

The Religious Intelligencer.

AN EVANGELICAL FAMILY NEWSPAPER FOR NEW BRUNSWICK AND NOVA SCOTIA.

JOSEPH McLEOD,

"THAT GOD IN ALL THINGS MAY BE GLORIFIED THROUGH JESUS CHRIST." Peter.

[Editor and Proprietor.]

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SAINT JOHN, NEW BRUNSWICK, FRIDAY, JUNE 21, 1867.

Whole No. 701.

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The Intelligencer.

THE AUTHENTICITY AND INSPIRATION OF THE BIBLE.

A SERMON BY DR. E. O. HAYEN, PRESIDENT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN. (Concluded.)

A deliverer was promised; a Messiah was expected; and just when "the sceptre departed from Judah," Jesus appeared.

Read the life of Jesus—astonishing fact. A new star appears in the heavens of history—the sun of this grand solar system of thought and moral power in which we live! Before him, by his yet invisible influence order was slowly arising out of chaos—the Spirit, all unknown to man, was hovering over the waters; but on the fourth grand prophet day of the world's history the sun shone out amid the darkness, and the moon, Christ's church, at first almost invisible, appeared amid the clouds. Often have both been eclipsed since by the angry storm and the awful stillness of the thick darkness of corruption; but the sun has still shone, and the moon has waxed larger, until now it is half full, and ere long there will be none to dispute their brightness and their beauty.

The authenticity of the Bible is a grand fact, confirmed, like all of the grand facts which God would impress upon the human intellect and heart, by numerous and almost innumerable parallel and independent attestations—no one perfect alone, but altogether exerting an accumulated power that defies a healthy contradiction. How know you that the earth is round, and that it sails majestically about the sun? Not by any one fact alone; but several facts agree in confirming this hypothesis, so that no man who understands them can possibly doubt the conclusion. How know you that the maturity and development of man's powers by education is an advantage? In the same way. So also you prove the advantages of civilization, the superiority of right to wrong. No one argument alone proves its authenticity; a thousand combine this power. Some of them are feeble, alone, like the single strand of the mighty cable, the single stones of the great pyramid, the single fibres of the majestic tree, the particle forces of the earth and the sun and stars.

There is the antecedent probability that God would give men a revelation, which he has not done, if the Holy Scriptures do not embrace it; there is the confirmation of its history by ten thousand times ten thousand bonds of connection with current history and laws; there is the grand plan of the Bible, its unity concentrating about Christ its central Sun, a doctrine and a history worthy of God, and that could not have been invented by man; there is its earnest advocacy of right, which man needs, and condemnation of wrong which man needs; there is its strange and wonderfully fulfilled prophecies; there is its sublime doctrines of immortality, regeneration, heaven and hell; there is its wondrous power over man; there is its singular exemption from the puerilities and follies of ancient and modern peoples; that so constantly developing science does not contradict any of its plain and positive teachings; and there is the grand practical truth that the better man is, the more pure and noble and manly, the more he admires it, and the more he finds in it inestimable treasures and clear evidence of the handwriting of God.

But if it be authentic it must be inspired. It must have proceeded from God.

But what do we mean by inspiration? Do we mean that every passage in the Holy Scriptures was dictated from the lips of the Holy One, in the exact words which we have, and is precisely true in all proper senses, or in some one sense more easily entertained? Were the human writers thereof merely writers, and God the real author of every word?

There are some who maintain this, and the arguments for their doctrine are not easily overthrown. It should be remembered that God's great written revelation was by slow degrees, and at long intervals, given to man. It should be studied in its own light. It should not be forgotten that God accommodated his instructions to the people, and to the age often, in which they were given, and that many of the earlier revelations are absorbed into or superseded by the later revelations.

There was a glory that in a sense has "passed away," by reason of the greater glory that remaineth. It should be remembered that, acting through the human mind, inspiration uses a finite instrument necessarily imperfect, and employs language, metaphor, parable, and other illustrations, necessarily indefinite, and that will and must be construed differently by different persons. It should be remembered that, much of it being history, which served only as a sort of scaffolding for the truth, it is not the history itself that we should study, so much as the truth supported and developed in the history. It should be remembered that many of its laws, usages, and ceremonies, were temporary, and were only a pedagogy or "schoolmaster," to lead to Christ.

Wherefore the wisest critics and most devout men of culture and piety recognize different degrees of inspiration. There are words that are diamonds shining in the dark, and from which the light of God is never absent; may, like stars, glow with their own divine brilliancy; there are others, like comets that once glowed, but have been followed by other and later fuel.

By the inspiration of the Bible, I mean that there is not a chapter in it which God did not give to accomplish its own good end, in his economy; but there are passages in it outgrown by later and broader truth. On account of the hardness of their hearts the ancient peoples who received the Bible, including the very men who wrote the ancient Scriptures, were allowed to live in violation of some of the holiest principles of rectitude, which they did not understand; and to them were given laws that were not intrinsically good, and many of their best thoughts and expressions have been eclipsed by the brighter light of the perfect day of Christ.

That was a noble argument of Bishop Butler, by which he demonstrated the reasonableness of the great doctrines of Christianity, by showing that the inherent difficulties of the Bible doctrines are paralleled by equally great and inherent difficulties in nature. The argument is capable of expansion, and perhaps has never been completely developed.

The Bible is perfectly parallel with nature. Both have the same author. Each bears the im-

press of the same hand. Both volumes are written in the same style. By nature, we mean that part of the universe revealed to our finite minds in the little inconsiderable corner of the universe, and by the Bible, that Book of God, written for us in this small planet. In other departments of the grand universe, nature may reveal some other laws, and a Bible for immortals there may be written in another style. Here, nature has certain laws, or certain modes of operating, and God binds himself by them in his workings. So human nature has its laws, and God accommodates himself to them in his supernatural revelations. The consequence is, in both, certain results that to weak minds at first seem to be imperfections, but are only necessary accommodations. In nature there are superfluities, wastes, defects, repetition, obstructions, experiments, failures; and out of all, promise of a grand, sublime, perfect totality of success. Is any mountain, river, lake, or ocean absolutely perfect in itself? Is any insect absolutely perfect? Does not every little contemptible finite creature imagine that he could have made a better world in some respects than this one, or at least suggested some improvements, if he had been consulted on the day before "the beginning," when God created the heaven and the earth? And yet, if his taste had been consulted, and he had omitted some dismal cave, left out some wild desert, prevented some tornado, excluded some pestilence-creating miasma, dropped out of the plan rattlesnakes and vermin, would he have made a better world? Might not that little improvement have destroyed the physical balance of things, and unhinged the machinery of the universe? So, too, could this little critic, like a frog swollen with self-conceit, have been consulted, he would have made what he thinks would be a better Bible! He would have dropped all those hard stories of crime and folly. Abraham should not have been afraid of the Egyptians, and resorted to something like a falsehood. Jacob should not have been a deceiver. David should not have fallen. Solomon should not have loved strange women, and made use, therefore, of some strange expressions. Paul should not have written some things "hard to be understood"; and the Apocalypse of John should have been as lucid as the multiplication table! And the Bible, in such a case, would have been a great failure as a world without its rough places and unfindable mysteries.

No, friends, it does not become you and me to criticize God's works in this temper—either natural or spiritual. Actually we do not know enough. We might as well confess our incapacity here. We were not made to create worlds, or write Bibles. We can only study them after they are made, and we find many hard places in both. They abound in rocks, and caverns, and strange developments; but, thank God! both are infinite in wisdom. They are both sublime, inconceivable, immeasurable embodiments of God's wisdom, power, and love. The most lamentable sight under the heavens is to see the students of the one contending against the students of the other. Neither alone, can be well understood. They are complements of each other. They are the two grand hemispheres of God's perfect globe of his infinite wisdom.

With one practical thought I close this condensed, and necessarily imperfect, discussion. As a man cannot profitably study nature without a reverent spirit—reverent to truth, reverent to science, willing to accept its teachings, depending not so much on his own previous notions as upon its actual unfoldings, and either yielding his prejudices under the power of new facts, so man cannot properly and profitably study the Bible without a reverent spirit—reverent to truth, reverent to piety, reverent to God. You must begin with prayer, and end with prayer or praise. You cannot comprehend repentance, without repentance; you cannot understand regeneration, without regeneration; you cannot cognize the sublime principle of faith, without faith. You must be willing and obedient. You must be loyal to God. You must forsake sin, and strive to hate sin, till you do hate sin. You must choose righteousness, and strive to love righteousness and pray to love righteousness, till you do love righteousness. Man does not comprehend the Bible with his earthly understanding, with his cold intellectual reason alone; but with his conscience, and with his heart. Beginning thus with the only proper first step, entering through the narrow wicket gate of penitence, and pressing forward in the pilgrim's journey, and consulting the roll for your practical good, you will ere long reach the Delectable Hills, and the varied results of your pilgrimage, and the occasional glimpses through the telescope of faith at the beautiful land over the river, will so refresh your spirit that mysteries will only develop your piety and strengthen your confidence and love; and like other, the noblest men that have ever lived, you will praise God for his Bible, and when you go down into the shadow of death, fear no evil, for this rod and this staff shall be your unfailing support.

MOTIVE TO CHRISTIAN ACTIVITY.

Zinzendorf owed much of his religious fervor to the casual sight of a picture of the Crucifixion, with this simple inscription at the bottom: "All this for thee, how much for me!" We may take it to ourselves. What has the dear Saviour done for us? What is he doing now? Oh! He "became poor" for us—how poor! "that we, through his poverty might be made rich," how rich! His friendship for us has been written in his blood, and sealed by His death. We profess to feel this; we own it. We declare that He is "all in all," to us.

"Thou art the great completion of my soul, The best fulfillment of my deepest need."

But the best expression of this is the prayer of the converted Saul of Tarsus: "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Devotion turns drudgery into delight. At a banquet given to Zinzendorf, when in this country, he said, "I would rather starve than rely for myself or my family on the help of others; but for my country's sake I would not be ashamed to beg from door to door." If we have anything of a right spirit we understand what this feeling is with respect to Christ's cause.

And this feeling ought to be intense. With Christ by the mouth of David, we ought to be able to say, "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up." Oh, to serve such a friend, and in such a work as giving the precious Gospel to the world! The angels would delight in it. Were it permitted them to do it, they would bring gold from the mines, and gems from the shore, and pearls from the ocean, with which to purchase the Scriptures, and then fly with the precious gift to the ends of the earth, and stand, their golden wings folded on

their shoulders, at the door of every human habitation. The beseeching appeal of Xavier, as he lay on his couch, just previous to setting out from Rome upon his mission to the East, was: "Yet more, O my God! yet more!" Can we rest satisfied with anything short of Christ's complete enthronement as God over all? We admire the spirit of a noble leader of the Crusaders, who offered a crown upon having conducted his followers to the confines of the Holy City. "No!" said he, "I will not wear a crown of honor, where my Master wore one of shame!"

God forbid that we should accept of ease, or honor, or anything but toil till Christ has His crown of universal dominion!

"I ask no heaven till all be Thine! No glory-crown while work of mine Remains here! Till earth shall shine Amid the stars."

Her sins wiped out, her captives free, Her voice a music unto Thee, For crown new work give thou to me." —Westleyan.

THE DEVIL DEFEATED.

Where? In Providence, R. I. How? I will tell you. Years ago there lived a man known as Wm. T. Osman. This man was a Christian of the Methodist persuasion, earnest, active, aggressive. But misfortune overtook and overwhelmed him. He lost his property, he lost his health and the sight of both his eyes. Then debts accumulated, and garments were worn out. Then hunger gnawed, and creditors were clamorous, and friends failed, and work could not be found. Then he grew desperate, prayer was restrained, and God and man were cursed.

Then, in that hour and power of darkness, the tempter came with much subtlety to beguile. "Go into the liquor business," said he, "and I will give thee what foxes have, and the Son of man had not." "Yea, lord," said Mr. Osman, and with the word went to work. A locality was selected, a saloon built, a bar erected and through the press the great attractions of "The Metropolitan Music Hall, No. 11 Worcester St.," were proclaimed in city and town, and throngs assembled nightly. They came from the city and from the country around to drink, to dance, to sing, to gamble, to swear and carouse.

"Then," as Luther would say, "the devil shouted and all the night stars of hell sang for joy." One thousand five hundred customers of a night, and four thousand yearly. What a business. But God was not asleep, neither was he talking, or on a journey; he was only moving in mysterious ways his wonders to perform, and when the time had come, he spoke to Mr. Osman by telegraph, saying, "Your sister is dying; haste if you would see her alive." And the man hastened from his bar to the town and to the house in which his sister lived. But he was too late to find her alive, and too late to receive a message which God bade that dying, godly sister to leave for her wicked brother.

But this did not suffice, and soon, by a much-loved son, God spoke to this man's heart the second time. "My country calls. She wants me in her navy. Say that I may go, father." "I cannot, my son, I want you here." "I know you want me here, and that is precisely why I would go. Father, must I be brought up in a bar-room?"

"Jo," said the father, and the son went, but that was not the last of it. All these customers were "somebody's sons," and God made this man's heart feel how he was damning them and himself day by day.

Then again, by the young men of the Christian Association, God spoke to this man the third time, and he was thoroughly maddened. "Better shut up your saloon," said they.

"I shall open it to-morrow morning, and go on driving spikes into the coffins of my customers," said he, and was as good as his word.

Then to him came his cruel master and stirred his mind to invention. In the papers new advertisements were imported, and every excitement and every excuse was dragged forth to muffle conscience, until one Saturday night, Mr. Osman announced that upon the next Thursday evening all the past should be eclipsed by a grand ball, and went to bed resolved when Thursday evening should come, to drink himself to drunkenness, and to keep himself in that state until God's Spirit in him should cease his strivings.

But God's Spirit did not wait for Thursday night. Instantly he commenced the battle, engaging the man with such energy of conviction and sore condemnation, that the darkness was death, and the night hell to him. Sleep he could not. There was but one thing he could do, and that he would not, and so the man with his Maker wrestled all night long, and passed by, and four of the morning hours had come and gone, and then he said, "This strife is too hard for me, Lord, I yield. Henceforth my saloon shall be conducted according to thy will, and I will serve thee."

This day Mr. Osman was in his congregation. My subject for the day was the "Joy unspeakable and full of glory" of believers. I saw that he knew it all and was amazed.

Afterward, at a meeting of the young men, he told how God had wrought in him to will, and the effect was of a rushing, mighty wind. I never saw or felt hearts so shaken. As if God were passing by, all heads were bowed. As if the day of Pentecost had returned, all eyes were eloquent with grateful, glowing joy. For an instant silence reigned, for all tongues were dumb. Then someone broke out, "All hail the power of Jesus' name," and O, how we sang!

From the meeting Mr. Osman went to his saloon, mounted the platform, and having obtained audience, confessed everything. Then gathering his astonished customers around him, he bowed himself in their midst, and poured out his soul in such a prayer of confession, contrition and consecration, as such a man, after such experience, could conceive.

As if winged angels were the swift messengers, intelligence of what had occurred flew through the city. All Providence knew it next morning, and many and conflicting were men's opinions. It is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous to us, said souls who were watching. "It is another of his tricks to get customers," said those who had been slumbering and sleeping.

Meantime Thursday night drew on and there was a "Grand ball" in "The Metropolitan," but it was Dr. Leavitt that opened it. And there was spirit in Mr. Osman, but it was the Holy Spirit.

And the past was indeed eclipsed, for the ball was a prayer and conference meeting, and the hall and all hearts were full.

Since then Mr. Osman has been such a power for God as I think the lower strata of society in Providence have never felt. His saloon has become a chapel where throngs assemble to hear the story of his redemption, which he tells with a simplicity and power that none can gainsay and few resist. Already many of his old customers have become his companions in the new life, and others are so awakened that Mr. Osman is sometimes called up at night to pray with men who are struggling as he was on that Saturday night. His wife has also been converted, and being thus agreed, the two are walking to heaven together.

And so it is come to pass not only that Satan has lost and God has gained a man in Providence, but grace has gained a monument, young men have learned that even Satan's high towers, though they appear strong, are nevertheless weak, while in the dark places of the city so full of the habits of cruelty, light is springing up. This is the way the devil has been defeated in Providence the past winter.—Boston Recorder.

MODERN PERSECUTION.

We read in the Book of Martyrs of the persecution of God's saints in centuries past by heathen and Papal hordes, scarcely aware that our own times have furnished instances of equally fierce persecution and heroic endurance. The island of Madagascar has been the scene of some of the severest trials of the faith of Christians, of which Rev. W. Ellis has given truthful and thrilling accounts in his publications. A sketch of what they have endured is given in a late number of the *Evangelical Christendom*, from which we make an extract.

Previous to the reign of Radama, who was assassinated in 1863, the Christian Church of Madagascar had for five-and-twenty years suffered the extremities of persecution. Large numbers of the converts had been put to death by the spear, or by being hurled over a terrific precipice which is the Tropic of Cancer of Antananarivo, or had been doomed to exile in chains, a fate which in many instances must have been a slow and agonizing form of death. "I brought home with me"—we quote from Mr. Ellis—"some of the fetters fixed on the bodies of the Christians. The ring round the neck is composed of a rugged piece of iron, six inches in diameter, passed through an aperture at the end of a heavy bar of iron, nearly three feet long. The ring was bent around the neck of the Christian, and fastened by a large rivet. Two other rings, somewhat less ponderous, were fixed in the same way, one on each ankle, the weight of the whole being more than fifty-six pounds. Loaded with these fetters, the Christians were sent away to distant parts of the country, where the fever prevailed, in order that the pains of the fever might be added to the torture of their fetters, and that the gradual approach of death might be rendered more physically agonizing to themselves, and more appalling to others. One party of them went to Ambohibahazo, a hundred miles distant to the east; another party were sent to the north-east, to Ambatondrazaka, in the country of the Antsianaka; another to the west, on the borders of the Sakalava country; and more were sent to the south. The irons were put up separately on each individual; but the Christians were fettered together, like felon gangs, of five or seven, or more; and thus chained they were sent to distant parts to die. The irons were never to be removed. When death released a victim—and many of them died before the first twelve months were passed—the soldiers in charge of them ruthlessly cut off the head, and slipped the ring over the neck of the corpse, and then cut off the feet, and slipped off the ring from the ankles, leaving the corpse either to be devoured by dogs and birds of prey, or buried by some attendant or friend. But this cutting off the head and feet was a kindness, for sometimes, when one of them died, there was no one to separate the dead from the living."

Amid horrors like these, which continued to prevail with more or less intensity for a quarter of a century, the native Church of Madagascar, instead of falling into decay, struck root downwards, and bore fruit upwards. The Protestant missionaries, who, when the era of persecution commenced, abandoned Madagascar, had impressed upon the Christians one general principle—that of being regulated in all respects by the Word of God. Upon this rule they had acted, and when, after twenty-five years of devotion and gloom, they again welcomed the missionaries, they had not fallen into heresy, and had worked out for themselves a simple and admirable Church organization. The latest statistics show that the number of Christians is about 19,000, with 4,374 communicants. They are united in seventy-nine churches, under the spiritual care of seven English missionaries, and ninety-five native pastors and teachers.—*American Exchange*.

MAN'S INFLUENCE ON FUTURE GENERATIONS.

What an illustrious power is that by which the labor of one man influences after ages! It is true to say that men leave foot-prints on the sands of time. Foot-prints? They do vastly more than that, for they make or mar the generations that follow them. How many hearts have been offered up on the altar of ambition because Napoleon lived! How many have sunk into the less of sensuality because Byron sang! How many have been won to goodness by the eloquence of Howard's life! A man's light words of to-day might fix the destiny of many who never heard the speaker's name; and it is impossible, therefore, to overstate the importance of the conversion of one soul to Christ, or the continuance of one heart in sin, for in both cases a series of influences is started whose vibrations reach to the farthest land and to the latest time. An old Puritan doctor wrote a book more than two hundred years ago, called "The Bruised Reed," a book which fell into the hands of Richard Baxter, and led his penitent spirit to trust in Christ. Baxter was like a giant in his ministry, and when he died, his "Call to the unconverted" went preaching on to multitudes who had never seen him, till it led Philip Doddridge to devote the summer of his life to God. Doddridge's "Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul" fell into the hands of Wilberforce, and Wilberforce's "Practical View of Christianity," cleared the faith and cheered the zeal of a clergyman in the sunny South—of England—who wrote the "Simple Annals of a Methodist Girl," which have borne fruits of blessing in every quarter of the globe, for who has not heard of Leigh Richmond and his "Daughter's Daughter?"

"Now, we would ask, what is the moral of all this? Why, that there is no one who need live in vain; that though their sphere may be the humblest, yet there is some brother-man whom they can reach and rescue; and that for the poorest there is a vast field of toil, and a weighty recompense of honor. If they cannot wield the influence which commands, they can exert the influence which blesses; and while those who have been merely gifted die out of remembrance like flaring street lamps when the morning dawns, their life of goodness should be as the name of the woman who anointed the Saviour's feet, a fragrant memory both for earth and for heaven."—*Telegraph*.

THE INDIAN THUG.

A Thug at Meerut, who had murdered more than one traveller, was captured under circumstances which made it vain for him to deny that he was a devotee of the goddess Kali. He was brought into the place heavily ironed, and thrown into a cell to await the arrival of the district judge. Weeks passed, and the wild and fearful-looking being seemed quite forgotten by all but the warder, who took him in his daily allowance of rice and water. But God did not forget him. His eye, which sees every one of us, pierced into the gloom of that dungeon, and looked with pity on the poor deluded man. God could raise him up a friend, although he seemed of all men most friendless.

A missionary was passing one day through the place and heard about this wretched man. Being anxious never to lose an opportunity of doing good, he at once sought him out and visited him. He found him a blind but sincere worshipper of the wife of Seva the destroyer, who is supposed to delight in offerings of human blood. The good man spoke to him at once of that of which his own heart was full, the love of Jesus, and with such softening influence, that the man at last lay at his feet eagerly drinking in all he heard. Kind words awakened kind echoes, and the message of Gospel love, now for the first time poured into the ears of this wretched man, was like the dawning of a new day, and the Good Spirit which draws to God began to work as heaven in his dark soul.

The missionary could remain only two or three days, in which he talked and read and prayed with him and pointed him to the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world. Before he left, finding he could read, he gave him a New Testament in his own native tongue. Weeks again passed, and the judge arrived, the court was set, the witnesses were ready, and the prisoner was brought in. But his very outward appearance was quite changed. The softening influence of true religion had proved stronger than all punishment and restraint. His savage wildness had disappeared, and was succeeded by a mild aspect and manner. God's work was being made manifest; God's Spirit had wrought the change.

"No need of those," exclaimed the prisoner, pointing to the witnesses, "I am ready to avow the crimes of my dreadful life." He then proceeded to declare that, having been brought up among Thugs, he had fully believed that by the shedding of the blood of each victim he had not only pleased the dreadful goddess, but procured her favor for himself; and he recounted murder after murder in which he had been engaged, some of them attended with such cruelty that those present, who had begun to feel some pity for him, again shrank back, the judge himself lifting up his hands and exclaiming, "How could you be guilty of enormities like these?"

The only reply the poor man made to the judge, was to place his hand in the bosom of his linen vest to take forth a little book; then, holding it up in his hand, he said: "Had I but received this book sooner, the book of Jesus, my Saviour and my God, I should not have done it."—*Missionary News*.

SPIRITUAL FOOD.

Two friends living in the country met together at the village church, a little way from their dwelling.

"What is the use of going to church so often," said the younger to his companion, "since we always hear nearly the same thing?"

"What is the use," replied the other, "of taking your meals so regularly every day, since they are composed of nearly the same dishes?"

"The cases are very different. I must eat to nourish my body which would otherwise perish," "Not so different as you suppose; for what food is to the body, the exercises of worship are to the soul; and spiritual life will languish if we cease to support it by the means which God has graciously given us."

"But, how happens it," said the younger, "that all men have not the same relish for these exercises as they have for their food?"

"You are mistaken again," replied his friend; "all men, it is true, receive their food with pleasure when they are in health; but when they are sick, food becomes not merely tasteless, but disgusting. It is the same with the soul; that is, in health, while it has peace with God through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus our Lord, then it desires the exercises of religion; it enjoys them, and cannot consent to omit them. It is sick when it is hardened in sin, it has then no appetite for spiritual food; it avoids opportunities for receiving it. The sanctification of the Sabbath is unpleasant. The resemblance goes further still; for, as sickness of the body, if not cured by medicine, ends in death, so also the corruption of the soul—ends, unless God heals it, in spiritual and eternal death; that is, in the exclusion of the soul from the presence of God."—*American Paper*.

Why am I thus?—Who would have thought three weeks ago, when I was so rejoicing in the Lord," said a deeply exercised Christian in the presence of two Christian friends with whom he was wont to hold sweet counsel and communion, "who would have thought that I should so soon be as I am to-day?" "Who would not," replied one of his friends, whom experience had taught to speak a word in season to this case, "who would not, but a fool like you that trusted in his own heart?"

From most men this would have been an insult; but spoken in love by a sympathizing fellow-Christian, it was "an excellent oil that did not break his head." It was the very word he needed; the cloud of despondency passed instantly away, and the light of God's countenance again shone full on the humble, believing soul.