

WHEN I left Trowbridge and arrived at Rochdale to bring my family away, it was a cutting feeling when I came to see my old friends, with whom I had had such sweet communion and to whom I had felt such a union of soul for so many years. And now to think of separating from them! O how it cut up my feelings, so that I felt as if it would be impossible for me to stand under the feelings I had! When I came to preach my farewell sermon, I thought I never could have stood under the keen feelings I had at seeing the dear people with whom I had had so many comfortable times, as well as times of great distress. Nor ever can I forget, at times, the many cries and tears we have had together for the prosperity of the cause of God at Hope Chapel. Many times did I expect, as well as hope, that I might live and die there; but the Lord will have His own way.

And, bless His dear Name, it is the right way, and He will ever bring His children to see it, acknowledge it, love it, and admire it; yea, they shall sing to His honour and glory, "My Jesus has done all things well." But if I had not passed through it, I never could have thought it so cutting a thing to the heart to leave a people with whom there is a real union of soul. Sometimes I felt as if it would have broken my heart; and especially when we came to part, I felt as if I could not stand it. I could enter a little into Paul's feelings when he cried out, "What mean ye to weep, and to break my heart?" The words, if I recollect aright, that I spoke from at parting were these: {Ac 20:32} "And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified." And if ever I felt my soul in the Spirit, I believe I did at that time in committing the little flock into the hands of the great Shepherd. A weeping time it was indeed, and I can say from my heart, never do I desire to pass again through the same conflicts in leaving a people that my soul is knit to.

I could not have believed that ever I had such love to the dear souls at Rochdale till the trial came at parting; and what comfort and joy it has been to my soul since, that God has proved and made it manifest that our cries and tears for the prosperity of the little flock at Hope Chapel has not fallen to the ground unaccomplished, but that in a wonderful manner the Lord heard and answered our poor petitions, and I believe the Lord has prospered them abundantly since I left. I wanted Him, however, to do it through me as the instrument; but "the counsel of the Lord shall stand, and He will do all His pleasure." This my soul has proved hundreds of times; and, bless His dear Name, He has always brought me to see and feel, too, that it has been a right way to a city of habitation.

On the Monday, which was the day after I took my leave of the little flock, I and the family left Rochdale and arrived the same evening at Manchester, where we

stayed two nights. On the Tuesday evening I went to hear my dear friend and brother, Mr. Gadsby, and never can I forget the text and the sermon. O the blessing of that text and sermon to my soul, particularly for fourteen or fifteen years! I neither can tell or write a thousandth part of it. The words were from Pr 5:15-17 "Drink waters out of thine own cistern, and running waters out of thine own well. Let thy fountains be dispersed abroad, and rivers of waters in the streets. Let them be only thine own, and not strangers with thee." And I verily believed there was not one in the chapel for whom it was designed but for me. O with what solemn pleasure and wonder did I sit and hear the glorious things that he brought forth, as the mouth of God, to my soul, which I received as coming from God as a solemn charge for me to take to Trowbridge, which I found, some hundreds of times after, to be for my soul's encouragement in very deep waters of despair respecting my ministry. O the times when I have since then been at a complete stand, and as sure I never could preach as ever I was born, that that text and sermon have come to my mind: "Drink waters out of thine own cistern, and running waters out of thine own well: let them be only thine own, and not strangers with thee." I have indeed reason to believe that God designed that sermon for me; and I must confess I never heard a sermon in all the days of my life that was for such a length of time made so great a blessing, for it never failed me when I was brought to despair that I should ever be able to preach again.

On Wednesday morning, my wife, myself and our eight children, left Manchester by the coach, stopped at Birmingham a night, arrived at Bristol on Thursday evening, and on the Friday evening got safe to Trowbridge. My poor soul was indeed melted with gratitude to the God of all my mercies for His kind protecting care over such a poor worm and his little tribe, in bringing us safe nearly two hundred miles. But when I arrived at Trowbridge I was quite overcome to see how the hearts of the people had been opened, and their kindness manifested in fitting me up a house with everything needful, from beds to dishes and spoons. Surely, thought, I, the Lord is here, for the people in general were a very poor people; but what cannot be done when God undertakes? There are no impossibilities with Him; and with what power did these words sound again in my soul "Abide in this city, for I have much people here;" and, "The cattle upon a thousand hills are Mine, and all the gold and silver at My disposal."

It had been a great mountain, and how it could be surmounted I knew not; nor how I could leave Rochdale, come with such a large family nearly two hundred miles, and have a house furnished with such necessary things as we could not do without. But my God soon made it appear that He could make a mountain become a plain

And so it was; for it was all done with cheerfulness and pleasure, and the house stored with provisions to begin with.

O what heavenly times I enjoyed for several months! At that time we met in a large room that would hold about three or four hundred people; and I believe God met with us in that room in a most wonderful manner, and bore testimony to the Word of His grace, for it was made evident by signs following. The congregation increased to that degree in a few weeks that it was with great difficulty the people could get in; and it went on increasing so much that we soon found we must begin a chapel, for the souls of the people were truly alive, and the Word of the Lord ran and was glorified. Numbers were brought to prove the Word of God to be a two-edged sword that cut deep into the heart, and brought them to cry out, "Men and brethren, what must we do to be saved?"

O how my poor soul was melted and crumbled into the dust to see the kind hand of God thus going before me in the way, and giving such testimony to the Word of His grace. We soon had a goodly number that came to tell what God had done for their souls, and cast in their lot amongst us, who were not ashamed to take up the cross and follow their dear Lord through evil report and good report. But there was no lack of reporters, for there was plenty of crying, both amongst professors and profane, "Report it," say they, "and we will report it." All the vile names that ever could be heaped up, poor Warburton had them all laid upon his back. Some said I was a bigot, others that I was an enemy to all holiness, a vile Antinomian, a presumptuous, ungodly wretch, entirely destitute of one grain of charity. And yet from week to week, and from month to month, I was vindicating and speaking well of charity, for I was confident that never a poor wretch in this world had so much need to speak well of charity as I, for I was testifying from Lord's day to Lord's day that it was nothing but pure charity in God the Father that ever He should make choice from everlasting of His sheep, and give His beloved Son, that "whosoever believeth in Him might not perish, but have everlasting life;" and I was confident that we poor sheep had gone astray from the womb, speaking lies; and that nothing but pure charity could lay upon Him the iniquities of us all. And I was constantly maintaining that charity in God the Son had freely provided a spotless robe to cover the naked, a rich fountain to wash and cleanse the filthy, a glorious salvation for the lost, fast at both ends from everlasting to everlasting, bread for the hungry, wine for the faint, strength for the weak, eyes for the blind, and pardon for the guilty.

Nay, I was constantly maintaining that there was not one thing that ever the poor and needy soul stood in need of, however vile he was and unworthy, but charity

had provided it all in Christ. Everything, I declared, was ready: "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." {Isa 55:1} I was also constantly maintaining that charity in God the Holy Ghost is the fountain of blessedness to poor beggars and paupers that are obliged to hang upon Him. For what could it be but charity that ever He stopped us in our mad career of sin, and opened our poor blind eyes, unasked for, unsought for?

We are living witnesses that He was found of them that sought Him not. And what could it be but the kind act of charity that would not suffer us to go about to establish a righteousness of our own? Of this I am confident, that there never was a poor creature who worked, tugged and toiled harder to get some righteousness of his own, that I might claim the mercy of God, than I did. But God has fixed and settled it that we shall not receive His mercies and blessings for works of righteousness that we have done, or can do. No; charity relieves the miserable, clothes the naked, feeds the hungry, heals the wounded, and completely saves the lost; and this I have ever found, as soon as I had nought to pay, charity frankly forgave me all.

I was, therefore, constantly affirming that all the dear children of God, who are called according to His purpose, were paupers upon charity for all things, both for body and soul, for time and eternity. I was confident of it, and so is every one that is taught of God, "that every good gift, and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, the Fountain of charity, with whom there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning;" and I was constantly maintaining that those professors of religion that were destitute of charity were dead in sin, and enemies to God and truth. "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal; and though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge, and though I have all faith so that I could remove mountains and have not charity~ I am nothing; and though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing."

I could not help, therefore, maintaining from Sunday to Sunday, that when charity was shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost, it led us to love God, to love His people, to love His ways, to honour Him in body, soul and spirit, to hate sin with a perfect hatred, and to long and desire to be as holy as God is holy. O when this charity is graciously felt in my soul, how I admire and adore the electing love and choice of God the Father! how my poor soul melts and breaks forth into raptures of holy wonder: "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that

we should be called the Sons of God; therefore, the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not. Beloved, now are we the Sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is; and every one that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself even as He is pure." O the blessed wonder, love and admiration that I have felt to God the Son for working out a righteousness for me, such a black monster as I, to make me fair as the curtains of Solomon, and to stand before a holy God without fault, "perfect through My comeliness which I have put upon thee, saith the Lord God." "I in them and thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one." "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of One (O blessed One! how my soul has at times adored Him!) shall many be made righteous." "But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption, that according as it is written, he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."

And how my poor soul has been melted with unspeakable wonder and adoration when, by faith, I have seen Him in Gethsemane's garden, in an agony, sweating great drops of blood, falling down to the ground. O what grief, what sorrow, what anguish of soul and body did He endure, when bearing and suffering the wrath due to Divine Justice for the cursed sins of His people! what must He have felt when He cried out, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death;" and when on the cross, My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me? O to have a faith's view of these sufferings for us, and feel the sweet virtue of them in our souls, it is this that will bring us to hate sin and everything that is contrary to the honour and glory of our glorious Redeemer.

I know, and have felt it in my very soul what God has declared by the prophet Zechariah: {Zec 12:10} "And they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for Him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn." O what godly repentance flows from the heart from such a feeling sight as this, repentance that needs not to be repented of! And could my soul and tongue help extolling and exalting such love and charity that was stronger than death, that many waters could not quench, nor the floods drown? Nay, the more I felt of it the more liberty did it bring into my soul, and the more boldly and fearlessly did I lift up my voice, that "by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." "We have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace." "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for

us," so that I could not help exclaiming with Paul, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." And I cannot, and, God helping me, I will not, while the Lord gives me strength to open my poor mouth, but speak well of charity in God the Holy Ghost, for it was He that laid hold of me in my mad career of sin, put a cry into my heart to cry unto God, and stopped me from going about to establish a righteousness of my own.

His invisible hand kept me from being my own murderer; He revealed in my heart pardoning blood and imputed righteousness; and some scores of times, when the enemy has come into my poor soul with such a tremendous flood of awful blasphemies against the Holy Trinity, especially against the Holy Ghost, that I have been sunk so low that at times I could see no more hope that God would ever appear in love and mercy for me than He would appear for devils, He has, bless His dear Name, lifted up again a glorious standard, and brought me up again out of the horrible pit, and set my feet again upon the Rock of ages. I have been hundreds of times where, according to my feelings, I have had no more faith, hope, love, patience, prayer, zeal, or even a desire for a desire in exercise in my heart than there is in the beasts of the earth; and I am confident of this, that I could as soon empty the fathomless ocean with a bucket as I can raise up one spiritual desire Godwards. But, bless His dear Name, He has come again in His own time, and blown a soft gale of His life-giving, unctuous operations, so that my soul has been like a well-watered garden in a moment, and I have exclaimed, with wonder, pleasure and delight, "Let my Beloved come into His garden, and eat His pleasant fruits." Love, joy, peace, humility, praise and holy zeal for the honour and glory of my God have gone forth from my heart and tongue to the dear Comforter for His unmerited kindness in reviving my poor soul again with His sweet visitations; for I am a living witness that it is His blessed visits that revive my spirits.

I have been many, very many times so confused, so dark, and so completely blind, that I could not see nor find, to my comfort and consolation, whether ever I had any real grace or work of God begun in my soul. And here I have been shut up in the prison house, robbed, and spoiled, and ensnared in such holes that I could look for nothing but becoming a prey to the devil, as an awful presumptuous apostate, whom God was about to make manifest as nothing but a vile hypocrite; one who had a lamp of profession, but no oil in his vessel; having the form of godliness, but knowing nothing of the real power; one who could talk about the letter, but was a stranger to the spirit; who had begun with religion, but real religion had never begun with him.

Here I have been numbers of times, and could no more look back, and see, and believe that God had begun and carried on His good work of grace in my heart than I could believe I could raise the dead; and here I have been shut up with nothing but lamentations, miseries, sighs, groans, and tears, till the dear Lord has come again with, "Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee;" and then I could shout and sing, "The Lord is my light and my salvation; I will not fear what man can do unto me." I could then look back and see all the way the Lord had led me, and was confident it was the right way to a city of habitation; so that I am a pauper upon charity for everything temporal or spiritual, for time and for eternity. And I do, and am constantly maintaining, both privately and publicly, as far as ever the Lord has enabled me, the wonders, the glories, the beauties and preciousness of charity; and yet I must be branded as being a man that is an enemy to charity.

But, if by charity these people mean that I ought to unite with Arians and Socinians, who deny the Deity of my God and Saviour, whom I have proved again and again in my very soul that He is the mighty God, the everlasting Father, and the Prince of Peace; if by charity they mean that I ought to meet and unite occasionally with people that can testify and say without a blush that election is a damnable doctrine, and they hate it in their hearts; that imputed righteousness is "imputed nonsense," and a doctrine that ought to be abhorred and spurned by all, which is the very garment and covering that hides all my shame, the very robe that adorns my naked soul, and so very many times has been the joy and rejoicing of my heart, and which I have found to be so many times the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; if they mean by charity that I ought to unite with people that can say and testify that we may be a child of God one day and a child of the devil another; that Christ died and atoned for the sins of Esau, as well as of Jacob, for Cain as well as for Abel, for Judas as well as for Peter, and that there are thousands in hell for whom Christ died; if they mean by charity that I ought to unite and call those brethren who profess to believe in the doctrines of grace, and call themselves Calvinists, but can declare at times that those blessed doctrines which are so precious and glorious to my soul are non-essential things; that is, if I understand their meaning right, they view them as useless things, and that it is of no consequence whatever whether we receive or believe these doctrines or not, provided we do but unite with all sorts, and pray for all, and be candid, and mild, and esteem all as partakers of grace; I confess from my heart, if all this be charity, I am destitute of it, and instead of being grieved for my want of it, I glory in it.

I do not indeed feel the least ill-will against any of their persons as the creatures of God, nor do I desire to do them the least injury, but those principles that debase

free and sovereign grace, and exalt the creature, I hate and abhor. For how can two walk together except they be agreed? My soul has bought truth too dearly to part with it for such empty baubles as the praises and smiles of men; and those professors that like the smiles of men more than the truth of God, they are heartily welcome to them. I do not begrudge them. But notwithstanding all that ever these reporters could report, God stood by me, a poor worm, and gave such testimony to the Word of grace, that neither men nor devils could overthrow it. I believe they tried with all their might to do so; but God hath said it, and I know it will stand, for I have proved it again and again: "My Word shall go forth; it shall prosper in the thing whereunto I have sent it; it shall not return unto Me void."

Being quite crowded out of the room in which we met, we began to build a chapel which would seat between seven and eight hundred people. O the sinkings down I had at times for fear we should never be able to finish it! One day in particular, as I was looking at the building when it was up to the first window, I sank within, and feared it would all come to nothing, and that our enemies would have to say, "Ah, so would we have it," for many declared it would be impossible for us to finish it, and others were pleased to think it would make a good factory. I got home into my room as full of unbelief as ever I could hold. I began to think of the troubles I had passed through at Rochdale on account of the chapel there, and feared it would be the same at Trowbridge.

O the groans and sighs I had for some hours that the Lord would appear and give me some testimony that His hand was in it, and that He would prosper us, and be with us; and how sweetly and blessedly did He apply those precious verses of Ps 2 "Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against His Anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall He speak unto them in His wrath, and vex them in His sore displeasure. Yet have I set My King upon My holy hill of Zion." O what humility, joy, peace, and confidence dropped into my heart from those words, and what praises and adoration flowed out of my mouth to my covenant God for His tender mercies in once again enabling me to set my foot upon the neck of my enemies; and how sweetly did those words which nailed me at Trowbridge sound in my soul: "Abide in this city, for I have much people here."

I felt like a giant refreshed with new wine, and I could exclaim with confidence, "Though a host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident. One thing have I desired of the

Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in His temple." And O what humility and love did I feel to God that ever He had chosen such a foolish thing, such a base thing, such a nothing, and counted me worthy to suffer persecution for truth's sake, O how I could pray for my persecutors, if it were the will of God, that their eyes might be opened, that they might be brought to see the awful state they were in, and made to cry, "God be merciful to me a sinner." Yea, I could in my very heart esteem the reproach of Christ greater riches than all the treasures that this world calls good or great.

It now appeared evidently manifested, from month to month, that the more we were persecuted, the more we grew. But about this time a most lamentable and trying circumstance happened in my family, which I feared would have proved my death. I feel that I cannot help writing it down purely from this motive, that if it ever should come into print, it may perhaps fall into the hands of some poor child of God that may have been, or is now, in the same trying affliction. One week particularly I had been out to preach at several places in the country, and I had such a time of communion with God and sweet liberty in preaching, that I was quite carried away beyond myself and everything else under the sun. O I thought the Lord was about to take me home to Himself, and I was lost in wonder at His lovingkindness to such a worm as I!

I was coming home on the Friday, full of love and peace, when, about one mile before I reached it, these words arrested my attention with astonishing power, and brought me to a dead stand in a moment, and I wondered what it could mean: "In the day of prosperity be joyful, but" -and such weight came with the but that I shook from head to foot- "but in the day of adversity consider. God also hath set the one over against the other, that man should find nothing after him." "O!" cried I, "what is coming? what is the matter?" All my comfort, love and communion with God took flight and fled away in a moment; and how I got home that mile I cannot tell, for I felt persuaded there was something dreadful and distressing coming. When I got into the house, I cried out to my wife, "What is the matter? do tell me if there is anything, for I fear there is." Poor thing, she burst into a flood of tears, and for a few minutes could not speak. "O," cried I, "do tell me what is the matter!"

And when she could speak, she told me that the young man that kept company with my eldest daughter had left her in a disgraceful state. O, I sat down and wept while I had power to weep. I felt sure that this was to bring me to my end, and felt as if my very heart strings were giving way, nor could I believe it possible that I could ever bear up under it. O the nights and days I passed through for about seven

days! Neither tongue nor pen could ever describe a thousandth part of it. God hid His face from me, which was the greatest grief of all. The devil roared and told me that God had left me, and he should have me after all. When I groaned and cried the heavens appeared as brass, and if I looked into the Bible it was a sealed book. Many professors, as well as profane, were rejoicing over it as a rich feast; but my real friends were clad in mourning, and felt the affliction keenly for my sake, and I believe watered the Throne of grace with their tears, that God would, in tender mercy, appear for me and hold me up under it all, and bring me out with joy and peace; which the Lord did in His own time. But what sort of professors they could be that could rejoice and feast upon such things is very plain, and that they were not very particular about their food.

Some said it was a judgment from God for my presumption in preaching and holding forth particular election, imputed righteousness, atoning blood for none but the sheep, effectual calling by the grace of God of none but the election of grace, the final perseverance of all these to a man to eternal glory, and that neither sin, death, devil, nor hell could ever bring one of these chosen of the Father, redeemed by the Son, called, taught, preserved, and kept by the Holy Ghost, into the bottomless pit. Bless our dear Lord, He keeps the keys of death and hell as well as the keys of the kingdom of grace, and I am firmly persuaded that He will never unlock the door and let one of His dear sheep perish for whom He has sweat great drops of blood in the Garden of Gethsemane, for whom He died and bled upon the cross. No; He "gives His sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any one pluck them out of His hands." However they may be plucked at by men and devils, He will take care they shall never go out of His hands.

Poor things, they do indeed think and fear sometimes that He has cast them out of His hands of love and mercy, and exclaim, "The Lord has forsaken me, and my God has forgotten me;" but God denies the charge, and asks the question, "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb?" "Yea," God replies, "she may forget, yet will I not forget thee; thou art engraven on the palms of My hands, and thy walls are continually before Me." Bless His dear Name, then, if they go to hell, the palms of His hands must go there too. Some said they agreed with these things, and held them as a private sentiment, but thought it was very wrong to bring them out in public, except they were well guarded, that they might not be a stumbling-block to pious souls that were willing to do their duty, nor frighten poor sinners from coming to Christ, and closing in with a dear Saviour. But for my part, I never had any private sentiments about the things of God and truth, for I received every doctrine I preach in much affliction and joy of the Holy Ghost; and they have guarded me for these forty years and

upwards, and now and then, when God has pleased to cause these doctrines to drop as the rain, and His speech to distil as the dew, I am confident they will guard me safe unto the end.

How, then, can such a worm as I think of attempting to guard God or His truth? As far as God has opened my mouth, with the ability He has given me, my endeavour has been to tell the people what these doctrines are, what they do in the souls of all those that know them savingly, and what are the fruits that they bear in the life and conversation, in their own house, in the church, and in the world. Nay, I am confident of it, that these doctrines known and felt in the heart will teach a man to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world. One of these professors told one of our people that it would have pleased him better if it had been the father that had fallen into the snare instead of the child. Some hoped it would be a warning to me, and cure me of that bitter spirit, that narrow, bigoted feeling which I had ever manifested in cutting and chopping off so many pious people as nothing but hypocrites.

Others said it was now made manifest that I was an awful Antinomian, for I did not train up my children in the way they should go; for if I had they would not have departed from it. So some were crying one thing and some another: some believed I never could preach again; and, indeed, when Lord's day morning came I felt it as utterly impossible for me to preach as to raise the dead. All was darkness and confusion both within and without, and how I staggered to the place of worship God only knows.

God, however, gave me a message and strength to deliver it; but the moment I sat down the devil set on me with all his hellish rage-that I should never hold on my way, that the people would all leave me, that God had left me, and although I had got through the sermon it was nothing but from my judgment, and not by the teaching and influences of the Holy Ghost. O I trembled and shook, and though I did get through the day somehow or other, when night came I feared I must go out of my senses. Sometimes I felt such anger, wrath and desperation rising up in my heart against my child that I felt as if I must go and murder her.

Sometimes such wrath and anger boiled up in my heart against God for ever suffering it to take place, that I felt as if I could have pulled Him from His throne and stamped Him under my feet. O how my very knees did tremble; rottenness entered into my bones, my lips quivered, the very hairs of my head moved, every joint seemed loosened, and body and soul chopped up to pieces, and scattered at the grave's mouth. Yea, and sometimes I feared that hell was opening her mouth,

and was just ready to swallow me up. For how could I expect anything else, seeing and feeling nothing but devilish anger, wrath and enmity against God and man? It is true that I had groans and sighs, lamentations and bitterness, from morning till night, till I was so worried out that I cried out in my bitterness, "My soul chooseth strangling, and death rather than life." However, one day in this miserable state, as I was crawling up the stairs to go into the bedroom, these words came with such power into my soul that for a few minutes I stood still on the stairs: "Who maketh thee to differ, and what hast thou that thou didst not receive?"

O I saw and felt in a moment that I had no stone to throw at my child; and that though I had been preserved and kept from actually committing such a disgraceful sin ever since the Lord had set up His kingdom of grace in my heart, I saw and felt there was no glory to me, and if God had left me to my ungodly nature it might have been my case instead of hers. This crumbled me down with brokenness of heart to bless God that it was not I; and O what love I felt to my child! how my soul went out in prayer for her, that she might prove to be a vessel of mercy, and that God might overrule it for her soul's good and His glory; {5} whilst such sweetness, humility, and godly contrition flowed into my heart that I fell at His feet, and could only look on and wonder what it could all mean. "Be still, and know that I am God." "It is good to hope, and quietly wait for the salvation of God."

O what a calm there was! how still was everything in a moment! Not a devil moved his tongue, and the roaring seas were all in an instant hushed up to a calm. My soul did exclaim with David, feelingly in my very heart, "The voice of the Lord is upon the water; the God of glory thundereth; the Lord is upon many waters. The voice of the Lord is powerful; the voice of the Lord is full of majesty; the voice of the Lord divideth the flames of fire." {Ps 29:3-7} "He stilleth the noise of the seas, the noise of their waves, and the tumult of the people. They also that dwell in the uttermost parts are afraid at Thy tokens. Thou makest the outgoings of the morning and evening to rejoice; Thou visitest the earth and waterest it; Thou greatly enrichest it with the river of God, which is full of water." {Ps 65:8-9} O what quietness, peace, humility, thankfulness and praise to God did I feel that He had remembered me, a poor worthless worm, in my low estate! I could sing with Hannah from my very heart, "My heart rejoiceth in the Lord; mine horn is exalted in the Lord; my mouth is enlarged over mine enemies, because I rejoice in Thy salvation.

The bows of the mighty men are broken, and they that stumbled are girded with strength. He will keep the feet of His saints; and the wicked shall be silent in

darkness, for by strength shall no man prevail." It is in such places as these that my soul has learned the preciousness of sovereign grace, that upholds, defends, preserves, and delivers, in spite of sin, unbelief, carnal reason, despair, and all that ever the devil can do, either without or within. Bless His dear Name, He has numbers of times brought me through fire and water into a wealthy place, so that I have stood in need of no man to tell me it is my duty to give God all the glory; for when He has given me a sight and feeling sense of the glory of His grace and love in my soul, it is my very soul's delight to give back all the glory to Him from whom it comes; and it is the very joy and delight of my heart and tongue to exclaim, "Give unto the Lord, O ye mighty; give unto the Lord glory and strength; give unto the Lord the glory due unto His Name; worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness."

And how blessedly has my soul at such times joined with Paul, "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." {2Co 4:6} And O with what pleasure, delight and joy at such times have my soul and tongue gone out to the Lord, "Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever; Amen." I could now rest satisfied, and bow my shoulders to every burden, certain and confident that all things work together for good to them that love God, who are the called according to His purpose. There was plenty of tongue going privately and publicly about what had happened to Warburton; but the chattering of the poor grasshoppers out of doors had but little effect upon me while God silenced the old man and the devil indoors; for I know that a man's worst enemies are those in his own house.

O how sweetly could I go the next Lord's day to the house of God, as bold as a lion, a living witness that "through Christ which strengtheneth me, I can do all things;" and God put His broad seal to my poor labours that neither the rage of men nor devils could stop His work. It was quite unbearable to some of their feelings to think that such a poor wretch as I, who had no human learning, and had never been at the academy, but was a poor weaver brought from the loom, should stand up and cut down both parsons and people that did not know and experience such and such things.

Some of them thought they neither could nor would stand it; but, poor things! they were obliged to stand it, for I could testify of no other things but what my soul had handled and felt of the good Word of God; and as far as the dear Lord has helped me to this day, I have not, to my knowledge, kept one word back to gain the

applause of men, and I hope God will ever so keep me for the few days I have still to remain upon the walls of Zion.

This affliction was indeed blessed abundantly to my soul. O how near was I kept to the Lord for weeks together, that He would keep me as the apple of His eye, that none might set on me to hurt me, that He would water me every moment, that I might be neither barren nor unfruitful, that His fear might be in sweet exercise in my heart and before my eyes, that I might say to every temptation, "Get thee behind me, Satan, for thou savourest not of the things of God, but of men." The chapel went on, and was soon finished; and we entered in, and I believe the Lord entered in with us, too. The house was crowded to excess, and I have no doubt that God heard and answered our prayer.

We now went on very comfortably for some time, but I began to find that my incomings in temporal things would not meet the outgoings, and I soon got into barrenness in my circumstances, which proved a sore trial to my mind, being in the midst of enemies that were daily watching for my halting, and having such a tremendous salary, three pounds a week, out of which some thought I might lay by a good deal of money. But I found that he who wears the shoe can best tell how it fits, for I found as our ten children grew up, their mouths, backs, bellies and feet all grew too, and wanted more and more. But to say anything to the people about their raising me more money, I thought would be considered by some an unpardonable thing, for we had some in the church at that time who wondered how ever I could have a conscience to receive three pounds a week; and I do believe in my very heart that there were one or two at that time who stood as members with us that had more trouble and concern about my salary, how I ought to manage and lay out my money, and what I might save, and lost more sleep in making it out, than ever they had about the salvation of their souls.

I recollect one day I was so pressed down with a few debts that amounted to about ten pounds, that I could not abide in the house, and I went out to take a walk in the fields. I happened to meet a friend who attended our chapel, and he asked me how I did, to which I answered that I was pretty well in body. He then said, "I am glad to see you, and I hope you will not take any offence at what I am going to say. I have a ten pound note which is of no present use to me, and if it will be of any service to you, I shall take a pleasure in giving it to you, and I shall think it an honour that you will receive it from me." I thanked him for his kindness, and told him it would be very acceptable at the present time. I was so full I could not say much more at that time; so we parted, and I went into the fields, and O what an

opening up had I of the mercies, goodness, power, faithfulness and majesty of my covenant God and Father!

The whole creation was adorned with beauties, and I could see my Father in them all. O what delights and glories are there in those words of the apostle when they drop into the heart at such seasons! and those that have ever tasted them can feel and see their glory better than they can describe them. "All things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." The precious words that fastened me at Trowbridge came with fresh sweetness, beauty and glory: "Abide in this city, for I have much people here." "Thy bread shall be given thee, and thy water shall be sure." "For the cattle upon a thousand hills are Mine, and all the gold and silver is Mine, and the hearts of all men are at My disposal."

I quickly dispersed the ten pounds, which settled a few things that had lain very heavily upon my mind. But I soon found myself obliged to mention all to the friends, and that I should be glad if they would advance me the rent of my house in addition to my salary; for I found it impossible to pay it out of my present income, my wife about this time being confined of her last child, which made up the dozen. One child we had lost by death, which was our third, and one we had left in the North when we came to Trowbridge, so that now we had ten of them at home. The friends seemed very agreeable to pay the rent; but, after some time, some of them thought that it was more than the cause could do; so two or three of the deacons came up to our house and told me that the friends had had a consultation about paying my rent, and they had come to the conclusion that it was more than the cause could do; but as it appeared I could not do without it, a plan had come to their mind, which, if I would accede to, it might ease the church and answer the end as well for me.

This plan was, that if I would take the rent of my dwelling-house upon myself, they, the church, would give me two months a year to go out supplying where the Lord might open a way for me, and they, the church, would find supplies for the two months, on this condition, that I should take one month in the spring and the other in the autumn; and to this they hoped I would agree, as it would be an easement to the church. Without a moment's consideration I agreed to it, and told them that, though I did not know any church that would ever send for me to supply a month for them, yet as it was the desire of the church it should be so. After they were gone I had plenty of work within. Surely, thinks I, this is an evidence that they are tired of me, and this is a sideway to get rid of me. O what advantage did

the devil and my own heart take of this! what shaking I felt from these words: "The thing which I greatly feared is come upon me." Well, thinks I, it will be just as it was at Rochdale: as soon as the chapel was finished I had no comfort nor peace with a few till I was gone, and surely it will be the case here. O I felt as if I could hear the very roaring of the devil! "Where is your confidence now of abiding in this city?"

It is like all your other fleshly confidence; it will all end in the flesh, and all the great blaze and noise that you have made in the country will all come down upon your own head. And what will you do? You keep sinking more and more into debt, and as soon as ever your best friends know that your large salary is not sufficient to keep you out of debt they will think you do not manage it as you ought, and they will turn their backs upon you, and you will be brought to have neither house to live in, nor bed to lie down on." Here I was brought into such feelings of mind that I could see nothing but the workhouse for me and my family. I know there are plenty of professors that have got faith at their fingers ends, and laugh at such weakness; but it is no laughing matter to those dear children of God that are shut up in these things, for they well know by soul experience what Job meant: {Job 12:14-15} "Behold, He breaketh down, and it cannot be built again; He shutteth up a man, and there can be no opening. Behold, He withholdeth the waters, and they dry up; also, He sendeth them out, and they overturn the earth."

And David saith, "I am shut up and cannot come forth;" and this brought him to cry from his heart, "Bring my soul out of prison that I may praise Thy Name." My soul knows by painful experience what it is to be shut up in unbelief, and not be able to trust God for a groat. Yea, and whilst I was telling the dear children of God every Lord's day to cease from their own wisdom, and to trust in the Lord? and verily they should be fed, for their Father had all in His hands, and His promises would never fail, I could not trust Him, when left to myself, with either body or soul, for time and eternity. I am as sure of it that faith is "the gift of God," as ever I am that my life is in the hands of God; aye, and I would always believe if I could, for all is very comfortable and easy when I can believe God to be my God, and I can behold Him going before me. Jesus says, "When He putteth forth His own sheep, they follow Him;" and sweet following it is when they see His glorious Person, and hear His blessed voice, for they know His voice by the power that attends it, for "where the word of a king is there is power."

They know His voice, too, by the humility that accompanies it, for it humbles and melts the soul into godly contrition before Him. "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth." They also know His voice by the sweet drawing influence it produces, for

it draws up every feeling of the soul in love to the good Shepherd; and how delightful and pleasant it is to sing with David: "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want; He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; He leadeth me beside the still waters; He restoreth my soul, He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness, for His Name's sake." They know His voice, too, by the confidence it creates, for how blessedly can the soul then say, "This is my God, and I have waited for Him; He is my father's God, and I will extol Him." They know His voice also by the blessed contentedness that it produces; and how sweet it is to say, "A little with the fear of the Lord is better than great treasures and troubles therewith!" "A dinner of herbs where love is, is better than a stalled ox and hatred therewith."

They then know and feel to the comfort of their souls that godliness with contentment is great gain. Some professors tell us there is no such thing as a feeling religion; but the dear child of God that has been stripped and clothed, emptied and filled, wounded and healed, famished and fed, killed and made alive, damned and saved—he knows that his religion began with feeling, is carried on with feeling, and hopes to leave the world with feeling the love, mercy, grace and kindness of his dear Shepherd, that has loved the sheep and given His life for them; and at times hopes, when his poor, tried, tempted, tossed, and often shipwrecked soul shall enter into the harbour of eternal rest, that he shall be brimful of feeling the love of his covenant God and Saviour, so that he will shout and sing to all eternity, "Unto Him that has loved us, and washed us in His own blood, be honour, glory, dominion, and power for ever and ever."

But to return. I could neither see, nor feel, nor believe how it could be possible that I could get on without bringing a reproach upon the truth, that is, I should never be able to manage with my large family and pay my debts as I went on. Here I was for about a fortnight, and had nothing but sighs, groans and tears. My tears were my meat day and night for nearly three weeks; and I durst not tell my troubles to my nearest bosom friend amongst all the church, for the amazing salary of three pounds a week was talked of privately and publicly, in the pulpit and in the pew, east, west, north and south of Trowbridge, all wondering whatever the parson did with his money.

But after I had tugged and toiled, planned and schemed, raved and torn till my strength was gone, and I was brought to see that I could not make one hair white or black, that the stature was fixed, and that by my taking thought I could never add to it one cubit, and that whatever imaginations might be in my heart, the purpose of God must and would stand, I threw down my weapons of rebellion, and fell, a poor, blind, burdened, forlorn, dejected wretch, upon the tender mercies of Him

that "had delivered;" but I could not get a bit further with the text than "who hath delivered." Here, then, I lay with my grief and burden, till one morning, if I recollect right, about five weeks after I had agreed to pay my rent and have two months in the year my own, to supply where the Lord might open a way, the postman brought me a letter inviting me to go to London, to supply a few Lord's days for my old friend and brother, Mr. Robins, who preached in Conway Street to a number of Mr. Huntington's (See MERCIES Topic 17) people that had separated after his death. O, thinks I, what can this mean? and I trembled from head to foot. "O," I cried, "I never can preach three or four Lord's days to Mr. Huntington's old people;" for I had not forgotten the terrible shaking I had for some time before this when I preached for them one week-night at Conway Street Chapel, as I passed through London, and the very sight of Mr. Huntington's people then very nearly frightened me to death.

According to my feelings, I did get through my sermon in a middling way, but when I had done such trembling came upon me that I shook like a leaf, and I began to look over what I had said, and I could see so many things that I had left out that I ought to have brought in, that it appeared to me nothing but confusion and disorder. O what a fool I called myself all the time they were singing the hymn after sermon! How shall I stand, thinks I, when I go into the vestry? They will pull me all to pieces, and tell me to go to Jericho, and stop there till my beard is grown. I thought I could see and hear them talk together: "Did you ever hear such an ignorant bawling fool as this before?" But when I got into the vestry, many came in and spoke very kindly, and hoped the Lord would be with me; but somehow I thought I could perceive that others of them were glad the evening was over. Remembering all this, how will it be, thinks I, if I go to stop three or four Lord's days? Sometimes I thought I had better send them word that I could not go; then the interview which I once had with Mr. Huntington struck my mind, and how the Lord was with me, and that it had turned out then better than all my fears.

As a short account of this interview which I had with Mr. Huntington may interest some of my readers, I will just mention a few particulars of it. Many years before I began to preach, being one night at a prayer-meeting which I was in the habit of attending, a person who was there offered to lend me a book, the title of which, he said, was "The Kingdom of Heaven taken by Prayer," written, he added, by one Huntington, a coalheaver. "No," says I, "I thank you; it is nothing but some Arminian rubbish, for the title of the book satisfies me what it is." But he said that it was exactly my experience, and he was sure I should like it.

So, I took it, and O what a night I had in reading that blessed book! Never can I relate a thousandth part of my feelings. Sometimes I was crying, sometimes laughing, sometimes blessing and praising God, till my very soul was so overpowered that I hardly knew whether I was in the body or out of it. I read it till nearly daylight in the morning, and O what a union of soul did I feel to that dear man of God! I made a solemn vow to God that if ever He brought me in His providence anywhere near to him, I would go and tell him the blessing which I had received from reading his book. The very year before he died I was the unworthy pastor of the Baptist Church, meeting at Hope Chapel, Rochdale, and being considerably in debt for the chapel, the church wished me to go out a begging, as two hundred pounds were wanted, and we were threatened with law if we did not get it. So off I set round the different counties, till I got to London, and then that text came with power to my mind, "Pay thy vows unto the Lord."

O how powerfully did it come to my mind: "Did you not vow unto God when you read 'The Kingdom of Heaven taken by Prayer,' that if ever God in His providence brought you anywhere near where that dear man of God was, you would go and tell him how the Lord had blessed his book to your soul? Now you are in the town where he is." "Well," I cried, "Lord, help me to pay my vow." I felt in my mind a deal of going back; for I thought I was such an ignorant fool, and what would he think of such a fool as I going to see him? But the text kept following me, "Pay thy vows unto the Lord." So I was determined to go, and I said to my friend where I made my home, "Come, you must go and show me where Mr. Huntington lives, for I must pay my vow unto the Lord." I had told him all the circumstances before, but he had always thrown stumbling blocks in my way, telling me he was sure that Mr. Huntington would never talk with me, particularly if he had any idea that I was a Baptist. But I told him now that I must pay my vow unto the Lord, for I could have no peace till I had performed it. So off we went, and he brought me to the gates of the house, which was situated, if I recollect right, in a place called Hermes Hill, Pentonville.

I rang the bell, and when the footman came to the door, I requested an interview with Mr. Huntington, if agreeable. He asked me my name, and where I came from, and whether Mr. Huntington had any knowledge of me. I told him no, but that I should be glad to speak with him for a few minutes, if it were agreeable. He bade me follow him to the front door, and said he would go and ask if I might see him. But O what darkness of soul came upon me and trembling of body whilst he was going to inquire. I even felt a secret wish that a message might come that it was not convenient for him to see me; but when the man came back and said I was to follow him, and I was introduced to him in his study, O what fear and shaking I

had when I entered in. The good old man was sitting at his table with his cap on, and his Bible open before him, and he looked just like the old prophet Elijah in my eyes. But I was so shaken that I could hardly tell what to stammer out, nor did I know for a few moments what to say.

At last, however, I said I had read his book, "The Kingdom of Heaven taken by Prayer," many years ago, and it had been made a great blessing to my soul then, as it had been ever since at times, and that I had made a vow that if ever I came anywhere near where he was, I would tell him of it. But the dear old man never spoke a word, nor lifted up his head, and I sat so confused and shut up that I could not tell what to say, and for a minute or two not one word was uttered. At last I spoke, and said, "It is a mercy that we are poor sinners." The old man lifted up his head and said, "There are many poor sinners that know nothing of the matter." "Yes," I tremblingly said, "I believe there are;" and then I hobbled out somehow or another, "but it is a mercy if the Lord has brought us to know that we are poor lost sinners."

The dear old man lifted up his head again and looked me right in the face, and I felt as if his look would have knocked me right off the chair I sat on; and he said again, "There are many poor lost sinners that know nothing of the matter;" and down he dropped his head again. Poor ignorant blind fool, I sat sweating and trembling, and did not know what to say; but, blessed be the dear Comforter! He shone into my heart and brought what was needful to my remembrance, and gave me a sweet sight in a moment of the way by which He had brought me, and I answered the good old man, it was true there were thousands of poor lost sinners that knew nothing of the matter, but I believed in my very heart that when God the Holy Ghost quickened the dead sinner, opened his blind eyes, and brought him to see and feel that he was a poor lost sinner, He never left him till He had made it known in his heart what it was to be a saved sinner, and to know what the love of God is and its sweetness when it is shed abroad in the heart.

The old man looked up and said, "What dost thou know of the love of God? what is it? and what are the effects of it when known and felt in the soul?" and dropped down his head again. I said to him I hoped that the dear Spirit would enable me to give a reason of the hope that was in me with meekness and fear; and then I told him where the Lord had first met with me whilst in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity, and how He cut me down at a blow, and how He had slaughtered and killed me to all the pleasures of sin that I used to live in and enjoy as my meat and drink. I next told him how I had tugged and toiled and worked night and day to get some righteousness that I might have some hope that God would have mercy

on me. And I went on to tell him how the holy law of works was brought home to my conscience, and how I had found and proved it to be a killing letter, and the ministration of death and condemnation to my soul; and how long I lay in the belly of hell with the wrath of God in me, with no more hope of ever finding mercy than devils have.

I told him how I had envied dogs and every creature that had no soul to appear before God; and I was confident that those souls that had been here never went about to try to establish a righteousness of their own. I then told him where and when the dear Lord proclaimed peace, love, mercy, blood, and pardon to my soul; how wrath, terror, guilt, bondage, misery and hell fled away; and how love, mercy, peace, pardon and liberty entered into my heart, and the blessed and sweet effects that it had upon my poor soul for months. O what a change this produced in the dear man's countenance! He looked up with tears running down his cheeks and blessed God for what He had taught me; and I believe he brought twenty portions of God's Word to prove that it was the teaching of the blessed Spirit of God; and we both wept together, and blessed God for free and unmerited grace, displayed in saving, teaching, defending, upholding, delivering, comforting grace; so that we could join with Paul, "By the grace of God I am what I am."

After a long and savoury conversation I told him why I was in London, that I hoped the Lord had raised me up to tell to poor sinners what the Lord had done for my soul, and that I was the unworthy pastor over a little Baptist Chapel at Rochdale, in Lancashire; that we had built a new chapel, and being a very poor people, I had been through some parts of the country to get some assistance towards it, and had come for that purpose to London. But I told him God knew my heart, that I had no view of coming to him to beg, and that my desire to see him was for the love I felt to him for the truth's sake. The dear old man told me he could not encourage me to beg amongst his people, for they had built their own chapel themselves, and that it had cost them a great deal of money, so that he could not think it right to send a beggar amongst his people. I told him what he said was right, neither should I attempt to go amongst his people. But he opened his table drawer, and scraped up all the silver he had in it, and poured it into my hands, and said, "I give you this for your family." I thanked him for his kindness, and blessed the Lord that He had inclined his heart to speak so comfortably to the poorest of worms, and was just going to put out my hand to shake hands at parting, when I was checked with the thought that perhaps he might think me too bold.

I therefore blessed him in the Name of the Lord, and was going out of the room but he stopped me by saying, "Let us shake hands at parting;" and he rose up and came

to me, and got hold of my hand, and never can I forget with what cordiality he shook my hands and the words which he uttered, which have been a source of many comfortable moments to me since, when I have been sinking almost into despair. The words were these: "May the Lord God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, bless thee, and go with thee." O with what feelings I came out of the house! how my soul did bless and praise the Lord! And O the sweetness that flowed into my soul again and again from the parting blessing, "May the Lord God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, bless thee, and go with thee." And the Lord did go with me in a most wonderful manner, for I got the £200 in my journey, and went home to Rochdale with joy and peace.

This interference of God's right hand coming fresh to my memory when the invitation from the friends in Conway Street was working in my mind, so encouraged me, and, I believe, a little of the same unction came with it which I felt when dear Mr. Huntington spoke the words to me as we parted in his study, "May the Lord God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, bless thee, and go with thee," that I felt determined that I would write to the friends at Conway Street, and tell them that, the Lord helping me, I was willing to come according to their request. So I wrote a letter to say that, God willing, I meant to be with them for the time mentioned. But O the wrestlings in prayer which I had with God before the time came, and sometimes what fears and sinkings had I of soul lest the Lord should leave me to myself; for I have had such bitterness, bondage and misery in the pulpit when left to myself, that I dread pulpit work worse than the stocks, if the Lord be not there.

The Throne of grace was watered with my tears for about four or five days before the time came for me to go, that God would appear for me, both for body and soul, for He knew my situation in family trials, and that I had nowhere else to look, nor any other arm to rest upon. When I set off by the coach, my poor soul most of the way was breathing out its request unto God that I might see His goodness pass before me in the way; and such freedom I had with the Lord as quite astonished me, and many sweet and precious promises came with such power that I felt a sweet confidence the Lord would be with me. And for ever blessed be the Name of the Lord, I found Him as good as His promise, nor did one good thing fail of all that He had said to me by the way; for the Lord blessed the word to the hearts of many, and I believe they received spiritual things and cheerfully communicated carnal things.

Nay, I felt sometimes as if my heart would have broken with their kindness, for so many came to me blessing God for what they had received, and telling me it was a

light thing to communicate carnal things; and so it seemed, for they kept giving me, one after another, till I was almost ashamed to have any more. All the journey from home to London was nearly all the way with tears, cries and prayers that God would be with me; but nearly all the way from London home again was nothing but praises, adoration, thanksgiving and wondering at His goodness, mercy and grace in giving me, poor, ignorant, worthless me, the door of utterance to speak a little of His praise; and that He had opened the hearts of His people to communicate to my necessities. O the pleasure and joy that I felt when I got home, that I could go and discharge most of the debts that had bound me up so fast, and which, about a month or six weeks before, I believed would be my ruin at Trowbridge! And O how my soul blessed and praised my God who had brought the poor old blind fool by a way that he knew not, and in the paths that he had not known; who had made darkness light before me, and crooked things straight; and these things He had done for me, bless His dear Name, and had not forsaken me; and I did believe in my heart He never would, for I felt such a sweet, humble, blessed confidence, that I cried out again and again, "And can I ever distrust my God again? shall I ever despair again of His mercy, seeing He has so wonderfully appeared again in such a blessed way?"

I had for some time a tolerably even path; but it was a strange thing for me to be long out of the furnace, and I think never a poor worm tried harder to keep out of it than I did, nor dreaded more to be in it. But I have ever found that the purpose of God shall stand, let the devil and my heart plan, do, or say what they will; for "He will bring the third part through the fire, and purify them as silver is purified, and try them as gold is tried; they shall call on His Name, and He will hear them; He will say, It is My people, and they shall say, The Lord is my God."

Those professors, then, of religion who are not brought through the fire, whatever their sentiments may be, are not of the third part, and never know the bitterness of having all their fleshly religion burned up and consumed in the furnace, nor the sweetness of hearing a Father's voice, "It is My people," nor what it is to answer, "The Lord is my God." "I will leave in the midst of thee a poor and afflicted people, and they shall trust in the Name of the Lord;" "Many are the troubles of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth him out of them all;" "In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world;" "Through much tribulation we must enter the kingdom of God." And God gives His own account of those who are landed safe in glory: "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

I am confident the Word of God is true, and will stand for ever. Then woe be to those professors of religion who are all joy, and never know any sorrow; with whom there is all day, but who never know any night; all faith, but never any doubts; always full of peace, but never groaning under guilt; always strong, but never fainting; with plenty of salvation at their tongues end, but who never felt what damnation is in their souls; who are always extolling the form, but pouring contempt upon the power; always speaking in the highest terms of the letter of the Word, but casting a sneer of contempt at the Spirit's application of the Word to the soul; wonderfully zealous for attendance in ordinances, but never knowing what it is to groan to God that He will meet with their poor cast down souls as their Comforter in the ordinances.

Some of them will talk wonderfully about the doctrines of grace, but have never known what it is to water the Throne of grace with their tears, that God the Holy Ghost would cause His doctrines to drop as the rain, and His still small voice to distil in their souls as the dew. Poor things! they know nothing about these things by soul experience, for they are hid from these wise and prudent professors, and only revealed unto babes; and the dear Saviour thanked His Father that this was the case: "I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes; even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight." And why, O my soul, art thou not amongst them? Is it because thou hast merited His favour more than they? O no; it is because it pleased the God and Father of all mercies and all comfort that it should be so. Blessings and honours be unto Thee, O holy God the Father, that ever Thy love and choice was fixed upon such a brat of hell as I Honour, blessings, majesty, praises, and glories for ever crown Thy head, O Holy God the Son, Equal with the Father, and One with Him, that ever Thou didst condescend to take my nature into union with Thy Divine Person, didst obey and righteously fulfill all the demands of the holy law, and didst satisfy Divine Justice for all my cursed sins; didst conquer death, and him that hath the power of death, even the devil; and hath ascended up on high, and taken possession of the inheritance, and ever liveth to make intercession for my poor soul. And O Thou Holy God, Thou blessed Spirit, One with the Father and the Son, blessings, honours, majesty and glories for ever be unto Thee, that ever Thou didst pick up my poor soul out of the ruins of the Fall; didst kill me to all works of righteousness which I could do; didst reveal justifying righteousness and pardoning blood to my heart, and didst bear Thy solemn witness to my spirit that I am an heir of God, and joint heir with Christ.

O Thou that hast preserved me from falling a prey to the world, the flesh, and the devil all these years up to this moment; that hast lifted up a standard in my soul again and again when the floods of horrid, awful and unspeakable blasphemies have plunged my poor trembling soul into such despair that I have many times given it all up as a lost matter. O holy, blessed Trinity of Persons, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, One God, whom reason cannot fathom, but faith believes, love embraces, and praise adores, bless Thy holy Name. It is in Thy light that I see light; it is Thy smiles that make my smiles; it is Thy strength and power made manifest in me that holds me up and makes me strong; it is Thy Spirit of grace and supplications poured into my heart that brings my soul to pour it out unto Thee; it is Thy precious gift of faith, and Thy precious power, that draws it into exercise, which enables my soul to come with confidence and say, "My Lord and my God;" it is Thy precious Presence as my Father, my Friend, and my eternal All that changes a dungeon into a palace. Without Thee I am more and more confident I can do nothing. O ever keep me, ever teach me, ever uphold me. O never leave me to myself, my dear Lord, for two are better than one.

Some time after this heavenly vision was withdrawn I began to look out for the day of adversity, for I have ever yet found that God has set the one over against the other, that man should find nothing after him. The time drew on that I had engaged to go out to preach, if I recollect right, at Wallingford, London and Brighton, the whole of the journey being for ten weeks. My youngest child was at this time just turned three years old, and of all the idols I ever had, I think that this child was the greatest of them all. It was a girl, and her name was Rhoda. O how my very soul was knit to that child! Every thing it either said or did was beautiful in my eyes and pleasant to my feelings.

My dear wife often told me that she was sure I should be stripped of that child, and quite wondered I made such work about it. When I left home the dear little girl kissed me and bade me goodbye, and a second time followed me into the passage, calling, "Father, do give me another kiss;" and after I got to the door, she came again with tears in her beautiful eyes, "Father, do give me one more kiss," and, looking with such an anxious look as pierced my very heart, she said, "Father, shall I ever see you again?" "O how this cut my very soul, and into my feelings like a dagger." I was obliged, however, to leave the child and family, and all the way down the street I could not help weeping, fearing I should never see the child again in this world and, true enough, it was the case, for I never saw her more. I went on my journey crying, praying and begging that God would spare me and the child, that I might have the pleasure of meeting it again at home.

The first letter I think which I received from home mentioned that the child was poorly, but they made the best of it to make it appear that it might be nothing but a cold. But O it was such a cold as made my blood run cold in my veins from head to foot. I cried, sobbed, and groaned, but I could not get any access or liberty to God; and O how its little tongue and tears at parting came to my mind: "Father, shall I ever see you again?" O how I cried again, "Do spare the child; O Lord, don't be angry with me; do, Lord, raise up the child."

I tried with all my might to persuade the Lord to say, "This sickness is not unto death, but to the glory of God," but I could not move the Lord one jot; He took no notice of me either one way or the other. I was very anxious to have another letter to hear how the little creature was; but when it came the accounts were that the child was no better, but still they hoped it would recover. Thus I was kept sometimes hoping and sometimes fearing till I arrived at Brighton. O what a miserable journey I had from London to Brighton.

Sometimes I called myself a thousand fools for ever engaging to go to Brighton; then again I trembled at my wretched rebellion, for both conscience and judgment bore testimony that God was "too wise to err, and too good to be unkind;" and I was confident of it in my judgment that "the lot was cast into the lap, and the whole disposal thereof was of the Lord," and that by taking thought I could not add one cubit to the stature which God had fixed for me. O how I strove with all my might to leave the child in the hands of God, and with quietness and passiveness say, "Thy will be done;" but I could not do it. I am a living witness that quietness and passiveness to the will of God, when flesh and blood are cut to pieces, is the gift of God, as much as regeneration; for I know it would be for my comfort and consolation if I could but get at it; but I have ever found there is no other way of getting at it but as it gets at us. And how easy it is to fall into His hands, and have no will of our own, when His love, mercy, and grace fall into our hearts and give us to see the needs-be for every stroke!

The morning after I arrived at Brighton a letter arrived sealed with black. O how I trembled and shook from head to foot! I felt as if my very joints were loosened. When I opened the letter, I soon found the child was dead; but what I felt it is impossible either to write or speak. I had to preach the same night, but I felt confident it was impossible for me to attempt any such thing. The good woman of the house where I was tried all she could do to comfort me, but all in vain, and sometimes I thought my very senses were going.

A little before the time of preaching these words came to my mind, "Heaviness in the heart of man maketh it stoop, but a good word maketh it glad." I felt indeed the former part of the text, and, as far as the Lord enabled me, I preached from it the same evening, and I believe the Lord blessed it to one or two that knew what heaviness of heart meant. But no sooner had I finished my sermon than the old serpent came on me so unmercifully that I feared I must have sunk into hopeless despair in the pulpit. Sometimes I thought the child had been neglected, and if I had only stopped at home and minded my own house the child would have been alive now.

Then it came into my mind that I was the cause of the child's death, and, in fact, had murdered it. O the sobs, the anguish, the torment of mind that I passed through for weeks, till God delivered me, are past describing! Sometimes such wrath and anger would rush into my mind against God for taking the child, that I have stood trembling, expecting every moment that He would strike me dead for the devilish, awful, blasphemous feelings which I felt rising up in my heart against His dear Majesty. I strove with all my might against these horrid temptations. I prayed with all my might against them; but they paid no regard to either my prayers, wishes, tears, groans, or sighs, except it was to rave more and more. When I arrived at home, it was worse and worse, till I verily thought it was all over, and that my end would be black despair. My very soul, however, was brought to one text that seemed to stick by me the closest of any: "O Lord, I am oppressed; undertake for me." This, indeed, the devil told me was no text for me, for "it was," said he, "the cry of a child of God; but as for you, you are a downright hypocrite and will prove an apostate at last." But still I must keep crying out with the text, damned or saved, "O Lord, I am oppressed; undertake for me." And, bless His dear and precious Name, in His own time He appeared and whispered in my soul, "Be still, and know that I am God."

O then such a calm entered into my heart that not a rebellious thought moved its tongue, and such sweet submission to His heavenly will and pleasure came with it, that my heart and mouth cried out, "The Lord hath given, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the Name of the Lord;" "It is the Lord, let Him do what seemeth Him good;" "Not my will, but Thine be done." I could now kiss the rod, and Him that appointed it, and I could say from my very heart, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted that I might learn Thy statutes;" "The law of Thy mouth is better to me than thousands of gold and silver." I could now leave the child and bless God in my heart for taking it away, and stripping me of my idol, and bringing me to myself. "He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an

offering in righteousness." "From all their filthiness and from all their idols will I cleanse them." "I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and try them as gold is tried; they shall call on My Name." (O blessed shall! they never would but for almighty shall), "and I will hear them." Here is blessed sovereign free-will that does my soul good: "I will say, It is My people."

How will He say it, and where will He say, "It is My people?" His still small voice whispers in the soul, and bears witness with their spirit that they are the Lord's; and then they will say, and then they must say, and then they cannot help but say, "The Lord is my God." O what a sweet and heavenly calm I had for a short time after this terrible trial! Perhaps some professors may laugh at such little trials as losing a child, and if they do, I have no stone to throw at them, for I have thought so, and said so, and have wondered how a child of God could fret and murmur at the Lord for taking a child. The first child the Lord took I was as happy as my soul could hold, and could see and feel He was too wise to err, and too good to be unkind; so that I thought it was but a light thing to lose a child, and have given many a poor child of God some hard blows because they fretted against God who could not do wrong.

But when I came into the same place, and was left to the devil, and flesh, and blood, I found there never was such a rebellious wretch as I; and it matters not what the thing is, however little it may be, if God leaves us, the devil will be too mighty for us. I must stick to the old text while it sticks to me: "Without Me ye can do nothing;" "Through Christ, which strengtheneth me, I can do all things;" but let me be left to self and the devil, and a straw in the way will be too much for me. But O the wondrous works and ways of a covenant God! Truly the poet is very sweet:

God moves in a mysterious way,
His wonders to perform;
He plants His footsteps in the sea,
And rides upon the storm.

Deep in unfathomable mines,
Of never-failing skill,
He treasures up His bright designs,
And works His sovereign will.

Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take;
The clouds ye so much dread
Are big with mercy, and shall break
In blessings on your head.
William Cowper.

And O the blessings that broke through these clouds that I had so much dreaded! I never can tell a thousandth part of them, for there broke forth a blessing that I had prayed for for nearly twenty years; I mean the salvation of my dear wife. When the dear Lord first set my soul at happy liberty, how her soul was laid upon my mind! O the wrestling that I had with the Lord that He would be pleased to open her eyes; and sometimes I received such blessed testimonies from His dear Word that my poor prayer was heard, and that the lord would answer my request, that my soul rejoiced in the blessing, believing I should live to see it, and prove my God to be a prayer-hearing and prayer-answering Jehovah.

But, again, at other times it all appeared completely overturned, and fear would arise that she was a vessel of wrath, fitted for destruction. I wanted her to go and hear the preaching when she had an opportunity; but sometimes she would answer me very crossly, that I went after preaching and prayer meetings enough for twenty people; and she thought if people would mind their families, and do their duty, and trust to the mercy of God, it was quite enough. O how these speeches used to enter my heart like a dagger! Then my soul would go out again with such wrestlings that I felt as if I could sooner die than be denied the blessing. One day in particular, which I think I shall never forget, before I began to preach, we were in sore trials in providence, as she had a child at the breast and had been a long time without anything to eat. I had taken my work home, and been to the shop to get some provisions, and while they were getting ready she dropped down in a very severe fit, and for a long time I expected every moment she would be gone.

O how I staggered and reeled to and fro, and was at my wits end! I cannot tell the feelings I had. But at length she came to herself and revived again, but for several days she was much affected by it. O the dreadful shakings I now had of soul! For here the devil set me hard and fast. "Look at your situation," says he, "with five small children, you yourself over head and ears in debt, and your wife will never be able to do for them any more. God will take away her senses and the use of her limbs, and you will be brought to the workhouse, and die in black despair."

O the bitter agonies of soul that I passed through for three or four nights and days no tongue can tell, nor pen describe. But a little hope sprang up again that the Lord

was able to cure her, and that He could prevent her having any more fits. And now I began to pray nearly from morning till night that the Lord would grant that she might have no more fits; but in a few days she fell down in another very severe one indeed. Now, all hope seemed to be gone, and it appeared to me to be of no use to pray any more, for I thought God would never hear me. What I passed through between two or three months, as nearly as I can recollect, God only knows, for she had sometimes one and sometimes two fits in a week. Sometimes I thought I could perceive, as I thought, her faculties much injured.

O what scenes there were pictured before my eyes! Sometimes I thought I should see her deprived of her senses and of the use of her limbs; and then the devil roared again, "Where is your God? where are your prayers? Now what do you think of her being a vessel of mercy? Where is your good hope now that you have talked about? The Word of God saith, 'Hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in the heart;' but you are ashamed of your hope." O how I sank down into the very pit of despair, and could only whisper, "Let not the pit shut her mouth upon me." And now the devil began to threaten that a thousand worse things should befall me if I dared either to mutter, groan, sigh, or even think Godward; but this I could not comply with, for groan I must, and I told him plainly that groan I must, if I was damned for my groans; for groaning was in my heart, and I could not silence it or the devil either. So oft I was obliged to groan, "Let not the pit shut her mouth upon me," till one night when I had been to the prayer-meeting, which I then attended as often as I could, and as I was coming home through the fields, my poor wife's case respecting her affliction was so powerfully brought to my soul and came with such weight upon my poor heart, that I felt it impossible for me to carry it any longer. I got, therefore, into a large field, and went into the middle of it as nearly as I thought, and it being a very dark night, I thought none could see nor hear me but God.

Here I fell upon the ground with such a burden that I felt as if I could neither stir hand nor foot; and here I lay sighing, crying and wrestling with the Lord. I told Him and begged He would not be angry with me, but I assured Him I could not, I must not, I would not rise up from that place till He had answered my request. I told Him that I must either have my request or die on the spot, when these words came to my mind as I lay wrestling with Him, "Let Me alone, for the day breaketh;" but my soul cried out, and my mouth, too, "I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me." Here I lay quite passive in His hands for either life or death, and I said to Him, if it be more for His honour to deny me my request, and take my poor weighted, burdened, distressed, afflicted soul out of the body, His will be done. But by and by He came with such glory and with such majesty, that my poor soul

was quite overwhelmed with joy as He spoke the words, "Be it unto thee even as thou wilt."

For a few moments I could neither speak nor stir, for His glory overshadowed me with such a weight of it, that for a few minutes I was quite lost. But He spoke again, and with the words, "Be it unto thee even as thou wilt," there came light and strength so that I could answer it. And O how my poor soul answered Him with such humility, "Lord, my request is that my dear wife shall have no more fits; this is my request; be not angry with me, but in tender mercy answer my petition." He answered me with such a smile, "It is done as thou hast requested." O what confidence I felt that God had heard and answered my cries! My body and soul leaped up like a giant refreshed with new wine. Not one devil was to be found, nor even heard to whisper, for the sun had risen upon my poor soul, and they had all gathered themselves together into their dens, and my delighted soul went to her work of praise and love to my dear God and Saviour; for I was like a bird let loose from the snare; the snare was broken, and I was escaped.

When I arrived home it was very late, and I found my wife in great fear and distress lest something had happened to me, but I told her that all was well and right. I could not help exclaiming, "Dear soul, you will never have another fit, for God has answered my prayers." Poor thing, she exclaimed, "I wish you may tell true." My heart and my mouth answered, "Blessed be my God! it is done, and the Lord hath told me so." It is now between thirty and forty years ago, and she has never had one fit since. O the lovingkindness of a covenant God and Father! how many times have I sung and enjoyed a few verses of Ps 116 "I love the Lord because He hath heard my voice and my supplication; because He hath inclined His ear unto me, therefore will I call upon Him as long as I live. The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me; I found trouble and sorrow.

Then called I upon the Name of the Lord; O Lord, I beseech Thee, deliver my soul. Gracious is the Lord, and righteous; yea, our God is merciful; the Lord preserveth the simple; I was brought low and He helped me. Return unto thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee." Now I felt again sweet liberty in praying that he would open her eyes and bring her out of darkness into His marvellous light. And here I was crying that the Lord would save her soul; and as He had been kind enough to hear my poor prayers for her body, that He would hear me for her soul. O the many times for the space of twenty years that my soul has believed that I should have the blessing! yea, and have thanked and blessed His dear Name for it many years before I saw it manifested. Sometimes I thought it

was nothing but flesh and blood, and that all my tears and prayers arose from nothing but natural affections; but, blessed be God, I have lived to prove that they were prayers that were indited by the Holy Ghost, and I have had them blessedly answered to my souls satisfaction.

After I returned from Brighton, for several weeks I saw a great difference in my wife, but I thought it perhaps arose from losing the child, and would end in nothing but natural sorrow. But one evening, poor thing, she was in such distress that she could not conceal it any longer, and burst out in a flood of tears, exclaiming, "O I am lost, I am lost for ever; and I believe my very senses are going, and I shall go mad." I told her that I hoped her senses were coming in the best sense of the word, and I asked her if her distress was about losing the child. "O no," said she, "the child is nothing to me: it's my never-dying soul that will be lost for ever."

I asked her how she began to think anything about her soul, when she told me that a little before I left home, before the child was taken ill, I was preaching about the awfulness of the ungodly being cut down in their sins, and the awful eternity that these poor souls would have to suffer, and feel the wrath of a just God, and I came out with this word three times, "O eternity, eternity, eternity!" "O," said she, "it entered into my heart like a sword, and I saw and felt that I was the one that must endure eternal wrath for ever and ever." O the joy that entered into my heart when she told me these feelings. "Bless the Lord," exclaimed my heart and tongue, "God is not showing thee these things to send thy poor soul to hell." I believed in my soul that it was the work of God, and I felt my heart sweetly opened to speak to her of the mercy, grace and kindness of a dear Jesus to every poor, lost, ruined sinner. But the more I tried to comfort her, the more she cried out, "I am undone, I am undone! I am not of the number that He died for! O what shall I do? and whither shall I flee? O (cried she) I cannot see it possible how God can have mercy upon me."

I could not help feeling keenly for her in her distress, but could not but bless and praise God that He had brought her to see and feel herself to be a poor lost sinner; and I told her that God would in His own time reveal it to her joy and comfort that she was not only a lost sinner, but a saved sinner. But, poor thing! she could not take this in till the happy time arrived that it took her in; and here she was shut up unto the faith that should hereafter be revealed. Many times did the devil tempt her to put an end to her existence; but when the set time to favour Zion was come God delivered her, and that precious. I was attempting to preach from these words, Eph 3:18-19: "May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth

knowledge;" and as I was showing in my little way the characters that were interested in this love, God sent the word home to her heart, blotted out all her iniquities like a cloud, and assured her that He had loved her with an everlasting love, and that with lovingkindness He had drawn her.

O the joy and peace she came out of the chapel with! We then lived out of the town, and generally called at one of our deacon's houses for a short time after evening service before we went home. The mistress of the house asked her if she would come on Tuesday, and take a cup of tea before the evening service, to which she answered quite freely and pleasantly, " Yes; if the Lord enables me I will." I turned my face and looked at her, and said, "How can you think about coming on Tuesday evening? what is there for you? You say you are out of the secret, and the things of God belong not to you." But she answered with a smile and a pleasant countenance, " Bless the Lord! I know what it is to feel the love of God, and I am sure that I am one of those that are interested in the love of God, for I feel its preciousness in my heart." O the blaze of glory that came into my soul that the day had arrived which I had so longed to see with my eyes and to hear with my ears! and O the melting of soul that I felt that God had answered my prayer, though the devil had so often told me I never should see it.

But what struck me with wonder above all the rest was that He should make use of my poor mouth to pluck her out of the devil's kingdom, and likewise to lift her soul from off the dunghill, and set her amongst the princes of His people. I blessed Him, I thanked Him, I told Him He had well rewarded me for waiting twenty years, and I told Him that the blessing appeared too great for so worthless a wretch as I. What happy and comfortable nights and days we had after this! Everything appeared right for a time, particularly with my wife, and for a short time it was all love and praise with her. Bless God! He brought her and taught her in such a precious manner that we had one heart, one way and one voice in the things of God and truth. But by and by her comforts began to abate, and the fountain of the great deep began to be opened up within to let her see a little what a devilish heart she had got. I began to perceive a great gloominess upon her mind, and a great backwardness to speak of the things of God and truth.

Many things began to appear wrong in her eyes; the devil harassed her sore that it was all delusion; and in one of those plunging fits he told her it was all through my preaching, and sometimes he worked her up to that degree that, as she told me after she had had a deliverance from it, she was sorely tempted to murder me. I came home from the chapel one evening, and I wondered whatever was the matter with her. I had been trying to encourage the poor tempted children of God, and in the

sermon I had said, "Come, ye poor devil-dragged souls, God will deliver you in His own time." When I came home she did not look quite pleasant, and by and by asked me whether I thought it was right to come out with such expressions as devil-dragging. "I have read," said she, "a good deal in the Bible, but I never read there about a devil-dragged soul. I have read a good deal of Mr. Huntington's works, and I never found such an expression there; and I have read some of Mr. Gadsby's works, and have heard him preach many times, but I never heard him come out with such an expression.

I wonder where you have picked it up. It appears to me such a vulgar expression, that I really felt so ashamed for you that I did not know where to hide my face." But I took no notice of her words. "Poor thing," thought I, "thou wilt know by and by a little of what devil-dragging means." And so it was; for she got into such a state of mind, and was so tempted to believe that it was my preaching that had been the means of driving her into it, that she was determined she would go to some other chapel. So one week evening off she went to one of the chapels; but she came out worse than ever, and when she came home she was full of nothing but misery and wretchedness. I asked her where she had been.

She told me. "Well," said I, "and how did you get on?" "Why," she says, "let me have devil-dragging sooner than that. I have been told that I have nothing to do but to do my duty, live up to my privileges, watch and pray, take God at His word, and trust to the merits of Christ, and then all would be well; but not a word of encouragement was there given to such an unbelieving, worthless, devilish wretch as I" I could not help smiling, though I felt for her in her distress; and I knew that the Lord would appear in His own time. But here she was, sorely harassed for some time, until a little while after this I was led to preach from these words: "For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith the Lord; I will set him in safety from him that puffeth at him." {Ps 12:5} God carried the word home to her heart, and she came home full of joy and peace, exalting free and sovereign, discriminating grace. Truly, her feet were set upon the rock, and a song of praise was put into her mouth, even thanksgiving unto her God. She declared that she could live up to her privileges now, and trust her God with body and soul for time and eternity. "Yea," said she, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me;" and she never once ever after grumbled at my vulgar speeches, for she was brought to know a little of what devil-dragging was. Bless His dear Name! all His children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of His children; and though they have so many sinkings, they must rise again, for He raiseth up those that He bowed down; though they have so many nights, morning is sure to come, and joy with it; though they have so many days of

adversity, the day of prosperity is over against it; though they have to endure so many winter seasons, when there are nothing but sighs, groans and misery of every description, yet springtime is sure to come. And O the heavenly delights when our dearly Beloved speaks to the soul: " Rise up, My love, My fair one, and come away; for lo! the winter is past, the rain is over and gone, the flowers appear on the earth, the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land. The fig tree putteth forth her green leaves, and the vine with the tender grape give a good smell. Arise, My love, My fair one, and come away." But what can we do without our dear Lord? His own mouth declares, "Abide in Me, and I in you; as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in Me. I am the Vine, ye are the branches; he that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without Me ye can do nothing." And I believe in my very soul that all who are taught of God are learning this lesson all their lifetime-that without Christ they can do nothing, and that with Christ they can do all things.

But to return to the place where I left off. When I arrived home from Brighton, I found things very trying in providence; for what with afflictions in the family, children's school bills, rent and taxes, clothing and provisions being very dear, and most of the children being now men and women at the table, I found that I was very much embarrassed in my circumstances, and could see no way how it was possible that I could get out of my difficulties, and pay every one what I owed. And yet some of my professed friends wondered what I did with my money, three pounds a week, and they could not but think that I must be laying some by very fast. But I found the case quite the reverse, for I saw that I was sinking very fast, and how to get out of it I could not tell.

About this time there was a house to let a little more than a mile out of the town. I went to see the house, which was situated upon what they call Trowle Common, and found it to be a tolerably good-sized house, with a large yard and conveniences to keep a cow or two, with liberty, I understood, at the proper time, to turn them on the Common. I was quite taken with the place, for there was a good-sized orchard full of apple trees and a good garden, and it appeared to me that this was the place where I should be able to get out of my difficulties. For I thought farmers are the men that get on the best, and I thought I would turn farmer, too; not with a view to gain riches, but to get out of my present difficulties, and I considered it was right to try all I could to get on, and provide for my family without burdening the people so much.

When I came home I told my wife where I had been, and how well pleased I was with the situation, and I was quite sure it was the very spot for us. But she could not see with me, neither could she believe that the Lord would bless it; "for I am confident," said she, "whatever you take in hand, except preaching the gospel, will never prosper, for I believe you must live upon the gospel." And so it turned out, but I could not believe it till I had proved it, for I thought Paul worked with his hands, and I was determined that I would do so too, and would not be entirely dependent on the friends, for it cut me to pieces to hear from one and another that some of the people thought I was quite wrong in burdening them as I did. So I fully made up my mind that take the house I would, though all my real friends advised me not. So off I went and took the house, which in a few weeks I was to enter into possession of, and, if I recollect aright, it being about May, I began to prepare to stock the orchard and garden by planting potatoes and other things needful for a family; and wonderful expectations I had that I should save my present rent completely the first year, and that that would go towards paying my debts.

At length I got to my new habitation, but found it a most expensive job, what with moving and fitting up some things in the house that must of necessity be done. I had borrowed twenty pounds of a friend to stock my little farm with; and when I had planted all my ground with potatoes and other vegetables, I went to market and bought a lot of pigs. If I recollect right we had about fifteen, and these I thought I could turn on the Common. But at the winding up of it I thought I must have been turned on the Common myself; for I soon found I must turn my live stock into money, or else I should be in the wrong place. But when I offered the pigs for sale I was told that poor pigs were so cheap that I should get very little for them, and, I was advised to put them up and fatten them. It would be, they said, so much better than selling them as they were, for that would be next to giving them away. So off I went to the meal-man, and agreed to have as much barley meal as would fatten nine or ten pigs.

My wife told me as soon as ever I began to fatten them that she believed fat pigs would come down in price as fast as poor ones; and true enough it was the case, for when I had killed and finished them all up, they did not bring me in a third part of what I had calculated upon. As to the crop of potatoes which I had planted in the orchard, and which I had expected would amount to upwards of twenty sacks, they rotted in the ground; and as for the apples, which I had calculated would pay half the rent, I believe I had not five shillings' worth altogether. Nay, it appeared that the Lord had gone out against me, and blasted every plan; and when I came to look over my accounts. I found that coming to this place, with all things connected with it, had sunk me nearly £40 in debt more than I was before I went there.

O, I thought, I must have gone out of my senses! I think I shall never forget one day. In my misery I went into the orchard and sat under an apple tree, and how my soul went out unto God that He would be so kind as to show me why all this calamity had befallen me; and if I had acted wrong, I begged from my heart He would make it plain to me. And here I wrestled with my whole heart and soul, till the dear Lord was pleased to answer me with these words: "No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier." O how I fell under it; and while my soul was weeping and confessing that I had done wrong, and begging He would forgive me, these words sounded in my soul: "Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel?" {1Co 9:13-14} And what light and glory shone in these words in the same chapter, verses 7-11: {1Co 9:7-11} "Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges? who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock? Say I these things as a man, or saith not the law the same also? For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn.

Doth God take care for oxen, or saith He it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt this is written, that he that ploweth should plow in hope, and that he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope. If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?" O how my soul was humbled and melted down at His blessed feet, and how clearly did I see that those that do not reap spiritual things, how grudgingly do they communicate carnal things. I saw as clearly as the noon day that we had some of this sort amongst us at that time who did not reap spiritual things from my poor preaching, or else they would never have found it such hard work to communicate to my necessities.

But God showed me that I had nothing to do with their words nor looks. O how seasonably did these words come and sound in my soul: "What is that to thee: follow thou Me." "When I sent you out without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye anything?" And my very soul answered, "Nothing, Lord." And O how blessedly the Lord brought to my remembrance the way He had led me, the helps and deliverances that He had wrought for me to that present day, and had been a very present help in all my times of troubles; and these words sounded so sweetly: "He hath delivered; He doth deliver." "Yes," I exclaimed, "and I trust He will yet deliver." O how clearly did I see the needs-be for all that had befallen me, for I was nearly eaten up with the things of the world, and some times as savage as a bear

bereaved of her whelps because I could not have my own way. I speak it to my shame, that I felt so full of wrath and anger boiling up at times in my heart, both against God and man, that I did really think God had given me up to horrid presumption, and how I hobbled through with my preaching for several months God only knows, for I cannot tell.

It was with me little else than darkness, hardness, bondage, and misery, for my head and heart were constantly hard at work; and as God tumbled one castle down, I was building up another; as He hedged up my way with thorns in one place, I was trying hard in another place to break through there. Sometimes on a Saturday I verily thought I should go mad, for I could get no text. Everything was going wrong in the house, and sometimes the pigs got out of the sty into the garden, ploughing up the few potatoes I had left, tearing up the cabbages, and spoiling everything they came near. I remember particularly one Saturday they had been in the garden, and I had driven them out, not in the best of tempers, and, as I thought, fastened them in so completely that I considered it would be impossible for them to break out again; but in about two hours, as I was got a little calm, and was attempting to pray for a text, tidings were brought that the pigs were in the garden. O, thinks I, the very devil must be in the swine; and I believe he was not very far from them when I got near them; for the devil was very strong in me, and it was a wonder that I was kept from swearing, for I verily believe never did a poor blasphemous wretch come out with more oaths outwardly than I felt inwardly.

When I had got them secured in their house again, and got into my room, O the terror that seized my poor mind for the feelings which I had had! O how I hung down my poor head and wished I had never been born! I could neither see nor feel that there was any more grace in my heart than there was in the swine. "Surely," cried I, "I am deceived, and am deceiving the church of God. What can I expect but vengeance and wrath to follow and pursue me, and plunge me at last into that hell that is my just due?"

How I got through with preaching the following day I cannot tell, but I did somehow or other; and what astonished me was, that though I was so fast bound up, the Word of God was not bound, for He bore testimony to the word of His grace by calling and delivering many precious souls. O the cursed infidelity that at times rushed into my mind! "How can you prove the Bible to be the Word of God? or how can you prove there is a God? Look at such and such men that can curse and swear, break the Sabbath, and care for neither God, nor man, nor devil, and see how they prosper in everything they put their hands to; and is it likely, if there were a God, He would bear with such wretches? And look at yourself, and many

more that profess to be God's people and believe the Bible to be the Word of God, see how you are plagued, tormented, and crossed, and everything keeps coming contrary to your wishes and desires. And see the situation you are in with the immense debts that you owe, and with all your striving and desires to pay them, you are sinking further and further."

Sometimes I sunk so deep under these feelings that I verily believed I should never rise more; nor should I ever have risen had not He who is the resurrection and the life come to me and raised me up, as I have mentioned, under the apple tree. O I lay as passive in His hands as a child. Bless His dear Name, He burned up all my fleshly, trumpery rubbish into ashes, and there I lay at His feet in my feelings, confessing my baseness and foolishness; and I told Him to do with me as it seemed good in His sight, that I could be anything or nothing that He might be glorified. And O what a blessed change I felt under the apple tree when He gave me " beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness, that I might be called a tree of righteousness, that He might be glorified." I truly felt my soul willing to bear whatever burden He might be pleased to put on, and I did indeed feel His yoke easy and His burden light.

My soul was now led out in prayer from day to day that He would open a way that I might leave the place, and come into the town again. One day I was sitting in the garden, when we had been there, I think, about ten months, and there wanted about two months to the rent day, when I should have to pay, if I recollect right, twenty-two pounds, and I sank at the thoughts of it, how I was to get the money up, and then give the landlord warning that I should leave; and while I was pondering these things over, there came a person out of Trowbridge, whom I knew by sight, and asked me if I was intending to leave the house which I then occupied. I told him yes, that I did intend it. " Well," says he, "I have not my health very well in the town, and I think such a walk as this would do me good; so if you have no objection, I will take it off your hands." To this I answered that I should be glad if he would. "But," says he, " I shall want to come in it about a fortnight, for the springtime is coming on, and I want to have the benefit of the air." "Well," says I, "the sooner the better, for I am sick and tired of it." So off I set to the landlord to know if he was willing to take such a man as his tenant, and set me free from his house after I had paid him my year's rent.

He told me that he knew the person, and would consent to it. O how I blessed and praised the Lord that He had opened so unexpected a way that I could leave the house without giving six months warning. Bless the Lord, my soul exclaimed; He is able to bring me out of it all. So off I went into the town, and found a house

standing empty, which I thought would suit us very well, and I took it; and in about a week, I think, we moved and took possession of our new habitation. But O the sinking of soul when I came to reckon up my debts! It appeared impossible that ever I could pay them, and I called myself a thousand fools that ever I should have acted so foolishly. But, bless the Lord, I found one promise true again and again: "He giveth power unto the faint, and unto them that have no might He increaseth strength." I had nowhere else to fly to but to Him who had the cattle upon a thousand hills and all the gold and silver at His command; and my soul was crying to Him night and day that He would appear for me, for I was cured of cutting, planning, and scheming how to get out of trouble, as I found by bitter experience that that was the way only to get deeper in.

O the blessedness when God helps us to cease from our own wisdom, and leave our cares in the hands of a covenant God, who ever was, ever is, and ever will be faithful to His promise! And so I found it in this case, for God brought me out by a way that I knew not, and made darkness light before me, and crooked things straight, so that my soul leaped for joy. Some of the members of the church had pity on me, and, unknown to me, went to some of the church and congregation, and had a collection for me towards the loss that I had met with; and I was quite humbled with the liberality of so many of the friends, for, if I recollect aright, they collected more than twenty pounds. O how my soul blessed the Lord for this blessed gift! Surely, my soul cried out, "The hearts of all men are in the hands of the Lord; and He does whatsoever He will in the armies of heaven, and amongst the inhabitants of the earth." I was not long before I distributed the money; and this encouraged me still to cry on to the Lord, for I had a ten pound debt at one place that was coming due, which I must pay somehow or other, but how I could not tell. But my eyes were up unto the Lord, for I had nowhere else to look; and here I was till the day before I was to pay the money, and there was no appearance whatever of the money coming. O what a fit of unbelief did I fall into! "Tomorrow is the day, and no possibility now of having it; and what will your friends think, that have been so liberal, when they come to hear you owe ten pounds more and cannot pay it? Yes, and what would they think if they knew of the many ten pounds that you owe!"

O how my soul cried unto the Lord! and O how sweet the dear promises flowed into my soul! precious promises when we come in the very spot where they fit so well! There is not a word out of place then: "Truly a word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver;" "A word spoken in season, how good it is." And I found them very good and precious, for let the devil come in on what side he pleased, God sent me a promise that He would provide; and so I found in the

morning, for the postman came to the door with "One shilling and eleven-pence!" O the sound of "One shilling and eleven-pence!" it made my soul to dance for joy. It was a letter from my dear old friend and brother, Mr. Gadsby, which I was not long in opening, and the first thing I saw was a ten pound note. Up into my bedroom I ran, and fell upon my bed, blessing and praising my God till all my strength of body and soul seemed to be gone. Peter had no more wonder, love and joy when he girt his fisher's coat about him and leaped into the sea to come to his Lord. I clasped His feet with my feelings, and washed them with tears of joy, and wiped them with the hair of my head. Nay, such displays of God's wonderful love and goodness may be felt, but can never be told. After blessing and thanking God for the ten pounds I then proceeded to read the letter. My friend Gadsby began it with blessings upon the head of our dear Lord that had appeared for me in such a kind way as the God of providence, and then went on to tell me that he had called to see a friend of his, who was also a friend of mine, and that in the course of conversation this friend had asked how John was going on, to which he had answered that he believed he was up to the neck in trouble; for, says my friend G., I had a letter from him not long ago, and he was in great fears he should never be able to get on at Trowbridge."

On this, as the letter went on to relate, my kind friend put his hand into his pocket, took out a twenty pound note, and said, " Send him that; it will do him good; but don't tell him who sent it." " Now," said the letter, " as you owe some money in Manchester, I will keep ten pounds in my hands till I hear from you, and if you cannot pay it now I will send the other ten, if you wish it." O the feelings I had are past describing! Tongue cannot utter it, nor pen describe it, I was so lost in my feelings. " Truly," my very soul exclaimed, " the Lord hath done great things for me, whereof I am glad." O how establishing, confirming and settling are such blessed deliverances as these of the love, mercy, grace and faithfulness of a covenant God towards His dear children, who are driven to their wits end, and know not what to do. How delightful it is to see, and feel, and be living witnesses to prove that God has heard and answered their poor cries! how sweetly can they enter into these words: " I love the Lord, because He hath heard the voice of my supplications; because He hath inclined His ear unto me, therefore will I call upon Him as long as I live. {Ps 116:1-2} This is the Lord's own account of them: " Ye are My witnesses, saith the Lord, that I am God, and that there is none else."

I was not long before I sent my never-failing friend, Mr. Gadsby, a letter to say that I had received the ten pound note safely, and the blessing it had been to me, and how well it fitted, and wished him to employ the other ten pounds towards settling what I owed at Manchester. O the wonders of a covenant God and Father! O what

a blessed confidence I had for some time that God would bring me through, and that I should live to see the day that He would enable me to pay my debts; for I believe in my heart that the grace of God known and felt will make a man honest in all his dealings, and will lead him to desire that he may adorn the doctrine of God his Saviour in his conduct at home within his own family, in the church, and in the world. O how near and dear is the cause of God and truth to his heart at times, and what cries and tears he has to God that He will preserve him from dishonouring His blessed Name, or causing the mouth of the uncircumcised to say, "Ah, so would we have it." O how my poor soul has trembled for fear this would be the case with me! but hitherto the Lord has preserved me, and I am at a point that it is only by the grace of God that I am what, I am.