

NO. 62.

MR. ANDERSON.

AN INTERESTING STORY,

DESIGNED TO INCUCCATE IMPORTANT TRUTH.



It was impossible for him, with the weight of his prey, to outstrip the speed of a fether, impelled by such feelings as quickened the steps of Mr. Anderson.—See page 6.

PUBLISHED BY THE

AMERICAN TRACT SOCIETY,

AND SOLD AT THEIR DEPOSITORY, NO. 144 NASSAU-STREET, NEAR
THE CITY-HALL, NEW-YORK; AND BY AGENTS OF THE
SOCIETY, ITS BRANCHES, AND AUXILIARIES IN
THE PRINCIPAL CITIES AND TOWNS
IN THE UNITED STATES.

SAYINGS OF REV. DR. PAYSON.

“Suppose one man owes another a thousand pounds, but he is unable to pay the debt, and denies that he owes it. His creditor, being a very compassionate man, says to him, “I do not wish for your money, and as soon as you will own the debt to be a just one I will release you from your obligation; but I cannot do it before, for that would be, in fact, acknowledging that I am in the wrong.” The poor man refuses to confess that he owes the money, and is, in consequence, sent to prison. After remaining there for a time, he sends his creditor word that he will allow he owes him a *hundred pounds*. But that will not do. After another interval, he says he will allow that he owes *two hundred pounds*; and thus he keeps gradually giving up a little more, until he gets to *nine hundred*; there he stops a long while. At length, finding there is no other way of escape, he acknowledges the whole debt, and is released. Still it would be free, unmerited kindness in the creditor, and the poor man would have no right to say “I partly deserved it because I owned the debt;” for he ought to have done that whether he was liberated or not. Just in this manner we have treated God. When he comes and charges us with having broken his law, we deny it; we will allow, perhaps, that we deserve a slight punishment, but not all which God has threatened. But if we are ever to be saved, God comes and, as it were, shuts us up in prison; that is, he awakens our consciences, and sends his Spirit to convince us of sin. Thus we, every day, see more and more of the desperate wickedness of our hearts, until we are ready to allow that we have deserved eternal condemnation. As soon as we acknowledge this, God is ready to pardon us; but it is evident that we do not deserve pardon, that he is not under the least obligation to bestow it, and that all who are saved are saved through free unmerited grace.”

“One excuse which awakened sinners are accustomed to allege in their own defence is, that they wish to love God and to have new hearts, but cannot. They do indeed wish

to be saved, but they are not willing to be saved in God's way; that is, they are not willing to accept salvation as a free gift. They would do any thing to buy it, but will not take it without money and without price. Suppose that you were very sick, and were told by the physician that there was but one medicine in the world which could save your life, and that this was exceedingly precious. You were also told that there was but one person in the world who had any of this in his possession; and that, although he was willing to *give* it to those who asked, he would, on no account, *sell* any. Suppose this person to be one whom you had treated with great neglect and contempt, and injured in every possible way. How exceedingly unwilling would you be to send to him for the medicine as a gift; you would rather purchase it at the expense of your whole fortune. You would defer sending as long as possible, and when you found that you were daily growing worse, and nothing else could save you, you would be obliged, however reluctantly, to send and ask for some. Just so unwilling are sinners to apply to God for salvation as a free gift; and they will not do it until they find themselves perishing, and that there is no other hope for them."

"To assist you in estimating the criminality of sin, suppose that you had committed the first sin; that, before you were born, such a thing had never been heard or thought of; but that all beings had united in loving and serving God, till, all at once, you started up and began to disobey his commands. What a commotion would be excited! Instantly the news would spread through heaven and earth with inconceivable rapidity, and all ranks and orders of beings would join in exclaiming, "It cannot be! where is the wretch who would dare to disobey Jehovah?" Suppose, then, that you were obliged to come forward and stand in the view of the assembled universe, of myriads of sinless beings, who all regarded you with feelings of astonishment, horror, and detestation too strong for utterance. How inexpressibly dreadful would sin appear in this point of view! And yet it is, in reality, just as dreadful and as criminal to sin now, as if no sin had ever been committed by another."

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STORY OF MR. ANDERSON.



IN my last annual excursion in the country, I crossed a bleak and rugged range of mountains, and descending one of unusual steepness, my horse stumbled and threw me to the ground. As I was so much bruised by the fall, that I could not help myself, I must have perished, if I had not found assistance from some fellow man. It was well, that I had nearly reached the bottom of the mountain, and approached the region of cultivation. I had not seen any house; but that hope which does not often fail us in time of difficulty, gave me some support in the wretchedness of my situation. After groaning under my pains, and suffering the greatest anxiety, about an hour, I heard at a distance a human voice. It was that of a farmer, driving his team. I could not call to him, and he appeared to be going farther from me; but, as he entered the main road from the field, he espied my horse loose, and his curiosity was roused. After catching the beast, he searched for its rider, and in a few minutes, to my inexpressible joy, he found me. Having procured assistance, he soon transported me, half dead, to his house. Here I was treated with the greatest attention; medical aid was obtained; and after being kept quiet several days, I was so far recovered as to be able to sit up and converse with the family.

When I was first seated in my chair, Mr. Anderson (for by that name I will introduce to my readers the good man, to whom I was under such great obligations,) came into my chamber to felicitate me upon the prospect of my speedy recovery. He took me by the hand, and expressed the satisfaction he felt in seeing me so well. In his manner there was all the ease of honest benevolence; and I could not but respect and esteem him for the apparent excellence of his character, while for his kindness to me I felt the emotions of gratitude.

"How fortunate it was," said I, "that my horse did

not throw me in the midst of the forest of evergreens, through which I had just passed; for in that case, I should probably have been a repast for the wolves which howl upon these mountains." "Yes," said Mr. Anderson, "it is, I believe, well for you; and it shows us the goodness of that Being *in whom we live*, that he so appointed the circumstances of your fall, that you have been preserved from death, and were not, like thousands of others, called suddenly into *eternity*. When I first found you, I did not think you could live; but God has wonderfully restored you, and I hope you will yet see more of his goodness."

I felt the keenness of the reproof which was conveyed in these words; for I had never considered the late event, which had occasioned me so much trouble, in any other light than as an *accident*: I had not once viewed it as directed by a superintending Providence, or as designed to teach me any important truth, or reclaim me from any sin. After Mr. Anderson left me, I revolved these things in my mind; and the more I thought upon the subject, the more was I convinced that all events must be under the control of the great Creator of the world; for it appeared to me that every living being must be sustained continually by Him, and can act only by his permission, and that all the elements of nature can be moved only by Him.

All this was new to me. I had entered a field that presented to my view objects which I had never before seen. Is it possible, said I to myself, that the Most High continually supports me in life, and yet that I should be unmindful of his goodness? Is it possible that his agency should pervade the world, and I have never perceived it! I was delighted with the novelty of viewing all things as proceeding from God. As I sat at my window, and surveyed the forest trees, which lifted their heads toward the skies, at no great distance from me, I considered them as nourished by the universal Parent, and as enabled to expand themselves by his power. When the clouds gathered thick in the sky, and darted forth lightning, giving utterance at the same time to the voice of thunder, I found great satisfaction in regarding all this war of elements as directed by a superior power, and as displaying his majesty.

With this change in my views, I felt more desirous of conversing with my host. Accordingly, I seized the very

next opportunity, when he was sitting with me in my chamber, to observe to him, that I was no longer so unreflecting as to attribute the late preservation of my life to *fortune*. "Your attempt," continued I, "to direct my mind to the Supreme Disposer of events, has not been unavailing. I perceive my dependance upon him; it is he who has preserved us." As these words were uttered by me, I noticed that the countenance of the good man was somewhat brightened; there was a glow upon it, which indicated new regard to me, and gratitude to the Being who, he hoped was teaching me wisdom. "All nature," added I, "seems to bespeak a God. He must have created all things, and his hand must move all things." "You are undoubtedly correct," said Mr. Anderson; "but have you considered with what design this present system was formed, and for what end divine Providence is concerned in the affairs of this world?"

This was an inquiry to which I had not attended; but I had no hesitation in replying, "that *the happiness of man was the great object in view*." "Do you believe, my friend," said Mr. Anderson, "that the Almighty Being, toward whom you have of late directed your thoughts, is able to accomplish his purposes? Do you consider his power as supreme? Is every atom of dust which flies in the beaten road directed by him? Can nothing obstruct the execution of his will? How then can the happiness of man be the object which He has in view, when man is not happy? How many of our fellow beings are groaning in pain! How many are driven about by the fury of unrestrained passions! How great a portion of the earth presents to our view only a scene of wretchedness!"

A difficulty was thus suggested, which I could not surmount. I knew it to be in the divine power to make every countenance joyful; but this power was not exerted. "Perhaps," said I, "the evils which exist, are necessary in the present state, and will be removed in the next; when those who suffer will be compensated for the troubles which are laid upon them, and all inequalities will be done away." "Your supposition," replied Mr. Anderson, "is destitute of proof; it has nothing to establish it; for if it be consistent with the goodness of God, that evil should exist in this world, it may be consistent with the

same goodness, that it should exist in the next, and that it should exist for ever. And that this will be the case, is asserted in the Scriptures, which reveal to us the will of the Most High. Besides, when you speak of our being *compensated* for trouble, you seem to forget that trouble is *deserved*; you do not consider the *character* of man as a sinner, without attending to which, the ways of God cannot be vindicated."

As he said this, a sudden cry struck our ears. Mr. Anderson ran out of the house, and hasted to a field at a little distance, whence the cry seemed to proceed. Judge what must have been his feelings as he beheld a huge bear standing over the body of his youngest child, a fine boy of four years of age. He instantly seized a knotty stick, and without a moment's consideration rushed toward the animal to attempt the rescue of his child; but the bear, perceiving his approach, took up the mangled body in his teeth, and set off for the woods. It was impossible for him, however, with the weight of his prey, to outstrip the speed of a father, impelled by such feelings as quickened the steps of Mr. Anderson. The bear was overtaken, and received from the arm of the infuriated father, such a tremendous blow as made him drop his prey, that he might effect his escape.

From my window I soon saw the good man returning, bearing in his arms the mangled and lifeless body of his son. He brought it into the house and wept with the afflicted family, which was now small. Mrs. Anderson had been dead two years; his two eldest sons had fallen in battle, and only two daughters, of the age of fifteen and of twelve, remained to cheer him in the decline of life.

It was not a great while before Mr. Anderson entered my chamber to make known to me his affliction. He was calm, but the lines of sorrow were deep upon his countenance; as he grasped my hand, my tears flowed in sympathy with his. I did not attempt to console him, being conscious that the sources of consolation were better known to him than to myself. After the emotions of grief, which were revived afresh by the interest I took in his sorrows, were in some degree passed away, he was enabled to speak; and raising his eyes toward heaven, with a look full of submission, he said, "*The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken*

away ; *blessed be the name of the Lord !* It is good for me, my friend, that I should be afflicted. I still have an attachment to the things of this world, which needs to be dissolved. Though I have been much chastened, I still need the correction of my heavenly Father, that I may be reclaimed from my sins. He is good in all his ways."

I was not a little surprised to hear Mr. Anderson speak of his sins, for I considered him not only as a very moral and virtuous, but as a generous and benevolent man. But this was not a time to make inquiries.

The next day was appointed for the funeral. The neighbours assembled, and with undissembled sympathy mingled their tears with the afflicted. The minister of the town, according to the custom, made an address on the occasion. Though not yet able to leave my chamber, I was placed near the door, and could hear him. He began with adverting to the solemn event which had convened them, and then directed the thoughts of his hearers to the uncertainty and shortness of human life, and the variety of distressing evils which rendered life so uncomfortable. "You behold before you," he proceeded, "a parent, whose fondest hopes are suddenly cut off, and who, in a manner the most harrowing to his soul, is deprived of the child of his old age. You yourselves have known the meaning of trouble. But while you remember that trouble springs not from the ground, do you consider why it is sent upon you? Why is this world so full of evil? Why is it, that we hardly take a step, but we tread upon thorns? We must look for the cause, my friends, in our own hearts. We are all by nature the children of wrath, alienated from God, seeking our own purposes rather than his, placing our affections upon the world rather than upon things above ; labouring for the meat which perisheth, and not for that which endureth unto everlasting life. We do not love the God of excellence and glory. And we are not only guilty, and the slaves of unholy desires, but we are blind and deceived. We think not that the world is soon to pass away. We cling with eagerness to what must be torn from us, and seek not those treasures which might be ours for ever. Being thus unholy, we deserve punishment. We have offended the Governor of the world, and he is right in bringing evil upon us. O, let us then, in the days of trou-

ble, think of our sins and turn from them. Let us give ourselves to God; for if we are not his, we are the children of the evil spirit, and must go away with him into punishment everlasting." Having made a few more solemn reflections, and endeavoured to sooth the minds of the mourners, the minister concluded his exhortation. After a most interesting and affecting prayer, the procession moved to the burial ground, and the cold grave received the body of the child.

I was struck with the address which I had heard. It threw light upon a subject which had much embarrassed me. "It is then to the iniquity of the heart," said I to myself, "that we must attribute our troubles; it is sin, which has brought upon man disappointment, pain, and distress." As my thoughts pursued the subject, I was led to consider the dangerous incident which had taken place with regard to myself, as a solemn admonition from God; I searched into myself to discover my iniquities; and I found that I had been continually violating that law which requires me to love the Lord my God with all my heart, as I had lived without him in the world. He made me, his power had sustained me, his bounty had continually supplied my wants; but I had been unmindful of his goodness, and guilty of shocking ingratitude. He was the righteous Governor of the world, but I had disregarded his authority. I felt that I was guilty, that my character was depraved, and that I was lost. My sensations can be conceived only by those who have experienced the pangs of contrition.

In a few days I was so far recovered as to be able to go below, and sit with the family of Mr. Anderson. His daughters exhibited the most engaging simplicity of manners, and I found their minds not a little improved. The father was better able to instruct them than I had yet conceived; but I soon learned more of his character.

It was his practice toward the close of evening, as well as in the morning, to read with his family a portion of that precious book which contains a revelation of the will of God, and to lead their minds in prayer. In the portion which he read, when I was first present, were these words: 'This is the covenant that I will make with them; after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their

hearts, and in their minds will I write them; and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.' Mr. Anderson was a priest in his own house; he not only read the word of God, but he endeavoured to explain it, that it might be understood. "My dear children," said he, "you have heard a most valuable promise of the divine mercy. God will have compassion upon sinners. Though they rebel against him, he 'will put his laws into their hearts;' he will deliver some from the general ruin; he will give spiritual blessings to all those whom he hath 'chosen in Christ Jesus before the foundation of the world.' This is our only hope. We are so wicked, that unless he, by the power of his Holy Spirit, 'engraves his commandments upon our minds,' we shall continue in sin: as we cannot save ourselves, unless he save us we shall perish. He has afflicted us 'that we might be partakers of his holiness;' but our affliction will be in vain, unless he has mercy upon us. Let us therefore seek his blessing." He then kneeled down, and in the most devout manner implored the favour of God, and besought those influences of his Spirit, without which 'the heart of stone' will never be changed into 'the heart of flesh.' I was affected; I had never before prayed in my life: though often present when others addressed the Supreme Being, I was either not attending to what they said, or, if I listened to their words, it was only as an uninterested hearer, or as a critic. But I now united in earnest with the good man in the desires which he poured out unto God. I felt that I was lost, and that the Most High only could save me.

When the family had retired, I was disposed to converse with my host upon those subjects which now seemed to me infinitely more important than the world had ever appeared to me in my days of inconsideration and of folly. "It gave me a new pleasure," I observed to him, "to unite in your devotions; I never before lifted my thoughts in prayer. In what blindness and insensibility have I lived! Is it possible, that the God whom I have offended, can have mercy upon me?"

"O, my friend," replied Mr. Anderson, "the mercy of God is beyond our conceptions. The humble and the contrite spirit is his delight; for it was he who softened the hard heart into penitence, and he will carry on the good

work. He sent his own Son, the brightness of his glory, to die for sinners, and the Son hath declared that none of his people, that none whom the Father gave unto him, should be lost. He says to you, and to all the penitent, 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.'"

These were joyful tidings, but they inspired me with no satisfaction excepting that which arises from being preserved from despair. The character of the Lord Jesus as the Saviour of sinners was not yet sufficiently disclosed to me, and the time of my consolation was not yet arrived.

From the time that I first saw Mr. Anderson, I was struck with his appearance, which did not altogether correspond with his situation; and the more I became acquainted with him, the more highly was I impressed with esteem for his character. His mind seemed to have been considerably improved, and he possessed that correct judgment and plain good sense which is of much greater importance than learning. He was remarkably pious. He seemed to breathe the spirit of goodness. He was unwilling to converse much upon the things of this world, as he found more pleasure in fixing his thoughts upon the concerns of the future state, and knew that the affairs of this life were too apt to occupy our attention.

One day, after I had so far recovered as to be able to walk out, as we were surveying the improvements upon his farm, he led me to the bank of a torrent which poured down from a neighbouring mountain. The channel was deep, with perpendicular rocks on each side, which defied the force of the stream. The stream, however, had worn away the bottom of the cliffs, and left them projecting from above. We stood on one of these overhanging rocks. At no great distance was a tremendous fall, which presented itself fully to our view. The vast sheet of descending water, the clouds of vapour which arose from the bottom, the foaming waters and the unceasing roar, produced in my mind a sublimity of feeling which I had never before experienced. Mr. Anderson had often been here, for he loved to contemplate the wonderful works of God. "From this scene," said he, "we may form some conceptions of the greatness and the power of the Almighty. What resistless force has he imparted to the collected particles of

water! Observe how the rapid torrent bears down all before it, and even shakes these columns of rocks on which we stand! And cannot God accomplish his pleasure? Can his will be resisted? Can the purposes of him, who is the *Most High over all*, be obstructed?"

Mr. Anderson possessed the happy art of drawing useful instruction from the objects of nature which met his eye, and from the common occurrences of life. He was one of those men who

"Find tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
"Sermons in stones, and good in every thing."

My feelings were in unison with his, and I could not but raise my thoughts in adoration and wonder to the great Creator of all things. "But how does it happen," inquired I, "that a new direction has of late been given to my mind? A few days ago, if I had stood on this spot, I should have seen nothing but the cliffs and the torrent; they would not have been associated with him who made them; and I should not have thought of God. Whence is it, that you and I harmonize in our views, and that we are led to reflections which very few in the world ever make?"

"Perhaps," replied he, "the number of those men who behold God in his works, is greater than you imagine. You have probably been connected in life with but few who were truly wise; and you may hence be disposed to judge too unfavourably of those with whom you have not been acquainted. But whether there are few or many whose vision is strengthened and enlarged,

'To look through nature, up to nature's God,'
your inquiry yet remains an important one; whence is this difference? How is it that some remain blind, while the eyes of others are opened? In searching for the cause, we shall find it to be Him, 'who worketh all things according to the counsel of his own will.' You have acknowledged that you were guilty and lost; all men by nature are in the same condition; all are under sin. The heart is destitute of love to God, and hence the whole life is a course of transgression. It is only the power of God which can renew the corrupted soul. In the Scriptures, the whole work is attributed to Him. *He* gives the sinner a new heart and a new spirit; He creates the sinner anew in Christ Jesus'

and it is by grace that men are saved. All religious privileges, the instructions of the word of God, the events of providence and the admonitions of conscience, being often ineffectual, we are led, when the sinner is converted from his evil ways, to ascribe all the glory to our merciful Father in heaven."

"It must be so," added I, "for I have long attended upon excellent religious instruction, and have passed through many solemn and affecting scenes in the course of my life! but I never knew myself, before I came to your house. God has now taught me that I am a sinner, and has opened my eyes to see the operation of his hand in the events which take place around me."

"I pray him," said Mr. Anderson, "still further to teach you. With him there is a sufficiency of grace, and he has said, *Seek and ye shall find.*"

The approach of night now admonished us to return, and we with reluctance left a spot so well calculated to elevate our minds to the Author of nature. When we reached the house, we found the tea-table was waiting for us, and the countenances of his daughters expressed the pleasure which they felt in the presence of their kind and affectionate father. Their hearts were yet sad on account of the loss of their brother, but they endeavoured to suppress their feelings. "Henry is taken from me," said Mr. Anderson, "but praised be God, I am not left alone."

"And Henry was a good boy," said Eliza, the eldest of his daughters; "he used to bend his little knees in prayer to God every night and morning; and I remember the day before he was torn in pieces, as you were telling him how the kind Saviour loved little children and died for them on the cross, the tears ran down his cheeks; and he asked, *Does Jesus Christ love me?*" "I indulge the hope," said the father, much affected, "that my child is now in heaven; for I gave him what religious instruction it was possible for him to receive; and by frequent prayer commended him to that Power which could change and purify his heart." "But did his heart need to be purified?" I inquired. "Was he, while so young, guilty of sin?" "Yes," replied Mr. Anderson, "I think he was sinful, though in a degree very disproportionate to the iniquity of those who have had greater knowledge, and resisted

stronger motives. He knew that he ought to regard my commands, but he sometimes disobeyed me. The seeds of sin I believe were sown in his constitution, and, like all others, he was by nature a child of wrath; but I have no doubt that all iniquity is now eradicated, and that he is presented pure in the kingdom of heaven."

Being desirous of knowing more of this good man's life, than I had yet learned, I thought this a favourable opportunity to request him to gratify my curiosity. He readily consented, remarking that it would delight him to retrace the steps by which a merciful God had brought him to the "knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus."

"I was born," said Mr. Anderson, "of respectable and pious parents, in a distant city. They endeavoured early to impress my mind with religious truth, and took all pains to form me to holiness and virtue. But I was thoughtless, like most youth. The return of the Sabbath, which filled my parents with joy, as it was a day of rest, a day consecrated to God, put an end to all my pleasures. I had no love to my Father in heaven, and all religious exercises were disgusting to me. Even the most affectionate and solemn preaching of the good and faithful minister at whose meeting my parents attended, was without effect. His description of the misery of the wicked, who would be cast into hell, sometimes alarmed me, and sometimes I wept as he addressed his hearers with the tender affection and anxiety of a parent; but my goodness soon passed away. At the age of fifteen I was sent to college; and here, liberated from the restraints which had been laid upon me, I yielded myself to my passions. I could not resist the temptations which beset me. At length I was engaged in a scene of disorder, which occasioned my expulsion. Thus driven away in disgrace, having no longer the encouragement of my companions, and left to my own thoughts, my wretchedness was almost insupportable. I thought of quitting my country for ever; but I still had some remains of regard to my parents, and this alone prevented me. I visited them; and such a meeting we never before had. They could not speak, for their hearts were oppressed with anguish. A variety of passions seemed to struggle in the breast of my father. All his pleasing hopes were cut off; all his care, and affection, and

instruction, had been unavailing; his son had plunged a dagger into his heart. O how I loathed myself, and hated life, as I saw the emotions of my parents! I wept, and my contrition enkindled afresh the flame of parental love, and obtained for me parental forgiveness. I resolved never again to occasion an uneasy sensation in the breasts of those from whom I derived my being. I became industrious, and regular in my habits, and in a few years was well established in mercantile business. I married an excellent woman, who was truly religious, but whose life was imbittered by the apprehensions that her husband was not living in obedience to God. I was indeed immersed in business, and my thoughts were employed almost entirely upon the concerns of this world. Mrs. Anderson would sometimes gently allude to the certainty of death, and the importance of being ready and willing to leave this present life; but her affectionate admonitions made but little impression upon me. The depraved mind readily finds arguments to justify itself in iniquity. I used frequently to think upon the duty incumbent upon every man to provide for his family; and this I made my excuse for neglecting all religious duties. I did not read the Scriptures, nor pray to God in my family; and my excuse was, that too much of my time would be thus occupied, and that it was sufficient to attend upon public worship on the Sabbath. I had also formed acquaintance with several young men, who were virtuous in their lives, and who contended that nothing more was requisite in order to future happiness, than general uprightness of conduct, and who considered every act of charity and beneficence as entitling them to an additional reward. These doctrines were so well adapted to make me easy in my sin, they accorded so well with my depraved, selfish disposition, that I had no hesitation in admitting them. But my peace was not uninterrupted. There were times when unwelcome fears would intrude, and when I trembled lest a just God should inflict upon me the punishment I deserved, for living in disobedience to the Gospel.

“Such was the state of my mind, when a distinguished preacher visited the place of my nativity. I had previously heard him, and had been delighted with his eloquence. I now went the first time he preached, and like

thousands of others, went to gratify my curiosity. His text was, *Strive to enter in at the strait gate, for many, I say unto you, shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able.* He explained this passage as meaning, that unless the heart was supremely attached to God, unless the chief bent of the mind was toward religious concerns, we could not be saved. Toward the close of his sermon he said, 'My dear friends, I see thousands sitting attentive, with their eyes fixed upon the unworthy preacher: in a few days we all shall be collected before the judgment seat of Christ; we shall form a part of that vast assembly which will be composed of all the children of Adam; and every eye will behold the Judge. The Lord Jesus will be encircled with glory; he will search into our hearts, and we shall be known. He will inquire, whether, when on earth, we *strove to enter in at the strait gate*; whether we were supremely devoted to God; whether our hearts were absorbed in him. My heart bleeds, my hearers, when I think that many of you will *then seek to enter in, but will not be able*; that many of you will be found to have made no exertion to be holy while in this world.

"You, O sensualist, who cannot resist the lusts of the flesh, but yield yourself to the dominion of your appetites; what will you plead for yourself? Have you withstood temptation? Has it been your constant aim, to mortify the flesh with its affections and lusts, and to present your body a living sacrifice to God? No, your Judge will say, you did not strive to obtain eternal life.

"You, O child of this world, whose treasure is in the dust of the ground; what is your plea? Alas, you cannot say you have made any exertion to do the will of God. You can only say, My mind was occupied with the means of growing rich; the treasures of religious knowledge I neglected, for the treasures which were torn from me at death; I made myself easy, when in life, by flattering myself that all would be well; but my own heart has deceived me, and I am lost.

"You, O false and hollow Christian, of what avail will it be, that you have done many things; that you have read much in the sacred word; that you have made long prayers; that you have attended upon religious duties, and have appeared to be holy in the eyes of men; of what avail,

O wretched man, will all this be, if it has not been your constant desire and endeavour to do the will of the sovereign Lord; if you have not loved him supremely in your heart; if you have not been seeking his glory; but have been delighting yourself in thinking how you should be exalted in heaven for those acts which were all unholy and polluted!

“Repent, O sinner, lest the wrath of the Lord should be kindled; repent, for now is the day of salvation!”

“Such was the sermon,” continued Mr. Anderson, “which was to me the most searching and solemn one I had ever heard. I perceived that I was living to myself, and not to God; for this world, and not for the world to come. That dreadful peace, which I commonly possessed, was now effectually interrupted; I was stung with a sense of my sin, and was overwhelmed with the terrors of the judgment day. My dear wife sympathized in my wretchedness; she wept with me, but her tears did not all spring from commiseration for the anguish of my mind; some of them were tears of joy. She had no greater desire in this world than to see me brought to repentance, embracing the holy Saviour, and living as an immortal being, and as a child of God. And it was not long before this desire was gratified. In a few days I heard again the same excellent preacher, and eminent servant of God. He described the way of redemption by the crucified Messiah. He dwelt upon the necessity of a mediator between God and man, and he pointed out the glory of Christ as a sacrifice for sin, as the only ground of pardon, and as an ever present and almighty Friend to all those who love and obey him. He represented, in the most affecting manner, the love of Christ to a fallen world. The cross of the Redeemer beamed upon me with splendour. I was taught by this discourse, what I had never before known, *that God could be just, and yet justify those who believe in Jesus*. I gave myself to the Lord. I found peace in viewing his character and offices. I returned to my house with a gladdened heart and a cheerful countenance; and as I disclosed to Mrs. Anderson my views and my hopes, we shed tears of gratitude and joy.”

“But were you made a good man at once, and in a moment?” I asked; for as yet I knew but little concerning

religious doctrines. "Yes," replied Mr. Anderson, "such was my hope; but whether my hope rested on a good foundation or not, if ever a sinner is brought to the love of God, the change must take place in a moment. You believe there will be two classes of men in the future world, the righteous and the wicked, and that these, and only these classes exist in this world. You admit that all men are by nature lost. If then a corrupt and depraved man is rendered holy, must not the change take place in a moment? Can there be a time when he is neither impenitent nor penitent? and when if he should die, he would neither enter into heaven nor descend to destruction? Various previous steps are, to be sure, necessary in order to conversion: there must be knowledge of God and of one's self; and the converted man may grow in grace and improve in what is pleasing to God; but the effect produced at first by the agency of the Holy Spirit must be immediate and at once."

I assented to this statement, and begged him to proceed with his relation.

"It was immediately proposed by Mrs. Anderson," said he, "that our house should no longer be like the abodes of the heathen; but that the voice of thanksgiving and prayer should be heard in it. We found a pure joy in family worship, and in the discharge of all the duties which are incumbent upon the heads of families. We endeavoured, by pious instruction, to enrich the opening minds of our two little boys, James and Samuel, who were at the age of five and seven; and it was pleasing to see how early they could receive some impression from the precious truths of the Gospel. Under the culture of divine Providence, they seemed to grow up in the fear of God.

"A number of years soon passed away, during which it pleased the merciful Disposer of events to prosper me in my business, and to continue to lift upon me the light of his countenance. I indeed had to encounter the trials which every christian is called to meet; and the constant sense of the iniquities of my heart kept me humble. But I had to struggle with few external difficulties.

At length Mrs. Anderson began to decline in health. As her strength became continually more enfeebled, my anxiety on her account was very great. The physicians

pronounced her case to be hopeless, unless she could derive benefit from the country air. From regard to her health, and despairing of ever being able again to prosecute my business in the city, I disposed of my property.

"A relative of mine lived in this retired town. This circumstance, together with the excellence of the air, was a strong inducement for us to come here. But before coming to a decision, we wished to ascertain whether the minister of the place was a faithful, evangelical preacher, who loved the dear Redeemer, and could guide immortal souls in the way to heaven; for we were desirous of having a spiritual guide for ourselves, and we felt an interest in the religious concerns of our children. Being satisfied on this subject, I purchased this farm, which had been for a number of years under improvement, and which would require only my superintendence. I was, however, gradually induced to labour, and my boys soon accommodated themselves to their new situation, and used to say they felt more like men, in the field, than when behind the counter. Through the goodness of God, Mrs. Anderson's health was perfectly restored. Two years quickly passed away, and every day seemed to bring with it new pleasures. Every evening was spent in contemplating the rich instructions of the word of God, and in reading some other book which would impart to us religious knowledge. We conversed upon subjects to which our attention was called; we endeavoured to form correct ideas, and to understand the truths of God. We were not unwilling to speak of the certainty of our being separated, but we remembered also that the followers of Christ would be again united; and this made us cheerful in conversing upon what many persons would call a *gloomy subject*.

"When we removed to this place, Mrs. Anderson and myself transferred our connexion with the church to the flock of Christ here; and we had the inexpressible satisfaction (praised be God) of seeing our two sons sitting round the same table of our precious Saviour, and receiving with tears of penitence and gratitude the memorials of the Redeemer's sufferings, and the emblems of that spiritual nourishment and strength which is received by *faith* in the Lamb of God.

"But, by the appointment of God, new afflictions were

now about to come upon us. My two sons enlisted in the service of their country. We parted with them, earnestly commending them to God, who could preserve them, or prepare them to meet the arrest of death. But they never returned. Both fell in one action. The last words of my youngest son were, 'I am going to my blessed Saviour; O Lord; receive me!'

It was some time before Mr. Anderson could proceed. His own grief and that of his daughters prevented him.

"It will be too painful," continued he, "to dwell upon the sorrows which were awakened in our afflicted bosoms. We acquiesced in the will of God, but we were afflicted. We were taught to place our treasure more entirely in heaven: and I have no doubt the wisdom of Divine Providence will at last shine forth in great brightness.

"Mrs. Anderson died but two years ago; and she died supported by the hopes of a christian. Her faithful instructions, her repeated admonitions, her earnest and affectionate prayers, I hope are not lost upon these, my remaining children."

"No, dear father," they both cried, "we will endeavour to be good and pious, as she was."

Such was the relation of Mr. Anderson; and in hearing it, I was not a little affected. Before I laid my head upon my pillow, I could not but commend myself to God, entreating him to support me under the afflictions to which he might call me, and to render them all subservient to the promotion of humility, of piety, of godliness in my heart.

On the next day, which was the Sabbath, we all attended public worship, as it was Mr. Anderson's invariable practice. The meeting-house was small, but it was well filled with an attentive audience. The passage of Scripture upon which the minister dwelt, was this, which is in the epistle to the Galatians: *Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ.* He observed, that *to be justified* was to be *constituted righteous*; or to be freed from any charge, or any deserved punishment. "As we are all sinners," continued he, "our great inquiry should be, how shall we be justified? how shall we escape the wrath of God, which is threatened the sinner? One of you will perhaps say, 'I will be perfectly honest in my dealings; I will do no hurt to

any man; I will be neighbourly, and even generous, when it is in my power.' All this you will do if you are a christian; but all this will not justify you.

"Another may say, 'I will not take the name of God in vain; I will not spend the Sabbath in worldly business; I will not neglect the Scriptures; I will not neglect to pray; and if I am guilty of sins, I know that God is merciful, and trust that he will pardon me.' All this you will avoid, if you are a christian; but all this will not justify you; 'for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

"It is asserted in the Scriptures, that a man is *justified by the faith of Jesus Christ*, or by believing in the Son of God. And this, my friends, is a most cheering doctrine. However sinful we are, God will receive us, if we receive his Son whom he has sent. We must feel our need of a Saviour, and view Christ as such: we must view him as 'wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities,' and as put to death on our account; we must view him as the "propitiation for our sins," and acknowledge that there is "no other name under heaven whereby we can be saved." If we view him as thus appointed a Redeemer, and love his character, and have a heart which will find pleasure in obeying the Gospel and living in all holiness and benevolence; then are we *justified*, and justified by that faith in Jesus Christ "which purifies the heart and overcomes the world."

"Thus receiving salvation from our almighty Saviour, we shall trust in his power to protect and bless us, and shall be inclined to perform all those *good works* which he has enjoined."

Such were the ideas of the preacher. I was inquiring how I might be saved from my sins, and was deeply interested in the subject. On my return from meeting, I read with great care the third chapter of the epistle to the Romans, and the second and third chapters of that to the Galatians, and earnestly entreated the teachings of the Holy Spirit. It pleased God that light should burst in upon my mind. I saw the glory of the Redeemer's character, and every fearful thought was driven away. Under the agitation of exquisite joy and ardent gratitude, I passed a sleepless night. My mind was completely occupied with the wonderful exhibition of divine justice and mercy in the scheme of

redemption by Jesus Christ. In the morning I visited the excellent minister, whose instructions, by the influence of the divine Spirit, had been so much blessed to me. He received me with great affection. "Permit me," said he, "to be faithful to you. You now think you have true faith in Christ. Be careful to attend to his word: *If ye love me, keep my commandments.* Obedience to his Gospel, obedience in heart and in life, is the evidence of being his disciple. Live like the good man at whose house you are tarrying, and your hope will not make you ashamed. Mr. Anderson loves all the followers of his Master; he delights to visit and converse even with the humblest. He searches for objects of kindness, and on account of his charity the thanksgivings of thousands have ascended to God, and the prayers of thousands have been poured out for him. But he does not content himself with seeking the temporal welfare of his fellow-men. He knows that the soul is of more importance than the body; he delights therefore to converse on religious subjects. He is 'not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ.' Many have been enlightened by his wisdom; and I have known repeated instances, in which the most thoughtless have been brought to consideration by means of his plain dealing. He distributes many pious books among those who have not the means of procuring them. He takes peculiar pleasure in visiting the sick and dying, in praying with them, and directing them to the Saviour. In this way he is taught to keep the eternal world continually before him, and though he is confined to the earth, yet he lives as an immortal being. He appears to 'give all diligence to make his calling and election sure.' Go thou, my friend, and do likewise."

I left this servant of God, resolving that his admonitions should not be lost upon me.

My health being now restored, I bade adieu to Mr. Anderson with tears of affection, praising the God of mercy, that during my abode in the house of that good man, *he had brought me out of darkness into his marvellous light.*

I resolved that every succeeding year I would revisit the spot which is associated so closely with my religious hopes; and thus be led to adore that infinitely wise Being, who can bring good out of evil, and by the most wonderful means accomplish the purposes of his grace.

END.

SURRENDER TO GRACE.

Lord, thou hast won, at length I yield;
 My heart, by mighty grace compelled,
 Surrenders all to thee;
 Against thy terrors long I strove,
 But who can stand against thy love?
 Love conquers even me.

All that a wretch could do, I tried,
 Thy patience scorn'd, thy pow'r defied,
 And trampled on thy laws;
 Scarcely thy martyrs at the stake,
 Could stand more steadfast for thy sake,
 Than I in Satan's cause.

But since thou hast thy love reveal'd,
 And shown my soul a pardon seal'd,
 I can resist no more:
 Couldst thou for such a sinner bleed?
 Canst thou for such a rebel plead?
 I wonder and adore.

If thou hadst bid thy thunders roll,
 And lightnings flash, to blast my soul,
 I still had stubborn been:
 But mercy has my heart subdued,
 A bleeding Saviour I have viewed,
 And now I hate my sin.

Now, Lord, I would be thine alone,
 Come, take possession of thine own,
 For thou hast set me free;
 Releas'd from Satan's hard command,
 See all my powers waiting stand,
 To be employed by thee.

My will conform'd to thine, would move;
 On thee my hope, desire, and love,
 In fix'd attention join:
 My hands, my eyes, my ears, my tongue,
 Have Satan's servants been too long,
 But now they shall be thine.