

A CHRISTIAN UPON CRUTCHES.

Upon crutches! But where were his wings pray? I am sure I have read of such people having wings. "They shall mount up with wings," &c. And sure am I that people who have promised to live *above* the world need wings to help them to keep that promise; and people who mean to go a long journey *upward* need wings for that purpose surely, and moreover, people who have *so much to do* in a wicked world, before they take their flight to heaven, need the swiftness of wings to fly about and get all done up, so as to be in readiness.

Upon crutches was he? But then he was as poorly fitted to do another thing which I have urged upon the class to which he belonged. "So *run* that ye may obtain;"—"Let us *run* with patience the race," &c.—Run upon crutches! That will never do.—What a figure one would cut making such an attempt! This disciple could not run then at all. Not he.

Well, I cannot give the matter up, for I have read of another thing expected of disciples, that they should "*walk* and not faint." How about his walking? Much as ever that even crutches help about walking. They were intended for the sole purpose of aiding the lame. But a man, especially a disciple, makes but a sorry figure in such a path as duty opens before him, with a pair of crutches. When I saw him he got along pitifully—looked fatigued and out of sorts with his journey—stopped frequently altogether—looked wistfully back, as if he was almost or quite sorry he had started; and as he looked forward his countenance fell, as if he thought it would be a long business to reach the Invisible City at that rate. And I thought so too.

Now it was the more sad to see that disciple upon crutches for that he had nothing of the kind when he began his journey as a disciple. He started well—had wings and feet both—he flew, and ran, and went ahead gloriously. You would as soon thought of crutches for an antelope. He left many behind that started with him.

But he got a terrible fall! He never said much about the matter; but it is supposed that he had an encounter with a very bitter and powerful enemy of all who are travelling to Mount Zion, named Worldliness, and that, instead of riding triumphantly over him, he was overcome in the contest. And the first thing we knew he was down upon crutches; wings and feet, flying and running, all out of the question. People, as they walked about Zion, could hardly believe he was the same disciple they had seen moving on as a strong man to run a race.

Now, as the Christian's pilgrimage lies through different regions, I thought I would give him a look as he entered one after another.

1. One of these regions was the Word of God:—

'Tis a broad land of wealth unknown,
Where springs of life arise,
Seeds of immortal bliss are sown,
And hidden glory lies.

And I have known travellers through it who, though once lame, yet leaped like the hart when they came to this region and found things there more precious than rubies, and went joyfully on their way, loading themselves in gladness with gold and silver and precious stones. And I was in hopes to see our traveller drop his crutches and make a swift and happy journey through that beautiful land. But not a sign of any such thing did I see.—And though there was law and gospel, promise and prophecy, and whatsoever was lovely and of good report; yet there were his crutches, and on he went, halting and limping, and most laboriously slow. He could not have enjoyed the journey; indeed it seemed, at times, as if he should be glad when his journey, even through such a country was finished.

2. And it did not seem a farthing better when he came to any part of the region of *religious duty*. I have read of some travellers who found *praise* comely, and who found it good to *draw nigh* to God, and who found it more blessed to *give* than to receive, taking even joyfully the spoiling of their goods for the welfare of others, and who found keeping *God's commandments* a great reward; so that they traversed this whole territory with gladness, finding it full of fragrant flowers and living fountains of waters. But our traveller was more lame, and more constantly on his crutches than ever, through this whole territory. It was very painful to other travellers to see what sad work he made of getting along.—And at some of the duties which were along the road he actually fetched up altogether,

came to a dead stand, and would not go farther.

There were several other regions through which travellers have to go before they can reach the Invisible City, which I cannot stop to tell about now. But through each the christian and the crutches went together, and sorry sort of travelling it was. Fellow travellers had to leave him, so sadly did he lag behind them; and the people of the country, who were not travellers, made plenty of fun of so forlorn a looking pilgrim.

I almost forgot to say that at times he got so teased with admonitions from saints, and impudent jests and sneers from sinners, that his crutches became like a smoke in one's nose, and he flung them from him in haste, and ran, and walked on Zion-ways with the boldest of the travellers. But he tottered again directly, and the old crutches and the old pace became history again as aforesaid.

As I had noticed the disciple was upon crutches in reference to pretty much every thing pertaining to Zion, I thought I would just give him one look before I left him, to see if he was also upon crutches in his worldly affairs. Poor fellow, thought I, if he is as sorry a traveller *world-ward* as he is *Zion-ward*, he must have a sad pilgrimage.

But what did I see! What animation, enterprise, activity! Limping and lame? Not he. Moving slow and painfully? The last thing to be thought of. Crutches? Why there was not a sign of one in sight. He was all muscle and sinew. He could run, leap, fly even. The winds had no swifter or stronger wings, and such feet to run, it was a wonder! It was a sight to see what a journey he could make! And yet he was the same mortal who made such mournful work of his christian pilgrimage!

But I must now leave him, and sad am I to leave him at so great a distance from the Invisible City. It is a long way for him, and the danger is that he will not reach it. Many such travellers have come short of it.

It may not be of much avail, but I will just say to him, should this article meet his eyes, that if he would set his heart on fire with divine love, and burn up those crutches in the blaze, then he will travel to some purpose, and the "Delectable Mountains" would soon be in sight.

Evidences for Heaven.

The reader of this article hopes for heaven. He does not expect to die in despair, and to be cast into the bottomless pit. However much he may be wedded to the world now, he hopes to reach heaven at last. Would it not be well for him to dwell upon the evidences of heaven in his case?

The following is an abridgment of a summary drawn up by one who, I doubt not, reached heaven more than two centuries ago. Happy is he who can claim these evidences as his own.

"The Lord by his Spirit accompanying the word caused me to see sin to be exceeding sinful, and to look upon myself as a loathsome creature in God's sight by reason of my sins. I thought that I was utterly forsaken of God and that he could never accept of such a wretch as I saw myself to be. I was brought to cry out, 'What shall I do to be saved?' and then to say with Paul, Lord, what wouldst thou have me to do? I was brought to see a superlative beauty and excellency in the Lord Jesus Christ, and my soul was deeply in love with him. If I know my heart, it panteth after Christ and Christ alone. The whole world in comparison with Christ is nothing to me. I see myself undone forever without the righteousness of Christ imputed unto me, and therefore I hope I am among the number of those whom Christ was commissioned by his Father to come to save.

I am weary and heavy laden. I can say with David that my sins are a burden to me: Christ has promised to give rest to such. I am willing to take his yoke upon me, and would fain learn of him the lesson of meekness and lowliness, and therefore am invited to come unto him.

I can say with Paul that I delight in the law of God after the inward man, and am grieved that I cannot keep it. I find an earnest desire wrought in my soul, to be made like unto Jesus Christ, and that it may be my meat and my drink to do and to suffer his will.

The Lord hath in some measure put his fear into my heart, so that I fear to offend him out of love to him, and I love to fear him. I think I can truly say with David that I have

none in heaven but thee, and that there is nothing on earth that I desire beside thee. I can with Peter make my appeal to him and say, Lord thou knowest all things, thou knowest I love thee. Finding therefore that God hath drawn out my heart to love him and to make choice of him alone, I hence ground my hope that God loveth me. "We love him because he first loved us."

I find my heart much inflamed with love to all the children of God because they are God's children, and the more I see or hear of God in them, the more I find my heart cleaving to them.

I not only love God and the children of God, but I labour to keep his commandments, and they are not grievous to me. I do not only confess my sins but with all my heart I desire to forsake them, and to turn to the Lord. It is my constant endeavour to die to sin, and to live to newness of life. And this is my comfort and hope, that he who hath begun a good work in me will perfect it.

As for my affliction that lieth upon me, (though it be in itself very heavy) I much more desire the sanctification of it, than the removal. I earnestly labor learn to all the lessons which God would teach me by affliction.

Faith is the condition of salvation, and I find nothing so hard as to believe aright, to cast away all my own righteousnesses, and to venture my immortal soul upon Christ and his righteousness for life and salvation, and yet I am willing to take Christ upon his own terms as he is tendered in the gospel, and am willing to give up myself soul and body wholly to him: and my love to God and to the children of God is the fruit of my faith, as also is my desire to be made like unto him.

Thus I have endeavored to give a reason of the hope that is in me. What have I but what I have received? The desire of my soul is that God may have all the glory. And if I be deceived, the Lord for Christ's sake undeceive me. May he that is my heart-maker, be my heart-searcher, and my heart-discoverer, and my heart-reprover."

Such are the evidences of a title to heaven. O that they were possessed by every professor of religion, by every traveller to eternity!

Going Home to Glory.

A friend called to see an aged woman who was in her last sickness, and inquired, how she was. "I am going home to glory," was the reply. A joy like the light of beauty illumined her withered and wasted features as she thus spoke. During her sickness, which was protracted, she always spoke of death as a *going home*. What a blessed thing it is that there is a home of glory for wearied mortals to go to!

How inexpressibly grateful was that home to that wearied pilgrim! She had led a life of sorrow. The man to whom in her youth she gave the wealth of her affections, proved passionate and unkind, and finally became intemperate and brutal. She often bore upon her person marks of violence.

She had cast in her lot with the people of God; but his fiendish cruelty cut her off from most of the sources of enjoyment connected with the church. He prevented her from going to the sanctuary on the Sabbath, and from meeting those with whom she could take sweet counsel. When his excesses brought him to the grave she was left in the deepest poverty, with a ruined constitution, the consequence of exposure caused by his cruelty. She soon followed him to the grave; or rather, she soon went home to glory.

Was it strange that God left one of his dear children to suffer thus? Was it in keeping with his promise to withhold no good thing from those that walk uprightly? God seeth not as man seeth. He was fitting her for her home in glory. That home is far more precious to her than it would be, if her course on earth had been different. No doubt she now sees that all his dealings with her were in love.

Withered Flowers.

Every Christian should labor to form the habit of mind by which spiritual reflections shall be suggested by every object and event. Few persons have attained this habit in as high a degree as did Flavel. His reflections are sometimes as remarkable for their poetic beauty as for their rich spirituality. The following were written "upon the sudden withering of beautiful flowers."

"How fresh and orient did these flowers lately appear, when being dashed over with the morning dew, they stood in all their pride and glory, breathing out their delicious odors,

which perfumed the air round about them, but now are withered and shrivelled up, and have neither any desirable beauty nor favour in them.

"So vain a thing is the admired beauty of creatures, which captivates the heart, and exercises a pleasing tyranny over the affections of vain man, yet it is as suddenly blasted as the beauty of a flower.

"If then thou delightest in beauty, O my soul! choose that which is lasting. There is a beauty which never fades, even the beauty of holiness upon the inner man. This abides fresh and orient forever, and sparkles gloriously when thy face, the seat of natural beauty, is become an abhorrent and loathsome spectacle. Holiness enamels and sprinkles over the face of the soul with a beauty in which Christ himself delights. Even imperfect holiness on earth is a rose that breathes sweetly in the bud; in heaven it will be full blown, and abide in its prime to all eternity."

Sayings for Clergymen.

FLIGHTS OF RHETORIC.

I have not found that God hath made much use of labored periods, rhetorical flowers, and elegancies, to improve the power of religion in the world: yea, I have observed how Providence hath sometimes rebuked good men when they have too much affected these pedantic fooleries, in withdrawing from them his usual aids, and exposing them to shame.—*Flavel*.

So far as I ever observed God's dealings with my soul, the flights of preachers sometimes entertained me; but it was Scripture expressions which did penetrate my heart, and that in a way peculiar to themselves.—*J. Brown of Haddington*.

John did not preach so much to please as to profit. He chose rather to discover men's sins, than to show his own eloquence. That is the best looking glass, not which is most gilded, but which shows the truest face.—*Thomas Watson*.

Preaching experimentally is the life and soul of preaching. Men love sermons that come to their business and bosoms.—*Job Orton*.

Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth. And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech, or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God.—*Paul*.

A Salutary Thought.

When I was a young man there lived in our neighborhood a Presbyterian, who was universally reported to be a very liberal man, and uncommonly upright in his dealings.—When he had any of the products of his farm to dispose of, he made it an invariable rule to give good measure, over good, rather more than could be required of him. One of his friends, observing his frequently doing so, questioned him why he did it, told him he gave too much, and said it would not be to his own advantage. Now my friends, mark the answer of this Presbyterian:—"God Almighty has permitted me but one journey through the world, and when gone I cannot return to rectify mistakes." Think of this, friends, only one journey through this world.—*J. Simpson*.

What is Life.

The mere lapse of years is not life. To eat, and drink, and sleep; to be exposed to darkness and the light; to pace around in the mill of habit, and turn the wheel of wealth; to make reason our book-keeper, and turn thought into an implement of trade—this is not life. In all this, but a poor fraction of the consciousness of humanity is awakened; and the sanctities still slumber which make it most worth while to be. Knowledge, truth, love, beauty, goodness, faith, alone can give vitality to the mechanism of existence; the laugh of mirth which vibrates through the heart, the tears that freshen the dry wastes within, the music that brings childhood back, the prayer that calls the future near, the doubt which makes us meditate, the death which startles us with mystery, the hardship that forces us to struggle, the anxiety that ends in trust—are the true nourishment of our natural being.

"I never knew any man," says an old author, who could not bear another's misfortune like a Christian;" which reminds us of the old lady who thought every calamity that happened to herself a *trial*, and every one that happened to her friends a *judgment*.