morning on her ladyship, she anxiously inquired if they had heard Mr. Whitefield on the previous evening, and how they liked him. The reply was, "Oh, my lady, of all the preachers we have ever heard, he is the most strange and unaccountable. Among other preposterous things, (would your ladyship believe it?) he declared that Jesus Christ was so willing to receive sinners, that he did not object to receive even the devil's *castaways*. Now, my lady, did you ever hear of such a thing since you were born?" To which her ladyship made the following reply: "There is something, I acknowledge, a little singular in the invitation, and I do not recollect ever to have met with

it before; but as Mr. Whitefield is below in the parlour, we will have him up, and let him answer for himself.”

Upon his coming up into the drawing room, Lady Huntingdon said, “Mr. Whitefield, these ladies have been preferring a heavy charge against you, and I thought it best that you should come up and defend yourself. They say, that in your sermon last evening, in speaking of the willingness of Jesus Christ to receive sinners, you expressed yourself in the following terms: ‘That so ready was Christ to receive sinners who came to him, that he was willing to receive even the devil’s castaways.’” Mr. Whitefield immediately replied, “I certainly, my lady, must plead guilty to the charge; whether I did what was right, or otherwise, your ladyship shall judge from the following circumstances. Did your ladyship notice, about half an hour ago, a very modest single rap at the door? It was given by a poor, miserable looking, aged female, who requested to speak with me. I desired her to be shown into the parlour, when she accosted

me in the following manner: 'I believe, sir, you preached last evening at such a chapel.' 'Yes, I did.' 'Ah, sir, I was accidentally passing the door of that chapel, and hearing the voice of some one preaching, I did what I never had been in the habit of doing—I went in; and one of the first things I heard you say, was, that Jesus Christ was so willing to receive sinners, that he did not object to receive the devil's castaways. Do you think, sir, that Jesus Christ would receive me?' " Mr. Whitefield answered her there was not a doubt of it, if she was but willing to go to him. This was the case; it ended in the conversion of the poor creature to God. When she died, she left highly satisfactory evidence that her great and numerous sins had been forgiven, through the atonement of the Lord Jesus.

FREE GRACE, AND FREE SALVATION.

Mr. James remarked, I will now answer a question, which has been suggested by these examples, viz., what is the meaning of the word *free*, when applied to this subject? Ar-

minian preachers sometimes convey the idea that they alone preach free grace, and free salvation, and that Calvinists cannot do this consistently with their principles. The fact is, however, that the term *free* is especially appropriate to Calvinistic theology. It does not properly belong to any other system of doctrine. When a favour is offered to us *freely*, the meaning is that it proceeds wholly from the benevolence of the donor, and that we are not required to pay any thing for it. This is the scriptural import of the phrases, "free grace," and "free salvation." Thus our justification is declared to be free, that is, not obtained by our works, but proceeding from the love and mercy of God in Christ. "Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." Again, "The free gift is of many offences unto justification." In like manner, the gospel invitation is free; that is, it offers grace and salvation to sinners, without money and without price. "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

I thought, father, said Henry James, that the word *free*, as used in the preaching of Arminian ministers, is understood by them to denote the universality of the gospel provision, in other words, that grace and salvation are offered equally to all.

Mr. James replied, You are correct in your supposition; and it is on this ground they claim to preach the gospel in a more ample and unrestrained manner than is done by Calvinists. But their claim is not well founded. The import of the word *free* is given correctly in the remarks already made; yet if taken in the Arminian sense of signifying that the door of mercy is open to all who are willing to enter it, no more is meant by this language, even by Arminians themselves, unless they are Universalists, than is believed and preached by Calvinistic ministers. The Apostolic commission authorizes and commands that the gospel be preached to every creature; and the preaching of the gospel to every creature includes the offer of eternal life to all men; not however to all, nor to any,

unless they repent of their sins and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Evangelical Arminians agree in this particular with Calvinists; and on the other hand, Calvinists agree with Arminians, if understood according to this sense, in proclaiming free grace and free salvation to the whole world.

WHAT KIND OF SINNERS CHRIST RECEIVES.

Henry James remarked, I recollect, father, you said in your sermon, that the kind of sinners whom Christ receives, were those who feel sensible of their sins; are humble and contrite for them; who confess and forsake their sins, and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, as the only Saviour of sinners.

Yes, said Mr. James, your recollection is accurate. These restrictions are clearly stated in the Bible. Unless men feel that they are sinners, they have no disposition to come to Christ. Hence he said to the Pharisees on another occasion, "They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to

repentance.” But even when they feel their need of a Saviour, they will not come to Christ, until their hearts are humble and contrite. Their awakened consciences, and their fears of future misery urge them towards the cross; but pride holds them back. The gospel remedy is a system of grace; and therefore, in order to its reception, sinners must have broken and contrite spirits, without which they will not consent to be debtors to the free, unmerited mercy of God.

By confessing sin, I did not mean auricular confession, *i. e.*, confession in the ear of a priest, as practised by Roman Catholics; but confession to God. “He that covereth his sins shall not prosper; but whoso confesseth and forsaketh shall find mercy.” A sincere and hearty confession will be followed by a turning from sin unto God. This was noticed in our last conversation, in describing evangelical repentance. It is the gospel condition of divine acceptance. I also described faith in Christ, in a previous conversation. Faith is the act of coming to Christ; and those who

come to him he receives. Thus he says, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." These several qualifications are distinctly mentioned in the Bible as necessary requisites to their being received by Christ, without which they can have no saving interest in the gospel provision. But all who really possess these feelings are welcomed to the privilege of his pardoning love, however great or numerous may have been their past sins. Accordingly we may truly say in the words of one of our hymns,

Sinners, to Jesus then draw near,
Invited by his word ;
The chief of sinners need not fear ;
Behold the Lamb of God !

THE UNPARDONABLE SIN.

Henry James inquired whether there is not one sin for which there is no forgiveness. I think, father, you alluded to the unpardonable sin, in a discourse which I heard you preach not long ago. Please state your views on this subject.

— Mr. James replied, The occasion on which Christ mentioned this sin, was his being charged by the Pharisees with casting out devils by Beelzebub the prince of the devils. See Matt. xii. 22—32. “Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.” The same words, in substance, occur in Mark and Luke. Dr. J. A. Alexander, in his commentary on Mark iii. 30., “Because they said, He hath an unclean spirit,” gives a satisfactory exposition of what is meant by the unpardonable sin. You may read his exposition.

Henry read as follows: “Lest there should be any doubt as to the bearing of this fearful sentence, [hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation,] Mark specific-

ally mentions what occasioned it, only exchanging the name Beelzebub for unclean spirit, which is really its meaning. It appears then, that in charging him with being thus possessed, they either did commit, or were in danger of committing, the unpardonable sin of blaspheming against the Holy Ghost. It cannot consist therefore in mere obstinate unbelief or final impenitence, for these are chargeable on all who perish, and could not be described in such terms as a peculiar sin distinguished from all others, and according to Matthew (xii. 31.), even from the sin of speaking a word against the Son of God. There are two other explanations which have been extensively received and are entitled to attention. One of these is founded upon Matthew's statement, and supposes a distinction between Jesus, as the Son of man, *i. e.*, a divine person in the form of a servant, (Phil. ii. 7.), and under that disguise, liable to be mistaken, so that men might speak against him and blaspheme him, not indeed without aggravated guilt, but without incurring

this tremendous condemnation; and on the other hand Jesus, as the Son of God, with the manifest tokens of divinity afforded by his miracles of mercy. But as this does not account for the Holy Spirit being put in opposition to the Son of man, and as Mark omits this opposition altogether, most interpreters agree that the unpardonable sin consists in obstinate rejection of the truth, and wilful apostasy from God, in opposition to one's own convictions, and with malignant hatred of the gospel, the expression of which is blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, as the illuminating Spirit by whom truth is carried home to the heart and understanding of believers, and to whom such apostasy and unbelief are therefore more especially insulting."

Mr. James remarked, If this exposition be correct, (and I think it is,) "The unpardonable sin consists in obstinate rejection of the truth, and wilful apostasy from God, in opposition to one's own convictions, and with the malignant hatred of the gospel, the expression of which is blasphemy against the Holy

Ghost." It is an awful thing for a sinner to be in such a state, more terrible than any other evil which can befall him this side of hell. And for aught I know to the contrary, this sin may be committed now, as well as in the time of Christ. But it is important to notice, in addition to the above description of this sin, that the malignant feelings and blasphemous words against the gospel in which this sin consists, leave the person who has committed it in a condition of religious insensibility and hardness of heart; and hence those who fear and tremble lest they themselves may have committed this sin, may reasonably infer that they are mistaken. If they are anxious about their souls, and are endeavouring to seek an interest in Christ, they may be assured that however heinous their sins may be they are not guilty of the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost; and that if they truly repent, they will obtain divine forgiveness.

EXPERIENCE OF JOHN BUNYAN.

Henry James remarked, I am reading the

works of John Bunyan, which you presented me, commencing with his life written by himself. It is entitled, "Grace abounding to the chief of sinners." I have often thought of it during this conversation, because he was so remarkable an illustration of abounding grace. He was indeed a great sinner, and he feared for a long time that he had committed the unpardonable sin. He was also tempted to think so, even after he had believed himself to be a Christian, and had experienced considerable religious comfort. Shall I read a page or two, father, from this book ?

Consent being given, he read as follows :

"After the Lord had given me such strong consolation, and blessed evidence from heaven, touching my interest in his love through Christ, the tempter came upon me again, and that with a more grievous and dreadful temptation than before.

"And that was, to sell and part with this most blessed Christ, to exchange him for the things of this life, for any thing. The temptation lay upon me for the space of a year, and

did follow me so continually, that I was not rid of it one day in a month; not sometimes one hour in many days together, unless when I was asleep. In labouring to resist this wickedness, my very body would be put into action or motion, by way of pushing or thrusting with my hands or elbows; and answering, as fast as the destroyer said, 'Sell him,' 'I will not, I will not; no, not for thousands, thousands, thousands of worlds.'

“Then began I with sad and careful heart, to consider of the nature and largeness of my sin, and to search into the word of God, if I could in any place espy a word of promise, or any encouraging sentence, by which I might take a relief. Wherefore I began to consider that of Mark, 'All manner of sins and blasphemies shall be forgiven unto the sons of men wherewithsoever they shall blaspheme.' Which place, methought, did contain a large and glorious promise for the pardon of high offences; but considering the place more fully, I thought it was rather to be understood, as relating more chiefly to those who had, while

in a natural state, committed such things as are there mentioned; but not to me, who had not only received light and mercy, but that had both after, and also contrary to that, so slighted Christ as I had done.

“I feared therefore that this wicked sin of mine might be that sin unpardonable, of which he there thus speaketh, ‘But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost, hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation.’ And I did the rather give credit to this, because of that sentence in the Hebrews, ‘For ye know how that afterwards, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected; for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.’

“And now was I both a burden and a terror to myself; nor did I so ever know, as now, what it was to be weary of my life, and yet afraid to die. Oh! how gladly now would I have been any body but myself! any thing but a man, and in any condition but my own! for there was nothing did pass more frequently

over my mind, than that it was impossible for me to be forgiven my transgression, and to be saved from the wrath to come.

“I found it a hard work now to pray to God, because despair was swallowing me up; I thought I was as with a tempest driven away from God; for always when I cried to God for mercy, this would come in: 'Tis too late, I am lost, God hath let me fall, not to my correction, but my condemnation; my sin is unpardonable; and know concerning Esau, how that after he had sold his birthright, he would have received the blessing but was rejected.

“Once as I was walking to and fro in a good man's shop, bemoaning myself in a sad and doleful state, greatly fearing that I should not be pardoned; praying also in my heart, that if this sin of mine did differ from that against the Holy Ghost, the Lord would show it me; and being now ready to sink with fear, suddenly there was the noise of a wind upon me, but very pleasant, and as if I heard a voice speaking, ‘Didst thou ever refuse to be justified by the blood of Christ?’ And

withal, my whole life of profession past, was in a moment opened to me, wherein I was made to see, that designedly I had not; so my heart answered groaningly, 'No.' Then fell with power, that word of God upon me, 'See that ye refuse not him that speaketh.' This made a strange seizure upon my spirit; it brought light with it, and commanded a silence in my heart, of all those tumultuous thoughts, that did before use, like masterless hell hounds, to roar and bellow, and make an hideous noise within me. It showed me also that Jesus Christ had yet a word of grace and mercy for me, and that notwithstanding my sins, and the heinousness of them, I might venture my salvation upon the Son of God. It was as if an angel had come upon me; it commanded a great calm in my soul."

When Henry had read these extracts from the life of Bunyan, Mr. James remarked, This interesting narrative shows several things. One is, that an apprehension of having committed the unpardonable sin, is sometimes (I

do not say always) a temptation of the devil, which, like other temptations, ought to be resisted, and prayed against, with earnestness and perseverance. A second is, that the question, whether a sin is unpardonable, must be determined, not only by the nature of the act, but also by the state of mind in which it is performed. As it is essential to the crime of murder that the deed should be intentional, and with malice prepense, so it is essential to the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, that it be uttered, not from a sudden impulse of fear, or outward temptation, like Peter's denial of his Lord, but in a deliberate manner, and with a malicious spirit, like Judas, when he betrayed him for thirty pieces of silver. A third is, that all sins, however flagrant, if truly repented of, are pardonable. Judas indeed repented, but not truly. His sorrow was not a godly sorrow, but a remorse of conscience which drove him to despair and suicide. The greatest sinners who feel their sins to be a burden, and sincerely desire to be delivered from them, have scriptural grounds for believ-

ing that their condition is not hopeless. Instead of troubling themselves about the unpardonable sin, let them be encouraged to come to Christ, whose blood cleanseth from all sin.

Mr. James further said, I had marked several places in the Life of John Bunyan, which I designed to have you read, illustrating by his own happy experience the significant title which you have already mentioned; "Grace abounding to the chief of sinners." This title was prefixed by Bunyan himself, and with a view of expressing his own feelings concerning the wonderful grace of God in calling such a sinner as he was, from his evil and ruinous ways, into the path of eternal life. But the time appropriated to our present conversation will not allow of more than a single one of these extracts. This shall be an account of his gracious deliverance from his distressed and troubled state of mind. Accordingly Henry read as follows:

"It would be too long here to stay to tell you in particular, how God did set me down in all the things of Christ, and how he did,

that he might do so, lead me into his words ; yea, and how he did open them unto me, and make them shine before me, and cause them to dwell with me, talk with me, and comfort me over and over, both of his own being, and the being of his Son, and Spirit, and word, and gospel.

“Only this, as I said before, I will say unto you again, that in general, he was pleased to take this course with me ; first to suffer me to be afflicted with temptations concerning them, and then reveal them unto me ; as sometimes I should lie under great guilt for sin, even crushed to the ground therewith ; and then the Lord would show me the death of Christ, yea, so sprinkle my conscience with his blood, that I should find, and that before I was aware, that in that conscience, where but just now did reign and rage the law, even there would rest and abide the peace and love of God, through Christ.

“Now I had an evidence, as I thought, of my salvation, from heaven, with many golden seals thereon, all hanging in my sight. I thought

that I loved Christ dearly ; that my affections cleaved unto him. Now could I remember this manifestation, and the other discovery of grace, with comfort ; and would often long and desire that the last day were come, that I might be for ever inflamed with the sight, and joy, and communion with Him, whose head was crowned with thorns, whose face was spit upon, and body broken, and soul made an offering for sin : for whereas before I lay at the mouth of hell, now methought I was got so far therefrom, that when I looked back, I could scarcely discern it.”

Mr. James remarked, It was after this time, that Mr. Bunyan was assaulted by those awful temptations concerning which you first read, when he feared he had committed the unpardonable sin. This shows that God’s children are sometimes tempted of the devil. It is very distressing to the soul to be harassed in this way ; but it is not an evidence that a person is not a Christian, unless he willingly yields to the temptation. If he willingly yields to it, he shows thereby that his heart

is not fortified by divine grace; in other words, that he has not been renewed by the Holy Spirit. Faith in Christ will influence the believer to resist the devil; and sooner or later, God will open a way for his escape.

Henry James now inquired, Will you not say something, father, concerning the benefits which penitent sinners enjoy, from their being received by Christ?

His father replied, This point formed a part of my sermon this morning, and it properly belongs to the subject on which we are conversing. But as our conversation has been sufficiently long, I shall defer a notice of these benefits till another time. I will simply remark, at present, that Christ's unbounded willingness to receive penitent sinners is itself a strong motive to influence them to seek his favour. The anxious soul, under a sense of guilt and unworthiness, often asks itself doubtfully, Shall I be welcome, if I come to Christ, or be rejected by him? Oh, if I could be assured that he would receive me, how quickly and gratefully would I come! Let all such

know, that though they may be the chief of sinners, they are welcome to Christ, and let them come to him and receive from his fulness those spiritual and everlasting blessings which are treasured up in him, for the benefit of his people. In the words of another, "The fountain of mercy rises in the Godhead, flows in the channel of the atonement, and is open for the most unworthy; none can change its course, dry up its streams, or have a right to impose any conditions; the poorer the wretch, the more welcome here."

Mr. James concluded by saying, The subject of our next conversation will be Adoption, under which it will be appropriate to notice the benefits of being received by Christ. Meditate on this subject, Henry, and be prepared to explain the nature and privileges of being a child of God.

CONVERSATION V.

ADOPTION, OR GRACE CONSTITUTING CONVERTED SINNERS CHILDREN OF GOD.

ON the succeeding Sabbath evening, Mr. James asked Henry whether he had taken time during the week to meditate on the subject of Adoption.

Yes, sir, said Henry, and also to read something about it, particularly in the Bible, and the exposition of the catechism. But I do not feel prepared, father, to explain the subject, though I have studied it sufficiently, I trust, to be an intelligent learner.

Well, Henry, said Mr. James, I am glad you have given your attention to this subject. It is an important doctrine, and ought to be better understood, and more highly appreciated, than it seems to be by some persons.

You may first answer the question, What is adoption?

Henry responded in the words of the catechism: Adoption is an act of God's free grace, whereby we are received into the number, and have a right to all the privileges, of the sons of God.

Mr. James remarked, This answer contains three clauses. The first is, Adoption is an act of God's free grace. Have you learned a proof text to show this?

Henry answered, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God!"

Very well, said Mr James: The second clause is, that we are received by adoption into the number of God's children. Can you repeat a text on this point?

Henry replied, "As many as received him, [Christ,] to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name."

The third clause is, continued Mr. James, that in adoption we have a right to all the

privileges of the sons of God. What Scripture can you repeat, touching this particular?

Henry said, The Bible mentions several privileges, and these are not all found, I think in any single text. One is that if we are God's children, we have freedom and confidence in approaching him as our Father. "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." Another is that we are heirs of heaven. "If children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ."

Mr. James commended Henry for his prompt and appropriate answers, which afforded such good evidence that he had attended diligently to his father's request to study the subject. This brief outline, said he, brings before us, in a satisfactory manner, the chief points belonging to this doctrine, for the more full explanation of which I shall make such remarks and illustrations as may serve, I trust, to give you a still clearer, and more extended knowledge of this delightful doctrine.

THE NATURE OF ADOPTION EXPLAINED AND
ILLUSTRATED.

Adoption, continued Mr. James, is the act of making and treating a child of another person, as our own. This may be done from friendship to the parents of such child; or from love to the child himself, who may be remarkably amiable; or it may be done to perpetuate the name of the individual who performs the act, on account of his having no child of his own. In this last case the adopted child drops his former name, and assumes the name of the person who adopts him; and in all cases of adoption, the adopted children have a share in the estates of those who thus make them members of their families.

Our first parents were children of God by creation; but by the fall they lost their happy standing in God's family, and were subjected to the fearful curse of being excluded from his presence and favour. All mankind were involved in that curse. Being born with a depraved and sinful nature, and under the

sentence of condemnation, they are called in Scripture, "the children of wrath." "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." The meritorious ground of their adoption, as we are here taught, is the redemption purchased by Christ, who became a curse for them, and redeemed them from the curse of the law. As the fruit of his death, the Holy Spirit was given to work faith in their hearts, and thereby unite them to Christ in their effectual calling; and those who are effectually called, or, in other words, who are born again, by the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit, he adopts or re-instates into his family, and gives them the disposition, the name, and the privileges of the sons of God.

HENRY. Do you say, father, that adoption confers a new disposition? My grandfather once adopted a little girl; but I did not perceive that she was any different in her temper afterwards from what she was before.

MR. JAMES. The communication of a new character, with a filial disposition, which precedes or accompanies divine adoption, is unlike any thing known among men. It is above human power, and is therefore a peculiarity which belongs only to the kingdom of grace. Thus in that text, a part of which you quoted, regeneration and adoption are connected together. "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name : which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." The first act of the soul, consequent on this new birth is receiving Christ; and the power or privilege to become the sons of God, is bestowed in immediate connection with this act of faith.

Mr. James continued, As an illustration of the nature of adoption, I will describe briefly an impressive scene which I witnessed some years ago, at the reception of about twenty young persons into the communion of the church. The minister's text was taken from

Gal. iv. 5, which I have just repeated to you, ending with the words, "that we might receive the adoption of sons." He dwelt considerably on adoption. He noticed the adoption of Moses by Pharaoh's daughter, and of Esther by Mordecai. These two, he said, referred directly to temporal matters, though their consequences were eternal. He alluded also to the adoption of the Israelites, of whom God said, "Israel is my son, even my first born," in allusion to which Paul said, "To whom pertaineth the adoption." This conferred peculiar religious privileges, which however were rather external than internal, and which pertained to them collectively rather than individually, but were typical of that higher, spiritual adoption which belongs to all the true Israel of God.

The preacher then noticed the adoption of the two sons of Joseph, Ephraim and Manasseh, by the patriarch Jacob, recorded in Gen. xlviii. 5; with Mathew Henry's comments on the same. The words contain, says Henry, "an express reception of Joseph's sons into

his family. 'Thy sons are mine; not only my grandchildren, but as my own children.' Though they were born in Egypt, and their father was then separated from his brethren, which seemed to have cut them off from the heritage of the Lord, yet Jacob takes them in, and owns them for visible church members. He explains it (v. 16), 'Let my name be named upon them, and the name of my fathers;' as if he had said, 'Let them not succeed their father in his power and grandeur here in Egypt; but let them succeed me in the inheritance of the promise made to Abraham,' which Jacob looked upon as much more valuable and honourable, and would have them to prize and covet accordingly. Thus the aged, dying patriarch teaches these young persons, now that they were come of age, (being about twenty-one years old,) not to look upon Egypt as their own, nor to incorporate themselves with the Egyptians, but to take their lot with the people of God, as Moses afterward in the like temptation. Heb. xi. 24—26. And because it would be a piece of self-denial in them,

who stood so fair for preferment in Egypt, to adhere to the despised Hebrews, to encourage them, he constitutes each of them the head of a tribe. Those are worthy of double honour, who, through God's grace, break through the temptations of worldly wealth, and preferment, to embrace religion in disgrace and poverty. Jacob will have Ephraim and Manasseh to believe, that it is better to be low, and in the church, than high, and out of it; that to be called by the name of 'poor Jacob,' is better than to be called by the name of 'rich Joseph.'"

These thoughts, said Mr. James, were expanded by the preacher, and applied to his hearers in a feeling and impressive manner; particular mention being made of the twenty young converts who were on that day to profess their faith in Christ, and to declare their filial love and obedience to God, their heavenly Father. The concluding hymn was appropriate and touching. The whole congregation seemed to be moved while it was sung.

Sovereign of all the worlds on high,
Allow our humble claim ;
Nor while poor worms would raise their heads,
Disdain a Father's name.

Our Father God! how sweet the sound!
How tender, and how dear!
Not all the melody of heaven
Could so delight the ear.

Come, sacred Spirit, seal the name
On my expanding heart ;
And show, that in Jehovah's grace
I share a filial part.

Cheered by a signal so divine
Unwavering, I believe ;
Thou knowest, I, Abba, Father, cry,
Nor can thy word deceive.

EVIDENCES OF ADOPTION. EXPERIENCE OF
RICHARD BAXTER.

Henry James expressed much satisfaction with his father's remarks, and especially his narrative concerning the young converts ; and then said, Please, father, state some of the evidences by which a person may know that he is a child of God, and also whether he can

be so fully assured of this fact, as to have no doubt of his filial relation.

Mr. James replied, The evidences of a person's being a child of God, are substantially the same as those of his having been converted. Our remarks, therefore, on regeneration and conversion, may be applied to this subject. As I have already said, those who are born again, possess from that moment the character of God's children, and then by a divine act called adoption, they are constituted members of his family. But the evidences of this change are often developed gradually. As an illustration of this fact, and also as an answer to your question,—what these evidences are, you may read some extracts from the christian experience of that remarkable man, the Rev. Richard Baxter, author of the *Call to the Unconverted*, and the *Saint's Everlasting Rest*. Henry read those passages which his father had marked, beginning with his early life, as follows:

Richard Baxter was born at Rowton, Shropshire, England, Nov. 12, 1615. He was the

only son of a pious father, who taught him in early life to read the holy Scriptures. "At first," says he, in the History of his own Life and Times, "my father set me to read the historical parts of the Scriptures, which suiting with my nature, greatly delighted me; and though all that time I neither understood nor relished much the doctrinal part, and mystery of redemption, yet it did me good, by acquainting me with the matters of fact, and drawing me on to love the Bible, and to search by degrees into the rest.

"But though my conscience would trouble me when I sinned, yet divers sins I was addicted to, and often committed against my conscience, . . . and for which, in my childhood, conscience troubled me for a great while before they were overcome." . . .

"When about fifteen years of age, it pleased God of his wonderful mercy, to open my eyes with a clearer insight into the concerns and case of my own soul, and to touch my heart with a livelier feeling of things spiritual than ever I had found before. In read-

ing a book, entitled, 'Bunyan's Resolutions,' which a poor man in the town lent my father, it pleased God to awaken my soul, and show me the folly of sinning, and the misery of the wicked, and the inexpressible weight of things eternal, and the necessity of resolving on a holy life, more than I ever was acquainted with before. The same things which I knew before, came now in another manner, with light, and sense, and seriousness to my heart.

“ Yet whether sincere conversion began now, or before, or after, I was never able to this day to know; for I had before had some love to the things and people which were good, and a restraint from other sins, except those before mentioned; and so much from those that I seldom committed most of them, and when I did, it was with great reluctance. And both now and formerly, I knew that Christ was the only Mediator, by whom we must have pardon, justification, and life: but even at that time, I had little lively sense of the love of God in Christ to the world or me, nor of my special need of him.

“About this time, it pleased God that a poor pedlar came to the door, that had ballads and some good books, and my father bought of him, Dr. Sibbes’s ‘Bruised Reed.’ This also I read, and found it suited to my taste, and seasonable to me; which opened more the love of God to me, and gave me a livelier apprehension of the mystery of redemption, and how much I was beholden to Jesus Christ. After this, we had a servant that had a little piece of Mr. Perkins’s works, ‘Of Repentance,’ and the right ‘Art of Living and Dying Well,’ and the ‘Government of the Tongue;’ and the reading of that did further inform me, and confirm me. And thus without any means but books, was God pleased to resolve me for himself.

“Being in expectation of death by a violent cough, with spitting of blood, &c., of two years’ continuance, supposed to be a deep degree of consumption, I was yet more awakened to be serious, and solicitous about my soul’s future state; and I came so short of that sense and seriousness, which a matter of such infin-

ite weight required, that I was many years in doubt of my sincerity, and thought I had no spiritual life at all. I wondered at the senseless hardness of my heart, that I could think and talk of sin and hell, and Christ, and grace, of God and heaven, with no more feeling. I cried out from day to day for grace against this senseless deadness. I called myself the most hard-hearted sinner, that could feel nothing at all that I knew and talked of. I was not then sensible of the incomparable excellence of holy love, and delight in God, nor much employed in thanksgiving and praise; but all my groans were for more contrition, and a broken heart, and I prayed most for tears and tenderness.

“ Thus was I long kept with the calls of approaching death at one ear, and the questionings of a doubtful conscience at the other; and since then I have found that this method of God’s was very wise, and no other was so likely to have tended to my good. These benefits of it I sensibly perceived.

“1. It made me vile and loathsome to myself,

and made pride one of the most hateful sins in the world to me.

“2. It much restrained me from that sportful levity and vanity which my nature and youthfulness did much incline me to.

“3. It made the doctrine of redemption the more savoury to me, and my thoughts of Christ to be more serious and regardful, than before they were.

“4. It made the world seem to me as a carcass that had neither life nor loveliness, and it destroyed that ambitious desire after literary fame, which was the sin of my childhood. .

“5. It caused me first to seek God’s kingdom and his righteousness, and most to mind the one thing needful; and to determine first of my ultimate end, by which I was engaged to choose out and prosecute all other studies but as meant to that end.

“And as for those doubts of my own salvation, which exercised me many years, the chief causes of them were these :

“1. Because I could not distinctly trace the workings of the Spirit upon my heart, in that

method by which Mr. Bolton, Mr. Hooker, Mr. Rogers, and other divines describe; nor knew the time of conversion, being wrought on by the forementioned degrees. . . . :

“2. Because of the hardness of my heart, or want of such lively apprehension of things spiritual, which I had about things corporeal.

“3. Lest education and fear had done all that ever was done upon my soul, and regeneration and love were yet to seek; because I had found convictions from my childhood, and found more fear than love in all my duties and restraints.

“4. Because my grief and humiliation were no greater, and because I could weep no more for this.

“5. Because I had, after my change, committed some sins deliberately and knowingly. And be they ever so small, I thought, he that could sin upon knowledge and deliberation had no true grace; and that, if I had as strong temptations to fornication, drunkenness, fraud, or other more heinous sins, I might also have committed them. And if these proved that I

had then no saving grace, after all that I had felt, I thought it unlikely that ever I should have any."

On these several points, said Mr. James, Mr. Baxter expresses his own reflections and views, which you may read at your leisure. The reading of them now would protract our conversation beyond the usual time. You may, however, read a page or two more, stating the means by which he obtained relief. Henry accordingly read again as follows :

"The means by which God was pleased to give me some peace and comfort were :

"1. The reading of many consolatory books.

"2. The observation of other men's condition.

. . . In particular, it much comforted me to read him whom I loved, as one of the holiest of all the martyrs, John Bradford, subscribing himself so often, 'The hard-hearted sinner,' and 'The miserable hard-hearted sinner,' even as I was used to do myself.

"3. And it much increased my peace, when God's providence called me to the comforting

of many others that had the same complaints. While I answered their doubts, I answered my own: and the charity which I was constrained to exercise for them, redounded to myself, and insensibly abated my fears, and procured me an increase of quietness of mind.”

Henry paused, and Mr. James remarked that this was the religious experience of a man who became one of the most eminent ministers of that age. His long continued struggles between hope and fear, and his many doubts whether his conversion was genuine, were not essential parts of his experience, and must not therefore be regarded as a model for us. They are indeed to be avoided if it shall please God to grant us freedom from these trials. But they may nevertheless be adduced as an encouragement to desponding and doubting believers, who in view of the experience of Baxter, may be exhorted to hope in God's love. 'Though he was so long in doubt, it is easy to see that his exercises of mind were such as indicated him to be a child of God.

He mourned over sin ; he delighted in divine things.

Baxter's protracted struggles and his subsequent peace and comfort, may have been designed by God to prepare him the better for his successful labours, and cruel persecutions. He knew how to weep with those that wept, as well as to rejoice with those who rejoiced. His success as a minister was extraordinary ; but his efforts to do good were thwarted for ten or twelve years, by the secret abettors of popery, and the bigoted partisans of a nominal Protestant conformity. "His goods were distrained ; his books were carried off ; his character was traduced ; his person was seized ; he was most brutally insulted and vilified in the mockery of a judicial trial ; and notwithstanding his age and many infirmities, was thrown into prison." All this was done on account of his religion. But like Moses, he "endured as seeing Him who is invisible ;" and as soon as he was released, he resumed his ministry with the same earnestness as before, and finally closed his eventful life with

peace and triumph. He had sowed in tears; he now reaped in joy. He had gone forth weeping, bearing precious seed; he now entered heaven with rejoicing, bearing his sheaves with him.

FULL ASSURANCE OF OUR ADOPTION ATTAINABLE—THE WITNESS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

In reply to Henry's question, whether a person can know beyond doubt that he is a child of God, Mr. James remarked, that full assurance is attainable, and ought to be earnestly sought for by God's children, as a great and valuable privilege. "We desire that every one of you," says Paul, "do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope." The full assurance of hope necessarily involves the full assurance of our adoption. The two are therefore essentially the same.

On the mode of attaining this assurance I will refer at present only to a single text. "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." Here is a twofold testimony of our adoption,

viz., the testimony of our own spirits corroborated by the testimony of God's Spirit. The witness or testimony of our own spirits is the consciousness of our being God's children, derived from a comparison of our religious experience with the description of a saving change of heart recorded in the Holy Scriptures. If we find that what is there stated concerning the exercises of God's people, accords with our own exercises, it is a fair inference that our hearts have been renewed by divine grace. These exercises are not natural to sinful men, but wrought in them by the Holy Spirit.

Some interpreters of Scripture think that the text I have quoted is fully explained by what I have now said. The Bible was indited by the Holy Spirit; and hence by the Spirit's bearing witness with our spirits they understand to be meant the Spirit in the word harmonizing with the inward exercises of the soul. In my opinion, however, the words convey the additional thought of a direct testimony of the Holy Spirit to our adoption; not

independently of the written word, but in connection with it. The language of the Apostle seems to require us to understand the Holy Spirit's witness, as a direct act, and not as being solely through the word. And the context states what this witness is, as distinguished from other evidences of conversion, viz., the "Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba, Father;" which is called elsewhere the "Spirit of God's Son sent forth into our hearts;" and again, it is described as the "love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." A person may possess a satisfactory evidence of having experienced a change of heart by an examination of the word of God; and unless he has this evidence, any supposed witness of the Spirit independently of this, and especially if contrary to it, would be a mere illusion. But he may possess this evidence without that full assurance which he feels when there is superadded thereto the spirit of adoption, that is, that filial feeling towards God which imparts a holy and happy, yet humble bold-

ness, when we come into his presence. The Apostle John describes this spirit under the phrase, "perfect love that casteth out fear." "Herein," says he, "is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear." By perfect love is meant here filial love, as opposed to what Paul calls "the spirit of bondage again to fear."

At one time, continued Mr. James, I was absent from home for seven or eight months, engaged in the service of the church. When I returned, your little brother did not know me. While all the family greeted me with delight, he was afraid, and could not be persuaded to come to me. But he kept his eyes on my countenance; he listened to my voice and conversation; he noticed the freedom and happiness manifested by others; he heard my name, father, father, repeatedly uttered; until at length the impression of his relation to me was distinctly made on his mind; and he then of his own accord immediately flew to my

arms. That little boy was my son before this; but he did not feel the assurance of this fact, and hence feared to address and treat me as his father. And so it may be with the children of God. The act of adoption is not the same as the spirit of adoption; and the former may exist without the latter. The act of adoption is outward and declarative; the spirit of adoption is inward, a feeling of the heart, a persuasion, or assurance of God's love.

PRIVILEGES OF ADOPTION—THE INDIAN CONVERT.

Do you remember, Henry, continued Mr. James, what I promised you, at the close of our last conversation?

Yes, sir, said Henry. You told me you would mention some of the benefits of our being received by Christ.

Mr. James remarked, Several of these benefits are included in the answer to the question in the catechism, What is adoption? It is an act of God's free grace, whereby we

are received into the number, and have a right to all the privileges of the sons of God. To be received into the number of God's children is of itself a great privilege. In order to this, the sinner must be justified, *i. e.*, his sins must be pardoned, and he must be accepted as righteous in God's sight, through Christ's righteousness imputed to him. With this imputation of righteousness he becomes affiliated to God through Christ, and receives the name of a son. What divine condescension and love are manifested in this appellation! When the Danish missionaries in India appointed some of their Indian converts to translate a catechism, in which it was mentioned as the privilege of Christians to become the sons of God, one of the translators being startled at what he thought so bold a saying, exclaimed, "It is too much; let me rather render it: They shall be permitted to kiss his feet."

Notice, adoption is an *act*, *i. e.*, an announcement or declaration made by God, to the effect that those who were before aliens and

strangers, are now his children. So justification is an *act*, pronouncing our sins to be forgiven; and in this particular it is distinguished from sanctification, which is a *work*, and consequently is gradual, *i. e.*, it is not, like justification, completed at once. The act of adoption, however, though it is a great privilege, is only the first of a series of privileges. It brings us into the relation of children, and this relation secures an interest in all the blessings purchased by Christ for the people of God. Some of these have been mentioned. I will mention a few more.

The spirit of adoption which is granted to God's children is a great privilege. This has been alluded to already in discussing the evidence of our adoption. But it ought to be mentioned also under the head of privileges. Simply to receive the name of a son would be an empty form, unless we could feel conscious of being the friends of God, and could enjoy free and filial intercourse with him as our Father. But happily this privilege is enjoyed. The spirit of adoption has an attractive power

which draws the soul to God, and attaches it, in holy delight to the bosom of divine love. It has also a sanctifying power, which gives to our filial communion with God, through the Holy Spirit, a constant moral force, to assimilate us to the divine character, and dispose and qualify us for the service of Christ.

Thy Spirit shall unite
Our souls to thee our Head ;
Shall form us to thy image bright,
That we thy paths may tread.

SEVERAL PRIVILEGES OF ADOPTION ENUMERATED.

Mr. James paused for a moment, in order to give Henry an opportunity to note down the privileges which had been enumerated. He wrote thus: When Christ receives a returning sinner, he forgives his sins; and the sinner who is thus forgiven, is adopted into the family of God, has the name, spirit, and character of a son, is permitted to enter freely into God's presence, becomes more and more like him, and engages with filial love and sat-

isfaction in his service. Having read them to his father, he inquired whether adoption does not secure still other benefits.

Mr. James replied in the affirmative. I have requested you to note down these, said he, because I had made no division of these privileges into particular heads, and had simply named one or two of them without any accompanying remarks, and I wished you to put them down together, that you might see what a rich cluster of heavenly jewelry had been already gathered up to distinguish, adorn, and honour the adopted child of God.

FURTHER PRIVILEGES OF ADOPTION.

Mr. James continued, Adoption into the family of God secures his kind, paternal correction, which if rightly viewed, is a real privilege. "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth."

. . . "Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit

of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.”

Again, adoption secures the supporting and comforting presence of the Holy Spirit, in seasons of trial and temptation. God's children are tried and tempted like other men. But they have the advantage of others in this important respect, that Christ has promised them, “I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you;” and also the advantage of a divine promise made in the Old Testament, and repeated in the New; “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee;” and further, “God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.”

TEMPORAL BENEFITS OF ADOPTION—ANECDOTE
OF HENRY J. STILLING.

Again, adoption secures God's providential care over us, and the supply of our temporal wants. In numerous instances, a childlike reliance on the Lord in circumstances of need,

has been followed by remarkable interpositions of divine providence. One example of this kind now lies before me. You may open that book, Henry, and read it. I allude to the account of Henry Jung Stilling, of Germany. Henry James read as follows:

In youth, Stilling was extremely poor, not having the ordinary comforts or even the necessaries of life. After much anxiety and prayer, he felt satisfied that it was the will of God that he should enter a university, and qualify himself for the medical profession. He did not at first decide upon going to a university, but waited for an intimation from his heavenly Father; for as he intended to study simply from faith, he would not allow his own will in anything. Three weeks after he had come to this determination, a female friend asked him whither he intended to go. He replied, he did not know. "Oh," said she, "Mr. T. is going to Strasburg, to spend the winter there; go with him."

This touched Stilling's heart; he felt that this was the intimation he had waited for. At

that moment, Mr. T. entered the room, and was pleased with the proposition. His welfare, as he thought, now depended on his becoming a physician; and for this, a thousand dollars at least would be required, of which he could not tell where to raise a hundred. He nevertheless fixed his confidence firmly on God, and reasoned as follows:

“God begins nothing without terminating it gloriously. Now, it is most certainly true, that he alone has ordered my present circumstances, entirely without my co-operation. Consequently, it is also most certainly true, that he will accomplish everything regarding me in a manner worthy of himself.”

He said pleasantly to his friends, who were as poor as himself, “I wonder from what quarter my heavenly Father will provide me money!” When they expressed anxiety, he said, “Believe assuredly that He who was able to feed a thousand people with a little bread, lives still, and to him I commend myself. He will certainly find out means. Do not be anxious; the Lord will provide.”

Forty-six dollars was all that he could raise for his journey. He met unavoidable delay on the way; and while at Frankfort, three days' ride from Strasburg, he had but a single dollar left. He said nothing of it to any one, but waited for the assistance of his heavenly Father. As he was walking the streets, and praying inwardly to God, he met Mr. L., a merchant from the place of his residence, who says to him, "Stilling, what brought you here?"

"I am going to Strasburg to study medicine."

"Where do you get your money to study with?"

"I have a rich Father in heaven."

Mr. L. looked steadily at him, and inquired, "How much money have you on hand?"

"One dollar," said Stilling.

"So," said Mr. L. "Well, I'm one of your Father's stewards," and handed him thirty-three dollars.

Stilling felt warm tears in his eyes and said, "I am now rich enough; I want no more."

This first trial so encouraged him, that he no longer doubted that God would help him through every difficulty.

He had been but a short time in Strasburg, when his thirty-three dollars had again been reduced to one, on which account he began again to pray very earnestly. Just at this time, one morning, his room-mate, Mr. T., said to him, "Stilling, I believe you did not bring much money with you," and offered him thirty dollars in gold, which he gladly accepted, as an answer to his prayers.

In a few months after this, the time arrived when he must pay the lecturer's fee, or have his name struck from the list of students. The money was to be paid by six o'clock on Thursday evening. Thursday morning came, and he had no money, and no means of getting any. The day was spent in prayer. Five o'clock in the evening came, and yet there was no money. His faith began almost to fail; he broke out into a perspiration; his

face was wet with tears. Some one knocked at the door. "Come in," said he. It was Mr. R., the gentleman of whom he had rented the room.

"I called," said Mr. R. "to see how you like your room."

"Thank you," said Stilling, "I like it very much."

Said Mr. R., "I thought I would ask you one other question; have you brought any money with you?"

Stilling says he now felt like Habakkuk when the angel took him by the hair of the head to carry him to Babylon. He answered, "No; I have no money."

Mr. R. looked at him with surprise, and at length said, "I see how it is; God has sent me to help you."

He immediately left the room, and soon returned with forty dollars in gold.

Stilling says he then felt like Daniel in the lions' den, when Habakkuk brought him food. He threw himself on the floor, and thanked God with tears. He then went to



He soon returned with forty dollars in gold. Page 212

the college and paid his fee as well as the best.

When Henry had read this narrative, he said, with deep emotion, How true it is, father, that godliness hath the promise of the life that now is, as well as that which is to come! A person will be a great gainer even in this world by becoming a child of God.

THE CROWNING PRIVILEGE OF ADOPTION IS
ETERNAL GLORY.

True, said Mr. James, godliness hath the promise of the life which now is. But though the enjoyment of temporal good is valuable, it is scarcely to be named in comparison with those future and eternal benefits which are secured by adoption. "If children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ." This is the crowning privilege of believers. It secures their perseverance in grace to the end of life, the resurrection of their bodies, and a glorious immortality, in the presence of God and the Lamb. I have not sufficient time now to converse with you concerning that glory;

but I will resume the subject hereafter. I will merely remark at present that its ultimate possession is rendered certain to God's children, by the double assurance that he will not withdraw his love from them, nor leave them to lose their love to him, until grace is perfected in glory. "Having loved his own, he loved them unto the end;" and his love to his people secures their perseverance in the divine life until they enter heaven.

They go from strength to strength,
Through this dark vale of tears,
Till each arrives at length,
Till each in heaven appears ;
O glorious seat,
When God our King shall thither bring
Our willing feet.

OBLIGATIONS INVOLVED IN ADOPTION.

How great, continued Mr. James, are the obligations involved in adoption! It is an act of God's free grace. There was no goodness in us to merit such a favour. This accounts for the fact that the text you quoted to show the nature of adoption, has the form

of an exclamation, expressive of wonder and surprise. "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God!" The contemplation of this love takes us back to the love of God in sending his Son into the world to die for us, to the love of the Son in offering himself a sacrifice for sin, and to the love of the Holy Spirit in renewing our hearts, and drawing us cordially and sweetly to the Saviour, as the fountain of grace and mercy. The gospel call to sinners to come to Christ is a proclamation of divine love, and every subsequent act of God in us and for us, until we are constituted and declared to be his children, is an act of love. All who believe in Christ ought therefore to feel and act like Paul, whose language was, "The love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead; and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again."

Henry said, I have often thought of this,

father, and I endeavour to adopt as my own the last line of some verses which I am fond of repeating, because they describe so truly my religious experience.

I heard the voice of Jesus say,
Behold, I freely give
The living water; thirsty one,
Stoop down and drink and live.

I came to Jesus, and I drank
Of that life-giving stream;
My thirst was quenched, my soul revived,
And now I live to him.

I am gratified, said Mr. James, to hear you speak thus. To whom should we devote the service of our heart and lives, if not to Christ who bought us with his blood; and to the Holy Spirit who applied that blood to the cleansing of our polluted souls; and to God the Father by whose gracious act of adoption we are made sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty?

Mr. James remarked further, that the relation of parent and child furnishes an appropriate train of thought, for the purpose of

showing the manner in which the obligations involved in adoption are to be discharged. Children owe their parents filial honour, gratitude, and obedience. If they are dutiful children, they will need no prompter but filial love to make them revere and obey their parents. And if they duly appreciate the many benefits they have received at their parents' hands, they will cheerfully do their utmost to advance their interests. If parents are slandered, their children will be the first to repel the aspersion, and to sustain and vindicate their good name. If they require efficient aid in accomplishing any great and important undertaking, their children may be reasonably expected, above all others, to enter zealously into their plans, and to employ their best endeavours for carrying them into effect. Good children also love each other, and rejoice in each other's welfare.

In like manner the children of God, if they act in character, honour and adore his holy name, and habitually and cheerfully keep his commandments. They seek to promote God's

kingdom and glory in the world. His interests they feel to be their own. They also love one another, and endeavour to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. By the exhibition of these principles, and the performance of corresponding duties, they act worthily of the high relation into which they are brought by adoption. In the words of Paul, they are "the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom they shine as lights in the world."

I earnestly counsel and exhort you, Henry, to walk worthily of that holy name by which you are called. Lead a devout and consistent Christian life. Always confide in the wisdom and goodness of your heavenly Father. Endeavour to bring others who are now strangers to the covenant of promise, into the same fellowship with God which you enjoy, and to be fellow-heirs with you of the heavenly inheritance.

Henry thanked his father for the interest which he felt in him, and expressed the hope

that his counsels, exhortations, and prayers would not be lost, but that he would receive grace to serve the Lord with fidelity all the days of his life. The evening being spent, the conversation closed.

CONVERSATION VI.

GRACE AND COMFORT, OR THE DOCTRINES
OF GRACE A SOURCE OF TRUE HAPPINESS TO
BELIEVERS.

HENRY JAMES had now become a happy and growing Christian. His doctrinal difficulties were removed, and he took delight in religious duties. At family worship one evening, the forty-sixth Psalm was read, and two stanzas of the same Psalm were sung from Dr. Watts's beautiful versification.

There is a stream, whose gentle flow
Supplies the city of our God!
Life, love, and joy still gliding through,
And watering our divine abode.

That sacred stream, thy holy word,
Supports our faith, our fear controls;
Sweet peace thy promises afford,
And give new strength to fainting souls.

After prayer, Henry said to his father, Is it a good evidence that a person has experienced a saving change, when he takes delight in God's word—when its doctrines, promises, and precepts are sources of comfort and satisfaction ?

Mr. James replied, Happiness as well as holiness, comes from God. But whether these are always connected with each other depends on the kind of happiness referred to. God's goodness extends even to the wicked, who enjoy many temporal pleasures, though living in sin. "He is kind to the evil and to the unthankful." But spiritual comfort, which is the purest, best, and only permanent blessing, is enjoyed by Christians alone. There is no true spiritual comfort without grace. Unconverted men have no relish for religion. "The carnal mind is enmity against God." The communication of his renewing grace must therefore precede that species of satisfaction and delight alluded to in your question. And hence my answer is, that if a person takes delight in God's word, if its doctrines, promises, and

precepts afford him real pleasure, he has a scriptural warrant for inferring that his heart has been renewed by divine grace.

When we read the words of David, "Oh how I love thy law! It is my meditation all the day;" and of Paul, "I delight in the law of God after the inward man;" we do not doubt that they describe the feelings of those men after they became pious, and not before. And the case is the same, when from the word of God in general, we particularize its doctrines, promises, and precepts. They are precious to the renewed heart, but not to the carnal mind. Thus concerning practical religion, the apostle John says, "This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments; and his commandments are not grievous." God's love in the heart makes obedience to him a source of real pleasure. To such, Christ's "yoke is easy, and his burden is light;" but not to those who have no faith in him as their Redeemer, and no love to him as their king and lawgiver.

If any part of the gospel, said Mr. James,

could afford pleasure to unconverted men, it would be its promises. In order however to make the promises of God a source of inward satisfaction, we must exercise faith in them, without which they are scarcely more efficacious in comforting our souls, than was Samson's dry and juiceless jaw-bone in allaying his thirst. Though it had done him good service as a weapon to slay the Philistines, it possessed not a drop of moisture to revive his exhausted body, till by the prayer of faith he called on the Lord. Then "God clave a hollow place that was in the jaw, and there came water thereout; and when he had drunk, his spirit came again, and he revived." Judges xv. 18, 19. In like manner those only who truly believe in God, and rest on his word, can derive real comfort from its promises. Accordingly the language of Peter concerning the preciousness of God's promises, is adapted in a special manner to his people, *i. e.*, to those who are subjects of his grace, and are seeking to be conformed to his character. "Whereby are given unto us exceed-

ing great and precious promises ; that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.”

The doctrines of the gospel, continued Mr. James, are taught in the Scriptures in various forms. Doctrinal instruction is often contained in the promises and precepts of God's word. But in whatever form doctrines are taught, a love for them, and especially a love for those doctrines which are usually styled the doctrines of grace, is a good evidence of a change of heart. The true state of the case is expressed in one of our hymns :

Christ and his cross is all our theme :
The mysteries that we speak
Are scandal in the Jew's esteem,
And folly to the Greek.

But souls enlightened from above,
With joy receive the word ;
They see what wisdom, power, and love,
Shine in their dying Lord.

THE DOCTRINES OF GRACE ARE ADAPTED TO
MAKE BELIEVERS HAPPY.

Henry James remarked, I am glad, father, that you have mentioned the doctrines of grace in this connection. I have been hoping you would state before our conversations closed, how these doctrines are adapted to make Christians happy.

Mr. James replied, This has been stated incidentally already, and it may be inferred from much that has been said in our previous interviews; but it will afford me pleasure to give it a distinct and separate consideration. A desire for happiness ought not to be our primary motive for being religious; nor is the tendency of the doctrines of grace to make us happy the sole, or even the chief, argument in favour of their being true and important. The principal question is, Are they taught in God's word? not, Will a belief in them make us happy? If, however, it can be shown from the Bible, and from Christian experience, (as may be easily done,) that they are a

source of true comfort to believers, this fact corroborates the other evidence for the truth and excellence of these doctrines, and it is a proper and powerful motive, though a secondary one, for their being cordially embraced.

THE DOCTRINES OF ATONEMENT AND JUSTIFICATION ARE ADAPTED TO MAKE BELIEVERS HAPPY.

The first of these doctrines mentioned in our conversations, is the atonement, a believing reception of which produces joy. "We also joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement." Rom. v. 11. In this passage, the apostle expressly teaches that faith in the doctrine of Christ's atonement, *i. e.*, an inward, experimental faith, makes the believer joyful. The nature of this joy is partly described by the clause, "joy in God." It is religious joy, resulting from a scriptural evidence that God is reconciled to us and we to him; that he accepts and treats us as his friends. It is further described by the clause, "through our

Lord Jesus Christ." It is evangelical joy, arising from a hearty approval and reception of the gospel plan of atonement and reconciliation. God out of Christ is a consuming fire to the transgressor. "God in Christ is reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." Saving faith trusts in the atoning sacrifice of Christ, as the only ground of deliverance, and an essential preliminary to faith, *i. e.*, to saving faith, is a conviction of sin and misery; in other words, remorse of conscience, and an apprehension of divine wrath, with an anxious concern to be delivered from this state of condemnation. When a sinner under these circumstances is enabled by God's grace to receive and rest on Christ alone for salvation, his troubled conscience is relieved, and his fear is succeeded by hope and comfort. With an humble yet joyful heart, he can exclaim in the language of the prophet, "O Lord, I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me."

Closely allied to the atonement, continued

Mr. James, is justification ; and the comfort arising therefrom, is very much the same as has been now described. "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." Rom. v. 1, 2. As has been before stated, we are justified meritoriously by the imputation of Christ's righteousness, and instrumentally by faith, which receives his righteousness, and appropriates it to our own benefit. His righteousness furnishes a full and satisfactory ground of access to God, and a comforting assurance of our acceptance. Christ is our peace. Through him we can "come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." Justification gives us likewise peace of conscience, which consists, not in ceasing to feel that we are guilty and unworthy sinners, but in the inward consciousness of being pardoned and accepted through the merits of Christ, for whose sake our sins will not be brought against

us in the judgment. And further, believers have not only a hope of being delivered from wrath, but of obtaining salvation, through the Lord Jesus Christ. Justification secures a title to heaven, a firm and confident hope of which is a fountain of inexhaustible comfort. "We rejoice in hope of the glory of God."

AN EXTRAORDINARY ANECDOTE.

The following extraordinary anecdote of a poor negro on the coast of Africa, affords a remarkable illustration of the peace and joy afforded to believing sinners by the doctrines of atonement and justification. Becoming much distressed about his soul, he went from place to place, without meeting with any one to comfort him. One day, falling in with some English sailors, he was asked by one of them, "What is the matter with you?" The negro began to tell his tale of woe, but was hastily interrupted by the sailor, "Oh, I see what is the matter; you must go to England, and there you'll hear of the Christian's God, who paid the debt." These words were spoken in a

thoughtless manner, but they made so deep an impression on the mind of the negro, that he determined to proceed to England. Travelling to an English settlement, and going aboard a ship which was lying there, he made an arrangement by which he worked his passage to London. During the voyage, he would frequently approach the sailors, one after another, and say with great simplicity, and in a plaintive tone, "Please, massa, tell me where's the Christian's God, dat pay de debt?" But the sailors, being irreligious, laughed him to scorn. When he landed in England, he walked about, repeating the question to every one he met, in a most melancholy manner, "Please, massa, tell me where's the Christian's God, dat pay de debt?" After he had wandered here and there, for some time, without obtaining satisfaction, a pious gentleman directed him to go to such a place that evening, and there he would hear about the Christian's God. He went, and heard a sermon on the suretyship of Christ, in which the minister described sin as a debt, and Christ as paying

it, and the price he paid, and that he had ascended up to heaven, and had sent him, the preacher, to say to all, "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Before he closed his sermon, the Holy Spirit had so enlightened the mind of the negro, that he started up in the pew, and said in a low tone, and with tears streaming from his eyes, "Me have found him ! me have found him ! the Christian's God dat pay de debt." After the services, the minister instructed him further concerning the gospel plan of salvation, and so on from day to day, as he had opportunities. The negro gave evidence of possessing true faith in Christ ; his anxiety of mind was relieved ; and like the Ethiopian eunuch when he parted from Philip, he returned to his native country, rejoicing in the Lord.

THE CHRISTIAN'S HAPPINESS SHOULD CONTINUE AND INCREASE AS HE GROWS OLDER.
THE FULL ASSURANCE OF HOPE. ANECDOTE
OF A WOUNDED AND DYING SOLDIER.

Henry James inquired whether young con-

verts do not enjoy more happiness than older Christians?

Mr. James replied, The discovery of a fountain of water excites a stronger gush of joyful emotion in the mind of a person almost ready to die with thirst, than he feels afterwards when he approaches the same fountain from day to day. But though that extraordinary impulse does not continue, his real enjoyment is rather increased than diminished by his constant supply of this necessary of life. In like manner, when an anxious soul first finds Christ, the transition which is experienced from a state of nature to a state of grace, produces some emotions peculiar to that point of time. But when those peculiar emotions, though pleasurable, pass away, it does not follow that the Christian's happiness is diminished. His subsequent religious experience develops other emotions not felt at first so distinctly, but which being more of a spiritual, and less of an animal, character, are, in their nature, permanent and progressive.

One source of happiness in particular is mentioned in Scripture as a Christian attainment, to be sought for and enjoyed by those who are already converted, and not as being an essential characteristic of true piety, and which therefore is to be expected in advanced believers, rather than in young converts. I allude to the full assurance of hope. "We desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end." Heb. vi. 11. I do not affirm that young converts never enjoy this assurance, much less that they cannot from the nature of the case. But as this exhortation is addressed to believers, and as full assurance is generally, if not always, mentioned in Scripture in a similar connection, I feel warranted in the statement that it belongs to the progress of the Christian life, rather than to its commencement. Though the first act of genuine faith in Christ produces hope, and this emotion is joyous; yet when our faith is tested and strengthened by experience, our hope becomes proportionally more clear and

consequently the joy of hope more and more abundant.

But I may add that the attainment of this assurance does not depend so much on the length of time, as on the diligence with which it is sought. A feeble faith, and a slothful performance of religious duty, are not the medium through which God communicates this privilege, or the joys which flow from it. In order to its possession, believers must seek by prayer the increase of their faith, cultivate with diligence the other Christian graces, and put in practice what Paul denominates the "work and labour of love."

And further, it is important, in order to the enjoyment of this assurance, that we have the witness of the Holy Spirit. In proportion to the degree of evidence we possess of being God's children, will be our assurance of his love, and our hope of salvation. And one of the most satisfactory and delightful of these evidences is, the witness of the Holy Spirit. What this is I have already told you, and I now remark that in order to the habitual en-

joyment of this divine testimony of our adoption, we must seek the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit in our hearts; and to this end we must avoid grieving the Spirit by the indulgence of an unholy temper, or the committing of known sin; and we must earnestly pray for his influences, and devoutly meditate on his word. The happiness experienced by believers from this source is more easily felt than described. The spirit of adoption is eminently a peaceful and happy spirit. How worthless and beggarly do earthly pleasures appear, in the estimation of those who feel the peace and joy resulting from this divine testimony of their being the children of God!

While blest with a sense of his love,
A palace, a toy would appear;
And prisons would palaces prove,
If Jesus would dwell with me there.

The peace of mind described in the following incident was worth more to its possessor than any temporal good, not excepting life itself. Let your walk with God be such,

Henry, as to secure the daily and uninterrupted enjoyment of this peace. Nothing is stated concerning the previous character of the person alluded to; but the incident shows on its face, that he was before this a truly religious man. I take it from a paper published at the time. In one of the battles of the Crimea, an English officer noticed a wounded soldier weltering in his blood, and he asked him if he could do anything for him.

“Nothing, thank you.”

“Shall I get you a little water?” said the kind-hearted officer.

“No, thank you; I am dying.”

“Is there nothing I can do for you? Shall I write to your friends?”

“I have no friends you can write to. But there is one thing for which I would be much obliged; in my knapsack you will find a Testament—will you open it at the 14th of John, and near the end of the chapter you will find a verse that begins with ‘Peace.’ Will you read it?”

The officer did so, and read the words,

“Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”

“Thank you, sir,” said the dying man; “I have that peace: I am going to that Saviour; God is with me; I want no more,” and instantly expired.

SANCTIFICATION PRODUCES COMFORT.

Mr. James further remarked, Growth in grace is a source of comfort to believers. Sanctification, or growth in grace, I have already described to be the work of God's Spirit in the soul, by which we experience an habitual advance in our inward spiritual life. With respect to sin, it is a continual death; but with respect to holiness, it is the daily attainment of new vigour for the service of God; a higher state of conformity to his will, and a closer approximation to the character of Christ. There is much in this process that is painful to the flesh. It is a warfare, a denying of ourselves, a mortifying of our cor-

rupt affections. But though painful to the flesh, the achievement of such a victory over the old man of sin renders our spirit joyful; and this joy is increased when, having put off the old man, we “put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.” The more we grow in grace, the more intimate and delightful will be our communion with God, the more earnest our aspirations after the joys of heaven, and the greater our comfort at the prospect of death. “The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.” Notice, it does not say, less and less, but more and more; teaching us that true Christians will become more and more holy, and more and more happy, the further they advance in their heavenly course, until, crossing the Jordan, they shall enter into the joy of their Lord.

How powerful are the motives here presented for aiming at a high standard of piety! Be not satisfied, Henry, with low attainments. Watch against sin and all temptations thereto;

against sensuality, pride, envy, avarice, ambition, and the inordinate love of the world. Guard against inward declension, and endeavour to obtain, from day to day, a fresh unction, a new baptism of the Holy Spirit. And be encouraged and animated in your aims and efforts, by reflecting that He who has made you a partaker of the heavenly calling is the holy God ; that the Saviour who has redeemed you is the holy Jesus ; that the Spirit by whom you have been regenerated, is the Holy Ghost ; and that the church of the first born in heaven are rendered happy and glorious, in a large degree, from the fact that their characters, associations, and employments, bear the impress of perfect holiness. If the smallest stain of sin among the inhabitants of heaven would mar their bliss, is it strange that it should alloy the Christian's enjoyment here ? This is the chief reason why our happiness on earth is not complete ; and why believers so often exclaim, with longing desires, like the apostle Paul, " O wretched man that I am ! Who shall deliver me from

the body of this death?" But this very utterance, proceeding from a heart like Paul's, is a step in the work of sanctification; and with each successful struggle, and the prospect of a complete victory at last, we shall find our rebounding spirits sympathizing still further with him in saying, "I thank God through Jesus Christ, our Lord."

Henry inquired, Do you mean to say, father, that our joys are invariably in exact proportion to our growth in grace?

Mr. James replied, God may sometimes, for good reasons, withhold light and comfort from his people, though they are making habitual progress in holiness. Or their minds may be clouded through the influence of bodily disease. Or they may be chiefly eminent in those particular graces, patience for instance, which are in their nature less adapted to produce joy than some other graces. I do not feel warranted therefore, in asserting that we can invariably test our progress in holiness, by the amount of our joy. My language was intended to be taken in a general sense. Yet

the circumstances under which great joy is often alluded to in the Scriptures, strongly favour the idea that the ordinary concomitant of growth in grace, is a corresponding increase of inward comfort. The following considerations will be sufficient to make this apparent :

1. Godly sorrow for sin is a Scriptural mark of increasing holiness. But the very tears of penitence which are thus shed, are rendered bright and pearly by spiritual joy. I noticed the joy of repentance in a previous conversation, and illustrated it by an example. As you will readily call to mind what I said, and especially the anecdote referred to as an illustration, I need not remark particularly now on the happiness which flows from this grace.

2. Afflictions are sometimes sent for the evident purpose of promoting our sanctification. Yet God's suffering people, even before they are brought out of the furnace, are often filled with joy, like Paul and Silas, who, though smarting under the stripes of their

persecutors, and with their feet fast in the stocks, "prayed and sang praises unto God."

3. The renunciation of self, and an unre-served consecration to the service of God, are evidences of sanctification. But who ever heard of a Christian performing these acts without having his religious enjoyment greatly increased? The man who forsakes God, the fountain of living waters, and hews out to himself broken cisterns, which can hold no water, must necessarily be in a dry and comfortless condition. But when he renounces self, and turns again to God, with a full purpose to glorify him, he gains direct access to the source of all good, and "with joy draws water out of the wells of salvation." And,

4. Resignation to God's will is a proof of sanctification. But a resigned state of mind is a happy state, and the more entire this resignation, the more abundant the joy. To have no will of our own, to lie passive in God's hand, to be disposed of according to his pleasure, is the purest, the sweetest, and

the most elevated enjoyment which the Christian ever experiences here below. It is like the joy of angels, the joy of the spirits of the just made perfect, the joy of our Lord himself.

GOOD WORKS ARE PRODUCTIVE OF COMFORT TO
BELIEVERS.

After answering several other questions which Henry desired to ask, concerning the joy of sanctification, Mr. James proceeded to remark on the comfort connected with the performance of good works. That religion which saves the soul, said he, is not merely a set of principles, but a spiritual life, the beginning of which consists in our being quickened by the Holy Spirit, according to the words of Paul, "You hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins." The consciousness of possessing this life is a source of pleasure, just as the possession of natural life affords to every living being a feeling of satisfaction. But mere life without its activities, is far less happy than the same life, when its vital func-

tions and its capacities for receiving and communicating good are in active exercise. So the belief that we are Christians produces comfort; but our happiness is much increased by performing devotional duties, and by practising good works.

Prayer, praise, reading God's word, and devout meditation, are sources of more real enjoyment to pious minds, than can be computed by numbers. They are delightful, because they are suited to the spiritual taste of our renewed moral nature. For the same reason, good works are sources of pleasure. God's "commandments are not grievous." On the contrary, they are "the joy and rejoicing of our hearts." A consciousness of performing our duty is a proper ground of satisfaction, but our love for God's service introduces another element of happiness not felt by those who merely obey the behests of conscience. What we love to do will of course afford us pleasure. And besides, if our good works are the fruit of faith in Christ, and a desire to glorify God, we shall receive

the divine approbation as manifested in the comforting influences of the Holy Spirit. "And where he vital breathes, there must be joy."

Says Jehovah to his ancient people, "Oh that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! then had thy peace been as a river;" *i. e.*, it would have been abundant and increasing; I would have communicated peace from my own presence; and it would have been ever flowing into your souls, with a continuous and expanding fulness, like a deep and broad river flowing onward to the ocean.

These remarks, continued Mr. James, have a special application to works of benevolence and mercy. True piety subdues the selfishness of our natures, and brings our feelings into free and unrestrained sympathy with the wants and woes of our fellow men. It makes well-doing a luxury. As a gentleman once said, when he was thanked for a donation to a benevolent object, "I thank you for affording me this opportunity of giving; the practice of beneficence is to me a real luxury." And

besides this, the Scriptures assert that such acts piously performed are well pleasing to God; and I need not repeat the remark that this secures the purest and most elevated happiness. "To do good and to communicate, forget not; for with such sacrifices, God is well pleased."

I earnestly enjoin upon you, Henry, to engage in the work of doing good. Give a portion of your substance, and also of your time. Engage in personal efforts to alleviate bodily suffering. Be an angel of mercy to the poor and distressed. Aside from the fact that you will thus discharge a christian duty, you will find it a source of real satisfaction.

Labour also for the souls of men. "Let him know," says the apostle James, "that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins." How greatly it will add to the happiness of your christian life, to be made an instrument in God's hand of saving a single soul from eternal death! But you may, peradventure, if you diligently

employ scriptural means, save not only one, but many souls; and thus have your cup of spiritual comfort filled to overflowing. I doubt not that those pious young men who are actively engaged in teaching Sabbath-schools, and in other efforts to benefit the youth and children of our country, are rendered doubly happy by these exertions.

HAPPINESS OF BENEVOLENT ACTION ILLUSTRATED—REV. ANDREW FULLER AND HIS CHURCH—REV. DR. A. ALEXANDER.

Mr. James further remarked, Many illustrations might be given of the happiness connected with the performance of good works. I will mention one only, which relates to the comfort that follows benevolent action. The Rev. Andrew Fuller, an eminent Baptist minister of England, in a letter to a friend, wrote as follows: "There was a period of my ministry marked by the most pointed systematic effort to comfort my serious people: but the more I tried to comfort them, the more they complained of doubts and darkness. Wherever

I went among them, one lamentation met my ear, 'Ah! sir, I can get no comfort. I am unable to appropriate any of the great and precious promises to myself. I looked for light, and behold darkness.' I knew not what to do, nor what to think, for I had done my best to comfort the mourners in Zion. I was therefore at my wit's end. At this time, it pleased God to direct my attention to the claims of the perishing heathen in India; I felt that we had been living for ourselves, and not caring for their souls. I spoke as I felt. My serious people wondered and wept over their past inattention to this subject. They began to talk about a Baptist mission. The females, especially, began to collect money for the spread of the gospel. We met and prayed for the heathen, met and considered what could be done amongst ourselves for them, met and did what we could. And, whilst all this was going on, the lamentations ceased. The sad became cheerful, and the desponding calm. No one complained of a want of comfort. And I, instead of having to study how to com-

fort my flock, was myself comforted by them. They were drawn out of themselves. Sir, that was the real secret. God blessed them while they tried to be a blessing."

There is sound, christian philosophy, said Mr. James, in Mr. Fuller's solution of this matter. "God blessed them while they tried to be a blessing." A genuine missionary spirit is the spirit of Christ; and those who cherish and practise it are made happy and joyful in the light of his countenance. The venerable Dr. A. Alexander once remarked that he was convinced by reading the correspondence from foreign missionaries, his former pupils, that their religious enjoyment had been much increased by their consecration to the missionary work. In them was fulfilled the promise of our Lord, "Every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundred fold, and shall inherit everlasting life."

GOOD WORKS ARE INSTRUMENTS, NOT THE
FOUNDATION OF OUR HAPPINESS.

Henry James's countenance beamed with animation as he listened to his father's remarks. He now said, Your description of the Christian's privileges is delightful. But may I ask you, father, whether if our good works contribute so much to our happiness, there is not some danger of our placing too much reliance on our works?

Mr. James replied, If we are not genuine Christians, this may be the effect. Mere *nominal* Christians, who look no further than to external duties as the source of their comfort, will be quite likely to feel self-complacent, and self-reliant, at their supposed progress in the divine life, by these outward performances. But in my remarks, I have no reference to those who thus go about to establish their own righteousness, but to real believers, who have learned a different lesson at the cross of Christ. A self-righteous spirit is the bane of true christian enjoyment. Hence if we are

truly converted, our immediate loss of comfort by self-righteousness would check us, even if we were tempted to rely on our good works as the ground of our happiness. We are not made happy *by* our good works, but *in* them. They are not the foundation of our comfort, but only instruments of conveying comfort from Christ, by faith in whose blood, good works are produced. The Comforter is the Holy Spirit, who is given to those that believe in Christ. But besides being our Comforter, the Holy Spirit is also our Sanctifier; and a part of our sanctification consists in the grace of humility. Hence those in whom the work of sanctification is going on, feel, notwithstanding all their good works, that in God's sight, they are unprofitable servants; that their comforts are not bestowed upon them as a debt, but on the principle of grace; and thus looking away from themselves and their good works as sources of comfort, they trust solely in Christ as the only fountain of happiness; according to that promise of our Lord, "He that believeth on

me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. This spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him shall receive." The whole taken together may be stated thus: Christ is the infinite fountain of grace and comfort. The Holy Spirit is the vital current which proceeds from it, and communicates grace and comfort to the soul. And this grace and comfort thus communicated, spring up again in holy and happy affections, which in their outward manifestations yield a rich harvest of good works.

PERSEVERANCE AND PREDESTINATION ARE
ADAPTED TO MAKE CHRISTIANS HAPPY.

Henry James remarked, You have now, father, gone over nearly the whole ground of our previous conversations, except perseverance and predestination. Are these doctrines adapted to make Christians happy?

Yes, my son, said Mr. James, these two doctrines are among the great mercies of God, and when cordially embraced, they possess

remarkable power to sustain, invigorate, and comfort the soul. What believer can meditate on such texts as the following, without feelings of gratitude, confidence, and joy? "I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee." "Having loved his own, he loved them unto the end." He "is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy." "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."

These passages are a few among many of a similar character, which God's people delight to meditate upon, and appropriate to themselves, as a part of their most valuable spiritual wealth. And yet these texts contain a distinct statement of the doctrines of the saints' perseverance and predestination. Notice in particular the last of these texts. "All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." It may be doubted

whether there is a passage in the Bible more replete with consolation to the people of God under their earthly trials than this. In painful or protracted illness ; in the loss of friends ; in a change of circumstances from affluence to poverty ; in religious persecution ; and in any other sufferings to which believers are subject, this text is like an anchor to their souls, to keep them steadfast and happy, amidst the billows of adversity. As the sailor boy, in a terrific storm at sea, was calm and composed, while all around him were trembling with fear, because he said, his father stood at the helm ; so pious believers in these doctrines feel, with regard to their heavenly Father. "Let us sing the forty-sixth Psalm," said Luther, "and then let our enemies do their worst." God's infinite power, love, and faithfulness which underlie these two doctrines, form the chief sentiments of that Psalm ; and no unbeliever in these doctrines can sympathize with the great German Reformer in the support and comfort which he derived from that portion of God's word. But I will give

one or two examples, which contain a more direct and explicit testimony on this point. They will serve to illustrate the feelings of millions of others.

ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE COMFORT AFFORDED
TO BELIEVERS BY THE DOCTRINES OF PER-
SEVERANCE AND PREDESTINATION—DR.
DWIGHT—DR. JOHN BRECKINRIDGE.

The biographer of Dr. Dwight, whose published works show that he was a firm believer in these doctrines, makes the following statement concerning the closing period of his life: "During his last days and hours, his mind seemed to repose with unlimited confidence and joy on the great truths which he had believed and preached, and his departure was as serene and beautiful as the going down of the sun in a cloudless sky."

Dr. John Breckinridge was a minister of the Presbyterian church, a zealous and devoted Christian, and a "prince of preachers." The great joy which he experienced from these doctrines may be seen from a single circum-

stance, viz., that a favourite hymn which he often read from the pulpit, contains the following stanzas, which he also repeated occasionally in private conversation, remarking as he proceeded, with a glow of joy on his countenance, that he derived from those words the most exquisite pleasure.

God has laid up in heaven for me
A crown which cannot fade ;
The righteous Judge at that great day,
Shall place it on my head.

Nor hath the King of grace decreed
This prize for me alone ;
But all that love, and long to see
The appearance of his Son.

Jesus, the Lord, will guard me safe
From every ill design ;
And to his heavenly kingdom take
This feeble soul of mine.

After I had read these stanzas not long ago from the pulpit of one of our prominent city churches, the pastor said to me, "Do you know that this was Dr. John Breckinridge's

favourite hymn? He used to speak of it as a hymn which afforded him peculiar satisfaction." And why was it such a favourite? Unquestionably because it contains a glowing and scriptural statement of the blessed security of God's people, founded on his eternal and unchangeable love. The words themselves clearly indicate this, especially when interpreted by Dr. Breckinridge's well known theological sentiments.

Mr. James then said to Henry, I wish now to appeal to your own feelings; and as a test of these, I desire you to read that beautiful hymn, the first verse of which I repeated in a former conversation, commencing,

Grace! 'Tis a charming sound ;

and then tell me whether the sentiments contained in it, are not adapted to make you feel happy. That hymn was composed by one of the most eminent ministers of his day, the Rev. Dr. Doddridge, author of "The Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul."

Henry read as follows :

Grace ! 'Tis a charming sound,
Harmonious to mine ear :
Heaven with the echo shall resound,
And all the earth shall hear.

Grace first contrived the way
To save rebellious man ;
And all the steps *that* grace display,
Which drew the wondrous plan.

Grace first inscribed my name
In God's eternal book ;
'Twas grace that gave me to the Lamb,
Who all my sorrows took.

Grace led my roving feet
To tread the heavenly road ;
And new supplies each hour I meet,
While pressing on to God.

Grace taught my soul to pray,
And made my eyes o'erflow :
'Twas grace that kept me to this day,
And will not let me go.

Grace all the work shall crown
Through everlasting days ;
It lays in heaven the topmost stone,
And well deserves the praise.

After Henry James had finished reading this hymn, he said, When you were making your remarks on this and another hymn of a similar character, in the conversation to which you have alluded, my feelings fully accorded with your statement, that the sentiments they contain, are the delight of all true Christians. My own delight in them I have regarded as one evidence of my having experienced a saving change of heart. The singing of these stanzas, and others of like character, has often made me feel happy. But I did not notice, until after you mentioned it, that these hymns contain so distinct a statement of the doctrines of grace, and that without my having thought particularly of this fact, my chief pleasure was derived in reality from these doctrines. May not Christians sometimes embrace these doctrines, father, in their hearts, and yet either deny, or considerably modify them, when stating their principles in a doctrinal form?

'This is doubtless the case, said Mr. James. A Presbyterian minister once remarked to the

following effect: Pious Arminians and pious Calvinists differ more in theory than in their inward sentiments. Arminians begin with man and go up to God, and of course they have a great deal of man in their theology. Calvinists begin with God and go down to man, and consequently their theology has a great deal of God. But there is a middle ground on which they both meet, and give expression to the same pious and devout feelings. Even John Wesley seems to have been a Calvinist at heart, though he was the founder of a denomination of Christians whose doctrinal standards are Arminian. The following occurrence, narrated by Dobbin, in reference to an interview between Simeon and Wesley, is an illustration.

JOHN WESLEY A CALVINIST AT HEART.

Three or four years after Simeon, whose name has since become sacred in the annals of the Church of Christ, was ordained, this young minister had an opportunity of conversing with the founder of Arminian Metho-

dism; and, wishing to improve the opportunity to the utmost, he began to question him thus:

“Sir, I understand you are called an Arminian; now I am sometimes called a Calvinist, and therefore, I suppose, we are to draw daggers. But, before we begin to combat, with your permission, I will ask you a few questions, not from impertinent curiosity, but for real instruction. Pray, sir, do you feel yourself a depraved creature—so depraved that you would never have thought of turning unto God, if God had not put it into your heart?”

“Yes,” said the veteran, “I do indeed.”

“And do you utterly despair of recommending yourself to God by anything that you can do, and look for salvation solely through the blood and righteousness of Christ?”

“Yes, solely through Christ.”

“But sir, supposing you were first saved by Christ, are you not somehow or other to save yourself afterwards, by your good works?”

“No; I must be saved by Christ from first to last.”

“Allowing, then, that you were first turned by the grace of God, are you not, in some way or other, to keep yourself by your own power?”

“No.”

“What, then? Are you to be upheld every hour and every moment by God, as much as an infant in its mother’s arms?”

“Yes; altogether.”

“And is all your hope in the grace and mercy of God to preserve you unto his heavenly kingdom?”

“Yes; I have no hope but in him.”

“Then sir, with your leave, I will put up my dagger again; for this is my Calvinism; this is my election, my justification, my final perseverance. It is, in substance, what I hold, and as I hold it; and therefore, if you please, instead of searching out terms and phrases to be a ground of contention between us, we will cordially unite on those things wherein we agree.”

Henry James was much pleased with this anecdote of Mr. Wesley, and said, How happy it would be, father, if Christians could all agree on these doctrines! Do you think this will ever be the case?

Yes, said Mr. James, it will certainly be the case in heaven, if not before; and I think it will be substantially so here at a future time. It is a matter which deserves the attention of Christians. Though the time allotted to our present conversation is spent, I will protract it a few minutes longer, to make some remarks on this subject.

Mr. James then proceeded to remark as follows: With regard to those doctrines which are fundamental, there can be no compromise without endangering our salvation. Cerinthus, who lived in the Apostolic age, held erroneous notions concerning the person and work of Christ. One day when he was in a public bath, the apostle John, that loving disciple, observing Cerinthus in the bath, exclaimed, "Let us flee lest the bath fall upon us, while Cerinthus, an enemy of the truth,

is in it." This fact I learn from ecclesiastical history, and it well accords with a passage in one of John's Epistles, "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in the truth." Lord Burleigh, a great English statesman of the time of Queen Elizabeth, used to say, "I never will trust any man whose religious principles are not sound; for he that is false to God, can never be true to man."

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE RISE OF ARMINIANISM.

The differences which divide Calvinists and Arminians, continued Mr. James, though not fundamental, are important. Arminius was a Hollander, a professor in the University of Leyden. The five points on which he differed from Calvin, have been brought to your notice in our previous conversations on the doctrines of grace. The doctrines of Arminius excited so much discussion in Holland, that an Ecclesiastical Council was called at Dort, in 1618, nine years after his decease, to discuss, and decide upon the alleged errors of those who

espoused the sentiments which he had promulgated. The Synod consisted of eighty-six members, who were delegated from the churches of Holland, from all the Reformed churches on the continent except France, and from the Church of England. They were men eminent for talents, learning, and piety. Bishop Hall, one of the English delegates, when taking leave of the Synod, on account of ill health, declared, "There is no place upon earth so like heaven as the Synod of Dort, and where he should be more willing to dwell." The Synod continued to sit from the 13th of November, 1618, to the 20th of May, 1619. It held, in all, one hundred and eighty sittings, and it condemned the doctrines of Arminius by a unanimous vote.

A century after that time, lived the Rev. John Wesley, who, it has been said, decided the question, whether he should embrace and preach Calvinistic or Arminian doctrines, by casting lots. This was an extraordinary method of settling articles of faith. He decided in favour of Arminianism; by which

circumstance, he and Whitefield, who was a Calvinist, were separated from each other, though they always remained personal friends, and had great confidence in each other's piety.

HOW TO PROMOTE AGREEMENT ON THE DOCTRINES OF GRACE.

How long it will be before Calvinistic and Arminian Christians will fully agree concerning the doctrines of grace, I cannot predict. So far as we can promote agreement without surrendering important truth, we ought to make the attempt, and to this end several particulars must be observed.

1. We must ascertain precisely what our differences are; whether they relate to the substance of these doctrines, or only to certain words and phrases which are usually employed to express them. If chiefly the latter, there is a substantial agreement, and hence no real ground exists for controversy. Christian charity and mutual explanations are all that is needed for securing unity in action.

2. We must avoid using severe and offensive language, or indulging an unbrotherly spirit, when we may be called in duty to defend these doctrines against objectors and opposers.

3. We must be careful not to afford just cause for objection, (as some professed Calvinists do,) by entertaining extreme, antinomian views concerning these doctrines. Ultraisms of all kinds should be avoided. They are serious obstacles to Christian unity, and do great injury to the cause of truth.

4. We must bow with profound reverence to the teachings of God's word, and receive its doctrines with implicit faith. The Bible would lose its chief value and significance, if we should subtract from it the doctrines of grace; and the more the Bible is studied with a humble and pious heart, the more harmonious will be the views of Christians, both as to what these doctrines are, and as to the proper, scriptural mode of expressing them.

5. We must contemplate these doctrines in their relation to the heart as well as the head,

and endeavour to feel, and have others feel their saving power. An inward unity of faith, which is common to all true Christians, concerning the grand principles which constitute the doctrines of grace, will, in due time, by increasing knowledge of God's word, and the illumination of the Holy Spirit, produce a substantial unity in the manner of giving utterance to all essential and vital truth. Among the saints in heaven, the agreement is perfect, both in spirit and language. John Calvin and John Wesley are now chanting the same songs, and in the same words. Let us pray and labour that it may be so with the church on earth; thus fulfilling our Saviour's prayer, "That they all may be one; as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us."

Henry James thanked his father for this expression of his views, and they both retired to rest.

CONVERSATION VII.

GRACE CONSUMMATED IN GLORY, OR THE
BLESSED AND GLORIOUS ISSUES OF GRACE IN
THE HEAVENLY WORLD.

HENRY JAMES, having been apprised of the subject of conversation at the time appointed for their next meeting, said to his father when they met, I have been reading a delightful piece of poetry on heaven, a few lines of which with your permission I will repeat. They express my present desires and feelings.

Oh, talk to me of heaven ! I love
To hear about my home above ;
For there doth many a loved one dwell,
In light and joy ineffable.

Oh, tell me how they shine and sing,
While every harp rings echoing,
And every glad and tearless eye
Beams like the bright sun gloriously.

Tell me of that victorious palm
Each hand in glory beareth,
Tell me of that celestial calm
Each face in glory weareth.

Oh, happy, happy country ! where
There entereth not a sin ;
And death who keeps its portals fair
May never once come in.

Mr. James remarked, Heaven is a delightful theme, and the poetry you have quoted concerning it is very beautiful. I proposed to you this topic as a suitable conclusion of our conversations on the doctrines of grace. Grace has been described as glory begun, and glory as grace consummated. The blessed and glorious issues of grace in the upper world, embrace all the ideas which belong essentially to the happiness and glory of heaven as described in the Bible ; all indeed which can be conceived of as essential to our happiness any where in the universe of God.

We have Scripture warrant for regarding heaven as surpassingly grand and magnificent in outward appearance. Hence there was

some foundation for the beautiful thought of a little Swedish girl, when absorbed in gazing at the starry skies. Being asked of what she was thinking, she said, "I was thinking, if the wrong side of Heaven is so glorious, what must the right side be !" In her imagination, the wrong side was that which looked on our world ; and she inferred that the right side, which looks towards the throne of God and the Lamb, must be glorious indeed.

It must not be forgotten, however, that the external grandeur of heaven is not the only nor even the chief thing which renders that world attractive to God's people ; and therefore, while I would not have you overlook any circumstance mentioned by the sacred writers, in describing the happy condition of glorified saints, I wish to direct your particular attention to those spiritual elements of happiness for which divine grace is especially designed and adapted to prepare us.

THE INHABITANTS OF HEAVEN ARE HOLY.
FRIENDS WILL KNOW EACH OTHER IN HEAVEN.
ANECDOTE OF A SCOTCH MINISTER.
MYRIADS OF INFANTS WILL BE FOUND THERE.

The crowning glory of the heavenly world, said Mr. James, and the chief source of bliss to its inhabitants, are the manifestation of the divine presence, the beatific vision of which will be ever present to the enraptured and adoring worshipper, through eternity. None but holy beings will be permitted to enjoy this sight. "The pure in heart shall see God." Indeed if it were possible (as it is not) for unsanctified persons to obtain this view, it would not be a source of delight, because we can derive no pleasure from beholding an object which does not harmonize with our moral tastes and perceptions. But the highest conceivable happiness which can be enjoyed by holy beings, is their communion with God, and in heaven this communion will be perfect. "In his presence is fulness of joy."

Again, heaven is rendered happy and glorious by the blissful fellowship which the inhabitants enjoy in each other ; and in order to this they must all possess the same moral characters. The angels who kept not their first estate, could not remain a moment in heaven after their fall. Their exclusion was a matter of necessity as well as justice, because their continuance there would have marred the bliss of that world. It is not society alone which makes us happy, but congenial society ; and not this alone, for the devils are not happy in each other's society, though they are all alike sinful. A holy society alone possesses the inherent elements of pure, exalted, and permanent happiness. Of this character are the saints in heaven. Their robes have been washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb.

Henry James inquired, Do you think, father, that friends will know each other in heaven ?

Mr. James responded, I will answer you by referring to an old Scotch minister, whose wife

asked him this same question. He replied, "To be sure we shall ; do you think we shall be greater fools there than we are here?" Then, after a moment's pause, he remarked further, "But I may be a thousand years in heaven without having seen you ; for the first thing which will attract my notice when I arrive there, will be my dear Saviour ; and I cannot tell when I shall be induced to look at any other object." As I have said, the crowning glory of heaven will be the beatific vision of God in Christ ; and this may so fully absorb the minds of the saints, that those around them may be comparatively unnoticed. Yet I doubt not they will be thought of, and recognized, and that their knowledge of each other will contribute to their enjoyment.

Henry asked again, Are infants found in heaven, father ?

Yes, said Mr. James, I have no doubt that myriads of infants are found in heaven. Indeed my belief is, and this is the common belief of the Presbyterian church, (I know of none who think otherwise,) that all dying in

infancy are saved. They are not saved however on the ground of their being born holy, for this is not true ; but on the ground of their belonging to God's elect, of their being redeemed by Christ's blood, and being regenerated and sanctified by the Holy Spirit. If they are born holy, they would have no need of redemption or regeneration, and consequently their salvation could not be ascribed either to Christ or the Holy Spirit ; and hence their admission to heaven would be based on a different foundation from that of others ; which is a sentiment that has no Scriptural authority. Their salvation, like that of all other sinners who go to heaven, is entirely of grace. In the words of one of our hymns,

Behold what matchless, tender love
Doth Christ to babes display ;
He bids each parent bring them near,
Nor turns the least away.

See how he takes them in his arms,
With smiles upon his face ;
And says his kingdom is of such,
By free and sovereign grace.

The words of our Lord, "For of such is the kingdom of heaven," to which allusion is made in one of these lines, do not assert in terms, that all little children belong to his kingdom, but only that his kingdom is composed of such, *i. e.*, that little children are found there. Yet as he assigns no reason which does not apply to all infants as much as to any, his language strongly favours the sentiment that all dying in infancy are saved. This doctrine may also be inferred from Matt. xviii., where Christ placed a little child in the midst, and discoursed therefrom concerning his kingdom concluding with the words, (v. 14.) "Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish." Though the words, "little ones," are not identical with "little children," in ver. 3. yet the analogy which Christ institutes between the two, seems to justify the inference that none dying in infancy will perish. Several other Scriptures corroborate this idea, from all which taken together, infant salvation is commonly held to be a Bible doctrine.

HENRY. Does not the Presbyterian Confession of Faith imply, by using the phrase, "elect infants, dying in infancy," that some infants dying in infancy are lost?

MR. JAMES. No. The subject where this phrase occurs is EFFECTUAL CALLING, which in ordinary cases, our Confession teaches, is through the "word and Spirit;" but in the case of "elect infants dying in infancy," they "are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit," (*i. e.*, through the Spirit alone,) "who worketh when, and where, and how, he pleaseth." The contrast here is between elect infants dying in infancy, and elect infants not dying in infancy. Elect infants not dying in infancy may be regenerated in infancy, and sometimes they are, for God is able to do this. But if he takes them out of the world in infancy, he always regenerates them before they die; and hence our Confession of Faith virtually teaches, that non-elect persons never die in infancy. It is therefore a fair deduction from the language of our Confession, that those eminent divines who originally framed

and adopted it, held that all dying in infancy are saved.

Mr. James continued : The holiness of heaven is an essential characteristic of its glory. God himself is declared to be glorious in holiness. The angels are glorious, because they are holy. The saints are glorious, because they are "the spirits of just men made perfect." Their employments are glorious, because they consist largely in ascriptions of praise and adoration to the triune God, in whose presence they cease not day nor night, saying, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty." Our fitness for that world therefore depends on our being holy. "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." And it is a source of joy to God's children that the covenant of grace provides for their entire deliverance from sin. They aspire after this deliverance daily, and with the assurance that though their warfare is to continue through life, they will at last obtain a complete victory, and enjoy in their own persons, what John says of the bride, at her marriage with

the Lamb: "To her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints."

Palms of glory, raiment bright,
Crowns that never fade away,
Gird and deck the saints in light,
Priests, and kings, and conquerors they.

Yet the conquerors bring their palms
To the Lamb amidst the throne;
And proclaim in joyful psalms,
Victory through his cross alone.

Kings for crowns their hearts resign,
Crying as they strike the chords,
"Take the kingdom, it is thine,
King of kings and Lord of lords."

Round the altar priests confess,
"If these robes are white as snow,
'Twas the Saviour's righteousness,
And his blood that made them so."

Who are these? on earth they dwelt,
Sinners once of Adam's race;
Guilt, and fear, and suffering felt,
But were saved from all by grace.

They were mortal too like us ;
Ah ! when we like them shall die,
May our souls translated thus,
Triumph, reign, and shine on high.

THE GLORY OF HEAVEN DESCRIBED IN THE
LANGUAGE OF SCRIPTURE—BUNYAN'S VIS-
ION OF HEAVEN WHEN IT WAS ENTERED
BY CHRISTIAN.

In describing the glory of heaven, continued Mr. James, no language can equal the inspired record. I have marked some passages in the Revelation, which I wish you to read. Henry read as follows :

“And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God : and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal ; and had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel.” . . .

“And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl; and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass. And I saw no temple therein; for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.” . . .

“And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: and they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads.” . . .

“And he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no

more, neither thirst any more ; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters : and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

This vivid description of heaven, said Mr. James, must not be interpreted literally, but figuratively. Yet heaven is no less real, and no less glorious on this account. The figures employed apply to the nature of that glory, but do not affect its real or local existence. Heaven is a place. "I go to prepare a place for you." It is inhabited by living beings. Their state and mode of existence are changed ; but they are as truly themselves, and as susceptible of personal enjoyment as they were in this world. The imagery employed in this description indicates that their happiness and glory will be as great in heaven, as their physical natures would enjoy on earth, if they inhabited such a splendid city, and had access to such a blessed paradise as are here described.

That remarkable book written by John Bunyan, entitled, "The Pilgrim's Progress," is an allegory; yet it describes the life of a Christian as truly as if it was a literal history of a traveller going from the city of Destruction to the New Jerusalem. I commend that book to your attentive perusal. You will find it highly instructive as well as interesting. When Christian and his companion Hopeful, had passed the river which separated them from the gate of the celestial city, they were met by "two shining ones," who told them they were "ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those that shall be heirs of salvation. Thus they went along towards the gate." Henry, you may take the book, and read a part of the account of what then occurred. You will see that the imagery is drawn, not from Bunyan's imagination, but from the Bible, and this is the reason why the description is so graphic and enchanting. Henry read as follows :

"Now while they were thus drawing towards the gate, behold a company of the heavenly

host came out to meet them: to whom it was said by the other two shining ones, These are the men that have loved our Lord, when they were in the world, and that have left all for his holy name; and he hath sent us to fetch them, and we have brought them thus far on their desired journey, that they may go in and look their Redeemer in the face with joy. Then the heavenly host gave a great shout, saying, 'Blessed are they that are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!' There came out also at this time to meet them several of the King's trumpeters, clothed in white and shining raiment, who, with melodious noises and loud, made even the heavens to echo with their sound. These trumpeters saluted Christian and his fellow with ten thousand welcomes from the world; and this they did with shouting and sound of trumpet. * *

"Now I saw in my dream, that these two men went in at the gate; and lo! as they entered, they were transfigured; and they had raiment put on, that shone like gold. There were also that met them with harps and

crowns, and gave them to them; the harps to praise withal, and the crowns in token of honour. * * * * *

“Now just as the gates were opened to let in the men, I looked in after them, and behold the city shone like the sun; the streets also were paved with gold; and in them walked many men with crowns on their heads, palms in their hands, and golden harps, to sing praises withal. There were also of them that had wings, and they answered one another without intermission, saying, ‘Holy, holy, holy is the Lord.’ And after that they shut up the gates; which when I had seen, I wished myself among them.” * * *

THE GLORY OF THE RESURRECTION BODY.

When Henry had read these extracts, he said, Are the representations of heaven, found in the book of Revelation, and repeated in the Pilgrim’s Progress, designed to describe the glory of believers immediately after death, or only after the resurrection of their bodies? If the former, please tell me,

father, wherein consists the peculiar glory of the resurrection body.

Mr. James replied, Some think that the saints receive new, spiritual bodies immediately after death, and hence that they do not enter heaven at all without bodies. Persons who hold this doctrine, interpret those texts of Scripture which speak of the resurrection, in a metaphorical or figurative sense, and they deny altogether the future, and literal resurrection of the body from the grave at the day of judgment. Concerning this opinion it is sufficient to remark, that such an interpretation of Scripture is forced; that it is not authorized by a fair construction of the words and phrases which treat of this subject, and that it is contrary to the express mention of the time when the resurrection will occur, viz., not at death, but at a period still future, when the last trumpet shall sound, to summon the world to the bar of God.

During the intermediate state between death and the final judgment, the souls of believers shall dwell in the glorious presence of Christ,

and hold sweet communion with each other. Our Lord's promise to the penitent thief on the cross, "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise," is fulfilled to every dying believer. As your catechism expresses it, "The souls of believers are, at their death, made perfect in holiness, and do immediately pass into glory; and their bodies, being still united to Christ, do rest in their graves till the resurrection."

If the Scripture texts which you have read, describing the glory of heaven, are to be interpreted figuratively, as I have told you, they are applicable to the glory into which believers enter immediately after death. But they will nevertheless have a more full application to the still greater glory which they will enjoy in their resurrection bodies. To quote again from the catechism, "At the resurrection, believers being raised up in glory, shall be openly acknowledged and acquitted in the day of judgment, and made perfectly blessed in the full enjoyment of God to all eternity."

The glory of their resurrection state, as distinguished from the preceding one, after their arrival in heaven, cannot be fully explained. The reunion of their souls with their bodies, the transformation of their bodies into the likeness of Christ's glorious body, and the public honour conferred on them in their being openly acknowledged by God as his friends and children, in the presence of myriads of saints and angels, may be mentioned as some of the circumstances which will constitute the peculiar glory of the resurrection body. An inspired description of the resurrection body is given by Paul in the first epistle to the Corinthians, fifteenth chapter, a part of which you may read. I will premise however that, in the same chapter, the apostle establishes the truth of the doctrine of the resurrection, from the resurrection of Christ; and he attaches so much importance to it as to affirm that the truth of Christianity itself depends upon the truth of the resurrection of the body. "If there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen:

and if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain."

Concerning the resurrection body Paul says, (Henry now took the Bible and read,) "It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul, the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit, that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. 'The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I show you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but

we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Oh, said Henry, as he finished reading this passage, what triumphant joy the apostle must have felt, when he penned these words! With such glorious prospects as these before us, how happy might we be in view of death! And how valuable would be the dying testimony we might thus leave behind us, to the truth and importance of Christianity!

THE GLORY OF HEAVEN ANTICIPATED IN THE DYING ECSTASIES OF BELIEVERS—TOPLADY, SCOTT, EVARTS, PAYSON.

Mr. James replied, A peaceful and happy death, if not preceded by a pious life, must be generally regarded with suspicion. I say generally, not always. Persons sometimes truly repent at the eleventh hour, and die in great peace of mind. Such cases, however, are exceptions to a general rule. But when we witness a holy and godly life, closing its bright career, by a joyful and even ecstatic death, we justly regard it as an important dying testimony, superadded to a previous living one, of the incalculable value of an interest in Christ. Atheists have no foundation for rapture in the hour of death. The prospect of annihilation, which, according to their belief, is all they expect, cannot possibly be a ground for joy. They may be indifferent, but not joyful. Deists are a step in advance of Atheists, yet their religious principles are too cold and cheerless to become a source of joy

in death. Christians, it is true, do not always die in ecstasies ; and hence the absence of such manifestations is not to be taken as a mark against their piety, when they have given previous evidence of its being genuine. But where these ecstasies exist, it is legitimate to refer to them, as evidences of the joyful and glorious manifestations of God's presence, who thus favours his people with an anticipation of the glory of heaven. I will select a few examples from a long list which lies before me.

Mr. Toplady, a distinguished English divine of the last century, closed a long and eminently holy life by a triumphant death. In addition to other similar expressions of triumphant joy, he said, " Oh what a day of sunshine has this been to me ! I have no words to express it ; it is unutterable. Oh what delights ! who can fathom the joys of the third heaven ? The sky is clear—there is no cloud ; come Lord Jesus, come quickly."

Dr. Scott, the commentator, had few equals as a conscientious and holy man. As he was

leaving the world, he exclaimed with rapture, "This is heaven begun; I have done with darkness for ever. Satan is vanquished. Nothing remains but salvation with eternal glory—*eternal glory!*"

Mr. Evarts, a lawyer by profession, and secretary of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, was distinguished during his life, as a consistent, active, and devout Christian. Just before his death, he uttered these rapturous expressions; "O wonderful, wonderful, wonderful glory! We cannot comprehend—wonderful glory! I will praise him! I will praise him! Wonderful—glory!—Jesus reigneth."

Dr. Payson, a New England pastor, owing chiefly to physical causes, had many alternations of light and shade, during the greater part of his life. But he served his Master with zeal and fidelity, regardless of his variable frames of mind. For the last three or four weeks prior to his decease, his ecstasy was remarkable. A letter which he indited, was clothed in language of surpassing rapture, and

some of the remarks which fell from his lips were equally triumphant. He said, "Hitherto I have viewed God as a fixed star, bright indeed, but often intercepted by clouds. But now he is coming nearer and nearer, and he spreads into a sun so vast and so glorious, that the sight is too dazzling for flesh and blood to sustain. Victory, victory! peace, peace!"

I remember, father, said Henry James, an instance of extraordinary peace and joy on a dying bed, not long ago, (Mr. A.) and I doubt not you recollect it too, for you were there, and repeated several stanzas of a hymn which greatly delighted our dying friend. I committed the words to memory, and can repeat them now. They are as follows:

Our journey is a thorny maze,
But we march upward still;
Forget these troubles of the ways,
And reach at Sion's hill.

See the kind angels, at the gates,
Inviting us to come;
There Jesus, the Forerunner, waits
To welcome travellers home.

There on a green and flowery mount,
Our weary souls shall sit,
And, with transporting joys, recount
The labours of our feet.

No vain discourse shall fill our tongue,
Nor trifles vex our ear ;
Infinite grace shall be our song,
And God rejoice to hear.

Eternal glory to the King,
Who brought us safely through ;
Our tongues shall never cease to sing,
And endless praise renew.

Yes, said Mr. James, I recollect the instance you allude to, perfectly well. I have seldom witnessed greater ecstasy in a dying hour than was manifested on that occasion. I remember too how earnestly he addressed his family, speaking to each member in turn, and with a countenance beaming with joy, charging them all to meet him in heaven. Surely, thought I, an appeal so powerful as that must win their hearts to Christ. But alas! alas! I will not say any more, except that I hope and pray that the Holy Spirit will ere long make

that providence the means of bringing salvation to each member of that dear family. Some of them are Christians now, but not all. Would to God that the remainder may speedily experience that change of heart, which made their pious father's death so joyful and triumphant.

THE GLORY OF HEAVEN COMPLETE—NOTHING IS WANTING TO MAKE THE SAINTS PERFECTLY HAPPY.

Mr. James further remarked, When believers arrive at heaven, they will find their bliss far surpassing their highest expectations. The Psalmist calls it "fulness of joy." The largest desires of the soul will be fully satisfied, and nothing will be wanting to make the saints perfectly happy. In addition to the particulars already noticed, there is another part of the apostle John's vision of heaven, which contains a vivid description of its happiness derived from the physical world. "He shewed me," says John, "a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out

of the throne of God and of the Lamb," and "the tree of life which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month." And "there shall be no more curse." "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

These strong and beautiful figures are designed to show that the bliss of heaven is complete, that the glorified saints not only enjoy happiness, but are free from every impediment which would tend in the least degree to mar their enjoyment. The curse consequent upon sin is wholly removed. There is neither hunger, nor thirst, neither pain, sorrow, nor tears. All that the imagination can conceive concerning the happiness of our first parents in the garden of Eden, from its balmy winds, its fragrant trees, its pleasant shades, and its crystal fountains, is more than realized in the Paradise of God. And the saints are in-

troduced to the enjoyment of these pleasures by the Lamb of God himself, who becomes their companion and guide, to lead them and give them possession of whatever can delight their souls.

Henry James remarked, I have lately read a pleasing illustration of the joy which flows from Christ, the Fountain of Life, derived from the joy of the Israelites when they received a supply of water in the wilderness; and it occurred to me, if their joy was so great at receiving that necessary blessing, though only a temporal one, how much greater must be the joy experienced by the believer, as one of the fruits of faith in Christ, and especially after this joy is consummated and made perfect in the world of glory!

Mr. James replied, The supply of water to the Israelites, during their sojournings in the wilderness, forms, next to the manna, one of the most remarkable portions of their history. The last incident of this kind occurred at Beer, near the border of Moab. The word Beer signifies a well, and the place was so called because

that was "the well whereof the Lord spake unto Moses, Gather the people together, and I will give them water. Then Israel sang this song, Spring up, O well; sing ye unto it." Num. xxi. 17. Their providential, and in two instances miraculous supply of water was annually celebrated by the Jews in succeeding generations, as a part of their sacred solemnities at the feast of Tabernacles. The priests drew water from the pool of Siloam, and with a multitude of people encompassed the altar seven times singing hosanna, and pouring out the water at the foot of the altar. So great was the joy manifested on that occasion, that Jewish writers say that a person who has not witnessed the joy of pouring out water has never witnessed joy in his life.

Not long since, continued Mr. James, similar joy was manifested by the Arabs in the African desert, at the finding of water by the French engineers. While the engineers were engaged in boring, (I quote from a newspaper,) "the Arabs looked on in silent wonder, until they saw the precious stream actually

gush forth, when their joy knew no bounds. They sang and danced around the wells as they successively appeared, gave them names of old, and even worshipped the engineers, whose marvellous skill had thus cleaved the fountains, which lay hid far beneath the arid and burning sands of the desert, and given them promise of an abundant supply of that priceless element, which to the inhabitants of tropical regions, is the very symbol of refreshment, fertility, and every thing that blesses life."

These illustrations, said Mr. James, are quite suitable to show the joy of faith experienced by Christians on earth, but are very inadequate to describe the ecstatic bliss of the saints in glory; unless indeed they be employed by way of contrast, and then they are pertinent and forcible. In order to apply these figures to the heavenly world, you must imagine yourself, not as standing by water gushing from the earth in a desert, but as being transported from the wilderness of this world to "the throne of God and of the

Lamb ;” and a pure river of water of life clear as crystal, issuing from that throne, with all the accompanying scenery described by the inspired revelator. Divesting your conceptions of every thing gross or sensual, you must adapt your thoughts to the elevated character and condition of the glorified saints. You must think of myriads of holy beings in the presence of their divine Redeemer, engaged in adoring and praising his name, and enjoying all the pure and exalted bliss which is associated with an honoured citizenship in the New Jerusalem, and a free access to the celestial Paradise by which it is surrounded. In view of this scene, we might well exclaim, if the hope of heaven produces in believers on earth, “joy unspeakable and full of glory,” how inconceivably joyful and glorious will be the reality ! Human language is too poor to describe it ; the human mind is too limited to comprehend it.

THE PROSPECT OF HEAVEN OUGHT TO INFLUENCE CHRISTIANS TO LEAD A HEAVENLY LIFE ON EARTH—TRANSCIENCE OF REV. WILLIAM TENNENT, JR.

Henry James remarked, With such glorious prospects before us, one would suppose that Christians would think and converse about heaven much more than they do. I read in some paper a short time ago, that a little girl in one of our cities, said to her mother, "You talk a great deal, mother, about getting ready to go into the country, but I never hear you say any thing about getting ready to go to heaven. Why is this, mother?" I thought, that the question of that little girl was very sensible, though pungent.

You are correct, said Mr. James. The prospect of heaven ought to influence Christians to lead a heavenly life on earth. The Apostle Paul enjoins, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above not on

things on the earth." Again he asserts concerning himself, and his brethren of the primitive church, "Our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body." The Apostle Peter also exhorts, "Seeing then that all these things, [the visible heavens] shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat! Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens, and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot and blameless."

Mr. James continued, God does not often permit his people to visit heaven, and then return again to this world. He designs to have us walk by faith, not by sight. And if we

possess true faith, we have no need of going to heaven in order to assure us of its reality, or of our own interest in it; because "faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." But in a few instances, the Lord has granted an actual view of that world, and we have their testimony in general terms, of what they saw and heard, as far as they were allowed to give it. The apostle Paul was thus favoured; (see 2 Cor. xii. 2—5,) but all which he reported was that he "heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter." One of the most remarkable instances of this kind was the trance of the Rev. William Tennent, Jr., of Freehold, N. J. a little more than a century ago. Mr. Tennent was one of three brothers, all eminent ministers, and sons of the Rev. William Tennent, founder of a famous school of that day, for educating candidates for the gospel ministry, which received the name of the Log College. A highly interesting volume with this title, from the pen of the Rev. Dr. Archibald Alexander, is published by the Presbyterian

Board of Publication. This volume contains the account of the trance of Rev. Wm. Tennent, Jr., a part of which you may read ; not to introduce the subject of trances, but to show the effect which a sight of heaven is adapted to produce on the mind ; and to deepen the impression that our contemplation of heaven ought to be such as to produce a similar effect on us, as the sight of it did on him, at least to the extent of elevating our affections above this world, and increasing more and more, from day to day, our delight in heavenly things. This account of Mr. Tennent is well authenticated, and as we are told, it was universally credited at the time by those who had knowledge of the occurrence.

Henry James took the book and read as follows :

“After a regular course of study in theology, Mr. Tennent was preparing for his examination, as a candidate for the gospel ministry. His intense application affected his health, and brought on a pain in his breast, and a slight hectic. He soon became emaciated, and at

length was like a living skeleton. His life was now threatened. He was attended by a physician, a young gentleman who was attached to him by the strictest and warmest friendship. He grew worse and worse, till little hope was left. In this situation, his spirits failed him, and he began to entertain doubts of his final happiness. He was conversing one morning with his brother in Latin, on the state of his soul, when he fainted and died away. After the usual time he was laid out on a board, according to the common practice of the country, and the neighbourhood were invited to attend his funeral on the next day.

“In the evening his physician and friend returned from a ride in the country, and was afflicted beyond measure at the news of his death. He could not be persuaded that it was certain ; and on being told that one of the persons who had assisted in laying out the body thought he had observed a little tremor of the flesh, under the arm, although the body was cold and stiff, he endeavoured to ascertain the fact.

He first put his own hand into warm water, to make it as sensible as possible, and then felt under the arm, and at the heart, and affirmed that he felt an unusual warmth, though no one else could. He had the body restored to a warm bed, and insisted that the people who had been invited to the funeral should be requested not to attend. To this the brother objected, as absurd, the eyes being sunk, the lips discoloured, and the whole body cold and stiff. However, the doctor finally prevailed, and all probable means were used to discover symptoms of returning life. But the third day arrived, and no hopes were entertained of success but by the doctor, who never left him night nor day. The people were again invited, and assembled to attend the funeral. The doctor still objected, and at last confined his delay to one hour, then to half an hour, and finally to a quarter of an hour. He had discovered that the tongue was very much swollen, and threatened to crack. He was endeavouring to soften it, by some emollient ointment put upon it by a feather, when his brother came

in about the expiration of the last period, and mistaking what the doctor was doing for an attempt to feed him, manifested some resentment, and in a spirited tone, said, "It is shameful to be feeding a lifeless corpse;" and insisted with earnestness, that the funeral should immediately proceed. At this critical and important moment, the body, to the great alarm and astonishment of all present, opened its eyes, gave a dreadful groan, and sunk again into apparent death. This put an end to all thought of burying him, and every effort was again employed in hopes of bringing about a speedy resuscitation. In about an hour, the eyes again opened, a heavy groan proceeded from the body, and again all appearance of animation vanished. In another hour life seemed to return with more power, and a complete revival took place, to the great joy of the family and friends, and to the no small astonishment and conviction of very many who had been ridiculing the idea of restoring to life a dead body.

* * * * *

The writer of these memoirs was greatly interested by these uncommon events ; and on a favourable occasion, earnestly pressed Mr. Tennent for a minute account of what his views and apprehensions were, while he lay in this extraordinary state of suspended animation. He discovered great reluctance to enter into any explanation of his perceptions and feelings, at this time ; but, being importunately urged to do it, he at length consented, and proceeded with a solemnity not to be described :

“ While I was conversing with my brother,” said he, “ on the state of my soul, and the fears I had entertained for my future welfare, I found myself, in an instant, in another state of existence, under the direction of a superior being, who ordered me to follow him. I was accordingly wafted along, I know not how, till I beheld at a distance an ineffable glory, the impression of which on my mind it is impossible to communicate to mortal man. I immediately reflected on my happy change, and thought :—Well, blessed be

God! I am safe at last, notwithstanding all my fears. I saw an innumerable host of happy beings surrounding the inexpressible glory, in acts of adoration and joyous worship; but I did not see any bodily shape or representation in the glorious appearance. I heard things unutterable. I heard their songs and hallelujahs of thanksgiving and praise with unspeakable rapture. I felt joy unutterable and full of glory. I then applied to my conductor, and requested leave to join the happy throng; on which he tapped me on the shoulder, and said, 'You must return to the earth.' This seemed like a sword through my heart. In an instant I recollect to have seen my brother standing before me, disputing with the doctor. The three days during which I had appeared lifeless, seemed to me not more than ten or twenty minutes. The idea of returning to this world of sorrow and trouble, gave me such a shock, that I fainted repeatedly."

He added, "Such was the effect on my mind of what I had seen and heard, that if it be

possible for a human being to live entirely above the world and the things of it, for some time afterwards I was that person. The ravishing sound of the songs and hallelujahs that I heard, and the very words uttered, were not out of my ears when awake, for at least three years. All the kingdoms of the earth were in my sight as nothing and vanity; and so great were my ideas of heavenly glory, that nothing which did not in some measure relate to it, could command my serious attention."

Henry James was elated by this extraordinary account; upon which his father remarked, I am not surprised, Henry, at your being elated, but I wish you to notice, particularly, the last few lines, which state the elevating effect of the scene on Mr. Tennent's mind. As I told you at the beginning, it was in order to show this, that I requested you to read it. You are as fully assured of the existence of that blessed and glorious world as though you had been there. Let your thoughts often soar

thither ; and let earthly things be kept under your feet.

To take a glimpse within the veil,
To know that God is mine,
Are springs of joy that never fail,
Unspeakable, divine.

These are the joys which satisfy,
And sanctify the mind ;
Which make the spirit mount on high,
And leave the world behind.

HOW THE DOCTRINES OF GRACE ARE VIEWED
BY THE SAINTS IN HEAVEN.

Mr. James further remarked, I have one thought more to notice, before I close. Suppose yourself now to be in that world, about which we have been conversing so delightfully, and to be inquiring what views are entertained by the saints in glory concerning the doctrines of grace—suppose yourself, I say, to be there, and you and them to be looking back to a past eternity, and thinking of that “love divine all love excelling,” by which you were chosen in Christ to be holy and happy for ever : to be

thinking of Christ your Redeemer, who condescended to come into the world to die for you ; of the grace of the Holy Spirit in quickening you when you were dead in trespasses and sins ; of the mercy of God in your justification, adoption, and sanctification ; and of his constant care over you, to keep you in the right way, to give you victory over your spiritual enemies, and prepare you for an abundant entrance into his everlasting kingdom. If a doubt has ever rested on your mind, with regard to any one of these doctrines, I am quite sure you will feel no such doubt, on your arrival in the world of bliss. Every saint in that happy land rejoices to acknowledge that his entrance there is an example and an illustration of grace triumphing in glory ; and that the doctrines of grace are so many links in the golden chain of mercy, by which he has been conducted to heaven.

CONCLUSION.

IN concluding these conversations, I earnestly counsel the dear youth to whom they are particularly dedicated, that they give diligent heed not to "fail of the grace of God." "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near." "The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth, say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." These gospel invitations are addressed to you, and they offer you pardon and eternal life on the ground of free grace, which is the only basis adapted to the condition of sinners. You must be saved by grace,

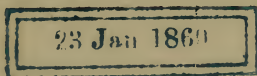
or not saved at all. This grace is brought nigh to you in God's word. It is sufficient for the chief of sinners. In the forcible and eloquent language of Dr. Guthrie, "At all times and seasons, faith and prayer find fulness of mercy and pardon, and of grace to sanctify, in Jesus Christ. The supply is inexhaustible. Mountains have been exhausted of their gold, mines of their diamonds, and the depths of ocean of their pearly gems. The demand has emptied the supply. Over once busy scenes, silence and solitude now reign; the caverns no longer ring to the miner's hammer, nor is the song of the pearl fisher heard upon the deep. But the riches of grace are inexhaustible. All that have gone before us have not made them less, and we shall make them no less to those that follow us. When they have supplied the wants of unborn millions, the last of Adam's race, that lonely man over whose head the sun is dying, beneath whose feet the earth is reeling, shall stand by as full a fountain as this day invites you to drink and live, to wash and be clean."

Consider, unconverted reader, I beseech you, the great peril of your continuing in a graceless state. It is no more certain that grace in the heart will be succeeded by eternal glory, than it is that the failure to obtain grace will result in eternal misery. The benevolent Saviour, whose love for sinners led him to lay down his life to save them from hell, distinctly affirmed that their ruin would be inevitable, notwithstanding his death, unless they repented of their sins, and put their trust in him as their Redeemer. "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." These sentiments were repeatedly uttered, and he solemnly warned the people to flee from the wrath to come. The inspired apostles did the same thing, and in view of the threatened judgments of God, they urged the duty of immediate repentance. "But [God] now commandeth all men every where to repent; because he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom

he hath ordained ; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead." Again, "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men." Dear youth, let me persuade you. "Turn you to the strong hold, ye prisoners of hope." This strong hold is Christ. He is "a hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest ; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." He invites, yea urges you to seek deliverance and salvation, through his grace. And he has promised, "Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out." "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

Seize the kind promise while it waits,
And march to Zion's heavenly gates ;
Believe and take the promised rest,
Obey and be for ever blest.

27 *



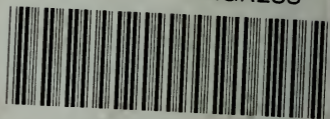
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