

GRACE ABOUNDING
TO THE
CHIEF OF SINNERS:

O R,

A Brief and Faithful Relation of the exceeding Mercy of God in Christ, to his Poor Servant JOHN BUNYAN.

Wherein is particularly shewed, the manner of his conversion, his fight and trouble for sin, his dreadful temptations; also, how he despaired of God's mercy, and how the Lord at length, through Christ, did deliver him from all the guilt and terror that lay upon him.

All which was written by his own hand, and now published for the support of the weak and tempted people of God.

PSAL. lxxvi. 16. Come, and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my Soul.

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The PREFACE :

Or, a brief account of the publishing of this Work : written by the Author thereof, and dedicated to those whom God hath counted him worthy to beget to Faith, by his Ministry in the Word.

CHILDREN, grace be with you. Amen. I being taken from you in preface, and so tied up, that I cannot perform that duty that from God doth lie upon me, to you-wards for your further edifying and building up in faith and holiness, &c. Yet that you may see my soul hath fatherly care and desire after your spiritual and everlasting welfare ; I now once again, as from the top of Shebir and Hermon, so from the *Lions dens, and from the mountains of the Leopards*, (Song iv. 8.) do look yet after all, greatly longing to see your safe arrival into the desired haven.

I thank God upon every remembrance of you, and rejoice even while I stick between the teeth of the Lions in the wilderness, at the grace and mercy, and knowledge of CHRIST our Saviour, which God hath bestowed upon you, with abundance of faith and love. Your hungerings and thirstings also after further acquaintance with the Father in his Son ; your tenderness of heart, your trembling at sin, your sober and holy deportment to me : *For you are my glory, and joy*, 1 Thess. ii. 20.

I have sent you here enclosed a drop of that honey that I have taken out of the carcass of a Lion. Judge xiv. 5, 6, 7, 8. I have eaten thereof myself also, and I am much refreshed thereby. (temptations when we meet with them at first, are as the Lion that roared upon Sampson ; but if we overcome them the next time we see them, we shall find a nest of honey within them.) The Philistines understand me not : It is something a relation of the work of God upon my own soul, even from the very first, till now : wherein you may perceive my casting down, and risings up : for he woundeth and his hands make whole. It is written in the scripture, Ps. xxxviii. 19. *The father to the children shall make known the will of God*. Yea, it was for this reason I lay so long in Sinai, (Lev. iv. 10. 11.) to see the fire and the cloud, and the darkness, *that I might fear the Lord all the days of my life upon earth, and tell of his wondrous works to my children*, Psalms lxxviii. 3, 4, 5.

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Moses Numb. xxxiii. 1, 2, writes of the journeying of the children of Israel from Egypt to the land of Canaan; and commanded also, that they remember their forty years travel in the wilderness. *Then shalt thou remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, and to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments or no.* Deut. viii. 2, 3. Wherefore this I have endeavoured to do; and not only so, but to publish it also; that, if God will, others may be put in remembrance of what he hath done for their souls, by reading his work upon me.

It is profitable for Christians to be often calling to mind the very beginnings of grace with their souls. It is a night to be much observed to the Lord, for bringing them not from the land of Egypt. This is that night of the Lord to be observed of all the children of Israel in their generations, Exod. xii. 42. *My God,* saith David, Psal. xiii. 6. *My soul is cast down within me, but I will remember thee from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites, from the hill Mizar.* He remembered also the Lion and the Bear, when he went to fight with the Giant of Gath, 1 Sam. xvii. 36, 37.

It was Paul's accustomed manner, Acts 22, and that when tried for his life, Acts 24, even to open before his judges the manner of his conversion: He would think of that day, and that hour, in which he first did meet with grace: for he found it supported him. When God had brought the children of Israel through the Red Sea, far into the wilderness; yet they must return quite about thither again, to remember the drowning of their enemies there. Num. xiv. 25, for though they sing his praise before, yet they soon forgot his works, Psalms cvi. 11, 12.

In this discourse of mine, you may see much; much, I say, of the grace of God towards me: I thank God I can count it much, for it was above my sins, and Satan's temptations. I can remember my fears, and doubts, and sad months, with comfort; they are as the head of Goliath in my hand: there was nothing to David like Goliath's sword, even that sword that should have been sheathed in his bowels; for the very sight and remembrance of that, did preach forth God's deliverance to him. O the remembrance of my great sins, of my great temptations, and of my great fears of my perishing forever! They bring fresh into my mind, the remembrance of my great help, my great support from heaven, and the great grace that God extended to such a wretch as I.

The P R E F A C E.

My dear children, call to mind the former days, and years of ancient times; remember also your songs in the night, and commune with your own heart, Psal. lxxiii, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12. Yea, look diligently, and leave no corner therein unsearched; for that is treasure hid, even the treasure of your first and second experience of the grace of God toward you. Remember, I say, the word that first laid hold upon you; remember your terrors of conscience and fear of death and hell: Remember also your tears and prayers to God, yea, how you sighed under every hedge of mercy. Have you never a hill Mizar to remember? Have you forgot the close, the milk-house, the stable, the barn, and the like where God first visit your soul? Remember also the word, the word, I say, upon which the Lord hath caused you to hope; if you have sinned against light. If you are tempted to blaspheme, if you are down in despair, if you think that God fights against you, or if heaven is hid from your eyes, remember it was thus with your father, *out of them all the LORD delivered &c.*

I could have enlarged much in this my discourse of my temptation and troubles for sin, as also of the merciful kindness and working of God with my soul: I could also have stepped into a stile much higher than this in which I have here discoursed, and could have adorned all things more than here I have seemed to do: but I dare not: God did not play in convincing of me: the devil did not play in tempting of me: neither did I play when I sunk as into a bottomless pit, when the pangs of Hell caught hold upon me: wherefore I may not play in my relating of them, but be plain and simple, and lay down the thing as it was: He that liketh it, let him receive it; and he that does not, let him produce a better—Farewell

My dear Children,
*The Milk and Honey is beyond this Wilderness;
 God be merciful to you, and grant you be not
 slothful to go in to possess the Land.*

JOHN BUNYAN.

GRACE ABOUNDING
TO THE
CHIEF OF SINNERS:

OR,

*A Brief relation of the exceeding Mercy of God in
Christ, to his poor Servant JOHN BUNYAN.*

IN this my relation of the merciful working of God upon my soul, it will not be amiss, if in the first place, I do in a few words give you a hint of my pedigree, and manner of bringing up; that thereby the goodness and bounty of God towards me, may be the more advanced and magnified before the sons of men.

2. For my descent then, it was, as is well known by many of a low and inconsiderable generation; my father's house being of that rank that is meanest, and most despised of all the families in the land. Wherefore, I have not here as others, to boast of noble blood, or a high born state, according to the flesh; Though all things considered, I magnify the heavenly Majesty, for that by this door he brought me into this world, to partake of the grace and life that is in Christ by the gospel.

3. But yet notwithstanding the meanness and inconsiderableness of my parents, it pleased God to put it into their hearts, to put me to school, to learn both to read and write; the which I also attained, according to the rate of other poor mens children, though to my shame I confess, I did soon lose that

little I learnt, even almost utterly, and that long before the Lord did work his gracious work of conversion upon my soul.

4. As to my own natural life, for the time that I was without God in the world, it was indeed, *according to the curse of this world, and the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience*, Eph. ii. 2.

3. It was my delight to be taken captive by the devil at his will, 2 Tim. ii. 26. Being filled with all unrighteousness; the which did also so strongly work, and put forth itself, both in my heart and life, and that from a child, that I had but few equals, (especially considering my years, which were tender, being few) both for cursing, swearing, lying and blaspheming the holy name of God.

5. Yea, so seuled and rooted was I in these things, that they became as a second nature to me; the which, as I also have with soberness considered since, did so offend the Lord, that even in my child-hood he did scare and affright me with fearful dreams, and did terrify me with dreadful visions. For often after I had spent this and the other day in sin, I have in bed been greatly afflicted, while asleep with the apprehensions of devils, and wicked spirits, who still, as I then thought, laboured to draw me away with them; of which I could never get rid. Also I should at these years be greatly afflicted and troubled with the thoughts of the fearful torments of hell fire; still fearing that it would be my lot to be found at last among those devils and hellish fiends, who are there bound down with the chains and bonds of eternal darkness.

6. These things, I say, when I was a child about nine or ten years old, did so distress my soul, that when in the midst of my sports and childish vanities, amidst my vain companions, I was often much cast down and afflicted in my mind therewith; yet

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could I not let go my sins : Yea, I was to overcome with despair of life, and heaven, that then I should often wish, either that there had been no hell, or that I had been a devil ; supposing they were only tormentors ; that if it must needs be, that I indeed went thither, I might be rather a tormentor, than be tormented myself.

7. A while after, these terrible dreams did leave me, which also I soon forgot ; for my pleasures did quickly cut off the remembrance of them, as if they had never been ; wherefore, with more greediness, according to the strength of nature, I did still let loose the reins to my lust, and delighted in all transgressions against the law of God : so that until I came to the state of marriage, I was the very ring-leader of all the youth that kept me company, in all manner of vice and ungodliness.

8. Yea, such prevalency had the lust and fruits of the flesh in this poor soul of mine, that had not a miracle of grace prevented, I had not only perished by the stroke of eternal justice, but also laid myself open to the stroke of the laws, which bring some to disgrace and open shame before the face of the world.

9. In these days, the thoughts of religion were very grievous to me ; I could neither endure it myself, nor that any other should ; so that where I have seen some read in those books that concerned christian piety, it would be, as it were, a prison to me. *Then I said unto GOD, depart from me, for I desire not the knowledge of thy ways.* Job xxi. 14. 15. I was now void of all good consideration ; heaven and hell were both out of sight and mind ; and as for saving and damning, they were least in my thoughts. *O Lord, thou knowest my life, and my ways were not hid from thee.*

10. But this I will remember, That though I could

myself sin with the greatest delight and ease and also take pleasure in the vileness of my companions, yet even then, if I have at any time seen wicked things by those who professed goodness it would make my spirit to tremble. As one above all the rest, when I was in my height of vanity, yet hearing one to swear, that was reckoned for a religious man, it had so great a stroke upon my spirit, that it made my heart ache.

11. But God did not utterly leave me, but followed me still, not now with convictions but judgments, yet such as were mixt with mercy: For once I fell into a creek of the sea, and hardly escaped drowning. Another time I fell out of a boat into Redford river, but mercy yet prevented me alive; besides, another time being in the field, with one of my companions, it chanced that an adder passed over the high way, so I having a stick in my hand, struck her over the back, and having wounded her, I forced open her mouth with my stick, and plucked her sting out with my fingers, by which act had God not been merciful to me, I might have brought myself to my end.

This also have I taken notice of with thanksgiving: When I was a soldier, I with others were drawn out to go to such a place to besiege it, but when I was just ready to go one of the company desired to go in my room, to which when I had consented, he took my place, and coming to the siege, as he stood centinel, he was shot in the head with a musket bullet, and died.

Here, as I said, were judgments and mercy, but neither of them did awaken my soul to righteousness, wherefore I sinned still, and grew more and more rebellious against God, and careless of mine own salvation.

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12. Presently after this I changed my condition into a married state; and my mercy was to light up-on my wife, whose father was counted godly: This woman and I, tho' we came thither as poor as poor might be, (not having so much household stuff as a dish, or spoon betwixt us both) yet this she had for her part. *The plain man's path-way to Heaven*, and, *The practice of Piety*, which her father had left her, when he died. In these two books, I should sometimes read with her, wherein I also found some things that were somewhat pleasing to me; (but all this while I met with no conviction.) She also often told to me what a godly man her father was, and how he would reprove and correct vice, both in his house, and amongst his neighbours; what a strict life he lived in his day, both in word and deed.

13. Wherefore these books, with this relation, tho' they did not reach my heart to awaken it about my sad and sinful state, yet they did beget within me some desires to religion: so that because I knew no better, I fell in very early with the religion of the times, viz. to go to church twice a day, and that too with the foremost, and there should very devoutly both say and sing as others did; yet retaining my wicked life: but withal, I was so over-run with the spirit of superstition, that I adored, and that with great devotion, even all things (both the high place, priest, clerk, vestments, service and what else) belonging to the church; counting all things holy that were therein contained: and especially the priest and clerk most happy, and without doubt greatly blessed because they were the servants as I then thought, of God: and were principal in the holy temple, to do his work therein.

14. This conceit grew so strong in little time up-on my spirit, that had I seen but a priest (tho' ever

so, sordid and debauched in his life) I should in my spirit fall under him, reverence him and knit unto him; yea, I thought for the love I did bear unto them, (supposing they were the ministers of God) I could have lain down at their feet, and have been trampled upon by them: their name, their garb, and word, did so intoxicate and bewitch me.

15. After I had been thus, for some considerable time, another thought came in my mind, and that was whether we were of the *Israelites* or no? For finding in the scriptures, that they were once the peculiar people of God, I thought, if I were one of this race, my soul must needs be happy. Now again, I found within me a great longing to be resolved about this question, but could not tell how I should: at last, I asked my father of it, who told me, *No we were not*; wherefore then I fell in my spirit, as to the hopes of that, and so remained.

16. But all this while I was not sensible of the danger and evil of sin: I was kept from considering that sin would damn me, what religion soever I followed, unless I was found in Christ: nay, I never thought of him, nor whether there was one or no. *Thus man, while blind, doth wander, but wearieth himself with vanity: for he knoweth not the way to the city of God, Eccles. x. 15.*

17. But one day (amongst all the sermons our parson made) his subject was to treat of the Sabbath day, and of the evil of breaking that, either with labour, sports, or otherwise; (now I was notwithstanding my religion, one that took much delight in all manner of vice, and especially that was the day that I did solace myself therewith.) Wherefore I fell in my conscience under his sermon, thinking, and believing that he made that sermon on purpose to shew me my evil doings; and at that time I felt

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what guilt was, tho' never before, that I can remember; but then I was for the present greatly loaded therewith, and so went home when the sermon was ended, with a great burden on my spirit.

18. This for that instant did benumb the sinews of my best delights, and did imbitter my former pleasures to me; but behold, it lasted not; for before I had well dined, the trouble began to go off my mind, and my heart returned to its old course: But, Oh! how glad was I that this trouble was gone from me, and that the fire was put out, that I might sin again without controul! Wherefore, when I had satisfied nature with my food, I shook the sermon from my mind, and to my old custom of sports and gaming, I returned with great delight.

19. But the same day as I was in the midst of a game at cat, and having struck it one blow from the hole: Just as I was about to strike it the second time, a voice did suddenly dart from Heaven into my soul, which said, *Wilt thou leave thy sins and go to Heaven? or have thy sins and go to Hell?* At this I was put to an exceeding maze; wherefore leaving my cat upon the ground, I looked up to heaven, and was as if I had with the eyes of my understanding, seen the Lord Jesus looking down upon me, as being very highly displeased with me, and as if he did severely threaten me with some grievous punishment for these, and other, my ungodly practices.

20. I had no sooner conceived in my mind, but suddenly this conclusion was fastened on my spirit, (for the former hint did set my sins again before my face. *That I had been a great and grievous sinner, and that it was now too late for me to look after Heaven, for Christ would not forgive me nor pardon my transgression.* Then I fell to musing upon this also; and while I was thinking on it, and fearing

least it should be so, I felt my heart sink in despair, concluding it was too late ; and therefore I resolved in my mind I would go on in sin ; for thought I if the case be thus, my state is surely miserable ; miserable, if I leave my sins ; and but miserable, if I follow them, I can be but damned ; and if it must be so, I had as good be damned for many sins, as be damned for few.

21. Thus I stood in the midst of my play before all that then were present ; but yet I told them nothing : but, I say, I have made this conclusion, I returned desperately to sport again ; and I well remember, that presently this kind of despair did so possess my soul, that I was persuaded I could never attain to other comfort than what I should get in sin ; for heaven was gone already, so that on that I must not think : wherefore I found within me a great desire to take my fill of sin, still studying what sin was yet to be committed, that I might taste the sweetness of it ; and I made as much haste as I could to fill my belly with its delicacies, lest I should die before I had my desires ; for that I feared greatly. In these things *I protest before God I lie not, neither do I feign this form of speech : these were really, strongly and with all my heart, my desires ; the Lord, whose mercy is unsearchable, forgive me my transgressions.*

22. (And I am very confident that this temptation of the devil, is more usual among poor creatures than many are aware of. even to over-run the spirits with scurffy and scared frame of heart, and benumbing of conscience ; which frame he stilly and stily supplieth with such despair that though not much guilt attendeth the soul, yet they continually have a secret conclusion within them, that there is no hopes for them ; *for they have loved sins, Jer. ii, 25, and 18 12.*)

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23. Now therefore I went on in sin with great greediness of mind, still grudging that I could not be so satisfied with it as I would: this did continue with me about a month or more. But one day as I was standing at a neighbour's shop window, and there cursing and swearing, and playing the mad-man after my wonted manner, there sat within the woman of the house, and heard me, who tho' she was a very ungodly wretch, yet protested that I swore and curied at that most fearful rate, that she was made to tremble to hear me. And told me further, *That I was the ungodliest fellow for swearing, that ever she heard in all her life: and that by this doing was able to spoil all the youth in the town, if they came but in my company.*

24. At this reproof I was silenced, and put to secret shame; and then too, as I thought before the God of Heaven; Wherefore while I stood there, and hanging down my head, I wished with all my heart, that I might be a little child again, that my father might bid me to speak without this wicked way of swearing for thought I, I am so accustomed to it, that it is but in vain for me to think of a reformation, for I thought that it could never be.

25. But how it came to pass I know not, I did from this time forward so leave my swearing, that it was a great wonder to myself to observe it; and whereas I made use of an oath to make my words have authority, now I could speak better, and with more pleasantness than ever. I could before; all this while I knew not Jesus Christ, neither did I leave my sports and play,

26. But quickly after this, I fell in company with one poor man that made profession of religion, who, as I then thought, did talk pleasantly of the scripture, and of the matters of religion: wherefore, falling into some love and liking to what he said, I

betook me to my Bible, and began to take great pleasure in reading, but especially with the historical part thereof: for, as for *Paul's* epistles, and scriptures of that nature, I could not away with them, being as yet but ignorant either of the corruptions of my nature, or the want and worth of Jesus Christ to save me.

27. Wherefore I fell to some outward reformation, both in my words and life, and did set the commandments before me, for my way to heaven; which commandments I also did strive to keep; and as I thought, did keep them pretty well sometimes, and then I should have comfort; yet now and then should break one, and so afflict my conscience; but then I should repent and say, I was sorry for it, and promise ~~to~~ God to do better next time, and there get help again.

28. Thus I continued about a year, all which time our neighbours did take me to be a very godly man, a new and religious man, and did marvel much to see such a great and famous alteration in my life and manners: and indeed so it was, tho' yet I knew not Christ nor grace, nor faith, nor hope; and truly as I have well seen since, had I then died, my state had been most fearful: Well, this I say continued about a twelve month or more.

29. Now you must know, that before this I had taken much delight in ringing, but my conscience beginning to be tender: I thought that such a practice was but in vain, and therefore forced myself to leave it, yet I hankered, wherefore I should go to the steeple house and look on: but I thought this did not become religion neither, yet I forced myself, and would look on still; but quickly after I began to think, how if one of the bells should fall; then I chose to stand under a main beam that lay

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over-thwart the steeple from side to side thinking there I might stand sure : But then I should think again, should the bell fall with a swing it might first hit the wall, and then rebounding upon me might kill me for all this beam ; this made me stand in the steeple door, and now thought I, I am safe enough, for if a bell should then fall, I can slip out behind these thick walls, and so be preserved notwithstanding. So after this, I would yet go to see them ring, but would not go no further than the steeple door, but then it came into my head, how if the steeple itself should fall, and this thought (it may fall for ought I know) would when I stood and looked on, continually so shake my mind, that I durst not stand at the steeple door any longer, but was forced to fly for fear it should then fall upon mine head.

Another thing was my dancing, I was a full year before I could quite leave it : But all this while, when I thought I kept this or that commandment, or did by word or deed any thing that I thought were good, I had great peace in my conscience, and should think with myself, God cannot chuse but be well pleased with me, yea to relate it in my own way, I thought no man in England could please God better than I.

But poor wretch, as I was, I was all this while ignorant of Christ, and going about to establish mine own righteousness, had perished therein, had not God in mercy shewed me more of my state by nature.

29. But upon a day, the good providence of God did cast me to Bedford, to work at my calling and in one of the streets of that town I came where there were three or four poor women, sitting at a door in the sun, talking about the things of God, and being now willing to hear them discourse, I drew near to hear what they said, for I was now a brisk

talker also myself in the matters of religion. But I may say, *I heard, but I understood not*, for they were far above out of my reach, their talk was about a new birth, the work of God on their hearts; also, how they were convinced of their miserable estate by nature: they talked how God had visited their souls with his love in the Lord Jesus, and with what words and promises they had been refreshed, comforted and supported against the temptations of the devil: moreover, they reasoned of the suggestions and temptations of Satan in particular, and told to each other, by which they had been afflicted, and how they were born up under his assaults; they also discouraged of their own wretchedness of heart, of their unbelief, and did contemn flight and abhor their own righteousness, and filthy and insufficient to do them any good.

30. And me thought they spake, as if joy ~~the~~ make them speak; they spake with such pleasantness of scripture language, and with such appearance of grace in all they said, that they were to me as if they had found a new world, as if they were *People that dwell alone, and were not to be reckoned among their neighbours*, Numb. xxiii. 9.

31. At this I felt my own heart began to shake and mistrust my condition to be naught: for I saw that in all my thoughts about religion and salvation, the new birth did never enter into my mind, neither did I know the comfort of the word and promise, nor the deceitfulness and treachery of my own wicked heart. As for secret thoughts, I took no notice of them, neither did I understand what Satan's temptations were, nor how they were to be withstood and resisted, &c.

32. Thus therefore when I heard and considered what they said, I left them and went about my

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employment again : but their talk and discourse went with me, also my heart would tarry with them, for I was greatly affected with their words, both because by them I was convinced of the happy and blessed condition of him that was such an one.

33. Therefore I should often make it my business to be going often into the company of these poor people ; for I could not stay away ; and the more I went amongst them, the more I did question my condition ; and as I still do remember, presently I found two things within me, at which I did sometimes marvel, (especially considering what a blind, ignorant and ungodly wretch but just before I was) one was a great softness and tenderness of heart, which caused me to fail under the conviction of what by scripture they asserted, the other was a bending on my mind to a meditating on them, and on all other good things which at any time heard or read of.

34. By these things, my mind was now so turned, that it lay like a horse leech at the vein, still crying out, Give, give, Prov. xxx. 15. Yea, it was so fixed on eternity, and on the things about the Kingdom of Heaven, (that is so far as I knew tho' as yet God knows I knew but little) that neither pleasure, nor profits, nor persuasions, nor threats, could loose it or make it let go its hold ; and tho' I may speak it with shame, yet it is indeed a very certain truth, it would then have been as difficult for me to have taken my mind from heaven to earth, as I have found it often since to get it again from earth to heaven.

35. One thing I may not omit, there was a young man in our town, to whom my heart before was knit more than to any other, but he being a most wicked creature for cursing and swearing, and whoring, I shook him off, and forsook his compa-

ny, but about a quarter of a year after I had left him, I met him in a certain lane, and asked how he did, he after his old swearing and mad way answered, he was well. But Harry, said I, why do you swear and curse thus? what will become of you, if you die in this condition? he answered me in a great chafe, *What would the Devil do for company if it were not for such as I am.*

86. About this time, I met with some Ranters books that were put forth by some of our countrymen, which books were also highly in esteem by several old professors: some of these I read, but was not able to make a judgment about them. Wherefore, as I read in them, and thought upon them, (feeling myself unable to judge) I should betake myself to hearty prayer in this manner: 'O Lord, I am a fool, and not able to know the truth from error: Lord leave me not to my own blindness, either to approve of, or condemn this doctrine; if it be of God, let me not despise it, if it be of the devil, let me not embrace it. Lord, I lay my soul in this matter, only at thy foot, let me not be deceived, I humbly beseech thee.' I had one religious intimate companion all this while, and that was the poor man that I spoke of before, but about this time he also turned a most devilish Ranter, and gave himself up to all manner of filthiness, especially uncleanness; he would also deny that there was a God, Angel, or Spirit, and would laugh at all exhortations to sobriety: when I laboured to rebuke his wickedness he would laugh the more and pretend that he had gone through all religions, and could never light upon the right till now, he told me also, that in a little time I should see all professors turn to the ways of the Ranters; wherefore, abominating those cursed principles, I

left his company forth-with, and became to him as great a stranger as I had been before a familiar ; Neither was this man only a temptation to me, but my calling lying in the country, I happened to light into several peoples company : who, though strict in religion formerly, yet was also swept away by these Ranters. These would also talk with me of their ways, and condemn me as legal and dark, pretended that they only had attained to perfection, that could do what they would and not sin. O these temptations were suitable to my flesh, I being but a young man, and my nature in its prime, but God who had as I hope designed me for better things, kept me in the fear of his name, and did not suffer me to accept of such cursed principles. And blessed be God, who put it in my heart to cry to him to be kept and directed, still distrusting mine own wisdom, for I have since seen even the effect of that prayer in his preserving me, not only from ranting errors, but from those also that have sprung up since. The Bible was precious to me in those days.

37. And now, me thought I began to look into the Bible with new eyes, and read as I never did before : and especially the epistles of the Apostle St. Paul were sweet and pleasant to me ; and indeed, I was then never out of the Bible, either by reading or meditation, still crying out to God, that I might know the truth, and way to Heaven and Glory.

38. And as I went on and read, I lighted on that passage, *To one is given by the spirit the word of wisdom, to another the word of knowledge by the same spirit, and to another faith, &c.* 1 Cor. xii. And though, as I have since seen, that by this scripture the Holy Ghost intends special things extraordinary, yet on me it then did fasten with conviction, that I did want things ordinary, even that understanding

and wisdom that other Christians had. On this word I mused, and could not tell what to do, especially this word (Faith) put me to it, for I could not help it, but some times must question, whether I had ~~my~~ faith or no, but I was loth to conclude I had no faith : for if I do so, thought I then I shall count myself a very castaway indeed.

39. No, said I, tho' I am convinced that I am an ignorant sot and that I want those blessed gifts of knowledge, and understanding that other good people have, yet at a venture I will conclude, I am not altogether faithless, tho' I know not what faith is. For it was shewed me, and that too (as I have since seen) by Satan, that those who conclude themselves in a faithless state, have neither rest nor quiet in their souls ; and I was loth to fall quite into despair.

40. Wherefore by this suggestion, I was for a while made afraid to see my want of faith ; but God would not suffer me thus to undo and destroy my soul, but did continually against my blind and sad conclusion, create still within me such suppositions, insomuch that I could not rest content, until I did now come to some certain knowledge, whether I had faith or no ; this always running in my mind, *But how if you want faith indeed ? But how can you tell you have faith ?* And besides ; I saw for certain if I had it not, I was sure to perish forever.

41. So that tho' I endeavoured at first to look over the business of faith, yet in a little time I began considering the matter, was willing to put myself upon trial, whether I had faith or no, but poor wretch ! so ignorant and brutish was I, that I knew to this day no more how to do it, than I know how to begin and accomplish that rare and curious piece of art, which I never yet saw or considered.

42. Wherefore while I was thus considering, and

being put to my plunge about it (for you must know that as yet I had in this matter broken my mind to no man, only did hear and consider) the tempter came in with this delusion, that there was no way for me to know I had faith but by trying to work some miracle, urging those scriptures, that seem to look that way, for the enforcing and strengthening his temptation. One day as I was betwixt Elstow and Bedford, the temptation was hot upon me, to try if I had faith by doing some miracle; which miracle at that time was, I must say to the puddles that were in the horse pads, be dry; and the dry places, be you the puddles; and truly one time I was going to say so indeed but just as I was about to speak, this thought came into my mind, *But go under yonder hedge, and pray first, that God would make you able:* But when I had concluded to pray, this came hot upon me, that if I prayed and came again and tried to do it, and yet did nothing notwithstanding, then before I had no faith but was a cast away, and: Nay, thought I, if it be so, I will never try yet, but will stay a little longer.

43. So I continued at a great loss, for I thought if they only had faith which could do such wonderful things, then I concluded, that for the present I neither had it, nor yet for time to come were like to have it. Thus I was tossed betwixt the devil and my own ignorance, and so perplexed, especially at some times, that I could not tell what to do.

44. About this time, the state and happiness of these poor people at Bedford, was thus in a kind of vision presented unto me: I saw, as if they were set on the sunny side of some high mountain, refreshing themselves with the pleasant beams of the sun, while I was shivering and shrinking; afflicted with frost, snow and dark clouds; me thought also betwixt me

and them, I saw a wall that did compass about this mountain ; through this wall, my soul did greatly desire to pass, concluding, that if I could, I would go even into the very midst of them, and there also comfort myself with the heat of their sun.

45. About this wall, I thought myself to go again and again, still praying as I went, to see if I could find some way or passage by which I might enter therein, but none could I find for some time : at the last, I saw, at it were a narrow gap, like a little door way in the wall, through which I attempted to pass : now the passage being very strait, I made many offers to get in, but in vain, even until I was quite beat out by striving to get in ; at last with great striving, me thought I at first did get in my head, and after that by sideling striving my shoulders, and my whole body ; then was I exceeding glad, and went and sat odwn in the midst of them, and so was comforted with the light and heat of their sun.

46. Now this mountain and wall, &c. was thus made out to me ; The mountain signified the church of the living God ; the sun that shone thereon, the comfortable shining of his merciful face on them that were therein. The wall I thought, was the word that did make separation between the Christians and the world ; and the gap which was in this wall, I thought was Christ, who is the way to God the Father, John xiv. 6. Math. vii. 14. But for as much as the passage was wonderful narrow, even so narrow, that I could not but with great difficulty, enter into life, but those that were in down right earnest, and unless also they left this wicked world behind them ; for here was only room for body and soul, but not for sin.

47. This resemblance atode upon my spirit many

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days all which time I saw myself in a forlorn and sad condition, but yet was provoked to a vehement hunger, and desire to be one of that number that did sit in the sunshine: now I should pray wherever I was, whether at home or abroad, in house or field, and should often with lifting up of heart, sing the fifty first Psalm, *O Lord, consider my distress*: for as yet I knew not where I was.

48. Neither could I attain to any comfortable persuasion that I had faith in Christ; but instead of having satisfaction, here I began to find my soul to be assailed with fresh doubts about my future happiness, especially such as these, *Whether I was elected; but if the day of grace should be past and gone?*

By these two temptations I was much afflicted and disquieted: sometimes by one, and sometimes by the other. Add first, to speak of that about my questioning my election, I found at this time, that tho' I was in a flame to find the way to heaven and glory, and tho' nothing could bear me off from this, yet this question did so offend me, that I was especially at some times, as if the very strength of my body had been taken away by the force and power thereof. This scripture seemed also to trample upon all my desires. *It is neither in him that willeth nor in him that canneeth, but in God that sheweth mercy*, Rom. ix.

50. With this scripture I could not tell what to do, for I evidently saw, unless that the great God of his infinite grace and bounty, had voluntarily chosen me to be a vessel of mercy, though I should desire and long and labour until my heart did break, no good could come of it. Therefore this would still stick with me. How can you tell you are elected? And what if you should not, how then?

51. O Lord, thought I, what if I should not indeed? it may be you are no, said the tempter: it

may be so indeed, thought I. Why then, said Satan, you had as good leave off, and strive no further; for if indeed you should not be elected and chosen of God, there is no talk of your being saved; *For it is neither in him that willeth, nor in him that runneth, but in God that sheweth mercy.*

52. By these things I was driven to my wits end, not knowing what to say, or how to answer these temptations, for that the elect only attained eternal life, I without scruple did heartily close with; but that I was one of them, there lay the question.

53. Thus for several days, I was greatly assaulted and perplexed: but one day, after I had been so many weeks oppressed and cast down, as I was now quite giving up the ghost of all my hopes of ever attaining life, that sentence fell with weight upon my spirit, *Look at the generations of old, and see, did ever any trust in God, and were confounded?*

54. At which I was greatly lightened, and encouraged in my soul, for thus at that very instant it was expounded to me: begin at the beginning of Genesis, and read to the end of the Revelations, and see if you can find that there was any that ever trusted in the Lord, and was confounded. So coming home, I went to my bible, to see if I could find that saying, for it was so fresh and comfortable to me, that I was as if it talked with me.

55. I looked, but found it not, only it abode upon me: I then asked first this good man and then another, if they new where it was; but they knew no such place; at this I wondered, that such a sentence should so suddenly, and with such comfort, seize and abide upon my heart, and yet that none could find it.

56. Thus I continued above a year, and could not find the place, but at last, casting mine eye into the

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Apocrypha, I found it in Ecclesiastes, ii. 10. This at the first did somewhat daunt me, but because by this time I had got more experience of the love and kindness of God, it troubled me the less; especially when I considered, that though it was not in those texts that we call holy and canonical, yet for as much as this sentence was the sum and substance of many of the promises, it was my duty to take the comfort of it, and I bless God for that word, for it was of him: and doth still at times shine before my face.

57. After this, that other doubt came with power upon me. *But how if the day of grace be past, and gone?* Now I remember, that one day as I was walking in the country, I thought of this, when, to aggravate my trouble the tempter presented to my mind those good people of Bedford, and suggested thus unto me, that these, being converted already, they were all that God would save in those parts, and that I came too late, for these had got the blessing before I came.

58. Now I was in great distress, thinking in very deed that this might be well so: wherefore I went up and down bemoaning my sad condition, counting myself far worse than a thousand fools, for standing off thus long, and spending so many years in sin as I have done; still crying out, Oh, that I had turned sooner! Oh, that I had turned seven years ago: it made me also angry with myself, to think that I should have no more wit but to trifle away my time, till my soul and heaven were lost.

59. But when I had been long vexed with this fear, and was scarce able to take one step more, just about the same place where I received my other encouragement, these words came into my mind: *Compel them to come in, that my house may be filled,*

and yet there is room, Luke xiv. 22, 23. These words, but especially them, *And yet there is room*, were sweet words to me; for truly I thought I saw that there was place enough in heaven for me; and that when the Lord Jesus spake these words, he then did think of me, and that he knowing the time would come that I should be afflicted with fear, that there was no place left for me in his bosom, did before speak this word, and leave it upon record, that I might find help thereby against this vile temptation, this I then verily believed.

60. In the light and encouragement of this word, I continued for a while, and the comfort was the more, when I thought that the Lord should think on me so long ago, and that he should speak these words on purpose for my sake.

But I was not without my temptations to go back again; temptations, both from Satan, mine own heart, and carnal acquaintance; but I thank God these were outweighed by that sound sense of death, and the day of judgment, which abode, as it were, continually in my view. I should often also think of Nebuchadnezzar, of whom it is said, *He had given him all the kingdoms of the earth*, Daniel v. 18, 19. Yet, if this great man had his portion in this world, one hour in hell fire would make him forget all. This consideration was help to me.

61. I was also made about this time to see something concerning the beasts that Moses counted clean and unclean. I thought these beasts were types of men: the clean, types of them that were the people of God; but the unclean, types of such as were the children of the wicked one. Now I read, that the clean beasts chewed the cud; that is, they shewed us we must feed upon the word of

God: they also parted the hoof, I thought that signified, we must part, if we would be saved with the ways of ungodly men. And also, in further reading about them, I found, that though we did chew the cud as the hare; yet if we walked with claws like a dog, or if we did not part the hoof like the swine; yet if we did not chew the cud as the sheep, we were still but unclean; for I thought the hare to be a type of those that talk of the word, yet walk in ways of sin, and the swine like him that passeth with outward pollutions, but still wanteth the word of faith, without which there could be no salvation. let man be ever so devout, Deut. xiv.

62. After this, I found by reading of the word, that those that must be glorified with Christ in another world, *Must be called by him here*, Called to the partaking of a share of his word, and righteousness, and to a peculiar interest in all those heavenly things, which fore-fit the soul for that rest and house of glory, which is in heaven above.

63. Here again, I was at a very great stand, not knowing what to do, fearing I was not called, for if I be not called, what then can do me good? None but those who are effectually called, inherit the kingdom of heaven. But Oh, how I now loved those words that spake of a *Christian's calling*! As when the Lord said to one, *Follow me*, and to another, *Come after me*; and Oh, that he would say to me too! How gladly would I run after him!

64. I cannot now express with what longings and breathings in my soul, I cried to Christ, to call me. Thus I continued for a time, all on a flame to be converted to Jesus Christ, and did also see at that day, such glory in a converted state, that I could not be contented without a share therein.

Gold! could it have been gotten for gold, what could I have given for it! had I but a whole world, it had all gone for this, that my soul might have been in a converted state.

65. How lovely now was every one in my eyes, that I thought to be converted men and women? They ~~shone~~, and walked like a people that carried the broad-seal of heaven about them. I saw the lot was fallen to them in pleasant places, and they had a goodly heritage, Psal. xvi. but that which made me sick, was that of Christ in Mark, *He went up into a mountain, and called to him whom he would, and they came unto him*, Mark iii. 13.

66. This scripture gave me fear, yet it kindled fire in my soul. That which made me fear was this, lest Christ should have no liking to me, for he called *whom he would*. But the glory that I saw in that condition, did still so engage my heart, that I could seldom read of any that Christ did call, but I presently wished, would I had been in their clothes, would I had been born Peter, would I had been born John, or would I had been by, and had heard him when he called them, how would I have cried, *O Lord, call me also!* but Oh, I feared he would not call me.

67. And truly the Lord let me go thus many months together, and showed me nothing, either that I was already, or should be called hereafter. But at last, after much time spent, and many groans to God, that I might be made partaker of the holy and heavenly calling, that word came in upon me, *I will cleanse their blood that I have not cleansed, for the Lord dwelleth in Sion*, Joel iii. 21. These words, I thought, were sent to encourage me to still wait upon God, and signified unto me that if I were not already, yet time might come, I might be converted unto Christ,

68. About this time I began to break my mind to those poor people at Bedford, and to tell them my condition, which when they had heard, they told Mr. Gifford of me, who himself also took occasion to talk of me, and was willing to be persuaded of me, tho' I think but from little grounds : but he invited me to his house, where I should hear him confer with others about the dealings of God with the soul ; from all which, I still received more conviction, and from that time began to see something of the vanity and wretchedness of my heart, for as yet I knew no great matter therein, but now it began to be discovered unto me : and also to work at that rate as it never did before. Now, I evidently found, that lusts and corruptions put forth themselves within me, in wicked thoughts and desires, which I did not regard before : my desires also for heaven began to fail, I found also, that whereas before my soul was full of longings after God, now it began to hanker after every foolish vanity ; yea, my heart would not be moved to mind that that was good, it began to be careless both on my soul and heaven ; it would now continually hang back both to, and in every duty, and was as a clog on the leg of a bird to hinder me from flying.

69. Nay, thought I, now I grow worse and worse, now I am farther from conversion than ever I was before ; wherefore I began to sink greatly in my soul, and began to entertain such discouragement in my heart, as laid me as low as hell ; if now I should have burned at a stake, I could not believe that Christ had love for me. Alas ! I could neither hear him, nor see him, nor feel him, nor savour any of his things ; I was driven as with a tempest, my heart would be unclean, the Canaanites would dwell in the land.

70. Sometimes I would tell my condition to the

people of God : which when they heard, they would pity me, and would tell me of the promises ; but they had as good have told me I must reach the sun with my finger, as have bidden me rely on the promise, and as soon as I should have done it ; all my sense and feeling was against me, and I saw I had a heart that would sin, and lay under a law that would condemn.

71. These things have often made me think of the child which the father brought to Christ, *Who while he was yet coming to him was thrown down by the devil, and also so rent and torn by him, that he lay and wallowed foaming.* Luke ix. 42: Mark ix, 20.

72. Further, in these days, I should find my heart to shut up itself against the Lord, and against his holy word ; I have found my unbelief to set as it were the shoulder to the door to keep him out and that too, even when I have with many a bitter sigh cried, good Lord, break it open : *Lord break these gates of brass, and cut the bars of iron asunder,* Psal. cvii, 16. Yet that word would sometimes create in my heart a peaceable pause, *I girded thee, though thou hast not known me.* Isaiah xlv. 5.

73. But all this while, as to the act of sinning : I never was more tender than now, I durst not take a pin, or stick, though but so big as a straw, for my conscience now was sore, and would smart at every touch, I could not now tell how to speak my words, for fear I should misplace them ; O how lingeringly did I then go, in all I did or said ; I found myself in a miery bog that shook if I did but stir, and was as bereft both of God and Christ, and the spirit, and all good things,

74. But I observe, tho' I was such a great sinner before conversion, yet God never much charged the guilt of the sins, of my ignorance upon me,

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only he shewed me I was lost if I had not Christ, because I had been a sinner. I saw that I wanted a perfect righteousness to present me without fault before God, and that this righteousness was only to be found but in the person of Jesus Christ.

75. But my original and inward pollution, that was my plague and my affliction; that I saw at a dreadful rate always putting forth itself within me, by reason of that, I was more loathsome in mine own eyes than a toad, and thought I was so in God's also: sin and corruption, I said, would as naturally bubble out of my heart, as water would out of a fountain; I thought now that every one had a better heart than I, I could have changed heart with any body. I fell therefore at the sight of mine own vileness into deep despair, for I concluded that the condition I was in, could not stand with a state of grace, sure, thought I, I am forsaken of God, I am given up to the devil and a reprobate mind, and thus I continued a long while, even for some years together.

76. While I was thus afflicted with the fears of my own damnation, there were two things would make me wonder: the one was, when I saw old people hunting after the things of this world, as if they should live here forever; the other was, when I found professors much distressed and cast down when they met with outward losses, as of husband, wife, child, &c. Lord, thought I, what ado is here about such little things: what seeking after carnal things by some, and what grief in others for the loss of them; if they so much labour after and spend so many tears for the things of this present life, how I am to be bemoaned, pitied and prayed for! my soul is dying, my soul is damning. Were my soul but in a good condition, and were I but sure of it,

how rich should I esteem myself, though blest but with bread and water: I should count those but small afflictions, and should bear them as little burdens. *A wounded spirit who can bear.* ●

77. And though I was thus troubled and tossed afflicted with the sight and sense and terror of my own wickedness, yet I was afraid to let this sense and sight go quite off my mind; for I found that unless guilt of conscience was taken off the right way, that is, by the blood of Christ, a man grew rather worse, for the loss of his trouble of mind, than better. Wherefore if my guilt lay hard upon me, then I should cry, that the blood of Christ might take it off: and if it was going off without it, for the sense of sin would be sometimes as if it would die, and go quite away; then I would also strive to fetch it upon my heart again, by bringing the punishment for sin in hell fire upon my spirit, and should cry, *Lord let it not go off my heart any other way than by the blood of Christ, and by the application of thy mercy through him to my soul:* For that scripture lay much upon me, *Without shedding of blood there is no remission,* Heb. ix, 22. And that which made me the more afraid of this, was, because I had seen some, who, when they were under wounds of conscience would cry and pray, yet seeking rather present ease from their trouble than pardon for their sins, cared not how they lost their guilt, so they got it out of their mind: now having got it off the wrong way, it was not sanctified unto them, but they grew harder and blinder, and more wicked after their trouble. This made me afraid, and made me cry to God the more that it might not be so with me.

78. And now was I sorry that God had made me a man, for I feared I was a reprobate: I counted man,

as unconverted, the most doleful of all the creatures : thus being afflicted and tossed about my sad condition I counted myself alone, and above all men unblest.

79. Yea I thought it impossible that ever I should attain to so much goodness of heart, as to thank God that he had made me a man. Man indeed is the most noble, by creation, of all the creatures in the visible world, but by sin he had made himself the most ignoble. The beasts, birds, fishes, &c. I blessed their condition, for they had not a sinful nature, they were not obnoxious to the wrath of God, they were not to go to hell fire after death, I could therefore rejoice, had my condition been as any of theirs.

80. In this condition I went a great while, but when comforting time was come, I heard one preach a sermon upon these words in the Song. Song iv 1. *Behold thou art fair, my love, behold thou art fair.* but at that time he made these two words my love, his chief and subject matter ; from which after he had a little opened the text he observed these several conclusions 1 *That the church and so every saved soul is Christ's love, when loveless.* 2 *Christ's love without a cause in Christ's love when hated of the world.* 3 *Christ's love when under temptation and under desertion.* 4 *Christ's love from first to last.*

81. But I got nothing by what he had said at present, only when he came to the application of the fourth particular, this was the word he said. *If it be so, that the saved soul is Christ's love when under temptation and desertion and thou poor tempted soul when thou art assaulted and afflicted with temptations and the hiding of God's face ye think on these two words, my Love still.*

82. So as I was going home these words came again into my thoughts, and I will remember as they came in. I said thus in my heart, *What shall I get by this.*

ing on these two words ? this thought had no sooner passed through my heart, but these words began thus to kindle in my spirit, *Thou art my love, thou art my dove*, twenty times together ; and still as they ran thus in my mind, they waxed stronger and warmer, and began to make me look up : but being as yet between hope and fear, I still replied in my heart. *But is it true ? but is it true ?* At which that sentence fell in upon me, *He wist not that it was true which was done unto him of the Angel.* Acts xii. 9.

83. Then I began to give place to the word, which with power did over and over make this joyful sound within my soul, *Thou art my love, thou art my love, and nothing shall separate thee from my love !* and with that, Rom. viii. 39, came into my mind. Now was my heart filled full of comfort and hope, and now I could believe that my sins should be forgiven me ? yea, I was now so taken with the love and mercy of God, that I remember I could not tell how to contain till I got home, I thought I could have spoken of his love, and have told of his mercy to me, even to the very crows that sat upon the ploughed lands before me, had they been capable to have understood me, wherefore I said in my soul with much gladness, *I would I had a pen and ink here, I would write this down before I go any further, for surely I will not forget this forty years hence :* but alas ! within less than forty days I began to question all again, and by times fell to my old courses again.

84. Yet still at times, I was helped to believe that it was a true manifestation of grace unto my soul, though I had lost much of the life and favour of it. Now about a week or fortnight after this, I was much followed by this scripture ; *Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you,* Luke

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xvii. 31; and sometimes it would sound so loud within me, and call so strongly after me, that I turned my head over my shoulder, thinking verily that some man had behind me called me, being at a great distance, me-thought he called so loud, it came, as I have thought since, to have stirred me up to prayer and watchfulness. It came to acquaint me that a cloud and storm was coming down upon me, but I understood it not.

85. But so foolish was I, and ignorant, that I knew not the reason of this sound, only it would make me muse, and wonder in my mind, to think what should be the reason that this scripture, and that at this rate, so often, and so loud, should still be sounding and raving in mine ears. But, as I said before, I soon perceived the end of God therein.

86. For about the space of a month after, a very great storm came down upon me, which handled me twenty times worse than all I had met with before: it came stealing upon me, now by one piece, then by another: First, all my comfort was taken from me, then darkness seized upon me, after which, whole floods of blasphemies, both against God, Christ, and the scriptures, was poured upon my spirit, to my great confusion and astonishment.

87. These blasphemous thoughts were such as stirred up questions in me against the very being of God, and of his holy beloved Son; as whether there were in truth a God or Christ, and whether the holy scriptures were not rather a fable and cunning story, than the holy and pure word of God.

88. The tempter also would much assault me with this: "How can ye tell, but that the Turks had as good scriptures to prove their Mahomet the Saviour, as we have to prove our Jesus is: And could I think so many ten thousands, in so many countries and

kingdoms, should be without knowledge of the right way to heaven, (if there were indeed a heaven) and that we only, who live in a corner of the earth, should alone be blest therewith? Every one doth think his own religion rightest, both Jews, Moors, and Pagans: and how if our English faith, and Christ, and scriptures, should but think so too?"

89. Sometimes I have endeavoured to argue against these suggestions, and to set some of the sentences of blessed Paul against them; but alas! I quickly felt, when I thus did, such arguings as these would return again upon me: 'Though we made so great a matter of Paul and of his words, yet how could I tell, but that in very deed, he being a subtle and cunning man, might give himself up to deceive with strong delusions, and also take the pains and travel to undo and destroy his fellows?'

90. These suggestions (with many others, which at this time I may not, nor dare not utter, neither by word or pen) did make such a seizure upon my spirit, and did so over weigh my heart, both with **their** number, continuance, and fiery force that I felt, as if there were nothing but these from morning to night within me, and as indeed there could be room for nothing else; and also concluded, that God had in very wrath to my soul, given me to them to be carried away with them as with a whirl wind.

91. Only by the distaste that they gave unto my spirit, *I felt there was something in me that refused to embrace them*: but this consideration? then only had, when God gave me leave to swallow my spittle, otherwise the noise, and strength, and force of these temptations would drown and overflow, and (as it were) bury all such thoughts, or the remembrance of any such thing. While I was in this temptation I would find often my mind suddenly put upon it to

curse and swear, or to speak some grievous thing of God, or Christ his Son and of the scriptures.

92. Now *I* thought, *surely I am possessed of the devil*; at other times again, *I* thought, *I* should be bereft of my wits, for instead of lauding and magnifying of God the Lord with others, if *I* have but heard him spoken of, presently some most horrible blasphemous thought would bolt out my heart against him. So that whether *I* did think that God was, or again, did think there were no such thing: no love, nor gracious disposition could *I* feel within me.

93. These things did sink me into deep despair, for *I* concluded that such things could not be found against them that loved God, *I* often, when these temptations have been with force upon me, *I* did compare myself, in the case of such a child, whom some gipsie by force took up in her arms, and is carrying from friend and country; kick sometimes *I* did and shriek; but yet *I* was bound in the wings of the temptation, and the wind would carry me away. *I* thought also of Saul, and the evil spirit that did possess him, and did fear my condition was the same with that of his, 1 Sam. xvi. 14.

94. In these days when *I* have heard others talk of the sin against the Holy Ghost, then would the tempter so provoke me to desire to that sin, that *I* was as if *I* could not, must not, neither should be quiet until *I* had committed that; now no sin would serve but that; if it were to be committed by speaking such a word, then *I* have been as if my mouth would have spoken that word whether *I* would or no; and in so strong a measure was this temptation upon me, that often *I* have been ready to clap my hand upon my chin to keep my mouth from opening; to that end also, *I* have had thoughts, at other times to leap with my head downward into some muck hill hole or other, to keep my mouth from speaking. g.

95. Now again, I beheld the condition of the dog and toad, and counted the estate of every thing that God had made, far better than this dreadful state of mine, and such as my companions was : yea, gladly would I have been a dog or horse, for I knew they had no soul to perish under the everlasting weight of hell for sin, as mine was like to do : Nay, though I saw this, felt this, and was broken to pieces with it ; yet that which added to my sorrow, was, that I could not find, that with all my soul I did desire deliverance. That scripture did tear and rend my soul in the midst of these distractions, *The wicked are like the troubled sea which cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt :- There is no peace to the wicked, saith my God, Isa. lvii. 20. 21.*

96. And now, my heart was at times exceeding hard, if I would have given a thousand pounds for a tear, I could not find one. I was much dejected to think that this would be my lot : I saw some comforters mourn and lament their sins, and others again, could quietly talk of, and with gladness remember the mercies of God, while I was only in the storm or tempest. This much sunk me. I thought my condition alone, I should therefore much bewail my hard heart, but get out of, or get rid of those things, I could not.

97. While this temptation lasted, which was about a year, I could attend upon none of the ordinances of God, but with sore and great affliction ; yea, then was I most distressed with blasphemies ; if I have been hearing the word, then uncleanness, blasphemies, and despair, would hold me a captive there ; if I had been reading, then sometimes I had sudden thoughts to question all I read ; sometimes again, my mind would be so strangely snatched away, and possessed with other things, that I have never known, nor regarded, nor remembered so much as the sentence that but now I had read.

98. In prayer also, I have been greatly troubled at this time: sometimes I have thought I have felt him behind me pull my clothes; he would be also continually at me in the time of prayer, to have done, break off, make haste, you have prayed enough, and stay no longer; still drawing my mind away. He would sometimes cast in such wicked thoughts as these, that I must pray to him, or for him; I have thought sometimes of that, *Fall down, or, If thou wilt fall down and worship me*, Mat. iv. 9.

99. Also when, because I have had wandering thoughts in the time of this duty, I have laboured to compose my mind, and fix it upon God; then with great force hath the tempter laboured to distract me, and to turn away my mind, by presenting to my heart and fancy, the form of a bush, a bush, a thorn, or the like, as if I should pray to those; and he also he would sometimes so hold my mind, that I was as if I could think of nothing else, or nothing else, but to these, or such as they.

At times, I should have some strong affecting apprehensions of God, and the truth of his gospel; but oh, how my heart at such times put forth itself with inexpressible groanings! my whole soul was then every word, I should cry with pangs after God, that he would be merciful to me; but then I shall be daunted again with such conceits as these, I should think that God did mock at these my prayers, saying, and that in the audience of the holy angels, this poor simple wretch doth hanker after me, as if I had nothing to do with my mercy, but to bestow it on such as him. Alas, poor soul! how art thou deceived; it is not for such as thee to have favour with the Highest.

101. Then hath the temper come upon me also with such discouragements as these: "You are very hot for mercy, but I will cool you: many have been as hot as you for a sport, but I have quenched their zeal." And with this, such and such, who were fallen off, would be set before mine eyes; then I should be afraid that I should do so too; but, thought I, I am glad this cometh into my mind, I will watch, and take what heed I can; "Tho' you do (said Satan) I shall be too hard for you, I will cool your intensibility by degrees; what care I, though I be seven years in chilling your heart, if I can do it at last; continual rocking will lull a child to sleep; I will ply it close, but I will have my end accomplished: though you be burning hot at present, yet if I can pull you from this fire, I shall have you cold before it be long." These things brought me into great straits; for as I at present could not find myself fit for present death, so I thought to live long would make me yet more unfit; for time would make me forget all, and even the remembrance of the evil of sin, the wages of heaven, and the need I had of the blood of Christ to wash me, both out of mind and thence; but these things did not at present make me stop my crying, but rather did put me more upon it, like her who met with the adulterer, Deut. xxii. 26. in which days that was a good word to me, after I had suffered these things a while; *I am persuaded, that neither height, nor depth, nor death, nor life, &c. shall separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus, Rom. viii. 38.* And now I hoped long life should not destroy me, nor make me nuis of heaven.

102. Yet I had some supports in this temptation, though they were then all questioned by me: that

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in the 3d of Jeremiah, at the first, was something to me; and so was the consideration of the fifth verse of that chapter, that though we have spoken and done evil things as we could, yet we should cry unto God, *My Father, thou art the guide of my youth, and should return unto him.*

103. I had also once a sweet glance from that in 2 Cor. v. 12. *For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.* One day, as I was sitting in a neighbour's house, and there very sad at the consideration of many blasphemies, that word came suddenly upon me, *What shall we say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?* Rom. viii.

31. That also was an help unto me, *Because I live, ye shall live also,* John xiv. 19. But these were but ~~short~~ touches, and short visits, though very sweet when present, only they lasted not.

104. But afterwards the Lord did more fully and graciously discover himself unto me, and indeed did ~~not~~ not only deliver me from the guilt that by these things was laid upon my conscience, but also from the very filth thereof, for the temptation was removed, and I was put into my right mind again, as other Christians were.

205. I remember that one day as I was travelling into the country, and musing on the wickedness and blasphemy of my heart, and considering of the enmity that was in me to God, that scripture came in my mind, *He hath made peace by the blood of his cross,* Cor. i. 20, by which I was made to see that day that God and my soul were friends by his blood; yea, I saw that the justice of God, and my sinful soul, could embrace and kiss each other through his blood: this was a good day to me, I hope I shall not forget it.

GRACE ABOUNDING

106. At another time, as I was sitting ~~by the~~ fire, musing on my wretchedness, the Lord made that also a precious word unto me, "For as much as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same, that through death, ~~the~~ might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver those who through the fear of death were all their life subject to bondage," Heb. ii. 14, 15. I thought that the glory of those words was then so weighty on me, that I was ready to swoon as I sat, not with grief and trouble, but with solid joy and peace.

107. At this time also, I sat under the ministry of holy Mr. Gifford, whose doctrine, by God's grace, was much for my stability. This ~~man~~ made it much his business to deliver the people of God from all those false and unsound rests that by nature we are prone to, take special heed, that we ~~take~~ not up any truth upon trust, as from this or that, or any other man or men, but to cry mightily to God, that he would convince us of the reality thereof, and set us down therein by his own spirit in the holy word; for, said he, if you do otherwise, when temptations come, if strongly, you not having received them with evidence from heaven will find you want that help and strength now to resist, as once you thought you had.

108. This was as seasonable to my soul, as the former and latter-rain in their season; for I had found, and that by sad experience, the truth of these his words. For I had felt, *no man can say especially when tempted of the devil, That Jesus Christ is Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.* Wherefore I found my soul, through grace, very apt to drink in this doctrine, and to incline to pray to God, that

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in nothing that pertained to God's glory and my own ~~eternal~~ ^{eternal} ~~salvation~~ ^{salvation}, he would suffer me to be without the confirmation thereof from heaven; for now I saw clearly, there was an exceeding difference between the notion of flesh and blood and the revelation of God in heaven: also a great difference between that faith which is feigned, and according to man's wisdom, and of that which comes by a man being born thereto of God, Mat. xvi. 15. 1 John v. 1.

109. But oh! now, how was my soul led from truth to truth, O God! even from the birth and cradle of the Son of God, to his ascension and second coming from heaven to judge the world.

110. ~~And~~ I then found upon this account, the great God was very good unto me, for to my remembrance, there was not any thing that I cried to God to make known and reveal unto me, but he was pleased to do it for me; I mean not one part of the gospel of the Lord Jesus, but I was orderly led into it; me-thought I saw with great evidence, from the relation of the four Evangelists, the wonderful work of God, in giving Jesus Christ to save us, from his conception and birth, even to his second coming to judgment: me-thought I was as if I had seen him born, as if I had seen him grow up, as if I had seen him walk through this world, from the cradle to the cross, to which also when he came, I saw how gently he gave himself to be hanged and nailed on it for my sins, and wicked doings; also, as I was musing on his progress, that dropped on my spirit, ~~that~~ ^{as} ~~was~~ ^{ordained} ~~for the slaughter,~~ 1 Peter i. 12. 20.

111. When I have considered also the truth of the resurrection, and have remembered that, *Touch me not Mary, &c.* I have seen as if he had leaped out

of the grave's mouth, for joy that he was risen again, and had got the conquest over our dreadful foe. John xx. 17. I have also in the spirit seen him a Man on the right hand of God the Father for me, and have seen the manner of his coming from heaven to judge the world with glory, and have been confirmed in these things, by these scriptures following, Acts i. 9 10. & vii, 56. & xxi. 2. Heb. vii. 24 & viii, 88 Rev. i 18. 1 Thel. iv. 17, 18. Once I was troubled to know whether the Lord Jesus was man as well as God, and God as well as man; and truly in those days, let men say what they would, unless I had it with evidence from heaven, all was nothing to me, I counted myself set down in any truth of God; well I was much troubled about this point, and could not tell how to be resolved: at last that in the fifth of the Revelation came into my mind; and I beheld, and lo, in the midst of the Throne, and the four beasts; and in the midst of the Elders stood a Lamb, in the midst of the Throne, there is his God head, in the midst of the Elders, there is his Man hood. But O me thought this did glister, it was a godly touch, and gave me sweet satisfaction; that other scripture also did help me much in this, *To us a Child is born, to us a Son is given. and the government shall be upon his shoulders, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace, &c.* Isa. ix. 6.

112. Also besides these teachings of God in his word, the Lord made use of two things to confirm me in these things, the one was the errors of the Quakers, and the other was the guilt of Sin: for as the Quakers did oppose his truth, so God did the more confirm me in it, by leading me into the scriptures that did wonderfully maintain it; and

as I said, the guilt of sin did help me much, for still as that would come upon me, the blood of Christ did take it off again, and that too, sweetly according to the scriptures. O friends, cry to God to reveal Jesus Christ unto you, there is none teacheth like him.

113. It would be too long here to stay, to tell you in particular, how God did set me down in all the things of Christ, and how he did, that he might to do, lead me into his word, yea and also, how he did open them unto me, and cause them to dwell with me, talk with me, and comfort me, both of his own being, and the being of his Son, and spirit, word and gospel.

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

115. Now had I an evidence for heaven with many golden seals thereon, all hanging in my sight; now could I remember this manifestation, and the other discovery of grace with comfort; and should often long and desire that the last day were come, that I might be forever inflamed with the sight, joy, and communion of him, whole head was crowned with thorns, whole face was spit on, and body broken, and soul made an offering for my

ness: for whereas before I lay continually trembling at the mouth of hell: now me-thought I was got so far therefrom, that I could not, when I looked back, scarce discern it: and, O thought I, that I were fouricore years old now, that I might die quickly, that my soul might go to rest.

119. But before I had got this far out of these my temptations, I did greatly long to see some ancient Godly man's experience, who had write some hundred years before I was born; for, for those who had write in our days, I thought (but I desire them now to pardon me) that they had write only that which others felt, or else had through the strength of their wits and parts, studied to answer such objections as they perceived others were perplexed with, without going down themselves into the deep. Well, after many longings in my mind the God in whole hand are our days, did call unto my hand (one day) a book of Martin Luther, his comment on the Galatians, so old that it was ready to fall to pieces, if I did but turn it over. Now I was pleased much that such an old book had fallen into my hand; which, when I had but a little way perused, I found my condition in his experience, so largely and profoundly handled, as if his book had been written out of my heart: this made me marvel: for thus thought I, this man could not know any thing of the state of christians now, but must needs write and speak the experience of former days. Besides, he doth most gravely also in that book debate of the rise of these temptations, namely blasphemy, desperation and the like, shewing that the law of Moses, as well as the devil, death and hell hath a very great hand therein, which at first was very strange unto me, but by considering and watching, I found it so indeed. But of par-

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riculars here, I intend nothing, only this me thinks, I must let fall before all men, I do prefer this book of Mr. Luther upon the Galatians, (excepting the holy Bible;) before all the books that ever I have seen, as most fit for a wounded conscience.

117. And now I found, as I thought, that I loved Christ dearly. O me thought my soul cleaved unto me: my affections cleave unto him. I felt love to him as hot as fire, and now as Job said, I thought I should die in my best: But I did quickly find that my great love was but little, and that I, who had as I thought, such burning love to Jesus Christ, could let him go again for a very trifling. God can tell how to abase us: and can hide pride from men. Quickly after this my love was tried to purpose.

118. For after the Lord had in this manner thus graciously delivered me from this great and sore temptation, and had set me down so sweetly in the faith of his holy gospel, and had given me such strong consolation and blessed evidence from heaven touching my interest in his love through Christ; the tempter came upon me again, and that with a more grievous and dreadful temptation than before.

119. And that was to *sell and part with this most blessed Christ, to exchange him for the things of this life, for any thing*: the temptation lay upon me for the space of a year, and did follow me so continually, that I was not rid of it one day in a month, no, not sometimes one hour in many days together, unless I was asleep.

120. And tho', in my judgment I was persuaded, that those who were once effectually in Christ, (as I hoped, through his grace, I had seen myself) could never lose him forever, (*for the land shall not be sold forever, for the land is mine, saith God;*

Levet. xxv. 23.) yet it was a continual vexation to me, to think that *I* should have so much as one such thought within me against a Christ Jesus, that had done for me as he had done.

121. But it was neither my dislike of the thought, nor yet any desire or endeavour to resist it, that in the least did shake or abate the continuation, or force and strength thereof: for it did always in almost whatever *I* thought, intermix itself therewith: but still the temptation would come, *Sell Christ for this, sell Christ for that, sell him, sell him.*

122. Sometimes it would run in my thoughts not so little as an hundred times together, *sell him sell him, sell him*: against which, *I* may say, for whole hours together, *I* have been forced to stand as continually leaning and forcing my spirit against it, lest happily before *I* were aware, some wicked thought might arise in my heart that might consent thereto; and sometimes also the temper would make me believe *I* had consented to it, then should *I* be as tortured upon a rack for whole days together.

123. This temptation did put me to such fears lest *I* should at sometimes, *I* say consent thereto, and be overcome therewith, that by the very force of my mind in labouring to gain say and resist this wickedness, my very body would be put into action or motion, by way of pushing or thrusting, still answering, as fast as the destroyer said, *sell him, I will not, I will not, I will not, no, not for thousands, thousands, thousands of worlds*: thus reckoning, lest *I* should in the midst of these assaults, set too low a value of him, even until *I* scarce well knew were *I* was, or how to be composed again.

124. At these seasons he would not let me get my food in quiet, but forsooth, when *I* was set at the table at my meat, *I* must go hence to pray, *I*

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must leave my food now, just now, so counterfeit holy would this devil be. When I was thus tempted, I should say in myself, now I am at meat, let me make an end: No, said he, I must do it now, or I should displease God, and dispise Christ, Wherefore I was much afflicted with these things: and because of the sinfulness of my nature (imagining that these things were impulses from God) I should deny to do it as if I denied God; and then, should I be as guilty, because I did not obey a temptation of the devil, as if I had broken the law of God indeed.

125. But to be brief, one morning as I lie in bed, I was as at other times most fiercely assaulted with this temptation, *to sell and part with Christ*; the wicked suggestion still running in my mind, *Sell him, sell him, sell him, sell him*, as fast as a man could speak; against which also in my mind, as at other times, I answered no, no, not for thousands, thousands, at least twenty times together: but at last, after much striving, until I was almost out of breath, I felt this thought pass through my heart, Let him go if he will! and I thought also, that I felt my heart consent thereto; and where was my love to Christ now?

126. Now was the battle won, and down fell I, as a bird that was shot from the top of a tree, into great guilt and fearful despair: thus getting out of my bed, I went mopping into the field, but God knows, with as heavy a heart as mortal man could bear: where, for the space of two hours, I was like a man bereft of life, and as now past all recovery, and bound over to eternal punishment.

127. And withall, that scripture did seize upon my soul. 'O profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat, sold his birth right; for ye

‘ know that afterwards, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected; for he found no place of repentance, tho’ he sought it carefully with tears.’ Heb. xii. 16, 17.

128. These words were to my soul like fetters of brails to my legs, in the continual sound of which I went for several months together. But about ten or eleven o’clock on that day, as I was walking under a hedge, full of sorrow and guilt, God knows, and bemoaning myself for this hardship, that such a thought should arise within me, suddenly this sentence bolted in upon me, *The blood of Christ remits all guilt*; at this I made a stand in my spirit, with that this word took hold upon me, *The blood of Jesus Christ his Son, cleanseth from all sin*, 1 John i. 7. Now I begin to conceive peace in my soul, and me-thought I saw as if the temptor did fear and steal away from me, as being ashamed of what he had done. At the same time also, I had my sin and the blood of Christ, thus represented to me; that my sin, when compared to the blood of Christ, was no more to it, than this little clod or stone before me is to this vast and wide field that here I see: this gave me good encouragement for the space of two or three hours, to which time also, me-thought I saw by faith, the Son of God as suffering for my sins. But because it tarried not, I sunk again under exceeding guilt.

129. But chiefly by the aforementioned scripture, concerning Esau’s selling of his birth right, for it would lie all day long, yea, all the week, all the year long on my mind, and hold me down, so that I could by no means lift up myself, for when I would strive to turn to this scripture or that for relief still that sentence would be sounding in me; *For ye know, how that afterwards, when he would*

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have inherited the blessing. he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.

130. Some time indeed I should have a touch from that in Luke xxii. 31. *I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not*; but it would not abide upon me; neither could I indeed, when I considered my state, find grounds to conceive in the least, that there should be the least root of grace within me. Now was I torn and rent in a heavy case, for many days together.

131. Then began I with sad and careful heart to consider of the nature and largeness of my sin, and to search in the word of God, if I could in any place clyp a word of promise, or any encouraging sentence by which I might take relief. Wherefore I began to consider that third of Mark, *All manner of sins and blasphemies shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, wherewithsoever they shall blaspheme*. Which place, as I thought did contain a large and glorious promise for the pardon of high offences; but considering the place more fully, I thought it was rather to be understood, as relating more chiefly to those who had in a natural estate committed such things as are there mentioned, but not to me, who had not only received light and mercy, but that hath both after, and also contrary to that, sighted Christ as I had done.

132. I feared therefore that this wicked sin of mine, might be that sin unpardonable, of which he there thus speaketh: *But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness. but is in danger of eternal damnation*, Matth. iii. And I did the rather give credit to this, because of that sentence in the Hebrews. 'For you know how that afterwards, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected; for he found no place

‘ of repentence; tho’ he sought it carefully with
‘ tears,’ for this stuck always with me.

133. And now began I to labour to call again time that was past, wishing a thousand times twice told, that the day was yet to come, when I should be tempted to such a sin; concluding with great indignation, both against my heart, and all assaults how I would rather have been torn in pieces, than have consented thereto: but alas! these thoughts and wishings, and resolvings, were now too late to help me; the thought had possessed my heart, God hath let me go, and I am fallen: O! thought I, *that it was with me as in months past, as in the days when God persecuted me!* Job xxix. 2.

134. Then again, being loth and unwilling to perish, I began to compare my sin with others to see if I could find that any of those that are saved had done as I had done. So I considered David’s adultery and murder; and found them most heinous crimes, and those two committed after light and grace received; but yet by considering, I perceived that his transgressions were only such as were against the law of Moses, from which the Lord Christ could with the consent of his word deliver him: but mine was against Gospel, yea, against the mediator thereof, I had sold my Saviour.

135. Now again, should I be as if racked upon the wheel, when I considered, that besides the guilt that possessed me, I should be so void of grace, so bewitching: what, thought I, must it be no sin, but this? must it needs be the *great transgression*? Psal. xix. 13. Must that wicked one touch my soul? John v. 18. O what stings did I find in all these sentences!

136. What! thought I, is there but one sin that is unpardonable! but one sin that layeth the soul

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without the reach of God's mercy, and must I be guilty of that! is there but one sin amongst so many millions of sins, for which there is no forgiveness and must I commit this! Oh! unhappy man! These things would so break and confound my spirit, that I could not tell what to do, I thought at times they would have broke my wits, and still to aggravate my misery, that would run in my mind. *You know, that afterwards, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected* Oh! none knows the terrors of these days but myself.

137. After this, I came to consider of Peter's sin, which he committed in denying his Master; and indeed this came nighest to mine, of any that I could find, for he had denied his Saviour, as I, after light and mercy received: yea, and that too after warning given him: I also considered, that he did both once and twice, and that after time to consider betwixt. But tho' I put all these circumstances together, that if possible I might find help, yet I considered again, that his was but a *denial of his Master*, but mine was a *selling of my Saviour*. Wherefore I thought with myself, that I came nearer to Judas, than either David or Peter.

138. Here again, my torment would flame out and afflict me; yea, it would grind me, (as it were) to powder, to consider the preservation of God towards others, while I fell into the snare; For thus considering other mens sins, and comparing them with my own, I could evidently see God preserved them notwithstanding their wickedness, and would not let them, as he had let me, become a son of perdition.

139. But O! how hid my soul at this time prize the preservation that God did let about his People? Ah, how safely did I see them walk, whom God

both hedged in, they were within his care, and protection: tho' they were full as bad as I by nature; yet because he loved them, he would not suffer them to fall without the range of mercy: but as for me, I was gone, I had done it. he would not preserve me; nor keep me, but suffered me, because I was a reprobate, to fall as I had done. Now did those blessed places that speak of God's keeping his people, shine like the sun before me, tho' not to comfort me, but to shew me the blessed state and heritage of those whom the Lord had blessed.

140. Then again I began to compare my sin with the sin of Judas, that if possible I might find that mine differed from that which in truth is unpardonable; and, O thought I, if it should be but the breadth of an hair, what a happy condition is my soul in! and by considering I found that Judas did his intentionally but mine was against my strivings, besides his was committed with much deliberation; but mine in a fearful hurry on a sudden. Thus I was tossed to and fro, like the locusts, and driven from trouble to sorrow; hearing always the sound of Esau's fall in mine ears, and of the dreadful consequences thereof.

141. Yet this consideration about Judas his sin, was for a while some little relief unto me: for I saw I had not, as to the circumstances, transgressed so foully as he; but this was quickly gone again, for I thought with myself, there might be more ways than one to commit the unpardonable sin: altho' I, thought that there might be degrees of that, as well as of other transgressions; wherefore, for ought I yet could perceive, this iniquity of mine might be such as might never be passed by.

142. I was often now ashamed that I should be like such an ugly man as Judas; I thought also,

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that I could scarce see a good man, that I believed had a good conscience, but I should feel my heart tremble at him, while I was in his presence. I now saw a glory in walking with God, and what it was to have a good conscience before him.

142. I was much about this time tempted to content myself, by receiving some false opinion, as that there should be no such thing as a day of judgment; that we should not rise again, and that sin was no such grievous thing. The tempter suggesting thus, For if these things should indeed be true, yet to believe otherwise, would yield you ease for the present. If you must perish, never torment yourself so much before hand, drive thoughts of damning out of your mind, by possessing your mind with some such conclusions that Atheists and Ranters use to help themselves with.

144. But when such thoughts have passed thro' my heart, how, as it were with a step, hath death and Judgment been in my view. Methought, the Judge stood at the door, I was as if it was come already: so that such things could have no entertainment: but methinks I see by this, that Satan will use any means to keep the soul from Christ. He loveth not an awakened frame of spirit, security, blindness, darkness, and error, is the very kingdom and habitation of the wicked one.

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

146. Then was I struck into a very great trembling, inasmuch that at sometimes I could for whole days together feel my very body, as well as my mind, to shake and totter under the sense of the dreadful judgment of God, that should fall on those that have sinned that most fearful and unpardonable sin. I felt also such a clogging and heat at my stomach, by reason of this my terror, and it seemed at times that my breast-bone would split asunder. Then I thought of that concerning Justas, *Who by his falling head-long, burst asunder, and all his bowels gushed out, Acts i.*

147. I feared also, that this was the mark that the Lord did set on Cain, even continual fear and trembling under the heavy load of guilt that he had charged on him. or the blood of his brother Abel. Thus did I shrink under the burden that was upon me; which burden did so oppress me, that I could not be at rest or quiet.

148. Yet that saying would sometimes come to mind, *He hath received gifts for the rebellious, Psal. lxxviii. 18. The rebellious!* Why surely, tho't I, they are such as once were under subjection to their prince, even those who after they have sworn subjection to his government, have taken up arms against him.

149. This I sometimes thought on, and should labour to take hold thereof, that some small refreshment might have been conceived by me: but in this also, I missed of my desire.

150. After I had thus considered the sins of the saints in particular, and found mine went beyond them; I began to think thus with myself. Set the case I should put all theirs together, and mine alone against them, might I not then find some encouragement? For if mine, tho' bigger than any one,

yet should be equal to all, then there is hopes : for that blood that hath virtue enough to wash away all theirs, hath virtue enough to do away mine, though it be bigger than all theirs. Here again I should consider the sin of David, of Solomon, of Manasseh, of Peter, and the rest of the great offenders, and should also labour what I might, with fairness to aggravate their sins.

151. I should think with myself that David shed blood to cover his adultery, and that by the sword of the children of Ammon, a work that could not be done but by continuance, deliberate contrivance, which was a great aggravation to his sin. But then this would turn upon me : Ah, but these were but sins against the law, from which there was a Jesus sent to save them, but your's is against the Saviour, and who shall save you from that ?

152. Then I thought on Solomon, and how he sinned, in loving strange women, in falling away to their idols, in building them temples, in doing this after light, in his old age, after great mercy received : but the same conclusion that cut me off in the former consideration cut me off as to this : namely, that all those were but sins against the law, for which God had provided a remedy, but I had sold my Saviour, and there now remained no more sacrifice for sin.

153. I would then add to these men's sins, the sins of Manasseh, how that he built alters for idols in the house of the Lord, he also observed times, used enchantments, had to do with wizards, was a witch, had his familiar spirits, burnt his children in the fire, in sacrifice to devils, and made the streets of Jerusalem run down with the blood of innocents. These, thought I, are great sins, sins of a bloody colour ; but yet it would turn again

upon me, they are none of them of the nature of your's, you have parted with Jesus! you have sold your Saviour!

154. This ~~one~~ consideration would always kill my heart, *My sin was point blank against my Saviour*, and that too, at that height, that I had in my heart said of him, let him go if he will. O! no thought, this sin was bigger than the sins of a whole nation or kingdom, or of the whole world, all of them together was not able to equal mine, which out went them all.

155. Now I should feel my mind to flee from God, as from the face of a dreadful judge: yet this was my torment, I could not escape his hand. (*It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God*, Heb. x.) But blessed be his grace, that scripture in these flying fits would call as running after me. 'I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgressions, and as a cloud thy sins: return unto me for I have redeemed thee,' Isa. xlv. 22. But I could not return, but fled, though at sometimes it cried, 'Return, return,' as if it did follow after me: But I feared to close in therewith, lest it should not come from God, for that other was still sounding in my conscience, 'For you know, how that afterwards, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected, &c.'

156. Once as I was walking in a good man's shop, bemoaning to myself in my sad and doleful state, afflicting myself with abhorrance for this wicked and ungodly thought: lamenting also this hard hap of mine, for that I should commit so great a sin greatly fearing, I should not be pardoned; praying also in my heart, that if this sin of mine did differ from that against the Hol. Ghost the Lord would shew it me:

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And being now ready to sink with fear, suddenly there was, as if there had rushed in at the window, the noise of wind upon me, but very pleasant, and as if I had heard a voice speaking, *Didst thou ever refuse to be justified by the blood of Christ?* And with-
 ail, my whole life of profession past, was in a moment opened unto me, wherein I was made to see, that designedly I had not, so my heart answered groaningly, No. Then fell with power that word of God upon me, *See that ye refuse him not that speaketh*, Heb. xii. 24. What this was I know not: I have not yet in twenty years time, been able to make a judgment of it. I thought then what here I should be loath to speak. But verily that sudden rushing wind, was as if an Angel had come upon me; both it and the salutation, I will leave until the day of judgment, only this I say, it commanded a great calm in my soul; it persuaded me there might be hope; it shewed me as I thought, what the sin unpardonable was, and that my soul had yet the blessed privilege to fly to Jesus Christ for mercy. But, I lay concerning this dispensation, I know not what yet to say unto it, which was also in truth the cause that at first I did not speak of it in the book. I do now also leave it to be thought on by men of sound judgment. I lay not the stress of my salvation thereupon, but upon the Lord Jesus in the promise: yet seeing I am here unfolding of my secret things, I thought it might not be altogether inexpedient to let this also shew itself, though I cannot now relate the matter as there I did experience it. This lasted in the favour of it, for about three or four days, and then I began to mistrust, and to despair again.

157. Wherefore, still my life hung in doubt before me not knowing which way I should tip: only

this, I found my soul desire, even to cast itself at the foot of grace, by prayer and supplication. But, O, it was hard for me to bear the face to pray to this Christ for mercy, against whom I had this most vilely sinned ! yet I knew this must be the way for mercy was no where else.

158. Which when the temper perceived, he strongly suggested to me. That I ought not to pray
 ‘ to God, for prayer was not for any in my case, nei-
 ‘ ther could it do me good, because I had rejected
 ‘ the Mediator, by whom all prayers came with ac-
 ‘ ceptance to God the Father, and without whom,
 ‘ no prayer could come into his presence: where-
 ‘ fore, now to pray, is but to add sin to sin, seeing
 ‘ God hath cast you off is the next way to anger and
 ‘ offend him more than ever you did before.

159. ‘ For God (said he) hath been weary of you
 ‘ for these several years already, because you are
 ‘ none of his: your bawling in his ears hath been
 ‘ no pleasant voice to him and therefore he’ll let you
 ‘ sin this sin; that you might be quite cut off, and
 ‘ will you pray still.” This the devil urged and set
 forth, that in numbers, when Moses said to the chil-
 dren of Israel. ‘ That because they would not go
 ‘ up to possess the land, when God would have
 ‘ them, therefore forever after, he did barr them
 ‘ out from thence, though they prayed they might
 ‘ with tears,’ Numb. xiv. 36, 37, &c.

160. As it is said in another place, Exod. xxi. 14.
*The man that sins presumptuously, shall be taken from
 God’s altar, that he may die :* Even as Joab was by
 king Solomon, when he thought to find shelter
 there, 1 Kings ii 27, 28, &c. These places did
 pinch me very sore, yet my case being desperate, I
 thought with myself, I can but die, and if it must
 be so, it shall once be said, that such a one died at

the foot of christ in prayer, this I did. but, with great difficulty. God doth know: for still that saying about Eſau, would be set at my heart even like a flaming sword. to keep the way of the Tree of Life, lest I should take thereof, and live. O who knows, how hard a thing I found it to come to God in prayer!

161. I did also declare the prayers of the people of God for me, but I feared that God would give them no heart to it; yea, I trembled in my soul to think that some or other of them shortly would tell me, that God had said these words to them, that he once did say to the Prophet, concerning the children of Israel, *Pray not for this people, for I have rejected them*, Jer. xi 14. So, *Pray not for him, for I have rejected him*: Yea I thought, that he had whispered this to some of them already, only they durst not tell me so, neither durst I ask them of it, for fear it should be so, it would make me quite beside myself. *Man knows the beginning of sin* (said Spira *but who bounds the issues thereof?*)

162. About this time, I took an opportunity, to break my mind to an ancient christian; and told him my case. I told him also, that I was afraid that I had sinned the sin against the Holy Ghost; and he told me, he thought so too: Here therefore I had but cold comfort, but talking a little more with him, I found him, tho' a good, man, a stranger to much combat with the Devil. Wherefore, I went to God again, as well as I could for mercy still.

165 Now also did the tempter begin to mock me in my misery, saying, that seeing I had thus parted with the Lord Jesus, and provoked him to displeasure who would have stood between my soul. and the flame of devouring fire; there was now but one way, and that was, to pray that God the Father would

Be the Mediator betwixt his Son and me, that we might be reconciled again, that I might have that blessed benefit in him, that his blessed Saints enjoyed.

164. Then did that scripture seize upon my soul, *He is of one mind, and who can turn him? Oh! I saw it was as easy to persuade him to make a new World, a new Covenant, or new Bible besides that we have already, as to pray for such a thing: this was to persuade him, that what he had done already, was mere folly, and to persuade him to altar, yea, to disanul the whole way of salvation; and then would that saying, rent my soul asunder, Neither is their salvation in any other, for their is none other name under heaven, given amongst men, whereby we must be saved, Acts, iv. 12.*

165. Now the most free, and full, and gracious words of the Gospel, were the greatest torments to me; yea, nothing so afflicted me as the thoughts of Jesus Christ; for the remembrance of a Saviour because I had cast him off, brought both the vilany of my sin, and my loss by it to mind, O! it is sad to be destroyed by the grace and mercy of God; to have the Lamb, the Saviour, turn Lion, and destroyer, Rev. vi. I also trembled, as I have said, at the sight of the saints of God, especially at those that greatly loved him, and that made it their business to walk continually with him in this world: for they did both in their words, their carriages, and all their expressions of tenderness, and fear of sin against the precious Saviour, condemn, lay guilt upon, and also add continual affliction and shame unto my soul. *The dread of them was put upon me, and I trembled at God's Samuels, 1 Sam. xvi. 4.*

166. Now also the tempter began afresh to mock my soul saying, that Christ indeed did pity my case, and was sorry for my loss: but for as much as I had

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finned, and transgressed as I had done, he could by no means help me, nor save me from what I feared; for my sin was not of the nature of theirs, for whom he bled and died, neither was it counted with those that were laid to his charge when he hanged on the tree; therefore, unless he should come down from heaven, and die anew for this sin, tho' indeed he did greatly pity me, yet I could have no benefit of him.

167. But, O how this would add to my affliction, to conceit that I should be guilty of such a sin for which he did not die. These thoughts would so confound me, and imprison me, and tie me up from faith, that I knew not what to do: But, Oh, thought I, that he would come down again! O, that the work of man's redemption was yet to be done by Christ! how would I pray, and intreat him to count and reckon this sin amongst the rest for which he died? but this would strike me down, *Christ being raised from the dead, dieth no more: death hath no more dominion over him, Rom. vi. 9.*

168. Thus by the strange and unusual assaults of the tempter, was my soul like a broken vessel, driven, as with the winds, and tossed sometimes headlong into despair, sometimes upon the covenant of works, and sometimes to wish that the new covenant, and the conditions thereof, might so far as I thought myself concerned, be turned another way, and changed. But in all these, I was but as those that jostle against the rocks, more broken, scattered and rent. Oh, the unthought of imaginations; frights, fears and terrors that are affected by a thorow application of guilt, and yielding to desperation. This is the man that hath his dwelling among the tombs with the dead that is always crying out, and cutting himself with stones, Mark v. 1. 2. 3.

But, I say, all in vain; desperation will not comfort him, the Old covenant will not save him. Nay, heaven and earth shall pass away before one jot or tittle of the word and law of grace shall fail or be removed; this I saw, this I felt, and under this I groaned. Yet this advantage I got thereby: namely, a further confirmation of the certainty of the way of salvation, and the scriptures were the word of God. Oh! I cannot now express what then I saw and felt of the steadiness of Jesus Christ, the rock of man's salvation, what was done could not be undone, added to nor altered; indeed sin might drive the soul beyond Christ, even the sin which is unpardonable, but wo to him that is so driven, for the word would shut him out.

169. Thus was I always sinking, whatever I did think or do. One day I walked to a neighbouring town, and sat down upon a settle in the street, and fell into a deep pause about the most fearful state my sin had brought me to; and after a long musing, I lifted up my head, but me thought I saw as if the sun that shineth in the heavens did grudge to give light, and as if the very stones in the street, and tiles upon the houses did bend themselves against me. O how happy now was every creature over I was! for they stood fast and kept their station, but I was gone and lost.

170. Then breaking out in the bitterness of my soul. I said to myself, with a grievous sigh, *How can God comfort such a wretch as I?* I had no sooner said it, but this returned upon me, as an echo doth answer a voice, *This sin is not unto death*, At which I was as if I had been raised out of a grave, and cried out again; *Lord how couldst thou find out such a word as this?* For I was filled with admiration at the fitness, and also the unexpectedness of the sentence.

171. Now I was in hopes, that my sin was not unpardonable; but that there might be hope for me to obtain forgiveness, but, O how satan now did lay about him, for to bring me down again! but he could by no means do it, neither this day nor the most part of the next; for this good sentence stood like a mill post at my back. Yet towards the evening of the next day, I felt this word begin to leave me, and to withdraw its supportation from me: and so I returned to my old fears again, but with a great deal of grudging and peevishness, for I feared the sorrow of it.

172. But the next day at evening, being under many fears, I went to seek the Lord; and as I prayed, I cried to him in these words, *O Lord, I beseech thee, shew me that thou hast loved me with an everlasting love* Jer. xxxi. 3.

I had no sooner said it, but with sweetness it returned upon me, *I have loved thee with an everlasting love*. Now I went to bed in quiet, also when I awakened the next morning, it was fresh upon my soul.

173. But yet the temper left me not, for it could not be so little as an hundred times, that he that day, did labour to break my peace. O the combats and conflicts that I did then meet with! as I strove to hold by this word, that of Esau would fly in my face like to lightning: I should be sometimes up and down twenty times in an hour. Yet God did bear me up, and keep my heart upon this word, from which I had also for several days together, very much sweetness and comfortable hopes of pardon. For thus it was made out to me, 'I loved thee whilst thou was committing this sin, I loved thee before, I love thee still, and will love thee forever.

174. Yet I saw my sin most barbarous, and a filthy crime, and could not but conclude, and that with great shame and astonishment, that I had horribly abused the holy Son of God, wherefore I felt my soul greatly to love and pity him, and my bowels to yearn towards him; for I saw he was still my friend, and did reward me good for evil: yea, the love and affection that then did burn within, to my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, did work at this time such a strong and hot desire of revengement upon myself for the abuse I had done unto him, that, to speak as then I thought, had I a thousand gallons of blood within my veins, I could freely have spilt it all at the command and feet of this my Lord and Saviour.

175. And as I was thus in musing, and in my studies, how to love the Lord, and to express my love to him, that saving came in upon me. *If thou Lord, shouldst mark iniquity, O Lord, who shouldst stand? But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared,* Psal. cxxx 4. These were good words to me, especially the latter part thereof, viz, that there is forgiveness with the Lord. that he might be feared; that is as then I understood it, that he might be loved, and had reverence: for it was thus made out to me, 'That the great God did set so high an esteem upon the love of his poor creatures, that rather than he would go without their love, he would pardon their transgressions.'

176. And now was that word fulfilled on me, and I was also refreshed by it, *Then shall they be ashamed and confounded and never open their mouth any more, because of their shame, when I am pacified towards thee, for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord.* Zach. xvi. 36. Thus was my soul at this time set at liberty from being afflicted with my former guilt and amazement,

177. But before many weeks were over, I began to dispond again, fearing, lest notwithstanding all that I had enjoyed, yet I might be deceived and destroyed at the last: for this consideration came strong into my mind, That whatever comfort and peace I thought I might have from the word of the promise of life, yet unless there could be found in my refreshment, a concurrence and agreement in the scriptures, let me think what I will thereof, and hold it ever so fast, I should find no such thing at the end, *For the scriptures cannot be broken, John. x. 35.*

178. Now began my heart again to ache and fear, I might meet with disappointment at last. Wherefore, I began with all seriousness to examine my former comfort, and to consider whether one that had sinned as I had done, might with confidence trust upon the faithfulness of God laid down in those words, by which I had been comforted, and on which I had leaned myself; but now was brought those sayings to my mind, 'For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened and have tasted the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come; if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance, Heb. vi.' 'For if we sin wilfully, after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remains no more sacrifice for sin, but a certain fearful looking for of judgement and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries, Heb. x.' 'Even as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birth right; for you know, how that afterwards, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place for repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears, Heb. xii.'

179. Now was the word of the gospel forced from my soul, so that no promise or encouragement was to be found in the Bible for me; And now would that saying work upon my spirit to afflict me, *Rejoice not, O Israel, for joy as other people,* Hosea, ix, i. For I saw indeed there was cause of rejoicing for those that held to Jesus: but as for me, I had cut myself off by my transgressions, and left myself neither foot-hold nor hand-hold amongst all the stays and props in the precious word of life.

180. And truly I did now feel myself sink into a gulf, as an house whose foundation is destroyed. I did liken myself in this condition, unto the case of some child that was fallen into a milk-pit, who though it could make some shift to scrabble and sprawl in the water, yet because it could find no hold, it must die in that condition. So soon as this fresh assault had fastened on my soul, that scripture came into my heart, *This for many days,* Dan. x. 14. And indeed I found it was so; for I could not be delivered nor brought to peace again for near two years and an half. Wherefore, these words, though they tended to discouragement, yet to me who feared this condition would be eternal, they were at times as an help to me.

181. For thought I, *many days* are not for ever; they will have an end; therefore seeing I was to be afflicted, not a few, but *many days*, yet I was glad it was but for *many days*. Thus, I say, I could recall myself sometimes, and give myself a help; for as soon as ever the words came in at first, I knew my trouble would be long.

182. Now, while these scriptures lay before me, and laid sin anew at my door, that saying in the 18th Luke, with others, encouraged me to prayer: then the tempter again laid at me very sore, sug-

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gesting, 'That neither the mercy of God, nor yet the blood of Christ, did at all concern me, nor could they help me, for my sin. Yet thought I, I will pray; but, said the tempter, your sin is unpardonable. But I still continued to pray, and while at prayer, uttered words to this effect, 'Lord, Satan tells me, that neither thy mercy, nor Christ's blood, is sufficient to save my soul: Lord, shall I honour thee most by believing thou wilt and canst, or by believing thou neither wilt nor canst; Lord, I would fain honour thee by believing thou wilt and canst.'

183. And as I was thus before the Lord, that scripture fastened on my heart, *O man, great is thy faith.* Matth. xv. 28. Yet as I was on my knees before God, I was not able to believe this till almost six months after, for I could not think that I had faith, or that there should be a word for me to act faith on; therefore I should still be as sticking in the jaws of desperation, and went mourning up and down in a sad condition.

184. There was nothing that I longed for more than to be put out of doubt as to this thing, and as I was vehemently desiring to know if there was hope, these words came into my mind, 'Will the Lord cast off forever, and will he be favourable no more? is his mercy clean gone forever? Doth his promise fail forever more? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? Hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies?' Psal. lxxvii. 7, 8, 9. And all the while they run in my mind, methought I had this still as the answer: 'tis a question whether he hath or no; it may be he hath not; there was still something upon my mind, which with this text did sweeten my heart, and make me conclude, that his mercy might not be quite gone forever.

GRACE ABOUNDING

115. At another time I remember I was again much under this question, whether the blood of Christ was sufficient to save my soul? In which doubt I continued from morning till night; and at last, when I was quite worn out with fear, lest it should not lay hold on me, these words did sound suddenly within me, *He is able*; but, methought, this word *Able*, was spoken loud unto me; it shewed a great word, and gave such a justice to my fear and doubt, for the time it tarried with me, as I never had in all my life, either before or after that, Heb. vii. 25.

186. But one morning when I was again at prayer, and trembling under the fear of this, that word of God could help me, that piece of a sentence darted in upon me, *My grace is sufficient*. At this methought I felt some stay, as if there might be hopes: but, O, how good a thing is it for God to send his word! for about a fortnight before, I was looking on the very place, and then I thought it could not come near my soul with comfort, and threw down my book in a pet. I tho't it was not large enough for me; but now it was, as if it had arms of grace so wide, that it could not only inclose me, but many more besides.

187. By these words I was sustained, yet not without exceeding conflicts, for the space of seven or eight weeks: for my peace would be in it, and out sometimes twenty times a day? comfort now, and trouble presently; peace now, and before I was full of fear and guilt, not only now and then, but whole seven weeks experience, for *this about the sufficiency of grace*; and that of Esau's parting with his birth-right, would be like a pair of scales within my mind, sometimes one end would be uppermost, and sometimes the other, according to which would be my peace or trouble.

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188. Therefore, I did pray to God, that he would come in with this scripture more fully on my heart, viz. that he would help me to apply the whole sentence: for as yet it only helped me thus far, *My grace is sufficient*; and though it came no farther, it answered my former question, viz. that there was hope; yet because for thee, was left out, I was not contented, but prayed to God for that also: wherefore one day, as I was in a meeting of God's people, full of sadness and terror, for my fears again were strong upon me, and as I was now thinking my soul was never the better, but my case most sad and fearful, these words did with great power suddenly break in upon me me, 'My grace is sufficient for thee, my 'grace is sufficient for thee, my grace is sufficient for 'thee,' three times together: And O! me-thought, that every word was a mighty word unto me; as *my* and *Grace*, and *sufficient*, and *for thee*: they were then, and sometimes are still, far bigger than others be.

189. At which time my understanding was of enlightened, that I was as tho' I had seen the Lord Jesus look down from heaven, thro' the tiles upon me and direct these words unto me; this sent me mourning home, it broke my heart, and filled me full of joy, and laid me as the dust, only it staid not long with me, I mean in this glory and refreshing comfort, yet it continued with me for several weeks, and did encourage me to hope. But so soon as that powerful operation of it was taken off my heart, that other about Esau, returned upon me as before: so my soul did hang as in a pair of scales again, sometimes up, and sometimes down, now in peace, and again in terror.

190. Thus I went on for many weeks, sometimes comforted, and sometimes tormented, and especially at sometimes my torment would be very sore, for

all these scriptures before named in the Hebrews would be set before me, as the only sentences that would keep me out of heaven. Then again I should begin to repent that ever that thought went through me; I should also think thus with myself, why now many scriptures are there against me? there is but three or four, and cannot God miss three, and save me for all them! sometimes again, I should think, if it were not for these three or four words; now, how might I be comforted; and I could hardly forbear at sometimes, to wish them out of the book.

191. Then me-thought I should see as if Peter, Paul, and John, and all the writers did look with scorn upon me; and hold me in derision and as if they said unto me, all our words are truth one of as much force as another; It is not we that have cut you off, but you have cast away yourself; there is none of our sentences that you must take hold upon, but these, and such as these, *It is impossible: there remains no more sacrifice for sin*, Heb. vi. And it had been better for them not to have known the will of God, than after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them, Heb. x. For the scriptures cannot be broken.

192. These are the elders of the city of refuge, I saw, were to be the judges both of my case, and me, while I stood with the avenger of blood at my heels, trembling at their gate for deliverance: also with a thousand fears and mistrusts, that they would shut me out forever, Josh. xx, 3.

193. Thus was I confounded, not knowing what to do, nor how to be satisfied in this question; Whether, the scriptures could agree in the salvation of my soul, I quaked at the Apostles; I knew their words were true, and that they must stand forever.

194. And I remember one day, as I was in diverse frames of spirits, and considering that these frames were still according to the nature of the several scriptures that came in upon my mind; if this of grace, then I was quiet; but if that of Esau, then tormented. 'Lord, thought I, if both these scriptures would meet with my heart at once, I wonder which of them would get the better of me.' So me-thought, I had a longing mind that they might come both together upon me; yea, I desired of God they might.

195. Well, about two or three days after, so they did indeed; they bolted both upon me at a time, and did work and struggle in upon me for a while: at last, that about Esau's birth-right began to wax weak, and withdraw; and this about the sufficiency of grace prevailed with peace and joy. And as I was in a muse about this thing, that scripture came home upon me, *Mercy rejoiceth against judgement*, James ii. 13.

196. This was a wonder to me, yet truly I am apt to think it was of God, for the word of the law and wrath, but give place to the word of life and grace; because, tho' the word of condemnation be glorious, yet the word of life and salvation, doth far exceed in glory, 2 Cor. iii. 8, 9, 10, 11. Also that Moses and Elias must both vanish and leave Christ and his Saints alone.

197. This scripture also, did now most sweetly visit my soul, *And him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out*. O the comfort that I had from this word, in *no ways*: as who should say by no means for nothing whatever he hath done.

198. But notwithstanding all these helps and blessed words of grace, yet that of Esau's selling of his birth-right, would still at times distress my con-

science; for tho' I had been most sweetly comforted, yet when that came into my mind, 'twould make me fear again. I could not be quite rid thereof, 'twould every day be with me; wherefore now I went another way to work, even to consider the nature of this blasphemous thought, I mean, if I should take the words at the largest, and give them their own natural force and scope, even every word therein: so when I had thus considered, I found that if they were fairly taken, they would amount to this, that I had freely left the Lord Jesus Christ to his choice, whether he would be my Saviour or no, for the wicked words were these, let him go if he will; then that scripture gave me hope, *I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee*, Heb. xiii. 5. O Lord, said I, but I have left thee; then it answered again, 'But I will not leave thee:' for this I thank God also.

199. Yet I was grievously afraid he should, and found it exceeding hard to trust him, seeing I had so offended him: I could have been exceeding glad that this thought had never befallen, for then, I thought, I could with more ease and freedom have leaned upon his grace; I see it was with me, as it was with Joseph's brethren, the guilt of their own wickedness, did so often fill them with fears, that their brother would at last despise them, Gen. i. 15.

200. But above all the scriptures that I yet did meet with, that in the twentieth Joshua, was the greatest comfort to me, which speaks of the slayer that was to fly for refuge. 'And if the avenger of blood pursue the slayer, then, saith Moses, they that are the elders of the city of refuge shall not deliver him into his hands; because he smote his neighbor unwittingly, and hated him not aforetime.' O blessed be God for this word! I was convinced, that I

was the slayer ; and that the avenger of blood pursued me. I felt with great terror, only now it remained, that *I enquire*, whether I have right to enter the city of refuge ? so I found that he must not *who lay in wait to shed blood* ; but he who unwittingly, or that did unawares shed blood, even who did not hate his neighbour. before, Wherefore,

201. I thought verily I was the man that must enter, for because I had smitten my neighbour *unwittingly and hated him not afore-time*. I hated him not a fore-time. no, I prayed unto him, was tender of sinning against him ; and against this temptation. I had strove for a twelve month before, yea, and also when it did pass thorough my heart, it did in spite of my teeth : wherefore, I thought I had right to enter the city, and the elders, which are the apostles, were not to deliver me up. This therefore was great comfort to me, and did give me hope.

202. Yet being very critical, for my smart had made me that I knew not what ground was sure enough to bear me. I had one question that my soul did much desire to be resolved about ; and that was, * Whether it be possible for any soul that hath * indeed sinned the unpardonable sin, yet after that * to receive, tho' but the least true spiritual comfort * from God thro' Christ ?" Which after I had much considered, I found the answer was, No, they could not ; and that for these reasons :

203. 1st. Because those that have sinned that sin, they are debarred a share in the blood of Christ, and being shut out of that they must needs be void of the least ground of hope, and so of spiritual comfort, *For such there remains no more sacrifice for sin.* Heb. x. 26. 2^{dly}, Because they are denied a share in the promise of life ; they shall never be forgiven, neither in this world nor in that which

is to come, Matth. xii. 31. 3dly, The Son of God excludes them also from a share in his blessed intercession, being forever ashamed to own them both before his Holy Father, and the blessed Angels in heaven, Mark viii.

204. When I had with much deliberation considered of this matter, and could not but conclude that the Lord had comforted me, and that too, after this my wicked sin : then me thought I durst venture to come nigh unto those most fearful and terrible scriptures with which all this while I had been so greatly affrighted, on which indeed before I durst scarce cast mine eye, (yea, had much ado an hundred times to forbear wishing them out of the Bible, for I thought they would destroy me) but now I say, I began to take some measure of encouragement, to come close to them to read them, and consider them, and to weigh their scope and tendency.

205. The which when I began to do, I found their visage changed ; for they looked not so grimly as before I thought they did : and 1st, I came to the sixth of the Hebrews, yet trembling for fear it should strike me ; which when I had considered I found that the falling there intended, was a falling quite away, that is as I conceived, a falling from, and an absolute denying of the gospel, of remission of sins by Christ, for from thence the Apostle begins his argument, verie 1, 2, 3. 2dly, I found that this falling away must be openly in the view of the world even so as to put Christ to an open shame, 3dly, I found that those he there intendeth, were forever shut up of God, both in blindness, hardness, and impenitency : *It is impossible they should be renewed again unto repentance.* By all these particulars, I found, to God's everlasting praise, my sin was not the sin in this place intended.

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206. Then I considered that in the tenth of the Hebrews, and found that the wilful sin, there mentioned, is not every wilful sin, but that sin which doth throw off Christ, and then his commandments too. 2dly. That must be done openly, before two or three witnesses, to answer that of the law, verie 28. 3dly, This sin cannot be committed but with great despite done to the spirit of grace : despising both the dissuasions from that sin, and the persuasions to the contrary ; but the Lord knows, tho' my sin was devilish, yet it did not amount to these.

207. And as touching that in the twelfth of the Hebrews, about Esau's selling his birth-right, tho' this was that which killed me, and stood like a spear against me ; yet now I did consider, 1st, That his was not a hasty thought against the continual labour of his mind ; but a thought consented to, and put in practice likewise, and that too after some deliberation, Gen. xxv. 2dly, It was a public and open action, even before his brother, if not before many more ; this made his sin of a more heinous nature than otherwise it would have been. 3dly, He continued to slight his birth-right : *He did eat and drink and went his way ; thus Esau despised his birth-right,* Yea, twenty years after, he was found to despise it still. And Esau said, *I have enough, my brother, keep that thou hast to thyself.* Gen. xxxiii. 9.

208 Now, as touching this, *That Esau sought a place of repentance :* This I thought, First, This was not for the birth-right ; but for the Blessing : this is clear from the Apostle, and is distinguished by Esau himself, ' He hath taken away my birth right, (that is formerly) and now he hath taken away my blessing also,' Gen. xxviii. 36. Secondly, now this being thus considered, I came again to the Apostle, to see what might be the mind of God in a new

Testament stile and sense concerning Esau's sin : and so far as I could conceive this was the mind of God, the birth-right signified Regeneration, and the Blessing, the eternal inheritance; for the Apostle seems to hint, ' Lest there be any profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birth-right ;' as if he should say, lest there be any person among you that shall cast off all those blessed beginnings of God that at present are upon him, in order to a new birth, lest they become an Esau, even be rejected afterwards, when they would inherit the blessing.

209. For many there are, who in the day of grace and mercy, despise those things which are the birth-right to heaven, yet, when the deciding day appears, will cry as loud as Esau, *Lord, Lord, open to us ;* but then as Isaac would not repent, no more will God the Father, but will say, *I have blessed these, yea, and they shall be blessed,* but as for you, *Depart, you are workers of iniquity.* Gen. xxvii. 32. Luke xiii. 25, 26, 27.

210. When I had considered these scriptures, and found that to understand them, was not against, but according to other scriptures ; this still added further to my encouragement and comfort, and also gave a great blow to that objection, to wit, ' That the scriptures could not agree in the salvation of my soul.' And now remained only the hinder part of the tempest. for the thunder was gone beyond me, only some drops did still remain, but now and then would fall on me : but because my former frights and anguish were very long and deep, therefore it did oft befall me still, as it befalleth to those that have been scared with fire. I thought every voice was *fire, fire* ; every touch would hurt my tender conscience.

211. But one day as I was passing in the field, and that too with some dashes on my conscience, fearing lest all was not right, suddenly this sentence fell upon my soul, *Thy righteousness is in heaven* : and, me thought withal, I saw with the eyes of my soul, Jesus Christ at God's right hand : there, I say, was my righteousness : so that wherever I was, or whatever I was doing, God could not say, *He wants my righteousness*, for that was just before him. I also saw, moreover, that it was not my good frame of heart that made my righteousness better, nor yet my bad frame that made my righteousness worse : for my righteousness was Jesus Christ himself. *The same, yesterday, to day, and for-ever*, Heb. xiii. 8.

212. Now did my chains fall off my legs, indeed I was loosed from my afflictions and irons, my temptations also fled away : so that from that time, those dreadful scriptures of God left off to trouble me ; now went I also home rejoicing, for the grace and love of God. So when I came home, I looked to see if I could find that sentence, *Thy righteousness is in heaven* ; but could not find such a saying, wherefore my heart began to sink again, only that was brought to my remembrance, 1 Cor. xiii. ' He ' was made unto us of God, wisdom, righteousness, ' satisfaction, and redemption : ' by this word I saw the other sentence true.

213. For by this scripture, I saw the Man Christ Jesus, as he is distinct from us, as touching his bodily presence, so he is our righteousness and sanctification before God through Christ ; O me thought Christ, Christ ! there was nothing but Christ that was before my eyes : I was not only for looking upon this and the other benefit of Christ a-part, as of his blood, burial, or resurrection, but considered him a whole Christ ; as he in whom all these and

all other virtues, relations offices, and operations met together, and that on the right hand of God in heaven.

214. Twas glorious to me, to see his exaltation, and the worth and prevalency of all his benefits, and that because of this : Now I could look from myself to him, and should reckon, that all those graces of God, that now were green on me, were yet but like those crackt goats, and four pence-half-pennies that rich men carry in their purses, when their gold is in their trunks at home : O, I saw my gold was in my trunk at home ! in Christ my Lord and Saviour ! Now Christ was All, all my wisdom, all my righteousness, all my sanctification, and all my redemption.

215. Further, the Lord did also lead me into the mystery of union with his Son of God. that I was joined to him, that I was flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bone, and now was that a sweet word to me, in Eph. v. 30. By this also, was my faith in him, as my righteousness, the more confirmed to me ; for if he and I were one, then this righteousness was mine, his merits mine, his victory also mine. Now could I see myself in heaven and earth at once : in heaven by Christ, by my head, by my righteousness and life, tho' on earth by my body and person.

216. Now I saw Christ Jesus was looked on of God, and should also be looked upon by us at that common or public person, in whom all the whole body of his elect are always to be considered and reckoned, that we fulfilled the law by him, died by him, rose from the dead by him, got the victory over sin, death, the devil, and hell by him : when he died, we died, and so of his resurrection : *The dead men shall live together, with my dead body shall they arise*, saith he, Isa. xxvi. And again, *After two*

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days he will revive us, and the third day we shall live in his sight, Hosea vi. 2. Which is now fulfilled by the sitting down of the Son of man on the right hand of his Majesty in the heavens according to that to the Ephesians, 'He hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.' Eph ii. 6.

217. Ah! these blessed considerations and scriptures, with many other of the like nature, where in those days made no spangle in mine eyes; 'Praise ye the Lord God in his Sanctuary, praise him in the firmament of his power, praise him for his mighty acts, praise him according to his excellent greatness.' Psal. cl. 1. 2.

218. Having thus in a few words given you a taste of the sorrow and affliction that my soul went under by the guilt and terror that this my wicked thought did lay me under; and having given you also a touch of my deliverance therefrom; and of the sweet and blessed comfort that I met with afterwards, (which comfort dwelt about a twelve-month with my heart, to my unspeakable admiration.) I will now (God willing) before I proceed any further, give you in 3 word or two, what as I conceive was the cause of this temptation; and also after that, what advantage at the last it became unto my soul.

219. For the causes I conceived they were principally two; of which two also, I was deeply convinced all the time this trouble lay upon me. The first was, for that I did not, when I was delivered from the temptation that went before, still pray to God to keep me from the temptations that were to come: for tho', as I can say in truth, my soul was much in prayer before this trial seized upon me. Yet then I prayed only, or at the most principally,

for the removal of present troubles, and for fresh discoveries of love in Christ: which I saw afterwards was not enough to do; I also should have prayed, that the grace of God would keep me from the evil that was to come.

220. Of this I was made deeply sensible by the prayer of holy David, who when he was under present mercy, yet prayed that God would hold him back from sin and temptation to come: *For then shall he, shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression.* Psal. xix. 83. By this very word was I grieved and condemned, quite through this long temptation.

221. That also was another word that did much condemn me for my folly, in the neglect of this duty, Heb. iv. 16. 'Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need'; this I had not done, and therefore was thus suffered to sin and fall, according to what is written, *Pray that you enter not into temptation*: and truly this very thing is to this day of such weight and awe upon me, that I dare not, when I come before the Lord, go off my knees, until I entreat him for help and mercy against the temptations that are to come; and I do beseech thee, reader, that thou learn to beware of my negligence, by the afflictions that for this thing I did for days, and months, and years, with sorrow undergo.

222. Another cause of this temptation was, that I had tempted God; and on this manner did I do it: upon a time my wife was great with child, and before her full time was come, her pangs as if a woman in travel were fierce and strong upon her, even as if she would immediately have fallen into labour, and been delivered of an untimely birth:

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Now at this very time it was, that I had been so strongly tempted to question the being of God, wherefore as my wife lay crying by me, I said, but with all secrecy imaginable, even thinking in my heart, 'Lord, if thou wilt now remove this sad affliction from my wife, and cause that she be no more troubled therewith this night, (now were her pangs just upon her) then I shall know that thou canst discern the most secret thought of the heart.'

223. I had no sooner said it in my heart, but her pangs were taken from her, and she was cast into a deep sleep, and so she continued till morning, at this I greatly marveled, not knowing what to think, but after I had been awake a good while, and heard her cry no more, I fell to sleep also: so when I waked in the morning, it came upon me again, even what I had said in my heart the last night, and how the Lord had shewed me, that he knew my secret thoughts, which was a great astonishment to me for several weeks after.

224. About a year and an half afterwards, that wicked thought, of which I have spoken before, went through my sinful heart; even this thought, *Let Christ go if he will*, so when I was fallen under guilt for this, the remembrance of my other thought and of the effect thereof, would also come upon me with this retort, which also carried rebuke with it, "Now you may see that God doth know the most secret thoughts of the heart."

225. And with this, that of the passages that were betwixt the Lord and his servant Gideon; fell upon my spirit; how because that Gideon tempted God with his fleece both wet and dry, when he would have believed and ventured on his word, therefore the Lord did afterwards so try him, as to send him against an innumerable company of e-

mies : and that too as to outward appearance, without strength or help, Jud. lv. 7. Thus he observed me, and that justly, for I should have believed his word, and not have put an if upon the allyingness of God.

226. And now to shew you something of the advantages I also have gained by this temptation, and 1st, By this I was made continually to possess in my soul, a very wonderful sense both of the being and glory of God, and of his beloved Son : in the temptation before, my soul was perplexed with Atheism, but now this case was otherwise, now was God and Christ continually before my face, though not in a way of comfort, but in a way of exceeding dread and terror. The glory of the holiness of God did at this time break me to pieces, and the bowels and compassion of Christ did break me to on the wheel ; for I could not consider him but as a lost and rejected Christ, the remembrance of which was as the continual breaking of my bones.

227. The scriptures also were wonderful things unto me ; I saw that the truth and verity of them were the keys of the kingdom of heaven : those the scriptures favour, they must inherit bliss, but those they oppose and condemn, must perish for evermore : O this word, *For the scriptures cannot be broken*, would rend the caul of my heart ! and so would that other. ' Whose sins ye remit, they are remitted ; but whose sins ye retain, they are retained.' Now I saw the Apostles to be the elders of the city of refuge, Josh. xx. 4. those that they were to receive in, were received to life ; but those that they shut out, were to be slain by the avenger of blood.

228. Oh, one sentence of the scripture did more afflict and terrify my mind, I mean those sentences

that stood against me (sometimes I thought they every one did) more, ~~many~~, than an army of forty thousand men that might have come against me. Wo be to him against whom the scriptures bend themselves.

229. By this temptation I was made to see more into the nature of the promises, than ever I was before; for I lying now trembling under the mighty hand of God, continually torn and rent by the thundering of his justice; this made me with careful heart, and watchful eye, with great fearfulness, to turn over every leaf, and with much diligence mixt with trembling to consider every sentence, together with its natural force and fortitude.

230. By this temptation also, I was greatly holden of my former foolish practice, of putting by the word of promise when it came into my mind, for now, thought I could not suck that comfort and sweetness from the promise as I had done at other times, yet like to a man a sinking, I should catch at all I saw: formerly I thought I might not meddle with the promise, unless I felt its comfort, but now it was no time thus to do, the avenger of blood too hardly did pursue me.

231. Now therefore, I was glad to catch at the word, which yet I feared I had no ground nor right to own, and even to leap into the bosom of that promise, that yet I feared did shut its heart against me. Now also I should labour to take the word as God hath laid it down without retaining the natural force of one syllable thereof; O what did I now see in that blessed sixth of John, *And him that comes to me, I will in no wise cast out!* John vi. 37. Now I began to consider with myself that God had a bigger mouth to speak with, than I had a heart to

conceive with ; I thought with myself, that he spake not his words in haste, or in an unadvised heart, but with infinite wisdom and judgment, and in every truth, and faithfulness, 2 Sam. iii. 28.

232. I should in these days, often in my greatest agonies, even flounce towards the promise (as the horses do towards sound ground, that yet stick in the mire) concluding on this, I will resist and stay, and leave the fulfilling of it to the God of heaven that made it. O ! many a pull hath my heart had with Satan, for that blessed 6th of John : I did now, as at other times, look principally for comfort (tho', O how welcome would it have been unto me !) Bus now a word, a word to lean a weary soul upon, that I might not sink forever.

233. Yea, often when I have been making to the promise, I have seen, as if the Lord would refuse my soul for ever : Then I thought of Esther, who went to petition the King contrary to the law, Esther iv. 16. I thought also of Benhadad's servants, who went with ropes upon their heads to their enemies for mercy, 1 Kings, xx. 31, &c. The women of Canaan also, that would not be daunted, though called a dog by Christ, Matt. xv. 22, &c. And the man that went to borrow bread at midnight, Luke i. 5, 6, 7, 8, &c. Were great encouragements unto me.

234. I never saw those heights and depths in grace, and love, and mercy, as I saw after this temptation : great sins to draw out great grace ; and where guilt is most terrible and fierce, there the mercy of God in Christ, when shewed to the soul, appears most high and mighty ; when Job had passed thro' his captivity, *He had twice as much as he had before*, Job. xiii. 10. Blessed be God for Jesus Christ

our Lord. Many other things I might here make observation of, but I would be brief, and therefore shall at this time omit them; and pray God that my harms may make others fear to offend, lest they should be made to bear the iron yoke as I did.

I had two or three times, at or about my deliverance from this temptation, such strange apprehensions of the grace of God, that I could hardly bear up under it; it was so out of measure amazing, when I thought it could reach me, that I think, if that sense of it had abode long upon me, it would have made me incapable for business.

235. Now I shall go forward to give you a relation of other of the Lord's dealings with me, of his dealings with me at other sundry seasons, and of the temptations I then did meet with. I shall begin with what I met with when I first joined in fellowship with the people of God in Bedford. After I had propounded to the Church, that my desire was to walk in the order and ordinance of Christ with them, and was also admitted by them while I thought of that blessed ordinance of Christ which was his last supper with his Disciples before his death, that scripture, *Do this in remembrance of me*, Luke xxii. 19, was made a very precious word to me. But behold, I had not been long a partaker at that ordinance, but such sad temptations did attend me at all times, both to blaspheme the ordinance, and so wish some deadly thing to those that then did eat thereof; that least I should at any time be guilty of consenting to these wicked and fearful thoughts, I was forced to bend myself all the while to pray to God to keep me from such blasphemies; and also to cry to God to bless the bread and cup to them, as it went from mouth to mouth. The reason

of this temptation, I have since thought. was, because I did not with reverence partake thereof.

236. Thus I continued for a time, and could not be at rest; but at last the Lord came in upon my soul with that same scripture, by which my soul was visited before: and after that, I have been usually very well and comfortable in the partaking of that blessed ordinance, and have, I trust, therein discerned the Lord's body as broken for my sins, and that his precious blood has been shed for my transgressions.

237. Upon a time, I was somewhat inclined to a consumption, wherewith about the spring, I was suddenly and violently seized, with much weakness in my outward man; insomuch that I thought I could not live. Now began I afresh to give myself up to a serious examination after my state and condition for the future, and of my evidences for that blessed world to come. For it hath, I bless the name of God, been my usual course, as always so especially in the day of affliction, to endeavour to keep my interest in life to come, clear before me.

238. But I had no sooner begun to recall to mind my former experience, of the goodness of God to my soul, but there came flocking into my mind an innumerable company of my sins and transgressions, amongst which these were at this time most to my affliction, namely, my deadness, dulness and coldness in holy duties, my wanderings of heart, my want of love to God, his ways, and people, with this at the end of all, 'Are these the fruits of christianity, are these the tokens of a blessed man?'

239. At the apprehension of these things, my sickness was doubled upon me, my soul was clogged with guilt; and all my former experience of God's goodness to me, was quite taken out of my mind,

and hid, as if it had never been nor seen: now was my soul greatly pinched between these two considerations, *Live I must not, Die I dare not.* Now I sunk and fell into my spirit, and was giving up all for lost; but while in this woeful state, that word of God took hold of my heart, 'Ye are justified freely by his grace, thro' the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.' Rom. iii. 24.

240. Now was I as one-awakened out of some troublesome sleep and dream, and listening to this heavenly sentence, I was as if I heard it thus expressed to me—'Sinner, thou thinkest that because of thy sins and infirmities, I cannot save thy soul; but behold my son is by me, and upon him I look, and not on thee, and will deal with thee according as I am pleased with him.' At this I was greatly lighted in my mind, and made to understand that God could justify a sinner at any time; it was but looking upon Christ, and imputing his benefits to us, and the work was forthwith done.

241. And as I was thus in a muse, that scripture came with great power upon my spirit, 'Not by works of righteousness that we have done, but according to his mercy he hath saved us,' &c. 2 Tim. i. 9. Tit. iii. 5. Now I saw myself within the arms of grace and mercy; and though I was before afraid to think of a dying hour, yet now I cried, Let me die: No, death was lovely and beautiful in my sight; for I saw, *We shall never live indeed, till we be gone to the other world.* O methought this life is but a slumber in comparison of that above.

242. Again, as I was at another time very ill and weak, and all that time also, the tempter did beset me strongly, labouring to hide from me my former experience of God's goodness, setting before me the terrors of death, and the judgment of God; in-

so much, that at this time, thro' my fear of miscarrying forever (should I now die) I was one dead before death came, and did as if I had felt myself already descending into the pit: but just as I was in the midst of those fears, these words of the Angels carrying Lazarus into Abraham's bosom, darted in upon me, as who should say, *So it shall be with thee when thou dost leave this world.* This did sweetly revive my spirit, and help me to hope in God; which, when I had with comfort mused on a while, that word fell with great weight upon my mind, *O death! where is thy sting? O grave! where is thy victory?* 1 Cor. xv. 55. At this I became both well in body and mind at once, for my sickness did presently vanish, and I walked comfortably in my work for God again.

243. At another time, though just before I was pretty well in my spirit, yet suddenly there fell upon me a great cloud of darkness, which did so hide from me the things of God and Christ, that I was as if I had never seen or known them in my life; I was also so over-run in my soul with a senseless frame of spirit, that I could not feel my soul to move and stir after grace and life by Christ. I was as if my loins were broken, or as if my hands and feet had been tied, or bound with chains. At this time also, I felt some weakness to seize upon my outward man, which made still the other affliction the more heavy and uncomfortable.

244. After I had been in this condition three or four days, as I was sitting by the fire, I suddenly felt this word to sound in my heart, *I must go to Jesus*: at this my former darkness and Atheism fled away, and the blessed things of heaven were set within my view; while I was on this sudden thus overtaken with surprise; wife, said I, is there ever

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such a scripture, *I must go to Jesus?* She said she could not tell, Therefore I sat musing still to see if I could remember such a place. I had not sat above two or three minutes, but that scripture came in upon me, *And to an innumerable company of Angels;* and withall, Hebrews the twelfth about the Mount Sion was set before mine eyes, Heb. xii. 22, 23, 24.

245, Then with joy I told my wife, *O now I know! I know!* But that night was a good night to me, I never had but few better; I longed for the company of some of God's people, that I might have imparted unto them what God had shewed me; Christ was a precious Christ to my soul that night, I could scarce lie in my bed for joy, and peace, and triumph thro' Christ; this great glory did not continge upon me until morning, yet the word of the author to the Hebrews was a blessed scripture to me for many days together.

246, The words are these, "You are come to Mount Sion to the city of the living God, to the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of Angels, to the general assembly and church of the first born, which are written in heaven, to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new Testament, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things than that of Abel." This blessed sentence, the Lord led me over and over, first to this word and then to that, and shewed me wonderful glory in every one of them. These words also have oft since this time been great refreshment to my spirit. Blessed be God for having mercy on me,

*A Brief Account of the Author's Call to the
Work of the Ministry.*

247. **A**ND now I am speaking my experience, I will in this place thrust in a word or two concerning my preaching the word, and of God's dealing with me in that particular: for after I had been about five or six years awakened and helped to see both the worth and want of Jesus Christ our Lord, and enabled to venture my soul upon him: some of the most able among the Saints with us, I say the most able for judgment, and holiness of life, as they conceived, did perceive that God had counted me worthy to understand something of his will in his holy and blessed word. and had given me utterance in some measure to express what I saw, to others for edification; they desired me with much earnestness, that I would sometimes speak a word of exhortation unto them.

248. The which, tho' at first it did much abash my spirit, yet being still by them intreated, I consented to their request, and did twice, at two several assemblies (in private) discover my gift amongst them: at which they not only seemed to be, but did solemnly protest, they were both affected and comforted; and gave thanks to the father of mercies for the grace bestowed on me.

249. After this, sometimes when some of them went into the country to teach, they would that I should go with them; where, tho' as yet I did not make use of my gift in an open way, yet more privately still, as I came amongst the good people in those places, I did sometimes speak a word of admonition unto them also: the which they, as the

other received with rejoicing at the mercy of God, to me ward, professing their souls were edified thereby.

250. Wherefore to be brief, at last, being still desired by the church, after some solemn prayer to the Lord, with fasting, I was more particularly called forth, and appointed to a more ordinary and public preaching the word, not only to and among them that believed, but also to offer the Gospel to those that had not yet received the faith thereof. About which time I did evidently find in my mind a secret pricking forward thereto: Tho' I bless God, not for desire of vain glory, for at that time I was most sorely afflicted with the fiery darts of the devil concerning my eternal state.

251. But yet could not be content, unless I was found in the exercise of my gift, unto which also I was greatly animated, not only by the continual desires of the godly, but also by that saying of Paul to the Corinthians. 'I beseech you brethren, (ye know the household Stephanas, that is the first fruits of Achaia, and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints) that you submit yourselves unto such, and to every one that helpeth with us, and laboureth.' 1 Cor. xvi. 15, 16.

252. By this text I was made to see that the Holy Ghost never intended that men who have gifts and abilities, should bury them in the earth, but rather did command and stir up such to the exercise of their gift, and also did commend those that were apt and ready so to do. *They have addicted themselves to the ministry of the Saints*: This scripture in these days did continually run in my mind to encourage me in this my work for God; I have been also encouraged from several other scriptures and examples of the godly, both specified in the word

and other ancient histories. Acts viii. 4, and xviii. 24, 25, &c. 1 Pet. iv. 10. Rom. xii. 6.

253. Wherefore, tho' of myself of all the saints the most unworthy, yet I did set upon the work, and did according to my gift, and the proportion of my faith, preach that blessed gospel that God had shewed me in the holy word of truth: which when the country understood, they came in to hear the word by hundreds, and from all parts.

254. And I thank God, he gave unto me some measure of bowels, and pity for their souls, which also did put me forward to labour with great diligence and earnestness to find out such a word as might lay hold of, and awaken the conscience; for I had not preached long, before some began to be touched, and greatly afflicted in their mind, at the apprehension of the greatness of their sin, and of their need of Jesus Christ.

255. But I at first could not believe that God should speak by me to the heart of any man, still counting myself unworthy, yet those who thus were touched, would love me, and have a peculiar respect for me; and tho' I did put it from me that they should be awakened by me, still they would confess it, and affirm it before the saints of God; they would also bless God for me (unworthy wretch that I am!) and count me God's instrument that shewed to them the way of salvation.

256. Wherefore seeing them in both their words and deeds to be so constant, and also in their hearts so earnestly pressing after the knowledge of Jesus Christ, rejoicing that ever God did send me where they were: then I began to conclude it might be so, that God had owned in his work such a foolish one as I; and then came that word of God to my heart with much sweet refreshment, 'The blessing

‘ of them that were ready to perish is come upon me ; yea, I caused the widow’s heart to sing for joy.’ Job xxix. 13.

257. At this therefore I rejoiced, yea, the tears of those whom God did awaken by my preaching, would be both solace and encouragement to me : for I thought on those sayings, *Who is he that maketh me glad, but the same that is made ferry by me ?* 2 Cor. ii. 2. And again, *Though I be not an apostle to others, yet doubtless I am unto you, for the seal of my apostleship are ye in the Lord,* 1 Cor. ix. 2. These things therefore was as another argument unto me, that God hath called me to, and stood by me in this work.

258. In my preaching of the word, I took special notice of this one thing, namely, That the Lord did lead me to begin where his word begins with sinners, that is, to condemn all flesh, and to open and alledge that the curse of God by the law doth belong to, and lay hold on all men as they come into the world, because of sin. Now this part of my work I fulfilled with great sense, for the terrors of the law and guilt for my transgressions, lay heavy on me. I preached what I felt, even that under which my poor soul did groan and tremble to astonishment.

259. Indeed, I have been as one sent to them from the dead ; I went myself in chains to preach to them in chains, and carried that fire in my own conscience, that I persuaded them to beware of. I can truly say, and that without dissembling, that when I have been to preach, I have gone full of guilt and terror even to the pulpit door, and there it hath been taken off, and I have been at liberty in my mind until I had done my work ; and then immediately, even before I could get down the

pulpit-stairs, have been as bad as I was before: Yet God carried me on, but surely with a strong hand; for neither guilt nor hell could take me off my work.

260. Thus I went for the space of two years, crying out against men's sins, and their fearful state because of them. After which, the Lord came in upon my own soul with some peace and comfort through Christ; for he gave me many discoveries of his blessed grace through him; therefore I did much labour to hold forth Jesus Christ in all his offices, relations and benefits unto the world, and did strive also to discover, to condemn and remove those false supports and props on which the world doth both lean, and by them fall and perish.

261. After this, God led me into something of the mystery of union with Christ; and that I shewed to them also. And when I had travelled thro' these three chief points of the word of God about the space of five years, I was caught in my present practice, and cast into prison, where I have lain above as long again to confirm the truth by way of suffering, as I was before in testifying of it, according to the scripture, in a way of preaching.

262. When I have been in preaching, I thank God, my heart hath often with great earnestness cried to God, that he would make the word effectual to the salvation of the soul: still being grieved, lest the enemy should take the word away from the conscience, and also it should become unfruitful.

263. Also when I had done the exercise, it hath gone to my heart to think the word should now fall as rain on stony places; still wishing from my heart, that they who have heard me speak this day, did but see as I do, what sin, death, hell, and the curse of God is: and also what the grace, and love, and

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mercy of God is, through Christ, to men in ~~such~~ ^{such} case as they are, who are yet estranged from him: and indeed, I did often say in my heart before the Lord, *That if to be hanged up presently before their eyes, would be a means to awaken them, and confirm them in the truth, I gladly should be contented.*

264. For I have been in my preaching, especially when I have been engaged in the doctrine of life by Christ, without works, as if an angel of God had stood by at my back to encourage me: It hath been with such power and heavenly evidence upon my own soul, while I have been labouring to unfold it, that I could not be contented with saying, *I believe, and am sure: methought I was more than sure: that those things which I asserted, were true.*

265. When I went first to preach the word abroad, the doctors and priests of the country did open wide against me; but I was persuaded of this, not to render railing for railing, but to see how many of their carnal professors I should convince of their miserable state by the law, and of the want and worth of Christ: for thought I, *This shall answer for me in time to come, when they shall be for my hire before their face.* Gen. xxx. 33.

266. I never cared to meddle with things that were controverted and in dispute amongst the saints, especially things of the lowest nature; yet it pleased me much to contend with great earnestness for the word of faith, and the remission of sins by the death and sufferings of Jesus; but, as to other things, I should let them alone, because I saw they engendered strife, and because that they neither in doing, nor in leaving undone, did commend us to God to be his: besides, I saw my work before me did run in another channel, even to carry an awakening word; to that therefore did I stick and adhere.

267. I never endeavoured to, nor durst make use of other mens lines, Rom. xv, 18. (though I condemn not all that do) for I verily thought, and found by experience, that what was taught me by the word and spirit of Christ, could be spoken, maintained and stood to, by the soundest and best established conscience: and though I will not now speak all that I know in this matter, yet my experience hath more interest in that text of scripture, Gal. i. 11, 12, than many amongst men are aware.

268. If any of those who were awakened by my ministry, did, after that fall back, I can truly say, their souls hath been more to me, than if one of my own children, begotten of my body, had been going to its grave: I think I may speak it without any offence to the Lord, nothing hath gone so near that, unless it was the fear of the salvation of my soul: I have counted as if I had goodly buildings, and Lordships in those places, where my children were born: my heart hath been so wrapt up in the glory of this excellent work, that I counted myself more blessed and honoured of God by this, than if he had made me the emperor of the Christian world; or the Lord of all the glory of the earth without it: O these words, "He that converteth a sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death," Jam. i. 20. The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls, is wise, Prov. xi. 30. They that be wise, shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever, Dan. xii. 3. 'For what is our hope, our joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not ye ever in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For ye are our glory and joy,' 1 Thess. ii. 19, 20. These, with many others of like nature, have been great refreshment unto me.

269. I have observed, that where I have had a work to do for God, I have had first as if it were the going of God upon my spirit to desire I might preach there, I have also observed, that such and such souls in particular, have been strongly set upon my heart, and I stirred up to wish for their salvation. And that these very souls have after this been given in as the fruits of my ministry.

270. I have also observed this, that where there hath been a work to do upon sinners, there the devil hath been to roar in their hearts, and by the mouths of his servants. Yea, oftentimes when the wicked world hath raged most, there hath been souls awakened by the word: I could instance particulars but I forbear.

271. My great desire in fulfilling my ministry, was to get into the darkest places of the country, even amongst those people that were furthest off of profession: yet not because I could not endure the light (for I feared not to shew my gospel to any) but because I found my spirit did lean most after awakening and converting work, and the word that I carried, did lean itself most that way; "Yea, to have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation." Rom. xv. 20.

272. In my preaching, I have really been in pain, and have, as it were, travelled to bring forth children to God. I could not be satisfied unless some fruits did appear in my work: if I were fruitless, it mattered not who commended me; but if I were fruitful, I cared not who did condemn. I have thought of that. Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord; and the fruit of the womb is his reward. As arrows in the hand of a mighty man: so are children of the youth. Happy is the man that hath

filled his quiver full of them: they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate, *Psal. cxxvii. 3, 4, 5.*

273. It pleased me nothing to see people drink in opinions, if they seemed ignorant of Jesus Christ, and the worth of their salvation, sound conviction for sin, especially for unbelief, and an heart set on fire to be saved by Christ, with strong breathings after truly sanctified soul; these were the souls I counted blessed.

274. But in this work, as in all others, I had my temptations attending me, and that of divers kinds: as sometimes I should be assaulted with great discouragement therein, fearing that I should not be able to speak a word at all to edification; nay, that I should not be able to speak sense to the people.

275. But I thank the Lord, I have, as Sampson, bowed myself with all my might to condemn sin and transgression wherever I found it: yea, though therein also I did bring guilt upon my own conscience: *Let me die*, thought I, *with the Philistines*, Judges xvi. 29, 30. rather than deal corruptly with the blessed Word of God: *Thou that teachest another, teachest thou not thyself?* It is far better that thou do judge thyself, even by preaching plainly unto others, than that thou, to save thyself, imprison the truth in unrighteousness: blessed be God for his help also in this.

276. I saw therefore, that he that hath gifts, had need of a sight of the nature of them, that they come short of making him to be in a truly saved condition, lest he rest in them, and so fall short of the grace of God.

277. Let all men, therefore, prize a little with the fear of the Lord: gifts indeed are desirable, but yet grace and small gifts, are better than great gifts and no grace.

A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF
THE AUTHOR'S IMPRISONMENT.

279. **H**AVING made profession of the glorious gospel of Christ a long time, and had preached the same about five years; I was apprehended at a meeting of good people in the country, (amongst whom, had they let me alone, I should have preached that day, but they took me away from amongst them) and had me before a justice; who, after I had offered security for my appearing at the next sessions, yet committed me, because my sureties would not consent to be bound that I should preach no more to the people.

279. At the sessions after I was indicted for an upholder and maintainer of unlawful assemblies and conventicles, and for not conforming to the national worship of the church of England; after some conference there with the justices, *was sentenced to perpetual banishment, because I refused to conform.* Being again delivered up to the gaoler's hands, I was had back to prison, and there have lain now complete twelve years waiting to see what God will suffer these men to do with me.

280. In which condition I have continued with much content through grace, but have met with many turnings and goings upon my heart, both from the Lord, satan, and my own corruptions; by all which I have also received much conviction, instruction, and understanding, of which at large I shall not here discourse; only, give you in a hint or two, a word that may stir up the godly to bless God, and to pray for me; and also to take encouragement, should the case be their own, *Not to fear what men can do unto them.*

281. I never had in my life, so great an inlet into the word of God as now ; them scriptures that I saw nothing in before, are made in this place and state to shine upon me ; Jesus Christ also was never more apparent to me than now. O that word, *We have not preached unto you cunningly devised fables.* 2 Peter i. 16, and that, *God raised Christ from the dead, and gave him glory, that your faith and hope might be in God,* 1 Peter i. 20, were blessed words unto me in this my imprisoned condition.

282. These three or four scriptures also have been great refreshment, in this condition, to me ; John xiv. 1, 2, 3, 4. John xvi. 33. Col. iii. 2, 4. Heb. xii. 22, 23, 24. I have had sweet sights of the forgiveness of my sins in this place, and of my being with Jesus in another world : " O the mount Zion, the heavenly Jerusalem, the innumerable company of angels, and God the judge of all, and the spirits of just men made perfect, and Jesus," have been sweet unto me in this place. I have seen that here, that I am persuaded I shall never, while in this world, be able to express : I have seen a truth in that scripture, " Whom, having not seen, yet love, in whom, tho' now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unpeakable, and full of glory," 1 Pet. i. 8.

283. Before I came to prison, I saw what was coming, and had especially two considerations warm upon my heart ; the first was, how to be able to endure, should my imprisonment be long and tedious. The second was, how to be able to encounter death, should that be here my portion. For the first of these, that scripture, Col. i. 11. was great information to me, namely, to pray to God " to be strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long suffering with joyfulness,

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I could seldom go to prayer before I was imprisoned, but for not so little as a year together, this sentence or sweet petition, would, as it were, thrust itself into my mind, and persuaded me, that if ever I would go through long suffering, I must have all patience, especially if I would endure it joyfully.

284. As to the second consideration, that saying (2 Cor. i. 9.) was of great use unto me. "But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we might not trust in ourselves, but in God that raiseth the dead." By this scripture I was made to see, that if ever I would suffer rightly, I must first pass a sentence of death upon every thing that can properly be called a thing of this life, even to reckon myself, my wife, my children, my health, my enjoyments, and all, as dead to me, and myself as dead to them.

285. The parting with my wife and poor children, hath often been to me in this place, as the pulling the flesh from my bones; and that not only because I am somewhat too fond of these great mercies, but because I should have often brought to my mind, the many hardships, miseries and wants that my poor family was like to meet with should I be taken from them; *especially my poor blind child*, who lay nearer my heart than all I had besides; O the thoughts of the hardship I thought this child might undergo, would break my heart to pieces.

286. Poor child! what sorrow art thou like to have for thy portion in this world? But yet recalling myself, thought I, I must venture you all with God, though it goeth to the quick to leave you: O, I saw this condition, I was as a man who was pulling down his house upon the head of his wife and children; yet, thought I, I must do it: and now I thought of thee: two milk-kine the-

were to carry the ark of God into another country, and to leave their calves behind them,' 1 Sam. vi. 10. 11. 12.

287. But that which helped me in this temptation, was divers considerations; of which three in special here I will name; the first was, the consideration of those two scriptures, 'Leave thy fatherless children. I will preserve them alive, and let thy widows trust in me:' and again, 'The Lord said, Verily it shall go well with thy remnant; verily, I will cause the enemy to entreat thee well in the time of evil,' &c: Jer. xlix. 31. chap. xv. 11.

288. I had also this consideration, that if I should now venture all for God, I engaged God to take care of my concernments; but if I forsook him and his ways, for fear of any trouble that should come to me or mine, then I should not only falsify my profession, but should count also that my concernments were not so sure, if left at God's feet, whilst I stood to and for his name, as they would be if they were under my own tuition, tho' with the denial of the way of God.

289. I had also another consideration, and that was, the dread of torments of hell, which I was sure they must partake of, that for fear of the cross, do shrink from their profession of Christ, his Word and laws, before the sons of men: and of the glory that he has prepared for those that in faith and love, and patience stood to his ways before them.

290. I will tell you of a pretty business: I was once above all the rest in a very sad and low condition for many weeks, at which time also, I being but a young prisoner and not acquainted with the laws, I had this lying much upon my spirit, That my imprisonment might end at the gallows for ought that I could tell; now therefore satan laid hard at me to beat me out of heart, by suggesting thus un-

to me ; but how, if when you come indeed to die, you should be in this condition ; that is, not to favour the things of God, nor to have an evidence upon your soul for a better state hereafter? (for, indeed, at that time, all the things of God were hid from my soul.)

291. Wherefore, when I at first began to think of this, it was a great trouble to me ; for I thought with myself, that in the condition I now was in, I was not fit to die, neither indeed did I think I could, if I should be called to it : besides, I thought with myself, if I should make a scrambling shift to clamber up the ladder, yet I should either with quaking, or other symptoms of fainting, give occasion to the enemy to reproach the way of God and his people, for their timorousness.

292. I was also at this time, so really possessed with the thoughts of death, that oft I was as if on a ladder with the rope about my neck : only this was some encouragement to me, I thought I might now have an opportunity to speak my last words to a multitude, which I thought would come to see me die ; and, thought I, if it must be so, if God will but convert one soul by my last words, I shall not count my life thrown away, nor lost.

293. But yet all the things of God were kept out of my sight, and still the tempter followed me with, “ But whither must you go when you die ? what will become of you ? where will you be found in another world ? what evidence have you for heaven and glory, and an inheritance among them that are sanctified ? ” Thus was I tossed for many weeks, and knew not what to do ; at last this consideration fell with weight upon me, “ That it was for the word and way of God that I was in this condition, ” wherefore I was engaged not to flinch from it.

294. I thought also, that God might choose whe-

ther he would give me comfort now, or at the hour of death; but I might not therefore choole whether I would hold my profession or not. I was bound, but he was free; yea, it was my duty to stand to his word, whether he would ever look upon me, or save me at the last: wherefore, thought I, the point is this, I am for going on and venturing my eternal fate with Christ whether I have comfort here or no; if God doth not come in, ~~then~~ I, "I will leap off the ladder even blindfold into eternity, sink or swim, come heaven, come hell: Lord Jesus, if thou wilt catch me do, I will venture for thy name."

295. I was no sooner fixed upon this resolution, but that word dropt upon me, 'Doth Job serve God for nought? as if the accuser had said, Lord, 'Job is no upright man, for he serves thee by respects; hast thou not made an hedge about him? &c. but put forth now thine hand, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face.' How now, thought I, is this the sign of an upright soul, to desire to serve God when all is taken from him? Is he a Godly man that will serve God for nothing rather than give out? Blessed be God! then I hope I have an upright heart, for I am resolved (God giving me strength) never to ~~deny~~ my profession, though I have nothing at all for ~~my~~ pains: and as I was thus considering, that scripture was set before me, Psalm xliv. 12. &c.

296. Now was my heart full of comfort, for I hoped it was sincere: I would not have been without this trial for much. I am comforted every time I think of it, and I hope I shall bless God forever, for the teaching I have had by it. Many more of the dealings of God towards me I might relate, but *these out of the spoils won in battles have I dedicated to maintain the house of God, 1 Chronicles 26, 27.*

THE CONCLUSION.

1. **O**F all the temptations that ever I met with in my life, to question the being and truth of the Gospel, is the worst, and worst to be borne; when this temptation comes, it takes away my girdle from me, and removeth the foundation from under me: O I have often thought of that word, *Have your loins girt about with truth*; and of that, *When the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?* Sometimes, when after sin committed, have looked for sore chastisement from the hand of God, the very next that I felt from him, hath been the discovery of his grace. Sometimes when I have been comforted, I have called myself a fool for my so thinking under trouble. And then again, when I have been cast down, I thought I was not wise to give such way to comfort. With such strength and weight have both these been upon me.

2. I have wondered how much at this one thing, that though God doth visit my soul with never so blessed a discovery of himself, yet I have found again, that such hours have attended me afterwards, that I have been in my spirit so filled with darkness, that I could not so much as once conceive what that God and that comfort was, with which I have been refreshed.

3. I have sometimes seen more in a line of the Bible, than I could well tell how to stand under, and yet at another time the whole Bible hath been to me as dry as a stick; or rather my heart hath been so dead and dry unto it, that I could not conceive the least dram of refreshment, though I have looked it all over.

4. Of all tears, they are best that are made by the blood of Christ, and of all joy, that is the sweetest, that is mixed with mourning over Christ: Oh! 'tis a goodly thing to be on our knees with Christ in our arms, before God, I hope I know something of these things.

5. I find, to this day, seven abominations in my heart: 1. Inclinations to unbelief. 2. Suddenly to forget the love and mercy that Christ manifesteth. 3. A leaning to the works of the law. 4. Wandering and coldness in prayer. 5. To forget to watch for that I pray for. 6. Apt to murmur because I have no more, and yet ready to abuse what I have. 7. I can do none of those things which God commands me, for my corruptions will thrust in themselves; *when I would do good, evil is present with me.*

6. These things I continually see and feel, and am afflicted and oppressed with; yet the wisdom of God doth order them for my good: 1. They make me abhor myself. 2. They keep me from trusting my heart. 3. They convince me of the insufficiency of all inherent righteousness. 4. They shew me the necessity of fleeing to Jesus. 5. They press me to pray unto God. 6. They shew me the need I have to watch and be sober. 7. And provoke me to pray unto God through Christ to help me, and carry me through this world. *Amen.*

F I N I S.