

**Editors Note:** To my mind the following brief quotation from James Wells sermon “A Rich Kingdom for a Poor People” (number 515, Preached on September 20<sup>th</sup>, 1868) provides the basis for understanding God’s dealings with Mister Wells at the end of his life. It is a very God Glorifying illumination. Near the end of the sermon he states: “God in the deeps of his sovereignty leaves people to mysterious afflictions, and during those afflictions they do mysterious things. There is not anything too hard for the Lord. However mysterious things are, he can understand them, and he brings them right. Grace can afford anything except that of parting with them; that it cannot afford, that it never will afford” .... “For myself, I hate that mawkish belief that would allow that anything can undo the work where it is once begun. Our God’s work must prevail, His truth must prevail, and grace must reign.”

## **ACHOR’S GLOOMY VALE.**

**A SERIES OF LETTERS**

**ADDRESSED TO THE CHURCH AND CONGREGATION.**

**TO WHICH IS ADDED,**

*The Writer’s own account of his call by Grace and to the Ministry of the Word*

By

**JAMES WELLS**

**LATE PASTOR OF THE SURREY TABERNACLE**

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## PREFACE

The contents of this little hook are a record, principally personal, of the beginning, development, trial, and continuance of a fairly representative Christian life. The struggling with sin and the law are vividly described, as well as the deliverance from bondage and enjoyment of the liberty of the gospel. The ministerial and other labors in which our deceased brother was exceedingly abundant are but slightly referred to, because they are indelibly recorded in the hearts of thousands, and will only be forgotten in death. The trials, temptations, and sorrows of body and mind, in his long and painful affliction, are clearly and Scripturally declared. The gloom, despondency, and doubt experienced are honestly told, and the source, mode, and character of relief, consolation, deliverance, and final triumph, are sweetly set forth.

God glorified himself in the spiritual, life-long, and dying experience of our brother; and he glorified God in his testimony, in his walk and life, and in the fires. What our brother preached he lived upon; and his doctrine, his experience, and his practice were in entire harmony.

I have much pleasure and satisfaction in commending to thoughtful Christians of every denomination these records of the action of spiritual life in varied circumstances; knowing that they will find in them an echo, a sympathy, a brotherhood, which men born from above alone can feel, and which, under such circumstances, they cannot help feeling to their soul's joy.

WM. CROWTHER.

Gumersal, Leeds,  
December, 1872.

## ACHOR'S GLOOMY VALE

### LETTER I.

To the Church and Congregation assembling in the Surrey Tabernacle.

Dear Friends,

I am still in the waters of deep and bitter affliction; my entire inability to be among you as heretofore adds most distressingly to my trouble. How mysterious, that in the very midst of prosperity I should thus be cut down! So with good Josiah, king of Judah; just as he had established the pure service of God in Jerusalem, and all things looked bright and well, he unwisely goes to war against Pharaoh-necho, and in so doing loses his life, and Judah never found another king like him until the King of kings appeared. And how mysterious that the life of John the Baptist should be taken from him in the midst, apparently, of all but unbounded usefulness; and that the enemy should be suffered to take the life of Stephen while being filled with the Holy Ghost, and he was bidding fair to shine as a ministerial star of the first magnitude upon

this benighted world; and that Herod should be permitted to take away the life of James the brother of John with a sword! And how many ministers have been taken away by martyrdom! and what a number of ministers in the very zenith of their prosperity have by various diseases been taken away! And the same may be said of very many useful private Christians. These circumstances and considerations have at times tended to calm my tempest-tossed mind—in all things showing that God does indeed move in a mysterious way; and such has been my experience in this affliction, that I shall never be able to describe what my feelings have been. I hardly know which have been greater—the agonies of my body or the agonies of my mind for although I was in the first part of my affliction fully assured, from the first part of the 14th chapter of John, of my acceptance with God, and could have departed to the mansions of bliss without the shadow of a doubt or a fear, all this departed from me, and deep and dark and black despair took the place thereof, so that truly I was brought into darkness, and not into light; and nothing possessed my mind but that the Lord was turned against me. My ways were—indeed enclosed as with hewn stone. I cried and shouted, but the Lord shut out my prayer; and I was ready to say with the prophet, “He is unto me as a bear lying in wait, and as a lion in secret places;” and my soul sunk to the very gates of hell, and I could see nothing but my sins, and almighty and eternal, wrath to come. His arrows did, indeed stick fast in me, and the poison thereof drank up my spirits. I truly could say with the prophet Jeremiah, “The yoke of my transgressions is bound by his hand; they are wreathed, and come upon my neck;” and nothing possessed my mind but that to perdition I must go. At the same time, I had in a dream such a vision of hell as I never had before, and hope I shall never have again. Oh, how clearly it showed me that the salvation of one soul therefrom outweighs in value the whole material universe! I can no more describe what I saw in hell than the apostle Paul could describe what he saw in heaven. The infinite awfulness thereof, the eternity of it, the gloom of it, the self-acting irresistible fires of it, their lightning-like activity, the universal despair, the utter desolation, the personal misery of its inhabitants, the impossibility, of escape therefrom, —oh, how did I wish I had never been born. What an infinity of evil there appeared in the least sin! How deeply did I feel for myself and for lost souls! But ere long I awoke, and found it was a dream: but the impression, which seemed indelible, remained with me, assuring me that this was my deserved and dread abode; and the threatenings of the Bible came rolling, in upon me like a mighty tempest, and at that time every morning as I awoke some, fearful threatening of the Bible fastened upon me, such as— “I will laugh at your calamity; and mock now your fear is come:” “The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God,” and many more of the like kind. All attempts to get any comfort from past experience, or usefulness, or sincerity, or from the Bible, were in vain. If I trembled (which I did), so “devils believe and tremble too;” therefore said despair, What are you better than they? And if I prayed, then the prayers of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord.” If I tried to have a little hope, then, your hope shall be as a spider’s web;” and if I attempted to look to the atonement and y righteousness of the Saviour, then it was that Jesus Christ received none but good people, and that he would marvel at my presumption in supposing that he could receive me. How could he say to me, I Well done!” when I had done nothing, well? and how could he call me good. and faithful, when it seemed to me I had been neither? What an awful havoc doth despair make when it gets the ascendancy! Thus, did I possess wearisome nights, and days of vanity where appointed me. Each day my language was, “Even to-day is my complaint hitter, and my stroke is heavier than my groaning.” Never before did I understand Job so well when he said of the Lord, He hath kindled his wrath against me, and counteth me unto him as one of his enemies,” —and many such like scriptures.

I may in a future letter state how. my hope returned unto me.

Now, dear friends, in conclusion, I greatly praise you in having so firmly kept together, and for so faithfully abiding by that cause now so especially and so solemnly committed to your trust. Pray for me that I may be restored to you, or be sustained, and patiently wait until the hour of my departure for a better world.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

## LETTER II.

It is a truth that every real Christian must, to a less or a greater degree, realize that in the world ye shall have tribulation;" and no small part of my present trouble is the trying position into which yourselves and the deacons by my affliction are brought. Nor is it always easy to say, The will of the Lord be done. But still keep together, and do all you can, as you have done, to strengthen the hands of the deacons in their serious and great responsibility, —not forgetting the kindness of the good ministers of the gospel who have so kindly spoken the word to you. And as to your kindness to me, your poor afflicted servant, I will say nothing at present, as it is beyond all words can express. The deacons have also in the greatest kindness carried out your best wishes towards me, and have done all that Christian men can do to minister to my support and comfort. Many indeed have been the bitter waters I have had to drink. I can well understand the meaning of Naomi when she said, "Call me not Naomi, call me Mara: for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me. The Lord hath testified against me, and the mighty One of Jacob hath afflicted me." In many ways Satan was permitted to tempt even the Son of God to destroy himself; but how different such a temptation with him from us! He was invulnerable; the serpent found no pregnable or weak part in this eternal Rock; for in his nature was no sin, and consequently no inclination to comply with the tempter. Alas! not so, with us. There are various circumstances and diseases that force upon dying man this temptation to self-destruction, and mine happens to be one of those diseases; and gladly should I, but for two things, have destroyed my mortal life and such were my agonies of body and mind, that I should have cared not how. But two things kept me therefrom—first, the deadly sin of it; and second, the lake of eternal fire into which it must have plunged me. Therefore, I may say, "So did not I because of the fear of the Lord;" but to be under this temptation is an awful place to be in. Yet this temptation came upon me again and again; but it is now gone and, I trust, gone forever. And I am not alone in this temptation. Hundreds—nay, thousands of Christians have from various causes groaned and trembled under this temptation; and such were my distresses of mind, I could not forbear screaming aloud. I could indeed say with Jeremiah, "He hath filled me with bitterness; he hath made me drunken with wormwood." My soul was removed far off from peace; I forgot prosperity; not a ray of hope could I get—not a particle of comfort— until I came to these words in the last chapter of James, — "Is there any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him." And I was not only sick, but trembling lest the temptation to self-destruction should get fatal power over me; and the following words seemed to give me a little hope: — "And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him; and I well knew that in my despondency and hard thoughts of God I had committed many sins. These last and lovely words seemed very encouraging to me, — "Shall be forgiven him." No uncertainty about it; only I could not wholly believe that forgiveness was for me, but hoped it might be so. This was on a Lord's day: so, the same evening I sent for our deacons, who after service kindly, came I and conversed and prayed with me. I asked them to pray to the Lord that, I might die an honorable death—that the Lord would bruise Satan down, under my: feet; for I thought and hoped that if I were not raised up again into this life, I should be raised up to a throne of eternal I glory with all my sins forgiven. "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin." I almost, began to anticipate the realization of victory by the blood of the Lamb.

The deacons conversed, very kindly and prayed very earnestly with me, which somewhat weakened the temptation, for I felt that I was cared for by the Lord's children. Several of the deacons praying with me

from time to time tended to help me to hope in the Lord, and especially the liberty they felt in prayer with me. How helpless we are “when despair seizes upon us! Mr. Spurgeon, in his kind and excellent letter of sympathy to me, expressed a hope I should play the man in affliction as when in the pulpit; but, alas! I cannot boast of having so done. I have no more played the man in the first part of this affliction than Elijah did when he sat down under a juniper, tree and requested for himself that he might die, and said, “It is enough;” now I have proved to myself what a poor weak mortal I am. “O Lord, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers.” I have no more played the man than Job did when he cursed the day of his birth; and, like David, I have felt that there was but a step between me and death; and while no doubt of the truth of the Bible or of the gospel could for one moment lodge in my mind, I could not for one moment believe I belonged to the Lord; not the slightest access to God, much less communion with him. It may well be written that “when he hideth his face, who then can behold him, whether it be done against a nation or against a man only?” Never before did I so deeply feel the truth of Mr. Hart’s words. I realize their meaning in their bitterest form—shut out and cast out, and apparently held in derision by the Most High himself: —

“if thou, celestial Dove,  
Thine influence withdraw,  
What easy victims soon we fall.  
To conscience, wrath, and law”

“No longer burns our love;  
Our faith and patience fall;  
Our sin revives, and death and hell  
Our feeble souls assail.”

Feeble indeed when thus made to sit in darkness and in the shadow of death. Being bound in affliction and iron, my cup was filled. with gall; nor could I say; “There’s something secret sweetens all.” Yet at intervals my heart was melted down in love to the Savior; light seemed to shine for a few moments between the clouds, but these momentary reliefs were few and far between; and yet, with it all, I had, as I can now see, the spirit of prayer and supplication—entreating the Lord with many cries and tears that he would show me his mercy, that he would rebuke the disease, or enable me to endure the same with patience; and that, as his soul was grieved for the misery of Israel, so he would be grieved for my misery. I thought how far his dealings were from the testimony given in the 103rd Psalm, — “Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him.” I could see no pity nor could realize the least sympathy from on high; yet how earnestly did I cry to him from day to day! And if he has answered my prayers, and the prayers of those who have prayed with me and for me, it is but partially, as I am not yet restored, or taken to my eternal rest. But, like Elijah’s servant, we must look again and again, until a cloud of promise shall appear. God’s elect are to cry to him day and night; and though the vision tarry, at the end it shall speak, and not lie. We are to wait for it because it will surely come, and will not tarry beyond the appointed time; and that vision is sure to be a revelation in that form which shall seem good in his sight, whether it be to sustain us here, or to take us to himself; in either form my language is, “Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.” But still, as I have said, I was not without occasional seasons of revival; and one occasion which began to let light and comfort into my mind was from the 30th and 31st verses of the 4th chapter of Deuteronomy, — “When thou art in tribulation, and all these things are come upon thee, even in the latter days, if thou turn to the Lord thy God, and shalt he obedient unto his voice; (for the Lord thy God is a merciful God;) he will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which he sware unto them.”

“When thou art in tribulation”—I said, Well, Lord, if any poor creature were ever in tribulation in body and mind, I am, — “and all these things are come upon thee;” —and these afflictions which are come upon me are, next to the mysteries of the gospel, the greatest mysteries I ever met with. “In the latter days” —so I have; it is in the latter days of my life that this cup of trembling, which I have drunk to the very dregs, is put into my hand, and I am still, though more moderately, drinking thereof. “If thou turn to the Lord thy God, and be obedient to his voice,” —I said, Ah, Lord, I do turn unto thee with all my heart and all my soul; thou knowest I have none in heaven but thee, and there is no god on the earth I desire beside thee; if thou refuse to hear me, all is lost. “And be obedient to his voice,”—Yea, Lord, said I, if believing in thy dear Son, and cleaving unto thee as my only hope, if this is being obedient unto thy voice,—if feeling, if I were raised up again to serve thee, I would do so day and night with soul and body and every power I possess,—if this is being obedient to thy voice, I am obedient to thy voice. The spirit of grace and supplication which I trusted I felt a little of gave me hope of interest in the beautiful clauses of the 31st verse, — “For the Lord thy God is a merciful God.” Ah, exclaimed I, then after all he is my God. “THY God is a merciful God” came with encouraging sweetness. THY God; I lingered much upon these words—THY God: and then, thought I, he is just the God I need, for he is a merciful God; for never even in my first convictions of sin did I more deeply feel the need of his mercy than I did at this time. Then comes in this 31st verse a beautiful description of this mercy:— “He will not forsake thee,” —I was ready to say, What can I want more? “Neither destroy thee” —this, again, helped me much, because this is just what I feared he was doing. “Nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which he sware unto them.” The substance of all I ever said of this everlasting covenant seemed to present itself to my mind; this was the first, instance in my affliction in which I gained comfort from my past experience; my intense love in times gone by to the Holy and Eternal Three, by the revelation of the sworn and immutable covenant, seemed to be reviving in me. Long had I known that all my salvation and all my desire were in and by this well-ordered and everlasting covenant: “The Lord thy God will not forget the covenant of thy fathers which he sware unto them.” I was enabled somewhat to rejoice that I had for so many years delighted in the Messenger of this covenant, and so long gloried in the immutability of that counsel which is shown to the heirs of promise. Here I began to be at home; and had I been well in health, you would have had a sermon of life and power from these two beautiful verses in Deuteronomy. Oh, how full my heart and soul have been at times of these eternal things! Lest I tire your patience, I will add no more at present, only that great grace may I rest upon you all.

Yours most affectionately in all godly sincerity,

J. Wells.

### LETTER III.

Ever dear Friends in the Faith of God’s Elect,

I will in this letter name a few more scriptures to which in my low estate, as mentioned in my former letters, I was driven for help and comfort. Such was my sight and sense of my state as a sinner, I felt as though no sinner on earth could be worse. I was glad to go to scriptures which I never thought before of going to for help. I gathered up the worst faults of the Old Testament saints, and carefully marked the dealings of God with them; and have felt a fear that I have in my past ministry passed over, at times, some of the deepest experiences and cutting and trying exercises of the children of God. I was always more or less deeply exercised, and preached only that which I experimentally knew. I learnt from the faults of the

Old Testament saints the abounding abundance of the grace of God—that while their sin brought tribulation, as it must necessarily do, as with David and others, yet, in the face of it all, when David trembled before the Lord, and said, “I have sinned against the Lord,” no sooner was the confession out of his mouth than “mercy, like a mighty stream, over all his sins divinely rolled,” saying, “The Lord hath put away thy sin;” not put away the soul, but put away the sin. “Thou shalt not die.” And when the Lord smote the child, David went into the house of the Lord and worshipped—he neither despaired nor ran away from the Lord. This set mightily before me the great truth that “Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.” For I felt so much vileness in myself, that I could not believe that David, with all his outward sin, was so vile as I. The evils of my heart which I felt were infinitely too bad to name; so that this testimony of the abounding grace of God gave me a little revival in my bondage. Also Jonah running away from the presence of the Lord, and being cast into the sea, and yet how the Lord abode by him; and how the Lord heard and answered Hezekiah; and how Solomon, who, after building the temple of the Lord, became a builder of temples of idols, and went even after these horrible gods of stocks and stone; yet he got to heaven at last: this helped me much. Never before did I think the testimony of Solomon in his old age playing the fool could by any possibility be a comfort to any one—yet it was a great comfort to me. I looked at it again and again, and derived great help from it; and while I hate, and always have hated, since I have known the Lord, all false gods, false doctrines, and false ways, yet that Solomon after all should appear at the last among them who are more than conquerors, “for he was beloved of his God;” this impressed my mind very powerfully. I could never before bless God for the testimony given in the 11th chapter of the first book of Kings of Solomon’s foolish doing. It may well be written that all Scripture is profitable. Great indeed is that variety of dealing of the Lord with his people; so that to the bitter in soul, the distressed and distracted, Scriptures without these tribulations we pass by lightly, and scarcely care to read; but let the soul be keenly and sharply hunger-bitten, then comes out the truth that to the hungry soul every bitter thing, is sweet. These circumstances were bitter to David and to Solomon: yet to the self-despairing sinner they are sweet; and his heart rejoices not in the sin they committed, but in that dear covenant God who put away the sin, and said, “Thou shalt not die.” Sin was put away by being set to the account of the then coming Messiah. Jesus put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. The Holy Spirit puts it away, testimonially by the revelation unto us of the one eternal offering. Here we lose our burdens, sin loses its right and power over us. For we are not under the law that gives strength to sin, but under that grace that takes its condemning and reigning power away; and though through the law in our members it gains at times a limited and temporary ascendancy, its very existence is virtually ended. A little while, and the saying shall be brought to pass, “O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?” Ah, where indeed? lost in our Immanuel’s conquering power, so that the promise “Thou shalt not die” is positive, and not conditional; and the reason it is positive, and not conditional, is because it was not by Moses, or law of works, but by him by whom come grace and truth. Gladly would I here repeat the language I used when I seemed to be at heaven’s gate, wrapped in this Immanuel and his glory; my soul would have taken wing with infinite rapture to the worlds of light, of joy, and peace. I did, indeed, realize the truth of the poet’s words,—

“Jesus, the vision of thy face  
Hath overpowering charms.”

No wonder that Simeon, when thus favored, should desire to depart. No wonder that, the apostle Paul, who knew immeasurably more of Christ, of God, and of heaven, than I ever knew, should also desire to depart, to be with Christ, which is far better. Oh, how did I long also to depart! nor can I say that the feeling has yet left me. My seemingly interminable illness makes my life bitter; nevertheless, the Lord himself keeps me stayed upon him, so that he has not suffered me to be tried above that I have been able to bear; and not one inch of ground has the enemy gained upon me in relation to God’s eternal truth—

the same being unto me dearer, if possible, then it ever was. In this sense, I have been enabled to play the man, having so far fought a good fight, and perhaps shall soon finish my course; and if I have not kept the law of Moses, I have kept the faith of Christ, which is the only way in which the crown of life, righteousness, and glory can be obtained. Jesus himself puts a negative upon all other ways. "No man," says he, "cometh unto the Father, but by me." How has my heart rejoiced in these words! Oh, how suited the way of access to God! None so good but that if they are saved it must be in this way; and none so bad that Jesus cannot make good. What a change does he work in our souls! And see our poor dying bodies now, and in the grave, and see them in the resurrection state. And why this mighty change of soul and body? Simply because Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life, This change can be brought about in no other way. Creature doings and ceremonies are of no avail in this matter, but Christ is all and in all. Yet in my desponding state I felt I was too vile for him to receive. What self-contradictory creatures we are, professing to be sinners saved by grace. But when the Lord answers us, and makes us see and feel the hitherto hidden evils of our hearts, and makes us drink the wine of astonishment, we then give it all up for lost, as though redeeming blood had lost its power, as though grace had changed its voice, and, that God ceased to delight in mercy.

I always held that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, but when the fountains of the great deep were more than ever in this affliction broken up; while I still held that he came into the world to save sinners, yet I feared not such a sinner as I am. As though this fresh discovery of vileness of self, which was new to me, was new also to the Lord; whereas he knows as much about us, when we do not know ourselves as he does when we do know ourselves. I can now see this disbelief of interest in him was my infirmity—and I am thankful that it is called by no worse name than that of infirmity. I could easily believe the truth of God; but found it utterly impossible to believe I was interested in it.

I was driven from scripture to scripture, and each scripture seemed to say, "Depart from me, I know you not."; And I have long been, and am more than ever, persuaded, than when the Lord hides his face it becomes one of the most difficult questions to decide upon, "Am I his, or am I not?" It never was my lot to understand that experience which has in it no doubts or fears; but in this affliction my doubts and fears amounted to fearful trembling at God's word; and if I attempted to get a little help from the words, "To this man will I look, that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and that trembleth at my word," yet, said despair, "Devils believe and tremble, and are poor too, so there is nothing here for you." Sometime after the words came to me again, and I was enabled to plead them with confidence, especially by the help of other scriptures, as where it says, "Blessed be ye poor, for yours is the kingdom of God." And again, "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." And again, "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted." I felt I was poor indeed, and that my heart was broken and my spirit made contrite; and that, while I loathed and despised myself, the Lord would not despise me, and I did tremble at his holy word, lest the threatening should fall upon me; and I then saw that the promise of exaltation was unto such. On another occasion the 10th of the Romans, from the 9th to the 13th verse, was good anchorage-ground for me. How earnestly did I try myself by every clause of these verses! In a word, so deep was my concern for eternity, that I was driven nearly all over the Bible to see that I if so be there may be hope. How little and valueless did everything else appear! At the same time, I was deeply impressed with the infinity and eternity of the endearment subsisting between the Lord and his children. I thought it might well be said of them, as they stand by faith in Christ, that "they look forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, terrible as an army with banners." And in what a small degree does the most favored Christian recognize the dignity of his oneness with the Savior! "Behold what manner of love hath the Father bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." Especially at the time of the first earnest prayer meeting on my behalf did I see their glory; and perfectly sure did I feel that you could not pray in vain. And while you were praying for me, I had carefully read to



me Solomon's prayer—for I myself was too ill to read. How anxiously did I watch every clause, particularly where it says, "Whatsoever sore, or whatsoever sickness there be." I knew, as I have said, you would not pray in vain; for if the Lord did not hear you on my behalf to restore me, or to manifest himself to me; if neither of these were granted, yet your prayers would return into your own bosoms, and bring to you blessings therewith. But he has heard you in reviving in me a good hope, and enabling me now to say, —

"Whene'er the signal's given,  
Me from earth to call away,  
Borne on angels' wings to heaven,  
Glad to leave my mortal clay,  
My soul will ready rise and reign in endless day."

But while I thus speak, I may, for aught I know, have many days of darkness yet, and sharper conflicts with the enemy of our souls— "though a troop overcome Gad, he shall overcome at the last" Perhaps I have now said nearly as much as I ought to say upon my own personal experience I but I have said thus much that the deeply tried among you may see that you are not alone in that path "which the vulture's eye hath not seen." There is a wealthy place into which all such ere long shall come and our God is the best judge who amongst his children needs the hottest furnace. Isaac had not the troubles of Jacob, nor had Isaiah the sorrows of Jeremiah I yet all were sufferers more or less. Now the Lord keep you in his truth, in his fear, in his love, in his service; for we cannot be too earnest, too zealous, or too constant therein, as these are marks of distinction from an ungodly world; and though I am yet bound in affliction, I in spirit meet with you every time you assemble. What a number of times in my illness have I dreamed I have been among you as active and as happy as ever! and when I wake my feeling of disappointment is most distressing. It was but recently I dreamt I was in the pulpit, and began with saying, The tidings I had to tell were so good and so great that I could not utter them; and when I attempted to speak, the sight of you all, and the thought, of the tidings I had to tell, overcame me, and instead of speaking I burst into tears; and so I awoke from my dream. Truly I bear you on my heart before the Lord, as you I am sure have not yet forgotten me. And now that the Lord may greatly bless you all, temporally and eternally, is my prayer that goes not out of feigned lips. —Yours most sincerely in the Lord,

J. Wells.

#### LETTER IV.

Ever dear Friends,

I will begin this letter in the words of John when he said, "I pray above all things that you may prosper and be in health, even as your souls prosper." It is in health of body, and only in health, that we can attend and enjoy the public means of grace. Fain would I find words to describe how distressing this privation now for eight months has been to me; but it is so with us that we are often blinded, at least in part, to the value of our mercies until we lose them. This is now Sunday evening, and oh, what would I give to be able to appear this evening in the assembly of the saints, especially the saints of the Surrey Tabernacle! If only as a hearer, how could I sit down like a little child, and listen to and drink in the words of the Lord, spoken by any one of his servants! Let me therefore, in love to you, say a word or two upon this all-important matter. The Lord can and does bless his afflicted ones in private, yet he bestows more blessings by the public ministry of the word than by all other means put together. While therefore you have a measure of

health, let nothing but absolute necessity keep you from the house of God. The day will come when you're having attended constantly will be a great service to you, for in keeping his commandments there is great reward. Here am I with my harp on the willow, the music of which in times past has made your hearts bound with joy but here, is my harp still on the willow, my hand unable to play upon the same. Oh, how I weep when I remember Zion, and see you all assembled, to feel myself shut out! I can indeed say with the poet, —

“Loved Zion remembering I weep while the foe,  
My harp on the willow, still mocks at my woe,  
Afar from her courts like a captive I mourn, —  
Lord, when shall my feet to Thy temple return?”

May it be increasingly your language, “If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning; if I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy.” “The Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than all the temporal dwellings of Jacob” and if conscience be, through the love of the world, or any other cause, partly stifled now, it will ere long awake and do its terrible work. What could be a more cutting reproof to the ancient Jews, “Is it for you, O ye, to dwell in your ceiled houses, and this house lie waste?” I hope and pray that while you have your health every one of you will be earnest and diligent to see that you do not forsake the assembling of yourselves together, and so much the more as you see the day approaching, for not only will you in your right minds say that “you would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of God than dwell in the tents of wickedness,” but also you would rather take the humblest place than to be kept, from any cause whatever, away from the house of your Father God. Oh, what would I have given to have had a place with you this evening, if only on the door-step; gladly, for your own sakes, would I say something to encourage and to determine you to do not only as you have done, but to be more than ever attentive to the house of God, both on the Sabbath and on the week-night; if you cannot get there some of you by the time the service begins, try and be there by the time the sermon begins. What numbers of Wednesday evening Bethels I have had with you! but, alas! what are my Wednesday evenings now? and though, like the rest of you, I had my many times of darkness, yet how many divine and happy Sabbath days have I had with you! but what are my Sabbaths now? How in this sense is the fine gold changed! Could each one of you, if only for one Sabbath, take the place and state of worse than Babylonish captivity I am now in, how earnestly would you, as health returned, seek never to be absent from the assembly of the saints whenever the doors are opened! The true gospel ministry and your attention thereto are second in importance only to the salvation of the soul. Nay, faith and eternal life come by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. The word of God! —what majesty in that one sentence? You have had, and you will have, your discouragements in hearing the word, but it is by these discouragements that the Lord puts to the test and brings to light our sincerity—that is, where the grace of sincerity is implanted in the soul. In what one thing do we meet with more discouragement than in prayer? Either the Lord seems to be silent, or to say something as it were withering to us. So the woman of whom we read, first “he answered her not a word.” How often is this precisely our case! And again, “I am not sent, but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” Then says the soul through unbelief, I am not one of the sheep, I am not of the house of Israel, therefore there is nothing for me. More discouraging still, for then said he, “It is not meet to give the children’s bread to dogs.” But the woman was sincere, and well knew that what she sought could be obtained only of Jesus of Nazareth; and the very circumstance of her being brought to seek the blessing in the right way, and in the right spirit, were proofs that the blessing would be bestowed. Her faith was in Jesus, and in God by him, and seeking, as I have said, in the right spirit of deep humility, and of full confidence in his ability. She was not, therefore, offended when the Savior said, “It is not meet to give the children’s bread, and cast it to dogs,” but was willing to take the lowest place, saying, “Truth, Lord, yet

the dogs eat of the crumbs from under their master's table." She, no doubt, thought her faith was weak, and that she should obtain very little favor, yet it was a living faith, and her prayer was the prayer arising from the faith she had in the Savior; and how must the Savior have astonished her when he said unto her, "O woman, great is thy faith; be it unto thee even as thou wilt!" So, with ourselves; though we have all these and many more discouragements, yet ere long we shall return with rejoicing, bringing our sheaves with us. So, in hearing the word, you meet with much discouragement; but still you are in the house of God, in the service of God, and in the special presence of God, and you are obeying the command of God, and the Lord knows that you are come to seek Jesus, for his lips keep knowledge, and you are to seek the law of life and liberty at his mouth, for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts; and whether the word be on some occasions blessed to you or not, whether you are happy or miserable in the house of the Lord, whether you seem to hear well or not hear well, you are doing that which is pleasing in the sight of the Lord. World-wide is the command for the gospel to be preached, and world-wide it shall be heard, and to be a part of that people who shall as they go on take more and more earnest heed to the things which they have heard, to be one of such people is the greatest blessing which can be bestowed upon us in time or in eternity. And each may, whatever his feelings or his circumstances, say, "Thou God seest me," which words I have several times in my illness thought, if I should be favored to be restored to you, I should like to see written on the wall behind and above the pulpit, in the face of the whole assembly, that each, as he looked up, should turn the words into prayer: — "Thou God seest me in what my sins are; send a word by thy ministering servant, and make me feel that thou hast forgiven me. Thou God seest me in all my circumstances, tossing's to and fro, whereby I am driven to my wits end; give me a word to make me see that thou hast looked upon me by that dear Mediator whereby thou holdest me free from sin, even as he is free, and whereby thou canst be well pleased even with a sinful, rebellious worm like me." How many times have I at the numerous anniversaries I have attended heard a sermon, simple, plain, and clear, all of which I knew before! not perhaps one new thought thrown out; but there was a dew, a savor, a peacefulness, that soothed away one's sorrows. How delighted have I been whenever I was thus favored! It may therefore well be said that faith cometh by hearing. Oh! I shudder at the thought of any one of the dear friends at the Surrey Tabernacle becoming lax in his attention to the house of God! Dear friends, may it be the lot of every one of you to increasingly feel as David. did, — "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will! seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life." Being myself at present shut out, I speak with the deeper feeling, heart-rending as it has been to me to be so kept from the house of my God. Oh, how I long again to see His power and glory in the sanctuary so as I have seen him! Again, then, I say, while you have health of body let the house of God have a large and a constant share in the use you make of that health; and my prayer is that you may be in health, and in all things, prosper; and being thus favored, you will ever seek the prosperity of Zion. And said Jesus by his servant David, "Let them exceedingly rejoice that favor my righteous cause," not forgetting the Lord's prisoners. Ebed-melech thought of Jeremiah in the dungeon, and obtained his release, and the Lord blessed him in his deed. And in attending punctually to the house of God you encourage the minister, and draw out his soul towards you; for when he feels that his testimony is sought and received, he speaks with the greater liberty and power. How often have I with pleasure reminded you of the beautiful words of Malachi, — "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it." I know, dear friends, that through grace you have set your affection toward the house, of the Lord your God. I say these things not for any fault in you in this matter, but to assure you of the distress, and grief, and sorrow I feel in being excluded, and to encourage you, while you have your health, to make the best possible use thereof; and in so doing you will find there is great reward — not of merit, but of grace. Dear friends, do your uttermost a little longer to keep together as you have done; and as there is not anything too hard for the Lord, and as I am spared so far, and seem improving, though slowly, yet who can tell but I shall again be in your midst, should my health, return?

The wings, as it were, of a dove should as in a moment bring me to you. O lovely gates of Zion! shall I ever see you again? Well, if the Lord takes me away, he will not take himself away. I will now say, "Peace be within thee" feeling it a great privilege to be permitted to speak to you in any form. The Lord of all bless you all. Yours in ties divine, J. Wells.

## LETTER V.

Dear Friends,

Whether I live or whether I die it is a pleasing thought to me that no false evidences can satisfy you concerning your interest in eternal things, though upon those evidences I will not in this letter enlarge, but will say a few words upon mediation. If this mediation be dear to you, for unto you that savingly believe he is precious, precious in value, and precious in endearment, this is a good evidence of interest therein. Only look at what, by his atoning death, he has achieved. Sin deeper than hell, high as heaven, broad as the sea, and longer than the earth, hath lighted up unquenchable fire; how vain to attempt to describe the tortures, the endless tortures and miseries of a damned soul! With more terror than I ever felt before, have I had a foretaste of hell itself. I can better than ever understand the meaning of David when he says, "The sorrows of death compassed me, the pains of hell gat hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow;" and so drunken was I with wormwood that I felt I could not look with any hope to the Savior. I did from that low and dark dungeon see the glory of the bright and morning Star, but it was again quickly hidden from my sight, and the heavens to me had now no light. Dear friends, do try and look for a moment at the glorious testimony upon record, that "He hath finished transgression, and made an end of sins, and made reconciliation for iniquities." Who can compass the full meaning of this? and what are we apart from his grace and in our fallen nature but sinners, transgressors, and workers of iniquity? and thus are we by nature children of almighty and eternal wrath; but Jesus Christ died for us while we were yet sinners. There was nothing, no, nothing but sin between Him and us, nor ever could be by anything we could ever do I he died for us while we were yet transgressors, and nothing but transgressors; he died for us while we were workers of iniquity; and in our fallen nature we are nothing now but sinners, transgressors, and workers of iniquity; but he atoned for iniquity, transgression, and sin, and hereby delivered us from the burning lake, the lowest hell, the wrath of God; and we can rightly receive him only as transgressors, sinners, and workers of iniquity. We cannot rightly receive him in any other way; and just as he received us at Calvary, in the face of all our badness, so he receives us now. How can we be received in any other way? It is by his atonement for sin, transgression, and iniquity that he receives us; yet so sure as we are thoroughly convinced of sin and what we are by sin we tremble, and take it for certain that he never will and never can receive, such vile creatures as we are, whereas he receives none others. Hath Rahab a grain of faith? she shall obtain eternal victory; not the Pharisee, but the publican is received; and Saul of Tarsus, before he can be received, must be turned into the chief of sinners. The thief on the cross was exactly suited to the Savior; his sins well prepared him to be remembered and received by the atonement. Publicans and harlots were well suited for his atonement, and his atonement for them; but Pharisees were not suited for his atoning death, nor his atonement for them, and were therefore rejected. Look at the words again; "He hath finished transgression;" it is done; neither faith, nor repentance, nor prayer, nor love, nor hope, nor any one grace of the Spirit has anything to do with it, nor can add anything to it, nor take anything from it; these graces of the Spirit are only part of the glory that follows. His holy arm wrought the complete victory; all was done and finished by him, and being so done has never again to be undone, and so complete that it is truly said that he hath brought in everlasting righteousness. Again, I say he died for them who are nothing but sinners, transgressors, and workers of

iniquity, and our best doing is to receive that which is done, which is called "receiving the atonement." Let us be favored thus, to see the Son of God in his atonement, we shall no more fear to die, or fear being rejected, or fear we shall not get safe at last, any more than if sin did not exist, nor so much: for in angels and in men, where sin did not exist, it came into existence; but sin can never come into existence in Christ, nor in the church as it stands in eternal oneness with him. Oh! how different my feelings mouths ago, when he was obscured from my sight, from what they are now! I lost sight of Bethlehem's star for a time, but it reappeared, and stood over where the young child was, "and when they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding joy;" and I, in my humble measure, have done the same, and so I would not desire that it should be with me as in recent months past, when the candle of the Lord did not shine upon my head, and when, without his light, I had to walk through darkness, for he brought me into darkness and not into light. But now once more I am renewed by the Spirit of the testimony given by the apostle, when he said, "All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ." Here we stand conformed to the perfections and inimitable counsels of the Most High; it must be by Jesus Christ, by faith in him. Again, look at the truth that sin is atoned for, that it is done; here it is we have all boldness and access to God; here it is we are to live, and here it is we are to die. The Savior cannot be exalted or glorified if his atonement be not received in what it is; it is by it that the Father is well pleased; it is by it that the Savior sees the travail of his soul and is satisfied. But what can I say in a short letter? (and you have not time to listen to a long one), for these testimonies would in their meanings so multiply as to suffice you all, and leave twelve baskets full to go on with. My heart and soul are, if possible, more than ever towards you in these eternal things; it is by his atonement that we shall surely realize a full answer to the prayer of the apostle, "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to his eternal power." Amen and Amen.

J. Wells.

## LETTER VI.

Ever dear Friends,

I cannot speak with the same ease and freedom by the pen as I could from the pulpit; my recent many and varied experiences have impressed so many scriptures upon my mind; and one out of the many which has been of help to me is in the 31st of Jeremiah, from the 18th to the 20th verse, beginning with "I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself." Thus, like the prodigal, Ephraim was brought to himself" and during our lifetime we have many experiences that bring us again and again each unto himself; but when Ephraim was somewhat revived and encouraged he would then see that what he had thought to be wrath and condemnation was only chastisement: "Thou hast chastised me; I not condemned me, I but chastised me." And when new afflictions and new soul-troubles set in like a flood, and we are carried apparently into the dead sea of despair, and feel as though we never had believed or prayed aright, and as though we never had been vitally reconciled to God, the very grape-gleanings of the vintage are gone, and "Woe is me!" seems written on everything that pertains unto us; so Ephraim felt as though he never had been accustomed to the yoke of the gospel, nor could for a moment think that the Lord in mercy was listening to his groanings. Now that Ephraim begins to have a little hope in the Lord, he begins to understand the meaning of his tribulations, and the Spirit of prayer and of confidence was given unto him, so that now he looks to the Lord to turn his captivity, saying, "Turn Thou me, and I shall be turned" that is, turn my captivity, and I shall come to the heavenly Jerusalem, for Thou art the Lord my God; that is, Thou art Jehovah my Interposer. We here see that these chastisements stripped him of all false gods, false

confidences, and brought him to the one God, and one Mediator between God and men; and when he was thus far favored deeper repentance was renewed within him. Now, taking the woman in Simon's house as a good representation in her feelings of Ephraim, washing the Savior's feet with her tears, and wiping them with the hairs of her head, and anointing them with costly ointment, and as it were loading them with holy kisses, in this repentance or restoration of the soul to freedom there is intense love, overflowing peace, and ardent and supreme devotion to God ; so with Ephraim, when he was thus turned to God afresh, he was melted down into the deepest humility and self-abasement before God, and had not one word to say in his own favor, but stood every way delighted with God's great grace and great salvation. All. this was after these chastisements had instructed him, and mercy had been manifested to him. So, he said, "That after I was instructed I smote upon my thigh; I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth." He more than ever clearly saw that he had been a sinner, and compassed with many infirmities from his youth up, his conscience told him of it all, and he felt the force and reproach thereof, and was ashamed of all that he was as a sinner before God, and confounded in all attempts to justify himself; but now brought into the light, he sees that it is God that would justify, that it is the Messiah that would die and rise again and ascend to glory, and thus would the Messiah be his interposer on earth and in heaven, in time and in eternity. But when Ephraim was under the cloud he felt the force of nothing but that that was against him, for he knew that God in his holy law must of necessity speak against him, and only against him; "for cursed is he that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them." But then Ephraim felt the force of these testimonies that were against him; God was correcting him, and he knew it not, and more deeply wounding him that he might the more conspicuously heal him. Yet while passing through these cutting experiences he was at the same time, unknown to himself, both "a dear son and a pleasant child." Jesus Christ is God's dear Son—dearer to God than angels ever were, or ever can be, for unto which of the angels hath he at any time said, "Thou art my Son"? and we are assured in the 17th of John that the people in their oneness with Jesus are loved even as he is loved. But before Ephraim can see this for himself his captivity must be turned, and the captivity is such that none but he who hath led captivity captive can turn the law and sin-imprisoned captivity of any one. Ephraim calling himself all the vile names he could think of— confounded, ashamed, and trembled before God—and all this time God, in his counsel, and purpose, was holding him as one of his, dear sons; so that Ephraim, as each believer, —

"Shall learn at length to know  
The gain of grief, the blessedness of woe."

Ah, said he, —

"Long I struggled with the chastening rod,  
Marveling and murmuring at the ways of God,  
Who seemed to shroud his smiles in wayward gloom,  
And blight the hopes himself had bade to bloom;  
I know Him now—and ah! I know the heart  
That thus in mercy he ordained to smart;  
In mercy may earthly prospect dim,  
That I might center love supreme on him."

So, shall Ephraim see that he is not only a dear son, but also a pleasant child. But how is he a pleasant child? First, the Lord Jesus Christ was, and is, and ever will be the holy child Jesus, and therefore pleasant unto God; pleasant in his birth—that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God—pleasant in his obedient life, pleasant in his atoning death, pleasant when in the grave. God did not

say of him as Abraham said of Sarah, "Bury the dead out of my sight," for Jesus was still the Holy One, and could not see corruption; pleasant in his resurrection and in his exaltation, infinitely pleasant to God, and eternally pleasant to the saints. This is one of the reasons that Ephraim is said to be a pleasant child. Second, Ephraim is a pleasant child because he is now reconciled to God by Jesus Christ, and is a true friend of God; and what is more pleasant in any person than true friendship? And Jesus is indeed a Friend that loveth at all times, and his people become such friends that they shall love his name and truth at all times. What can be more encouraging than the word of the Lord unto Ephraim? I will not here attempt to describe the help these verses I have touched upon have been to me. I will now conclude with the Lord's own word, for since I spoke against him in the law, and correctively—and there cannot be a more solemn experience on earth than to feel that the Lord is testifying against us; but mark the beautiful words, — "I do earnestly remember him still," not only remember him, but remember him earnestly, and this earnest remembrance stirred all his inward and intense compassion; "My bowels are troubled for him," and no sinner on earth, no sinner out of hell, that feels his sad condition would desire a better conclusion. "I will surely have mercy upon him." Dearest, dearest, dearest Lord, unto every seeking sinner do as thou hast said. This same sure mercy be with you all; so, prays your sincere but at present afflicted servant,

J. Wells.

## LETTER VII.

Ever dear Christian Friends, —

Gladly would I say something in this letter concerning the way in which Jesus hath prepared a place for you, but I would rather dwell for a few moments upon the state of things into which you are to be received, together with the order of that reception. That state to which you are to be received is a state of unexceptionable liveliness; it was so in the garden of Eden, where everything looked, and sounded, and savored, and scented of life and liveliness; health in perfection reigning, not an adversary or evil occurrent, from the starry heavens to the verdant earth, all charmed our first parents with their liveliness. Sin and death, and grief and sorrow; illness, dullness, castings down, the fear of wrath and hell, did not yet exist, so that all was life and liveliness. All creation ministered to their momentary and constant delight. So with the Israelites when their land was purified from idolatry, sin, and error; how did the mountains and hills break forth into singing, and all the trees of the fields clapped their hands, and the people from Dan to Beersheba, every one under his vine and under his fig tree, eating and drinking and making merry; and so in the house into which the prodigal was received there were music and dancing, making merry; and in all the revelations we have of heaven, liveliness is one of its most striking features. See the living creatures in Ezekiel's vision moving as lightning moves, ranging in the circles of eternity with more than angelic delight, the rainbow of new covenant assurance over their heads; the Holy Spirit giving them elasticity, buoyancy, and joys which can come only from God by Jesus Christ; the great High Priest of their profession, in their midst filling their souls with and guiding their tongues in the high praises of God. God the Father there shining upon them and jesting in the eternity of his love. See also the Book of the Revelation—all the heavenly gates there thrown open show the liveliness of the state in which they are. John heard the voice of a great "multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thundering, saying, "Hallelujah, the Lord God omnipotent reigneth!" Our times of liveliness, when we enjoy health of body, ease in circumstances, and the presence of the Lord, all combined are at best but dullness compared with the liveliness of heaven. Two things are the secret of this liveliness—first, that there is no sin; and

secondly, that God is all in all, he himself being all; and everything pertaining to sin and mortality is annihilated, God is their exceeding joy.

Some months ago, when my soul was caught up near to heaven's gate, nothing impressed my mind more than these three things: —first, the universal liveliness; second, that this liveliness was by our dear Immanuel; and third, the infinite and joyous welcome by which I should be received by all heaven. Like lightning flashing upon my mind did the contrast appear between my state of affliction in the body and, my freedom and welcome there. I can never forget what I heard or what I felt, and shall ere long in perfection realize; and the dullness which, through deep affliction, I have now so many months endured, makes to me the contrast between earth and heaven the greater. We love to be lively here on earth when the Lord makes us joyful, and the joy of the Lord becomes our strength. The universal and-ininitely joyous welcome with which I should be received made a deep impression upon my mind I and the poet is not far out when he says, —

“Anon the pearly gates unfold,  
An heir of bliss draws nigh;  
Again they strike their harps of gold,  
And hallelujah cry.”

And as to the order and manner of this reception into glory, a volume may be written thereon, but I have only space for a few words. The first feature of this reception is that of forgiveness of sin. How readily and freely was the prodigal forgiven, and his sins, not even named unto him, but only the trouble into which sin had brought him! He was dead and lost, but now is alive and found, and lively and happy at home. God the Father all our sins on Jesus laid, that he might freely and fully forgive us; and the very mission of Jesus was to put away and forgive our transgressions, to cover our sins, that iniquity may not be set to our account, that he may present us holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight, the Holy Spirit delighting to reveal this abundant and forgiving mercy; and shall we dream for one moment of ever departing from such a faith, from such a God, from such a Savior as this?

“Much forgiven, quite forgiven,  
Once for all, yet daily too,  
Let me live near Christ my Savior,  
Let me keep the Cross in view.

Much forgiven! then let boasting  
Be forever cast aside:  
Shall a newly pardoned sinner  
Dare to lift his head in pride?

Much forgiven! Dearest Savior,  
If my present state be such,  
May these further words describe me, —  
This poor sinner loveth much.”

And who without forgiveness can be received? each must seek the mercy of forgiveness. For this forgiveness every one that is godly shall pray unto God while he may be found. What words can be more joyful to the guilty sinner's ears than “Son, thy sins be forgiven thee”? How small is the sum we are called upon to forgive each other, compared with the ten thousand sins which he forgives us! If he will thus



forgive us, what will he not do for us! But this forgiveness is but one element in the order and manner of our reception to eternal glory; this forgiveness clears the way for every other blessing; this forgiveness Cain did not seek, and so obtained neither this nor any other heavenly blessing: and well it is for us that we are saved by hope, for how few Christians feel fully assured that their sins are all forgiven! but what they, know not now they shall know hereafter, and ere long our work and sufferings on earth will be over, and eternity, as said the poet, will be all leisure time; and when Jesus calls the soul<sup>1</sup> home, He will say unto it, —

“Rest, rest with Me awhile in paradise,  
Till He who bade thee rest  
Shall bid thee rise!  
Then rise with quickened powers,  
To spend with Me  
That blessed leisure time,  
Eternity.”

Your hopeful Servant,

J. Wells.

## LETTER VIII.

Ever dear Christian Friends,

What opposite experiences of the people of God are recorded in the Holy Scriptures! The nineteenth chapter of Job is a strong example of this. There we find Job, on the one hand, looking to God by the eternal redemption of Christ. He knew it was by this redemption that all iniquity was taken away; he knew that it was by this Redeemer the curse of the law would be endured, and he, Job, redeemed, therefrom; and it was a redemption from hell and from the lowest hell, that it was a redemption from death and from the grave, a redemption from all evil, a redemption that brought the soul savingly to God, a redemption that would at last take all sorrow and sighing away, a redemption infallible, a redemption that brings in eternal glory. But what kind of a person must he be who can achieve such ends as these? The answer is, "Their Redeemer is strong, the Lord of hosts is His name; He will thoroughly plead the cause of His people, and will give rest unto their souls." Thus, Job knew the Redeemer by the redemption he should achieve, so that hereby he could with full assurance say, "I know that my Redeemer liveth," and that he would carry out with unerring certainty all the rights of eternal redemption, and that he should meet him in glory at the resurrection morn. Thus far all is clear and joyful in prospect, but there is a dark cloud also through which Job had to look; and let us for the encouragement of the deeply tried see what Job's feelings and language were in the path of bitter experience. Some, it is true, reprove us for such weaknesses and such expressions, and say it is very wrong; but whether right or wrong, here are the solemn facts that it is so; and though it may be the lot of but few of the Lord's people to drink so deeply into this bitter cup, and to be tried, and have hard thoughts of God, why are such paths clearly marked out in the Bible? and how astounding to the non-Christian and to the untried Christian to hear the perfect man, the "upright man, the man that feared God and eschewed" evil, to find him so distracted, discouraged, and distressed, as to exclaim, "Even that it would please God to destroy me! that he would let loose his hand and cut me off!" What! this the perfect man? this the upright man that feared God and eschewed evil? Yes, the very

selfsame man; Thus Job must not look to himself for salvation, but to One who suffered infinitely more than a mere creature can, but never sinned, — even Jesus, who alone can deliver us from the wrath to come. Again, and again have I from bitterness of mortal existence used this very same language. Dear friends, believe me, none but those who experimentally know the contrast can understand the mighty difference between walking in heavenly

prosperity and walking in that path where neither sun nor stars appear, and a heavy tempest beating upon you, and seeming as though it would never pass off. “Here it is again” a perfect Christian man exclaims; “he hath destroyed me on every side, and I am gone, and mine hope hath he removed like a tree;” as though Job should say, “My hope bears no fruit, so he hath taken it from me as from a stony ground, that he might plant it in a good ground.” Job’s affliction compassed him on every side, and it seemed to him as though all was over with him; therefore, he said, “He hath destroyed me on every side, and I am gone,” as though he should say, “never to return again; no more shall I wash my steps in butter; no more shall the dew rest all night upon my branch; no more in his light shall I walk through darkness; no more on earth shall I again be happy while life shall last.” Such were his feelings and his apprehensions; but he goes much farther yet, and declares God hath kindled his wrath against him. Such a feeling as this would make any spiritually living soul tremble with black despair; for who can stand when once he is angry? This is the bitterest drop in the bitterest cup that affliction can put into our hands. If this secret place of thunder be so distressing, what must hell itself be! No soul can be brought into this secret place of thunder and remain careless concerning the weighty matters of faith, judgment, and mercy. And Job goes farther yet, and says, “He hath counted me as one of his enemies,” —as though Job should say, “If I am one of his friends, why doth he deal with me thus, having destroyed my family, my property, and my health, and left me here to lie helpless in sackcloth and ashes. What can I be, therefore, but one of his enemies?” And there is no other God to fly to! and, to his grief and to his sorrow, his professed friends add grief to his sorrow, and put the worst possible construction upon the cause of his affliction; and this caused him, as well it might, the deepest anguish of spirit. His friends took occasion hereby to taunt, to revile, and to reproach him. This must have perfected his anguish of mind, and made him exclaim, “Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O ye my friends; for the hand of God hath touched me. Why do ye persecute me as God?” How different their spirit from the spirit of the Savior, the dear Savior who commiserated the afflicted, healed their diseases, and set them free! Job’s friends forsook him; his very wife and servants despised him. This must have been most overwhelming to him. Oh! what should I feel were the dear friends at the Surrey Tabernacle now in my affliction to taunt me, despise and forsake me! the very thought is more than I can bear, so that I hope to remain a stranger to this bitter part of Job’s experience. But his friends were ere long, as we learn from the end of the book, convinced of their error, the Lord himself sharply reproofing them, and they had grace to repent, and were made to take a very different view of God’s servant Job. And now the clouds hanging over Job begin to pass off: he sees his Redeemer. Thus, we see the two opposite parts of Job’s experience, the one showing his great suffering and his great weaknesses under those sufferings. And let us bless our God that it is put upon record that good and great men were men of like weaknesses and like passions with ourselves. And why are these things put upon record, but to show the exceeding riches of the grace of God, and also to show that all must come right at the last, that every tear shall he dried, and that we shall not have had one sorrow, grief, or pain too many. Better to be full of sores here, and that to the day of our death, than to lift up our eyes in hell hereafter. Job was in a noble state of mind when it was written of him that “in all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.” But he soon fell from this unbounded confidence in God. But, notwithstanding all, he came out of his affliction, as every true Christian shall, much profited by the furnace.

And now, dear Christian friends, may you continue, as you ever have done, deeply to sympathize with the afflicted and the needy, for they are blessed of the Lord who do so. So, believes your tried and afflicted servant in the Lord,

J. Wells.

## LETTER IX.

Ever dear Christian Friends,

I am too ill to say much to you at present. Well do I understand the meaning of the psalmist, "Make haste, O God, to deliver me;" deep soul-trouble will open up this and all such scriptures, when every past sin is present, and the soul shut up in a fearful looking for of wrath and fiery indignation. Such being in agony do indeed pray the more earnestly I they need no outward persuasion to make them seek the Lord. The Lord hath bid them seek his face; their heart ardently answers, "Thy face, O Lord, will I seek. And yet how long are many kept in the slough of despond! Gladly would they leap out of the pit, fly out of the prison, and run from all they have and are as sinners. Their eyes are unto the Lord, that he would give them a word of mercy to enable them to hope in Christ Jesus, whom they know to be the one sure and eternal foundation laid in Zion, These know what it is to fear they shall be in eternity before a word of hope shall reach them; and who shall undertake to describe the value of the deliverance when it does come? —and come unto such it surely will, for there is a set time to favor Zion. "Make known unto me this day that I am Thy servant," is their daily prayer. I say nothing here of the temptations and fiery darts which try them while thus unassured of interest in God's salvation. Happy the soul that thus goes forth weeping, bearing precious seed of faith and prayer. Not only in soul-trouble, but under wayward and adverse circumstances, does the Lord seem to stand aloof, while under these circumstances the bosom heaves and sighs, and the Christian cries out, "O Lord, I am oppressed, undertake for me; put it into the heart of some Pharaoh's daughter to draw me out of these waters, or into the heart of some Mordecai to defeat the council of Haman and turn my captivity, or into the heart of some Ebed-melech, or that the Lord without the hand of man would step in and give me manna and water from the flinty rock." Is anything too hard for him? He holds the winds in his fists, and hides the waters in the hollow of his hand. If we are therefore still tossed about, and adversity still prevails, notwithstanding all our toiling and rowing, it just shows it is the will of the Lord it should be so; but still we may in this sense also look and pray unto him to appear for us, saying, "Make haste, O God, and deliver me." Among other reasons, lest I should seek deliverances in the wrong way, as the ancient Israelites did, when, to lessen their adversity, they sought affinity with the heathen around—and we all know the direful consequences thereof, —let the Lord deliver, and then it will be a deliverance after a godly sort; and so shall such sing, "The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad. But how trying the tarrying's, the long tarrying's of the Lord! as said the Church of old, "Awake, why sleepest thou O Lord, arise and deliver us for thy mercy's sake." So, in bodily affliction we may, well say, "Make haste, O God, and deliver me." How long do many of the Lord's people suffer afflictions! and it seems to them as though they should never be delivered. Your humble servant is one of these afflicted ones. How for nine long and dreary months, not one hour during that time, night or day, except in now and then a short sleep, — (my sleep scarcely ever lasts an hour), have I been free from agony and pain. I lie down with agony and dread. I pass the night, not as I used to do, in peace and perfect ease, but with agonies indescribable; and so I rise, and so I pass through the day. Think you not that I do not from the very depths of my soul cry out, "Make haste, O God, to deliver me"? and were a prophet sent to me, declaring that this day I shall die, with what delight should I hail the tidings! I should indeed dance for joy, and as heartily as ever Simeon did fall in with the prayer, "How, Lord, lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." Let it be now, this very day, this very hour, this very minute. O how should I leap from Bashan to the mountains of

spices, from Jordan to Jerusalem; and so should mortality with all its burdens be swallowed up of life divine. But I am yet kept alive to suffer, and perhaps in the world in this respect there is not my equal; but all will be right at last. Still I am not suffering much from the original complaint; that I trust is radically better; but I am now suffering from the sciatica, and everyone who has had the sciatica badly well knows the agonies thereof. But for this sciatica, I should now, with some degree of confidence, name a probable time when I should again be in your midst, but as it is I must leave it with the Lord to throw a light upon that department. Still pray for me, that I may be sustained under my present heavy afflictions, and that I may be restored to you the sooner. As the Lord is round about Jerusalem, so may the Lord be round about you all henceforth and forever. Amen. Your earnest and humble but faithful servant,

J. Wells.

## LETTER X.

Ever dear Christian Friends,

As I am not yet personally out of the Book of Job, nor out of lamentations, this letter will still be a voice from the valley of Achor, and from the low dungeon, and possibly from the banks of Jordan. I have light and I have life, but I have great bitterness therewith, showing that spiritual light and life are for other purposes besides those of joy and rejoicing, namely, that we may go down into the depths of sorrow and suffering, that we may learn, our weaknesses, and testify to our brethren what they would feel if they were cast into these depths, this darkness, and these deeps, and that they may see the cause there is for gratitude to God that they are favored to walk in a smoother path, a path wherein the briny tear seldom flows. I well know that all will meet on the same ground and the same level at the last. "Wherefore," said Job, "is light given unto him that is in misery, and life unto the bitter in soul, who eat ashes [sorrows] like bread, and whose tears are their meat day and night?" Such experience will enable us well to understand the words in one of our hymns, —

"Once they were mourning here below,  
And wet their couch with tears;  
They wrestled hard, as we do now,  
With sins, and doubts, and fears."

It is when we are put into the crucible that we do indeed wet our couch with tears. Never did I cry more to God in my life with such agony and earnestness as I have done in this affliction; and how many thousands of Christians have earnestly prayed for me! but as yet no clear answer has come. But what of that? He means our good, and has, by covenant promise, insured the same. Wherefore, though he slay me, yet I will I trust in him, because I believe my song (notwithstanding the depth and intensity of my affliction) at last will be,—

"I know that in all that me befell  
My Jesus hath done all things well?"

And had I not this spiritual light and life I could not bear this spiritual testimony; but I will follow Job a little farther, because the words describe that bitterness of soul into which I have pretty deeply drunk, I which long for death, but it cometh not." He still holds my soul in life, and doth not suffer my foot to be

moved, though, like Job, I have sought for death as for hid treasures, I have sought for it in the sudden relapses I have had in times past, I have sought for it in the nights of agonies I have endured, I have hoped for it in the lightning's flash and in the hidden power of God, that he would gather me from this wilderness to himself; and thus have I earnestly sought for death as hid treasures, but it comes not, and like Job should rejoice exceedingly, and be glad to find the grave. And now, dear friends, I have spoken thus from most solemn, cutting experience, and believe me when I say that constant and distressing as my affliction is, making me, as I have said, seek for death as for hid treasures, yet there are many states in which there may be but little sorrow, yet I would not exchange my bitterness for their sweets. I refer now of course to worldly and ungodly men. Doleful as is the state of mind which leads me to seek for death as for hid treasures, yet would I infinitely rather be where I am than rioting with the ungodly; infinitely rather would I be as I am than to be wrapt up only in worldly pursuits, and vainly hoping that death may never come, infinitely rather would I be where I am than serving sin and Satan, infinitely rather would I be what I am than to be left ignorant of the Mediator of the better covenant. The Lord is my witness that if I have any wish to be restored (and I dare not say I have not a wish to be restored), it is only to serve, to honor, and to glorify our God; for no other object do I desire to live, as that one object includes all other objects that are desirable. But at present the way I am to go is hidden from me; as said Job, "Why is light given to a man whose way is hid?" It is by this light that I see my way is hid. The dear Savior doth not now talk much with me, though he hath many lovely things to say unto me, but will talk more with me hereafter; as he himself said, "I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now;" so at present my way is hid; but what we know not now we shall know hereafter; but not only is my way hid, but like Job also I am hedged in; but then, if my way he hid from me, it is not hidden from him; and though I am hedged in he is not hedged in, nor is the word of God bound; and so when he hath tried me I shall come forth as gold; but all our troubles will pass away as a dream. What are the hardest things we have to endure compared with what as sinners we deserve, or compared with what the Savior endured for us? So that Job was more commendable in longing for death, and seeking it as hid treasures, more commendable than those who seek to live forever, without Christ, and without hope, and without God in the world. And if this letter be plaintive, let it not be forgotten that the promise is to them that weep and mourn after eternal things; their sorrows shall be turned into joy. So, dear friends, do not despair on my account; this dispensation is of God, good must come therefrom. Encourage your deacons, who are indeed worthy of double honor; encourage yourselves in the Lord, encourage one another, encourage the good ministers who come to speak to you in the name of the Lord; "the heart of man is as deep waters," and your prayerful presence will draw it out, and the minister will preach with more liberty and enlargement, as he feels his testimony is received, not forgetting that you are all set for the defense and furtherance of the gospel; and "God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you."

Yours affectionately in the eternal love of God,

J. Wells.

## LETTER XI.

Ever dear Christian Friends,

I am still agonizing from the sciatica day and night without cessation; still there are times when the heavens are opened unto me, but always by the complexity of the dear Savior. It is perfectly astonishing what firmness of standing I feel before the Lord for eternity when the rays of his complexity shine upon

me. The other night about midnight, and racked with incessant pain, I looked about for some relief, and could see none till the majestic words of the poet came with power into my soul, —

“Lo! the incarnate God ascended,  
Pleads the merits of his blood.”

Said I to myself, what can I want more? this will do all things for me, and each line, as I went through the verse, came with more and more power, made me feel that Jesus had loved me and given himself for me.”

“Venture on him, venture wholly,” and I did venture on him wholly; and well I might, for in him dwelleth all fulness, and each line, as I have said, came with more and more power and sweetness.

“Let no other trust intrude,” are words that came with most endearing power, and oh! I did rejoice that no other trust was needed, and if any other trust was needed, where could I look for any other trust? How suited the words for life, for death, and for the world to come! Once more was I wrapt in Immanuel’s glory; with what earnestness did I set my seal to the closing words of the verse, “None but Jesus can do helpless sinners good”! Ah, said I to myself, helpless indeed. Here am I stretched on the bed of untold and untellable agonies, bound with the heavy chains of dire affliction, but free in Jesus, whose face I daily and hourly long to see; but I need great grace to enable me to wait with patience my appointed time; and what else is there worth waiting for in comparison with the glory yet to be revealed? There are indeed intermediate mercies. I should esteem restoration to my place in the pulpit at the Surrey Tabernacle the greatest mercy, next to my eternal salvation, that the Lord could bestow upon me. I long after you all in the love and in the spirit of Christ, for ye are my joy and crown of rejoicing in that great day. I must say at present no more, only that I daily pray for you all; do the same for me. Amen and Amen.

J. Wells,

## LETTER XII.

Ever dear Christian Friends,

Though still in affliction, yet through mercy am

looking for that blessed hope and glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity.. Here do I feel, and here alone, my safety complete. Sin has done all the mischief, and is the most awful thing in existence, because it is against God, and hath lighted up an awful wrath to come; and as we all died by sin in Adam, and are saturated by that fall with sin, nothing in whole or in part can cleanse us therefrom but the blood of Jesus. I feel I do not half appreciate this infinite gospel treasure of redemption from all iniquity; none but glorified spirits fully know the value and sweetness of this redemption. Oh, how I long to be one among them I No sin! what does it mean? It means no sorrow, no pain, that every tear is dry! How shall we reach this height of bliss? The answer is, By faith in the blood of our incarnate God. Several times when I thought I was about to depart, the words have resounded through my soul, —Victory, victory, victory through the blood of the Lamb! I have felt his atonement does give the victory to him that believeth, and it is by faith in him that he purifies us unto himself; and the more we realize this the happier are we, by the mercies of the Lord, daily to present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto the Lord; and the more completely

we are enabled to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, the more boldly can we look for and hasten unto the coming of the day of God; for if our hearts condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God; and if our hearts condemn us, God is greater than our hearts, and knows all things. But, alas! where is there a Christian whose heart does not at times condemn him? But the Lord knows the sincerity of his people, notwithstanding their faults. "Simon Peter, lovest thou me?" The Lord knew that he loved him, and that sincerely. The consciences of the Pharisees of old condemned them, but the Lord, notwithstanding all their righteousness before men, knew they were no part of his purified people. "Ye are," said the Savior, "of your father the devil." They did not even believe on the Son of God. Their purifications were ceremonial, but not vital. Thus, the Lord knows how to distinguish his people compassed with infirmity, from the Pharisee, the self-deceiver, who trusts that he is righteous, and despises others. But the real Christian regains again and again his boldness; though he inwardly fall seven times a day. yet he rises up again, and is zealous of good works, and so goes on to prove his eternal election of God.

We hope to have a few more words on this all-important subject next Lord's day.

Yours ever to serve in the gospel of Christ while life or breath remains, J. Wells.

### LETTER XIII.

Ever dear Christian Friends,

May I have another word with you upon that blessed hope and glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ? The apostle John gives a twofold representation of those who are looking for this blessed hope—first, as their hearts condemning them; and secondly, as their hearts condemning them not. Every Christian is made to feel that every sin is a sentence of condemnation, and as there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good and sinneth not, each knows more or less what it is to tremble at the word of the Lord; and where sin is suffered to abound, the louder is the voice of the condemnation of the conscience. This humbles them deeply in the dust before the Lord, and increases their sincerity to God, and makes all appear emptiness of emptiness apart from God, his mercy and salvation. And the Lord knows such; he will not condemn them, though they thus condemn themselves; and this I have found, for since the beginning of this dire affliction, how many rebellious and hard thoughts have I had of the Lord! I have borne the affliction more like a wild bull in a net than anything else. Truly I mourned like a dove, and as a crane or a swallow have I chattered, especially when I think he is cutting me off with pining sickness; yet he enables me to lay fast hold of the blessedness of the man whose transgression is forgiven, and whose sin is covered. Thus, when I look at myself in what I am as a sinner, my heart condemns me; but infinitely precious faith in Jesus frees me from all condemnation. Here my heart condemns me not, but on the contrary, I have the witness in myself that I do unfeignedly believe in him, and the Lord, knowing all things, knows how to account for our infirmities as he knows also our sincerity; and it is a remarkable thing that John uses the very same words upon this subject that Peter had used before him. John says, "The Lord knoweth all things;" and Peter had said before him, "Lord, thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love thee;" and though Peter, like the rest of us, deserved condemnation, yet his soul was reconciled to God, and he loved the Savior in sincerity, and was therefore neither a Judas nor a Simon Magus, but a true disciple of the true Messiah. This is that sincerity that shall obtain that blessed hope and the glory thereof. And now, dear friends, may everything with us be secondary in comparison of this hope, that we may live as those that are alive to God and godliness, that we may come off at the last with

a good conscience before God and the Lamb, for time is indeed short: twelve or thirteen, I believe, of our dear friends have been taken from us by death since the Lord first laid me aside.

Abide by the house of the Lord, uphold the hands of the deacons, and pray for me your afflicted servant, and may great grace rest upon you all.

J. Wells.

#### LETTER XIV.

Ever dear Christian Friends,

I am favored now and then with a little fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ; I can then abound in hope by the power of the Holy Ghost, and then a little resignation and submission to his will are felt; but, alas! this does not last very long, it takes but little to cast me down; none but the Lord can raise me up.

My affliction is indeed mysterious. Again and again have I asked, why am I thus cut down? Why this affliction in its terribleness hidden from me, until it was too late for it to be averted? Who would have thought that a little local pain of body, unnoticed, would lead to so many days and nights of pain, agony, and sorrow? and I know not how many more "such gloomy lines are writ for me," but still, mysterious as it is, would it not have been more so if it had pleased the Lord thus to lay me aside when the chapel was only half built, and only half paid for? If I see you face to face no more in the flesh, yet I leave you a beautiful sanctuary, in which to assemble from time to time to worship the Lord your God, to seek your own good, the good of your children, and children's children. I leave you the thousands of sermons that I have preached and published, as testimonies of the grace of God. I leave you a volume of Lectures on the Book of the Revelation; I leave you a sermon on Infant Salvation, which nearly every Christian who possesses it highly prizes; I leave you the letters written in Achor's gloomy vale; I leave you a free people, and you know it is the truth that has made you free; I leave with you a body of Christian men as deacons, willing and well able to join with you heart and hand to see that truth, vital godliness, and gospel order remain in the Surrey Tabernacle; I leave in your midst, in England, and different parts of the world, witnesses of the saving power which has attended my testimony. All this I have been enabled to do because the Lord gave you a mind to keep your shoulders to the work until the Tabernacle was finished, and many times has it since then been filled with the glory of the Lord. And now, dear friends, let me stand aside, and say, not I, but the grace of God that was with me; and I am sure you will willingly join with me in saying, "These have been the Lord's doings, and are marvelous in our eyes." Thus, then it seems that the affliction could not come until certain ends were reached; and he who has stood by the deacons and the members, and by you all, can make all grace abound towards you.

Mercy has been mixed with judgment, so that we shall all ere long sing of mercy and of judgment.

And now the Lord preserve you blameless until that great day, remembering it is by his death that you are presented holy, unblameable, and unproveable in his sight. How sweet the thought that Jesus is the way that we are to be thus presented!

Yours most sincerely and affectionately in the Lord,



J. Wells.

## LETTER XV.

Holy Brethren, Partakers of the Heavenly Calling,

There is nothing on earth nor in heaven to surpass the sweetness of being in body and soul holiness unto the Lord; but how shall this thing be, seeing we are all as an unclean thing, and we all do fade as a leaf, and our iniquities like the wind have carried us away? But Jesus died, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God! He then is the sent One and High Priest of our profession, and the heavenly calling shows us our need of him, and gladly would I conform with more and more earnestness, more depth, and more advantage, to the holy advice given by the holy apostle. Consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus, who is so worthy to be considered as the Holy One of Israel, who hath put away our sins, not with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with his own precious blood. Oh, how I thirst for the perfect realization of that holiness which is by faith in the blood of the Lamb, so as to have no more wanderings of a fallen and vile nature! Oh, how gladly would I be rid of every one of my sins, great as my affliction is, and heavy as my groanings have been, and piercing as my cries have been, I would rather retain all my bodily miseries than retain one sin. Oh, what is life to me, with all its treasures and pleasures, compared with holiness unto the Lord! I would indeed be holy as he is holy. What weight doth the great matters of faith, judgment, and mercy give to the holy apostle Peter's words! — "What manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God?" And without holiness we cannot with boldness meet that day; and this holiness must be personal, therefore it is that we cannot have this holiness personally without being born of an incorruptible seed, that lives and abides forever, nor without the atonement of the Savior, nor without his righteousness, nor without being brought into the bond of his covenant, and so be drawn by these heavenly cords and bands into daily consecration to God, doing that which is well pleasing in his sight. Well for us all that this holiness unto the Lord is by faith, while we need strengthening and refreshing every day; yet he that is washed need not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit. In this sanctification we stand by faith, and it is not by anything we are by nature, but by what we receive of the Lord, that is to say, we receive the Son of God, and such become the children of God, and it is their delight to be holiness unto the Lord; as said the Lord, "Ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation," and such as a people I have found you to be.

One and another taken from our midst reminds us solemnly of the words of the great High Priest of our profession, "What I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch."

Dear friends, let us pray that, we may ever remember that all these things are of God, who hath reconciled us unto himself by Jesus Christ, and hath made us his friends forever, nor will he cease to be our Friend forever. Amen.

J. Wells.

## LETTER XVI.

Ever dear Christian Friends,

What the dear Savior said to his disciples of old, he has said the same to me in many solemn, and in some pleasing senses of the word, "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place;" and so I have of necessity done, but the separation has wrung from my heart innumerable groans, and drawn from mine eyes innumerable tears, and made my pathway a darkness that might be felt. I have indeed groped for the wall like the blind, as if I had no eyes; nor could all nor any of the hymns contained in our own hymn-book, nor in the deep experienced hymn-book of Mr. Hart, nor any chapter in the Bible, nor the conversation of any one Christian friend, give me to see my eternal election of God. Though I thus groped as those that have no eyes, yet I had eyes and could see the truth, but I could not see my interest in it. I stumbled at noonday as in the night, and I can hardly now imagine how I could be so unbelieving. I felt that I was in a desert place, and as a man spiritually dead; yet all this time I could not see the Lord Jesus, he could and did see me. I could from personal experience indeed say, "Thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel the Savior;" I and Jesus often hid himself from his disciples, that they knew him not, but he knew them, and his eyes and his heart were upon them perpetually. He has indeed called me into a desert place; and when he shall again say, "Come ye yourselves apart," it will be to part with the church militant to join the church triumphant, to leave my heavy load of distressing affliction, and range in all the freedom of the eternal hills. But he has not yet so spoken. Many, many times have I said, "Lord, this exclusion from the habitation of thy house is indeed a desert place;" and so the disciples came to him and said, "This is a desert place;" and they seemed to think if they did not soon get out of this desert place they should never get out of it at all, for they said, "The time is far spent;" and this is the feeling of every Christian when troubles thunder loud and thunder long. Yet they were just where he commanded them to be; for he said, "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place." Yet even here they should have some rest, for he said, "Rest awhile;" but it is a kind of rest that no disciple likes, yet it is good in the sight of the Lord it should be so, and the desert after all was more seeming than real. For can it be a desert place where Jesus is— even Jesus only? No; for it must yield the peaceable fruits of righteousness. This the disciples soon saw when they handed round to the five thousand persons the multiplying loaves and fishes, all were astonished, all were filled with bread, Jesus was exalted, and God glorified. Is not all this encouraging to the afflicted and poor whom the Lord leaves in the midst of Zion?

Lord, increase our faith and patience also. Yours most truly in tribulation's path,

J. Wells.,

## LETTER XVII.

Ever dear Christian Friends,

Would that I were so free from sciatical pains (for there now lies the chief of my burden) as to write to you cheerfully and joyfully! but I am still in the seventh chapter of Job, and am with Job asking the Lord, "Am I a sea or whale, that thou settest a watch over me?" for the intervals of ease are so short, and the return of the sciatical pains so mighty, as to make me feel as though the Lord was determined to destroy me. Yet, again, when he gives me an interval of ease, and the original complaint going on as well as the nature of the complaint will admit, then I can read the Holy Scriptures, and can see the infinite beauties thereof, and feel assured that let matters end how they may, they must end well. But again, he hides his face, and then I am greatly troubled, and my soul chooses strangling and death rather than my life. Only think, dear friends, how great the burden my affliction must be to make me think little of death in

comparison of what I suffer; and as to the dear Savior, the conqueror of death and of hell, he is indeed the apple tree among the trees of the wood, he is indeed the rose of Sharon and the lily of the valley. I do, as I have said before, indeed long to see him as he is, and while in anguish of body and mind, my soul chooses strangling, that is, would be willing to leave mortal existence by any means the Lord should see proper to use, and death, said Job, rather than my life. Mark that, friends, my life, that is his mortal life, not that life he had in Christ, for he would not choose death rather than that heavenly life. Job knew the difference between his own mortal life and the life he had in his Redeemer; he knew that the life he had in Christ would carry him through all his troubles, raise him from the dead; and present him like unto his Redeemer's glorious body. He did not choose strangling and death rather than this life he had in Jesus; he well knew that when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, he should appear in glory with him. Oh, how it cheers my heart to think that the whole work of Christ is imputed unto us who with unfeigned faith believe on him! Not one thread of righteousness doth he need of that righteousness which he wrought out and brought in for us, as he was never otherwise in himself but complete in righteousness. And again, how sweet the thought that he had no sin, spot, wrinkle, or blemish of his own, so that he needed not to shed one drop of blood for himself nor to undergo one wound, grief, or sorrow for himself! All, all, all, was for poor perishing sinners. How is it then that many of us are such poor doubting, staggering things as we are? This dear mediation would, had the people eyes to see, and hearts to believe in the value of such a Savior, fill all the churches and chapels in the world, and will at the last people heaven with countless millions of souls. Dear Savior, I see thine eye of pity from Calvary's awful cross looking upon me. thou hast loved me, I feel that thou hast.

I must say no more, and yet I feel as though a volume of eternal things were written on my soul.

Dear friends, great grace be with you all. Yours ever in the eternal love of God,

J. Wells.

## LETTER XVIII.

Men and Brethren, and all ye that fear God,

Several are the visitations that the Lord has granted unto my soul from the fourteenth of John, and he so favored me a few days ago, melting me down in the deepest humility before his dear feet, looking down from infinite heights upon a poor crawling worm of the earth, and saying unto me, "Let not your heart be troubled." I said, "Lord, I cannot help my heart being troubled" "Ye believe in God" — "Yea, Lord, I do most solemnly and sincerely" — "Believe also in me." Ah, Lord, that is, what I want to do. May I believe that thou hast taken my sins and put them away? May, I believe that I am one of thine? May I believe that thy dear mediation includes a guilty, lost, and helpless sinner like me? May I believe I am washed in the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness? May I believe that thou were made sin for me? May I believe that thou were made a curse for me, even for me? I Again the words came with power, "Ye believe in God, believe also in me." I do not know that I ever did in my life believe in him more gladly or more unfeignedly. Yes, Lord, I do believe; help thou my unbelief. Oh, in what lovely aspects Jesus now appeared! Then said I, The way out of, all my troubles is to believe in God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent. Yes; for all things are possible unto him that believeth. Oh, how good and how pleasant I felt it to be to believe on him! This indeed is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins; and again, the words, as in the twenty-seventh verse, came with power, "Let not your heart

he troubled, neither let it be afraid." When we can by precious faith see the work of the dear Savior set to our account, there is nothing, no, nothing to fear. I Let any Christian in his dying hour he favored with such a visitation as this, he would indeed, as he passed through the valley of the shadow of death, fear no evil. I then began to look about for the many mansions in his heavenly Father's house. I began to say, "Lord, which is the way to them? —east, west, north, or south? or is it beyond the skies arid the stars of heaven hung out as lamps to show us the way? No, no. The words then came with power and freshness, as though I, had never read them before, "I am the way" I seemed all at once to spring into a paradise, a garden of delights. Oh, said I, how lovely! how suited I how pleasant the way! holiness is its name! no lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall be found there; a river runs by its side, and trees grow on its banks, and bear perennially, all manner of fruits. The moment the soul by precious faith steps into this path it thereby proves that it is passed from death unto life. What majesty in the beautiful words, "I am the way!" —a way in which everything is for us, but nothing against us. Dearest Savior, I will not say, Art thou he that should come, or look we for another? for I am divinely sure that Thou art He that should come, therefore I will not look for another.

Dear friends, so believes your humble servant in the Lord,

J. Wells.

## LETTER XIX.

Ever dear Christian Friends,

My prayer is that not one of you may ever come to the bitter experiences that I have gone through, and which at times I am still the subject of. I am ready to say with Job, "How long wilt thou not depart from me?" which of course means, How long wilt thou continue to afflict me? And the soul tossed to and fro as the locust, and the poor body full of pains, these two make up a perfect bitterness, which, as I have said, I hope not one of you may come into I but still, as there are, some whose way is hid, a few more words upon this dark path may be acceptable unto such. Let us, then, follow Job to the end of his seventh chapter, and, if it be the Lord's will, follow him to the end, of his captivity; and as the Lord was better unto him than all his fears, so let us hope that the same God in his mercy will be better unto us than all our fears, and that the Lord will ere long, as to his afflicting hand, depart from us, and will here or hereafter load us with benefits in the place thereof. Job, like me and many of you, felt the preserving hand of the Lord underneath it all, therefore said, "I have sinned; what shall I do unto thee, O thou Preserver of mien?" and the end of the book shows what he would do unto the Lord, that he would bring honor and glory to his holy name. This was only by the Lord's blessing the latter end of Job more than his beginning. Yet Job seems to have thought that the Lord had a peculiar dislike to him, for he said, "Why hast thou set me as a mark against thee, so that I am a burden to myself? I and so it is when the Lord cometh with troops of afflictions against us, and builds, as it were, a stone wall against us, reaching unto the heavens. It is not easy to run through these troops, nor leap over this wall, yet both these Job was at last enabled to do. "A burden to himself!" what a description this of soul-trouble and bodily affliction combined! He felt he was a sinner, for he said, "I have sinned!" he sought for pardon, but found it not; he sought for a sin-bearer on the right hand and on the left, but perceived him not; therefore, he said, "Why dost thou not pardon my transgressions, and take away mine iniquity? I He well knew that it was God alone that could do these two things, namely, pardon transgression, and take iniquity forever away. It is true these fears were groundless, but in his affliction he looked at his many troubles as sure signs of his eternal destruction, and

therefore said, "Now shall I sleep in the dust; they shall seek me in the morning, and shall not find me," —that is, I shall be cut off before I find either the pardon of my transgression or the mercy of God in taking away mine iniquity. Such precisely is the path I have walked in, and am now sometimes walking, but it will not be forever. These experiences will make any person feeble in mind and body. Well might the apostle say, "Comfort the feeble minded."

Your hopeful servant, earnestly looking for all that God hath promised to them that love Him,

J. Wells.

## LETTER XX.

Ever dear Christian Friends,

How mysterious are many of our experiences! yet it must be the grace of God or nothing. I have I suffered much this week, not from my original complaint, but withal enabled to pray somewhat in faith. No impenetrable cloud has been allowed to come between me and the Lord. So, weak is my poor heart, that I can look to him and leave my cares with him only a little while at a time; but this is in accordance with what he himself hath said, "A little while, and ye see me no more; yet a little while, and ye shall see me again, and your heart shall rejoice" This little while in which we see him not seems to me generally a very long while. "Oh, when wilt Thou come unto me?" is the language of holy longing for God; and how sweet the thought that Jesus is the end of sin! — yes, of all sin, this is that abominable thing which makes us afraid of God, afraid of death and eternity; but Jesus hath put away the abominable thing, and hath made us pleasing to God. I am altogether at a loss for words to express what I see and feel upon the dear Savior's wondrous words, "It is finished;" and should the Lord be pleased to restore me, and touch my lips as with a live coal from off the altar, shall not the person and work of our dear Immanuel be dearer to us than ever? But how much of convincing power to bring the Savior into that light before us, to make him and the fulness dwelling in him the all we seek, and the all we live for to glorify him! I feel in my own soul as though eternity itself, as it were, is not long enough to bring out His endless praises; and could we more mightily overcome that iron pillar sort of "if," and each be able to say, "My beloved is mine, and I am his,"—oh, when we can thus see he is ours, then we can say, "Oh, what a friend is Christ to me!" But here the enemy works with us more or less, telling us it is all very well, but it is not for us. This is where I stumble more than anywhere else; yet how essential I find these exercises to be! Dear brethren, my recent experiences have brought me to nothing, and less than nothing. I am indeed less than the least of all saints, but I feel an increased earnestness to take heed unto what the Lord hath spoken, Great is the earnestness I feel for my own soul, and for your souls; and should I be restored, I hope .to be able in private and in public to prove the same. Our respected deacons have carried out towards me to the uttermost of their ability every good feeling, you have towards me.

Dearest mercy compass you about and reign over you all.

Yours in best affection,

J. Wells.

## LETTER XXL

Dear Friends,

I am not yet destroyed, though I am much, very much cast down, and can in no wise lift up myself; but not so much cast down as in the former part of this illness, when I thought that I should certainly be, body and soul, cast into hell. Since that I have several times realized the truth of Mr. Hart's words, —

“When Jesus with his mighty love  
Visits my troubled breast,  
My doubts subside, my fears remove,  
And I'm completely blest”

These visitations have preserved my spirit, and again proved my hope to be as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast. Nevertheless, in the absence of these visitations I am much cast down. My body already much wasted and never free from pain, —these are the sure effects of sciatica when it has, as with me, taken a very strong hold; so that unless the Lord turn my captivity the outward man is fast perishing. But what of that? It is what all must undergo, only some by a less painful process and at God's right hand “there everlasting mansions stand.” So let us be cast down where we may, we have infinitely more to rejoice in than we have to be sorry about, for sorrow, sighing, and mourning must flee away; the matter is settled, and eternal redemption, as we see both in the 35th and 51st of Isaiah, is at the basis of these assurances. So that everlasting joy must come, in, and every tear be dry; and the more earnestly we look for and seek these treasures, the better; and I can, when in my right mind, say, “These light afflictions are not worthy to be compared in weight with the weight of glory to be revealed.” One drop of heavenly joy can outweigh all our woe. I have just seen one of your kind supplies; he gives a good account both of the deacons and of you all, not only for your united concern for the cause, but your earnest desire for the welfare of your poor afflicted servant, which greatly encouraged me. Oh, my ever dear friends, who is there that can be so worthy of our souls and bodies and services as the Lord our God himself? For though with me clouds have for a long time gathered thick and thundered loud, yet ere long eternal sunshine will settle on our heads.

Heavenly love be abundantly with you all.

J. Wells.

## LETTER XXII.

Ever dear Christian Friends,

Oh, how I envy you the sweet privilege in assembling in the name of Jesus! but, alas we seldom adequately prize our mercies until they are in whole or in part taken from us. It is solemn work to dwell in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is; the public ministry of the word is more owned and honored by the Lord than any other means he hath appointed. For thirteen dreary months have I been shut out from the sanctuary of the Lord. Oh, dearest Lord, set me somewhat free from affliction that is worse than iron bands. I should need no human persuasion to bring me with lightning pace, if the thing were possible, if

only once more to see an assembly of his dear children as olive plants round about his table. But here I am like a bramble, a briar, or a thistle, and left as though I were not worth gathering into the garner; and though favored with softening refreshing visits from on high at times, yet I have no lovely sabbaths to look forward to, nor refreshing week evenings. Yet now that the Lord has given me a little hope again, I can well remember that I have many times gone of a Wednesday evening as happy as I could wish on this side of the grave to be, with not an adversary or an evil near me. I did indeed eat my bread with joy, and took my simple beverage with a merry heart; but woe is me now, for I dwell in the tents of Kedar, and sojourn in Mesech, where no water of life is. Oh, how dull and solitary I get in this state! The Lord be with the dear ministers that speak to you in his name, that they may so minister that you may exclaim as one man, "Draw me, we will run after thee:" and if at times you get nothing, it is not because the well is empty, but because your times are in the Lord's hands. But still go on with "Spring up, O well, sing ye unto it," and pray that I may soon join you, that we may once more rejoice together; and if I should be favored, soon or late, I am sure I should come in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ. Oh, how it gladdens my heart to see the deacons, individually. and unitedly, the members and the seat-holders, continue to hold, the mystery of faith in a pure conscience, thereby purchasing to yourselves a good degree of honor and boldness in the faith! For myself, I now feel it is as difficult to believe I shall be lost as I did in the former part of my illness that I should be saved.

Heavenly-mindedness be with you all, Your humble but anxious servant,

J- Wells.

### LETTER XXIII.

Holy, and dear brethren and Sisters in the lord,

It is a great pleasure to me to seek and to have a little heavenly fellowship with you, I will therefore, in the utmost simplicity, tell you a little more how matters are with me in these things. First, then, unless the warfare be accomplished, unless Jesus be the end, the entire end of the law for righteousness, unless his work be such and so complete I feel I could have no hope; but not anything is more clear than this, that he did finish the work the Father gave him to do. Any ambiguity in this great matter, then, I sink into black despair; nor can all the affliction the Lord is pleased to lay upon us alter our vile and atheistical nature. I find these enemies striving daily to make me forget God, and certainly "the wicked shall be turned into hell, with all the nations that forget God." Seeing that I am by nature one of the wicked, and one with the nations that forget God, what then can I rest upon for eternal life but the completeness that is in him? This is one step in the path of saving faith, and the wicked, as I have said, shall be turned into hell with all the nations that forget God. As I am by nature one with them, and at times fear I am nothing else, then the gloomiest doubts prevail, and I fear to call him mine. Where I as sure at all times that Jesus is mine as I am that all the threatenings of the Bible belong to me as a sinner, then I should neither doubt nor fear my interest in Jesus; but then he that seeth the Son, and I do see him, all but as clearly as I shall see him in heaven, and unto such belong the declaration, "Her iniquity is pardoned." Ah, that's it, Lord! O infinitely precious theme! pardoning mercy is that mercy in which the Lord especially delights, or not one prodigal could be so freely received; but they are all freely received. Thy mercy, O my God, is indeed the theme of my song; how many times has it made my feet like hinds' feet! —is pardoned, let me look at it again and again; there is nothing, no, nothing between the accomplished warfare and the forgiveness of sin. See how the one follows immediately upon the other, before the ink of one sentence upon record is

dry the other leaps upon the parchment, —is pardoned, words never, no never to be erased. O ye lovers of these eternal truths, my mouth is opened unto you, and were I out of this prison-house of affliction, and in the pulpit, this loveliest of themes would carry me along that I should not know where to stop. The Lord be with the dear ministers, to show unto you more and more these saving mysteries. And why is it said (Acts viii. 8) that there was great joy in that city? It was because Philip wrought great miracles, wonders, and cures by preaching simply the Christ of God unto them. There is no sorrow which he is not a remedy for.

Grace enable us more and more to live to him who died for us and rose again, and, “on his bosom dying shall indeed life eternal gain.” Grace be with you all. Amen,

J. Wells.

## LETTER XXIV.

Ever dear Christian Friends,

I am still pressing on, and I hope improving, though very slowly. I believe the bitterness of death with me is past, though not death itself, nor the bitterness of life, which we shall ere long remember as waters that pass away; Above four hundred days successively has the cup of trembling been, put in my hand, yet hitherto I have been preserved in life. But who can say that ere long my strength may not return unto me, and I shall once more behold the glory of the Lord in the land of the living; but the glory of the upper world is such that I sometimes feel I would rather go at once than stop any longer; and then again I have a great desire to return to my work on earth, but you have had proof that the Lord does not forsake you. The deacons are, no doubt, discouraged; they must do as I used to do, put the encouragements over against the discouragements, and like David, encourage themselves in God, since none ever regretted so doing. I do indeed long and thirst for the day when I can come and appear among you, yet cannot but rejoice that such a goodly number of ministers of the new covenant have been found to minister unto you, and all the friends that I have seen express their satisfaction of the deep and devoted interest they have shown and do show for the welfare of the Surrey Tabernacle.

And you, the people, have endured the trial too long to think about giving up now, or even slackening in the work of the Lord. O Zion, “let not thine hands be slack,” and the glory of the Lord will yet more abundantly rise upon you, for Jesus is come that we may have life, and have it more abundantly, however other things may be. I feel there is always something great to look for in the gospel. I feel, when I look unto the hills, whence cometh my help. The peaceful glory of God has to reconcile me to my mysterious and rugged path? How have I been shut out from the people of God! one hour could see a friend with pleasure, the next hour too ill to see any one. I have never willfully declined seeing any one; it was not that I would not, but that I could not. I have too much Christian sympathy and love to all the friends willfully to decline seeing any one; these are but straws that will pass off with the current of time, and so let them go. My object, should I be favored to return, will be the salvation and welfare of precious souls; nor could I forget in my public ministrations your long-continued kindness and firmness in the faith during so long a trial. God is your shield and exceeding great reward; and there I pray that you may be still steadfast and immoveable.

Dear friends, continue to pray for me, as I also will for you. The Lord bless you all. Amen.



J. Wells.

## LETTER XXV.

Ever dear Christian Friends,

I am glad once more to say a word on our hope of eternal life, and the circumstances connected therewith. Everything doth even now at times depart from me except my hope. 'Tis awful work when our hope, the last anchorage of the Holy Spirit, is hidden from us: but through mercy this is not my case just now. As godliness hath the promise of this life and that which is to come, so I hope I have the hope of eternal life, and the hope also of being restored.

Dear friends, I am in the order of a kind providence come to reside a little nearer to you; the country did not agree with my health, having been in my own dear London ever since I was thirteen years old. So, it is in a manner my own native air, and it is here in London that innumerable blessings from on high have been heaped upon me, and by my humble services upon hundreds of others also, and I trust it is not ended yet.

I had, last Tuesday evening, the honor, the pleasure, the unspeakable delight of seeing our beloved, our respected deacons once more around me, in holding a deacons meeting in my little cottage residence, which the deacons and friends kindly obtained for me. This deacons meeting was one of the most honorable, respectful, and Christian steps that they could have taken. I am much, very much encouraged by it; their testimony of your continued kindness was gratifying to me to the last degree. I trust your labors of love will not be lost, nor be in vain.

I am still very ill from the effects of sciatica, but not so ill as I was before I left the country and came to London. I feel it essential, as my medical attendant assured me that it is necessary, I should be kept very quiet for a time; so, if the friends will kindly abstain for a few weeks from visiting me, I hope by that time I shall be able to see any one. My inability, to see the friends is no small part of my trouble, but I am sure no one would wish to be imprudent in this matter. The friends can always know through the deacons how I am, and how I am going on.

The Lord be with his dear servants who speak the word unto you, and bless you all, and that very greatly. Amen.

J. Wells.

The following five Letters were read to the Church at the Administration of the Ordinance of the Lord's Supper.

LETTER I.

To the Members of the Church of the Surrey Tabernacle.

Dear Brethren and Sisters in the Lord,

Shall I ever meet you again at the table of the Lord? There is one thing sure, whether I meet you on earth or not, the Lord himself will meet you, and be in your midst. But oh! how you need the power of the eternal Spirit to enable you to recognize the greatness of the occasion on which you are assembled! The elements, the bread and the wine, are very simple things, but not so the things signified thereby. The bread of God is a deep and eternal mystery; so is the wine of the true vine, Christ Jesus. How differently from the mere formalist must you view this holy ordinance! Often have I noticed that unusual darkness of mind, unusual hardness of heart and wanderings of thought accompany us generally while attending to this ordinance. "Of feeling all things show some sign but this unfeeling heart of mine" is often the inward and sore lament of each Christian. So, then, if the bread and the wine could help us, as we eat the one and drink the other, all these evils would at once be overcome; but to prevent our building on the wrong foundation, or looking the wrong way, or taking the shadow for the substance, the Lord makes us conscious of the emptiness of the one, that we may feelingly seek after the other. But perhaps for many ordinances we may not find it, but nevertheless it is doing as he commands; and with all our want of feeling on such occasions, we yet feel that we love him. This is one of the Lord's dealings difficult to be understood. Just where we would have our hearts melt with love, our souls hum with praise and adoration, and our minds absorbed in the eternal glories of the cross, and thus come near unto God, our exceeding joy, instead of this, we seem kept at a greater distance. Is not this not only to beat us off from false confidences, but also to remind us that this ordinance is to show forth the Lord's death till he come and his death was a suffering time? And is it not meet that we in this solemnity of Zion should drink a little of that cup which he drank so entire, and thus have fellowship with him in soul-trouble? for his soul was troubled and exceeding sorrowful, even unto death. What is the darkness we feel compared with the darkness that rested upon him? and what is the hardness we feel in comparison with the hard things he had to endure? what are the hidings on these sacred occasions of his face from us in comparison of the penal hidings of God's face from him which he underwent when he exclaimed, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" The enemy tempts us sometimes that because we do not enjoy the ordinance we should forsake it; to give way to such a temptation as this would indeed be to sin against the Savior. Just look at it dear friends, and ask yourselves the question, "Bid Jesus abide by us from day to day, and when his sufferings became more bitter than death, did he abide by us because he enjoyed his sufferings?" No, but because he loved us, had undertaken our cause, and came into the world to plead the same. So, we profess to love the Lord, to serve him, and to defend his cause; for thus says the Lord, "If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him." If the dear Savior was willing to be where our sins were, and where the wrath of a fiery law was, and where death in its most awful form was, shall we be indifferent to his commands, and to his ordinances, because we do not always enjoy them? Is this our love to our heavenly Friend? Such love will not stand the day of trial. But it is not all darkness, nor all distance, nor all weakness; for as there appeared an angel strengthening him, so the message of this Messenger of this covenant has sometimes at the ordinance softened and greatly comforted and strengthened our hearts, and we have felt it good to be there; and as the enemy went backward in Gethsemane, and fell to the ground, so now sometimes at the ordinance the enemy meets with a fall greatly to our advantage, as a pledge that we shall ere long obtain the final victory. Everything, therefore, seems with increased emphasis to say, as a voice from the Lord, "Abide with me" for there is no abiding anywhere else, for here we have no continuing city. And though I meet with you in spirit, and rejoice in beholding your order and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ, yet I seem most instinctively to wander away from ordinances on earth up to the everlasting hills, where the shadows are all fled. I hardly thought I could have stood so face to face, with death and feared it so little, or, rather, not at all; but what cannot the Mediator of the better covenant enable us to do? Gladly would I return to you; but when I feel low, and have but little hope of returning to you, then my eyes and my heart and soul are up to the Lord, but am unable to speak

out what I see and what I feel of these eternal things. Our Jesus doth indeed intercede for transgressors; it is by remembering him that our God does forgive and forget all our transgressions, and receives us into all the plenitudes and charms and glories of the mansions prepared. Nevertheless, we are to make it our first and last object to glorify our God on the earth. Believe me, dear friends, nothing else can bring us a sure reward. Alas! we do not always think or feel the truth of this. Well, let us bless the Lord for any feeling at all after eternal things; let us earnestly pray we may increase in this feeling, that our thirst for God and hunger for the chief things of the ancient mountains, and precious things of the lasting hills, may be kept up; and although for myself the Lord is not I pleased to keep me with him in that fellowship I could wish, yet there are times when I realize the truth of the poet's words, —

“Jesus, the vision of Thy face  
Hath overpowering charms

and then I infer from this, —

“Scarce should I feel death's cold embrace  
If Christ be in my arms.” . >

My heart is full, but space forbids my saying more. Dear friends, cleave by precious faith, in all holiness and righteousness, unto Jesus. He will not say thee nay. The peace of God be with you all. October, 1871. J. Wells.

## LETTER II

Dear Brethren and Sisters in the Lord,

Once more you are assembled-to commemorate the most solemn event that infinity itself knows of, that of the substitution of the Son of God. Among other truths this substitution sets forth is the certainty of the punishment of all sin, that punishment must be equitable, either in endless torment of the sinner, or in the all-sufficient sufferings of the Savior. He gathered up an infinity and an eternity of woe in his own person, and by his eternal omnipotence encompassed the whole. Then if God had spared sin anywhere, it would have been in his own dear and well-beloved Son. But did he spare it there? He did not. Where, then, shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? He travelled on from his very birth, from sorrow to sorrow, from grief to grief, from burden to burden, from conflict to conflict, and often might he have said, “Why all this ado? may not souls be saved without my wading through these mighty deeps?” No, no; he stands the surety of sinners, untold millions of sinners; and these millions of debtors are things of nought; all must fall upon the Surety. Is he to be spared nowhere? Echo answers, “Nowhere.” The Lord will never alter his decision against sin, his nature being infinitely and entirely averse thereto. Had the man Christ Jesus, as he entered Gethsemane, the least hope that he should be spared, and that he should not be called upon to suffer all that was due to sin, then he had not sweat great drops of blood falling down to the ground; but instead of this, when he drew near the scene of his death, the heavens became blacker and blacker, until the sun became darkness in the midst of heaven, and the earth began to tremble, and nothing but his own hidden almighty power upheld him. If God, then, spared not him, how much less will he spare angels or men from the full penalty due to their sin! It may well be written, “Stand in awe of him, and sin not.” How hard does fallen nature, and how do circumstances and the prince -of darkness labor

to hide from us the awfulness of sin? Such have been my solemn feelings of late, especially upon this matter, I hardly feel I could join in singing the words, —

“When rolling worlds depart on fire,  
And thousands sink to hell”

Could we but more deeply realize what is meant by the word “hell,” connecting with the word hell that of the burning lake and eternal duration, oh, how deeply would our minds then be solemnized! and we should indeed serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Sin, that hell-born power, spoils us in everything. More and more do I admire and wonder at the dear Savior’s words, wherein he said, “I was not rebellious, neither turned away backward;” and oh, how my soul clings to him in this! for I have done little else but rebel all the way I have come. But he hath received gifts for men, even for the rebellious, that the Lord God might dwell among us; and if the Lord God by his dear Son be with us, then it must be well with us. But, dear friends, brothers and sisters in the Lord, consider, as far as you can, how great were the labors and the sufferings of the Son of God to deliver us from the wrath to come. Could we but see sin only in a thousandth part of its evil as he saw it, we should indeed momentarily fly from it. Alas! alas! all could and did fly from the Son of God: they all forsook him and fled. Oh, what deadly errors we commit until better taught! They all forsook him and fled. But how different on the day of Pentecost! Thousands then, and thousands have since, through grace, fled from sin to the Savior. Oh, tis an awful truth that he that offends in one point is guilty of the whole; so that one sin, if laid to our charge, could shut us up in remediless woe. Now, dear friends, how utterly worthless and worse than worthless are human works in this great matter of putting away sin and bringing life and immortality to light! You love good works, as they adorn the doctrine of God your Savior, and no one can have a good conscience without them; but to put them into the place of his one great work, as all deluded people do, is one of the most awful errors we can commit. Nowhere does God’s hatred to sin appear as in the death of his dear Son, and here at the same place is revealed the love of God to man; and oh, how sweet the thought that it is everywhere in the Holy Scriptures—that not one humbled, earnest sinner who looks to Jesus will ever be turned away! How often have I said to you, by word of mouth, and hope I shall again before I die, namely, that when the Savior was here below, he never turned one away that came humbly and believingly to him. This is encouraging to us all. I cannot tell you how much I love this dear mediation of this dear Savior. It may well be written that he is our peace; and if we are filled with joy and peace, it must be by believing in him. I can of late hardly mention his name without being melted to tears of love and joy. Hear friends, pray that he may be more and more; precious to you. To be with him, and never, never sin, is a blessedness which it would be in vain to attempt to describe; but until that day he will be our advocate with the: Father. He is at once the sacrificial Lamb and the dear High Priest, daily and forever to present us faultless before God and his holy angels. Who else or what else could do this? for “to which of the angels said he at any time, sit thou, on my right hand, till I make thy foes thy footstool?” But what doth he not say unto his own dear Son? I and what he said to him he does by him say to poor sinners, for the promises of exaltation, of joy and glory, made to him are yea and amen promises to the people. He came short of nothing in his work, and so will come short of none of the glory; and you know, dear friends, you well know, that all his true followers are to be like him, and to behold his glory. I have failed in mind and body, but Jesus never failed, nor could he be discouraged, but brought forth judgment unto victory. And now may it be our highest aim by that victory to go on from strength to strength, till every one of us in Zion appears before God. As a church you have much to be thankful for; your deacons stand by you, and you abide by them; and let us yet hope for good days to come.

Your humble but sincere servant in the Lord,

November, 1871.

J. Wells.

### LETTER III.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in the Lord,

We are one month nearer the solemn hour when we must pass through that valley of death which so many of our friends have so recently travelled through, and which valley brings everything relating to us (except our sins) to nothing. I cannot contemplate the hand of the Lord in taking one and another from your midst without being deeply impressed with the words, "Be ye also ready." What an infinite gap is here, and what an awful gulf which can be filled up only by the person and work of him who is the true God and eternal life. The gulf is an infinite gulf, and can be passed not by deity alone, nor by humanity alone, for the same person that suffers must have a nature that can suffer, and also must personally possess almighty power to compass our sins, and terminate and bring them to nothing. Therefore, it is written, "His own arm brought salvation unto him." And now, dear friends, he stood in the mighty gap. The true prophets of old stood in this gap, but they left it as they found it; all they could do was to testify of the coining of that Just One, who alone could "fill up the gap, and make up the hedge for the house of Israel to stand in the battle in the day of the Lord," and in this gap or this breach between God and man there was no standing for any man, Jesus, therefore, stood in, and by his own eternal power; nor could the true prophets of old stand there, except by faith in the promise and in the Christ of God. Here they stood and showed forth his glory; and what is all this for but for the salvation of sinners, who have "nowhere else to flee, no sanctuary, Lord, but thee?" So, then, if death put an end to our worldly hopes, the death of Jesus (O for more than a seraph's fiery tongue to speak the words, "the death of Jesus!" it will take eternity to bring out in full the meaning of the words, "the death of Jesus")—so that to be made meet to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light is not so small and easy a work as is generally supposed. In the first, place, in order to be meet for the inheritance of the saints in light there must not be a spot or blemish of sin, for, the nature of God and sin are at eternal war. All the glorious things said in Solomon's Song arise from this great mystery that Jesus shall present the great congregation without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it shall be holy and without blemish; and, indeed, all the blessed things spoken of in the Bible arise from this one truth, "Ye are complete in him." It is only as these great truths of mediation are revealed. to us that we can feel that we are ready to fall in with the midnight cry, "Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him."

Dear friends, I have been several times, at least to human appearance, at the very gates of death, and the solemnities of death do not lessen as you draw near thereto, I do not wonder at the apostle saying "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, being made conformable unto his death." His death surpasses everything you can think of; it is the voice of mercy, by which God in heaven speaks to man upon earth; it is indeed "the voice of love and mercy sounding aloud from Calvary." Thousands are the forms and divers the manners by which this voice brings to light the hidden treasures of eternal love; and when we can recognize this voice we can indeed stand in the battle in the day of the Lord, singing, as we pass along, of the testimonies of the Lord, hearing him say, "Sing ye unto her, A vineyard of red wine; the Lord do keep it, I will water it every moment, I will keep it night and day; lest any hurt it." But the false prophets did not make up the hedge for the children of Israel to stand in the battle in the day of the Lord; and what is this hedge but the boundary over which the enemy cannot step, except by divine sufferance; and if the false prophets of old did not know this hedge Satan himself knew it. Therefore, said Satan unto the Lord concerning Job, "Hast thou not made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all

that he hath on every side?" Inside of this hedge Satan had access for a time, and was in due time cast out; the hedge; was made up as it were afresh, and Job, who had seen great and sore troubles, was now comforted on every side. Ah, "is he a God, and shall his grace grow weary of his saints?" There is then a way, and that way is the fountain opened for the washing away of sin and healing the leprosy of the soul; and then comes the spotless robe of imputed righteousness, and the Lord seems to be saying to my soul, "Fear not, poor prodigal; the shoes, the ring, the robe, the music, the provision are all there before you, waiting for you to appear in them, with which forever to make merry with thy friends." These are the things that will carry us through the new year, and without this the new year will be a sorry season with us; he will make all grace abound towards us.

December, 1871.

J. Wells.

#### LETTER IV.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in the Lord,

I have had no bright shinings these last few days, but am now living in the confidence of faith, prepared to live, prepared to die, the dear Savior being my all in all, and it is as a poor and needy sinner that I have confidence in his fulness; there's not a sin nor a threatening which his work doth not cover, and I, like you, wish ever to be faith full to him, ever earnestly to confess my need of him, ever to seek him who alone is never to be parted with; and oh, what a gift do I feel this knowledge of and confidence in him, and never shall I forget what I felt when my hope and my strength seemed pep shed from him. "Ah" said I, "now I'm a wretch undone, no other name, no I other foundation, no other Savior." I hope I shall never be in the like despair again, for no language can describe the distresses of such a state when you feel that you are without Christ, without hope, and without God in the world. When first called by grace, I felt pretty deeply the solemnity of this hopeless state, but not as I felt it in this illness; now when the Savior says, "Do this in remembrance of Me," my heart bounds towards him, and says, "Lovely Lord Jesus, of whom should we do it in remembrance, if not in remembrance of thee? Oh, how my soul is wrapped up in him! he hath indeed formed me for himself. I feel loosened from the earth, and my soul increasingly cleaves to Jesus, my soul follows hard after him; not only can I say that "still my soul would cleave to thee, though prostrate in the dust" but I can say, "my soul doth cleave to thee, though prostrate in the dust of this affliction."

Dear brothers and sisters, look at our Lord Jesus Christ, that there is not a sin to be seen nor to be heard of, except that they are forever destroyed; he is the morning without clouds; let us, then, pray for grace to walk with him, and seek more and more to serve him seeing "our sins can never be found." Here we are pleasing to God, even as Christ is pleasing to God. Well might the apostle say, "Consider one another, to provoke one another to love and to good works:" and may it be our daily language, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" We well know what sin, the world, the flesh, and Satan would have us to do, but the Lord will enable you to "tread underfoot the lion and adder, the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under foot," and so go on with—Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? serving him with gladness for the abundance of all things, feeling that the confidence we have is well grounded—for faith is the confidence of things not seen; be unfaithful as Judas was to the Savior, we thereby cast away our confidence, and so we should not obtain the great reward; therefore cast not away your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward; as says the apostle, "I have kept the faith: henceforth there is a crown of righteousness laid up for me, and for all those who love the Saviors appearing." Many times have I, when, with you, while I have held in my hand the bread of blessing or the cup of blessing have I thought,

if there is one thing I love above another it is his appearing; for he appeared to plead my cause, while I had nothing to do but to look on while this angel of the Lord did wondrously, and he will plead our cause until the last enemy is destroyed. Shall we, then, be negligent in serving such a Savior as this? nay, rather be fervent in spirit, serving him, by setting each other good examples. You thereby provoke each other to love, and shame the lukewarm out of their lukewarmness. When one sees another attend diligently the house of God and the ordinances of the Lord, he will say, "this man or this woman loveth much," I will pray I may have more of the same spirit of diligence to serve the Lord. Yea, such a one will say unto you, "what is thy beloved more than another beloved?" and "whither is thy beloved gone, that we may seek him with thee?" and so you will encourage each, other in seeking and serving the Lord, and we all know that -

"Happy the heart where graces reign,  
And love inspires the breast."

I am sure there is not one among you that would willfully flight the dear Savior; he walks in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, but when he sees some absent that ought to be present, does he, not then feel slighted? he does not expect anything of his enemies, but it is so ordered that his friends love him very sincerely.

The deacons are neither running about to other places nor neglecting their own, and you all feel pleased to see them in their places. And then, when provoked to love, good works are sure to follow. You are good examples of this, "and we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence, to the full assurance of hope unto the end;" the apostle does not omit one; he would have everyone join in this love and in these good works; and "so much the more as ye see the day approaching." But how little can I say in a short letter like this!

Your humble but earnest and sincere servant in the Lord, J. Wells.

January 7th, 1872.

## LETTER V.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in the Lord,

The nobles of the children of Israel are to be of themselves, and no man hath any divine nobility about him until born of God; and so, Jesus must not only be God, but be the Holy One of God, and this fitted him for his holy and noble work; and his holiness had to be tried to the uttermost and last degree. And when the soul is born of God, it then becomes one of those noble characters out of which the Lord chooses his ministers, and these and their testimony find out every soul that is ennobled by that incorruptible seed that lives and abides forever. We are to learn of Jesus, and one of the lessons we are to learn of him is, reconciliation to the dealings of God with us. How great, how long is the distance between where he stood in his infancy and that "end of sin" he had to bring about! and as he looked at the path that led thereto, he saw that opposition and reproach would attend every step; but he set his face like a flint, that he might overtake us and save us. He saw, also, that sin and Satan and the world and persecutions would try to outrun him and stop him. Not all these, nor the cup which was to be put into his hand at the last, could hinder him from rejoicing in the joy set before him, even rejoicing as a strong man to run a race, thirty-

three years and a half, so that many were his sorrows and few were his joys; yet at the last all his adversaries were ashamed, —looking for nothing by day but hard labor, privation/hunger, thirst, and weariness, and at night not where to lay his head. Now as the dealings of God with him were special, so with us very often his way is in the sea and his path in the great waters, many of his footsteps are to us as yet unknown, and this is that we should trust in him and obey him, and rest assured it will all come out right at the last; and the more we are reconciled the nearer we are to the spirit of Christ. It is true we are poor rebellious creatures, but the dear Savior could not afford one rebellion. One sin found ' in him and all is lost. No, he did not only not commit sin, but was indeed faithful to him that appointed him; and though he was the representative of nothing but holiness of God and heaven, yet in order to be the spotless representative of the Church, and that he might present that Church spotless as himself, he is reconciled to the great matter of being made sin for the people, that is, he is made sin “representatively,” the sin of the people was viewed as upon him. Here it is he said to the soul that seeks him, “Thou art all fair, there is no spot in thee.” But, what he suffered to reach this perfection for us who shall tell? But he did reach it; nothing can be added to it, and nothing can be taken from it. This is the way to God, and if we have a right knowledge of the same it will greatly, and increasingly consecrate us to God, and there is no happiness without this consecration to God. “Delight thyself in the Lord, and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart;” and if he does not make us all we could wish to be on earth, he will grant, our desires in a higher and better sense than this by making us partakers of the glory which is to be revealed. We cannot be too much reconciled at the thought of departure from this world. It is easy to talk of death when it is at seeming distance, but when it is seemingly drawing nigh, and when you think it is really drawing nigh, and the Lord at the same time hides his face, oh how different the scene! Many times in my illness all that I could say was, “O that I had never been born!” But darkness has been driven away, and a willingness and longing to depart has taken its place.

Dear brothers and sisters in the Lord, what after all should concern us but this approaching eternity? Looking to the sufferings of the Savior is a great help to the reconciliation to our lot. How fully then did he do his Father’s will! how nobly did the ancients abide in the faith! and how nobly have you been enabled to stand by the truth and cause of God to this day! Ministers that come to preach to you admire your steadfastness and unity in the faith; some all but envy you such a body of Christian men as deacons. Now may you go on to stand out for God and godliness, for everything virtuous, noble, and divine.

Yours in deepest heavenly affection, as well as in deep affliction, February 4<sup>th</sup>, 1872. J. Wells.

## CALL BY GRACE

The following brief Memorial will serve to commemorate the memory of the late, Pastor of the Church at the Surrey Tabernacle, who labored for upwards of forty-two years as a Minister of the Gospel.

THE words of infallible truth declare that the steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord. James Wells was born in the year 1803, at Alton, in Hampshire, he was brought up roughly and hardly, but being a lad of spirit he had an ambition at a very early age to earn his own living in his journeys from the country to this great metropolis and back. For several years he was the subject of many interpositions of divine Providence, though at that time unknown or uncared for by him. Being sharp and naturally intelligent he was entrusted with the delivery of valuable parcels. His pursuit of knowledge under difficulties was



rewarded to a wonderful extent, and he became a thoroughly trustworthy lad. His settlement in London, and the results following, are truly astonishing, as the poet Kent nicely describes: —

“There is a period known to God  
When all his sheep, redeemed by blood,  
Shall leave the hateful ways of sin,  
Turn to the fold, and enter in.”

The following account, written by himself, may be prefaced with his own words: “My chief desire in writing my experience is the hope of its being useful in the best of all causes, and in encouraging the Lord’s family in their pathway through the wilderness.”

In giving a reason of the hope that is in me I begin with observing that in the month of December, 1824, the Lord was pleased to lay me on a bed of affliction, which affliction continued three months. After being ill about seven weeks I was brought, to all human appearance, to the gates of death, when the innumerable multitude of my sins set themselves in array against me, and the terrors of the Almighty made me afraid. The weakness of my body, the anguish of my mind, the fear of death, the dread of condemnation, and the seeming assurance of endless woe, — these things sunk me into a pit of such ghastly apprehensions that I exclaimed, “I am lost, I am lost!” which horrible pit the Psalmist knew something of when he said, “Let not the pit shut her mouth upon me.” I well remember that one evening the terrors of my mind were so great that my tormented imagination almost persuaded me that the old fiend of the bottomless pit was then in the room waiting to receive my soul into the vengeance of eternal fire, and that an angel would come directly and summon me to the judgment-seat of God, and that God with His almighty arm and intolerable frown would send me down to the lowest hell; while I was convinced that if there was one place more awful than another I deserved that place. I wanted to go to sleep, that I might forget my misery, yet I was afraid, lest He should suddenly cut me off. However, I did sleep a little, but I was tormented in my sleep with such dreadful apprehensions, that of the two it was worse to be asleep than it was to abide awake. Job appears in this path when he speaks thus: — “When I say, My bed shall comfort me, my couch shall ease my complaint, then Thou scarest me with dreams, and terrifiest me through visions.” When the morning light appeared and I found that I was still spared, the terror of my mind seemed a little abated; in a word, the Lord let me alone a few hours, and suffered me to take a little comfort. I then begged of my wife to teach me the Lord’s Prayer, which I had been taught when a child, but had now forgotten; but this I soon found was quite useless, for I felt that my guilt was too weighty, my sins too mighty, the law too holy, justice too inflexible, and the devil too daring for anything to be done by my repeating a form of words. I felt that I was indeed tied and bound with the chain of my sins, that the powers which held me in fearful suspense were not mere nominal powers, but real powers. “What,” said I to myself, I can I do? Not one evil that I have done can I undo. Here are my sins present-with me; I am possessing fresh in my memory sins which I had forgotten, which I had looked at as trifles, but which are now like burning mountains around me, and ready to roll in upon me and seal my awful doom. Ten thousand worlds could I have given if I had never sinned against the Lord, or if I could have seen anything like hope of mercy; but all was dark, even darkness that might be felt. I was at this time totally ignorant of the great atonement of Christ, never having been among Christians, either nominal or real. I had learnt nothing about religion, even in the letter of it. While I continued to get worse in body, and death seemed drawing near, what my feelings were I cannot fully describe. The holiness, majesty, and power of God were dreadful to think of. “Yes,” said I, “my soul is immortal, and must live to all eternity; the Lord will never forgive me, for I have done nothing but sin, I possess nothing but sin, and I deserve nothing but curse and condemnation for sin.” How little, how trivial, what toys, what vanities the treasures, and pleasures, and honors of this world appeared! but how great, how important, how solemn,

how weighty, appeared the things of eternity! I felt as though I had done with, this world, and had there been given to me by the Lord a hope of mercy, I believe I should have been perfectly willing to depart; for such was my state of mind, that it was not for the sake of continuing in this world that I had any desire to recover, but I desired to recover that I might live a good life, get my past sins forgiven, and in this way get to heaven at last; so ignorant was I, as said one of old, “so foolish was I and ignorant; I was as a beast before thee” (Psa. lxxiii. 22). While in this state, a young man (a Wesleyan) came and talked to me. He told me that Jesus Christ died for every one of the sons and daughters of Adam, that God was merciful, and that if I would believe in Jesus Christ, and do my part, the mercy of God was so great that he would save me. My part, he said, was to repent and believe. He also knelt down by the side of my bed, and made a very great noise, which extorted from me a great many tears. However, his preaching and his praying, like my own prayer-saying, left me where they found me, or if there was any difference, sunk me lower, for I soon learnt that faith and repentance were out of my reach. Believe that Jesus Christ died for sinners, and that God was merciful, I really did; but the question, with me was, whether he would be merciful to me; this was what I could not believe. Repent I could, if repentance consisted in being sorry that I was such a great sinner, for the apprehension of everlasting destruction made me heartily sorry for the things I had done. I seemed to believe with a devil’s faith, for I believed and trembled. My repentance seemed to be the repentance of Judas; but my mind was not yet, even in the most distant manner, made acquainted with the great plan of salvation. I still thought that the matter lay in a great measure with myself, yet I felt that I could not help myself. But, thought I, if I should be restored to health I shall be able to do many things. I can then read and pray, keep the Sabbath, tell no lies, say no bad words, and shall be better able to drive evil thoughts away; in a word, that I shall be all religion, inside and out, week days and Sundays, at home and abroad, among friends and foes, in adversity and prosperity. But then the thought would come that I should not be restored to health; “I shall behold man no more with the inhabitants of the world; I shall go to the gates of the grave.” Wearisome nights where indeed appointed me, and I was full of tossing’s to and fro unto the dawning of the day. My life, in my apprehension, hung in doubt. I feared night and day, and had none assurance of my life; “remembering mine affliction and my misery, the wormwood and the gall; my soul hath them still in remembrance, and is humbled in me; this I recall to my mind, therefore have I hope” (Lam. iii. 19—21).

I go on to observe that a few days after the young man’s visit I was put into a hackney coach, and taken to St. George’s Hospital, Knightsbridge, where my health began to improve, so that I was soon able to go to the chapel there, and very glad I was to go, hoping that as the Lord had not cut me off, he would yet show mercy; that is, if I did my part. I cannot expect it without, said I to myself. When I came to the chapel, the service consisting in Church of England formalities, I seemed full of confusion. I knew not when to sit down nor when to stand up; so, I was guided by the people in this little piece of Popish business. I well remember when the following words were made use of, “Lord, have mercy upon us, miserable sinners,”- my heart really went with the language, for I deeply felt my misery and need of mercy. The text was, “Make your calling and election sure,” which text came, to my heart like, a messenger of death, and struck quite dead what little comfort I seemed to have; for what making my calling and election sure could mean, I could not make out; and if the minister gave the meaning, it was in a way that put it out of my reach; but that was not doing much, seeing that I was so confused and distracted that I hardly knew where I was. However, the text continued to follow me, and increasingly alarmed and terrified me, for I thought it contained a secret I knew nothing about; and so, it certainly did. In the first place, what the term election meant I knew not; and in the next place, how this election, whatever it was, could be made sure, I could not find out; and as I saw no one inclined to be serious in the ward where I was, except those who were really dying, I could not prevail on myself to ask any one, thinking I should get no other answer than a laugh at my ignorance; and if I had, it would have been one fool laughing at another.

When I came out of the hospital, I went as soon as possible to a place of worship, comforting myself with the thought that I was yet out of hell; and as I went on regularly attending a place of formal worship, I soon began, to conclude that to make my calling and election sure was to keep the ten commandments, believe in Jesus Christ, love God, and deal honestly with my fellow creatures; and that, by being thus faithful, I was going on to do my part. There I was, laboring to be accepted in my own filthy rags, trying to enter the kingdom by the law of the bond children, working hard to make my old Adam nature holy enough for heaven, and all this time thought that I was certainly going the right way to work; yet somehow or another I could not succeed. I used in the evening to try to reckon up how many bad thoughts I had had through the day, but I thought I had so many bad ones that I began to question whether I had one good one. I felt that I was not half nor a quarter so religious as I ought to be, and as I must be if ever I went to heaven. I could not think how it was, hard as I tried, that I could not be as good as I wished and worked hard to be. I was more and more dissatisfied with myself, and sometimes a scripture would come and make me tremble, especially the following: "Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment." These words, day after day, pierced me through and through. I felt and saw of all tribunals there was none so dreadful as the bar of God. Said I to myself, "What shall I do? where shall I appear; how shall I lift up my head, having not one thing in my favor? Oh, that I could be good, that I could get rid of all evil thoughts and feelings, that I could love God with all my mind, that I could be holy even as he is holy!" While in this state I joined, the Arminian camp, and as I heard a great noise, I thought it was the noise of war with the world, the flesh, and the devil; but in the course of a very few months I found that this noise was the voice of freewill boasting of the golden calf of creature sovereignty; for when Moses, came with his fiery law, and burnt the calf, ground it to powder, and cast it into my cup, and made me drink it, I was very much dissatisfied with my situation. Bitter, experience taught me the nothingness, helplessness, and vileness of the creature.

I went to a Sunday morning prayer meeting, and the people who came to this meeting seemed very happy, very holy, very zealous, and, very noisy. They very kindly asked me what I had done for the Lord, and said they hoped. I was not a stranger to these things. I told them that I really was and feared I always would be. They then asked me what I had experienced; so I began in my feeble way to relate some of the soul-troubles, trials, hopes, and tears with which I had been exercised, and that my nature was so wicked that I seemed nothing but sin. They then told me that there needed a deeper work of grace to be done in me, which, said they, you may have if you will but believe and pray; yea, they told me also that the Lord would so sanctify me and make me so holy that I should not have one evil thought, nor have occasion to say with Paul "O wretched man that I am I" for he said this when he was first under conviction; he went on to perfection (perfection in himself they meant). So, I received. these lies, and knew not but they were God's truth; for although they brought me no deliverance, yet I was very much pleased with these old wife's fables: a child is pleased with toys and rattles, which, when it arrives at manhood, it will scorn to be amused with. So, these free-will rattles were at that time to me very amusing; for, thought I, if I can get rid of my native wretchedness, and become quite holy, I shall be happy at once, for I have no other trouble worth calling a trouble when compared with the misery of sin which I daily feel. For this desirable object I strove and labored hard, and sometimes actually fancied that I was getting a little better. I one day told one of the perfect ones that I thought I was getting more heavenly. "Ay," said he, "that's right; you will be perfect if you go on." Ay, said I to myself, that I will. But this conceit lasted only a few hours, for the following reflections soon stripped me of my flattering notions. I bethought myself thus: what am I to do with my past sins, —are they forgiven? I have no reason to believe they are forgiven, and tremble with fear that they never will be. Again, hath the Lord given me true repentance? am I really born again? have I ever been one moment free from sin? do I not feel the workings of pride, ingratitude, hypocrisy, worldly-mindedness, peevishness, — yea, evils of all sorts? have I not promised that I would drive all those enemies out, and have I driven one out? do I not seem more instead of less under their power? do not

these evils hinder me from setting my affections on things above? do I not feel as vile as sin can make me? and what one good thing have I done? not one; and what have I towards being righteous before God? not one thread; and where shall I look for comeliness? am I not deformity; itself? can there be a more helpless worm under the sun? am I not beset, morning, noon, and night, with thoughts and feelings which I should be ashamed to utter? and "he that offendeth in one point is guilty of the whole." Where is that perfection, or any signs of that perfection of which I was just now dreaming? Thus, in me sin revived, and thus far killed my false hope. I was working hard, and I believe the devil was too, to keep me ignorant of, my real state as a sinner, that I might build myself up in delusion, and go on in enmity against the truth; but as fast as I built my hay and straw houses they were burnt, and I was driven about seeking to enter into the kingdom, but did not yet know the narrow way.

After a few weeks, I was again catechized to know what progress I had made, how much holiness I had obtained, how much sin I had got rid of, how much better I felt, what work I had done for the Lord, and whether I was going on to perfection; whether I truly loved God and all my fellow-creatures. But I had found, by distressing experience, that the Ethiopian could not change his color, nor the leopard his spots; for I found not only a law in my members warring against a law in my mind, but my mind was filled with such blasphemous thoughts that I trembled and feared that the Lord would cut me down as a cumberer of the ground, and at once sink me to perdition. This being my state, I told them what a sinner I saw and felt myself to be, and what fearful looking for of judgment I had, and that my wicked heart, since I had been trying to make it better, was, if possible, ten times worse than before. To this they gave but little heed, which made me begin to suspect that they, were strangers to the deep waters I was then wading through. I then began to read the Bible more and more. I found many parts of the Word seemed to contradict their doctrines; and then, again, many parts seemed to favor their doctrine. these apparent contradictions filled me with confusion.

About this time one of the most pious and most perfect among them told me that those who had committed the unpardonable sin could not repent. This made me tremble, for I thought this was just my state; and although I did not know in what the unpardonable sin consisted, yet I felt such hardness of heart, darkness, deadness, vileness, evil workings, and confusion, that "surely," said I, "I have committed this sin." Yet, strange 'to say, at times I seemed careless, light, trifling, vain, and worldly-minded, but still there was an uneasiness at the bottom, and I felt that these things were of the flesh, and tended to betray me into inconsistency of conduct. From this, however, I was, upon the whole, mercifully preserved, but the ten thousand abominations: working within made me truly miserable. There I was, with my heart like the nether millstone, and my mind like an old bush full of thorns, and destitute of all that was good, and seemingly destined to be burned, "Yes," said I, "if inability to repent be an evidence that I have committed the unpardonable sin, then I certainly am lost, for I cannot repent, nor love God, nor cleanse my heart; and what is to be done? I have nothing but sin in me; I have done nothing but sin; there is nothing due to me but condemnation for sin; there is nothing else before me; there is nothing else for me."

While under this state of mind I became so peevish that I could hardly give any one a civil word. I hated my own existence, and thought that the Lord made me see and feel my wretchedness that I might have a hell here as well as hereafter. Yet now and then a little secret hope would spring up; and then, again, I thought it was nothing but a delusion for me to indulge in anything like hope; for, thought I, what have I to recommend me to God, to give me any hope that he will receive me? Nothing at all; and it is wonderful that he has spared me as he has, for I do nothing but break my promises which I make to God. I have promised to guard against bad thoughts, to be humble, not to think about this world, not to speak one idle word, not to forget God. "Now," said conscience, "you have broken these vows again and again, therefore you are a downright hypocrite. You appear serious before men, while in your heart you are full

of rottenness and everything which is abominable in the sight of God. You are a very monster." "Well," said I, "this is certainly all true, and my best way will be to forget heaven, to forget hell, to forget God and my own soul, and everything pertaining to religion, for there is no hope." But the more I tried to carry this resolution into effect, the further I was from it. The words, "What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" came rolling in upon my mind like a mighty tempest, driving all before it, so that I could not trifle with the name, the ways, or the word of the living God. I felt that I was a sinner; I felt that there was a God; I felt that he was holy, that he was a consuming fire; that he was a sin-avenging God.

About this time, I went with a Wesleyan to hear an aged minister. He was a low Calvinist; therefore, the Wesleyan could hear him very well. His text was, "Love one another with a pure heart fervently." He talked a great deal about its being the duty of Christians to love one another, and it was to me a season I shall never forget; the blasphemous thoughts, the dread of damnation, the vivid recollection of past sins, without a seeming grain of hope; I would have given anything if I could have got out of the chapel. (The chapel I now allude to is in Paradise Row, Chelsea.) The old gentleman, with his duty-love tale, was to me a miserable comforter, a physician of no value; ay, and I now believe that he was a forger of lies. I know, he came not, in his ministrations, into the prison where I was, nor even to the door. We came not near each other throughout the whole of his sermon. He did not preach like a sinner, saved by grace, nor like a minister of the Spirit. "I was sick and in prison, and he visited me not; I was hungry, and he gave me no meat; thirsty, and he gave me no drink; naked, and he clothed me not; a stranger, and he took me not in." And no wonder, for if he himself had never been sick and in prison, how could he know where to look for those whom God had wounded? How, if he had never been longing and thirsting, could he sympathize with those who were ready to perish, and whose tongues failed with thirst? How, if he had never felt that he was a stranger, could he describe either what it is to be afar off, or what it is to be brought nigh? Such are false apostles. The Wesleyan with whom I went to hear the old gentleman was mightily pleased, and, of course, I was not offended, for then thought the minister really was that good, holy, meek, humble creature which he seemed to be. Such, however, was the misery I had felt that I dreaded going to a place of worship again, lest I should again be beset in the like manner.

There was now given to me a ticket to be admitted to a love feast, on which ticket were written these words, — "James Wells, admitted on trial." The last two words were quite enough for me; On trial! on trial! thought I; on trial! they certainly begin to see that I am just such a poor creature as I feel myself to be. Well, then, of what use will this love feast be to me? I have no love, nor life, nor light, nor anything else, that accompanies salvation. In this way, I reasoned myself out of the love feast, so that I did not go. I had not forgotten the old gentleman's duty-love sermon; nor rather, the anguish of mind and heart I experienced while trying to listen to it. But though I did not go to the love feast, yet I still attended the Sunday morning prayer meeting, where and when each was expected to say a little concerning his experience. My tale as usual being nothing but lamentation and woe, I was altogether out of their tone, I could neither be lively, nor pleasant, nor glory even in appearance, although I kept my trouble as much as possible to myself, and tried hard to be as cheerful as I could. While I began to be convinced that, there was something somewhere that I knew nothing about, these Wesleyans never seemed to feel either their vileness or helplessness in the way that I did.

I now began to run about to different chapels to see if I could hear a Bible experience described, and also to find if the doctrine of election were really a doctrine of the Bible; for I began to have some inclination to think that absolute election was a doctrine of the Bible, although I could not as yet receive it. I ran about on Sundays and week evenings from chapel to church, and from church to chapel. I found one preaching up human duties; another charitable societies; another universal offers and invitations; another

saying election was a doctrine of the Bible, but we had little or nothing to do with it; but as to entering into and opening up eternal election, divine predestination, the infinitely glorious atonement of Christ, the acceptance of the Church in Christ, her oneness with him; her certain salvation by him, her coming through grace to him, her willingness to suffer for him, her resting upon him, her longing after him, the saving operations of the Holy Spirit, real soul-trouble, distressing temptations, long and deep searching's of the heart; these rising billows, these storms, these earthquakes, this rending of the vail from top to bottom, leaving the sinner no shelter; these things, together with manifestative mercy, are things with which the ministers I at that time heard were evidently unacquainted. Yet their sermons are often so feasible that, being themselves deceived, they would, if it were possible, deceive the very elect; but the Lord's elect are taught of God, and who teaches like him?

As I now had, from reading the Bible, some faint and distant views of the doctrines, I became (in addition to my concern and longing for mercy) anxious to know whether the high doctrines or the low doctrines were the doctrines of the Bible. I had tried the low doctrines, and no poor creature could be more, earnest than I had been and still was. I had found that if the low doctrines were true, for me there was no hope; for I was in my misery, beyond the reach of Wesleyanism and low Calvinism. I was, in my apprehensions, beyond the reach of mercy. Yet as I went on reading the Bible, and hearing dead-letter men, I became increasingly inclined to believe that election was a doctrine of the Bible.

About this time, I was led in the course of providence into the company of a man who was favored with a knowledge of the truth. He talked to me of Christian experience in a way that described a great deal of what I had been through, and when I found he had been where I then was, I related to him some of the fears and conflicts with which I was then exercised. He said that he believed the Lord had begun a work of grace in my heart; from which I felt very greatly encouraged. It quite revived me, and made me feel as though I could almost hope that there might be mercy in reserve for me, so that I went on seeking mercy, at the same time fearing I should never find it. He told me also of election, but as I could not as yet believe the doctrine, I began to cavil at it, nor could he make me believe it; yet he brought scriptures enough to stop my saying any more against it. While I was thus staggered between high and low doctrines, a Wesleyan told me that the eighteenth of Ezekiel completely overturned all the high doctrines, for there it is written, "When a man turneth; from his wickedness, and doeth that which is lawful and right- he shall save his soul alive;" "But when a man turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth: iniquity, his righteousness shall not be mentioned." How, said the Wesleyan, can you get over this? Well, I said I certainly could not, but that perhaps there was a meaning in it that neither of us could see.

I was at this time grown very cautious, for I began to see that there were deceivers gone out into the world, and that in the Lord's name. This eighteenth of Ezekiel tormented me considerably, until I came to these words, which began to open up the secret and make the matter clear, "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new I covenant with the house of Israel; not according to the covenant I made with them when I took them by the hand and brought them out of Egypt; but this is the covenant that I will make with them in those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws in their hearts, and write them on their minds, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." Well, said I, this new covenant is high doctrine all through. The laws of truth are to be written in the hearts of the people, their sins are to be forgiven, and remembered no more forever; the laws of truth are to be thus written and the sins of the people forgiven by the Lord himself, and that according to the counsel of his own will; for there is no if, but the promises are yea and amen. Moses set before the people life and death, good and evil, and they were to choose which they would, but Christ hath destroyed death. While Moses, in old covenant language, tells the people to choose which they will; Paul, in new covenant language, tells the saints that they were blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ, according as they were chosen in him before the

foundation of the world. The old covenant came with, "If thou obey the voice of the Lord thy God, thou shalt be blessed in the city and in the field, in thy basket and in thy store." The new covenant comes with, "I will put my fear into their hearts, and they shall not depart from me; I will be their God, and they shall be my people." The old covenant comes with, "This people do err in their hearts for they have not known my ways." But the new covenant comes with, "And they shall all know me, from the least to the greatest."; The old covenant priesthood was after the law of a carnal commandment; the new covenant priesthood is after the power of an endless life. The deliverance from Egypt was after the order of the old covenant, and was temporal; but the salvation of the new covenant is eternal. The Lord took the old covenant people by the hand; he takes the new covenant people by the heart. The food, the raiment, and the victories of the old covenant people were after the flesh, and temporary; but the food, the raiment, the victories of the new covenant people of God are after the Spirit, and are eternal. The genealogy of the old covenant people was after the flesh; they were reckoned after the flesh; but the new covenant people are reckoned according to the Lamb's book of life; all their sins, were laid on him, they are reckoned not as children of men, but as children of God, "heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ;" "reckoned not after the image of the earthly, but after the image of the heavenly; " in which relation, likeness, and position, they are spotless, unblameable, without fault, and eternally safe. The throne of the old covenant is at an end; but of the throne of Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant, it is written, "Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever" The kingdom of David is no more, but of the kingdom of Christ there is no end. The royalty of the old covenant was tarnished; the royalty of the new covenant remains in perfection of beauty. The vineyard mentioned, in the fifth of Isaiah was after the order of the old covenant, therefore destructible; the vineyard mentioned in the twenty-seventh of Isaiah is after the order of the new covenant, and therefore, indestructible. The parable of the prodigal son, as far as it concerns the prodigal, is the language of the new covenant; therefore, the prodigal, notwithstanding the enormity of his sins, was joyfully received, abundantly, forgiven and supplied, entertained and made welcome to all that a father's heart could devise or his hand provide; but the parable of the talents is after the order of the old covenant, and therefore the approbation of the Lord depended not upon the obedience of one for them. They could not be approved in another, but must each perform the conditions in order to enjoy the reward. Mere creature obedience can receive, as a reward, nothing more than creature things; but the obedience of Christ is called the righteousness of God. Therefore, it is that those who are chosen in Christ are made partakers of the Spirit of God, are brought to live in the life of God, are upheld by the power of God, are guided by the counsel of God, are made acquainted with the mind of God, rest upon the immutability of God, glory in the salvation of God, are supplied from the fulness of God, and forever shall they dwell in the presence of God.

Again, as there was a disparity between the two covenants, so there was some degree of likeness. The old covenant did not extend to all nations, neither does the new covenant extend to the whole race of Adam, for "he hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth." The paschal lamb was for the Israelites; Christ laid down his life for the sheep. The Lord put a difference between the Egyptians and Israel; true believers are not of the world, because the Lord hath chosen them out of the world. The Lord hath made them to differ. The manna and the water out of the rock were for the Israelites; Christ is the life, the sanctification, and the way in which the souls of his people are satisfied. The promised land was for Israel; the everlasting kingdom shall be given to those for whom it is prepared; the many sons who are brought to glory are those for whom Christ tasted death. These are the "all" for whom he died, the "all" that shall come unto him, the "all" who shall be taught of God and come to the knowledge of the truth.

I used to sit up frequently until two o'clock in the morning searching the Scriptures. "Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress" was the only book, besides the Bible, that I had in the house, and that being allegorical, I could not understand much of it, and felt very little interest in it. My whole interest was in the Bible, which I searched with great eagerness. Sometimes the thought would come that there was no mercy for me, and what mattered it to me who were right or who were wrong? But then, again, a little encouragement would come. I was favored with a little help, by which means I continued for several weeks to sit up every night, after a hard day's work, searching the Scriptures, in order to find out whether the high doctrines or the low doctrines were the right; for I knew, from bitter experience, that if the low doctrines were true, I must lie down in eternal despair, but at the same time there were a thought and feeling sprung up in my mind that if the high doctrines were true it was possible there was mercy for me. When I began to have only distant views of the high doctrines, I saw they set forth richer grace, greater mercy, a better Savior, more abundant pardon, and more suitable promises than did the low doctrines. "The high doctrines," said I, "if true, set open a hope just suited to the lost, ruined, vile, and helpless Creature as I daily feel myself to be." After searching the Scriptures several weeks to find if election was a doctrine of the Bible, the two covenants, the two seeds, the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent, election and reprobation, the bond children and the free, the wheat and the tares, the goats and the sheep, that there was a people to be saved and a people to be lost, were to me made clear. I was no longer at a loss to understand the eighteenth of Ezekiel. I saw that the righteousness there spoken of consisted in a daily conformity to the laws and statutes which were given to the Jews, and that in thus conforming to these laws and statutes they should have temporal prosperity, and should thus save their souls alive; not save their souls in the Lord, but should preserve their lives from famine, from pestilence and the sword; but the day in which they turned from their righteousness they should be exposed to these calamities: but the righteousness of Christ is an everlasting righteousness; in it shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory. These are horn of an incorruptible seed, which lives and abides forever; and the Lord their God will never leave nor forsake them; they are preserved for ever.

Now who in his senses can, under these circumstances, blame me for becoming high in doctrine? Spiritual sickness, spiritual poverty, misery, guilt, vileness, fear, distress, and dread of eternity, drove me to seek that which the world could not produce, which no creature could bestow, which no human works could bring, and which low doctrines could not furnish. What then was I to do? Rest I could not; be put off with the mere form of godliness I could not, for I found every means fail and the low doctrines of no use. I was too deeply sunk in the miry clay of soul-trouble for moderation systems to reach me. I felt that I was not a moderate sinner, therefore, I needed something more than a moderate salvation. I needed an atonement, having in it infinite power to redeem, to cleanse, to pardon, to swallow up. death, and to overcome all adverse powers. Such is the great atonement of our incarnate God, an atonement which has met, does meet, and shall meet and defy sin, death, hell, and the grave; an atonement which overcomes the enmity of the carnal mind, together with all the darkness, bondage, temptations, falls, fears, tribulations, and enemies of the children of God; an atonement by which God the Father appears in the sweet harmony of all the perfections of his nature, honoring the great atonement of his dear Son, by sending those for whom this atonement was made out of the pit wherein is no water, drawing them to the Savior, manifesting forgiving mercy and endearing love, lifting upon them the light of his countenance, thus showing that he is well pleased with us in Christ, and in this his good pleasure there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. He thus, by the atonement of Christ, shows to the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, and that in his love, mercy, and grace there is no scarcity, no littleness, no weakness, no mutation, no hesitation, no termination. Christ went to the end of the law, but there is no getting to the end of the gospel. To sin, tribulation, death, and the grave there will be an end; but salvation is everlasting, consolation is everlasting, life is everlasting, glory is everlasting, God our Father's mercy is from- everlasting to everlasting. This mercy comes by, and is according to the atonement of Christ; it is



sovereign, free, full, and eternal. Of this great mercy, by this great atonement, I was brought to feel my need. I knew that the possession of a thousand worlds, without this great atonement, would leave me miserably poor; for what could it profit me to gain all these and lose my own soul? and no remedy within my reach had I left untried while refuge continued I to fail me. There I was, after all my doings, still sick and in prison; still hungry and thirsty, and a stranger to God. I saw him afar off; I beheld him in his great acts of mercy towards his people; I saw that God was good unto Israel, too such as are of a clean heart; but as for me, I knew not what a clean heart meant, for all the day long had I been plagued, and chastened every morning; therefore moderation systems were to me worse than nothing. These systems became vinegar to my teeth, smoke to my eyes, gall to my taste, a mockery to my ears, thorns to my hands, and miry clay to my feet. I knew sin was not a moderate evil; I knew not only my need of the obedient life, atoning death, and suretyship responsibility of Christ, together with the ancient provisions and settlements of mercy; but I knew also my need of a divine application of these things; for a human application I had found to be of no avail. Professors said it was my own fault, that I might have these things if I applied for them, that I ought to pray more, that I ought to give the Lord no rest, that I ought not to allow mine eyes to sleep until I was satisfied that matters were right between God and my own soul. All this seemed very true in theory, but the practical department was quite another thing. The practical part substantiated this one truth, that I was shut up and could not come forth. So, true it is, that when he shuts up none can open, and when he hides his face, who then can behold him? This experience stripped me of my fondness for low doctrines, moderate systems, and rounds of dead works. To me moderate, power, moderate mercy, and a moderate gospel were of no use. It mattered not what unhumbled, talkative, prating, and formal professors said, for I felt they could not, persuade me that I had experienced what I knew I had not experienced, nor could I be kept under the delusion that prayer was at my command. I learned, from feeling, that prayer, real spiritual prayer, is as much the gift of God as is salvation itself; and, if it were not, why is the Holy Spirit called the Spirit of grace and supplication? As we hunger and thirst by the laws of nature, so we thirst for God by the laws of grace; and where the Holy Spirit does not bring these laws into the mind, there is no real thirsting for God; for he who brings these laws into the soul keeps them in operation as seems good in his sight. These laws are the law of life, the law of liberty, the law of love, and the law of faith; and those who are regulated by these laws, wrought in them by power from on high, are said to walk by faith, —that is, they walk in a believing hold of the truths of the gospel. God is a God of truth; he lives in the truth, and brings his people into the belief of the truth; so that in this truth, which is yea and amen in Christ Jesus, they have fellowship with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. Thus, by the laws of truth, they come forth just as the Spirit of truth is pleased to lead them; for he it is who guides them into all truth; he it is that testifies of Christ and makes him precious to the soul; he it is that sheds abroad in the heart the love of God the Father; he it is that breaks up the fountains of the great deep within; he it is that opens up to the mind the counsels of eternity. He is the four winds that breathe upon the slain and bring into the soul life eternal. Of this almighty Testifier of Jesus I felt my need. I felt that the flesh profited nothing, and that in my flesh dwelt no good thing. To will was indeed present with me, but how to perform that which was good I found not. I knew the Holy Spirit would do nothing without Jesus; I knew Christ came into the world to save sinners; I knew I needed the Lord Jesus to be my everything, my all in all, for I possessed nothing, could do nothing, and could deserve nothing but cursing, bitterness, and woe.

From an experience of need I searched the Scriptures with great eagerness, ardor, and diligence, and was led to the conclusion that “the election had obtained it, and the rest were blinded.” Now, when I came to this conclusion, several temptations entered into my mind; one of which was that I was amongst those that were lost; and another came in this way, — “You had better go back and enjoy the pleasures of the world; and if you are one of God’s elect, he will call you, for either you are one of his, or you are not. If you are, he will save you without your troubling yourself about it; and if you are not one of his, all your

seeking, trying, doubting, and fearing will be of no use, for the elect are sure to be saved, and those whose names are not in the book of life are sure to be lost." All this appeared very feasible, and indeed is solemnly true, but it was thrown into my mind in a way that tended to create in me a spirit of awful, devilish, and destructive presumption. The enemy, in this temptation, was trying to get me so to use the doctrines of divine decrees as to trifle with the holiness, justice, majesty, power, and truth of the ever-blessed God; and to trifle also with my own soul. But while, on the one hand, I knew none but those who are chosen to salvation could be saved, and that I could be saved in no other way than by the grace, which is set forth in the high doctrines; yet, on the other hand, I knew that the promise was not to those who trifled, but to those who trembled. I knew I should have to meet my Maker. I knew I was a sinner in his sight, that he is true to his threatenings as well as to his promises; that while not one word of the gospel can pass away, so not one jot nor tittle of the law can fail. These things lay heavy on my mind; with me the world had lost its charms. In a word, I saw no beauty in anything but in Christ. I could behold the beauty of the Lord afar off. I could see his salvation was not in one, two, or three respects, but in every respect suited to my state; but to call it mine was no more in my power than it was to hide the waters of the ocean in the hollow of my hand, to hold the winds in my fists, or make the clouds the dust of my feet. I felt that I had no reason, no right to conclude that I was one of the Lord's people; yet I did hunger and thirst after his righteousness, but then I could not believe that my hunger and thirst were of the right kind. I was tormented with blasphemous thoughts, and my experience seemed to be all blackness, bondage, and fear. A dreadful blasphemous thought, directed against God, tormented me almost incessantly for about three months. This thought was so awful, that I never did, and I feel to this day as though I never could, name it, either by word or writing. It followed me everywhere, and the more I thought of God the more I was tortured with this infernal suggestion; and yet this same thought, which tormented me three months, though it is at this moment, while I write, fresh in my memory, has not the least power over me; it is now a broken chain, a powerless foe, a dead body. The monster is slain, never, I hope, in my mind again to revive.

Previously to my deliverance I was miserable to the last degree. Duty-faith, duty-love, duty-repentance, rounds of formalities, universal offers, the dead-letter doctrines of free-willism and low Calvinism were all husks to me. Fain indeed would I have filled my belly with these husks which the swine eat with pleasure, while my language was "I perish with hunger, and no man giveth unto me." I was therefore compelled to arise, for I needed what these did not, could not bring. I felt that I was weakness itself that I was as vile as it was possible for a creature to be. There I was, without even a fig leaf to cover me, without a mite towards the payment of the mighty debt, without one reason to assign why I should not be lost, without a good thought, good word, or good work. But the day of salvation was not far off. I had before been told by men that "now is the day of salvation." "Yes," said I, "it is no doubt the day of salvation with some; it was the day of salvation with those to whom the apostle said, "Now is the day of salvation;" but with me it was the day, not of salvation, but of condemnation." To tell me, while I was in that state, that with me it was the day of salvation, was like trying to persuade the sick man that he is in health, or the double-ironed prisoner that he is not in bondage, or the debtor that he owes nothing, or the blind that he can see, or the deaf that he can hear, or the dumb that he can speak, or the totally paralyzed that he can walk, and work, and leap like the hart upon the mountains. It is true that conviction of sin and living desire after God are evidences that the good work is begun, but there must be the experience of forgiving mercy before any real resting in the Lord can be enjoyed. "When the desire cometh, it is indeed a tree of life;" then is the day of salvation; then saving health, holy liberty, and royal release are known and felt; then the eyes that see are not dim, the ear listens with delight, the tongue moves with joy, the previously paralyzed mind works and walks, and glories in the way of gospel commandments.

Under a feeling sense of my need of these things I continued until the day of salvation arrived, which was but a Comparatively little while, for it was not more than twelve months from the time I began to be

abidingly concerned about eternal things. Though these twelve months were to me anything but short or pleasant, yet they were truly profitable; for the things I experienced emptied me, and made me long for a full Christ; humbled, and made me bow to an exalted Savior; stripped, and made me desire the garments of salvation and robe of righteousness; wounded, and made me look for the healing balm of atoning blood, brought my helplessness to light, and made me feel my need of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in a covenant ordered in all things and sure; and nothing but almighty power kept me from entire desperation and destruction. After thus continuing in this prison-house of fear, distress, and bondage, the day of mercy arrived.

On returning home from my work one evening, much cast down, melancholy, and miserable, weary in body, and worn out in mind with soul-trouble, I went and lay down on the bed, and thought of the awful state I was in, as being without hope and without God in the world, and that my portion at last would be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone; that I was reserved in the chain of my sins unto the judgment of the last day; that I should then sink to endless woe; to rise no more. After reflecting awhile in these gloomy regions of almost black despair, I rose from the bed and went to the Bible, with no more thought of finding mercy than of being king of England. However, I opened it, and began to read the fifty-fourth chapter of Isaiah, until I came to the eighth verse, which reads thus "In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment, but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer." These words, as I read them, came with such power that they filled me with astonishment, overwhelmed me with wonder, and caused me to exclaim, "What means this?" I found my guilt depart, darkness passed away, fears were removed, my heart enlarged, my mind released, my feelings changed, my soul delivered, and all my powers absorbed in the treasures of the text. I sat and wept, and wondered, and said there was mercy for me after all; that Jesus was certainly my Redeemer; that he shed his blood for me; that he wrought out and brought in everlasting righteousness for me. I read the text again and again, and still it remained mighty to my soul, put the enemy under my feet, put my trouble far away, and with its precious contents filled my soul with joy unspeakable and full of glory. Again, I looked, and wept, and wondered, and could hardly believe such a treasure could be mine; and then again, the text would come, "With everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer." This again would make me say, "It certainly is mine, even mine." "Then," said I to myself, "I shall never leave off rejoicing; no, never; now I am happy forever." I was thus brought into a new world; old things wore passed away, and all things were become new. The truths which I had seen afar off were now brought nigh, and made unto me spirit and life. The God at whose name I had trembled was now all my delight, all my salvation, and all my desire; he was now near and dear to me. I now felt that he was on my side, and I loved him sincerely in all the settlements and purposes, of his love. I looked at election, and could rejoice that my name was written in heaven. I looked at predestination, and could give thanks unto the Lord that he had not appointed me unto wrath, but to obtain salvation by the Lord Jesus Christ. I looked at my sins, and saw that they, were all laid upon his dear Son. I looked at the law, and saw it fulfilled, its curse removed, and my soul delivered from going down to the pit. I could look at the great work of Christ, and see that I was complete therein and forever perfected thereby. I knew the Holy Spirit had begun the good work, and that he would carry it on. I knew that this God was my God for ever and ever; that he would be my guide even unto death.

The next morning, as I went to my work, everything appeared new; the heavens and the earth, the trees, the winds, all seemed to remind me of the voice of that salvation which I now so abundantly enjoyed. I now went to my daily labor with joy, and ate my bread with gladness and singleness of heart. In this enjoyment of pardoning mercy, in this liberty wherewith Christ had made me free, in this fellowship with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ, in this large and wealthy place, in this mount of transfiguration, in this assurance of interest in God, in this dominion over enemies internal and external, I walked for

several weeks; and although my sins, discouragements, castings down, doubts, fears, and perplexities have since been numerous, yet I have never been sunk into such a state as I was in previously to this deliverance; this mount Hermon, this hill Mizar, this coming into the banqueting-house, I hope never to forget. I say I hope never to forget; but, alas! when the Lord hides his face 'and the enemy comes in like a flood, my old nature siding with the enemy, the Bible a sealed book, no power in prayer, the earth under me as iron, the heavens over my head as brass, and seemingly destitute of thought or feeling, or even inclination, to anything spiritual, full of self, the devil, and the world; when thus dead and stupid, when thus, shut, up, when thus carnally-minded, I seem as though I know nothing of the Lord, and as though I never did know anything. There seems to be no going out after God, no communication from God, no reproof from the precept, no transforming power from the promise, no pleasure in the service of the Lord; yet I cannot give up the truth, cannot be at home in the world, cannot approve of nor receive doctrines that oppose the free-grace honors of the dear Lamb, of God. My harp is hung upon the willows, and I sit down by the rivers of Babylon, —the rivers of confusion, the confusing and confused system of false doctrines, I sit down by the side of these rivers; they roll along, carrying their thousands, and I should go with them too, but mercy follows and holds me. Nor can I mingle my songs with theirs, for if I cannot sing of free grace, and free grace alone, I must remain in silence. Thus, though the feelings of mind my change, yet the sentiments of my heart remain the same; for I am no more willing to give up the truth when I am dark and dead in my feelings than I am when I am on the mount of enjoyment. I thus walk by faith; but when darkness of mind prevails, there is unbelief in exercise, and a very great many doubts, fears, and reasonings opposing faith; and herein is the conflict which can be settled to my satisfaction only by the presence of the Lord. "I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice" Not all the duties, all the prayers, nor all the sermons in the world can enable me to call the Lord mine. Nothing can do this but his presence, the light of his countenance, the anointing of his Holy Spirit, the diffusing through the soul the savouriness of Jesus name, the shedding abroad a Father's love. Without this authority, I feel no right to call the Redeemer mine. Nothing like having for our conclusions good authority; for if I conclude that I am a real Christian, then the question is, who or what has brought me to this conclusion? One poor lunatic concludes that he is a great scholar, and another that he is a mighty warrior, and another that he is a celebrated emperor; but where it is the lot of these poor things to come to their senses, they soon find that their conclusions were wrong; and are not unregenerate men as much deceived in matters pertaining to eternity? Thousands on thousands are concluding that they are Christians, while they have not one iota of divine authority so to conclude. A man who lives and dies ignorant of and an enemy to the great truths of the gospel, dying in all the enmity which is nursed and fostered by free-will and low Calvinism, dying in a state of aversion to the rightful sovereignty of the Most High, dying in the delusive charm of so-called Christian charity, dying without having been experimentally humbled, stripped, and emptied, —what must be the portion of such a one? It is one thing to say in the light of the letter of the Word that Christ is the only Savior and only hope, and another thing to have been cut down and raised up, wounded and healed, and torn to pieces and put together by the Spirit of the living God. Dying in any state short of this regenerating work of God is to die in our sin.

Knowing as I do, and that from experience, that my heart is deceitful and desperately wicked, and knowing also that many are deceived, that eternal things, in importance, infinitely surpass all other things, and that narrow is the way, and few there be that find it; knowing these things, nothing, can give me rest but the Lord himself making these matters clear; and though my evidences are obscured, again, again, and again, yet doth not the Lord forsake the work, of his own hands, but repeats the tokens of his favor. In the light of his countenance is life, and his favor is as a cloud of the latter rain."

All the chastisements of the Lord which he lays upon his people are called, "a little wrath," that is, fatherly, not vindictive wrath. Christ endured all the retributive wrath due to the Church. Her chastisements,

therefore, are light afflictions; the heaviest of her troubles are light compared with that which the Lord of life and glory endured, for her. If the curse which he endured had fallen upon the Church, it would have held her in everlasting chains, because she could have no ransom at command, no righteousness to plead, no holiness in which to appear; but Christ hath redeemed her from the curse of the law, and that by his own blood; therefore, all her afflictions are comparatively, light, and endure but a moment; her glory infinitely outweighs her afflictions, and eternally outlives all her troubles. A very little affliction outweighs the pleasures of this world, but all the adversities of the righteous amount not to the weight of a feather compared with those things which are reserved for them.

All I have felt, experienced, passed through, and seen in the profane and in the professing world, among Christians, nominal and real, in prosperity or adversity; all I have felt, seen, and known since I have tasted that the Lord is gracious, confirm in me the truth that salvation is entirely of grace. God the Father is called the God of all grace, and grace and truth came by the Lord Jesus, and the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of grace; thus is the Lord a God of grace for his people, to his people, in his people, and with, his people. Such has been and such is my experience of my own nothingness, vileness, helplessness, and loathsomeness, that were not election to eternal life an election of grace—were not predestination according to the riches of his grace—were not justification freely by his grace— were not redemption and forgiveness of sin entirely of grace—did not the Holy Spirit carry on his work as a Spirit of grace—were not salvation thus, from first to last, all of grace, I know by experience, and from the word of God, that I should have no more hope than those who are now in perdition. I am not, through mercy, ashamed to own that I do sincerely love the great doctrines of omnipotent grace. These words, these doctrines, were found, and I did eat them, and they were the joy and rejoicing of my heart; "I rejoice at thy word as one that findeth great spoil; I have esteemed the words of thy mouth more than my necessary food." These great truths swallow up all the curses of the Bible, overcome all adverse powers, and defy anything to be laid before God to the charge of his elect; and as the gospel, as it were, swallows up the law, so the promise swallows up the precept. The gospel does not make void the law, but establishes, magnifies, and honors it; so, the promise does not make void the precept, but the promise is broader than the precept; that is, it promises all, and more than all the precept demands. All the precepts are wrapped up in these two, — "Believe in me," and "Love one another"; Faith purifies the heart from enmity against the truth, overcomes, the world, and endears the Savior, and the love of Christ constrains us to every good word and work. The precepts are followers of the promises, and not the promises followers of the precepts. The Jewish Sabbath followed; the six days of the week, but our Sabbath goes first, and the six days follow after. Now our rest, our repose, our Sabbath, speaks on this wise "God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." The promise goes first, to supply and enable; and the precept comes after, to direct, to correct, rebuke, and reprove, But the period is fast coming when that as faith and hope will be lost in sight, so the precept will be lost in the glory of the promise; for we shall be unrebukable, unreprieveable, and unblameable in his sight. This arises from completeness in Christ, and conformity to Christ. He always was and always will be unrebukable, unreprieveable, and unblameable; and "we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is."

So completely am I assured of my own nothingness, and of salvation being entirely of grace, that I confess I do not like anything that stands opposed to, makes light of, or in any way treats these great truths with indifference. The Lord Jesus Christ cannot be scripturally preached, nor savingly received, contrary to these doctrines; and to make light of the great doctrines of grace is to make light of Christ. Whatever love men may profess to have to him, if they hate or make light of his truth, they will be reckoned among his enemies, though they may have preached and prophesied in his name. The name of those who profess to love him, yet hate his truth, is Legion, for they are many. Those who love the truth are few, a remnant according to the election of grace. The ministers of God minister these things according to the gifts and

abilities which are bestowed upon them. If one dwell much more upon experience than another, it does not follow that he thinks less of the doctrines than another, who dwells more upon doctrine; nor does it follow that he who dwells most upon doctrines makes light of true experience, or that he is not as much exercised as the brother who dwells more upon experience. The one shows the necessity and nature of the work of God in the soul, the other shows the necessity and nature of that salvation which Christ hath wrought for the soul. While the one does not leave out the doctrines, although he does not dwell so much upon them, the other does not leave out experience, although he does not dwell so much upon experience. There is this difference, and always was, and always will be, in the gifts and abilities of the ministers of God. Some dwell a good deal among the caves and dens of the earth, finding out the Lord's hidden ones; others dwell more among the provisions of the old store, to bring forth bread and wine to the hungry and the faint, who are some lying and some knocking at the door of mercy; and, after all, the whole matter lies with the Lord, the excellency of the power is of God. If I hear a man who dwells chiefly upon experience, and I enjoy the presence of the Lord, the word being attended with power, I then feel humbled before and thankful to the Lord that he has not left me to rest in the mere theory of religion, but that the knowledge he has given me is vital, and will abide when heart and flesh shall fail. If I hear a man who dwells chiefly upon the great doctrines of grace, and I in that sermon enjoy fellowship with God, I go away rejoicing that my name is written in heaven. The truth is, those who are to feed under that ministry which dwells more upon experience than doctrine, and those who are to feed under that ministry which dwells more upon doctrine than experience, must do so; they must feed each one in his place. The Holy Spirit giveth to everyone severally as he will; not that true experience can be separated from doctrine, nor doctrine from experience; for where the Holy Spirit is the teacher, the truths of the gospel are interwoven with the mind. God is a God of truth, Christ is the truth, the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth, and the Lord's people are brought into the truth, are made by the truth, and therefore they love the truth.

Now although in some few instances I have had life and power by sermons upon doctrines, and by sermons upon experience, yet the ministry (when I could meet with it) which has upon the whole suited me the best is that which unites the two sides of the matter; that ministry which expatiates upon the ancient provisions of mercy, the person and mediatorial work of Christ, the saving operations of the Holy Spirit, together with the glories yet to be revealed. The first shows us the source of salvation; the second shows the nature and greatness of that salvation; the third describes the evidence of interest in that salvation; the fourth shows a little of the bliss yet to be possessed. These truths are "fat pastures, and good, and the land is wide, and quiet, and peaceable" (1 Chron. iv. 40), and the more we are in these fields, the more fellowship we have with God; and there is no company like his.

What we want is power; the apostle was not ashamed of the gospel, and the reason is, because it is the power of God unto salvation. There are many powers which are deceptive; there is the power of superstition, holding its thousands in the performance of dead works, and persuading them that all will be well with them at last. There is the power of argument exercised by the wise of this world, and keeping up in the minds of men the delusive notion that they have some little power of their own in things pertaining to an eternal world. Then there is the power of human eloquence, touching the sympathies of men, and leaving them to think they have felt the power of God. Then there is the power of custom; I was brought up to such a religion, therefore it is the right. All these powers, with their deceptiveness, are noticed in the word of God, and distinguished from that power which accompanies salvation. But who can judge in this matter? for "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit, neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned I but he which is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man."

And now let us see how these powers stand in the estimation of those who are taught of God. The power of argument, or carnal wisdom, is turned into foolishness in the minds of those who are wise to salvation. Hence, says the apostle, "Where is the wise I where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?" This he brings about in the minds of his people, by making them feel and know that no man can know the Father, but he to whom the Son will reveal him; that no man can know the Son, but he to whom the Father will reveal him; but no man can feelingly say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost; that no man can receive anything except it be given him from above; that none but the Lord can give a saving knowledge of the truth. Arguments, reasoning, and education are of no use here; they all fall to the ground. In this way the wisdom of this world, in the minds of the children of God, is turned into foolishness. Christ, and Christ alone, is their wisdom, by which the Holy Spirit makes them wise unto salvation; for they cannot know salvation until they know Christ Jesus the Lord, and God the Father in him. In this way, the Lord confounds the wisdom of this world, when that wisdom gets out of its place, and attempts to meddle with the truth of God.

Then comes the power of human eloquence, which attracts such numbers, and brings together such great assemblies. This drapery, this show-off, that is where it is used contrary to truth, is to the soul born of God as empty, disgusting, and useless as the presentation of fine pictures to a dying man. The sick man wants medicinal power; he wants to obtain something worth having, namely; good sound health. They that be whole may be satisfied with fine oratory, but they that be sick want the good physician?

Then comes the power of custom: but when God takes a man in hand he brings him out of his old traditional customs; he ceases to pay deference to the traditions of men in things pertaining to God; he comes forth out of them all, and worships him who is a Spirit in spirit and in truth. This may seem to have some exceptions, in the circumstances of some good men remaining among the superstitions of the Church of England; but then, though these men continued among the inventions of men, they were not so led by them as to be enemies to the truth. However, the powers of which I am speaking have had and still have a partial dominion, even over good men, still they are not upon the whole led by these powers, but are led by the truth.

Then there are the powers of worldly interest and fleshly sanctity. It is almost incredible the power which a pretension to superior sanctity has had over the minds of men. There is indeed an invaluable dignity in true holiness, which the saints have in Christ, and is wrought in them by the Holy Spirit; but the fleshly sanctity pretended to by the Popes of Rome, men-made bishops and ministers, free-will leaders and free-will followers, low Calvinist priests and low Calvinist people, —the fleshly sanctity to which these pretend is nothing but hypocrisy and deception. Nothing can be holy but that which is made holy by the Lord, and the Lord makes no one holy out of, apart from, or contrary to the great atonement of Christ. This is the only holiness that can beautify a man in the sight of God, and this the children of God are brought to know, to feel, and to abide by. They see through the deception which has imposed and does impose upon so many thousands; and thus, the powers of human wisdom, human eloquence, human customs, and human fleshly sanctity are, in the minds of the children of God, brought to naught, these strongholds of Satan are pulled down, these vain imaginations are cast out, and every high thing that exalts itself against Christ.

Now in those who have the form of godliness, but who are destitute of the power, we find the absence of the following things: first, real experimental conviction of sin. They do not feel their own utter destitution of any one thing that is good, so as to loathe themselves in their own sight. They do not feel the emptiness of everything short of the infinite fulness of Christ. They do not come under the character of the poor and needy, the outcast, the prisoner, the bruised, the paralyzed, and the solitary. These are things which they do not really feel, yet these things are well known to those who have had a little teaching in the school of

Bible experience. Those who are learning in this school find that they are truly poor and needy, that they are by the law of God cast out of all hope of helping themselves, that they are shut up as prisoners charged before God with crimes innumerable, and they know the charges to be true, and their mouths are stopped; they feel that sin has bruised and paralyzed their souls, as well as having brought death into the body; they feel that they are solitary, for they cannot get at communion with God, they cannot see themselves one with Christ; nor is the world any longer the company they love or seek. These are the persons to whom the promises of the gospel are made; but those who have the form but not the real power of godliness are strangers to the experience of these things, consequently they do not long or seek to know their election of God. Election with them is a matter either of antipathy or of minor consideration, yet the Bible makes election a matter of the highest importance, and the Lord brings his people to feel it, for none can enter the heavenly city but those whose names are in the book of life; none are blessed with all spiritual blessings but those chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world; none can gain the possession of the kingdom but those for whom it is prepared. Well might the psalmist, in looking to the Lord, long, to see the good of his chosen; and well might the apostle exhort the little ones to make their calling and election sure, that is, seek a knowledge, an assurance of their election, in order that they may rejoice that their names were written in heaven. That is that which dead professors seek not, therefore they do not contend for the faith of God's elect; they neglect God's salvation, and attend to one of their own devising; they mingle the old covenant with the new; they do not rightly divide the word of truth, but wrest the Scriptures to their own destruction. By thus mingling the old and new covenant they can bring plenty of scriptures to build themselves up in their delusion, by substituting the mere moral, natural workings of the conscience for true conviction of sin, natural faith, natural love, and natural repentance for the fruits of the Spirit, they pass for true Christians in their own eyes, and in the eyes of a discerning world. But then there are a few high-doctrine people, in whose estimation these men-made Christians pass for what they really are, namely, mere nominal Christians; for such do not feel what and where they really are as sinners; they do not seek to know their election of God; they are not valiant for truth, and thus it naturally follows that they have no real union of soul to the real children of God; and how can they have? Their religion is natural, and not of the last Adam, the Lord from heaven, although they go in his name. To go in the name of the first Adam would discover the deception; thus, while old Adam eats his own bread, and wears his own apparel, yet he must be called by another name, to take away his reproach. In this way does the old man with his pious deeds shelter himself under the Savior's name, there lying in wait to deceive.

Thus, then, in dead professors we find the absence of these four things: first, real conviction of sin; second, true thirst for God; third, decision for his truth; fourth, union to his people. Yet the absence of these things in such is not always apparent, for we have instances in the word of God where they seemed to possess these things, but that which they seemed to have was taken from them (Luke viii. 18). They wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. Again, in the sixth chapter of John we read of a people that followed the Savior, who were seemingly his disciples; they would have made him King, and no doubt they congratulated the disciples; but when the Savior brought near to them that truth which separates the precious from the vile, shows up the sovereignty of God and helplessness of the creature, they went back, and walked no more with him. And how few professors, though they profess to obey the gospel, to be followers of God, and disciples of Christ—how few can endure sound doctrine! The truth brings to light their ignorance of spiritual things, their enmity against God, turns their love into hate, their piety into passion, and shows that they are still in their firstborn state. But to those who are born of God, and led into the truth, eternal election, divine predestination, complete redemption, entire justification and sanctification, together with fellowship with God and glory to come; to those who are taught of God, these truths in God, and God in these truths, are dearer than life and all things under the sun that can be desired.



## LAST DAYS

[It is to be regretted that no materials are left to compile a memoir, but the following extracts from a sermon preached on the fortieth anniversary of the foundation of the church, Wednesday, October 19th, 1870, will give some interesting facts relative to the cause of God in connection with the long and successful labors of the pastor.]

“And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness.” —Deut. viii. 2.

It is exactly forty years ago this day since this Christian church was what we call formed, consisting of twenty members. We are met to-day to acknowledge especially, after these long years of mercy, the goodness of the Lord unto us, and at the same time to express our confidence that as the Lord hath been kind unto us, so he will be; and that as he hath abode by us, so he will abide by us still. It is now nearly forty-three years since I began publicly to speak the Lord's word, and I did so from the Lord having brought my soul into liberty by the 8th verse of the 54th of Isaiah. I was happy beyond expression, and I thought what an infinite mercy it would be if all my fellow-creatures were brought to know the same God, the same mercy, and the same salvation; and I thought, "What shall I do to express my gratitude to God? So, I rose early on the Lord's day morning, and went to the Broadway, in Westminster, about half-past five or six o'clock in the morning, and there I began to speak, and I went on speaking on Sunday mornings as well as I could, without the slightest idea whatever of ever being what they call a minister. When the summer was gone, they took a little room in Rochester Row, Westminster; and there we did pretty fairly at first; by and by some left, and we were at last reduced to three people, at which I did not feel the slightest, discouraged, because I had no idea I should ever be a minister, and no particular desire to be so. Presently the room became crowded all at once, and would not hold half that wanted to come. Then we got to a schoolroom in Prince's Place, Westminster, and there it was forty years ago to-day, that the church was formed; and of the twenty members of which it then consisted there is now only one left. That place became full, and then, after being there about twelve months, we went to a place called Dudley Court, Denmark Street, Soho, and that became thronged. Then I went on Sunday afternoons over to Webb Street, Bermondsey, called now Ebenezer Chapel, and there we were crowded; and I thought if some chapel offered itself between the two positions, it would be well to take it. So, there was the Borough Road, a chapel almost in the shape of a lantern at that time; the minister for whom it was built had left the place sometime before; —we came there, and that became filled. It was taken down, and another built, and that became filled; then it was enlarged, and that became filled; then you set to and built this one, and paid for it completely, and this has become filled. Now this is the path that we have come. And as regards the people that have been with me, some of them nearly all this time and a great many of them a very large part of the time, I shall never be able to speak sufficiently in their praise. I am sure the kindness that I have experienced for forty-two years—I may as well go back as far as that—from the people that in the order of the Lord's providence I have been connected with, surpasses all that! can ever express. And somehow or another, I do not know, how it is, but the people seem to get more and more kind; —perhaps it is that they think they shall very seem lose me, and so will try and keep me alive by kindness. And therefore, for myself, although there may be some few individual exceptions among what they call high doctrine people, there is no people that I have such a union of soul to as I have to those ministers and those congregations and churches where they stand out for the truth, utterly regardless of what a carnal, unregenerate, profane, or Pharisaic world may say. Those who know the truth, it is for them to abide by

it; they are not to not to listen to man, but they are to listen to the great and blessed God. Of course I had not the slightest idea that we should prosper as we have; but I knew the people, I think, quite as well as any one I was ever associated with and I will tell you what I always said of them, — If they undertake a thing, they will do it; and all these forty years not a single thing that the people have undertaken have they failed in; not a society among us has broken down; nothing has shown so much sign of breaking down as the poor minister: he seems sometimes as though he had not a word to say; and yet somehow or another the Lord keeps us up, and he will do so. And I should like to see all our brethren in the ministry have full confidence in the people that are lovers of God's blessed truth. I had almost said, what will not a good man do for God's truth and for the sake of the truth? —individual exceptions there may be. Now the Lord has blessed me very much in this respect, so that I am almost a stranger to church meeting disputations; we have had a few in times past, but not worth speaking of. And another thing in which we have been blessed I will mention before I enter more particularly upon the subject before me; and what I am about to mention now I might and could dwell upon largely, because it is almost impossible to name a circumstance more important in the church of the living God; and it is this, —I have been blessed upon the whole all my time with excellent deacons. The office of deacon in a church, which I must not now stop to enlarge upon, is of vast importance. When the deacons are decided for the truth, when they look to the minister, to the people, to the cause of God at large, and do everything they possibly can for the good of the cause and the comfort of the minister, it is almost impossible to speak too highly of the importance, the greatness of their usefulness. It sets the minister's mind free. I have no trouble in coming here and going back again. I never come trembling and fearing lest any of the deacons should be put out, and lest this should be wrong and that wrong. We have no head deacons and no under deacons, for all are brethren here. And therefore, when a minister has not a thorough good staff to work with, I pity him with all my heart: how such men can preach at all I cannot tell. The cause of God ought to be to ministers, to deacons, and to people, everything; it is this decision that does the work. There may be a few individuals sometimes that do not like it at all; never mind that; always look to the main body of the people, and never feel moved at two or three individuals. Let the minister, like the eagle, have his wings free, and let him spread abroad his ministerial wings; and if by that liberty he is not the means of bringing the people of God along, and bringing them into the enjoyment of eternal things, nothing else can do it. After all, then, we have had forty years very pleasant sojourn, as far as the things of God are concerned; and the Lord will take care to follow up his people with trouble enough to make them, feel their need of him. Such, then, is an outline of the history of our church.

I will now take hastily a threefold view of the text. "Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee." First, why we are to remember the beginning; secondly, why we are to remember the present; and thirdly, why we are to look at the future.

First, why we are to remember the beginning. It was almost the first business of Moses, in giving this long address which we have in Deuteronomy, to show that the Israelites, for want of remembering all the way the Lord had led them, for want of remembering the beginning and acting upon it, lost the promised land. Had they remembered their beginning, and have acted upon it, and kept it with them, and gone on with it! All that did so came to the promised land; but those that lost sight of the beginning came short of the promised land. Ah, just so now, friends; if we are taught of God we shall remember the beginning. Let us, then, take a threefold view of the beginning, as applicable to us spiritually. What is the first thing that we shall call the beginning? That which the people of God as a general rule come to last, and that which is almost everywhere despised. What was the beginning? The beginning was a manifestation of the pure sovereignty of God. In Exod. xi the Lord said that he would put a difference—as the margin reads it, a redemption—between the Egyptians and Israel, referring to the paschal lamb. Now how did the Lord begin with you? Why, by making a difference, not only between you and others, but by making us

something very different from what we had been before. He began, therefore, by making a difference in our present from our former state. We began to tremble at our condition as sinners, we began to pray, we began to look upon godliness as the only thing worth living for; we began to see that there was nothing but curse, wrath, and condemnation apart from godliness. A change was wrought. And all of you that are thus favored, if you could—I know you cannot always do so, — look back to this change, and feel satisfied that it, was the Lord himself that made the change, how happy you would then be! You well know that you have undergone a change, whether it was gradual,—even if from your infancy you had successive convictions of your state, yet the time came when those convictions were deeper than they had ever been before; you became more concerned than you had ever been before; and you looked around and saw there was a great difference between yourself and others, between you and those that do not fear God, that do not pray to him, do not seek and do not love him, and do not practically say, “I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honor dwelleth.” “Thou shalt remember all the way.” Therefore, “who maketh thee to differ? and what hast thou that thou hast not received?” Then look back with the apostle, and remember what you were, —that you were dead in trespasses and in sins; and then look at the way in which you came to be made concerned, and made to seek the Lord. “God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ,” and given us to see and know that it is by grace we are saved. This is one way in which you are to remember the beginning—to remember that it was not your own work, but the work of the Lord; that you never would have been thus brought if he himself had not brought you. And I am sure this is a very profitable truth in relation to the people of God; for I think I shall speak the feelings of the real Christian when I say that I do not know any one truth more conspicuous to the Christian than this,— he says, If I do savingly differ from others, and from what I was, I am as sure it was by the free love, free mercy, free grace, and good pleasure and purpose and power of the blessed God, as I am of my existence. And you will reason thus, —If grace made me to differ then, how much more must it be grace now! for since I have known the Lord, have I merited anything? Alas! alas! innumerable rebellions, workings of infidelity, and atheisms have marked our path; so that we may indeed say, “It is of the Lord’s mercies that we are not consumed.” Let us, then, remember what we were, and that the Lord hath made us to differ from what we were, and that he alone can make others to differ; therefore, it is that the eyes and hearts of ministers and people must be up unto the Lord; for even a Paul may plant and an Apollos water, but it is God alone that can give the increase. It is no use to try to work upon the minds of people, and bring them into a temporary profession of religion, a mere superficial profession, and then call them converted; whereas such persons are still carnal, and will look out for an opportunity to run away from what little religion they have. But when a man is made to differ by the power of God, what a change there is then! how willingly he leaves the Egypt of this world, this world spiritually called Egypt, where our Lord was and is crucified! The true Christian practically declares that, he- is a stranger and a pilgrim on the earth, seeking a better, country, with no desire to return. That is one reason, then, why we are to remember all the way—that we might cling to God’s sovereignty, and remember that our salvation, originally as well as now and ultimately, must, come entirely from the Lord. Then the second thing in the beginning was that beautiful circumstance I will not enlarge upon, as a type of the dear Savior; it has made my heart rejoice many times, it has helped me in my darkest seasons, —when I have been doubting and fearing, someone clause, some one sentence or another out of the gospel has helped me, and especially that beautiful one, “When I see the blood, I will pass by the house, and the sword shall not come near to hurt you.” Oh, let us remember, friends, that the first shelter we ever had was Jesus Christ, that the original way of escape was by Jesus Christ; if we were left of the sword, it was by the blood of the Lamb. Am I then a believer in Jesus? When the Lord sees this, he will look not at my sins, but he will look at the atonement that is made for my sins, he will look at the righteousness that covers the whole, he will look at those blessings which were treasured up in Christ before the world was. So, then, remember the beginning; as it was God’s good pleasure then, O let us own that it is his good pleasure now; as it was by Christ Jesus then, so let it be by

Christ Jesus now. Shall we ever cease to enjoy that which is embodied in the ultimate anthem? — “Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God.” Then the third thing in the beginning was the victory which was wrought. Look at the victory the Lord gave to the Israelites; see how he divided the sea. It is self-evident, it is clear to you all, that in dividing the Red Sea, overthrowing Pharaoh and his host, and bringing the Israelites out, God did in that case what none but God could do; none but the living God could have given them such a victory. Now apply this closer home. Who but the God-man Mediator could have divided a greater sea? who but the God-man Mediator could make the depths of a greater sea a way for the ransomed to pass over? who but the God-man Mediator could bring in such a victory as Jesus Christ has brought in? who but Jesus Christ could penalty bear our sins? Look at the twenty-eighth chapter of this same Book of Deuteronomy; there are, I think somewhere about seventy bitter curses there put upon record, and they were more or less inflicted upon the Jews; but then they have a spiritual significance. I am not going to say that those seventy curses were in the form there stated inflicted upon Jesus Christ, because that would not be true; but I think I shall have the approval of the brethren and the friends if I say that all the wrath implied in those curses was borne by the Savior. He took our sins, and whatever wrath was due to our sins came upon the Lord Jesus Christ. Why, my hearer, I hope you will not think I am extravagant in saying it, I should be literally ashamed to think, of the possibility of a man being lost for whom Christ died. You see he has taken the man’s sins away; they are blotted out, they are forgiven and forgotten, and the moment you receive the Lord Jesus Christ in his substitution and, perfection, you then receive that that does pardon, that does sanctify, that does save, and does give you the victory? Only you must draw a distinction between receiving that that pardons, sanctifies, and gives you the victory—you must draw a line of distinction between receiving Jesus Christ in his perfection by faith, and your realizing the pardon which his mediation brings. As the Israelites were under the shelter of the paschal lamb before the sword passed by, and before they realized the deliverance, so the Lord now sometimes leads some to receive Jesus Christ, and to see that everything you need in a way of pardon, victory, and everything, is by Jesus Christ, —you receive that testimony as a faithful saying, worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners; but if you are asked, Are your sins forgiven? you say, That is what I want to realize. Have you realized your “title clear to mansions in the sky”? and has Jesus Christ been made so precious to you as to overcome all the banks and swallow up all the mountains of your sins, and to make you feel that God hath loved you with an everlasting love, therefore in lovingkindness hath he drawn you? Ah, say you, that is what I am waiting for. Well, if you thus receive the testimony of Christ, and are waiting for it in that way, you are waiting for it in a way in which it will come. The Jews of old were waiting for the Lord to appear for them, but they were not waiting by faith in Christ, and therefore, the deliverance did not come; and the Pharisee was waiting to be blessed, but he was not waiting by faith in Christ; and therefore, not waiting in the right way, the blessing did not come. So, you read that “many shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able.” Then if you know something of the truth that if you do savingly differ it is grace that has made you to differ; secondly, if you know that Jesus Christ has done what none but such a person could do; and if you believe that you can escape the wrath to come, and be formed and fitted for heaven, and get there only by the mediatorial work of Christ, —if you are got thus far, all I say is, Blessed are they that wait; — “Tarry ye in Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high;” and that blessed Jesus Christ in whom you believe will by and by send the Holy Spirit like a mighty rushing wind down upon your soul, and will take away all your doubts, and fears, and troubles; and you will hardly know what it means; you will wonder what is come to you; and presently a little reflection will show that it was nothing else but the pardoning mercy of God, nothing else but his presence. So, then “thou shalt remember all the way;” remember the Lord has made thee to differ, remember thou didst escape by the paschal lamb, and remember a victory was wrought for thy welfare which none but God could achieve; and so thou hast a victory now by Jesus Christ which none but Jesus Christ could achieve.

Now had the Israelites to a man taken with them this divine sovereignty, abode thus by the living God in his having made them to differ, and taken with them this paschal lamb, and abode by the Lord according thereto; if they had taken with them the victory that God wrought, and understood it, they would have spurned all other god§. They would have said to one, Who are you? I am Chemosh. Chemosh! what do you want? you have no claim upon us; you did not deliver us from the Egyptians you did not provide the paschal lamb for our escape; you did not divide the sea; you did not give us the victory; you did not overturn Pharaoh; —you may be off, or you will soon have your head off, as Dagon had his. In comes another: —Who are you? I am Baal. What have you done? Ah, I will do a great deal. Will you? — when? Now, if you will wait. Yes, and wait long enough. So, Elijah says, We will see what Baal can do; come now, cry aloud. And they cut themselves pretty well to pieces with their lances, and swore too, I dare say, at Baal. You may think it very strange of me to talk in such a way, but it is a fact that the heathen to this day will break out and swear most fearfully at their gods if they do not give them what they ask. So, Elijah said, "Cry aloud; for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked." Elijah was happy enough. Now then Baal cannot bring fire, let us see if our God can; and you know what our God did. And now that we have got the fire and the sacrifice accepted, let us see if Baal can bring rain. No; but our God did. And thus, friends, if they had kept with them that which was from the beginning, then that would have been true of all that was said only of some: — "Ye that did cleave unto the Lord your God are alive unto this day."

After I began to think I was to be a minister, I had many pretty little lessons given to me. One gentleman said, You go on in a very extravagant way; nobody will respect you, all ministers will be against you, and nobody will like you; you must be moderate and careful, for I can tell you it is a very dangerous thing to preach before everybody such doctrines as you preach. I took up my hat to go. What, I said, the grace of God a dangerous thing! the mercy of God, the promise of God, a dangerous thing! "I will and they shall" a dangerous thing! Why, my good sir, they are the only safe things in the world; there is not anything safe in the world but God's truth. Dangerous things! Ah, but people may make a bad use of them. Well, I said if these truths make a good use of the people, the people will make a good use of the truths. Now the people that know these truths are too friendly with them to ill-use them; —you would not ill-use a man if you loved him. These blessed truths are for the people of God; and the people shall curse the man that with-holds these glorious truths from them. Depend upon it, the truth of God is safe; it will maintain its own ground, clear its own course. Never mind what people may say about you; hold out, and God will stand by you; you stand by the Lord, and he will stand by you. God brought me forty-five years ago to a decision that I was nothing but a sinner on the one hand; and into another decision, that if I got to heaven it must be by his grace from first to last; and for forty-five years I have been kept as an iron pillar, a defended city, a brazen wall; and rather than I should ever show before I die the slightest sign of difference, I would sooner drop dead in this pulpit this very instant. The blessed truths of the eternal God will do what nothing else can do. "Thou shalt remember all the way" who made thee to differ, who gave thee escape, who it was that wrought the victory, who it is that hath done all this; —it is the Lord our God.

But let us look at the present; "led thee these forty years in the wilderness." How much wilderness experience the people of God have! what solitude! I like those scriptures—I do not like the experience of them, but I like those scriptures because they sympathize with us in trouble; "like a pelican in the wilderness," "like an owl of the desert," "like a sparrow alone upon the housetop;" and that he will "hear the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer;" and "they wandered in a solitary way, and found no city to dwell in." I dare say some good Christians think that ministers have not much of this wilderness experience; but I can tell you this, —if they have not, they will not be of much use to the people. They may pretend to weep with the people, but they cannot feel as they would if they had these experiences.

The doctor may be very sympathizing over the dying patient, but the doctor cannot feel what the parent feels, the doctor cannot feel what near and dear relatives feel. The apostle says, "Ye have ten thousand instructors, but not many fathers." For a minister, therefore to be of that sympathizing nature that he shall strengthen the diseased, heal the sick, bring again that which was driven away, he must from time to time know what this wilderness experience is; and then he will think when he comes into the pulpit, and say to himself, I am a poor, dark, helpless creature, no more fit to preach the gospel than to create a world; and thus the man is humbled down like a little child, and the Lord knows that is just the time for him to come; so in the Lord steps, the man's heart is warmed, his soul is enlarged, Satan flies off, and glad to get away; and the man is astounded how it is he is so strong; and one thought comes, and another; and the man that one-half his time perhaps is little more than a stammerer, all at once becomes eloquent, and pours forth torrents of thoughts, and blessing after blessing, until the people lose their troubles and their sorrows, and he loses his. Lord, he says, thou canst prepare me for the pulpit very much better than I can -prepare myself for it. I have found that out. It is a mysterious way, but all the ministers and people of God can understand it. The Lord leads us about the wilderness—not out of it, but about it, to humble and prove us, whether we will keep his commandments or no. Now, Job, you are going through a very desolating part of the wilderness; what do you say now? will you keep God's truth now? Yes. You will not go back from his way, from the commandment of his lips? No; his commandment is for me to believe in him, and I do believe in him, "His way have I kept, and not declined." Well, but you have cursed the day of your birth, Job. Well, enough to make me. Have you ever done it, say you? Yes, more than forty times—that is more than once a year—since this church was farmed.

"Thou shalt remember, all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years." I must just remind you that the Lord did not leave them nor forsake them. The manna continued, the rock continued, and the priesthood continued, and the mercy-seat continued. There was the cloud by day, and the fire by night; so that darkness was needed to bring out the light of the cloud; and if that cloud be a figure of God's truth, then the darkness of soul-trouble and affliction brings out the light of God's truth. You and I could not know what we do know, were it not for troubles and afflictions; these afflictions bring out in God's own time the light of eternal truth; and the truth shines brighter by those afflictions than by any other means. Thus, the Lord abode by them; and they were not, after all, so very badly off in the wilderness. Well, but say you "It was a terrible time; there were fiery, flying serpents, and scorpions, and drought, and it was a dreadful place." What signified that, if the Lord were with them? Why, the fiery furnace was a dreadful place, but then the Savior took the dread of it away; the lion's den was a dreadful place, but the Lord took the dread of it away. All we want is the presence of the Lord, to continue to cleave to him and abide by him; and as goodness and mercy have; followed us, so they will do in the future. And then the Lord instructs us how we are to look upon our troubles; we are to consider that "as a man chasteneth his son, so the Lord thy God chasteneth thee;" and so all our troubles are those chastisements by which we are kept in our senses, and by which we are humbled down from time to time for our good at his feet, that we should be glad to live in his way; and the end of it will be that he will bring us into a good land, where he will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams, where we shall eat bread without scarceness, where we shall not lack any good thing, but where our dwelling will be permanent, even in ' everlasting mansions.

May the Lord preserve us, then, from forgetting him, from forgetting what he hath done, and from, forgetting how he undertook our cause; and that he abides by us by the same laws now—the laws of grace and truth. The Lord thus bless us all, for Christ's sake. Amen.

After the delivery of this sermon he was only permitted to preach four times, and for sixteen months was prostrated by disease and incapacitated for ministerial labor. A few days before his departure, he said to

Mr. Butt, "I shall have an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." Another time, he said, "The Lord is often very dear to my heart when I say nothing about it, I feel too ill to talk much." He loved the book of Psalms, and delighted much in those from the 23rd to the 53rd, The last week of his life was a very solemn one. His testimony to the great realities of eternity, as he drew towards his end, will long be treasured up by those of the deacons who were daily with him. On Thursday, he said to Mr. Butt, "I am pleased to see you. Come and sit down." He inquired by name after each deacon, and said, "You are one of the comers. The Lord has blessed you very much, to, me, and to the cause at the Surrey Tabernacle. Brother, don't fear, cheer up; strength for the day. The cause has, through the blessing of the Most High, grown up to what it is. The truth I have preached forty-three years I steadily abide by. The finished mediatorial work of the dear Redeemer is a subject very dear to my heart. I withdraw not one gospel truth I have advanced, bless the Lord. The work of the Holy Spirit is dearer to me than ever. Some expressions I have used in my mode of address may have been misunderstood; but God knew my meaning. Oh, the dear Surrey Tabernacle! Brother, tell the deacons to stand firm by the Gospel I have preached; and oh, the dear people, may the Lord bless them. A more loving, affectionate, tender-hearted people there cannot be. Hundreds of them know what soul trouble is. Yes, there must be soul trouble, or how can we be lifted out of it?"

He then referred to ministers; how it rejoiced him to find that they had been acceptable. People had often said, "Ah, they only go to hear Mr. Wells, but now, for sixteen months, the truth has been spoken and the family fed, and they have supported me as though I had been in their midst. Wonderful, indeed." Asking after some of the afflicted and the poor of the flock, he gently said, "Try and remember them still. O, how I have been blest in the sanctuary." The scene then became truly affecting. Blessing his wife and children around his bed, he said, "I am three parts through the valley, and would not go back even if I could; no, not even to preach the Gospel. What, retreat! No, no—a crown of righteousness. Not a wave of trouble rolls across my peaceful breast. The crown is not only laid up for me, but for all those who love his appearing. I am quite willing and only waiting the summons." Mrs. Wells said, "Mr. Butt, will you engage in prayer?" He said, "I must pray to-night." This was his last prayer that may be called public. The season will never be forgotten. O, that the room had been full to have heard it. His wife, two daughters, a sister-in-law, and Mr. Butt were around his bed. He raised his hands, thanked God for his goodness in sustaining him all through his illness; for the love manifested in calling him and qualifying him for his ministerial position and usefulness in and to the Church of God by the power of the Holy Ghost. He then prayed for the deacons, for the Church and congregation, for ministers, and for the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom; then commended his wife to the God of all grace; then his dear children. With what fervor did he pour out his soul for ten minutes. Mr. Butt put his hand upon his shoulder, and said softly, "Let me close; you will be exhausted." A few more words, and then he said, "Amen, Amen." Mr. Butt followed for a few minutes, entreating the Lord to hear and to answer his request. Soon after Mr. Butt left the room with those feelings, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his," except those sufferings, Lord.

Friday evening, Mr. Butt, with his esteemed colleagues, Beach and Mead, stood by his bedside. He said, "Sit down;" and a truly delightful season they had in conversing upon the eternal realities of the Gospel for one hour. After prayer they left him, and his soul was much refreshed with this interview. Saturday morning early, his sufferings were very severe, and continued through the day. When Mr. Butt went into the room, he clapped his hands and said, "O, my dear brother, come here. I am so pleased to see you once more." Mr. Banks was introduced to him. He said, "Brother Banks, the Lord bless you." Lord's-day morning. It is said, "The time drew near when Israel must die," a most trying morning was passed. About three in the afternoon, Mr. Butt and Mr. Boulden went up. He knew them. Mr. Butt said to him, —

“Jesus, the vision of thy face  
Hath overpowering charms;  
Scarce shall I feel death’s cold embrace  
If Christ be in my arms.”

This seemed to infuse new life into his soul. He laid hold of the last line, firmly embraced it, and said, “If Christ be in my arms,” and repeated it again; but the messenger, Death, was just at hand. They bade him farewell and left, thinking that they should see him again next day; but, to their surprise, they were quickly fetched back to the house just in time to see him breathe his last. He said to Mr. Mitson, who was with him till the last, “Lift me up, brother, a little higher, a little higher,” and then, in a few minutes, in the arms of Mr. Mitson, he quietly, and sweetly fell asleep in Jesus, without a struggle or a groan, on Lord’s day afternoon, March the 10th, 1872, at ten minutes before four.

## FUNERAL.

The funeral took place on Wednesday, the 20th of March, at Nunhead Cemetery, previously to which a solemn service was held at the Tabernacle. When the body of the late pastor was for the last time on the platform, the feelings of the people cannot be described. The service was opened by singing the hymn, “Why do we mourn departed friends ” &c.

Mr. J. B. McCure read the 90th Psalm and 1st Epistle of Corinthians, chap, xv., ver. 35 to 58.

Mr. C. W. Banks offered prayer.

A second hymn was then sung, —

“How sweet to see the Christian die!  
And some may ask the reason why;  
Because through Christ he overcame,  
And thus he proved to die is gain.”

Mr. Thomas Jones then delivered the address from the 14th chapter of the book of Job and the tenth verse, “Man dieth and wasteth away; yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he?” at the close of which a third hymn was sung, “Jesus, the vision of thy face,” &c.; and Mr. Hanks concluded with prayer. —

The procession, was then formed; following the hearse were about ninety mourning coaches, with carriages and other conveyances. Having arrived at Nunhead the body was consigned to the tomb.

Mr. W. Crowther, of Gomersal, delivered a weighty and solemn address to several thousands of persons. The hymn of Mr. Hart’s was sung, —

“Earthly cavern, to thy keeping  
We commit our brother’s dust,  
Keep it safely, softly sleeping,



Till our Lord demand thy trust.”

The Solemnities of the day were closed with prayer by Mr. Hatton, of Red Hill, but many lingered around the tomb until darkness compelled them to retire, sorrowing most of all that they should see his face no more.”

## THREE HYMNS

COMPOSED BY JAMES WELLS UPWARDS OF FORTY YEARS AGO.

### HYMN I.

The beauties of Jesus my soul would adore!  
The God-man Mediator, that's bless'd evermore:  
I would cleave to his mercy, his grace, and his blood,  
And sing of my safety, for Jesus is God.

But oh! when my Jesus (and often he does)  
Quite hides from heart the sweet beams of his love,  
Tis then I'm in trouble for want of his blood;  
Yet here is my comfort, my Jesus is God.

The same in his love, in his thoughts and decrees,  
As when I can see him, and rest on his knees;  
Here then is a Savior that's always the same;  
God-man is his nature, Jehovah his name.

### HYMN II.

How kind is the Savior, how great is his love,  
To come and redeem me, and take me above!  
Where love everlasting and joy shall abound,  
And I with my Jesus shall always be found.

No more shall I hunger, for Jesus is there,  
Tis he that will feed me and make me his care;  
There I shall be fed with the love of his heart,  
And dwell with my Jesus, no more to depart,

Of thirst no more shall I grieve or complain,  
For Jesus is there, as the Lamb that was slain,  
To lead me to waters of kindness and love,  
To drink, and be living with Jesus above.

Sickness and sorrow, it shall not be known;

For Jesus the Lamb, in the midst of the throne,  
Shall shine in his glory, and health shall display,  
And sorrow and sighing shall quite flee away.

No more like a stranger my soul shall appear,  
But I with my Jesus shall dwell without fear;  
Shall lean on his "bosom, and to him shall sing  
The high praise of his grace that did first take me in.

But ah! I am yet in the desert below,  
Where I tribulation and sorrow must know;  
But then my Redeemer has been here before,  
And calls me his person and work to adore.

His sorrows were great, and his grief was unknown,  
But now he's the Lamb in the midst of the throne,  
And still he remembers my soul in distress,  
And visits me too in the strength of his grace.

Am I in prison, he visits me there;  
And says I'm his love, without spot and all fair;  
Though deeply in debt, yet nothing I owe, —  
This truth from my Jesus I'm favored to know.

Soon shall I reach my Savior's sweet home,  
Through much tribulation to heaven must come;  
There I shall adore the great worth of his blood,  
That pardoned my sins and brought me to God.

Till then I would rest in the arms of his grace,  
For Jesus will keep me till I see his face;  
Till then I would speak of his glory below,  
Till I see my Redeemer, and more of him know.

### HYMN III.

Ye saints, behold the boundless love  
Of your incarnate God;  
Look to a mighty Savior's arm,  
And to his precious blood.

How shall we speak of Jesu's love,  
Or half his sorrows tell?  
It goes beyond an angel's sight,  
And all our thoughts excel.

Behold the Lamb on Calvary's cross,  
In sorrow and in grief,

No friend to help, no eye to spare,  
No hand to give relief.

A loving Father hides his face,  
And pours his vengeance down,  
While Jesus cries, 'My heart will break  
How can I bear the frown?'

All hell agrees to hate the Lamb,  
And grieve his tender heart;  
While all men fear to own his name,  
Or take the Savior's part.

And must he then endure the cross?  
Tis his own wise decree,  
To shed his own most precious blood,  
And set his people free.

But now our Jesu's on the throne;  
The glories of the place,  
And all the boundless stores of love,  
Shine in his smiling face.

But we are yet in Achor's vale,  
In sorrow and in sin;  
We oft lament its raging power,  
And feel its plague within.

But oh, says Jesus, do not fear,  
I am the great I AM;  
I'll bring thee safe to my abode,  
And thou shalt adore the Lamb.

Soon shall all our sorrows cease,  
And night shall flee away;  
And Jesus feast our souls with love  
In everlasting day.