The drawings of everlasting love made known in the conscience of a sinner. To which is added, Observations on Ezekiel xxxvii

by

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THE DRAWINGS
OF
EVERLASTING LOVE
MADE KNOWN IN THE
CONSCIENCE OF A SINNER.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

Recent Thoughts
ON THE FREE MERCY OF "THE GOD OF LOVE AND PEACE" TO POOR SINNERS
IN THE "SON OF HIS LOVE," AS SET FORTH FIGURATIVELY IN
THE VISION OF THE DRY BONES
TO THE
PROPHET EZEKIEL,
AND RELATED IN CHAPTER XXXVII. WITH SOME FAITH VIEWS OF ITS
BLESSERD AND PEACEFUL EFFECTS IN THE SPIRIT AND CONVERSATION OF
THE SONS OF PEACE.

BY JOHN WADE.

"This people have I formed for myself; they shall show forth my praise;"
(Isaiah xiii. 21.) "they shall abundantly utter the memory of thy great
goodness, and shall sing of thy righteousness, they shall speak of the glory
of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power." (Psalm cxlv. 7, 11, 12.) "The Lord
hath brought forth our righteousness; come, and let us declare in Zion
the work of the Lord our God." (Jer. ii. 10.)

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PREFACE TO FIRST EDITION.

To them that are "written among the living in Jerusalem;"
"Beloved of God, called to be saints; grace to you and
peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ."
(Isaiah iv. 3; Romans i. 7.)

If the reason be asked (as well it may) why such a
poor ignorant mortal should presume to appear in public,
I will endeavour simply to state the circumstance by
which the Lord was pleased to open and draw forth those
testimonies contained in the following pages.

It came to pass on a certain day, that a certain person
in the ministry called upon me, and wished to read some
letters I had received from Dr. Hawker; after reading,
he requested to copy them for the Gospel Magazine, to
which I consented.* And as the Lord has endeared the
glory of his grace to my heart, I said, if ever those letters
went from me, I intended, if it were the Lord's pleasure,
to give a testimony before his people of the truth and
reality of his own word, revealed, confirmed, and sealed,
by his own power, and in his own time and way, freely
of his own good will and pleasure to me, as a poor, help-
less, and guilty sinner; his forbearance and long-suffering
mercy, wisdom, power, everlasting love, and faithfulness,
through all my path, as a dear covenant God in Christ
Jesus; and also the glorious and precious person and love

*
of God the Holy Ghost, in breaking forth upon my soul, and loosing my bonds; taking of the things of Christ and showing them to me, leading me to know and enjoy my eternal union with Christ, and my completeness and blessedness in him.

I was then led to enquire of the Lord, if it were his will to bring to my remembrance those things which he had wrought and taught in my soul during those many years he had led me in the wilderness? After some time had passed in waiting upon, and for the Lord, those scriptures in the title page were laid upon my mind; and as circumstances were brought to my mind, the sheets soon became too bulky to accompany the letters in the Magazine, although I endeavoured as much as possible to cut it short; it was then thought most advisable to make them into a small tract and send them forth under the Lord’s providence.

I have thus far thought proper to state the circumstances by which I was led into the subject, and to show that it came not from my wisdom, or the teaching of man, but was freely given by the Lord. But however pure these things were received from the fountain, yet in passing through my poor polluted nature, there are the sad discoveries of creature weakness and defilement; and no wonder, while my whole nature is one complete mass of sin and corruption, in every thought, every desire, and every affection, which appears to pollute every thing that passes through it. So that, instead of glorifying in the flesh, I am led down into the secret mysteries of iniquity within, in the deep and subtle workings of which I cannot fathom or define, and which are daily and hourly brought up to view, under which I groan and cry—
'Behold I am vile.' Yea, so very poor in spiritual things, that I cannot raise up one single longing or spiritual desire or affection, or command one ray of light or opening into the word, the mysteries of the kingdom, or the covenant of grace. Yea, the Lord has so ordered the whole of my path in every particular, as to have the whole glory to himself; not only in giving every spiritual blessing in Christ from everlasting, but also the amazing depths of wisdom and sovereignty displayed in the opening and giving out of those blessings, as to baffle and confound my wisdom and pride, and leave me nothing to glory in but Him, who is the glory of his people Israel. (Luke ii. 32.) And in closing this preface, I desire to bear my testimony to the sweet fruits produced by the Spirit, as 'love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance,' (Gal. v. 22, 23); and to induce the tenderest affection and regard to His dear name, His honour and glory.

I now desire to commit the whole to the sovereign will and pleasure of the Lord, humbly praying him to pardon every error; and that, so far as His purpose, His word and work are found in it, His blessing may be upon it, to prosper it in the thing whereunto He hath sent it; well knowing, that the whole government of His kingdom is upon His shoulders, to order it; and by His own power, teaching, and witnessing, to confirm and establish that kingdom in the souls of His own people: and the sure effects will flow, to the eternal praise and glory of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, now and for ever. Amen. (Isaiah ix. 6, 7; Matt. vi. 13; Luke xvii. 21; Romans xiv. 17.)

JOHN WADE.

July, 1831.
The first edition of this work has been sold off some years since, and several applications were made for copies, to which I could pay no regard without a reprint, to which I had a great reluctance. As applications still continue, it should seem to be a call in the Lord's providence; and under this persuasion I concluded to make an effort to revise and reprint it.

In going through it for this purpose, I must confess I was shocked at the unchristian spirit and expressions it contained; and though it certainly bore the marks of the teaching of the Spirit of God, yet there was by far more of the bitter, proud, and scornful spirit of John Wade, than of the lovely sweet mind and spirit of the Lord Jesus, and of which I am most truly and deeply ashamed (especially the latter part.) It is a mass of blind confusion and ignorance, most disgusting to my present mind, and most dishonourable to the name and glory of the Lord. I loathe it as I do myself and all that comes from me. I am obliged to leave out the whole of that piece, and have begged a few thoughts of the Lord, in reference to 'the exceeding riches of his grace,' to the dry bones of the house of Israel, the blessed effects of redeeming love in the crucifying of Self, and a partaking of Christ in his mind and spirit as the effects of suffering with him.
As far as my knowledge goes on the subject, experimental redemption from Self, is a subject very rarely insisted upon. Peradventure it may fall into the hand of some poor sufferer under the cross. The Lord preserve such from the weakness and errors of my judgment, and lead them by his Spirit into the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ.

Once it gratified my poor vanity under the cloak of humility, to publish what is thought a deep experience, in a miserable detail of sin and rebellion, and to manifest a spirit of enmity and bitterness against those who could not see with my eyes. I scorned the idea of free-will and the spirit of the proud pharisee, not knowing I was the very man, and was manifesting the very same spirit myself which I condemned in others. (Rom. ii. 1.) The beam was in my own eye. (Math. vii. 3.)

In the view of such poor vanity and sin I am made to abhor myself before God; and those who were once my scorn, have now my pity and my prayers, and myself the reproach.

Under these convictions, through the Lord's mercy, it is my one continued effort to look unto Jesus, 'who is holy, harmless, undefiled,' the pure and spotless 'lamb of God,' to the perfection of his righteousness, sacrifice, and mediation, now in the presence of God, and the Father's love, delight, and satisfaction in him, as the 'God of love and peace.' From this rich fountain of pardoning love and peace flows the soul-healing and soul-sanctifying power and virtue of redeeming love, as a rich and pure stream from the fulness of Christ to purge the corrupt fountain from its strife and bitterness. It is as the apostle saith, 'Beholding as in a glass the glory of the
Lord, we are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the spirit of the Lord.'

Reader; may the Lord awake your spirit to see, to seek, and enjoy your high, happy, and holy privilege, of being made a partaker of Christ, in his holy person, his obedience, sacrifice, and mediation, in his lovely mind and spirit, 'that you may show forth the praises, the virtues (margin) of him,' that he may have the whole glory of his love from all the powers of your ransomed spirit; and 'that the name, the person, the love, the goodness, mercy, wisdom, power, holiness, and all that is contained in the name and person of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.'
(2 Thess. i. 12.)

JOHN WADE.

Uppingham, October, 1841.
THE DRAWINGS OF EVERLASTING LOVE.

It is not my design, neither is it possible, to note down the first visits of the Lord to my soul, which were early in life; and which, though they were not attended with power to deliver me from the works of darkness, yet they are marks of the tender mercy and love of the Lord to me, when dead in sin. The relation of all the events which filled up the space of more than twenty years, would be too tedious to insert: the first three or four years of which were made up of convictions, and vows, and backslidings, until the word of the Lord came into my soul, 'Wherefore, come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.' (2 Cor. vi. 17, 18.) The power that came into my soul with these words of life, broke, as it were, my covenant with sin and sinners, and separated me from my old company and outward sins. My awful state by nature as a sinner, and a whole life of sin, were brought before me; and I was led to cry for mercy day and night as a poor guilty creature before God.
After some time had passed in this state, it came to pass one night, that I dreamed I saw Jesus Christ crucified upon the cross before me, and I kneeling at the foot of the cross; I thought I said ‘Blessed Jesus, didst thou suffer all this for my sins?’ I then awoke in tears, with my mind overflowing with love, peace, and comfort, the sweetest I ever experienced in the whole of my pilgrimage. Until the year 1829, I had sweet and frequent communion with Christ, and felt the assurance of the pardon of my sins, and the openness of his heart, and the freeness of his love to me.

Thus, while dandled on the knee, (Isaiah lvi. 12) I concluded my warfare was at an end; but the Lord soon undeceived me; when I was weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breast. (xxviii. 29.) My former convictions, which had been strong, had driven me to a close attention to church, but it now became a dead service to me. The Lord followed me with fresh power in the words, ‘Come out from among them,’ &c. and I was obliged to leave it. Notwithstanding all that stood in the way, the Lord gave me strength by this word, ‘Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.’ (2 Tim. iii. 11, 12.) And out of all the Lord delivered me.

But to cut short this part of my experience, I then went to hear the Arminians and other sects for a short time. I heard with great delight; read and prayed much; aided the system of making proselytes (Matt. xxiii. 15); walked in all the commandments and ordinances blameless. Here I felt myself at home, and began to bless myself, and cry Peace.

Sometimes, on reflecting on past experiences, and what I had gone through, I considered myself no common Christian; which filled me with pride and vanity. I thought I was rich and increased with goods, and needed nothing; not knowing that I was wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. Rev. iii. 17.
After going on about three years in this condition, I fell into a cold and insensible state of mind, and sin began to break out at times, which much alarmed me. I lost my tenderness of conscience, my love, zeal, and enjoyment of the means. This made me fear greatly. Fretfulness, peevishness, and rebellion against cross-providences took hold of me, and I fell under a heavy temptation, which lay upon me eight or nine years after, and sorely afflicted my mind at times. This drove me close to the means, but I found no strength from them. Prayer became hard work, I strove to curb my evil nature, but in vain. Iniquities prevailed against me, and I feared greatly lest I should make shipwreck of faith and a good conscience; which often led me to cry out, ‘Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.’ Psalm li. 10.

I cleaved close to the means, though all was dry and barren. My mind became dark and bewildered, and my heart dreadfully hard, and my conscience seared as with a hot iron. I thought of a phrase I had heard, of being gospel-hardened. This seemed exactly my case—given up to a reprobate mind, (Rom. i. 28,) my heart seemed filled up with all unrighteousness, darkness, and confusion. Whatever I heard or read, whether of judgments or of mercies, made no impression. These things could not soften my wretched heart. After I had been in this state for a length of time, these words came into my mind with much sweetness and comfort: ‘I the Lord do keep it,’ Isa. xvii. 3; which in some measure relieved my sorrow, and gave me a little hope. But this proved very short: my miseries and sorrows all returned as before. Soon after this, the doctrine of Election was brought before me; and my heart raged with the most awful enmity and rebellion against God, and I felt as if I could tear the Almighty from his throne; and as if, rather than be saved by Christ alone, I would be damned in hell for ever.
My soul trembles, as I look back at these awful thoughts, (which I well remember,) and I rejoice in the tender mercies of my dear covenant God. When these desperate fits were over, and my mind was a little calmed, then the wretched nature of my sin and my awful condition almost chilled my blood, and sunk down my soul into deep despair.

After about twelve months, these words stopped my mouth from caviling at the doctrine of Election, 'Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?' 'Woe to him that striveth with his Maker,' Mat. xx. 15. Isa. xlv. 9. But my heart still rebelled against the sovereignty of God. After this the word of the Lord came with power into my heart, 'I know you, that you have not the love of God in you.' John v. 22. It came as if the Lord had singled me out from all the world, and pointed at me with the finger; 'I know you,' &c. while I felt his piercing eye, ransacking every corner of my wretched heart. This proved it to be the word of the Lord, 'quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.' Heb. iv. 12. In this furnace all my free-will religion seemed to be burnt up, and shown to be cursed hypocrisy before God. My mouth was stopped, and I was covered with shame and confusion, and filled with guilt and horror of soul. If I attempted to cry to God, there appeared nothing but wrath and terror before me, and Satan close upon me; so that I dare not open my mouth. If I attempted to ask a blessing on my food, as soon as I began to speak, these words would come with such power and stop me, and sink down my soul into the deepest distress, 'I will even curse your blessings,' Mal. ii. 2; and these words would follow me continually, 'Ye are cursed with a curse.' iii. 9.

The Lord had now laid judgment to the line and righ-
teousness to the plummet; his hail was now sweeping away the refuge of lies, and his waters overflowing the hiding place. (Isa. xxviii. 17.) 'Behold he breaketh down and it cannot be built again; he shutteth up a man and there can be no opening.' Job xii. 14.; see Hosea ii. 6. to the end. I heard of the promises of God to them that believed; to them that loved and feared God, and that were sanctified; whose hearts were purified by faith, and who fled for refuge to lay hold on Christ, &c. But alas! as for me, I had none of these things, but quite the reverse: I was full of sin, unbelief, rebellion, enmity, and darkness, and estranged from God; nor could I hear of any thing to give me hope.

In what a wretched state my mind was, and what were my feelings I cannot even attempt to describe; notwithstanding all this I still cleaved to the means, and sometimes had power to pour out my complaints to the Lord, and to beg that he would bless the means to my soul. I laboured hard to keep up my profession, and to obtain peace of mind, and would fain have been delivered from my wretched state of mind, but could not.

After a long time waiting in this miserable condition, the Lord in mercy sent this sweet word with power into my soul, in a most miserable day of darkness and distress, (not under the means, as they are called, but when alone,) 'I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known, I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight, these things will I do unto them and not forsake them.' The sweet power and comfort which came with these words made my soul weep for joy, and for a short season to forget its misery. I ran immediately to my Bible to find them, which I did in Isa. xiii. 16. But alas! in a few days all was doubted as being a delusion, and as coming from Satan; and I must go down again into the deep. My terrors returned with double force; my state seemed described by the apostle, Heb. vi. 4 to 8, x. 26
to 29. My sins appeared desperate; they were spiritual wickedness committed after I had received a knowledge of the truth; after being once enlightened, and having tasted the good word of God, &c. and it is impossible to renew such again to repentance, I thought I had rejected Christ as the only Saviour, and had done despite to the Spirit of grace. This seemed to explain the cause why my heart was given up to sin, and so filled with rebellion against God, that nothing was blessed, but all was full of cursing and bitterness, within and without, and that I could find no repentance; that my heart was scaled up, given over to a reprobate mind.

Sometimes in my distress these words would come and sink down my soul, 'Having eyes full of adultery and that cannot cease from sin.' 2 Pet. ii. 14. No! cannot cease from sin—all is sin; all my strength, and nature, thoughts, prayers, and profession; and a wretched heart full of sin, overflowing, overflowing; cannot cease from sin. After this, these words came: 'Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness, &c. but after thy hardness and impenitent heart, treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.' What horror, distress, darkness, yea, what awful forebodings of 'the blackness of darkness for ever' came upon me. Jude 13th verse; Exod. xix. 16 to 19; Heb. xii. 21; Hab. iii. 16; Zep. i. 14 to 18; Joel ii. 1 to 11; Isa. ii. 10 to 22; Ezek. xxii. 17 to 22. What tongue or pen hath ever described what is felt in the soul while the Lord is leading his dear people into the knowledge of their ruined condition by nature, as all sin, and nothing but sin; and revealing his righteous judgments in the soul in its condemnation?

Nothing now appeared but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation which shall devour the adversaries: and what feelings are produced by this certain fearful looking for of judgment, can only be known (but not described) by those poor but precious souls, who
are compassing Mount Sinai, whom the Lord is proving
by the 'spirit of judgment; and the spirit of burning.'
Isaiah iv. 4; xxxi. 9. While these things were rolling
over my mind, I was sometimes enabled to pour out my
complaints before the Lord, in his own words, Hosea xiv.
2. 'O Lord, rebuke me not in thine anger, neither
chasten me in thine hot displeasure; have mercy upon
me, O Lord, for I am weak, O Lord heal me, for my
bones are vexed; my soul is also sore vexed, but thou,
O Lord, how long?' Psalm vi. 'I am troubled; I am
bowed down greatly; I go mourning all the day long,
thine arrows stick fast in me, and thy hand presseth me
sore.' Psalm xxxviii. 2 6. 'Be pleased O Lord to de-
 deliver me, O Lord make haste to help me.' Ps. xl. 13.
Thus I 'roared, by reason of the disquietness of my
heart.' Instead of answers of peace and deliverance, by
the pardon of my sins, godly sorrow, and humility to
walk with God, which I longed to possess—came heavy,
dark, afflicting, and distressing providences, which crossed
me in every thing I proposed. 'My purposes are broken
off, even the thoughts of my heart.' Job xvii. 11. At
which my wretched heart and nature manifested the most
awful rage and rebellion; 'like a bullock unaccustomed
to the yoke,' or 'a wild bull in a net, being full of the
fury and rebukes of the Lord God.' Jer. xxxi. 18. Isa.
li. 20.

While labouring and waiting under these distresses,
all that I heard was bondage and misery. I was told to
cultivate faith, love to God, repentance, humility, meek-
ness, resignation, universal and sincere obedience to all
the commands of God, love to the brethren, &c. without
these things there was no salvation for me. All my na-
ture being corrupt, sinful, and desperately wicked, and
laden with sin, all that I heard only tended to seal my
condemnation, and to make my life bitter. Alas! what
could I cultivate but sin and misery! If one good thought
could have delivered me from my wretched condition,
gained me the favor of God, I could not have produced it. That which was exacted from me, and required of me to cultivate, in a way of duty, or sort of bondage, or as it were law-work, I now find sweetly flowing from the infinite and abundant fulness of my dear and gracious Lord Jesus Christ, (Col. i. 19; Eph. i. 3, 22, 23; iv. 13; John i. 16; Deut. xxviii. 12;) and from the blessed testimonies, witnessing, and working of the Holy Ghost, (John xvi. 14; Deut. xxx. 6; Rom. v. 5; xv. 13; Heb. xiii. 20, 21; Col. i. 1 to 13;) the Lord fulfilling ‘all the pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power.’ 2 Thess. i. 11, 12.

As I could hear of no experience, nor of any mercy or refuge for one so entirely helpless, lost, ruined, and undone, I concluded there never was one in my case that ever had mercy or deliverance given him. I then thought I would try the people called the church, if ever any of them had felt as I did. When I opened my mouth, and began to tell of my wretched depraved heart and nature, my sin, darkness, hardness of heart, helplessness, ignorance, unbelief, rebellion, &c. some told me I was bound to love God for what he was in himself; I told them, I saw nothing in him but wrath and terrible majesty, and could not love him; skin for skin, all that I could do, or think of, or hear, or read, could not produce love, or deliver me from my condemnation. Others told me to appropriate Christ to myself, and to apply the promises. Others said I should not give way to such thoughts and feelings, but meditate on Christ. Others said they never heard of any one being in such a condition. Some advised me to join the church and to drink of the condunit-pipes, (the means of grace,) and my mind would be more settled and established; and as that was what I greatly longed for, I joined what is called the church, with much prayer and trembling, lest I should turn out a Judas or Essau among them.

But alas! the pipes were all dry pipes; as the God
of grace and the everlasting covenant of grace and peace
made for me in Christ, was neither known nor preached.
There was no grace in the means. Sometimes at ordi-
nances my mind has been driven almost to distraction
with these words: ‘Therefore, thus saith the Lord God,
behold, my servants shall eat, but ye shall be hungry;
behold, my servants shall drink, but ye shall be thirsty;
behold, my servants shall rejoice, but ye shall be ashamed;
behold, my servants shall sing for joy of heart, but ye
shall cry for sorrow of heart, and shall howl for vexation
of spirit; and ye shall leave your name for a curse unto
my chosen, for the Lord God shall slay thee, and call his
servants by another name.’ Isa. lxv. 13, 14, 15; lii. 5.
Oh! the bitter anguish and vexation, what lamentation
and howling of soul, as it were the echoes of the bitter
howling of the damned, shaking all within me. While
all about me were eating, drinking, receiving, and sing-
ing for joy of heart, my heart and mouth were sealed up.

After this I tried the minister, to see if he could know
anything about me, or give me any directions. I had
many a long conversation with him, and after opening
my mind a little, he told me that I was very nervous, and
that the weather had great effect upon me, which I knew;
but I said my heart and nature were the same in all
weathers. At other times he asked me if I could not
arise and shake myself from these feelings? I told him
I had neither strength nor power to lift up myself; my
experience was that exactly described in the lxxxviii.
Psalm, 4—6; cvii. 10. ‘Bound in affliction and iron, &c.’
By his answers, I found he knew nothing of my case, and
I often told him so; but he said he did. The next time
we were in conversation together, I told him, I thought
my heart grew worse and worse, and like the troubled
sea was continually casting up rebellion, enmity, unbelief,
and all manner of evil: when he, (with all the solemnity
and gravity of a judge passing sentence) said, ‘I tell you,
upon my very soul, that without love to God there is no
such thing as being a Christian.' I knew that, but I wanted to know how to come at it; this he never told me. After much conversation, I asked him if ever he was in my state? and, if he was, how did he get out of it? how he obtained faith, love, &c.? But I could obtain no satisfactory answer; there was nothing said of the sweet work of God the Holy Ghost, in shedding abroad the love of God in the heart, and opening and showing the precious things of Christ, or the work of faith with power, &c. The next time I saw him, I said, "It is of no use to talk with you, for you do not understand what I feel or what I want, unless you can understand this scripture, ‘But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered awhile, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.’ 1 Peter v. 10. This is what I want.' He said, 'Ah, I perceive! you are looking for what you will never have.' I said, 'Then, if I have not that, I have nothing, I am lost for ever.' The Lord has mercifully proved his own word, and stablished my soul in an everlasting covenant of peace in the Lord Jesus Christ, as the Lord my righteousness and my salvation.

After this, there came in September, 1818, a minister, and preached from Jer. i. 5. After speaking of the covenant in his way, he said, 'We must have faith and repentance to cement our souls in the covenant.' This being the way proposed for my entering into covenant with God, it completely closed the door and shut me out of the covenant; as I had nothing, and could cultivate nothing, being entirely helpless and wretched; my distress and misery was greatly increased by this sermon, as I find written in a paper after hearing the sermon: 'There is no straw given unto thy servants, and they say to us, make brick, go ye, get you straw where you can find it and fulfil your works, &c.' See Exodus v. throughout. Thus do those bondmen scatter bondage and death, and 'speak to the grief of those whom the Lord has wounded.'
Psalm lxix. 26. 'For the vile person will speak villany, and his heart will work iniquity, to practise hypocrisy and to utter error against the Lord, to make empty the soul of the hungry, and he will cause the drink of the thirsty to fail.' Isaiah xxxii. 6, 7. 'They turn the needy out of the way; they cause the naked to lodge without clothing; they pluck the fatherless from the breast; they take away the sheaf from the hungry; they are of those that rebel against the light; they know not the ways thereof; nor abide in the paths thereof.' Job xxiv. 'Woe be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture!' saith the Lord. I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran; I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied; how long shall this be in the hearts of the prophets that prophesy lies? yea, they are prophets of the deceit of their own hearts, &c.' Jer. xxiii.

Those who have not been brought down under the conviction of sin, cannot enter into the experience of those who are exercised with it, nor the sweet experience of deliverance from it by the love and power of the Holy Ghost, in manifesting or showing the Lord Jesus Christ, and what are the exceeding riches of the Father's grace and everlasting love, in choosing, predestinating, accepting, and blessing; nor of Jesus betrothing in eternal union; nor of the sweet communion and fellowship really and truly enjoyed in the soul, with all the persons of the Godhead; nor of following the Lord in a sweet life of faith, and holiness of conversation becoming the gospel, while receiving of his fulness grace for grace. (Rev. iii. 17; Rom. vii.; John xvi. 14; Eph. i. 3—6, ii. 7; Hos. ii. 19, 20; 1 John i. 3; Eph. ii. 10; v. 1; John i. 16.)

It is very grievous to pervert the gospel by a legal spirit, in setting forth a system of duties—instead of leading the afflicted soul to Christ and the fulness of his redemption, to receive from him all that will adorn his name and gospel. That is a very awful charge against the
shepherds of Israel, 'The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick; neither have ye bound up that which was broken; neither have ye brought again that which was driven away; neither have ye sought that which was lost; but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them; ye have thrust with side and with shoulder, and pushed all the diseased with your horns, till ye have scattered them abroad.' Gal. i. 7, 8; Rom. xv, 29, Ezek. xxxiv. throughout.

My conscience was filled at times with terrible apprehensions of the wrath to come. Heavy, dark, and afflictive providences pursued me, and the hand of the Lord appeared going out against me in every way, and every thing that befell me. Hearing nothing to encourage a poor helpless sinner, but the reverse—man was indeed fallen but had all his powers, and capable of doing much—while, on the contrary, the Holy Ghost was continually convincing me of my utter helpless and wretched condition. So that what I heard and what the Lord taught in my soul, was all contradiction and confusion.

While these things were going on in my soul, I was filled at times, with murmuring against the Lord, for his severe dealings (as I thought) with me, and used to mutter over those bitter complaints recorded in Læm. iii. 1—18, as they exactly suited my feelings; see also Job iii. 20; vii. 15—21; ix. 17, 18, 27—35; Psalm lxxxvii. and cii. 1—11. My cries to God were many and frequent, and sometimes for days together, I could think of nothing but 'Lord help me,' 'O Lord I am oppressed, undertake for me.' I was sorely distressed because I could not receive what is called the overture of mercy, as others did.

I then tried the people again, to know how they did to receive Christ, to get faith and salvation, and what they felt of their wretched natures, what meant darkness, chains, and bondage of soul in the prison-house, or how they got out; but how, or what these things were, none
could ever relate. After all my efforts, strivings, and thirstings of soul to get faith, and Christ, and salvation, and to get united to him and to love him, to have pardon of my sins and to be reconciled to God, I found it altogether impossible, and nothing could ever move me. I concluded there must be something more desperate in my nature than other sinners. This sorely staggered me, as the Lord had not led me into the chambers of imagery, (Ezek. viii.) nor taught me by experience the truth of his word (John vi. 44) in the bitter soul experience of it; and no man who has been here, will ever preach or hear the doctrine of free-will, or creature-ability, to work the work of God. For though I was so distressed, wretched, guilty, sinful, and ready to perish, and would look to Christ and come to him for mercy, then there would rise up the desperate pride, self-will of my wretched nature—as if just ready to say in the same breath, Lord be merciful to me a poor guilty, miserable, and distressed sinner—another voice from within would say, I would rather be damned than submit to Christ alone. O what hard stragglings were these in my soul, and often perplexed me day and night for a length of time. He, who from eternity gave me to Christ, he only can give Christ to my soul, and that God the Holy Ghost who anointed me in Christ, only can take of the things of Christ and show them to my soul, and witness to my eternal adoption, and bring forth that sweet cry from my soul, of 'Abba Father.' (John xvii. 2; Gal. i. 16; Psalm xlv. 7; 2 Cor. i. 21; Rom. viii. 15.)

However, to be short, finding no answers to prayer, 'hope deferred maketh the heart sick.' Prov. xiii. 12. My desperate heart was suffered again to break out, and I do tremble as I relate the awful out-breakings of a heart so desperately wicked. I was led to conclude there was no such thing as ever knowing anything about God, if there ever were any God; and if there were a God, I would go to hell and tell all the devils in hell that he was
not faithful to his word, and that I had prayed to him so many years and had proved him so; and worse than all, my malicious heart rejoiced in doing it. Oh! what shall I say unto thee, 'thou preserver of men,' my long-suffering, gracious covenant God, that preserved me in Christ Jesus, called me by thy grace, and led me about and instructed me, and delivered me from the snare of the fowler, and from my own most wretched heart and devilish and malicious nature! Thou hast indeed led captivity captive, and taken the captive from the mighty, and delivered the prey from the terrible. (Isa. xliv. 25.)

Close after this I was filled with the most distressing horror of soul, as expecting shortly to be visited by the righteous judgment of God, and sent to realize my misery, which sometimes, like the kindlings of divine wrath within me, again chilled my blood. I often wandered into the fields by night, and often cried unto the Lord, but sometimes dare not look up. I would have given all the world to have been like any animal, that my soul might have died for ever to escape my misery; but alas! here was no hope for me ever to have peace or comfort like these happy creatures possessed. How did I envy their state, and bemoan my wretched condition!

Soon after these things, as I was coming home from chapel, full of confusion and misery, on a sudden these sweet words were spoken with sweet power and comfort to my poor distressed soul: (O the tender mercy of my dear and gracious Lord.) 'Sanctified by God the Father, preserved in Jesus Christ, and called.' Jude i. These sweet words in a measure relieved my mind. I cannot pass over this without remarking the tender mercies and watchful eye of my dear covenant God to my soul, in my deep distress and misery, notwithstanding my awful rebellion and sin, as a proof of his good pleasure to me in Christ alone, to the praise of the glory of that grace which chose and accepted me, in the beloved.

These sweet scriptures given me by the Lord at
different times were all I had to live upon, and there was life in them. (Deut. viii. 3, John vi. 63.) Alas! the sweetness and power that came with these words were soon gone; but these words stuck fast by me, 'in Christ Jesus.' Yet how to get 'in Christ Jesus' and to be preserved in him I could not get at, nor understand. Numbers of scriptures such as 'If any man be in Christ,' 'Ye are all one in Christ Jesus.' 'To all the saints in Christ Jesus,' &c. But how to get in Christ, or what it was to be in Christ, here was the mystery. I could not get in by faith, for I could not believe; nor by works, for I was condemned in all by the law as sin. I was exhorted to get an interest in Christ, to put on Christ, to apply the promises, to appropriate Christ to myself, to love Christ, &c. Sometimes there was something said about an emanation or an influence, but this thing I could not find in all the word of God. This was darkening counsel by words without knowledge. (Job xxxviii. 2.) Alas, I had no strength, no faith, no love, nor could I cultivate any, all was dismal bondage, darkness, and confusion; nor could I cultivate anything but sin, unbelief, and fear that hath torment; all that I heard only tended to confusion, and to gait my afflicted conscience.

However, being under a legal spirit, and fearing I might be wrong, I still attended, though with great grief to my wounded conscience, and the great question still undecided, how to get an interest in Christ. And before I show the way in which it pleased the Lord to bring me acquainted with the letter of his precious truth and the plan of salvation, as a means of relieving my anxiety at that time, I must beg leave to state, that he has been pleased to lead me about and instruct me, by many of what are called heavy, afflicting, and perplexing providences, which he in his wisdom and eternal purpose was pleased to appoint in my path, and in his mercy brought to pass. While passing through these, my wisdom was
often confounded and shown to be foolishness, and perverted my way, and my heart fretted against the Lord; every attempt to extricate myself only tended to my own confusion and distress, and to mortify the pride and self-will of my stubborn nature, for in every one the Lord seemed to say, ‘My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure.’ ‘My glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images.’ Isa. xlvii. 10, xlii. 8. The purposes of the Lord being deep laid in his eternal wisdom, (Psalm xxxvi. 6; xcii. 5; lxxvii. 19;) every circumstance connected with these dispensations was so ordered as to place deliverance beyond the reach of an arm of flesh; and many times the Lord has shut up my mind from seeking help from that quarter; and notwithstanding my many murmurings and rebellion, he has sometimes so broke down my spirit into the sweet experience of that scripture, Psalm cxxxiii. 1, 2, and brought me to his feet to wait his mercy alone to deliver, and he has so often manifested his kind deliverances in his own way and time, and by his own power, and sealed the conviction upon my poor heart even in the most trifling circumstances, as they are called (Matt. x. 29, 30; Rom. xi. 33—36,) as to make his leadings in providence most sacred and sweet to my soul, and his glory dear to my heart.

With these things in my mind, I cannot pass over the providence which the Lord appointed to open the correspondence with his servant Hawker, seeing the Lord himself hath recorded a similar instance in Acts x. 5, 6, in directing Cornelius to the house where he had lodged his servant Peter. Many other similar instances are recorded, where the Lord has literally directed the steps of his people, and others also, to bring about the eternal purposes of his love: Abraham’s servant was led to the very spot where, and at the very time when the appointed damsel should come. (Gen. xxiv. 27.) Gideon’s feet must be directed to the very tent, and at the very moment, to hear the dream. A certain man, his wife, and two
sons must go into the country of Moab, to bring out Ruth. (Judges vii. 13; Ruth i. 1; Matt. i. 5.) The woman of Samaria must come to draw water as Jesus sat on the well. (John iv. 7.) Pharaoh’s daughter must come to the very spot, and her eye be turned to behold the ark. Moses must kill, and fear, and flee to Midian, and lead the flock to the backside of the desert, to the very bush where the Lord designed to deliver him his commission. The unconscious Ishmaelites must come in sight just in time to carry Joseph into Egypt. Sisera must flee to the tent of Jael, to be delivered into the hands of a woman. (Exod. ii. 5, 12, 14, 15; iii. 1, 2; Gen. xxxvii. 25; xl. 7, 8; Judges ix. 9, 17, &c.) And how often has the Lord guided my unconscious feet to the very place and person he hath appointed, to meet with and bless me with the sweetest openings of his infinite wisdom, in bringing about the whole, as has astonished my poor thoughtless heart!

It pleased the Lord to afflict my poor wife for many years, and having tried all doctors near us to no purpose, we were advised to go to one at Leicester. When we came there my path was directed to pass a shop, (I think kept by Calladine,) where were some tracts. I had passed many shops with windows full of books, but my mind being full of trouble I took no notice of them. Here reason may ask why and wherefore stop here to notice these? For the same reason that the brethren of Joseph should lift up their eyes to behold the Ishmaelites, or the daughter of Pharaoh behold the ark, or the compassion of her heart moved towards the babe—to fulfil the eternal purpose of God, as much as the passage through the Red Sea. (Acts xv. 18.) As I read on the title-page this inscription, ‘Affectionately recommended to the Church of God in this God-dishonoring, Christ-despising, Holy Ghost-disowning generation,’ it was instantly impressed on my mind that these tracts contained the very thing I wanted to know. I bought several of them,
and there was opened to me the being in Christ and the blessedness of it, in the eternal love and exceeding riches of grace of each glorious person in the Trinity or Godhead, towards the objects of everlasting love, and so clearly opened in the holy word, and witnessed therein by the Lord's people. These things gave me, as it were, entirely new views of the Bible and the plan of salvation altogether; my heart cleaved to the Lord in earnest cries to understand the blessed mysteries of the kingdom. But it not being the Lord's time for deliverance, I was soon after plunged again into deep distress, and as it appeared to me to be given up of God, and my heart sealed up and given over to the torments and fury of the devil and his fiends in these distresses.

However, one day I resolved to state my feelings in a letter, as well as I was able, and directed it by the address on the tracts, if peradventure it might find him, if alive; and to my great surprise, in about a fortnight I received my first letter from Dr. Hawker, wherein he showed, and that from the Lord's word, that the work was of God, which gave me some little hope at times, that the end might be blessed. It was indeed a sweet letter to me, as also the other letters which I afterwards received in answer to mine; some of which came in seasons of distress and sorrow, and which for a time relieved my mind; and my motive for mentioning this, is the Lord's glory in the mysterious leadings of his providence, which he has so often made dear to my heart; and although the Lord had not appointed Dr. Hawker as the instrument to bring deliverance to my soul, yet he has proved him in my instance to be a true prophet, and sent, and richly anointed with the Holy Ghost, to be a faithful witness to the truth as it is in Jesus, unto the people of God, before a crooked and perverse generation, in this day of rebuke and blasphemy. And as the Lord has fulfilled to me those precious views of Christ as set forth in the letters, I desire to set to my seal, and to
bless the Lord for having raised up such a faithful witness to his truth and salvation. See Jer. xxviii. 9.

The Lord well knowing the wretched proneness of my heart to idolatry, was pleased to close the correspondence with his servant Hawker, which was a great grief to me; especially as I had no communion with the Lord, nor any with man. I had now to struggle, as it were, alone, and to groan out my requests unto the Lord; and I have to admire the Lord's wisdom and goodness in this dispensation. However, as I loved the truth, as stated in the letters and tracts, and as clearly proved in the Bible, I was instructed into 'the way of the Lord more perfectly.' Consequently I seldom attended chapel, as the blessed truth was not to be found there. Soon after, I was called upon by one of the principal men of the church, to enquire my reasons for my absence. I told him, because I could not hear the gospel. This opened to a long conversation, in which he pleased how the minister had been under the wisest and best of teachers, and how it hurt his feelings to see any of his people absent themselves. I then told him it was written, 'All thy children shall be taught of the Lord.' As the man grew warm, I could scarcely get a word in for a length of time; but, on his going away, I said, 'Well, sir, I shall lay the matter again before the Lord, as I have done many times before; and if I should be directed to attend again, I will do it; but if not, I am sure I cannot.' At which, he turned again, and answered in these words, 'The Lord! the Lord has nothing to do with it! I verily believe you are under the delusion of the devil.' This was certainly a failure of brotherly kindness and charity; but the Lord did not leave me in their hands, 'nor condemn me when I was judged.' These words encouraged me to bring the matter before the Lord, to beg direction and strength from him. (Psalm xxxvii. 33, cix. 31, xii. 5.) After this, I forsook the chapel altogether. I was soon charged with living in the
neglect of a known command of God, in not assembling with the people of God. My only reply was, I could not find them.

It pleased the Lord that these things should come to pass at a time when my eternal state hung in doubt before me, and the heavens were as iron, and the earth as brass, no access or opening to the throne, wrath and terror in my soul, the hand of the Lord appeared closing against me in providence, and a poor afflicted wife; the enemy broke in upon me as a flood of violent temptation, saying, 'Alas! poor soul, what a wretched condition have you brought yourself into by your obstinacy and self-will, you have left off to behave yourself wisely and to do good, you have left the people and ordinances of God. It would have been better never to have known the way of righteousness, than to have known and turned from it; the last state is worse than the first. See how cheerful and happy are those christian friends you have left; and even the wicked are provided with employment to earn their bread by labour. You had but little work before, and now you have set all your friends against you. Now nobody comes near you. See how the face of the Lord is against you; you have no answers to prayer; you love sin, therefore the Lord will not hear you; your cries are nothing but the bitter complaints of Esau and Spira, shut up in black despair. You are full of sin; you have no satisfaction, no holiness, no mark of God's children. They are never forsaken, nor ever will be. You sin and rebel every moment, and fret against God; but you cannot repent, your heart is sealed up, your cry is exactly that of Spira, I cannot do it, oh, now I cannot do it, all is over, thou hast procured these things unto thyself.'

While these things were tearing my breast night and day, the devil so blew up the desperate enmity of my heart with his venomous breath and filled me with such rage and blasphemy against God, that I turned my back upon my family-altar for two or three days; nor dare I
open my mouth lest I should burst out to blaspheme God, nor attempt to bow my knee lest I should instantly be cut off. My Bible was closed, neither dare I take it up. Here refuge failed me, 'The Syrians before, and the Philistines behind; and they shall devour Israel with open mouth.' Isaiah ix. 12; liv. 16; li. 13; Psalm lx. 3. I cannot attempt to describe the horrors which shook both soul and body, while these times were going over me, a load of guilt, and (as it appeared to me) a frowning God, a captive to the enemy, fast bound with his heavy chain, while I sensibly felt him to rejoice over me.

When my days were fulfilled, my most gracious Lord was pleased to send me deliverance in these sweet words which came with power to my heart and delivered me from the paw of the lion, and as it were, 'lifted me up from the gates of death.' 'The Lord is a God of judgment, blessed are all they that wait for him.' Isa. xxx. 18. Hard and insensible as my heart is, yet do I feel a sweet melting as the Lord brings this most gracious deliverance to my remembrance. (John xiv. 26; Deut. viii. 2; Psm. cxv. 4—6.) Surely, 'Thou hast been a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat, when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall.' Isaiah xxv. 4; xlix. 24, 25; lix. 19. 'Himself hath suffered,' (Jesus, in my nature,) 'hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.' 'What shall I render unto the Lord?' 'What shall I say? he hath both spoken unto me and himself hath done it,' 'Who can utter the mighty acts of the Lord? or who can show forth all his praise!' Heb ii. 18; Psalm cxvi. 12; Isaiah xxxviii. 15; Psalm cvii. 2. As my mind was sweetly relieved, I vainly hoped that this would have closed my troubles, but no, 'bonds and afflictions' still awaited me.

But as I have gone so very far beyond any thing I ever intended, I must therefore forbear any further relation of particular events which filled up the next seven.
years, until the time the Lord ‘put off my sackcloth and girded me with gladness;’ during which time, to the best of my remembrance, I did not hear seven sermons of real truth, being placed at a great distance from any that gave a faithful testimony, and strangers I could not hear or follow, the Lord was pleased to fulfil his own gracious promise to me, Isaiah liv. 13. The relation of particular providences would appear too trifling, by which the Lord was pleased to teach my sole dependance upon him as a God of providence; even in the most trifling occurrences he has sometimes shown his love, and drawn out my poor heart to bless his precious name, and admire his wisdom and long-suffering in thus teaching me to profit, and in a measure to bow to his sovereign pleasure. ‘Good and upright is the Lord, therefore will he teach sinners in the way.’ ‘He is the rock, his work is perfect, for all his ways are judgment, a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he;’ although ‘clouds and darkness are round about him; righteousness and judgment are the habitations of his throne.’ Psalm xxxv. 8; Deut. xxxii. 4; Psalm xcvi. 2.

During these years of my captivity, the means which the Lord appointed for my information were my Bible and Dr. Hawker’s writings, and I have reason to bless the Lord for ever bringing me to be acquainted with that dear servant of his. With these I spent my many solitary sabbaths, ‘like a pelican of the wilderness,’ or ‘an owl of the desert,’ and watched ‘as a sparrow alone on the house-top.’ Psalm cii. 6, 7. Poor, helpless, empty, wretched, desolate, and alone, I cried unto the Lord that I might know something of the blessed truths I read, in my own soul’s experience. For by a constant attention to the word of truth, I became pretty well acquainted with the letter of the word as to doctrines, and could discern between truth and error—but notwithstanding this there was no spiritual life in my soul as to the enjoyment of them in communion with God.
But as soon as the Lord was pleased to visit me again with the rod, I found myself destitute of the substance of those precious things which only existed in a speculative knowledge in the head, acquired by reading and study, and not given and fixed in my soul by the Lord himself. These all failed me in the days of real soul-trouble; and I was left at a painful peradventure and uncertainty as to my special interest in them. As the Lord had made my conscience honest, I dared not to presume, and act the part of a thief and a robber, to call Christ or any one promise mine, although I would have given the world if I had it, could it have been purchased with money. The Lord enabled me at times to bring that promise before him, (John xvi. 14,) and my soul hung upon that promise at times for many years. The reading of Dr. Hawker's Lectures on the Person, Godhead, and Ministry of God the Holy Ghost, was a means of drawing my soul to seek and cry to the Lord, and at times to hope for deliverance; yet I feared, and begged that the Lord would not do it, until he had well broke down the pride and self-will of my wretched nature. Yet, how self-willed was this prayer! Alas! how my poor blind heart and nature would teach the Lord wisdom!

However, when the time of the promise drew nigh, my soul had sunk down into a dead formality; and, held and bound as with fetters of brass, with sin and guilt upon my conscience, pride, unbelief, and a hard heart, I could not raise one spiritual cry for mercy or deliverance. These continued for some weeks, until the Lord in mercy was pleased to send the arrow of deliverance to my poor heart.

'It came to pass,' on the morning of the eleventh of May, 1829—the reason why I have made use of these words, is, because the Lord has so often blessed me with a sweet opening into the absolute accomplishment of the eternal purposes of God. 'And it came to pass, at the end of four hundred and thirty years, even the self-same day, it came to pass, that all the hosts of...
out from the land of Egypt—not one day more bondage
to a poor afflicted child of God than the Lord has appointed—the day, the hour, the place, the means by which the Lord will burst the bonds and gather his people one by one, and bring them into the land of Israel, to enjoy the blessed freedom of the adopted sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty. For 'It shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered,' &c. and it is a deliverance to be much observed unto the Lord, in all the generations of Israel.' See the passage Exod. xii. 41, 42. This is that night of the Lord. O the blessedness, the power, the love, the breaking forth of the soul in this night of the Lord, and the certainty of it to every poor distressed child of God, groaning under the load of sin, bondage, and darkness, and terror of a broken law. 'I will surely assemble, O Jacob, all of thee: I will surely gather the remnant of Israel,' &c. Jesus must bring the other sheep, and perform his good word, his eternal thoughts of peace to the house of Israel, 'it shall come to pass.' (Joel ii. 31, 32; Acts ii. 16, 21; Micah ii. 12; John x. 16; Jer. xxix. 10, 13; Isaiah lv. 8, 13.) And what it is it that comes to pass, but the eternal purpose of the Lord, opening to the souls of the objects of his eternal love? How many of these eternal Its are every day and every hour opening and coming to pass, while my poor senseless heart almost sleeps under them. 'Quicken me, O Lord, according as thou art wont.' But I must not trespass further; the scriptures abound with the delightful subject, to the glory of a faithful covenant God.

Now for the eternal glorious it that came to pass, in my instance—no powers that I possess can describe the mercy—I will, as the Lord shall enable me, simply relate it to the Lord's glory, as a testimony to His truth, and for the comfort of his people, as the Lord has appointed. It came to pass, on the eleventh of May, 1829, (Ezekiel xxiv. 1,) that I arose from family prayer (if it
might be called prayer) with my heart if possible more insensible than ever. I went immediately alone to the Lord, and simply asked him if he ever had any purposes of love or mercy to me, if he pleased, to make it manifest? In about half an hour after, I was called out to work. While I was at my work, these words were darted with sweet power across my mind—'God the Father's Love!' which much astonished my soul. I cried in my heart,'What is it, Lord?' Astonished at the relief I felt, I wondered whatever it could mean, as they were not the exact words of scripture. In about half an hour after, as I returned home, which was about half-past nine, these words were spoken to my heart, 'By one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified,' for both He that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified, are all of one; for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren.' Heb. x. 14; ii. 11.

The light and power that flowed into my soul with these words broke asunder my fetters, and revealed to me the great mystery of godliness. 'God was manifest in the flesh.' John i. 14—18; 1 Tim. iii. 16. The Lord Jesus Christ, in my nature, bearing my sins in his own body on the tree: this wrought the sweetest melting, mourning, and rejoicing, which can never be described. O the sweet overpowering love, the precious love of Christ! How wonderful! how astonishing! so richly and freely poured forth into such a poor, disconsolate, wretched, rebellious, polluted, and guilty soul. O the sweet embraces of soul as in the very arms of Jesus; and Jesus pressed to and clasped to my heart as my beloved, my chief one among ten thousand, and 'altogether lovely!' Here I lost all my inward secret dread of the wrath of God; all my terrors, bondage; fears, darkness; and all my sin completely and for ever pardoned and put away by the sacrifice of himself. He finished the transgression, made an end of sin, and made reconciliation for iniquity, and brought into my soul everlasting righteous-
ness. And what gave still more sweetness to the mercy, and fixed it with double firmness and delight to my heart, the delightful power which came with these words, 'It pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell.' Col. i. 19. Oh! the sweet and delightful opening as into the very heart of God the Father, and the overflowing of his everlasting love to my heart. Not persuaded to it by my prayers, &c. but of his own good will and pleasure chose me in Christ, blessed me in Christ, adopted me by Christ, and accepted me in Christ, 'to the praise of the glory of his grace.' Eph. i. 3, 6. 'He hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.' 2 Cor. v. 21. '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.' 1 Cor. i. 30, 31. How sweetly did the Lord open to my soul's experience the blessedness contained in these sweet scriptures: 'When ye see this, your heart shall rejoice, and your bones shall flourish like an herb, and the hand of the Lord shall be known towards his servants.' 'Behold I will bring it health and cure, and I will cure them, and reveal unto them the abundance of peace and truth.' 'I will satiate the soul of the priests with fatness, and my people shall be satisfied with my goodness, saith the Lord.' 'Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf be unstopped, then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing.' 'Therefore they shall come and sing in the height of Zion, and shall flow together to the goodness of the Lord, for wheat, and for wine, and for oil, and for the young of the flock and of the herd: and their soul shall be as a watered garden, and they shall not sorrow any more at all.' 'Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.' 'For the Lord shall comfort Zion; he will comfort all her waste places, and he will make her
wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the Garden of
the Lord; joy and gladness shall be found therein,
thanksgiving, and the voice of melody.' 'As one whom
his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you, and ye
shall be comforted in Jerusalem.' Here was indeed,
'beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the
garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.' Isa. lxvi,
14; Jer. xxxiii. 6; xxxi. 14; Isa. xxxv. 5, 6; Jer.
xxxii. 12; Isa. ix. 1; li. 3; lxvi. 13; with abundance
of others which the Lord opened to the joy of my heart.
Isa. xii. xxvi. 1, 6—9; xl. 1, 2; xliii. 1—3; Prv. xxii.
19—21; 2 Tim. i. 9; Deut. xxxiii. 23, 26—29; Isa.
iv. 12, 18.

But no pen or language can describe that experience
when the rejoicing of the Lord is very graciously felt and
enjoyed in the soul: 'The Lord thy God in the midst of
thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee
with joy, he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee
with singing.' Zep. iii. 17. 'As the bridegroom rejoiceth
over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee.' 'I
will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people.' Isa. lxxii.
4, 5; lxv. 18, 19. Oh! the sweet melody in my soul
under the delightful experience, when the sweet words
of the prophet in all their beauty and fulness echoed back
from my soul. 'How excellent is thy loving kindness
O God;' 'I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul
shall be joyful in my God, for he hath clothed me with
the garments of salvation; he hath covered me with the
robe of righteousness.' 'How precious are thy thoughts
unto me O God! how great is the sum of them.' Psalm
xxxvi. 7, 8; Isa. lxi. 10; Psa. cxxix. 17; cxviii. 15;
lxiii. 3—5. This appears to be the experience spoken
of by the prophet, Jer. xxxiii. 11: 'The voice of joy,
and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom.'
The Lord Jesus Christ speaking to the heart with sweet
love and power, and showing the delight of his heart
over his bride, and her perfection and blessedness in him.
self; 'and the voice of the bride,' with her heart overflowing and overcome with the rich love of her beloved; her ravished soul vents its joys. 'Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy name.' 'Praise the Lord of Hosts; for the Lord is good, for his mercy endureth for ever.' (For the voice of the bride, and the voice of the bridegroom, see the Song of Songs.) Oh! the blessed testimony and witnessing of God the Holy Ghost to my adoption, and sonship, and sweet union with Christ, which came into my soul with these sweet words of Christ: 'at that day ye shall know that I am in my Father and ye in me, and I in you.' John xiv. 20, see Ezekiel xxxix. 22. 'I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; that the world may know that that thou hast sent me, and has loved them, as thou hast loved me.' 'For thou lovest me before the foundation of the world. I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it; that the love wherewith thou hast loved me, may be in them, and I in them.' John xvii. 23—26; Col. i. 27; 1 John iv. 15, 16; v. 20; Gal. iv. 6, 7. O what sweet soul-ravishing communion! as led into the banqueting house to behold the king in his beauty, clothed with his righteousness, made perfect through his comeliness, 'complete in him,' sanctified and for ever justified in him. Song ii. 4; Psa. xlv. 10—15; Isa. xxxiii. 17; Ezek. xvi. 14; Col. ii. 10; 1 Cor. i. 30; John xvii. 19, 23; perfect in one: Col. i. 22; Rom. viii. 30—33; iv. 25. Here is real, soul-satisfaction, (Jer. xxxi. 14,) and rest, when beholding the smiling countenance of my covenant God and Father, well pleased and rejoicing over me in Christ, feeling his precious love shed abroad in my heart, by the Holy Ghost, and opening to my soul the eternal purposes of his everlasting covenant-love, made for me in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, loved, chosen, accepted, blessed, and glorified in him; raised up together and made to 'sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.' Eph. ii. 6. 'Who shall lay
any thing 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, &c. Rom. viii. 33, 39. Oh, the sweet rest, (Isa. xi. 10; ) peace, (Eph. ii. 14, 15; ) joy, (Rom. v. 11; ) triumph, (2. Cor. ii. 14; ) and everlasting blessedness in Christ, (Heb. vi. 17—20; 2 Tim. i. 9; John xiv. 19; Col. iii. 3, 4.) ‘O Naphtali, satisfied with favour, and full with the blessing of the Lord;’ ‘in his favour is life,’ ‘in his presence is fulness of joy, at his right hand there are pleasures for evermore.’ Deut. xxxiii. 23; Psa. xxx. 5; xvi. 11; Prov. x. 22.

Here I am constrained to leave the subject, as I have no words or ability to set forth all that passed between the Lord and my soul, under these divine manifestations. It was indeed a ‘joy unspeakable and full of glory,’ a love which ‘passeth knowledge,’ and a peace which ‘passeth all understanding.’ As it was under the curse and wrath of God, revealed in my conscience in a broken law, so in the divine manifestations of Christ by the Holy Ghost, my poor nature could not have borne up under it; had not the Lord, who weigheth ‘the path of the just,’ weighed out both judgment and mercy, and also weighed out strength in both. ‘This corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality,’ before we shall be able to bear that ‘exceeding and eternal weight of glory;’ and ‘see him as he is.’ 1 Cor. xv. 53; 2 Cor. iv. 17. ‘Can the children of the bride-chamber fast, (or mourn) so long as the bridegroom is with them? but the days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them; then shall they fast in those days.’ Matt. ix. 16; Luke v. 34, 35.

After about three weeks it pleased the Lord to close the communion for the present, (Gen. xviii. 33,) and my sweet comforts declined; the Comforter withdrew, and left me with an aching heart, oppressed with deep
sorrow, distress, and amazement of soul, from which no	hing or creature could relieve me; an emptiness and
dissatisfaction, which nothing could fill or make up.
Here the Lord would teach how it is to walk by faith,
not by sight, sense, or feeling: no enjoyment in com-
munion at the throne, no answers of peace or apparent
access to the mercy seat; no light, power, or sweetness
in the Scriptures; perplexed and shut up in providence;
stubbornness, self-will, carnal reason, self-righteousness,
pride, and every abomination of my nature, interwoven
as closely as the blood that runs through my veins; un-
belief, questioning all that is past, finding fault with the
Lord's dealings, rebelling against his sovereignty; tem-
ptation like fiery poisoned darts which appeared to drink
up all spiritual strength; heavy thick darkness which
weighed down the soul into distress not to be described
—these are some of the things which caused my soul to
‘groan being burthened.’ What bitter anguish of spirit,
and heart-breaking sorrow, full of distress, and hardly
a word to utter! what longing and breaking of soul,
‘Whither is my beloved gone?’ ‘My soul fainteth for
thy salvation, mine eyes fail for thy word: saying, when
wilt thou comfort me?’ ‘How long wilt thou forget me,
O Lord?’ &c. See Psalms xiii. cxiii. cxlii. But,
‘the Lord knoweth the days of the upright,’ because he
hath appointed them. ‘And unto the upright there
ariseth light in the darkness.’ And for ever blessed be
the Lord, as often and as sure as he hath accomplished
his purpose in breaking down my spirit, and in purging
my dress and tin; he hath brought me forth to the light,
and I have beheld his righteousness, and leaned again on
his faithfulness and truth as my shield and buckler.

Oh! my foolish, self-willed heart and nature, is it not
expedient that Jesus go away, that the Holy Ghost may
come and show me something of my poor wretched
nature, and humble my proud, self-righteous, stubborn
heart? If Jesus go not away, how could his word be
fulfilled in my soul's experience, 'ye shall have sorrow,' &c. 'ye shall weep and lament,' &c. 'in the world ye shall have tribulation, &c. or how could I be 'weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breast?' or taught how to live by faith, or pass through the fire, and through the water, or be sifted and purged. (Isaiah i. 25, xxvii. 9; Zech. xiii. 9; Mat. iii. 3;) or how have 'fellowship of his sufferings,' as a 'man of sorrow and acquainted with grief, (Philippians iii. 10; 2 Cor. i. 5, 7; Isaiah liii.) or know how 'tribulation worketh patience,' &c. or how enter into soul communion with those companions in tribulation; 'my soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning;' 'with my soul have I desired thee in the night,' &c. Psalm cxxx. Isaiah xxvi. 8, 9; Rom. xii. 15; Song iii. 1, 4; or know the trial of faith, or the value of it, 1 Peter i. 7; or to hang upon Christ in the promise if he 'go not away;' or how could he say 'I will see you again and your heart shall rejoice;' or 'I am returned to Jerusalem with mercies,' John xvi. 22; Zech. i. 16; or ever I am aware, he breaks in upon my poor soul and astonishes me with his love, and shews me again and again my completeness, perfection, blessedness, and security in Himself as accepted in Him, and who will present me faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy; (Jude 24.) rooting and grounding my soul in love, and persuading me not to fear any of those things which I shall suffer, and that nothing shall separate me from his love.

My future days (if any,) are alone with him; nor dare I attempt to counsel him how he shall deal with me. I expect deep soul-tribulation from a body of sin and death, and from the malice and power of the enemy, which so often blows up the cursed pride and self-righteousness of my nature, from the secret depths of that mystery of iniquity which I cannot fathom. 'O wretched man that I am,' &c. 'I abhor myself;' and am often covered with shame and confusion of face. I cleave unto thee.
he is my life and my salvation; 'the Holy One of Israel,' 'the God of the whole earth;' 'the Lord of Hosts!' and bless a covenant God for that salvation which is in Christ, against which 'the gates of hell' shall never prevail.

While the Lord is carrying on these things in my soul, and cutting off worldly prospects and dependances, he sweetly leads me to his feet, and one half hour's communion with him from the mercy seat, in a day of darkness and soul-trouble, is worth more than ten thousand worlds of vanity and sin. (Psalm lxxii. 25.) Thus the Lord makes his glory dear to my heart, and is all that is worth living for in this vain and empty world of sin and woe; and while the Lord is thus pleased to teach, lead, and keep me, I hope to follow him 'in the regeneration,' and to 'show forth the praises of him who has called me out of darkness into his marvellous light.' (Isaiah xxvi. 3, xxvii. 3, xlii. 21, liv. 13; Psalm cxxi. cxxv. 1, 2; Hebrews xiii. 20, 21; 1 Peter ii. 9.) And when the Lord shall have accomplished his will and pleasure in me below, I shall, according to his own word, 'be with him;' to 'see him as he is;' John xiv. 3; Col. iii. 4, and with sweet melody join the delightful song 'unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion, for ever and ever. Amen.' Rev. i. 5, 6.
RECENT THOUGHTS
ON THE FREE MERCY OF 'THE GOD OF LOVE AND PEACE' TO POOR SINNERS
IN THE 'SON OF HIS LOVE,' AS SET FORTH FIGURATIVELY IN
THE VISION OF THE DRY BONES
TO THE
PROPHET EZEKIEL,
AND RELATED IN CHAPTER XXXVII, WITH SOME FAINT VIEWS OF ITS
BLESSED AND PEACEFUL EFFECTS IN THE SPIRIT AND CONVERSATION OF
THE SONS OF PEACE.

'Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God: every one that
loveth is born of God and knoweth God. He that knoweth not God; for God is love.' 1 John iv. 7, 8.

'God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,
even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ,
(by grace are ye saved.)' Eph. ii. 4, 5.

THE HOLY GHOST in the sacred word, compares our poor
nature in its lost and ruined condition to a helpless
infant, cast out in its filth and blood, to the loathing
of its person. (Ezek. xvi.)—as being spiritually 'wretched,
miserable, poor, blind, and naked;' (Rev. iii.) corrupt,
filthy, abominable, 'workers of iniquity,' and without
the knowledge or fear of God; (Psalm xiv.) 'alienated
from the life of God;:' 'being past feeling, and working
iniquity with greediness;' (Eph. iv.) 'haters of God,'
'inventors of evil things, implacable, unmerciful;' (Rom.
iv.) 'a degenerate plant of a strange vine.' &c. &c.(Jer. ii.)

To show that the children of God are alike partakers
of the same awful depravity, it is written, 'and you hath
he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins:'
(Eph. ii.) and by the prophet Ezekiel compared to bones,
‘dry bones,’ without spiritual life, ‘dead in trespasses and sins.’ Lo! behold! mark their condition, ‘Lo, they were very dry.’ Surely nothing could more fully set forth the destitute, dead, helpless state of our poor ruined nature in the fall, as being destitute of spiritual life!

In this low and lost estate, disjointed, scattered, and exposed in the open valley—destitute of a shelter, a refuge, a heart to desire one, or life to feel the need of one; in my view, there is not a stronger evidence of spiritual death than insensibility and ignorance of it, and a denial of the awful truth. Indeed there seems as much life literally in a dry bone, as there is life spiritually in the soul of a sinner ‘dead in trespasses and sins.’

It shows great ignorance and vanity in any, who, by free mercy, are made partakers of spiritual life, to set at nought any poor sinner, forgetting we were ‘children of wrath even as others.’ The apostle seems to remind us of this where he says, ‘remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh,’ aliens, strangers, ‘having no hope, and without God in the world,’ ‘children of wrath even as others,’ &c. (Eph. ii.)

The question the Lord asked the prophet seems often to rise in the mind, in meeting such numbers who appear destitute of any spiritual life in the fear or true knowledge of God, ‘Son of man, can these bones live?’ And his answer should be ours, ‘O Lord God thou knowest.’ The proudest Pharisee, the basest sinner, in a state of nature, are equal as to spiritual life or merit in the sight of God, are open to his most free mercy and power, and capable of receiving the operations of his Spirit under the proclamations of the gospel of peace and salvation, as the dry bones under the ministry of the prophet, under the special command and blessing of the Lord, (Matt. xxviii. 19; Mark xvi. 15, 20.)

This subject opens a blessed encouragement to ‘the servants of the Most High God,’ who from a deep sense
of the importance of their message, go forth in the authority, the name, strength, and blessing of ‘the Lord God of Israel.’ To those who experimentally know the power and strength of sin, the hardness, opposition, aversion, malignity, bitterness, and enmity of the heart of man to the sovereign mercy of God, what could encourage a hope of life and reconciliation, but precious faith in the free mercy and power of God, to give life and blessing, while prophesying to the dry bones, who shall say but the Lord may speak life into the heart, ‘O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord.’

I would not dare to pervert the sacred word, but it has struck me in reading this and similar passages of Ezekiel’s ministry, where similar expressions are used as in the beginning of this chapter, ‘The hand of the Lord was upon me, and carried me out in the spirit of the Lord, (see also viii. 9.) that the prophet was himself passing under the hand and spirit of the Lord in soul-experience. By his being caused to pass by them round about, it may seem to point to these soul-humiliating seasons, into which we are so frequently led by the Spirit—down into the painful discovery of our poor wretched and ruined nature; similar to what the apostle saith of his experience in Rom. vii. also in chapter viii. 32, ‘ourselves also which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves.’

In my view, there appears great wisdom in this, that the Lord should employ poor sinners in the ministry of reconciliation and peace—men of like passions, taught by one Spirit, led experimentally into the secret of a fallen state, with continued and still deeper and deeper heart-sickening views of Self and sin; also of the glory and blessedness of the great Redeemer and redeeming love—witnesses that can testify, ‘that which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you.’ In viewing this subject, even in the letter of it, surely no man, if only in possession of natural reason, (without special grace) could at-