

**Editor's Note:** The following information has been gleaned from issues of The Earthen Vessel and Christian Record from the 1854 to 1856 issues. These and the subsequent letters were published in the 19<sup>th</sup> century but have been long out of print. I have added headings briefly summarizing the subject of each letter. The location within the Vessel is given for reference.

# The Letters to Theophilus being the substance of James Wells theology: Letters 1 through 10

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## Epistles to Theophilus Letter 1 - pages 127ff 1854

The Word "World in John 3:16

Most excellent Theophilus, (Luke i. 3), as grace has formed you, I trust, for God, and is making good in your experience your name, (for Theophilus, as you know, means a lover of God), and now, that you may more clearly see into those things wherein you have been instructed, I will begin to set before you, in this my first letter to you, that which gives rest to my own mind, concerning those Scriptures which seem to you rather difficult, upon the subject of special, certain, and eternal salvation. You can hardly reconcile them with the doctrine of a he will have mercy upon whom he will have mercy."

Your daily experience tells you that it must be all of grace; yet that your judgment and your real experience seem somewhat at variance. The helplessness, the law in the members, the plague of the heart, and the destitution of anything good in the flesh, all bear testimony to your face that you are not only almost, but altogether an unclean thing; that you are in the first Adam, faded and fallen like an autumnal leaf from its parent tree; so that, truly, you are a debtor, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh; for if you live after the flesh, you shall die; yet you feel that you can live no other life than after the flesh, only as mercy from on high enables you so to do. You feel that a life of faith by the Son of God is far above, out of your reach: that even true living faith itself must be the gift of God; and if true faith in Jesus must be the gift and work of God, how much more must eternal life itself be the gift of God.

Now, as the words world, the whole world, all men, and every man, are to you somewhat difficult to understand, and while you have been told to look well to the context, in order to get the general drift, and spirit, and meaning of, the writer; and this advice, as far as it goes, is good, and should be by all means strictly attended to; but the context will not always give the meaning: while, therefore, we would and should look well to the context, we, in addition to the context, must keep close to the universal law of interpretation; which is this—that both definite and indefinite phraseology must be taken in strict accordance with the subject to which it is joined.

I will now give some examples of what I mean.

John iii. 16, "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Now, here we see that the love of God is the subject to which this indefinite mode of expression is joined. The word world, therefore, must not be understood in a way that does not accord with the love here spoken of.

The love here spoken of does not mean merely temporal and outward favor; for this temporal and outward favor was all that the love of the Lord meant to the Jews as a nation—and hence of them he says, “I will love them no more.” Hosea ix. 15. But the love of God spoken of here in John, is in Christ, and is like the gift it bestowed—“he gave his only begotten Son.” In his favor to the literal seed of Abraham, he gave them an earthly temporal inheritance; the love and the gift were in accordance one with the other; and so here he gave his only begotten Son. Is Jesus Christ the same yesterday, to-day, and forever? So is his love to those for whom Christ died. Is Jesus Christ God, and therefore infinite? So is the love of God. “God (unto his own) is love;” and was Christ, as Man, loved before the foundation of the world? (John xvii. 24), so are his people loved with the same love. (John xvii. 23). Is Jesus Christ indissoluble one with the Father? So there is no separation from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus. Is the Son of God sure, finally, to conquer all that can ho against him? So his people are more than conquerors through Him that loved them. Are the lines fallen to the Saviour in pleasant places, and has he a goodly heritage? So his people have an inheritance by him incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away. In a word, as the salvation from Egypt, sustentation in the wilderness, and the land of Canaan, with its advantages by the presence of the Lord by a temporal covenant, (see Deut. xxviii.), were expressive as a shadow of good things to come, and but a shadow; and as a shadow, is now passed away; as these were expressive of the kind of favor he bore to them as a nation—and he might, had it pleased him so to do, have chosen any other nation to the same honorable distinction but he chose whom he would—as they got the land in possession by the kind of favor he bore to them, so those who are loved in Christ are loved unto the end: yea, with an everlasting love. Whatever Immanuel is, that is the expression, the netting, and the measure of the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus.

The Saviour will never own any as his brethren, but those who by the Father were given to him, and constituted one with him. It is on the ground of this eternal electiononeness with him, that he owns them, sanctified by God the Father; sanctified, set apart for a holy use and destiny; and so it is written, that “both he that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified, are all of one; for which cause, he is not ashamed to call them brethren.” Here, then, the Father having chosen and set them apart, is the ground, the foundation, the cause of the Saviour owning them at the first, and then bringing them off at last with the triumphant, “Behold I, and the children which God hath given me.” (Heb. ii. 11, &c.)

Now, my good Theophilus, let us look again at “God so loved the world.” Now, though you do not believe in the doctrine of purgatory, yet you do believe and are sure that there is a hell, and some are already there; hut if they were included in “God so loved the world and yet are lost, then is that for ever put asunder which God had forever joined together, and that joined together which God had for ever put asunder. In John x. 15, the Great Shepherd has joined his death and the eternal life of those for whom he died for ever together —“ I lay down my life for the sheep,” and “ I give unto them,” (not I offer unto them,) but “I give unto them eternal life and they shall never perish.” Here his death and their eternal life are forever put together, and they and destruction put forever asunder. Shall we make the Son of God a liar? Shall we still join with sinners to contradict the Saviour? Shall we still walk in the counsel of the ungodly (the unregenerate)? Shall we still stand in the way of sinners, and sit in the seat of the scornful? And then delude ourselves with the notion that it all means the same thing, whether we admit or deny the truth of the testimony of Christ; forgetting that oneness with falsehood is (whether we know it or not) oneness with him who was a liar and murderer from the beginning.

Again, "Thou hast loved them as thou hast loved me." Would the living God ever part with his own Son, and yet 3 he parted with any, and if there were any danger that danger must have been even more with the Saviour than with the sinner: more with the Surety than with the debtor; more with the Shepherd than with the sheep, for all their sins were laid upon him; and if he overcame all and lived at last, then the danger is over, for " if Christ be not risen our faith is vain and we are yet in our sins; but now is Christ risen and gives this testimony, because I live ye shall live also."

Thus, then, the word "world" in this scripture, "God so loved the world," must mean those of whatever nation whom God eternally loves; for it is mediation love, and must accord with its own gift Christ Jesus, together with the order and design of that gift. Thus you must interpret the word "world" in accordance with that to which it is joined.

Remember, there is "a new covenant in Christ Jesus," and you must not interpret those scriptures which belong to that covenant contrary to that covenant; if you interpret but a man's covenant contrary to the manifest designs of that covenant, you would be looked upon to be both a sorry and a dangerous lawyer.

But you must look upon this letter as only an introduction to a few letters (if this beginning should be acceptable to you) I hope to be enabled, by the Earthen Vessel, to send to you.

You can for a few words and two-pence, obtain the Vessel by order through any bookseller; a work for two-pence which thousands of our forefathers would have rejoiced to have had for two-shillings; but happily, the day is gone by that two-hundred pounds had to be given for a Bible, and ten-shillings for a few pages of gospel truth. Let us then take advantage of the Earthen Vessel, in getting all the good we can by it ourselves, and commending it to others.

I hope Theophilus will not object to hear again next month from London, A Little One.

## Epistles to Theophilus Letter 2 - pages 153ff 1854

The meaning of meaning of the word world, as it pertains to the love of God

In my last to you, I dwelt chiefly on the words, "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John iii. 16. The subject contained in the latter part of this Scripture I will—the Lord enabling me—take up in some one or two of my future letters to you.

We have now to deal with the words, "God so loved the world." You will not forget the law of interpretation upon which we have set out—namely, that we must interpret both definite and indefinite phraseology by the subject to which it is joined, and to which it belongs. Guided by this rule, you will find .—both in respect to definite and to indefinite phraseology, several other correlative helps of confirmation; for if your primary interpretation be right, all the relations which the subject bears to other things, will accord with your primary interpretation.

So you will find here in the words, "God so loved the world;" for the word "world" in its meaning is in this Scripture limited; not only by the primary subject to which it belongs—namely, the love of God, but by other self-evident truths.

1st, by the history of the ancient world. Did not the Most High, in the deeps of his councils, suffer—and that for thousands of years—all nations to walk in their own way? Did he deal with all men as he did with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob? Did he call all others in the effectual way he did Abraham, Did he as much constitute Ishmael a child of promise as he did Isaac? Did he love Esau as he did Jacob? Did he take even one other nation from the midst of the nations? "Hath God assayed," saith Moses, Deut. iv. 34, "to go and take him a nation from the midst of another nation?" Hath God assayed—hath he attempted even so to do? Nor did he give the good land (see Deut. ix.) to the Israelites, because they were any better than other people; and if he drove out the heathen nations for their wickedness, he might quite as justly have kept out the Israelites for their wickedness. And does not one of that nation thus testify of the sovereignty of the mercy of the Lord unto them—"He shows his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel: he hath not dealt so with any nation; as for his judgments, they have not known them?" Psalm .cxlvii 19—21.

One of the most awful scenes that we can contemplate, is that of the millions who—before the coming of the Saviour—passed into eternity, without mercy, having no hope, and without God in the world; and what is it but solemn mockery, self-delusion, and daring denial of God's most holy word, to pretend that these millions of the human race were included in the words, "God so loved the world?" If they were loved, where is the least proof thereof? They were suffered to walk in their own way, and did as all others so left are sure to do. No mercy rolled in,

"Their downward course to stay;"

But, instead of the Lord quickening them by his Spirit, and pouring upon them the Spirit of grace and supplication—instead of this, he gave them up to vile affections. Can you, my good Theophilus, or can any man, with the fear of God before his eyes, reconcile such solemn judgments with making the words, "God so loved the world," to mean the whole human race? For where the love here spoken of is, it stands, thus, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore in loving-kindness have I drawn thee." Jeremiah xxxi. 3.

Upon what principle, then, can you understand the dealings of the Most High with the ancient world, but upon this, "he hath mercy upon whom he will have mercy; and whom he will he hardeneth?" There is no other principle in existence that can account for those dealings.

Why did not the prophets of old form themselves into a missionary society, and seek to convert the heathen nations? The answer is easy and plain; they knew that without the Lord, vain would be the help of man. The Lord was not pleased to send them to convert the heathen; therefore, knowing their attempts would be vain, they abstained from going. Yet there is now no class of men living who knew better than the holy prophets knew the vital, the infinite, and the everlasting importance of the salvation of the soul. They well knew that no mere man could redeem his brother, or give to God a ransom for him; for the redemption of the soul is precious; precious in the price

thereof, being the precious blood of Christ; precious in the value thereof; and precious in the endless effects thereof. Yet no attempts were made by God or man to convert these ancient heathen nations. Yet God loved them with all that love which is expressed in the gift of his dear Son. "Believest thou this now, Theophilus?" Can you believe that God loved them with an infinite and eternal love, yet left them to perish? What would be thought of a parent who, seeing a child working out its own destruction, and who at the same time had it in his power to prevent it, yet made not the least attempt so to do? Who would, who could, believe that the heart of that parent was full of love to that child? Yea, would not the very voice of common humanity cry everlasting shame upon such a one? And shall the holy the righteous, blessed God be made to appear thus—that he has given his own Son to be the End of the law for righteousness to the whole human race, leaving no law by which they can be condemned; yet the Lord himself, in the very face of his love to them, and in the very face of the atonement his own dear Son hath made for them, condemns them by that very law which Christ fulfilled for them, and from the curse of which he eternally redeemed them?

2nd. the present state of the world. Does not the gospel take a deeper hold in some nations than in others? Unbelief rejects the gospel; but while unbelief is the same in all, yet some, like the good ground, savingly receive the word; and it is the Lord himself that makes this difference: and so it is written, "The preparation of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue is of the Lord." Proverbs xv i. 1. So then, while some men are unbelievers, some are believers; some live and die in faith; some live and die in unbelief: and unto them who believe the Holy Ghost puts this question, "Who makes thee to differ?"

3rd. The day of days—the day of judgment— will shew the same truth, vis., that the words "God so loved the world," does not mean that he loved the whole human race. Those who shall be found on the Saviour's left hand were all in one shape or another, living and dying members of the man of sin; therefore always hated the truth, and so could not give even a cup of cold water to a disciple in true love to that disciple. A want of this love of the truth puts a negative upon all their good deeds.

It is said of these that they were cursed; but it is not once hinted that they were ever loved or blest.

Thus the farther we trace the several relations which these words "God so loved the world" bear to other objects, the more we are confirmed in our primary interpretation.

In short, the word "world" is often evidently used in a kind of anti-national sense; that the gospel of God was not to be confined to one nation, but was to be extended to all nations in the whole world, so that there should be, according to the promise of God to Abraham, that all the families or nations in the earth should be blessed in him; and so John in vision saw much people out of every kindred, tongue, and nation.

Indeed the people of God are the world in the substance thereof; all things are for their sakes; the world would be nothing in God's account without them; and it will cease to be when these pillars who bear it up are all taken away. They are God's own world; he loves them, blesses them, saves them, and shall forever dwell with them. So believes A Little One.

## Epistles to Theophilus Letter 3 - pages 217ff 1854

The importance of doctrine to these things (Isaiah liv. and in John vi.)

Now, my good Theophilus, having noticed the meaning of the word world, as it pertains to the love of God; we now have to notice the meaning of this same word as it pertains to the atonement. But before entering upon the same, it will be as well to have a few words upon the importance of the matter we have in hand; for you know it is very common for people to say, "O, never mind about doctrine. Holiness of heart and life is everything. We do not trouble ourselves about creeds."

And why do men thus speak? Is it not because their religion stands more with men than with God? Is it not because their religion is taught by man, and not by the Lord? And that it lies not between them and God, but, like the Pharisees of old, and like the apocalyptic beast, they do their works and wonders in the sight of men, and so delude themselves till the notion that they can have holiness of heart and life acceptable to God, apart from the true and wholesome doctrines of the gospel—whereas all who are born of God are born of an incorruptible seed, by the word of God, which liveth and abideih forever. (1 Peter i. 23). "Now, you are clean," saith the Saviour "through the word that I have spoken unto you."

The doctrines that hold us, and that we hold, are either false or true. Can falsehood produce true holiness of heart or life? If new covenant truth be not rooted in the soul; if they speak not according to this law of life and certainty, then it is because there is no true light in them. He whose experience does not make him poor, wretched, miserable, helpless, vile, empty, and worthless enough to keep him from displacing any one new covenant truth, is prepared to displace the whole and in so doing he will at last displace himself, as the Jews of old did when they despised the testimony of Christ; they soon lost both their place and nation, and themselves too; for they died in their sins.

By my words I am to be justified or to be condemned: the Pharisee was by his words condemned; the Publican by his words was justified.

The work of God is perfect: nothing can be added to it, nor anything taken from it; if, therefore, I am in love with false doctrine, whether I know it or not, I am on my way to the burning lake — the inheritance of the father of lies, and all who are one with him.

Now, if I profess the Saviour's name, and thus have a name in the book of life, and profess to have a part or portion in the holy city of God, and seem to be written among the living, yet add something of my own to the word and work of God, then the plagues written in that book will surely come upon me; and if I take away his sovereignty, his electing grace, and the perfect freedom of his Gospel, then every seeming part will be taken away from the book of life, and out of the holy city. (Rom. xxii. 18, 19.) And yet men trifle with doctrine, and think anything will do, if it has in it what they call holiness of heart and life. But it is written, "But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." Matt. xv. 9.

Is it, then, of no importance, whether we are led by truth or falsehood? Is it of no consequence, whether we wrest the Scriptures to our own destruction, or whether we receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save our souls? Is it of no moment, whether we receive the truth in the love of it, or whether we make God a liar? Is it a question of no weight, whether we receive rightly the record God hath given of his Son, or whether we resist the Holy Ghost in the testimony of his word? Is there nothing valuable at stake in this matter? Is the destiny of his soul of small import? Is its meetness for heaven a trifling work? Is it the work of man, or of God? Is it not the work of God to raise the dead? He it is that forms his people for himself; and therefore it is that they shew forth his praise.

Now, before entering again upon the word world, here is yet another point which I wish my good Theophilus particularly to notice; and it is this. The connection in which the promise, "All thy children shall be taught of God," stands. Look first at Isaiah liv. 13; then read that chapter down carefully; and then ask whether, if these be the truths which God himself teaches his children, are they not truths that stand directly opposed to free-will and low Calvinism? Look, in that chapter, at the heavenly union—thy Maker is thy Husband. Then look at the mercy and the majesty of an eternal covenant. Then look at the magnificence of the holy city—"I will lay thy stones with fair colors," &c. Then look at the sure and final defeat of all their foes—"No weapon formed against them can prosper." Yet blind and presumptuous man dares to set these truths at naught," such men do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God."

But look also at the 6th chapter of John, verse 45th, and then look at the spirit and doctrine of the same. First, you have here multitudes who professed to be his disciples, who yet followed him; not from recognizing anything supernatural about him; they entered not into the miraculous part of the matter, but did eat, and were filled, and that was enough; but they professing to be disciples, must be put to the test, therefore; as though he should say, If you are my disciples, you must labor not for the meat that perisheth, as your religion; but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of Man shall give unto you; for him hath God the Father sealed. All those who are taught of God are taught to labor by faith, and prayer, and hope, and love, for the meat that endureth to everlasting life.

You will thus see that it was not on the ground of any ability in them to labor for the bread of life, but on the ground of their professed discipleship that they were thus exhorted. He—the Saviour—well knew what they were, but then he was determined to make them manifest, that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed; and so in the end it proved. His very first answer he gave them to the question, "What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?" was, "This is the work of God that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." Now, look at the kind of truth with which this was followed up.

First, "the bread of God, of which, if a man eat, he shall live forever." And they said, "Evermore give us this bread" Now, this seems to look well; but, no sooner did he shew that he was the Bread of Life, and that all that the Father had given him should come to him, that none of such should be cast out, and that of all the Father had given him he should lose nothing, but raise it up at the last day; that every one that seeth him and believeth on him should have everlasting life, and be raised up at the last day—no sooner had he said these things, than they murmured at him, of the way in which he shewed he was the Bread of Life.

And how did he meet their murmuring? Was it by softening down the truth he had before advanced? Verily, no: it was not; for he said, "Murmur not among yourselves:" there is no fear of you receiving these dreadful doctrines; it is not in your power to do so: "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he truly know them;" therefore you need not murmur; for no man can come into this order of things, except God the Father draw him; "and I will raise him up at the last day." Now, then, if it be the work of God to bring a soul into these truths, then God himself will be responsible for the consequence; therefore, he who blames us for receiving and abiding by these truths, blames our Maker for bringing us so to do. And so it is, that he who in these matters reproacheth us, reproacheth the Saviour, as also he who sent him.

Now, which alternative must take place, it seems one or the other must take place? Either he must give up, or soften down God's truth, or loose the approbation of a very great multitude of (so called) disciples; which of these alternatives does he chose? Does he not go on to shew that it is by the sacrifice of himself— that it is by his blood, that we have everlasting life? That as the Israelites were supported and sustained in a desert land by the manna, so the true Christian is supported by daily supplies, which are by Christ Jesus; and that as the land of Canaan was made fruitful by the blessing of the Lord from the mercy-seat in the temple, so the land of gospel truth yields her strength by Christ Jesus; he it is that ripens and sweetens, and gives fullness to the promises. His blood is the blood of the everlasting covenant, which has, and does, and will, cheer the hearts of thousands of poor prisoners of hope. His sacrifice hath put away sin; now, to believe, to receive, to know, these truths in the endearing power of them; to be upheld, and encouraged, and nourished in our hope in his mercy, and in our love to his name, this is to find that his flesh, his sacrifice, is meat indeed, and his blood is drink indeed; this is that fare that proportions our strength to our day, and will give us the final victory. But these truths are neither the meat nor the drink of mere professors; however sincere they may be in their profession, they cannot receive these testimonies: how many go back who have seemed to receive them, and walk no more in them; but he knoweth whom he hath chosen. All who are taught of God will receive these truths.

Again then, I say, look at the truth which both in the Old and New Testament stands in connection with the promise of being taught of God. I hope these remarks in this letter will help us to enter more clearly upon the meaning of the word world connected with the atonement, in our next.

A Little One

Epistles to Theophilus Letter 4 - pages 223ff 1854

The meaning of meaning of the word world, as it pertains to the atonement

I now, after shewing in my last, the main drift of divine teaching as set forth in Isaiah liv. and in John vi.—I now proceed to shew— that, on the one hand, language in relation to the atonement universal in sound is limited in sense, and meaning; and on the other hand, that there are modes of speech limited in sound but universal in sense.

It is remarkable that the very scripture apparently the most powerful on the side of universal redemption is limited not only by its theme but by its connection; I here refer to 1 John ii. Verse the 2nd. "He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world."

Here we see the words "whole world" do not mean the whole human race, for the Jews are not included here in the words "whole world;" he is the propitiation not for our sins only, so then here are our sins and the sins of the whole world beside: thus, clearly shewing, the words "whole world" mean all the Gentile nations. But does it, at the same time, mean all the individual persons of those nations? I trow not. It was promised to Abraham, "That in him and in his seed should all the nations of the earth be blessed." And John, in vision, "Saw a people out of all nations, and kindred's and tongues." Here (Rev. vii.) we have our Maker's own explanation of the word's "whole world," "all men," "every man;" but men are not content with divine explanations, they prefer human conceits.

The Saviour's own explanations of the Old Testament were despised by the Pharisees of old; and so offended were they at his saying his "Sheep should never perish," and that "No man could come to him except it were given him from above;" this was such an offence that they never forgave him; and, therefore, crucified him, and so hoping to get rid of him.

But, let us give scope to the words in the mere sound thereof; and if the consequences which follow upon so taking the words cannot be sustained, then we may,—yea, we must,—infer that we have come the wrong road.

"He is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world; he gave himself a ransom for all."

Now, Theophilus, just look at this one rule: viz,—that if what is written concerning those for whom Christ died be not fulfilled in every individual case, then the interpretation which makes the words whole world and all men mean the whole human race falls to the ground.

Now, upon this point there are two things perfectly clear. 1st, that what is said concerning the effect of the atonement is fulfilled in some. 2nd, that it is not fulfilled in others. Now, how is this, if the redeemed of the Lord are to return? And (without if, but or may) it declares not only that the redeemed shall return, but that they shall reach Zion in safety, and that everlasting joy shall be unto them; and that sorrow and sighing shall flee away. If this be true, how is it so many are left behind? And if he laid down his life for the sheep—and it is said, and the Scripture cannot be broken, that his sheep shall hear his voice, and that He must bring them, and give unto them eternal life—if this be true, and God is true, how is it that so many are left to the hardness of their hearts, and do neither hear the voice of his truth, nor follow him, but perish in their own corruption? What! an Almighty Saviour lay down his life for the whole human race—take sole management of them as their good Shepherd, and yet suffer sin and Satan to take such numbers from him? What sort of an account would such a Shepherd have to give at the last? Would it not be a most unaccountable account—viz., that he has gathered up some with his arm, and carried them in his bosom, but could not manage the rest? Yet that same Person who could not manage to save them, will manage to banish them from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power. Thus this man, even this God-man, began to build, but was not able to finish—was not able, with ten thousand, to go against him that came against him with twenty thousand, but must send an embassies of peace, lest

sin and satan should rend those from him which he had saved. If this were the Immanuel of the Bible, his name to a poor, ruined, self-condemned, helpless sinner, would be "a delusion, a snare, and mockery." But those who are taught of God know better things of his name—"his name is all their trust," His name is a strong tower; the righteous—the man justified by faith—runneth into it, and is safe.

Now, my good Theophilus, as what is said concerning those for whom Christ died is not true of the whole human race, we must seek the meaning of the words, whole world, and all men, in another direction. And that to you is now, I trust, a very easy matter, seeing the Lord God Almighty himself has explained it by my servant John—Rev. vii. 9; and he who is not content with the explanation of Rev. vii. 9, would not be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.

But let us upon this, as upon a former part of our subject, look a little at correlative proof, that the words whole world, and all men, are synecdochical—that is a figure of speech in which the whole seems to be mentioned, but a part only is meant. "We know we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness." Here the whole world means that part of the human race, sleeping in the scorpion folds of the wicked one. 1 John v. 19.

"Satan, which deceiveth the whole world." Here, the whole world means only those who are governed by satanic delusion; and truly, "their name is legion, for they are many."

"All the world wondered after the beast." Here, all the world means all those, who in one form or another, wonder after the man of sin, here called a beast—meaning a wild beast—because the whole body of error is repugnant to God, and to God's house, and because all its admirers are strangers to the truth as it is in Jesus. Now, in all these Scriptures, the words worlds and whole world, are limited in their meaning, even our enemies themselves being judges.

But on the other hand, we have modes of speech limited in sound, but universal in sense.—"As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners." Now, here the word many must be explained by the subject to which it belongs. The fall of man is the subject to which it belongs. Now, we know that the whole human race are involved in the fall of Adam. But the word many, in the next clause, is joined to a different subject, therefore has a different meaning. "By the obedience of one, shall many be made righteous." Now, here again are two points clear: First that all the human race are sinners. Secondly, that only some are made righteous. And thus the same word has a different meaning, according to the subject to which it is joined. "Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame, and everlasting contempt." Dan. xii. 2. Now, we well know that there will be a resurrection of all that sleep in the dust of the earth, yet it here says, "many of them." Thus again, it is the subject to which it is joined that rules, or ought to rule, the interpretation. Let us be careful not to wrest the Scriptures, nor pervert the words of the Most High.

But, "he tasted death for every man." Heb. ii. 9. Note here, that the Greek word hyper, here translated for, usually means above, and beyond; and so he tasted death above and beyond every man. No man ever tasted death as he did; he so tasted death as to swallow up death in victory. This no man but the Man Christ Jesus ever did, or ever could do. Not that we need this rendering in order to give us the meaning of the words, "every man," as the next verse shows who the "every

man" is, for they are in the next verse called sons, for "it became him in bringing many sons to glory." Here, then, the many sons are the every man, and the every man for whom he tasted death are the many sons. We thus have the Holy Spirit's own explanation of the every man—he was on their behalf made perfect through suffering, and hereby he hath perfected them and that forever.

No doubt the magicians will continue to throw down their rods, but I hope to bring Aaron's rod to them again next month, upon matters more closely connected with regeneration, unless Theophilus be weary of the feeble attempt for good of London, A Little One.

## Epistles to Theophilus Letter 5 - pages 246ff 1854

The matter of regeneration and invitations of the word of God

We now come to the vital matter of regeneration, and the invitations of the word of God: — "Ye must be born again" In this lies the root of all real religion, for no man, except he be born again, can rightly "see the kingdom of God;" nor unless "born of water and of the Spirit" can he enter the kingdom of God.

The water here will mean the word of God; called water because of its cleansing quality and power; and so it is written, "now ye are clean through the word that I have spoken unto you." (John xv. 3.) Again, "he loved the church and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water, by the word; and present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Eph. v. 25—27. Again: "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever." 1 Pet. i. 23. Again: "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy hath he saved us by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost." Titus iii. 5. Again: "The dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and live." John v. 25,

Here then you will see that, that which is in one place called " water" is in another place called the "word." You will notice also, that the word and the Holy Spirit, are in this washing of regeneration, one. This is to show, that the word can minister no life without the Holy Spirit; for "the flesh profiteth nothing; it is the Spirit that quickeneth." And on the other hand, that the Holy Spirit works by the word. The word is both the rule and the means by which he works. And thus, to be born of water and of the Spirit, is to be born by the living, quickening, cleansing power of the Word: "Except a man be (so) born again he cannot enter the kingdom of heaven."

As to what men call Baptismal regeneration, let it not once be named by you, as becometh a Christian; seeing it does not become a Christian to make regeneration to consist in anything but the quickening power of the living God; everything short of this is simply fatal delusion; the work is entirely of God: "of his own will begat he us." And, again, "according to his abundant mercy he hath begotten us again to a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ; and he quickeneth whom he will"

I will, presently, lay before you the reasons that no man, except born of water and of the Spirit, can either here, or hereafter, enter into the kingdom of heaven. But before so doing, we must have a few words more upon this 3rd chapter of John; likewise, a quotation or two upon this "root of the matter, "from the Old Testament.

Now, in this 3rd of John, we have, first, a distinction made between our natural and spiritual birth, "That which is born of the flesh, is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit." In the one we are conceived in sin, in the other we are born of an incorruptible seed; in the one we are shapen in iniquity, in the other we are created in Christ Jesus; in the one we cannot please God, for, "they that are in the flesh cannot please God," in the other we receive the record God hath given of his Son, and so glorify God; in the one we are alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in us, in the other we have eternal life; in the one we have nothing that is good, in the other we have nothing that is not good; the one is natural, earthly, sensual, 'devilish; the other supernatural, heavenly, holy, and divine; being made partakers of the divine nature.

Again: we have in this 3rd of John the uncontrollable sovereignty of the Holy Spirit—"The wind bloweth where it listeth;" so much for human help in bringing an immortal soul into eternal life; "who then hath ascended up into heaven, or descended?" No man except the Son of man. "Who hath gathered the wind in his fist?" "With whom is the residue of the spirit; with man or with God?" "Who hath bound the waters in a garment?" No one but he who hath said, unto the sea of iniquity, "hitherto shalt thou come;" (namely to Calvary's cross,) "but no farther;" "here shall thy proud waves be staid." And "who hath established all the ends of the earth?" the fragments, the remnants, the outcasts of Israel? —who hath fixed, and settled them in their inheritance?" where the lines are fallen to them in pleasant places? and where they have a goodly heritage? What is his name? Or, what is his Son's name, if thou canst tell?" (Prov. xxx. 4.) These are things which no man but the God man ever did, or ever can do; how true it is that "vain is the help of man." For after all that men may say, or do, the wind still bloweth where it listeth, tarrying not for man nor waiting for the sons of men.

"But thou nearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit."

He who is born of God does not at first know whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; the word of God has a sound with him it never had before, and there is too, something piercing about it, it is the north wind of the Holy Spirit in his cutting convictions; the threatening's of God roar in the conscience; everything very wintery, blasting, and desolating; all fleshly excellences fade and come to naught; he finds that "All flesh is as grass, and all the goodness thereof as the flower of the field; the grass withereth, the flower fadeth, because the Spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it." He shivers, in despair; as for his life, he is ready to say of the Lord, "He casteth forth his ice like morsels, who can stand before his cold?" (Psalm cxlvii. 17.) When a sinner thus hears the sound of the word as a rough wind, he would creep and cling to anything for shelter, and for warmth and hope; he thus hearing and feeling the north wind, he does not yet know anything of the south wind, he runs to some humanly devised religion, and thus is running to a dunghill, and trying to get sustenance where there is nothing but the serpent's meat, namely, dust. He knows not what all this means; why he should be so miserable, he hardly knows; he feels that his iniquities, like the wind, have carried him away from God; and the rough wind of God's wrath, he fears, will carry him

away into destruction. He is full of tossing's to and fro, unto the dawning of the day; and tossed about he must be, until he becomes poor and needy enough for the pearl of great price,— poor and needy enough for the unsearchable riches of Christ, and made to submit to his righteousness, and acknowledge " that it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth;" for he has done both, and seems as far, or farther off, than ever; and therefore, it must be entirely of God, who alone can truly shew mercy, when the time shall come for the south wind to arise. Now he will begin to understand Job xxxvii. 16, 17. "Dost thou know the balancing of the clouds?" Yes, he will begin to see the bright light that shineth betwixt, and to know that the clouds of "dejection" have been so ordered, as to overshadow, and make him fear as he entered these thick wintery clouds of guilt and horror, and is hereby prepared to hear the Lord God of Israel saying unto him, "I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and as a cloud thy sins; return unto me, for I have redeemed thee." Isaiah xlv. 22. He shall thus know something of the "balancing of the clouds," that when balanced against the redemption of Christ, and the abundant mercy of God, they shall vanish away like smoke, and while

"Around his brow, these awful clouds were spread,  
Eternal sunshine settles on his head."

Dost thou, then, my good Theophilus, know the "balancing of the clouds"—the wondrous works of him, who is perfect in knowledge, how thy garments are warm, when he quieteth the earth by the south wind? I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from thee.

Truly, it is the south wind of the Gospel, under the genial rays of the Sun of righteousness, that quiets the earth—the new earth or land of promise. "The flowers appear on the earth, the time of the singing of birds is come;" the garments of salvation beautify and dignify, and are warm and durable clothing. And now comes, "quietness and assurance forever." Such a one is raised up out of the dust, and lifted up from the dunghill, and made to inherit the throne of glory. And now, while the heavenly wind bloweth where it listeth, he knows now, whence it comes, and whither it goeth; he knows now, that it comes from God, and leads to God. It is that heavenly trade wind, always blowing in the right direction, and is constant as the sun. Carried always by this wind, they are not to be moved by every cross wind of false doctrine, but to keep in the right course, and right latitude, until they come to their desired haven.

Now, what he, who is born of God, was to himself, he now, in one sense, becomes to others; he knows whence cometh this heavenly sound, and whither it goeth, but others do not know; they hear the sound thereof, in the testimony which such a one bears, but they cannot tell whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth. Some will say, he is beside himself; others will say, how knoweth this man these things, having never learned? And as they hear the sound of his testimony, and not understanding it, they will, in order to hide their own ignorance of the matter—for of course they will not like to confess their ignorance, and will therefore seek to hide it—they will say unto such an one, thou wast altogether born in sin, and dost thou teach us? and they will, (if they can) cast him out as a very dangerous sort of man. Yea, they will be quite shocked, (at least, pretend to be) at the testimony borne by a man who is born of God; and, if need be, will even suborn men to say, "This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place, and the law." Acts vi. 13.

They hear the sound," but cannot tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth." But, nevertheless, they who are born of God, cannot but speak the things which they have seen and heard. Acts iv. 20. They have seen an end of all perfection in the flesh—that vain is the help of man; that the commandment of God is exceeding broad; that none but Immanuel's wings could cover the same. They have seen that we must be born again; they have seen that this is the work of God, and that he does it sovereignly, quickening whom he will—the wind blowing where it listeth; and that he, who is born of God, is brought into the order of the kingdom of God; into the order of the Saviour's eternal priesthood; into the order of an immovable covenant sealed thereby; into the order of an indestructible and immoveable kingdom; and that, in contrast to, and defiance of, all the devices of men. For they are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man; but of the will and power of God.

In my next, I hope to shew the reasons none can enter the kingdom but such as are born of God.  
A Little One

## Epistles to Theophilus Letter 6 - pages 274ff 1854

About being born again

In my last I set before you the testimony of God concerning being born again, together with some of the experiences connected therewith, as well as the sovereignty of the Holy Spirit manifested therein.

In this letter, I shall show, first, that this being born from above, is as much a doctrine of the Old as of the New Testament, and secondly fulfil my promise, to shew the reasons, that in order to enter the kingdom of heaven we must be born again.

Now, in order to shew regeneration to be a doctrine of the Old Testament, we set out upon this one proposition, that without faith it is impossible to please God. Heb. xi. 6.

Now just look back again at the 3rd of John, and you will see that the believing spoken of in the after parts of that chapter must originate in the regenerating power of God, spoken of in the first part of that chapter; saith the Saviour, (John xi. 26,) "Whosoever liveth, and believeth in me, shall never die. Believest thou this? I know that thou believest." What, then, was the faith of Abel? Was it of God, or of men? Did it originate in the wisdom of men, or in the power of God? Did his faith bring him into the kingdom of God, or did it not? Is righteousness, divine righteousness, the first feature of the kingdom of God vitally, or is it not? Rom. xiv. 17. Did Abel know, and was he made righteous by the righteousness of Christ, or was he not? Heb. xi. 4. Did the Holy Spirit of God shew to Abel the meaning of his sacrifice being accepted, or did he not? Had Abel any testimony direct from heaven that he was righteous, or had he not?

Is it not written, that it is impossible for those sacrifices to take away sin? Heb. x. 4. And also, that those sacrifices could not make the comers thereunto perfect? (ix. 9.) and yet Abel obtained witness that he was righteous. Abel thus saw and entered into the kingdom of God; he knew the King and

Mediator of that kingdom. He saw the promised seed. This is that which Cain did not see. Cain was not born of God; therefore did not enter into the kingdom of God.

"If the natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God, neither can he know them," and yet Abel did both know and receive the things of the spirit of God; then Abel was not merely a natural man but a spiritual man—having by a spiritual and living faith spiritual and eternal life. I will not at present trouble you with what is said of Cain, as this will more properly belong to the subject of a future letter.

Enoch, the seventh from Adam, was a regenerated man: he walked with God, and therefore must have been where God could be walked with. And this could have been nowhere but in newness of life. "In the beginning was the Word; and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. In him was life, and the life was the light of men." This Divine Word was and is that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us.

Now, this manifestation of the blessed God in the new covenant, is in direct contrast" to the law, which is the ministration of death. It must therefore have been by the blood of the new covenant that Enoch walked with God. (Zech. ix 11). And so it was not by the works of the law, but by the faith of Christ, that he both walked with God, and was translated to that kingdom of glory, for which regeneration had fitted him.

Let us now, to avoid multiplying examples unnecessarily, take Abraham. He was called of God, and saw the day of Christ, and rejoiced;—" he saw it, and was glad." Now, if Abraham was the father of the faithful, and if they that be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham—and if this state of things be by the law of faith—and which law is the law of life—"for he that believeth hath everlasting life"—and if the law of faith be the law of love, and the law of liberty, and of final salvation—which it certainly is ; for true faith loves what it believes—and if the Son make us by faith in him free, then are we free indeed, and the end of our faith is the salvation of our soul. Then Abraham, as the father of the faithful, had all these, and was therefore a spiritual man; and to whom was clearly revealed the new covenant of God in Christ Jesus, and that in all the stability of its sworn order and form. As he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself.

Taking, then, the above as examples of the essential character of all Old Testament believers, it follows, that regeneration by the Spirit and power of God, was a truth known to them, and experienced by them.

The language, also, of the Old Testament, and its figurative representations, are as strong as in the New Testament. Hence, in" the Old as well as in the New Testament, it is called being born. "They shall come, and shall declare his righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that he hath done this.' Psa. xxii. 31. Here, being born of God is inseparably connected with the revelation to the soul of eternal righteousness; that righteousness being brought in by all that suffering of the Saviour spoken of in the preceding part of the Psalm.

Again: It is placed in close connection with that Zion where the Lord hath commanded his blessing—even life for evermore. "And of Zion it shall be said, this and that man was born in her. And the Highest himself shall establish her." Psa. lxxxvii. 5. Here the two testimonies, "life for

evermore," and "the Highest himself shall establish her," sort well together; so that Old Testament believers knew the truth, not of regeneration only, but also of that everlasting life and final settlement in the promised rest, inseparably one therewith.

Again: It is very beautifully united with that solemn sense of destitution to which everyone must be brought, in order rightly to appreciate the gospel. It is such, and such only, that can truly praise the Lord for the gospel; and so saith the Word—"He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer. This shall be written for the (spiritual) generation to come; and the people which shall be created (in Christ Jesus) shall praise the Lord." Psa. cii. 17, 18.

Now, in answer to this, the New Testament says—"Ye are a chosen generation—a royal priesthood—a holy nation—a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light." 1 Peter ii. 9. The light spoken of by the apostle, is contained in the preceding part of the verse—namely, eternal election: "Ye are a chosen generation;" oneness with the Great High Priest of our profession—Christ Jesus; "a royal priesthood;" the sanctification that is by him; a holy nation; the everlasting distinction from others, which is by him; "a peculiar people;" and these are the praises they are to shew forth. And so in Psalm cii.; the praise wherewith they are to praise the Lord is to go on to that eternity spoken of at the close of the Psalm—"Thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end: the (spiritual) children of thy (ministering) servants shall continue, and their seed shall be established before thee."

Again: It is called a formation: "This people have I formed for myself: they shall shew forth my praise." Isa. xliii. 21. The people thus formed for God are, in the preceding verse, thus described: "The beasts of the field shall honor me: the dragons and the owls, because I give waters in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert, to give drink to my people—my chosen" Here we have, in substance, the same as in Acts 10th, where the apostle Peter saw the Gentiles as wild beasts, fowls of the air, and creeping things; and yet in eternal election they stood sanctified and ordained to eternal life. And so here, in Isaiah, they are in their unregenerate state as wild beasts, dragons and owls. But then they are, saith the word, my chosen. And of this chosen people it is said, "I have formed them for myself: they shall shew forth my praise."

Here, then, we have, first, their state by nature—beasts of the field, dragons and owls. Secondly, the promise concerning them—"They shall honor me." Thirdly, when they are to honor him—it is to be when the waters of life shall reach them in this their wilderness and desert state. The waters of life are to be in the wilderness, and the rivers thereof in the desert. Fourthly, we have their relationship to God and their election—my people, my chosen. Fifthly, we have the reason of their honoring the Lord—"This people have I formed for myself." Never, had he not thus formed them, would they have thus honored him. If they truly honor him, it is because they are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. Sixthly, we have their final prospects and final employment—"They- shall shew forth my praise." You see these same things set forth in the very first verse of this 43rd of Isaiah.

Now bring the 100th Psalm into company with what I have here said, and you will at once be convinced of their complete agreement one with the other. "Know ye that the Lord he is God, it is He that made us, (anew,) and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture."

Now then, what is the work for which we are thus fitted? and what are the advantages of this new state of things? The answer to both these questions is given in this same 100th Psalm, "Enter into his gates with thanksgiving; be thankful unto him, and bless his holy name," for these three reasons—first, because he is good; second, because his mercy is everlasting; third, because his truth endureth to all generations. It will not be needful here to notice Ezekiel 37th; where, while the New Testament represents us as dead in trespasses and in sins, we are here in this 37th of Ezekiel, represented as dry bones, needing a resurrection; let then these few examples suffice for the present to shew that regeneration is as much a truth of the Old Testament as it is of the New Testament; a truth as much known to Old Testament saints as it is to New Testament believers.

It is a truth of which the chief priests and rulers of old were ignorant: but does it follow, that because Nicodemus was utterly unacquainted therewith, that therefore such men as Simeon or Zacharias knew nothing thereof? Are there not many in our own enlightened ago who profess to be teachers in Israel, and to whom the new birth is altogether a strange thing? These men do not (Nicodemus like) find the doctrine in the Old Testament; and what is said of it in the New Testament they either deny, or most fatally pervert. And so they themselves being deluded, they delude others unintentionally with the same delusion wherewith they themselves are deluded. Now what was true in the days of Nicodemus always was true; it was true then and always will be true; it is a truth essential to the salvation of every one—no one can be saved without it: "Ye must be born again."

The kingdom of heaven dispensationally is one thing, the kingdom of heaven vitally is another thing; into the kingdom of heaven in its external thousands enter who are not born of God—these are the tares who are to be gathered into bundles and cast into everlasting fire; from such the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and such have taken the external kingdom by force; namely, by acts of Parliament, by the sword, and by popish laws and persecutions, and have deprived the people of the Most High of this kingdom in its external. But they could touch neither the internal, nor the eternal; for in its vitality and eternity, it is beyond the reach even of angels; for "even unto angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak."

Thus, my good Theophilus will see that it is not into the kingdom of heaven externally that they cannot enter unless born again; but into the kingdom of heaven vitally and eternally that no man except born again can enter, and that for the following reasons: first, because of that heart work essential to the right knowledge of God. And having shewn that regeneration is a doctrine of the Old as well as of the New Testament, I shall enjoy the whole range of the Holy Scriptures to prove and establish the truth as it is in Jesus.

But we are again at the end of the space allotted us for this month, and therefore leave for another letter the remaining part of this important subject.

We have, at present, held our correspondence after a quiet sort of manner: and we have even a kind word from a "Little One's Friend," on the November wrapper, as well as a good word from the good Editor of the Vessel; and we hope these friends, and some few more, will go with us when we come to treat of "preaching to sinners, invitations, exhortations, precepts," &c.

But as a great man in other matters has said "you must not expect too much," seeing I am but A Little One. London, Nov. 22, 1854.

## Epistles to Theophilus Letter 7 - pages 6ff 1855

You must be born again to enter the Kingdom of Heaven

We closed our last by entering upon the reasons I am now to give, that no man, except born again, can enter the kingdom of heaven. First, because of that heart work which is essential to a right knowledge of God.

First, conviction of our state by nature- that we are utterly lost, helpless and corrupted—"full of wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores." Do you not, my good Theophilus, find it so? Do you not, in things eternal, feel yourself as weak, and helpless, and worthless, as "an autumnal leaf, which the wind driveth away?" Isaiah lxiv. 6. No more able to meet God, your Maker and Judge, than is the dry stubble to meet the devouring fire? (Job xiii. 25). Do you not find that you can be saved no more by the works of the gospel, (if those works are left to you), than you can by the works of the law? That you are just as unable to bring your heart to believe unto righteousness, to repent, pray, or set your affections truly on things above, as unable to do this as you are to be holy—" even as the law of God is holy?" O, it is a hard lesson to learn—that we cannot be saved by the works of the gospel!

But it must be by the grace of the gospel: that is, you feel that all the things that accompany salvation must be as much of grace as salvation itself. You sincerely wish to work out, with fear and trembling, your own salvation; but where are the fear and trembling? Do you not feel your heart too hard, either to fear or tremble? and can you not truly say with the poet,

"All things of feeling shew some sign,  
But this unfeeling heart of mine?"

Are you not under such feelings—or rather, want of feeling—ready to join the church of old, and say, "Why hast thou (permissively) made us to err from thy ways, and hardened our hearts from thy fear?" Isaiah lxiii. 17. Do you not feel that you cannot keep alive your own soul? (Psalm xxii. 29). Yes: your tongue must fail in prayer; your eye of knowledge must become dim; you must feel as if you knew nothing. If any man will be wise, let him become a fool. The hand of faith must become weak; the knee of prayer must become feeble; the heart sink under almost nothing; the mouth stopped—nothing to say: and as the legs of the lame are not equal, so your religion will seem to you like a parable in the mouth of a fool; and from a sense of what you are as a sinner, you will with deep sighings of heart say, "O Lord, I am as a beast before thee:" and thus your hand will be sealed up, that you may know his work. (Job xxxvii. 7).

You feel that you cannot go on in the things of God just as you please, nor can all the exhorting, or inviting, or threatening, or promising, in the least move you; no, not even the inviting of the Word, by the most favored of the servants of the Lord, in the least affect you, no more than mere

human breath could breathe life into the dry bones in Ezekiel's valley. You are still shut up, and cannot come forth into the house (the Christ) of God.

Now where is your free-will power? Now where are your dead formality-prayers? Now where are even the divinely appointed means? You are wandering in the wilderness in a solitary way, and finding no city to dwell in—not the city of God—for you feel as though you had no right to be there: not in the city of Babylon; for there your harp is hung upon the willows: not in the city of this world—for it is under the curse. And thus, too, it must be, that your strength must be completely dried up; nor will the Lord repent concerning you, until he sees there is none shut up or left. Then the Lord will repent—that is, change for a time his dealings with you. I say, for a time; for upon this subject of your helplessness, you will have line upon line; and some very dark lines, and crooked lines, and hard lines, and long lines, and interwoven and twisted lines; and you will have precept upon precept, which you must practice, whether you like it or not; whether it be to go into Jonah's hell, David's horrible pit, or Jeremiah's low dungeon: he will cure you of all your kicking's against the truth. These are bands which the unregenerate have neither in life nor death; their strength is firm; they are not plagued as are those who are born of God; and you will meet with plenty who know not what this path is; that will tell you that you need not be in this state; you should come to Christ, and he would give you rest. But then, you have with you the stubborn fact of real experience, joining with the word of truth, to prove that you can come to the Saviour only as it is given you from above so to do. You can easily come in word and outward form, but this is a very different thing from coming in the power of God, and finding and realizing rest from all that oppresses.

The reason that professors are so contented is, because they have never been made thoroughly discontented. They are soon pleased, and easily satisfied; and think the God of righteousness to be as easily pleased, and as easily satisfied, as they are; and thus the Lord says to such, "Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself." But, my good Theophilus, the Lord hath said unto you, "Be not thou like unto them." Nor—since the living God has spoken life into your soul, can you be like unto them, either in life or death, or judgment, or eternity—"And who maketh thee to differ?" "And what hast thou that thou didst not received"

Now, to what does this experience of your helplessness lead? Does it set the truths of the gospel at a distance from you? Does it make you sorry that salvation is all of grace? Does it make the dear Mediator, in the completeness of his atoning death, a stumbling block to you, and rock of offence? Does it lead you to despise electing grace, or to look at eternal election as a non-essential, or of secondary importance? Does it lead you to think lightly of the Holy Spirit of God? Does it make you feel at home, either in an ungodly or empty professing world? O, with what real sincerity, with what truth can you truly say, that but for the experience you have had, and increasingly have, of your own helplessness, the gospel of the blessed God never had been to you what it now is! You can see that the gospel is that gift which is as a precious stone in the eyes of him that hath it: where so ever it turneth, it prospereth. (Prov. xvii. 8). It will clear your way in all directions—in life and death—in judgment and forever. By it you can agree with your adversary—that adversary being the law of God. This is righteously your adversary, as a sinner; but the gospel shews the way in which Jesus, the Surety of the new covenant, met this law; and which law delivered him up to God, as the Judge; and how Justice, the officer, cast him into prison—not literally, but spiritually—and that prison, that low dungeon, was the prison, the hell of God's wrath. What awful waves and

billows rolled over him! Nor did he come out thence, until he had "paid the uttermost farthing." Matt. v. 26. "And now, by faith in him you become free; and if the Son make you free, then are ye free indeed."

The gospel of God, then, I say, wither so ever it turneth, and wither so ever you are called to turn with it, or by it, will prosper, and you will prosper with it. All things work for your good; even "working for you a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

But we must not go on too fast: we must come back again to a little more heart searching work; for thus saith the Holy One, "All the churches shall know that I am He that searcheth the hearts, and trieth the reins, to give unto every one according as his work shall be." That is, whether his work be the work of a living faith, or of a dead faith; or whether his work be a work of love to the truth, or of hatred thereto; for all his enemies must perish; but them that love him shall be as the sun, when he goeth forth in his might.

Now, if you have not yet come into the deeps of inward temptation, then you have this part yet to come; there is the all manner of concupiscence to be brought to light; and there will be the messenger of Satan to buffet you. Yes, you will know what it is, perhaps, to curse God in your heart, and even worse than that; and have the worst possible thoughts of him, together with the most abominable infidel besetments; calling everything in question; despising the Most High, as though he were your bitterest enemy, and be ready to ask why he suffered you to come into existence, seeing it is only to make you miserable. Why—you will ask — is light given to a man whose way is hid, and whom God hath hedged in? (Job iii. 23). While, perhaps, all kinds of temptations concerning the dear Saviour will beset you, trying to persuade you that Christ is not God, or that his sufferings were not real; or that it is all delusion together; and that better go away at once into the world, for that there is no hereafter; and if there be, there is nothing but hell for you; and that one religion after all is, perhaps, as good as another. You will, like Jeremiah, try to cry and shout, and the Lord will shut out your prayer; and just the very things you strive most against, shall gain the most mastery over you. Your heart will fret against the Lord, and think he deals so hardly with no one else as he does with you; he will indeed

"Blast your gourds, and lay you low."

You will be ready to say, Well, I would not mind all this, if I were sure that it was the hand of the Lord with me. Ah, my good Theophilus, here lies the difficulty; you will see and Satan distinctly enough; the transgression of the wicked within your heart will say, and that in a way that you cannot deny it, that after the flesh there is no fear of God before your eyes. Sin in you will revive again and again; and when you go to the Word of God, to see if you can get a little help, and get somewhat away from self; here, just where you hoped for a little holiness of feeling and thought, you will be beset more than anywhere, and you will seem as though you can read almost anything easier than you can read the Word of God; and in even the house of God, it will seem as though the enemy reserved all his worst suggestions and vilest dregs to hurl at you and upon you there; and thus you will, as saith the wise man, "behold and see, that in the place of righteousness that wickedness is there;" and thus, like the leper of old, you will be shut out from holy things, and all you can say is, "unclean, unclean!" with, "O wretched man that I am!" your life will draw nigh unto the grave, and your soul to the destroyers; and you cannot be a Pharisee, a free-wilier, or a

low, or an high, dead letter Calvinist, nor a gaudy intellectual professor; you cannot be any of these without being the vilest of hypocrites, and you see and feel quite sin enough in you without adding sin to sin, by joining with the multitude to cry down the testimony of God.

You will (for this will be another part of your experience) be brought to tremble at the Word of God, and yet have some moments of sweet softenings of heart before God; your spirit will make diligent search ; you will feel a hope spring up in your heart; you will begin somewhat to reason with God; you will begin to remember that Jesus came to save the lost; that while you are brought down as a little child, yet that he does not despise the little ones; and that, although you are a great sinner, he is an infinitely greater Saviour; and who can tell, but he may yet shew mercy to you?

The Saviour, when on earth, turned not one poor creature away who came to him; and is he not "the same yesterday, to day, and forever?" Here you will say, "yes, but he was on earth then, and he was man, and therefore sympathized with men." True: but that which he did in the exercise of those sympathies shews also that he was God as well as man; for he forgave sins, and even his enemies had light enough, as many of the enemies of his truth now have, to see that none but God can forgive sins, but Jesus did forgive sins, and is God, our enemies themselves being Judges.

And while he came in the name of the Father, he himself as one with the Father, was also the I AM; and by this power wrought the wonders recorded of him; therefore he did not hear the cry of the poor and needy merely as man, but also as God; nor could the deepest agonies, nor can the highest exaltation, remove his heavenly and listening ear from the feeblest cry of the soul that seeketh him: this the thief on the cross, and Paul, and Silas, can witness; who, when worn out with labor and evil treatment, cried in the Philippian prison, and he heard them. He is then, the same now as when on earth; and although his bodily presence is removed from us, he is still as nigh as ever unto his own, and that unto the end of the world.

Now, he is the way to God; but before we can rightly walk in this way, all other ways must be closed up; and, like Israel by the Bed Sea, have but one way of escape; and every one before he can possess the kingdom of God must become

A Little One. London, Dec. 13, 1854.

## Epistles to Theophilus Letter 8 - pages 33ff 1855

Various trials and convictions are an essential part of the Christian life.

In this my eighth letter to you, I wish to set before you a little more of that heart-work which is essential to a right knowledge of the truth. Many, very many, trials and deep convictions are essential to a firm establishment in the truth as it is in Jesus. Proof upon proof will daily appear that all our righteousness is like the leprous garment, (Lev. xiii.) after seven days trial the plague proves to be in it; it is the fretting leprosy.

Here it is, my good Theophilus, you have had already some very fretting sort of trials, and have shewn some very mortifying weaknesses, by which even others as well as yourself, can see that you have a garment of which it cannot be said, either that it is without seam or without sure signs of being worn out. Alas! it has the plague of sin in it, and that in spite of all we can do will make its appearance, for there is not a just man upon the earth, that doeth good and sinneth not; indeed, if we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. (1 John i. 8.) We are compassed with mortal infirmity, and with the flesh we inwardly, and, alas! Sometimes outwardly, serve the law of sin. This is the fretting leprosy; and fret we may over our supposed righteousness, but it must be given up, for the Lord is to be known not by our righteousness, but by his righteousness—even by him who is Jehovah our righteousness; and for the soul to be without the knowledge of his righteousness is not good, and if our zeal be not according to knowledge then it is not acceptable unto God. The zeal of Saul of Tarsus was great, but it was not acceptable to God, though it was very acceptable to men, as all zeal against the truth is; but such zeal, so highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God.

No doubt, my good Theophilus, you know what it is to be in a great hurry to make yourself good enough to be accepted of God, but you have found out that he that thus hasteth with his feet to walk the whole length and breadth of the law for himself sinneth in coming very far short of that law—but not only did you in so doing sin in coming short of that law, but you trod on hallowed ground with unhallowed feet, and therefore committed ignorantly trespass, in attempting to approach your Maker by the works of the law instead of by the all-sufficiency of the blood of the Lamb.

Our shoes of mortality must be put off, and we must be shod with the preparation of the gospel of reconciliation; therefore, it is by faith that it might be by grace, to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed. But when you were running the wrong road your foolishness in these things perverted your way, and your heart fretted against the Lord. (Prov. xix. 2, 3.) But this I am very glad of, for when once a soul begins to fret against the law of the Lord because it cannot keep pace with it, it shows that the fretting leprosy is began, that self-granulations and fleshly confidences are giving way; and give way they must too, let the cost be what it may, "that no flesh should glory in his presence." Nor will the Lord spare for your crying until he bring you into your right mind; he will thus chasten you while there is hope. (Prov. xix. 18.) There is no hope, as we say, beyond the grave; therefore, he will well discipline you before you come to the grave, that you may have hope in your death as well as in your life, and for the day of judgment as well as for eternity.

Do you ask, what is to become of your own righteousness altogether? The answer is that it must be burnt in the fire of tribulation, and in the furnace of affliction; (Lev. xiv. 52,) for "the Lord hath a fire in Zion and a furnace in Jerusalem;" and as you cleave so closely to the old remnants of your own free-will importance, not only must the garment itself be burnt, but you yourself must be brought into the fire, or you will never part altogether with self, never renounce all confidence in the flesh. Your own righteousness must be burnt to ashes, and you may set down and mourn over your loss, and feel yourself to be not a brand plucked out of the fire, but a brand just brought into the fire, with this question For your solution, "is it meet for any work 1 (Ezek. xv. 4.) and I well know what your solution will be, you will say, 'Work indeed, I am meet only to myself, and to others, and to God my righteous judge, what a poor, sin-burnt, worthless, lost mortal I am.

But then a ray of collies, a whisper, a still small voice is heard, and I commute with mine own heat, and think within myself, well such rescued brands have been plucked from the fire, (Zech. Iii 2) and therefore if I am not meet for any work, yet grace can save me, and that which suited Joshua when he stood before the angel of the Lord, clothed in filthy garments, will suit me; and, therefore, if I escape, it must be in the same way that he did; it is the Lord alone who in the strength of electing grace, must put satan under my feet, and clothe me with change of raiment, and give me a standing better than that which he gave to Joshua as a Levitical priest, for his standing in the official sense, was with an if thou wilt walk in my way; but I want the security given to Abraham and all his believing seed, wherein, as the Lord could swear by no greater, he swear by himself- and this oath is in Christ- "the Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek." Psalm cx 4. And "he that began the good work will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." Here we have the oath of the Father, the priesthood of the Saviour, and the perfection of the work of the Holy Ghost; here is a three-fold cord which cannot be broken; here are those bands of a man, the man Christ Jesus; here are cords of love which will keep us walking in the ways of the Lord, even "from strength to strength, until everyone shall in Zion appear before God." Here the sin of bondage is taken from us, and meat is laid unto us, even that meat which endures to everlasting life.

Such are the truths, and such is the standing, and such is the freedom, and such is the fellowship, with God into which you will come.

But if our own righteousness be as the leprous garment, so are our poor bodies like the leprous house; "the body is dead because of sin;" and as the leprous house was to be broken down, and carried away into an unclean place, so our poor bodies must come down and be carried away into the land of corruption; this is the humbling and unclean place to which we must come; it is true there are men called bishops, who think they can consecrate certain spots of that earth which the Lord hath cursed; but, alas!" who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one." No—we must still say to corruption "thou art my father, and to the worm thou art my mother and my sister." Job xvii. 14. My father because I have sin, and consequently corruption in my parentage; the worm is my mother because my mother was but a poor earthly mortal like myself; my sister because mere mortal relationship is compared with the heavenly relationship, but worm with worm.

Be not, my good Theophilus, offended because I write thus; for I know these truths are humbling, and hard to flesh and blood; but, nevertheless, not only are such truths laid home to the heart, but it is, I trust your desire that it should be so; and so you feel upon this as did the Psalmist when he said Lord, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days; what it is, that I may know how frail I am." Psalm xxxix. 4.

But as the house was to be taken down under the direction and care, and management of the high priest, so it is that we are in the hands, and under the care, of the great High Priest of our profession; and just so sure as sin has brought us down, salvation shall raise us up; just so sure as sin hath brought death, wrath, tribulation, anguish, and corruption, just so sure shall we have life, and love, and consolation, and rest, by him who is the resurrection and the life. Whenever the dear Saviour spoke of his sufferings and death he always at the same time spoke also of his resurrection; I do not think the Gospels— (Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John,)—make any exception to this rule; and sure I am, that if the holy and blessed Spirit of God is pleased to enable us in this, as well as in

other respects, to be followers of him who endured the cross, we shall find it truly good so to do: the enemy would have us look only at the clouds, at mortality, and death, without looking at those rays of heavenly glory, which throw a glorious light upon the whole scene, and reveal to us a state of things infinitely better than that which sin destroyed. Why, then, should we fear either to live or to die—our earthly house will be earthly or leprous no more, for "mortality shall be swallowed up of life."

But not only must the leprous garment be burnt, and the leprous house broken down, but the leprous person who, wore the garment, and who dwelt in the leprous house, must also be tried, and tested, and cleansed.

It required on the part of the high priest, great care to distinguish the real disease from the semblance of the same: there were two things especially by which to judge: the one was that it must be deeper than the skin; you will meet with plenty of skin deep professors, whose convictions of sin are too shallow to make real heart work of it, they do not truly know their own hearts: the disease, or rather conviction of it, is not deep enough to shew them their real condition before God; the word of God has not been to them sharper than any two-edged sword: the hidden sores of the heart are not laid open; their sore does not run in the night, and cease not, which as you go on you will find with yourself to be more and more the case.

When the Lord hides his face from you, it is night—then it is you will learn still something more of the plague of the heart, that it is as rottenness, and that there is no soundness in your flesh: and as with persons with disease literally, they have almost a kind of sympathy with the disease itself, so you will not feel all the self-loathing that you could wish—this will stagger you, but it will at the same time humble you before God.

You will wonder at yourself, that while men are telling you, that the love of sin in the believer is entirely slain, your experience will tell you to your face, that after the flesh you have the same, if not more, love to the things of the flesh than ever you had—and herein will be the difficulty or the conflict, for it is very easy to renounce that to which we have no liking: what conflict is there in such a case? The Apostle, therefore, sets forth the conflict as being as lively in the part that is against us as in the part that is for us; so that if faith, and hope, and the love of God in the heart, be for us, the evils, on the other hand, which are in our members, war against us, and so contrary are these one to the other, that not only can we not do the things that we would, but go on to do the things that we would not: thus it is, there is the will of the spirit and the will of the flesh, one against the other.

But this distinction between flesh and spirit does not destroy individual responsibility; for whatever is done, whether good or bad, is an individual act, and this every quickened conscience feels. I mention this because I wish you to keep clear of that spirit of presumption into which some, in this matter, have fallen, and have thereby become triflers, unhallowed, and anything but earnest, with either God or their own souls. Therefore I wish, my good Theophilus, ever to remember that "God is not mocked, for what a man soweth, that shall he also reap." "It is he that goeth forth weeping, shall come again rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him, "They that sow m tears shall reap in joy."

May such be our path; then I am sure, the lines will fall to us in pleasant places, yea, we shall have a goodly heritage."

I hope of this heart-work you will hear a little more next month, from Little One.

## Epistles to Theophilus Letter 9 - pages 65ff 1855

More about Self-Righteousness the about our High Priest, Jesus Christ, as shown in the cleansing of the leper.

In my last I endeavored to shew that the leprous garment did well set forth that self-righteousness so natural to us, which must be burned up. What the kind of fault in the garment called leprous, was, I know not; but we do know that the wool of a sheep which dies of disease is called dead wool; and when made into a garment, is very soon leprous enough to be good for nothing; though many dishonest manufacturers do deal in this dead wool, thereby deceiving people. And so it is, that sin is the disease that Adam the first brought in, and all died in him; and all our righteousness is as the dead wool; it would deceive us, and leave us destitute, and witness against us, just where we should want it to beautify us, and to speak for us—namely, at the bar of God. It is steeped in sin, and is anything but as the smell of a field which the Lord hath blessed. It is not fit for a working garment—much less for a wedding garment. The sentence of the law of truth is direct against it; it must be burnt; and yet, worthless as it is, it nevertheless cleaves close to us, and we to that, until we are plunged again and again into the ditch of tribulation, and this our own clothes made to abhor us. This is hard work—but so it is, that it must be so, as it is written: "By the great force of my disease is my garment changed: it bindeth me about as the collar of my coat: he hath cast me into the mire, I am become like dust and ashes." Job xxx. 18, 19.

You will find but few companions here; and what will your trials do but shew up more and more of what you are? and the more you are smitten, the more you will revolt; and against these revolting's of human nature you will find it hard work to stand—especially when the whole head is sick, and the whole heart is faint: while with you are no healing medicines, you must be brought unto the Priest! (Lev. xiv. 2j.

But before we come unto our High Priest, we must look a little more to the leprosy, and see that it is deeper than the skin, and also that it is spreading; for you must, before you are brought unto the Priest, be nothing in your own eyes) but a sinner; and this will become a good evidence that the good work of grace is begun in your heart; and thus it is written: "Then the priest shall consider: and behold, if the leprosy have covered all his flesh, he shall pronounce him clean that hath the plague: it is all turned white: he is clean." Lev. xiii. 18.

You see here that all the flesh must be spoiled before the Lord that no flesh should glory in his presence. Thus, my good Theophilus, you shall know what it is to have no soundness in your flesh; and this shall be the plague: it is a plague of the heart, and will be your plague, even unto death.

Now it's turning white, means that there is death at the root of the disease. Yes, the Holy Spirit of God hath brought the incorruptible seed of truth into the heart, and which liveth and abideth forever. And this will take away the condemning and reigning power of this plague, because the living word in the heart is by Christ Jesus; therefore no wonder that the old man of sin should turn pale, and be unable to keep such a florid complexion as to deceive the soul any longer; but he will not die until you die—and so it is, that "the righteous hath hope in his death."

Such are to be brought unto the priest. Can anything be more encouraging than this? Here is a poor leper—nothing but a leper; and the worse the case is, the more it will shew the power and compassion of the High Priest in cleansing such, and saving his soul from death. "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth his hand and touched him, and saith unto him, I will: be thou clean. And as soon as he had spoken, immediately the leprosy departed from him, and he was cleansed." Mark i. 41, 42. Thus shewing that he was the antitype of all the typical offerings of the law.

Now, although the Levitical law as a dispensation is abolished, yet, as a testimony, it is not abolished. It still bears testimony of Jesus. Let us, then, now come to that part of heart work that belongs to the cleansing.

Here we shall find several offerings, all truly beautiful in their meaning. The first offering seems of a very humble description; and you will readily account for this, for you already see how little we know at the first of the atonement of the dear Saviour. We see there is an atonement, but have by after experience to go on from one degree of knowledge to another, of the excellency, the power and value of this atonement; and you need not fear that your sin, your disease, or your necessities will be too great to be met by this atonement. No, for it will swell out and length-circumstances tell against the ordinance of 'en out the song of the redeemed' to boundless extent and to eternal duration—brighter and better prospects cannot, even by everlasting love itself, be given, than is given by this atonement; for it is thereby that everlasting love is sealed and settled. It is deeper than hell—high as heaven—broader than the sea—and longer than the earth. Yet in what humble forms, to suit our needs, and gradually lead us along, is this atonement presented! Shall we think the less of it for this? Shall we think less of the King of glory because he was once the Babe of Bethlehem? Does it lessen him, because he was despised and rejected of men? Does it dishonor him, because he bore our sins in his own body on the tree? Do we love the less to sit at his feet because he once washed the disciple's feet? Are his royal bounties the less delightful, because he did eat bread and broiled fish with men on earth? And shall we cease to praise him, because, to shew that his love was the same to the last moment of his stay on earth, he did at the parting moment lift up his hands and bless his disciples.

Most excellent Theophilus, these are the very endearments that bring us into his very presence with exceeding joy.

Let us, then, come unto the High Priest of our profession.

Now, for the leper to be cleansed, there were to be two birds; and we will, as we go along, notice the names of the several offerings—at least, give a name where one is not mentioned, yet fairly implied.

First, substitutional. I am aware they may all come (at least, the sacrificial) under this name; but we will notice some by the names given to them.

One bird was to be slain. Here is the substitutional. The leper was shut out from the temple of the Lord, and from the holy things. And there he might have died, but for the law of life and health provided for him. But here is a way—a sacrificial way—for him to be healed, and live, and draw nigh to God, and keep the feasts of the Lord.

And here were to be with the sacrifice cedar wood and scarlet; that is, scarlet wool, and hyssop. Have not these a meaning? Are they not intended to set forth some of the qualities of the sacrifice? Does the cedar mean the soundness of the cure, this being a sound, fragrant kind of wood? And I am sure the testimony of Christ's atonement is a sound cure. And is there not a promise that though our sins be red, like crimson, they shall be as wool? Does not, therefore, the scarlet wool mean the softness and gentleness of the hand of our Priest when he lays his hand upon us to heal us? Did not the leper, we have before noticed, find it so when Jesus laid his holy and blessed hand upon him? And does not the Psalmist pray, "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow?"

Now, whether this be the meaning or not, of the cedar wood, the scarlet and the hyssop, all these are certainly brought about in the experience of every one whose conscience is purged from dead works, to serve the living and true God. And in this you will be of sound mind, and in good spiritual health, and will feel that the word of truth hath healed you; you will taste that the Lord is gracious, and you will come out into a healthy and wealthy place. Now you will feel that you have a good hope, and know that God hath not given you the spirit of fear (of\_ man), but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind; and that you will not now be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of any of his poor prisoners. Having been a prisoner yourself, you know the heart of a prisoner, and therefore you will weep with them that weep, as well as rejoice with them that do rejoice; and this will be your resting-place, and feeding place, and banqueting-house, and place of drawing water—namely, "who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus, before the world began." 2 Tim. i. 7.

In this field of truth I hope you will be visited again next month by A Little One.

Epistles to Theophilus Letter 10 - pages 84ff 1855

More about our High Priest, Jesus Christ, as shown in the cleansing of the leper.

You will, perhaps, think I have lost sight of one main point, which is, to sum up and set forth the reasons that no one can enter the kingdom of heaven except he be born again; but I have not lost sight of this, and hope, in a future letter, to make it clear to you as the noon day.

I must, in this letter, begin where I left off in my last, namely, with the offerings connected with the cleansing of the leper. This is a subject so genial to my feelings, so enchanting to my heart, and so delightful to my soul, that I never seem weary of dwelling thereon, and I am greatly mistaken if you are not one with me in this heavenly theme concerning Him who alone can be the health of your countenance, and whom you do, in the spirit of adoption, desire to call your Lord and your God.

You will recollect, in the first part of the offerings, we have the two birds—the one slain; out to the other it was said, "Loose him, and let him go into the open field." The one bird slain, as I before said, is a very humble representation of the one great atonement; yet even here is freedom, and so you will find it—that a heartfelt knowledge, however humble in degree, of the atonement, will give a divine freedom to the soul—it will send you off into the field which the Lord hath blessed, where, being delivered from "the noise of archers," you will warble out in notes melodious and in strains pure and holy, the righteous acts of Him who hath so regarded you in your low estate.

The living bird was dipt in the blood of the sacrificial bird, and so carried with it the tidings and the Saviour of the sacrificial bird by which it was set free. Yes, dearest Saviour, we do gladly bear testimony that it is thy precious blood which sets us free; it is that freedom we have by thee, thou only substitute for sinners lost; it is by thee that we rise into the sunbeams of heaven, and become as the "wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold;" it is by thee that that winter blast that chilled us with despair, broke down our spirits, and left us ready to perish, while the threatening of thy holy word seemed to be raining down upon us hailstones, mingled with the lightning's wrathful flash, by thee, thou "dearest of all the names above," this winter is passed away — this tempestuous rain is over and gone—and we have a heavenly summer, which is at once our freedom, our defense, our safety and delight. Here is the voice of the turtle; so suited are his deepest notes to our solemnized, softened and humbled spirits, our soul is even as a weaned child; we are brought into the open field of gospel freedom—into the open field of the new heavens and the new earth. This field was once to us a closed field; we knew not of such a field, much less did we know the way to it, and much less still did we know anything of its everlasting delights.

As we rise and range at large in faith and love, what attractions are presented—not the least shadow of anything but blessedness. Here the flowers of heavenly promise display all their beauties, diffuse their fragrance, and peacefully ripen into perfection. Here the tree of life puts forth her green but fast ripening figs, and as a vine with tender grapes, it increases the deliciousness of that sacred clime. Here is a sun that never goes down, and a moon which never withdraws its shining. Here is a God who rests in his love. Here is the Lamb in the midst of the throne- while sickness and death are forever unknown. This, my good Theophilus, is no poetic fancy, or cunningly devised fable, but a sober reality to all who are brought into this open field, (for there is no bondage there,) and though they know only in part, yet it is enough to make them sincerely say, "Draw me, and we will run after thee," for here, in this healthful open field of the new creation, it is that—

"The meanest floweret of the vale,  
The simplest note that swells the gale,  
The heavenly sun, and air and skies,  
Become one opening Paradise."

But we must come back again to the leper; for if we sometimes fly a little, we must also run, and if we now and then run along pretty easily, we must also be brought down to a walk, and then to a standstill, and this is what I want you to do now—to stand still, unless you are got into the prophet's chamber, where there is

a table with a little unleavened bread upon it, and a candlestick with a good lamp of truth upon it, and a stool of repentance. If you get here, you may sit still, while I talk to you a little more about getting rid entirely of the leprosy. Or, if you have got into David's green pastures, why then you may lie down, while I talk with you—only for that to me would be grievous, and to you not safe.

Notice, then, that the sacrificial bird was killed in an earthen vessel over running water. Now we, in our poor mortal bodies, are but earthen vessels, and Jesus was made in the likeness of sinful flesh; and though he had no weakness of his own, yet he took our weakness upon him, and thereby undertook to die for us, and was crucified through our weakness, which was laid upon him, and though he thus took our weakness, yet he had strength enough of his own to bear our sins in his own body on the tree. Here, then, is a mediatorial end to our weakness; and as we have borne the image of the earthly, we shall, ere long, bear the image of the heavenly. We must die, through weakness, but we are to be raised up again, to live by the eternal power of God.

The bird was to be killed over running water. The idea here intended is, taking the disease away—so Jesus hath taken sin away; and as the blood of the sacrifice would become lost and invisible, and could not be gathered up again, so, by what Immanuel hath done, sin is lost, passed away, forgiven, forgotten, and cannot be recalled or gathered up again.

"What think you, then, good Theophilus, of our God? Who is like him?—who in the heavens can be like him?—Who among the sons of the mighty can be compared to him? Do not our souls love him? How can it be otherwise, when there is nothing in all his dealings with us but blessing from first to last—even blessing that maketh rich, and addeth no needless or final sorrow with it?"

I have now, in concluding my remarks upon the cleansing of the leper, four more offerings briefly to notice, as also the indicated perfection of that cleansing:—

1st. The trespass offering. This offering, from its name, seems to have reference to the trespassing upon, or transgressing the precept of, the law. Hence, Jesus hath finished transgression, and so he is the end of the law for righteousness. He is both the objective and legal end of the law—its objective command is perfect love to God and man. In this perfect love the Saviour lived and died, and so hath magnified the law; and having thus substitutionally fulfilled the law, it is by his eternal righteousness forever established, and we come out from under it, and are brought under the law of life, love and liberty in Christ; so that we are not (as some affirm we are) without law to God, but are under the royal law of love to Christ.

2nd. the sin offering: "Now, all have sinned and come short of the (law) glory of God." The sin offering therefore puts away our short coming in the law, and establishes another law, a law of an unchanging priesthood, where there can be no coming short, but where all is settled and that forever.

3rd. The burnt offering. This appears to have been reckoned the greatest offering of the Levitical law. Yet, the love of God, as the Saviour shews, is greater either than this or any other Levitical command. (Mark xii. 33.) Yet, this by no means, implies that the burnt offering may not have been of all the offerings of the law the most solemn; the truth of this, I think, you will be inclined to admit, when it is recollected that this offering represents that part of the suffering of the Saviour wherein he had to endure the wrath of God,—the flaming sword of justice: this was the keenest pang; the mightiest endurance, so terrible was even the mere sight, that Moses said, "I exceedingly fear and quake." Here it is that all the hell that must have been our portion was encountered, and borne, and overcome, by the Mediator of the new covenant; it was as a mighty earthquake, which must have swallowed up as in a bottomless pit its ruined millions; it was as an ocean of liquid fire kept alive by the Almighty breath of an incensed God (Isa. xxx. 33); it was as a concentrated tempest of thunder bolts which must have beat upon helpless, houseless, friendless man; it was as a fire burning to the lowest hell; it was as burning mountains rolling with unmeasured force upon

him! The earth trembled at the sound thereof; the rocks rent with the shock thereof; the graves were opened at the voice of him who said, "My God! My God! Why hast thou forsaken me?" It was a clime as sultry as fire and brimstone could make it; it was a place where he was cut off from all hope, apart from; and out of himself, "for of the people there was none with him;" and if there had been any of the people with him, what could they have done? They were, therefore, best out of the way: the sheep must be scattered, not for destruction, but for preservation; while "his own omnipotent arm brought salvation (for us) unto him;" and that under circumstances as disadvantageous as they could well be—mocked, scourged, dragged from Caiaphas to Pilate, from Pilate to Herod, here again set at naught, and then dragged back to Pilate again; and again despised, and derided, and smitten, in the rudest and most barbarous manner; and that after he had felt enough to cause him to sweat as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground. And so visible was it to all around, of the trembling state of his manhood, that his enemies seem to have been afraid they should be deprived of the fiendish delight, of seeing him expire on the cross: and, therefore, to secure to themselves this delight, they released him after he had carried the cross some distance; (see Luke xxiii. 26, and John xix. 17;) they compelled one Simon, a Cyrenian, to bear the cross the remainder of the way. Alas! what is man, when left to Satan and to himself; how solemn the words, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

Now, then, where would the work of salvation have been, if Jesus had not been divine as well as human, God as well as man; a Creator as well as a creature? Here it was then that all his resources were in his infinite self: he travelled, though men saw it not, in the greatness of his strength; he put forth his hand upon the marble rock table of justice, and on that table laid, as the price of our redemption, his own wondrous life. The table was hard, and the terms wore hard, but none too hard either for his love or his power. No man could take his life from him; no! For if man could have taken it from him, then he could have no price left in hand as the term of our redemption; he had lived to God; he kept himself from the paths of the destroyer! he set the Lord always before him; and always did those things that pleased him: and, thus at the last, had in full possession a pure, a spotless life; a life that had every way been well tried; and had there been a weak part, it must have shewn itself: "but, he did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth." Truly he hath rolled back that red sea of wrath which must carry his enemies away into perdition. "What, then, ailed thee, O thou sea, that thou was driven back; and thou Jordan of death, that thou fledest? Yea, even Sinai itself was moved at the presence of this God," the God-man, Christ Jesus, the God of Israel. He overturned the mountains by the roots; there is nothing which sin hath made crooked which he hath not made straight, nor rough, nor dark which he hath not made smooth and light.

I hardly know my good Theophilus, how to get away from this part of our correspondence; it is a part that enchains my attention; it softens my adamant heart; it draws me near to God; it awakens the best affections of my soul; it opens to me the door of heaven; it makes me feel more love to Jesus than I can ever express; I seem as though I would rather say nothing, but silently look on and bathe his dear feet as it were with my tears; it is too much for me while beams of the heavenly world fall through his Almighty death upon my pathway to the promised land; but, oh I how feebly do I speak of the greatness which I can, and do see, in the one offering of Jehovah Jesus! O, I despise, I laugh to scorn the thought of one being lost for whom such a ransom is paid, for whom such an offering is accepted; why, the very table of justice upon which the price was laid, is become to us the table of shew bread, of royal dainties, and all manner new and old of pleasant fruits. "Yea, mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other;" and, so it is, that hereby the Tabernacle of God is with men, and there shall be no more pain, neither sorrow. Believest thou this? if so, then I trust you will not refuse to meet again, next month, at the altar of burnt offering,

A Little One, London, March 13, 1855.