

The Mercies of a Covenant God First Part

I WAS born at Stand, about five miles from Manchester, in October, 1776. My parents being poor, I had but little opportunity of acquiring human learning, though, by the tender mercy of God, I obtained a little reading and writing, a blessing for which I have often felt thankful. My dear mother was, I believe, a vessel prepared unto glory before the mountains were brought forth. This God made manifest when I was about eight years of age, in a manner that has often filled me with surprise. I had frequently been astonished to see my dear mother sighing, groaning and weeping when reading her Bible, but, upon one occasion, I distinctly recollect that a neighbouring woman called in and, observing my mother in tears, asked what was the matter with her that she was in so much trouble.

My mother, as soon as she was able to speak, cried out that her poor soul was lost for ever and ever; at which the woman was astonished, and so was! The woman endeavoured to comfort her by telling her that she had been a good wife, mother and neighbour, and, consequently, could have nothing to fear; for if such good people as she were lost, woe to thousands besides! Moreover, "she continued, "you ought not to indulge in such thoughts as these, for who can tell in what they will end?"

My poor mother, however, could not drink in such doctrine as this, but exclaimed, "Oh! I am the greatest sinner that ever was upon the earth, and lost I must be for ever! There is no salvation for me. O that I had never been born!" The woman bade her remember that there is mercy with God for every one that repenteth. "Yes," said my mother, "there is to His own people, but I am not one of them. I am a castaway, lost for ever and ever!" How astonishing did all this appear to my mind! How did I desire to know who God was, and who were His people!

I remember that I cried and, retiring to a private place, said my prayers twice very devoutly, and was as firmly resolved as any Arminian in the world to be good; and I shall become one of His people; and what a happy people must they be who are God's, and how holy, too; for if my poor mother, who is so good, is not one of them, how very good they must be." I then vowed and promised how good I would be. I found upon examination that I had done many wrong things, such as frequently telling untruths, using bad words, and occasionally stealing a toy from the children with whom I was in the habit of playing. Then I prayed the Lord to forgive me, and vowed never to commit the like again. From this period I went on with many natural convictions, until I arrived at the age of fifteen or sixteen years, when, getting acquainted with many loose companions, I was given up to all

manner of wickedness, and so continued until my arrival at that time and place which God had purposed,Ñnot to offer, but to call by grace:

"To change the heart, renew the will,
And turn the feet to Zion's hill."

John Kent See MERCIES Topic 15

I was at that time married, and hearing that a new church, containing a fine organ, was to be opened at Bolton (distant about six miles), I made up my mind to go, and to enjoy myself by spending a few shillings that I had at the various public houses on my way home. These houses had been my delight for years; but, blessed be the dear Lord, He had designed other things. When the day came I went, and was greatly pleased with the appearance of the church. But when the minister entered the reading-desk, I was struck with astonishment at observing that he was the very man whom I had heard preach one sermon in our parish church many years before; a sermon which had alarmed me to that degree that I had made many vows to live a new life, and for several weeks afterwards durst scarcely look or speak for fear of sinning.

I had soon, however, broken my vows, and become worse than ever in open wickedness, until God now laid hold of me. When the minister began to read the prayers I thought I had never heard them read in like manner before. But when he got into the pulpit and read his text, it came from his mouth into my heart like a two-edged sword. His text was, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." I verily believed that he pointed directly at me; for his eyes appeared to look right through me, and I thought I should have dropped into hell.

All my sins and iniquities from a child stared me in the face, and I trembled like a leaf. He began to show what man was by nature, and how far natural men might go in vowing and breaking their vows, in sinning and repenting, until, if grace prevented not, hell proved their awful abode. He showed that for men to vow was merely to mock God and deceive their own souls. My very hair stood on end with the violence of my feelings, and I verily believed that he meant me and none else in the church. Nay, he so particularly described my ungodly life, my vowing and vow-breaking, and so entered into every transaction of it, as if he had been an eyewitness to everything I had done or said, that I looked up to him, wondering whether he were a man or an angel. I thought that he fastened his eyes directly upon me, and pointed personally at me with his finger; and when he had thus cut me up, root and branch, he repeated his text again like thunder in my ears: "Be not

deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." O the power with which it entered my soul, like a dagger that cut me through and through. I now saw and felt (what I had never seen or felt before) that I had been mocking God and deceiving my soul all my life long. O how my poor soul heaved up with grief and sorrow, "God be merciful to me, a sinner." "Oh! thought I, He can never show mercy to such a wretch as I, for I have mocked God all these years; and what a man soweth, that shall he also reap." And again the dear man repeated, "God is not mocked." As soon as he had concluded, I crept out of the church as if I had stolen something. Ashamed to look anybody in the face, I hastened through the town, and with difficulty refrained from roaring aloud, like a bear, as I passed through it. I thought that everybody gazed and pointed at me.

On my way home, the moment I got into the fields, where no human eye could see and no human ear could hear me, I fell upon my knees, and with all my power of body and soul cried, "God be merciful to me, a sinner." How often I repeated the publican's prayer I know not; but when I arose from my knees I went on wringing my hands, sobbing and exclaiming, O fool that I have been. How often would God have saved me, but I would not! Now it is all over forever and ever! O the dreadfulness of appearing before that God that will not be mocked is past describing! When I passed a public house I durst not even turn my eyes to look at it, much less enter it to enjoy the pleasure I had anticipated upon leaving home. All the dreadful things I had been guilty of in these wretched houses arose before my poor soul like an army in battle.

"O," cried I, "cursed places, cursed places; ye have ruined my soul for ever! O that I had but kept my vows! O what shall I do? whither can I flee? How can I stand to hear the awful sentence, Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels?"

Upon reaching home, my wife was surprised to see me returned so early. She wondered at my being so quiet, and asked what was the matter. I told her I was very unwell, and did all I could to hide the grief of my soul. But concealment for any length of time was impossible. So great was my misery, and such fast hold had it of me, that at every opportunity I could get by myself I was upon my knees, crying, "God be merciful to me, a sinner!" sometimes repeating the cry until my very breath failed me.

She soon, therefore, perceived that something had happened, and charged me with having turned Methodist. I told her that I knew not what I had turned; but this I did know, that I was one of the vilest sinners upon earth, and that if I did not mend my

ways, repent, and find mercy, I was as sure of going to hell as that I had been born; and that I would turn anything if I could but thereby save my poor soul; for as yet I could think of no other way of my soul being saved but by mending my life, doing my duty and pleasing God.

On the next Lord's day morning I set off for Bolton, to hear the same minister, whom I afterwards understood to be a Mr. Jones. O with what earnestness did I pray and beg all the way that he might tell me what to do that I might be saved! But instead of this, he cut me up to all intents and purposes, and declared that all those who were working for life were under the law, and therefore under its curse. Thus during the whole day I could hear of no encouragement save to God's own people, and I returned as miserable as ever. O what a journey I had home! sometimes wringing my hands and crying with bitter lamentations, O that I had never been born! O my poor soul, thou art lost for ever! O my place will be with devils and damned souls for ever and ever!

How I reached home the Lord only knows, but when I did my wife asked me how I was. "Oh," cried I worse than ever! it is all over with me! there is no hope but for God's people! She told me I should go no more to hear that man, for he would be sure to drive me mad, and I should be taken to the mad-house, which I indeed, began to fear would really be the case. I therefore thought I would try to put away the thoughts I had of death and eternity, and tried to compose my mind as well as I could, consoling myself with the resolution to do the best in my power, and perhaps things would be better than my fears.

I went, therefore, to bed rather more comfortable; but I had not been so long before that text thundered in my heart and in my ears, "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God." "O," cried my soul, "that is I, that is I I am the wicked wretch who has forgotten God, mocked God, abused God, despised God. O my poor, ruined, lost soul, thou wilt be turned into hell with all the nations that forget God!" O the dreadful feelings I experienced! I actually thought that the devil was then coming to fetch me, body and soul together. O how my inmost soul did cry to God that He would spare me but for that night. How often did I promise that I would do all that ever I could to please Him, and entreated with tears that He would not let the devil fetch me that night. And I thought the Lord heard me, for I felt more composed, and shortly dropped asleep.

Upon awaking in the morning, what thankfulness I felt to God that He had spared me and that I was not in hell. And who can tell, thought I, but God may yet have mercy on so vile a wretch, who has gone to such lengths in sin against Him and yet

been spared to the present moment? I did indeed pray with all my soul and strength that He would forgive all my past sins, and I promised that I would, for the future, live a holy life and do everything in my power to please Him, and honour Him all my days. Indeed, for several days after this I went on pretty comfortable. O the fear I had of sinning for I thought that, if I could but keep from sin, God would, perhaps, pardon me what was past in His own time. And so determined was I to dishonour God no more, that I went into a secret place, where no eye but God's could see me, and vowed with all my might to leave all the world and turn to the Lord and be His, and called upon Him to be witness of my sincerity.

But alas, alas! what is all our fleshly sincerity? The first blast from the devil blows it like chaff before the wind. I had been in the habit for many years of card-playing. What shall I do, thought I, when Saturday night comes? I am engaged to play a few games at the card-table, but I will not go, and they will not come for me. On Saturday night, however, my partner at the card-table called for me and saying it was near the appointed time, asked me if I was ready? What shall I do thought I? If I refuse they will call me a Methodist, and spread that report all over the parish. I will go just this once, and then tell them I intend to go no more. With this determination I went off. But oh, the misery that came upon me, as if I had been going to the gallows! But the fear of being called religious and a Methodist so overcame me that I entered the house and sat down with the rest at the table.

When we each had our cards dealt out, and I had just taken mine, O how my guilt stared me in the face! How did conscience thunder in my ears that I had broken the vows which I had called upon God to witness! and the old text, too, came like a thunderclap that shook both body and soul: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." I was so confused and confounded that I knew not what I was doing, and could no more tell which card to throw down than if I had never seen one in my life. In short, I entirely lost the game, which so enraged my partner that he called me the greatest fool he had ever seen, and the others heartily laughed at me. Poor things! they little knew what I had to grapple with within. I made the best I could of the matter; and, to prevent their knowing the real cause, I said that I was very poorly and must go home. Thus speaking, I took my hat without ceremony, and it being dark, went into the fields, where no human eye could see me. It was a very dark night, and Oh, the awful feelings of my heart! I thought of my vows and my breaking of them; of the dreadful majesty of that God whom I had mocked a thousand times; and of the horrible certainty of fast-approaching death. And then those dreadful words came to my mind. "Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out My hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all My counsel, and would none of

My reproof; I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh." {[Pr 1:24-26](#)}. That made my very hair to stand on my head, and my poor soul so to tremble that I feared I was dropping into hell every moment. My very joints were loosened, and what to do, or whither to go, I could not tell. I fell upon my knees and attempted to pray, but that text stopped my mouth in an instant: "The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord." {[Pr 15:8](#)} "Then," cried I, "it is all over for ever; for I am the vilest wretch either in hell or out of hell; and if God will not hear the prayers of a poor, wicked sinner, it is all over for ever and ever."

And now all my sins from a child came upon me like an army, with such weight that they actually pressed both body and soul to the very earth, and there I lay for a time with no more strength to stir than a new-born infant, and I believed in my very soul that I was soon to be where hope never comes. But, O the amazing goodness of an abused God! He gave me a little drop of encouragement: "Seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." {[Mt 7:7](#)} "What can that mean?" exclaimed I; "it can never mean that I am to seek and to find."

I arose and looked around to see if anybody was near who might have spoken these words; but I could neither see nor hear anybody; yet the words were again repeated in my soul with more power, "Seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened." This so encouraged my poor soul that I cried again to God to have mercy upon me, and told Him that if He would but forgive my sins, I would tell all the world what He had done for me. I then went home, resolved that I would seek night and day for mercy and forgiveness of my sins until I found it.

I went to bed much encouraged, and rose very early in the morning, blessing the Lord with all my heart that He had spared me another night. After breakfast I set off for Bolton to hear Mr. Jones, beseeching the Lord with cries and tears that I might hear something to comfort my soul. Surely, I thought, this is the time that I shall find Him. As I had sought Him so earnestly, I quite expected to have had my sins forgiven, and to return home with joy. But oh! how was I disappointed! I thought that Mr. Jones preached to none but the elect, and such as had been born again! Then I again sank into despair and exclaimed with bitterness of soul, "O that I were one of the elect! O that I were one of those who have been born again! What shall I do? Whither shall I flee? I have prayed and I have begged, I have sought and I have knocked; but I am not born again, I am not one of the elect. O poor soul, poor soul! thou art lost for ever! it is all over. O eternity, eternity! How can I dwell with everlasting burnings!"

O the miserable journey I had home; nothing but wretchedness and misery; and what added to it was, that my eyes were now open to see a little of the evil of my own heart. I saw that evil thoughts were sins against God, as well as evil actions, and God sent home that text to my soul with so much power that I thought I was dropping into hell at once: "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them." {[Ga 3:10](#)}

Such light shone upon these words that I saw, and felt too, that I was damned completely, without the possibility of escape; and these words, to finish and seal up my certain damnation to my own views, came to my mind with no less power than the former: "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." {[Jas 2:10](#)} I then saw, as clearly as the sun at midday, the holiness and justice of God in my damnation, and that it was utterly impossible for either God or man to save me. Now I felt that it was all over, and that there could be no hope for ever and ever. Now I saw that though I might repent and weep tears of blood, all that would not do "all things written in the book of the law."

I was now led to see that this holy law required holy thoughts as well as holy actions, and it came immediately into my soul. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy soul and with all, thy heart, and thy neighbour as thyself." Then again, like terrible thunder, sounded, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." Oh! the "to do them" dashed me to pieces like a potter's vessel, and struck me dead upon the spot from a glimpse of hope that God could save me consistently with justice. I now saw, as clearly as at noonday, His holiness and His justice in my damnation; and I told Him that when I came into hell, I would tell all the devils there that no injustice had been done me, that I could take all the blame upon myself and clear God of all wrong in executing His wrath upon one so vile, who had gone to such lengths in iniquity, who, having made so many vows, had broken them all, and plunged deeper and deeper into sin, and been so great a mocker of God.

Now, however. I clearly saw that my doom was sealed, for these words came Upon the back of the other, "Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." Thus I saw that God is immutably fixed in His holiness and justice, and that He can in no wise acquit the guilty. In this miserable state I continued for some months. Sometimes I fell into a fit of desperation and thought, "Oh, if I could but have a little comfort here, even if I had hell hereafter!" for of having hell hereafter I felt confident, for "Cursed is every one," etc.; and that I was one who had "not continued in all things written in the

book of the law," I knew. Well, thought I, let me have a little enjoyment here to drown the misery of my present feelings; as to hereafter, I can be but lost.

The best method of fulfilling this resolution appeared to be by going a hay-making, it being now the hay harvest. I accordingly went to a neighbouring farmer, and inquired if he had need of a hand. He said, "Yes," and bade me go into the fields. Upon joining the men, who all knew me and had heard that I had turned Methodist, some jeered me, others called out. "Warburton is turned Methodist," and all joined in laughing at me. I tried to put it off with a laugh, too, but it was with a heavy heart. Yes, thought I, these are going to hell as well as I, and see how comfortable they are! And again, I resolved to be as comfortable as they; for if I do go to hell, said I they will go too, and I shall not be alone.

In the afternoon of the same day there was what we call a wake, held at a place about four miles distant, and my fellow-workmen asked me to accompany them. To this I consented, and seven of us accordingly set out. But oh! what feelings I had at times upon the road! When we arrived there, the first thing was, of course, the public-house, and I felt determined to get drunk and drown my misery, and to enjoy myself as well as others. I had not, however, been many minutes in the house before that text of Scripture sounded like thunder in my poor soul: "Because He hath appointed a day, in which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man, Jesus Christ, whom He hath ordained." And that other text followed upon it like flames of lightning: "It is appointed for men once to die, but after this the judgment."

My poor knees smote together, my very hair began to move upon my head, and I got up and went out with all the horrors of damnation in my soul. I hastened as soon as possible from the place, sometimes fearing the devil would seize me before I could reach home: at others, falling upon my knees and crying. "God be merciful to me, a sinner!" But my mouth was stopped by "the prayers of the wicked are an abomination unto the Lord." I was confident that a wretch so wicked as myself never before lived upon the earth; and O the torments, the wrath, the bondage, the misery which I passed through! What dreadful and rebellious thoughts arose in my mind against God for having made all the torments of His wrath in hell, where not a drop of water is allowed to cool the scorching tongues of the damned, who are continually crying to all eternity. "The wrath to come, the wrath to come!" How I envied the very beasts of the field. "These poor creatures," said I, "have no souls to be judged;" and O the anger and wrath that boiled up in my heart against God, because He had not made me a dog, or anything without a soul to be judged at His righteous bar.

I had frequently before this time had many powerful temptations to put an end to my miserable life, but now I was fully determined to do it; for a thought struck my mind that the longer I lived in the world the more sin I should commit; and the more sin I committed, the greater would be my damnation. So that I concluded that the sooner I did the deed, the less sin I should have to answer for. Several times I went into my bedroom with my razor, being fully determined to cut my throat; but instead of so doing, was always obliged to fall upon my knees and implore the Lord that, if it were possible, He would show mercy to one so vile as I. And then again, a fresh sight of the justice of God in a righteous law brought me to believe it was as impossible for God to have mercy upon me as for Him to cease to exist.

I think I shall never forget the night before God delivered my poor soul. Fully resolved to destroy myself, I went on Saturday about midnight to a pool of water, making, as I proceeded thither, a solemn vow that nothing should prevent my fulfilling my purpose. When I got to the pool, O the dreadful view I had of the majesty, justice, and holiness of God in a righteous law! I saw, as clearly as the sun at noon-day, that the law was holy, just and good; that God had done me no injustice, and that the whole cause of my damnation was in myself. I had such a sight of God's grand perfections of holiness, that I knelt down before Him and told Him I could justify Him before men and devils. I said a solemn Amen to my own damnation; and, indeed, I did not want a salvation that was dishonouring to so holy and so just a God. After having been a short time exercised with these thoughts, I rose up to take a leap into the pool, when these words sounded in my ears, as loud, to my thinking, as if a man had called them out to me. "Who can tell?"

I made a dead stand and said, "What can that be?" "Who can tell?" The words sounded again and again in my very soul, and something seemed to spring up in my heart and thus interpret them: "Who can tell but God may yet have mercy upon my poor soul? Manasseh, the thief upon the cross, Saul of Tarsus, Mary Magdalene, and many others have experienced His pardoning mercy; and who can tell but that that poor wretch, John Warburton, may find mercy yet?" This put a stop to drowning myself. I felt my heart a little softer, and if ever my soul went out to prayer, I believe it was then.

I began to feel a little hope shine into me. Who can tell, thought I, but that God will at length hear my cry? I made up my mind that, as the next day was Sunday, I would go in the morning to Manchester and try once more to obtain a little consolation. I had been many times to Manchester and other places, far and near, in search of a little comfort for my soul, but all of no use. This was the last day I meant to try. After breakfast I set out for Manchester, and O the exercises of my

mind upon the road! I stood still and thought I would turn back, for I thought that it was impossible for God to show mercy upon me and be just. I determined to turn back again. Then the words, "Who can tell?" came again into my mind, and hope seemed to rise up within me, with a "Maybe the Lord will be merciful to me, a poor lost sinner." That text was, for a few moments, very sweet to me: "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief." {[1Ti 1:15](#)} O how my very soul cried unto God that He would save me, the very chief, the very vilest of the vile! and then with what exceeding sweetness and preciousness did the words come into my mind, "For the vision is yet for an appointed time; but at the end it shall speak, and not lie; though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry." {[Hab 2:3](#)} O how strengthened and encouraged was my poor soul! and I went on, hoping and praying that the Lord would meet me in mercy.

In the morning I went to Mosley Street Chapel, and soon after I was seated a solemn old man ascended the pulpit; and O how my soul trembled for fear lest he should beam a message from God to me of wrath and condemnation, What distress and horror I felt when, in reading the chapter, he came to these words, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them."

I can never express the thousandth part of all the misery and sense of guilt that I endured. I saw that my soul was doomed to certain destruction for ever and ever. What the old man preached about I could not tell; but this I knew, that damned I was, and sometimes thought that I should have dropped into hell whilst in the chapel. The service being concluded, I wandered up and down from street to street, until I verily believed that my senses were entirely gone. I looked behind me and saw two men following me, who, I was afraid, were coming to take me to the mad-house. The first place where I could sit down and vent my grief was St. George's Church; and seeing no person near, I sat down on the steps and wept until I had no more power to weep. After some time I got up, and thought I would go home and put an end to my miserable life. "Yes," said I, "I will come to an end and know the worst at once."

On my way home, as I thought, I got into Cannon Street, and observing a chapel there, into which people were crowding, I remembered that it was the chapel of Mr. Roby, to which I had once or twice been in company with my mother. I stopped and said, "Shall I go in?" "No," thought I, I will not. The minister will take that text, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law' to do them." I proceeded a short distance down the street and stopped

again. "Who can tell?" came once more into my mind. "Well," said I, "I can but be damned;" and so I came to the resolution of going into the chapel, and "if I perish," said I, "I perish." If ever I entered a place of worship with the feeling cry that God would, if it were possible, show mercy to one in so desperate a case, I believe I did then. When seated in the chapel all the horrors of hell seemed to come upon me.

I trembled from head to foot, and wished that I had never come in. At the conclusion of the first hymn. Mr. Roby went to prayer, and towards the end of it he dropped a few words which I believed were for nobody but me. He begged God that, if there was any one present who had come to make a last trial of His mercy, He would show Himself to such a one as his God. It was with hard work that I could keep from calling out, "Yes, here is poor lost John Warburton. Here I am, come to make the last trial." O how my soul went out to God in prayer that He would appear for me. The prayer being finished, another hymn was sung previous to the sermon.

All my little hope seemed dashed to pieces when I saw the minister take his Bible from the cushion to find his text. "O," thought I, "he is certainly seeking for that awful text which has so torn my heart asunder all these months. What shall I do if he takes that text, "Cursed is every one," etc.? O what will become of me? I must drop into hell if he take that." O the feelings I experienced! I could not imagine why he delayed so long to put the Bible upon the cushion. At last he did so, and I saw that it was opened about the middle. Blessed be God, my soul whispered, the text is not "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them." O the expectation that sprang up within me! "Do, Lord, pardon my sins; do, Lord, have mercy upon my poor lost soul," burst from my heart; and when Mr. Roby read his text, O the wonder and the glory that shone into my soul! The precious text was, "Thou hast ascended on high, Thou hast led captivity captive; Thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them." {[Ps 68:18](#)} O the love, peace and joy that broke into my heart as the words came out of his mouth!

They were truly sweeter to my soul than ten thousands of gold and silver. I wondered again. with astonishment, and said in my soul, "What can this mean? Where are my sins? What can be the meaning of all this? Where is my burden and the wrath and terror I have had so many months?" And again the text flowed into my soul, "Thou hast led captivity captive; Thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious, that the Lord God might dwell amongst them," O I knew not where to hide my poor face! My soul kept whispering, "Surely it cannot mean me; is it a dream? is it a dream?" I looked for my sins, for my burden, for the wrath and

misery I had so long carried in my poor distracted soul, and could find neither guilt nor sins, wrath nor bondage; for the Saviour of my soul had taken them all away. Such a sight of His sufferings and death shined into my soul as broke my heart to pieces. O how I looked on Him and mourned! "What have I done?" cried I; "I have crucified the Lord. O my cursed sins, that drove the nails into His hands and feet and thrust the spear into His heart.

O wretch, wretch that I am! And canst Thou, wilt Thou save and pardon me, notwithstanding all my cursed sins?" How wonderfully was my soul led to see that the dear Saviour had fulfilled and obeyed that holy law which I had broken in ten thousand instances, that all my cursed sins had been laid upon Him, and that He had suffered in my room and stead. I had so blessed a sight, by faith, of His feet and hands nailed to the cross, of the crown of thorns upon His head, and of the spear entering His heart; and His redeeming blood flowed with such peace, and love, and joy, and liberty into my soul, that I hardly knew what or where I was. The poor things who sat in the same seat kept jogging me with their elbows to sit still; but it was impossible for me to sit still or to lie still. O the love I felt to my dear Saviour for such unmerited kindness to one so vile, to the vilest wretch that ever was on the earth! I can never express a thousandth part of the hatred I felt against my cursed sins, which pierced the Lord of life and glory.

When the service was over, I went down the street blessing, thanking, wondering, praising and adoring the God of my salvation; for text upon text flowed in upon my soul, one after another, with so much power, that sometimes I was obliged to hold my hand upon my mouth to prevent myself from shouting aloud in the street. On my way home I got into the fields as soon as I could, and when out of the sight and hearing of every human being, I shouted, I leaped, I danced, I thanked and praised my dear Jesus with all my might, until my bodily strength was so gone that I fell upon the ground, and there lay, firmly believing that I was upon the point of going to heaven, to be with my dear Lord and Saviour. O what cause of holy wonder I saw in God's being a just God, and yet a Saviour.

That holy law that had been my terror for months, which had cursed me for every thought, word and deed, I now saw completely honoured and righteously fulfilled in Christ. And how precious were these words, "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." {[Ro 10:4](#)} Whilst another text came upon the back of it with so much power, sweetness, majesty and glory, that it overwhelmed me with adoration, praise and thanksgiving: "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." {[Ga 3:16](#)} I saw, and believed, and felt that

Christ had stood in my law-place and stead; and that all the wrath and damnation which I had deserved at the hands of a just God had been laid upon Jesus.

I saw that He had stood as my Surety and Bondsman, had atoned for all my sins, and magnified the law, and made it honourable in so holy a way, that there could be no condemnation either from heaven, earth, or hell. My poor soul was so carried away with the transports of joy, that if anybody had seen me, they would have supposed that I had just escaped from Bedlam; for I shouted, danced and clapped my hands with sweet delight. It was, indeed, a heaven upon earth. Those precious words of David were the very feelings of my heart at that time: "Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless His holy Name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits; who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies." {[Ps 103:1-4](#)}

I was blessing and praising God all my way home. My poor wife had been very uneasy on my account, for it was a very late hour when I reached home. But no wonder, for every tree of the field, every bird of the air, every beast and insect, even to the crawling worm, furnished me with matter of songs, wonder and praise. They were all new to me. In all of them I could see the hand of my Father and my God. I could not help telling my wife the comfort which I had received. God, I told her, had pardoned all my sins, I was sure of going to heaven, for Christ had suffered and died for me upon the cross. Poor thing! at that time she could not endure anything like religion, yet I could not conceal from her the blessing I had received.

I told her of the dreadful state she was in, and how awful a thing it would be for her to die in it. I then told her how the Lord had appeared for me, and what He had suffered for my poor soul, and how He had pardoned all my sins. The poor thing thought I was out of my mind; but I told her I was saying nothing but the truth, that all my sins had been actually pardoned and taken away by my Saviour Jesus Christ, and that I desired henceforth to live and die praising and adoring Him for His wonderful goodness to one so vile.

In this happy state of liberty, peace and praise I lived for months. In every chapter of the Bible that I read I could see something new, and exceedingly sweet and precious to my soul: "His words were found and I did eat them, and they were unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart." Nothing could I see in the heavens above, or upon the earth beneath, but His love, power, mercy, grace and lovingkindness. I was preaching Jesus Christ and His preciousness to every one with whom I could

get to talk; and ignorantly thought that all who went to chapel would be ready to rejoice with me.

But, alas! I was wonderfully deceived; for when, at the first prayer-meeting which I went to, I told them what great things the Lord had done for my soul, how He had delivered me from the curse of the law, and been made a curse for me, having died in my room and stead; how He had finished my transgressions, and made a complete end of all my sins; when I told them these things, and how God had made them known to my soul, convincing me that there was now no condemnation for me, and that I was as sure of going to heaven as that Christ was there; poor things! they could not tell what to make of me. Some laughed, some pitied, some called it nothing but wildfire, whilst others warned me not to be too secure. I kept them as long as I could persuade any of them to stay and listen, relating to them every particular, how I was, and where I was, and how it came to my soul, and how happy I was. I could have stayed all night, for it was my meat and drink to tell what great things the Lord had done for my soul.

Having left the chapel and got into the fields, I began to think over what they had said, and to question myself whether they might not be in the right, and all they said very true. There are some of them, thought I, old Christians, and have been many years in the ways of God. "They must certainly," said I, "know better than such a young fool as I Yet surely it cannot be all deception. Can I be deceived in losing my burden and feeling the pardon of all my sins? Lord, I am not deceived, am I?"

I fell upon my knees under the hedge and cried out to the Lord. "Am I deceived, Lord? Am I too secure? Is it wildfire, Lord?" And the dear Lord broke in upon my soul with such Divine glory, and such a succession of promises, that the Bible appeared to me to be nothing but promises from beginning to end, and all mine, all appearing to be made especially to me, and to none else. I had such a view, too, of the faithfulness and glory of God in His fulfilment of them from first to last to my poor soul, that I was completely overwhelmed with transports of heavenly joy, and for a time, scarcely knew' whether I was in the body or out of the body'.

Upon arising from the ground, it struck me that it was the very place in which the devil had often tempted me to put an end to my life; and O how I did dance and sing. and banter the lying devil, and dare him to come out of his den! I challenged him to his face, and told him if he did not come out he durst not. I called him everything but a gentleman. I was so happy and comfortable that I felt as if I could walk through troops of devils shouting, "In the Name of the Lord I will destroy

them." O how I wondered at the goodness of the Lord to one so unworthy of the least of His mercies! "If this." cried I, "be wildfire, let me have more of it. If this is being too secure, let me live and die in it. My God and my Saviour, Thou art my Portion, my Rock, my Hiding-place, my Friend, my dear Redeemer. O my dear, dear, dear Jesus, Thou art the chief of ten thousand, the Altogether Lovely." How I got home I know not, for what with shouting, praising, thanking and blessing the Lord, it was morning before I arrived there.

The next time I met the same people, I began, after the prayer-meeting, to tell them of my journey home the last meeting-night, and how I had knelt down in the field and asked the Lord whether I was too secure, whether I was deceived, and whether it was all wildfire. I told them how the Lord had answered my prayers, and had come into my soul with such glory, that He had showed me that all the promises of the Bible were mine, and that I was as sure and as confident of being a child of God, and of having had all my sins forgiven me, and that I should go to heaven, as I was that there was a God. For I insisted on it that He Himself had told me so; and with tears of joy in my eyes, I assured them that even at the moment I was speaking, I felt the pardoning blood of my dear Jesus in my soul, and was confident that I had been delivered from the curse of the law, that the law had nothing to do with me now, for Christ had obeyed all its demands for me.

I told them that I felt in my very soul that the law which had cursed me in my coming in and in my going out, in my lying down and my rising up, which had been so great a terror to my poor soul that I dreaded God as my worst enemy, was now removed from over me; for I could now love God, love His law, delight in it, and delight to see it honoured in my dear Jesus. I said that I had asked the law if it had aught against me, and it had answered, with such a smile, "Deliver him from going down into the pit; for I have found a ransom" {[Job 33:24](#)} and these were things, I said, to which I was a living witness.

One of them, who professed to be my friend, told me that he was afraid I was turning Antinomian. (See MERCIES Topic 8) "Antinomian," said I, "what sort of people are they? I never heard the name before." "They are those," replied he, "who deny the moral law to be the believer's rule of life, which is a most awful doctrine, and leads to all manner of sin." "Moral law!" said I, "what is that?" "It is that just and holy law of God," replied he, "in which He commands us to love and obey Him." "What," asked I, "do you mean that law which Paul meant when he said, 'Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them?'"

Do you take that law to be your rule of life?" asked I "Surely I do," said he, "and all those who do not are Antinomians." "Then," said I, "I am one of those Antinomians." Blessed be God! He has delivered me from that law. Christ has obeyed it for me, and has been made a curse for me, and has gone to the end of it for my poor soul.

I asked him how he felt that law, what it did for him whilst he was under it, and how he had been delivered from it. Upon this subject he could say nothing; but he maintained that believers were required to be obedient to the law, as well as to believe in Christ; but I insisted on it that there was obedience, and blessed obedience too, in Christ, obedience which did my soul good, which pleased God, honoured the law, pardoned all my sins, confounded the devil, and made my soul dance for joy. I told him I would not commit a single sin for a thousand worlds if I could help it; for it was my meat and drink to do the will of my God and Saviour who had done so great things for me. "When I was under the law," said I, "I had no obedience, but I was full of anger, rebellion and wretchedness, and sometimes felt such wrath that I could have pulled the Almighty from His throne for not having made me a beast that had no soul to appear before so holy a God, who cannot acquit the guilty.

But now, having been delivered from the law, and having the love of the Lord Jesus Christ shed abroad in my heart, I can believe in Him, obey Him, praise him, thank Him, and adore Him night and day." And I insisted on it that I never knew what it was to hate sin, to love God, and to delight in His ways until His pardoning love and blood were enjoyed in my heart, and that I was confident this was not the law, but Christ Jesus, my God and my Saviour, in my heart, obeying the law in my room and stead.

But of these things he knew nothing; nor, indeed, could I meet with any who knew much about the path in which I had been led, and the glorious liberty which I enjoyed. And, indeed, how can any man enter into it until it first enter into him? "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." I wondered that they who had been Christians so long did not see as I saw, and feel as I felt; yet whatever I could say to them of the way in which God had led me, the bondage from which He delivered me, and the love and delight I experienced in His ways, had no effect upon them, except that of making them rage and rave against me, and warn the people to have nothing to do with me.

I wondered how it was that they kept at such a distance from me, but I could not keep at a distance from them. At all their prayer meetings and preachings I was

sure to be present, being quite impatient for the time to arrive to meet the children of God and tell them again what great things God had done for my soul. But some of them could not bear to see me there, and one of them told me one night that he wished I would never come amongst them more, as I made nothing but confusion, and was a disturber of their peace; he therefore hoped I would come no more.

I answered him that I did not come amongst them intending to trouble them, or to throw them into confusion, but that my desire was to praise Jesus, and to tell what great things He had done for my soul by suffering in my stead, and obeying the law for me; and how precious to me was His blood, and the joy, and praise, and thanksgiving I felt for His mercy to lay under the curse of the law, expecting nothing but damnation. "And was it not wonderful," said I, "that the dear and precious Jesus, bless His dear Name, should come to my poor soul, and pardon all my sins and obey the law for me?" They told me that they feared I was deceived. "How can that be?" said I "I have His pardon in my heart and very soul." I assured them that I had tried to bring back my sins and to feel the guilt and burden of them again, but in vain; for, said I such sweet words as these flowed in upon my soul, "Thy sins are all forgiven thee;" {[Lu 7:48](#)} "Though thy sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool;" {[Isa 1:18](#)} "I have cast all thy sins behind My back;" {[Isa 38:17](#)} "Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace." {[Lu 7:50](#)}

I assured them that I could not now think of half the precious texts of Scripture that my dear and lovely Jesus was speaking to my Soul nearly all the day long. "And how," said I, "can I keep my tongue still? Were I to hold my peace, the very stones would cry out." However, the more I talked of the precious Jesus and the glorious things He had done for my soul, the more they hated and shunned me; nay, I verily believe that some of them hated me a thousand times worse than the devil. They told some of the ministers, whom I was in the habit of hearing with them, that I had turned Antinomian, and denied the moral law as my rule of life, which made all the professors with whom I was at that time acquainted look upon me for holding such a sentiment as a very dangerous man.

I recollect there was one minister, a Mr. Ely who preached at Bury, who was in the habit occasionally of coming to one of their houses at Radcliffe Bridge. One time, when he had been preaching there, he came to me to convince me of my error. He went on for a long time talking about things I knew nothing at all about. But I told him that I had been under the law for months, and had felt its curses and terror in my soul in such a manner that I expected nothing but damnation night and day, until I heard Mr. Roby read these words, "He hath led captivity captive," &c. I told

him the pardon, joy and peace that entered into my soul and the numerous texts of Scripture that had come with power, and that since that time I was not under the law. I asked how he felt when he was under the law, and how he had been delivered from it. I told him that, as he was a minister of Jesus Christ, he must have known these things. He turned very cross, and said I was got to be a teacher, one too wise to be instructed by my teachers. I answered that the dear Jesus was my Teacher, that He had told me that all my sins were forgiven, that He had died for me upon the cross, that He had shown me His hands and feet, and that I knew that He was my Lord and my God. "I have Him in my heart," said I, "this moment, and He is precious to my soul." Upon this, Mr. Ely said that he pitied me, and that he was sorry for me, and would pray for me, for he feared that I was awfully deluded.

After he was gone, I began to think for a few moments, "Am I wrong? All these good people who have been so long in the way, and even the pious ministers too, all believe that I am deceived. They are all determined to have nothing to do with me. Surely I must be wrong!" "O Lord," cried I, "am I indeed wrong? Am I indeed deceived? Was it from Thee? Am I a child of Thine? Art Thou my Lord and my God? Hast Thou suffered, and died, and obeyed the law for me, and in my room and stead?" And O how sweetly did the Lord appear again to my soul! Such a sight had I of His Person, His promises, sufferings and glory, that there was no room for doubts and fears. Indeed, for nearly twelve months it was little else with my soul but joy and peace, expecting, hoping and desiring that the time would soon come when I should die and be for ever with my dear Saviour, to see Him as He is, and to be like Him.

Three times, in particular, during the twelve months the love of God was so powerfully shed abroad in my heart, that for a time I really did not know whether I was in the body or out of the body. One of these times, I well recollect, I was returning from Manchester on a Lord's day after service. I felt very happy and comfortable in soul, but languid and faint in body and exceedingly hungry; and powerfully it came into my mind. "Yes, and you know you have nothing to eat when you get home, and not a farthing will you have to buy with until tomorrow when you take home your work."

This brought me for a moment to a standstill. What shall I do? thought I; but in came the Lord with some precious portions of His dear Word and dropped them into my soul like honey from the honeycomb; yea, sweeter were they than the honeycomb, and more beautiful a thousand times than apples of gold in pictures of silver! "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." {[Mt 4:4](#)} "Bread shall be given him and his waters shall be

sure." {[Isa 33:16](#)} "The cattle upon a thousand hills are Mine, and all the gold and silver." {[Ps 50:10](#)} It seemed as if the whole Bible were opened from beginning to end, that God was my God and not one single blessing that I stood in need of whether for body or soul, but that I had in promises, and should have in possession, too, as I needed them. He who had promised was God, and His promises were sure.

I was led also to see that all these blessed promises originated in His love; and such an opening had I to my soul of His everlasting love, grace and kindness, that I had not power to stand on my feet, but was obliged to lie down upon the ground. How long I lay there I know not but this I know, that the mercy, love, grace and glory of God shone so gloriously into my soul, that I earnestly begged the Lord to take me to Himself or otherwise stay His hand, for I felt the glory too much for the body to stand under. When the glory was a little withdrawn, I got up and went on my way home, singing, praising adoring and blessing His precious Name for such matchless, discriminating love to one so vile as I O, thought I, what a place heaven must be! O, if these are but drops, what must be the fountain? "O time," cried I, "fly away, stop not, but waft me quickly to that Jordan of death, where my soul shall be dislodged from this poor clay tabernacle, which is too weak to bear even the drops of my Saviour's glory. O death, death! when wilt thou come? welcome be thy presence! O happy messenger, haste thy speed, and let loose my longing soul, that it may fly to my God and Saviour, there to drink immortal joys!" O, thought I, what glory will be mine, when undressed of this body of flesh and blood! I shall dwell for ever with the Lord and never, never sin through all eternity. O the heavenly journey I had home.

Upon arriving there, I found that my wife had borrowed several little necessaries, so that we had a cup of tea, and plenty left for breakfast the next day, which enabled me to rise early in the morning to get my piece out, finish my work and carry it home, all of which I had to do before we could have any dinner. "O bless the Lord," cried my soul, "here is my bread and water, according to His promise." Soon after this the Lord began to withdraw His comforts, little by little, and I began to find that I had not such meltings of heart, nor yet such free access to Him as formerly. The Word of God was not so precious to me, and darkness began to gather upon my mind.

I read the sweet portions of God's Word that had hitherto been so precious to my soul, but I could no longer feel them so sweet. What all this could mean I could not tell; and such evil thoughts began to work in my heart, that I was quite astonished. "O," cried I, "what can be the matter? Surely my sins were all forgiven. Surely they were taken away by the death and sufferings of Christ. What means this?" I ran to

the Bible; again I read the old promises that had formerly been so sweet with all the earnestness and prayer that I could muster up; but, alas! not one drop of comfort could I get out of them all. What can be the cause? thought I Surely I must have neglected my duty, or I never should be in this state. Then I determined to follow up prayer until I should again enjoy the same comforts as before; but, alas this I could not do, for such terrible abominations arose in my heart as made me tremble. The more I determined to keep them down, the more they rose up.

Fears also began to arise, whether I had not been deceived; whether I had not been too secure, and whether it had not been all wild-fire, Here I was, day after day, and things appeared worse and worse. "O," thought I, "those dear Christians told me that I was deceived, and that it would be shown what I was, and they warned the people to have nothing to do with me; and that dear minister, Mr. Ely, told me that I was in an awful error; and all they said and believed of me is now coming to pass. O that I had never said a word about it to one soul! O if I had never opened my mouth about it, nobody would then have known anything about me, and all would have been quiet! But all the parish knows what I have said about my religion."

I really believe there never was such a fool with his comforts, for I scarcely ever entered a house without asking them whether they had been born again, and telling them that if they had not, they were sure to be lost. I could not help telling any person that would talk to me that I was born again, what God had done for me, and that I was sure of going to heaven. Besides which, I used to talk about my afflictions and trials in providence; in short, one thing upon another, until I was almost at my wits end, and was hated by all around, alike professors and profane, worse than the devil. But my greatest grief was the loss of God's smiles.

I had nothing but sighs and groans for days and nights together until I actually began to fear I must have been deceived, and that I must give it all up together. O how my poor soul did cry unto God, "Do, Lord, if I am indeed Thine, appear once more unto my poor soul, and say unto it, "I am thy salvation"" At last the Lord blessedly spoke again, and with such power and sweetness, in these words, "Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee." {[Jer 31:3](#)}

Then all was right in a moment; joy and gladness entered my poor sorrowful heart, and I could then sing with cheerfulness. "For He hath not despised nor abhorred the afflictions of the afflicted; neither hath He hid His face from him; but, when he cried unto Him, He heard." {[Ps 22:24](#)} O how was my soul led to see a little of His unchangeable love and faithfulness. I saw that whatever change I might

experience, His love and faithfulness were the same. Surely, thought I, I shall never distrust Him who has thus appeared to me again. But, alas! this state of mind did not last long. I soon had fresh exercises in providence and in grace.

At this time I had two small children, and my wife was near her confinement with the third. Trade was very bad and provisions dear, flour being fivepence or sixpence a pound, and other things in proportion. It was what we called "barley times," for there was scarcely anything for the poor except barley; so that our table was very scantily provided. Indeed, at the very time my wife was taken in labour we were without a single sixpence, and had not in the house two shillings worth of provisions. Off I was obliged to go for a doctor; but what to do for a little money, or where to go and borrow it, I could not tell. On my way to the doctor's I did nothing but cry. "O Lord, what shall I do? Where shall I go? Thou, O Lord, knowest how we are situated. Do, dear Lord, direct me what to do and whither to go."

As soon as I had sent off the doctor, it suddenly struck my mind that I should go to the master for whom I worked and ask him to lend me half-a-guinea. He lived in Manchester, and for that place I accordingly set out, praying all the way to the Lord that He would open the man's heart to lend it me, telling Him that the hearts of all men were at His disposal. When I arrived at my master's house, and asked him to do me the favour, he fetched me the half-guinea without either a frown or a cross look, for I watched him closely and saw that he did it pleasantly. Then I knew that the Lord had been before me, for he was not in the habit of lending money to his weavers. I saw that it was all the Lord's doing, and O what thankfulness I felt to Him for opening the man's heart! As I was walking down the street from the warehouse on my way home, blessing and praising the Lord for His unmerited kindness to one so utterly unworthy of the least notice of either God or man, I suddenly met, as I was crossing the road, a man whom I knew by sight, from having often seen him at the chapel that I attended, which was in Mosley Street.

I did not know the man's name, but in passing he blessed me in the Name of the Lord and held out his hand to shake hands with me. "God bless you," said he and ran off, leaving me in the middle of the street, utterly astonished to find that he had left half-a-guinea in my hand. There I stood for some time, admiring, praising and blessing God, and should have stayed longer had not a coachman, who was driving a coach up the street, called me a fool and told me to get out of the road. Upon looking round I perceived, for the first time, that there were a number of people collected together to gaze at me, in doubt, I dare say, whether I had not made my

escape from the mad-house. On my return home, I got out of town as quickly as possible, and O the blessed journey I had!

The very trees appeared to clap their hands! "O," cried I, "can I ever cease blessing, praising, thanking, extolling, trusting, and loving my dear Saviour! O," cried I, "Thou hast done great things for me, whereof I am glad." When I reached home I found that my wife had been safely delivered and was doing well. I had now plenty of money for present circumstances, and plenty of faith to trust God for more when we needed it; for I really did believe it impossible for me to distrust God again, seeing the very great things He had done for me, and the wonderful way in which He had done them. I soon, however, had plenty of work for my stock of faith. My landlord insisted on my quitting the house and going into the ground-cellar where I then kept my loom and used to weave, as he wanted the apartments in which we lived for himself. As I owed some money for rent, I complied; but my wife, having been so lately confined, was so much affected by the dampness of the place-and, indeed, it was a sad place to sleep in-that she, for a time, nearly lost the use of her hands, for she was taken with the cramp in her hands and fingers, so that she could but seldom either dress or undress herself or child.

Work was now very bad, and provisions immensely dear. We had three small children, and had lost one about six months before. One circumstance that occurred about this time I think I shall never forget. One week we had a very scanty allowance of food, not sufficient to last us through. In the hope of getting my piece out, if it were possible, by Saturday, I worked very hard; but this hard work, and the want of nourishment, our food being principally barley, so exhausted me, that I was obliged, through weakness, to leave off on Friday at the very time when we had not one morsel of food remaining. Here was a gloomy scene, not a morsel of food for husband, wife, or child; the wife, too, with an infant at her breast. If ever I prayed in my life, I did that night, that the Lord would take away our appetite and send us to bed satisfied.

And, I believe, the Lord heard my cry, for the poor children wanted to go to bed, and said not one word about anything to eat, for which I felt thankful. But my trouble was about the morning, for I could not leave the morrow to take thought for the things of itself. I rose very early the following morning, and worked till I was obliged to leave the loom, and could scarcely walk or stand, I was so faint and weak. My poor wife, who was as weak and as sickly as I, burst into tears, and cried, "O what shall we do? I cannot live; I am sure we shall die of want!" and I was sunk so low both in body and mind, that I verily believed it would be the case. But what was the finishing stroke to my feelings was that my eldest child, who was

about five years of age, looked up to me with tears running down its little cheeks, and cried, "Father, give me some bread; O my father, do give me some bread."

I thought my soul would have burst of grief. "O," cried I, "are my children to die of want before my face, and I cannot help them?" I ran into a little place under the cellar stairs, fell on my knees before God, and entreated the Lord with all my soul to take away my life. "O Lord, do take away my life; let me die; how can I behold the death of wife and children?" Whilst I was upon my knees entreating God to take away my life, these words came with great power and force into my mind, "And they did all eat and were filled; and they took up of the fragments that remained twelve baskets full." {[Mt 14:20](#)} And it was repeated again, "And they took up of the fragments that remained twelve baskets full." I did all I could to put it away. "What," said I, "can it have to do with me in our situation? It has nothing to do with me."

I kept crying for some time, but the whole connection came so powerfully to my mind how the Lord had fed five thousand in the wilderness with five loaves and two fishes, and they were all filled. Well, thought I, He is as able to feed us now with fish and bread as He was then. That precious text flowed into my soul with such light, life, liberty, power and glory, "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and for ever" {[Heb 13:8](#)} and my soul was so refreshed, and my faith so strengthened by it, that I was as sure that we should have a supply as that there was a God. I arose off my knees as strong as a giant in mind and body, and told my wife that the Lord would most certainly send us something to eat, and very soon.

She wanted to know how and when. "It does not matter," said I, "about the how nor the when; I know it will be the case, and my soul can bless God for it before it comes." Just upon the back of this, a man knocked at the door, and I went and opened it to him. It was a gentleman's servant. "John," said he, "my master has bought some herrings to give to his factory people. I had no orders to leave you any, but I thought as I came along that I would leave you twelve, if you like to accept them." I was so overpowered that I could scarcely speak to the man. The goodness, mercy and kindness of my dear Lord shone so brightly that I was quite lost in wonder. Whilst I was still wondering and admiring the goodness of God to a worthless worm, a neighbour sent two cakes of bread. I thought my very soul should have burst through my poor body, and taken its flight into glory unto my dear Jesus.

I withdrew into the little palace under the cellar which, a few hours before, I had begged God to take away my life. And O what a heavenly palace it was! After

returning my God thanks, some of the fish were soon ready. and we sat down to the table all crying together. "Come, my dears," said I, "we are now dining on the same food as Jesus and the five thousand dined on in the wilderness;" and I do believe in my very soul that Jesus sat with us at the table. O the sweetness of that fish and bread! And how wonderful the goodness and mercy of the Lord appeared unto me in sending fish and bread as the food of the soul in promise, and then the first morsel of food to the body must be fish and bread also. The fish were so sweet and good that we soon made a breach into the twelve.

O how my poor soul was overcome with the lovingkindness of my dear Lord! The remainder of the day was taken up with nothing but praises, thanksgivings, adorations and honours to my God for His wonderful deliverance. When night came on, the devil tried to bring me into misery again by telling me that the fish and bread were nearly all gone, and what should I do for the morrow? But faith was too strong for him at that time, for I was enabled to tell him with joy and comfort that Jesus Christ was the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow, yea, and for ever. Yea, that Jesus, if He pleased, could send us plenty for the morrow, and that I believed He would do. The next morning, being Lord's day, I was up very early, and with my soul sweetly melted with the goodness of God and with the blessed assurance that He would be with me and provide, I took a walk early in the fields. O the sweet view I had of my covenant God in all His works of creation, providence and grace. I saw that it was as utterly impossible for me to be denied any good thing that was really necessary for me, as it was for God to deny Himself. O how I gazed upon the heavens in their glory and upon the earth in its furniture! "What!" said my soul, "this God that hath spread out these heavens and formed this wonderful earth, and all the living creatures that live upon it! What! this God my Father?"

Can it be possible, Lord, that poor John Warburton can be Thy child, and must I call Thee my Father?" O how my soul went out in love to Him. I told Him with simplicity just as I felt, that if it would offend Him to call Him Father, I would try not to do it. But how to keep from it under these feelings I could not tell. But, bless His precious Name, He was not offended with me, for He showed me that He was my God from everlasting, and that He had chosen me. before this earth was spoken into existence. O what a sweet sight I had of Christ taking my nature into union with Himself, and becoming flesh of my flesh, and bone of my bone. "Why, then," said I, "I can call Thee Brother, too." Yea, and such glorious views had I of His character, and offices, and relationship, that I was lost in such holy wonder as quite to forget the time.

Upon returning home, I found two or three persons there who frequently came to our house on a Sunday. This morning they had brought us a few necessaries, some one thing and some another, so that we were comfortably supplied throughout that day. Surely, thought I, God is opening the windows of heaven, and raining down mercies upon me, so richly is He supplying all our need. O how my poor soul was carried away with matter of praise and thankfulness to my God for His astonishing kindness to me, the most unworthy of all His saints, the very chiefest of all sinners! O how I wondered that the ministers whom I was then in the habit of hearing never talked of the glorious things of God's wonderful deliverances, both in providence and grace, to His people! But I was soon brought to see the reason, because they were themselves utter strangers to these deliverances. And how could they enter into those things which their eyes had not seen, nor their hands handled, nor their ears heard, nor their souls feasted on?

Had these things been experimentally known in their own souls, they must have spoken of the things they had handled and felt. As soon as I discovered that they knew nothing of these things in their own souls, I declared that I did not believe God had sent them to preach, and that I was sure they were blind guides, wolves in sheep's clothing. This so exasperated them and their people against me, that they could neither bear the sight of me, nor endure to hear my name. "Oh, shocking!" said some of them, "have you heard what John Warburton says of our dear minister? He says that God has never sent him to preach, and that nearly all the ministers who come to our place are blind and dead." "Oh!" cried one of the pious ones, "I wish he was dead, for there is no peace where he is." "Yes," said another, "I wish he was out of the country."

But still I stuck to my text, that if God had sent them, they must come with God's message, and trace the footsteps of the flock, and pick up the stumbling-blocks from the path, and cast up the highway, and lift up the standard for the people. One or two of the people began to see as I saw, and to think that surely their ministers were out of the secret. This enraged them still more. "What!" said they, "he has poisoned the mind of such a one. There will never be any peace where he is." Then they would set upon me quite enraged; but this never moved me. God gave me such boldness and liberty to clear my conscience before them all, time after time, with a "Thus saith the Lord," that they could not stand against it, either parson or people. Sometimes, indeed, I did think that I would take no notice, whatever the ministers should say, but would try to be quiet like the rest; and if there were things I did not like, why, I would leave them, and pass my time away more peaceably.

By this means I thought I should have more friends, which, as I was very poor and much tried in circumstances, would be much better for me. But when I went again and heard the minister with his "ought to do," his "should do," "might do," and his "duty to do," O how my very soul rose up against such doctrine! No sooner was I out of the chapel than I was obliged to go right smack at it and pull it all to pieces. Thus I set all in a blaze, and it was thought an unpardonable thing that I should speak against the minister. I, who was so poor and lived in a cellar! who had not half a bellyful of victuals, and scarcely clothes to cover my nakedness! To think that I of all people should take upon me to find fault with the minister was unbearable!

But the greatest mortification to them was that they could not confound me with the Word of God. O how they did watch my goings out and my comings in; with many an anxious wish did they hope to be enabled to say. "Ah! so would we have it." But God preserved me with a tender conscience, so that I was enabled, in a small measure, to live the gospel, as well as to stand forth and vindicate it. And how their pious minister did at times rave and rage against me in the pulpit, holding me up as the poor bigoted Antinomian, an enemy to holiness and good works. Shortly after, however, it was proved that this pious minister had made too free with a female, and he was discharged from the place whilst the poor Antinomian stood the storm, and was brought through all, and was preserved from bringing a reproach upon the truth.

But I must return to the happy enjoyment I had in seeing the goodness of God, in putting into the hearts of these people to bring us so bountiful a supply at such a time of need. One brought some butter and sugar, another a loaf of bread, and another some potatoes and a little pork. O how my tongue was loosed to speak forth His praise! for we were provided for as richly as kings and princes. Nay, I envied no man's situation on earth; for I had everything that my soul and body wanted-plenty of provisions in the house, and the love of my God sited abroad in my heart, which, indeed, maketh rich and addeth no sorrow.

The next day I finished my work, and procured a fresh supply. Surely, thought I, never can I again distrust so gracious, so merciful, so longsuffering and faithful a covenant God and Saviour, who has kindly brought me on to the present day. But I have always found, and believe I ever shall, in this vale of tears, that whenever I have had a sweet day of prosperity, the day of adversity has been set over against it. The next trial that I had was a keen one indeed. My landlord began to want me out of his cellar, for I suppose, he began to think that I should never pay my rent. And, indeed, there was little appearance of it at that time, for my wife, who was a

fruitful creature (much too fruitful, many thought, for the times and our situation), was again in the family way.

My landlord sent for me, and told me that he wished me to leave his premises, and get another house, as he wanted the cellar himself for a shop for his loom. I answered him that I would endeavour to get another place as quickly as possible; and, indeed, I tried all I could for a long time. It really seemed for some time as if nobody should let me one. At last my landlord lost all patience, and told me the shop he wanted, and the shop he would have, whether I had a place to go into or not. As I owed him about four pounds for rent, he put the bailiffs in to take an inventory of my few goods. Indeed, they were so few that, if they had been sold, they would not have fetched much money. Then the devil, unbelief, and carnal reason set to work pretty sharply.

Now, indeed, thought I, it is all over with me! There are four pounds due for rent, and not four pence in the world have I towards paying it. In a few days my bed, my loom, even dishes and spoons must be sold. Not a friend did I know who could help me with ten shillings. "What shall I do?" I exclaimed; "whither shall I go?"

O how it will rejoice my enemies who have been waiting for my halting. Now they will say. "So would we have it." But the greatest trial of all was that God hid His face from me. I tried every possible way to get the money, but all in vain. At last I went to the overseer of the parish, but he informed me that I did not belong to his parish, but to the next one. So he gave me a shilling, and told me that he should remove me and all my family to my own parish the following day. I did not like this at all, but I was obliged to comply. O what a night I passed through! How my soul was torn to pieces! Oh! Thought I, how will professors and profane rejoice when I am in the workhouse. Then again a little hope would spring up, that perhaps the parish would pay my rent rather than that I should go into the poor house. The following day the overseer came, and I and my wife and three children went with him, and a weeping journey we had of, I think, three miles, Upon arriving there, we found that the overseer of the parish was not at home, and we therefore had to wait till he came in.

His wife was very cross with us, but my poor soul was so broken down, that she might have wiped her shoes upon me, and I should not have turned again. At last I told her that I was very sorry we were under the necessity of troubling her, and that it was my heart's desire that, if it were the Lord's will, she might never be in the same situation in which we then were. At this she became quite pleasant, and fetched some provisions, and was very agreeable, which quite revived me, for I

saw that the Lord could soften the heart in a moment, and cause even enemies to pity His people in captivity. In the evening the overseer came home, and when I told him my pitiful case, he heard me with great patience, and expressed a great deal of sorrow for me. He said however that he could not pay my rent, and that the best thing I could do would be to return, and if my goods were sold, I must come to him again, and he would take us to the workhouse.

He gave me two shillings and sixpence, and off we came home. I wondered that the man had given me half-a-crown, for we had no victuals in the house. What a night did I pass through again! I sometimes thought that I should sink into black despair. How it will grieve the church to which I belong, thought I, to hear that I have been forced to go to the workhouse! The church of which I was a member was one of independent principles, in Mosley Street, Manchester. Sometimes a little hope would spring up that God would yet open a way for me; and O how precious did these words come to my mind, "I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known; I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight." {[Isa 42:16](#)} And "Bread shall be given thee; and thy waters shall be sure." {[Isa 33:16](#)}

A day or two after this I finished the work which I had upon my loom, and carried it home to my master, who lived in Manchester. As I was coming out of the warehouse, a thought struck me that I would call upon one of the deacons of the church, whose name was Ramsay, a tailor, living in Shudehill. I made up my mind, however, not to say anything to him of the circumstances in which I was, for I thought it should grieve the people to know that they had a member of their church in such a plight. I tried to pass the door, but could not; so I knocked, trembling all the time. I was received very kindly by the old gentleman, who wondered that I had not called before, and asked me how I and my family were, and how we got on. I was speechless for a time, but at length burst into a flood of tears, for I really thought my heart would have burst with grief, and told him that my goods were about to be sold for rent, and that we were all going to the workhouse. I told him, too, that my greatest grief and sorrow was that the enemies of the truth would say, "So would we have it." The old man smiled, and said, "Never fear, John, your goods will not be sold." "Oh! sir," said I, "next Monday is the day for the sale, and there is no possibility, according to my views, of its being prevented." I again burst into a flood of tears, and wished I had never joined their church, for I was afraid they would be reproached on my account. The old man's feelings were overcome as well as my own, and he could hold no longer.

At length he asked me if I had seen Mr. Clegg, another deacon and I told him I had not. "Then," said he, "Mr. Clegg has got the money all ready for you, and has been expecting you to call upon him." "What," said I, "Can such a thing be possible? Oh! what shall I do to bless and praise the Lord?" My feelings were such that I could hardly tell what I was, or where I was. I went to Mr. Clegg, but I was so overcome with the wonder-working hand of God, that it was some time before I could get there. Mr. Clegg himself opened the door to me. and, with a sweet smile as pleasant as May, asked me how I was, and how I was getting on.

I was safe enough from telling, for I was so overcome that all I wanted was to be somewhere alone, where I could vent my feelings. He told me that, having heard of my situation, he had begged part of the money, and had added the rest himself. Many other things the old gentleman said, and what a pleasure he felt in being the instrument of delivering me out of my calamity. My soul was so full, that I could do nothing but weep for joy; I wanted to be on some common, where no human eye could see nor ear hear me, and where I could shout forth the praises of God both with body and soul. The old gentleman gave me the money, and we both wept together for joy. O the feelings I had when I came out of the house with the money in my pocket, and the love, mercy and glory of God in my heart. My poor soul was truly like a vessel that wanted vent. The first secret place I could find after I got into the street I crept into; and O what praise, thanksgiving and adoration flowed out of my heart and from my lips unto God for His wonderful unthought of deliverance. Oh! how the song of Moses melted my soul, and how precious did it flow out of my mouth, "I will sing unto the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea.

The Lord is my strength, and song, and He is become my salvation; He is my God, and I will exalt Him. Thy right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power: Thy right hand, O Lord, hath dashed in pieces the enemy." {[Ex 15:1-2,6](#)} I got out of the town in some way or other, but how I knew not, for I had such a weight of glory to carry, that at times I had to put my hand upon my mouth until I got into the fields, as here I could see no human being; and then I gave vent to body and soul, sometimes dancing and shouting His praises, sometimes on my knees blessing and thanking Him. I called Him all the endearing names my soul could think of, or my tongue utter; and such glorious views I had of the glory of God, both in providence and grace, that I was so lost at times that I did not know where I was, or where I was going.

At last it struck my mind that I ought to go home, and let my poor wife know the wonderful deliverance that God had wrought for us; and then I went on as hard as I

could walk, singing, praising, blessing and glorifying God with all my soul and with all my strength. At last I reached home, and into my little palace I went, for it appeared more like a palace than a poor cellar. I found my wife weeping, and almost exhausted for want of something to eat. I could not for a moment conceal the wonders that God had wrought for us. "Cheer up, woman," said I, "why weepest thou? God has sent us the rent, every farthing of it, and something to spare. I have it in my pocket." As I spoke thus, I pulled out the money, and put it upon the table. Poor thing! when she saw the money she almost fainted away. She did not, at that time, know the Lord for herself. I counted the money, and found that, what with that which I had drawn for my work, and a little that Mr. Ramsay had given me before I went to Mr. Clegg, we could pay the rent and have nearly twenty shillings left for provisions. We both wept together like two children. I told her that this God was my God, and I believed in my heart that I should live to see Him as her God too.

After having had something to eat, I went to my landlord and told him that I had brought him his rent money; but he said he had nothing further to do in the matter, and that I must go to the bailiffs who had marked my goods, and whatever they charged I must pay. So I went to them and settled the affair very comfortably. For several weeks after this event I was so indulged with the presence and love of God, and with such transporting views of His power, faithfulness and goodness, that my soul was carried above all the empty things of this perishing world, though I seldom knew what it was to have a sufficiency to eat. But who or what can give trouble when God gives peace? and truly my soul has proved the truths of these precious words many times, "Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith." {[Pr 15:17](#)} And many times have I found that man doth not "live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." "His mouth is most sweet, yea, He is altogether lovely."

With considerable toil and trouble, I at last succeeded in getting the promise of a house in what they call the Narrow Lane, near Besses-o'-th'-Barn. For fear the man should run from his word, I packed all my traps on the very same day that I took the house, for I wanted to get away as bad as my landlord to get rid of me. At this very time I had not one single penny in the world, nor six pennyworth of bread in the house. I had about two days' work upon the loom, but I durst not stay until it was finished, lest my new landlord should hear of my poverty and stop me from going into his premises. So I rolled up the piece on the beam, and with the help of my brother and a horse and cart, we set off with the things. When we had arrived there and unloaded the things, we began to want something to eat and drink. I accordingly went to the public-house, and asked the landlord if he would let me

have a little beer until I took home my work. I told him how things were with me; and his answer was, "Yes, I might have whatever I wished."

I then called upon a shopkeeper and, having told him who I was and explained my situation, requested credit for a few provisions, saying that I hoped soon to be able to pay him. His reply was, "Yes, you may have anything you please that I have." O how my soul looked on to see the angel of the Lord doing so wonderfully for me! O how He can make a way for His dear, tried ones in time of need! "Oh," exclaimed my soul, "He is indeed a very present help in trouble." Promise upon promise flowed in upon my soul, so that they appeared, in every chapter of the Bible, to hang like clusters of grapes which my soul could eat and digest.

O how precious did I find the language of the prophet, "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and Thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart." I had now everything that my heart desired; plenty of provisions, a comfortable house—compared with the cellar—and the love, smiles and mercy of God enjoyed within. O the blessed joy and peace I had for some time in my new habitation! Everything for a long time seemed to go on better. One night, a short time after, I had a very remarkable dream. I thought that I was going to see my mother, and on the road I had to pass a farmhouse, and in turning the corner of a field near this farmhouse, I thought that I suddenly came upon a large black bull, which seemed, by his appearance, determined to attack me.

I turned another way to avoid him, but I met him again. I then got into a way between two walls, where he again made his appearance and, rushing violently upon me, knocked me down. There I lay for a few moments, and he stood a few yards distant from me. Again he made his approach, for the purpose, as I thought, of making an end of me. I thought it was now all over, and that I must die upon the spot. But oh, what a spirit of prayer I felt in my dream to the Lord that He would be with me this once, and give me strength that I might come off more than conqueror.

In a moment I felt as strong and as bold as a lion. When he came in with all his might, intending to toss me up in the air, I seized him by the horns, one with my right hand amid the other with my left, and, splitting him quite asunder from head to tail, dashed the two parts of him to the ground, one on each side of him. I then placed my right foot on one side of him and my left foot on the other, shouting in triumph, "Rejoice not against me, O my enemy; when I fall I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me." {[Mic 7:8](#)} I awoke out of my dream with the precious words in my mouth, and for some time could hardly

persuade myself that it was a dream. O the weight with which this lay upon my heart for weeks! I firmly believed it to be a token of some keen trial I had to endure; and hope, at times, sprung up that God would bring me through it, because I had gained the victory in my dream.

And exactly so it happened. Shortly after this dream my wife was taken very ill, and instead of getting better, grew worse and worse, till at length I was obliged to call in a doctor, who, when he arrived and saw her, told us she was in a very bad fever. He likewise gave a strict charge that nobody should come into the house, except one person to attend upon her. Oh! when he told me, my soul sank fathoms. "What shall I do," cried I, "with the poor children?" We then had four of them; provisions were very dear; we were already in debt at the shop; and without a single friend who could do much for me. Attend to the work I had upon the loom I could not, for my wife became so bad that she was light-headed for several weeks; and we had not much else but what one neighbour or the other sent us, for the shopkeeper would not let us have anything more until we had paid off the old score.

One night I feared it would be almost too much for me, for the poor little children cried for some bread before they went to bed, and as not one morsel had I in the house to give them, they were obliged to go without. O how the enemy did set on my soul that God had left me. "You have not one penny in the house," said he; "your poor wife is not likely to live, and your children are starving for want; the shop is shut so that you cannot have one farthing's-worth there." For a few moments how I sank! O the groans, the sighs, the wrestlings I had that God would undertake for me! I told Him that nothing was too hard for Him. "Oh!" cried I, "my dear Lord, appear for me.

Let me once again see Thine arm made bare in working for me as the God of providence." And O how precious did those sweet words come, which set all right and straight in a moment, "The ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning." {[1Ki 17:6](#)} O the transports of joy I felt at the sound of these words! "What!" said I, "the dear prophet of God in the same place as I, and did God send him flesh and bread by ravens" and I firmly believed that God would as surely appear for me in the morning, as He appeared for the prophet. O what blessed submission and contentment did this produce in my soul! I felt heartily satisfied with my situation, and could bless God for my present afflictions. How sweet was that text, "The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and He addeth no sorrow with it." {[Pr 10:22](#)} O what a solid resting I felt on the love and faithfulness of a covenant God!

Early the next morning there was a knock at the door. I opened it and saw a person, who called me out and asked me how my wife was, and whether we had anything to subsist upon. I told him the truth, and how we were off. He said he had had no rest all night for thinking of me, and that he had brought me half-aguinea, though he did not like my religion. I told him that the Lord knew my situation, and that I had no doubt that He had sent him. I thanked him as the instrument, and then he left me. When he was gone, O the preciousness, the glory, the heavenly grandeur, and the solemn majesty in which my covenant God appeared to my soul! "Oh!" cried I, "who is a God like unto my God, that has sent a raven to feed me?" Indeed, I could see nothing but the goodness, mercy and kindness of my God and Saviour, on the right hand and on the left. O the preciousness of a wonder-working God in such scenes as these! It is, indeed, making darkness light and crooked things straight: "Ye are My witnesses, saith the Lord, that I am God, and beside Me is none else." {[Isa 43:11-12](#)} The tongue fails to express His glory and honour, and human language is completely beggared in setting forth a thousandth part of His worth and glory!

"Words are but air, and tongues but clay,
But Thy compassion's all divine."

But now I come to explain what I had been shown by my dream. A person with whom we had dealt for a long time for provisions, sent for me one day and asked me to pay him the money I owed him, which was about seven pounds, for he said he must have it. I told him the situation in which I then was, and had been for a long time, and begged him to have a little patience with me, and I hoped I should be able to pay him. He was very rough with me, and said he would have the money by some means or other. I now had fresh work for faith and prayer.

On the following Saturday morning, as I was returning from the doctor's house. I met my creditor going to market. He stopped, and asked me if I was coming to pay him on Monday. If I did not, he said he was determined to put me to trouble. I burst into a flood of tears and begged Him to have a little pity upon me. I told him how long the fever had been in the house, and that I had not one penny in the world. I hoped, I said, that my wife was now getting a little better, and that, in a short time, I should be able to bring him some money, which I would do then with pleasure. But he turned round and cursed me, declaring that if I did not pay him on Monday, and he lived till Tuesday, he would put me to trouble. With this, off he went, and my poor soul sank fathoms in a moment.

O how these words did sink me down! "The evil that I feared has come upon me." O what a day of misery I passed! Sometimes I feared that I should sink into hopeless despair. I could no more believe that God would deliver me than that I could make a world. My body was weak with loss of rest and want of food; my children were almost starving; my wife being a little better, was longing for something to nourish her; the devil was roaring in my ears, "God has forsaken him; pursue him and take him;" access to the Throne of grace was blocked up; the Bible was a sealed book; and the uncircumcised were rejoicing, "Ah, so would we have it."

My knees shook under me, rottenness entered my very bones, my lips quivered, and I felt as if every moment I should drop into the arms of death. O how I cried out, "My soul chooseth strangling, and death rather than life." {[Job 7:15](#)} Just at the time of my greatest sinking, a neighbour, who had been in Manchester, called upon me and said that he had been doing some business that day with a Mr. Clegg, a deacon of the church of which I was a member, and that he had inquired of him whether he knew a man in his neighbourhood named John Warburton, and upon his answering that he did, had asked very particularly whether I was well, saying he had not seen me in Manchester for several weeks.

My neighbour told him that my wife was very ill of a fever, and had been so for a long time; and "indeed," added he, "the poor man must be badly off." The dear old gentleman was quite surprised to hear it, and gave the man a particular charge to call on me as he went home, and tell me to come to Manchester the following day, as he wanted to see me. Upon hearing what the man said I felt hope spring up, and that precious text flowed in upon my soul with sweetness, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise Him, who is the health of my countenance and my God." {[Ps 42:11](#)} O what a sweet opening to my God I had during the greater part of Saturday night! My soul could now cast all her care upon Him; and promise after promise flowed sweetly and precious into my heart. and I verily believed that the Lord would appear for me.

On the Lord's day morning I went to Manchester, and saw Mr. Clegg, who was very sorry to hear that I had the fever in the house, and that I had been so sorely tried. He wondered that I had not been over to let him know, as he had told me before to be sure and inform him, if I was in any distress. He bade me tell him my situation exactly as I stood. I told him how long my poor wife had been ill of the fever, and the conflicts of bitterness and the seasons of joy I had passed through, till the dear old man wept like a child. I explained to him the situation in which I

was placed by a creditor, who threatened to put me to trouble on the following Tuesday. and I was so overcome by my feelings that I could no longer hold, but burst out. "O sir, sir, my greatest trouble is that I am afraid the cause of God will be blasphemed on my account."

The old gentleman's feelings were as much overcome as my own. He seized me by the hand, and said, "My dear brother, the Lord has given me plenty, and you shall have the money." He went directly and brought me back the full money for the debt, with a little besides for present support. No sooner was the money laid down, than the very text which I awoke with from my dream came into my mind with such power that I had hard work to keep from shouting it out in the house: "Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy; when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me." I left the old gentleman wishing me a thousand blessings; and my soul wished all the mercies and blessings that God had to give upon both his body and his soul, for time and for eternity.

I hastened home as quickly as possible, for I had left my wife very low. and I longed to tell her what great things the Lord had done for us. though. at that time, she knew Him not as her portion and her all. I now clearly saw my dream opened up; I saw who was the bull; but how he was to be split in two I could not yet find out, nor did I trouble myself about it. I knew that the Lord had wrought out a wonderful deliverance for me, and that was enough. O the sweet journey I had home! The number of times I looked at the money, and blessed, and thanked, and adored, and extolled my covenant God, for all His wonderful goodness to one so vile and so unworthy of the least of all His mercies. I cannot express the joy and gladness, the humility, love and praise of my heart.

It beggars all language to tell. Upon reaching home, I told my wife of the goodness and lovingkindness of God in providing the whole of the money for my debt. I showed her the money, and, poor thing! she wept like a child upon seeing it. O what a heavenly night I had in viewing the everlasting love, mercy, grace and kindness of my God and Saviour, in loving, choosing, redeeming, calling, justifying. preserving, feeding and providing for so poor, so helpless, so fearful, so unbelieving, and so base a wretch as I! My soul could give Him all the glory. I needed no one to tell me it was my duty and privilege to "crown Him Lord of all." It was my very meat and drink to exclaim, "Not unto us, but unto Thy Name give glory, for Thy mercy, and for Thy truth's sake."

On the Monday morning I went to the man to whom I owed the money, and told him that I had come to discharge my debt; for the Lord had provided me with the

money, and that I had more pleasure in paying than he had in receiving it. He took the money, and I came away. On the very Friday following, if I recollect aright, his wife was attacked with the fever and died in a few days, leaving him with a large family of young children; and, although at this time he was doing very well in business, yet in less than twelve months his goods were sold, his poor children taken to the workhouse, and he himself reduced to want bread. Thus I saw my dream fully interpreted.

O may my soul never forget the boundless mercies that God has caused to pass before me, a poor worm! Surely I am the greatest debtor to mercy upon earth! The kindness of an indulgent God and Father has so wonderfully appeared for me in every time of need, just, as it were, "by the skin of my teeth." {[Job 19:20](#)} When all human hope has been taken away, then has He appeared; when there has been no earthly arm to help and no mortal eye to pity, then has He made bare His arm and wrought a deliverance both in providence and in grace. He has ever proved Himself my prayer-hearing and prayer-answering God, and has never yet failed me, notwithstanding all my unbelief, and wretchedness, and unworthiness.

I went on for some time after this pretty comfortably, constantly hoping and praying that I might never distrust nor dishonour my God again. Indeed, I believed in my very soul that I never more could distrust that God who had appeared for me so often and so wonderfully. But I soon found that I had a sorer trial yet to pass through than any which I had had in my life. God was pleased to lay me up with a bodily affliction, so that for fourteen weeks I was ill of the dropsy, with no human hope of recovery, and nothing but the expectation of death I The darkness of soul in which I passed about twelve or thirteen weeks tongue cannot describe. Day after day and night after night were spent in nothing but gloom, misery, and wretchedness. I began to fear that all my past experience was nothing but deception. Death was staring me in the face, eternity was opening upon me, and not one promise could I lay hold of as mine. When I cried, the heavens appeared as brass, and I verily believed that all the comforts and joys I had felt were no more than those of the stony-ground hearers; so that I looked upon myself to be given up of God to make shipwreck of faith and of a good conscience, that it might be made manifest that I was nothing but an apostate. The filth and wretchedness of my heart boiled up in such awful rebellion against God, that I trembled from head to foot. I verily believed that the devil himself had taken possession of my soul.

I was brought to such an awful condition that I durst no more read the Bible or hear it read than put my hands into the fire. I told all my friends that I was a deceived man, and had deceived them likewise, and that I was as sure~ to be damned as that

I had been born. O the dreadful blasphemies that darted through my mind against the Holy Trinity-Father, Son and Holy Ghost; especially against the Holy Ghost. I dare not even now allude to them. I verily believed, as firmly as in my own existence, that I had sinned against the Holy Ghost, and could never be forgiven, either in this world or in the world to come. About three days before my deliverance, I was obliged to hold my hand over my mouth, lest the awful curses which were boiling up in my heart against the Holy Spirit should come out. O how I shook and trembled! I sometimes wondered that God did not command the earth to open her jaws and swallow me up.

I shall never forget the time of my deliverance. I was alone in the house, and being a little better in body, could just manage with the assistance of a stick to walk about, which I did, groaning and sighing. Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress" lay upon the table, and in opening it, I was led to cast my eyes upon the description of Christian's passing through the Valley of the Shadow of Death; with the awful scenes which he saw there, and the awful curses which were whispered in his ears, until he became so confused that he could not distinguish his own voice, but began to think that it was he himself who cursed the Lord. My soul began to melt, and hope to spring up that it was the very situation I was in. I saw that it was not I who was blaspheming God, but the devil who was tempting me to do so. I then went down upon my knees and poured out my soul to the Lord, entreating that He would appear for my soul once more; and I felt a freedom of access to Him, and a going forth of soul that I had not enjoyed for fifteen weeks.

And can I ever forget the tender mercies of a covenant God? of Him who appeared to me even while I was on my knees? He did appear with these blessed words sounding like a trumpet in my soul, "Shall not God avenge His own elect, which cry day and night unto Him, though He bear long with them? I tell you that He will avenge them speedily." {[Lu 18:7-8](#)} Such Divine power came with these words, and such light, life and liberty, that the devil and his artillery flew away like lightning, and my poor soul was like a bird let loose from the snare of the fowler, The snare was broken and I escaped. O the transports of joy that I experienced! O the love that I felt to my God and Saviour, who had conquered death and him who had the power of death, that is, the devil! O the precious days and nights I had of sweet communion with the dear Saviour, who had so wonderfully delivered my soul out of the lowest pit! I could sing from my very heart, and shout out with all my strength, "Thou hast brought me up out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And Thou hast put a new song into my mouth, even praise unto our God." {[Ps 40:2-3](#)}

The beauty, majesty, glory and grandeur of my covenant God and Saviour appeared in such transporting views to my poor soul that it was lost in wonder at His astonishing love, mercy and kindness to one so wretched, so miserable, and so sunk in black despair. I had given all up for lost; but, bless His precious Name, He had not given me up. O the light, life and liberty I enjoyed for some weeks after! All was right and straight. Whilst God was enjoyed in my soul, I truly found that when he giveth peace, none can give trouble. At this very time, owing to my bodily affliction, we had nothing to live upon, save what God put it into the hearts of one and another to bring us, with a little additional help from the parish. Yet every day brought its daily bread with it; how, I could not tell. O the many times I have found that better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith.

[{Pr 15:17}](#)