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THE  
**MOUNTAIN MILLER.**

AN AUTHENTIC NARRATIVE.

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A PREMIUM TRACT.  
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## "THE END OF THAT MAN IS PEA

CHARLES LATHROP, Esq. having received a public education and entered on the profession of Law, was brought soon after cordially to embrace the Gospel of Christ. He was long a spiritual guide and example to his own household, and a pillar in the church; the supporter of her institutions, her social meetings for prayer, her Sabbath Schools, Missions, and other benevolent operations. At length he was seized with a gradual decline, and near the close of his 61st year it became apparent that his end was at hand.

His faith had been tried by following to the grave his first-born son, in the prime of life, just as he was completing his college course, preparatory to the Gospel Ministry; and by soon after committing his eldest daughter to the ship that bore her from his sight for ever, as a Missionary to the distant Heathen: he knew not how they would be provided for, whom he was about to leave a widow and fatherless; he saw his own great change approaching, and had no hope but in the mercy of God—yet a heavenly calm pervaded his mind, and he submissively awaited his Father's will.

While he felt the necessity of being himself prepared for the summons whenever it might come, he was almost equally solicitous to prepare the minds of his family for the event. He cheered and comforted them by conversing with them familiarly on the subject of his departure; counselled them in respect to their worldly concerns; desired them not to incur expense for mourning apparel, nor for any thing unnecessary to his decent burial; and arranged all his business as he desired to leave it.

He had lived to witness two events, in relation to each of which he felt constrained to adopt the words of Simeon, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." The first was the saving conversion, as he trusted, of all his seven surviving children, and their union with the church; the other, a revival of religion, after a long season of spiritual declension, over which he had not ceased to mourn, in which seventy were added to the church with which he

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BY WILLIAM A. HALLOCK.

Corresponding Secretary of the American Tract Society.



The spring by the road side.—See page 8.

It is the glory of the Gospel, that it is adapted to the circumstances and wants of ALL; and equally to the glory of its great Author, that, while he "inhabiteth eternity," he condescends to "dwell" "with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit." Such a spirit was perhaps the prevailing characteristic of the individual whose history is now presented to the reader, in a simple, unexaggerated *narrative of facts*.

I first became acquainted with JOSEPH BEALS about the year 1800. He lived in one of the then recent settlements on the beautiful range of the Green Mountains, which extend some hundreds of miles, in a northerly di-



rection, near the western boundary of New-England. I have learned that he was born, June, 1752, in Bridgewater, a few miles from Boston, in Massachusetts; and that he early imbibed and cherished the sentiment, that *external morality, without a change of heart, may secure the salvation of the soul.*

Pecuniary embarrassments, occasioned by the struggle for our nation's independence, induced him in 1779 to seek a residence for himself and a rising family among the forests of the mountains, where his ax soon laid open a spot sufficiently large for the erection of a cottage, the sides of which were composed of the logs he had felled, and the roof was covered with bark or flat slips of wood.

He continued to make new inroads upon the forest; and at length, by the fruits of his industry, succeeded in providing for his wife and little ones a more convenient though humble habitation, and storing it with a sufficiency of the necessaries of life. Here, when nothing occurred to persuade him to omit the duty, he frequently called his household around him to offer morning and evening devotions; for having undertaken to procure heaven by his own righteousness, he thought family worship must constitute a part of it. And so watchful was he over himself, that, excepting his moroseness, his unyielding temper, the severity of his family government, his murmurings at the allotments of Providence, and his bitter opposition to the distinguishing doctrines of Evangelical religion, his life was, in the view of those around him, blameless.

Such was JOSEPH BEALS, when, in 1789, a year of great scarcity of provisions, God saw fit to teach him the true character of his heart by a very afflictive dispensation. Being absent from home one evening with his wife, at about 8 o'clock the alarm was given that his house was in flames. They had proceeded too far to be arrested. The house was consumed, and with it nearly all the provisions he had laid in store. Thus perished in an hour the fruits of nearly ten years, and he saw little in the prospect but the wretchedness of absolute famine.

Here he found, probably for the first time, that he had no true submission to the will of God. He could not say,

"Thy will be done." His heart repined against Him who orders all things well, and whose kind preservation of his children called loudly for gratitude. This led him seriously to question whether his religion was such as would stand the test of the last day. He found he could not endure the trials of this life, and he trembled in view of the retributions of eternity. For a time he struggled to banish the unwelcome thought, in his exertions to provide for his family; but when the abundant crops of the succeeding summer removed the occasion of this anxiety, his relish for earthly pursuits died away, and he had now become equally weary of his fruitless endeavors to work out a righteousness of his own.

Thus was he prepared, in the mysterious providence of God, for the visit of the Holy Spirit to "convince him of sin, of righteousness, and of a judgment to come." He was brought to see, that the law of God is "exceeding broad," extending not to the external actions merely, but to "the thoughts and intents of the heart;" that his sins were immeasurably great; that "all his righteousnesses were as filthy rags;" and that the day of final judgment was but a little way before him. He saw the wrath of God revealed against him, and neither acquiesced in its justice, nor perceived any way of escape. He betook himself to the Scriptures, and began to search them in earnest for relief, but they seemed to contain no promises or blessings for him. He was ready to despair of ever finding mercy. Every day, and sometimes every hour of the day, he would retire to the forest with his Bible, and there attempt to breathe out his prayer to the God who reared the stately trees, and whom he had so grievously offended. They, in every breeze before which they bent, were vocal with the praises of their Creator; but their song was mingled only with his bitter lamentations, and his rending cries for mercy, to a God whose praise he could not sing.

Every thing he met seemed to concur with his own conscience in showing him the magnitude of his sins, and deepening his impressions of the realities of the judgment day. When husking his Indian corn, with his little sons beside him, the separation of the good ears from the bad so forcibly reminded him of the awful separation of



the last day, when he expected to hear the sentence, "Depart ye cursed," that he could not continue his work, but was compelled abruptly to retire. Under these impressions, he went to his impenitent wife, thinking that he could convince her of the danger to which they were both exposed; but he found that the Lord only can affect the heart.

Thus he continued borne down with a sense of his sinfulness, and of "the wrath of God abiding on him;" recurring to his Bible, and his consecrated place of prayer; silently presenting himself wherever any were assembled for the worship of God, and using all the external means of grace, till, one morning as he was about to close his prayer with his family, he *suddenly broke forth in new strains of devotion, penitence and praise* for redeeming love; and continued praying, as his family believed, for more than an hour, apparently unconscious of the progress of time.

To his children, this fervor, as well as the previous anguish of his spirit, appeared quite unaccountable; for they seem scarcely to have heard that "except a man be *born again* he cannot see the kingdom of God," (John, 3 : 3,) or to have known any thing of the renewing and sanctifying influences of the Holy Ghost. But his wife, who had recently witnessed some other instances of sorrow for sin, followed by joy and peace in believing, *feared* that the same result was about to be realized in her husband, and to her impatient and unhumbled spirit the season of prayer was tedious almost beyond endurance.

In the husband and father God saw the temper of one now subdued by divine grace, broken for sin, and filled with arguments by the manifestations of redeeming love, pleading for mercy with the humility of a little child. In the wife and mother he saw the proud spirit, which would not accept of mercy, nor consent to its being bestowed upon her husband—but she knew not what blessings were to descend on her and her children in answer to his prayers.

The reality of what she feared became too evident to be questioned. Her husband enjoyed a cheering hope of his acceptance in Jesus Christ—a hope which the

reader will not be disposed to think unfounded, when he learns the fruits by which it was accompanied, in that best of all evidences—a holy life. Such fruits of the Spirit I cannot but remark, for the benefit especially of young readers, are evidences of saving conversion, on which we should chiefly rely, whether the particular hour of our deliverance from condemnation is known to us, as was joyfully the case with the subject of this narrative, or not. The grand question to be solved is, whether we have surrendered our hearts to Christ—whether, whereas once we were blind, now we see—whether we have now the graces of the Spirit in exercise, proving our union with Christ. The *manner* of the Spirit's operations in different minds is very diverse; the *radical change* from sin to holiness is essentially the same in all who are truly converted to God.

From the time of the conversion of the subject of this narrative, his *heart* became engaged in all those religious duties which he had hitherto performed with a cold formality. His hopes of salvation, which before were grounded on his morality, now rested on the atoning sacrifice of Christ, through repentance and faith wrought in him by the Holy Spirit. His own sinfulness, apart from the merits of Christ, appeared greater than ever before; but he saw there was perfect efficacy in the blood of the Lamb of God to take away all his sins. He put his trust in that Savior, and found him "worthy of all acceptance." His irritable temper became mild, and his heart expanded in love to God and man. He became an example of meekness and devotion to the cause of his Redeemer; and early in 1791 publicly consecrated himself to him, by uniting with a small Evangelical Church which had been formed in the district where he resided.

Immediately after his conversion, he began to pray and labor for the salvation of his family, instructing them from the Scriptures, and urging upon them the duty of submitting themselves without delay to Christ. Especially was he solicitous for the salvation of *his wife*, in whom the opposition of the heart to vital godliness was most conspicuously manifested. His enjoyment in religion, and particularly his delight in spiritual communion with christian friends, were almost odious to her. He



could with difficulty persuade her to attend a religious meeting; or even to visit her friends with him, if she knew that Christians were to be present, such was his apparent delight in conversing with them. On one occasion, after visiting with him at the house of Captain S—, a relative and a heavenly-minded man, she determined never to go with him again; for his mind was so engrossed with religious topics, that she thought herself quite forgotten. He sometimes remonstrated with her mildly; assuring her that, if her heart were right with God, the subject of religion would be a source of the highest enjoyment. She was not inclined to credit his assertion; but, in the waywardness of her mind, resolved, as she afterward told a friend, that, *if her views of religion should be changed, he should never know it.*

It was long before she relinquished all hope that what her companion thought was a change in his affections would prove a delusion. She considered murmuring and peevishness to be his besetting sin; and when any unpleasant event occurred, she would wait with eagerness to see an exhibition of his former fretfulness—and it is more than can be said of most professing Christians, that she is believed always to have waited in vain. On a Sabbath morning, she had great hope that the adversary would triumph over him. The new settlers had united about this time in procuring the stated preaching of the Gospel, and he was careful always to be present at an early hour. He went out to his pasture to take an unruly horse, which formerly had caused him many a weary step and filled him with wrath; but though his patience was much tried by the animal, he came in filled with that peace which the sacredness of the day and of the delightful services in which he was about to engage were calculated to inspire.

The opposition of his wife to the spiritual religion he had embraced, rose to such a height, that on his being taken sick, as she afterward said, she even hoped he would not recover; but he was enabled to exhibit a life of uniform meekness, kindness, and sympathy in all her trials. He also prayed to God continually for her conversion. Nor did he cry in vain; for when God had tried his servant as long as he saw it to be needful for his dis-



cipline and growth in grace, he granted a gracious answer to his supplications, and she became a companion with whom he could hold sweet intercourse on the subject nearest his heart. In September, 1803, she united herself with the church. They then went joyfully "to the house of God" and to the table of the Lord "in company," and were mutual helpers in their spiritual pilgrimage, till *together*, as the sequel will show, they took their departure for the "rest" which "remaineth to the people of God." After her conversion she felt that she could make no sufficient atonement to him for her opposition. He wished no atonement but that she should faithfully serve his blessed Master; but she declared to a pious friend, that, if he would have permitted it, it would have been a relief to her mind to fall on her knees before him, and humbly beg his forgiveness.

Soon after his conversion he found his first-born son earnestly seeking an interest in Christ, and the concern of a little daughter, at the age of four years, lest her soul should be lost, also awakened his tenderest sympathies. With this child, the incidents of whose death will hereafter be mentioned, he spent many sleepless hours, endeavoring to compose her agitated feelings by instilling into her mind a knowledge of that Savior, who, when upon earth, "took little children into his arms and blessed them."

He became also very active and useful in visiting the sick and afflicted; instructing those who were inquiring the way of salvation; and animating the desponding Christian.

About the year 1798 he purchased a Corn-Mill, which he regularly attended during most of the remaining years of his life, as a means of supporting his family. He usually appeared in a miller's dress, unless when attending public or social worship, and is remembered as the PIOUS MILLER, probably by all who knew him.

The purchase of this mill was, to many of the friends of the Redeemer, an occasion, at first, of sincere regret, on the ground that his confinement to it must greatly interfere with his usefulness. But they soon saw how divine Providence, who is infinite in wisdom, rendered this circumstance the means of good. His mill became a fre-

quent resort of those inquiring the way to Zion, and was doubtless the gate of heaven to many wandering sinners. For many years, he was almost always to be found there, and was ever ready to converse on the great concerns of eternity. Few of the children of God entered his mill without receiving some new impulse to fidelity in the Christian life—few impenitent sinners without being affectionately warned—rarely a child without being instructed in religion—and none, without seeing in him a living example of its power.

Many instances might be specified in which individuals were greatly helped in their spiritual course by a visit to this mill. One was the case of Mr. G. V. a man who, like the Miller, had cherished from his early years an undoubting confidence in his own external morality for salvation; but who had been led to see that his heart must be renewed, or he must be lost. He found no one who seemed so thoroughly to understand his case as the Miller, and often resorted to him for instruction and counsel. By the grace of God he was enabled, at length, to cast himself on Christ for salvation, and became a steadfast pillar in the church.

An eminent and faithful clergyman has also informed the writer, that, when he was brought to see his danger as a sinner, he frequently went several miles, from a neighboring town, descending and climbing the long hills, that he might avail himself of the Miller's counsel and prayers; and an exemplary physician states that the Miller was the first person that ever asked him if he had been born again.

The spot where so many thus met the pious Miller, and his devout aspirations so often ascended to God, and even the pure perennial spring of water by the road side, where he used to drink, bursting from the rocks in a basin three or four feet from the ground, as if hewn by God for the purpose, and shaded by two beautiful sugar maples, have still a sacredness around them, which will remain till all who knew him and feel the value of religion shall have followed him to eternity.

Confined as he was during six days of the week, he most scrupulously reserved the whole of the Lord's day for religious purposes. And though he himself consi-



dered the Sabbath as commencing at midnight, he usually shut his gate at the close of day on Saturday; for he would not allow customers to be waiting for their meal on Saturday evening during hours which *they thought* holy time, and scrupulously regarded the feelings of his brethren of the church, who considered the Sabbath as commencing with the setting sun.

At the close of the year 1804 God saw fit to try him, and to honor the religion he had professed, by calling him suddenly to part with his eldest daughter, for whose spiritual welfare, at the tender age of four years, he had, as above related, felt so much anxiety. He was not confident of her preparedness for heaven; but he was enabled to betake himself to a still higher source of consolation, while he cast her upon the mercy of his heavenly Father, and felt that he would do all things well. She was a lovely daughter, in all the bloom of youth. The stroke was most severe. He plead with God for her, and was all that a father could be to her, till she was gone; cheered by a faith, "the sorrow of the world" could not reach, and laboring at the same time to turn the tears of all around him to praise. He knew not, he said, but he as cheerfully gave her up to God as he received her from his hand. His tongue was loosed in heavenly conversation, and he repeated, with much emotion, the whole of his favorite Psalm.

Sweet is the work, my God, my King,  
"To praise thy name, give thanks and sing," &c.

Such a state of mind continued, though with an increase of his spiritual joys, until the hour appointed for her burial, when his Christian friends, who came in great numbers to sympathise with him, saw in his sweet and placid countenance a glow, indicating unearthly peace and joy, and giving emphasis to the words of salvation, which flowed irrepressibly from his lips. It was the custom of the plain and affectionate people among whom he resided, after the funeral exercises, to place the coffin on a table a little distance from the house, where all who were present might take a last look at the deceased; after which they would fall back in a circle, while the bereaved relatives approached for the same purpose. Such was the

proceeding on this occasion. The devout Miller presented himself, his broken-hearted wife and children beside him, and with his head uncovered, and a countenance so serene and joyful that its expression will never be obliterated from the minds of many who were present, placed his hand upon the coffin's edge, and in a voice mellowed by the bursting emotions of his heart, began to speak to the sympathizing friends around him of the sweet consolations of religion in such an hour. He appealed to them, that they knew how he loved her whose remains then lay before him—how suddenly she had been called into eternity; but assured them, such had been the kindness and mercy of God to him in this affliction—such the spiritual consolations he had received—such the smiles of the Savior's countenance and the joys of his presence, that that day had been *the happiest day of his life*; and the sweet peace he had experienced outweighed all the joys of earth. Here, said he, is a mirror into which we all may look. We shall soon be as this beloved child is. Are we prepared for judgment and eternity. Nothing but an interest in Christ will then avail us. He urged all who knew not the consolations of religion, which he now found so precious, to embrace it without delay, and all who had embraced it to be more holy, and come up more fully to the enjoyment of the privileges to which their Redeemer invited them. Thus he proceeded for some minutes, in a strain of affection and solemnity, that brought eternity in full view, and melted the hearts of the whole concourse. On repairing to the grave, as soon as the body was lowered to its long home, he began again to speak of the necessity of preparation for eternity, filling up the moments till the grave was closed; and when his wife afterward asked if he did not say more than was proper, he told her such was his sense of the value of the soul, he *could not* refrain. Veterans in sin, who had seldom wept before, united their sympathies with the throbbing bosoms of youth, in witnessing these scenes; and hardened unbelievers, as they retired, were heard to say, "I thought the religion of those called devout Christians was a delusion. I once called JOSEPH BEALS a hypocrite; but when I saw and heard him to-day, at his daughter's funeral, I knew he had something to support him that I had never experienced."



The manner in which the Miller was sustained in this affliction is to be ascribed to no sudden burst of excited feeling, but to special aids of the Holy Spirit, imparted to one who habitually lived near to God, and maintained an abiding sense that, though "clouds and darkness are round about him," "righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne." From the time of his conversion, the language of his heart in every trying dispensation seemed to be, "It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good." From that period no murmuring word against the dealings of his Maker is known to have escaped his lips. At one time, when a dear babe was apparently brought near to death, and his wife expressed her fears respecting the result, he told her that, much as it had entwined itself in their affections and engaged their prayers, he felt that he could resign it without any reserve to God, to do with it according to his holy pleasure.

The same confidence in God supported him when, nearly six years after the death of his eldest daughter, he was called to bury his second daughter, at the age of twenty-one, who departed in the assured hope of heaven. Though his soul was not ravished with the manifestations of the Divine presence, as in the former trial, he was composed, and sweetly submissive to the will of God.

In all the circumstances of his life his Christian course was remarkably uniform. No calamity on the one hand, however severe, was suffered greatly to depress his spirits; nor, on the other, did any scene through which he passed greatly elate them. A mild and calm expression usually sat on his countenance, indicative of the heavenly peace that reigned within. The character which he exhibited in the occasional company of Christians, or in the meeting for social worship, he exemplified also in his family and in his common intercourse with men. None felt so deeply as his most intimate acquaintance, that his holy life proceeded from an abiding sense of the presence of God, and of his obligations to live entirely for his glory. His wife and children often conversed with deep interest on the probability that God would soon call him away from them. Heaven seemed to be already begun in his heart, and he appeared rather to "desire to depart" and be with his Savior, where sin would be done away, and

he should "see him as he is." As he was walking one day with a daughter in the grave-yard, she said to him, "Father, are you *always* ready to go?" He meekly replied, "the prospect of living here always would be melancholy to me."

In the summer of 1813 the period came when his pantings for heaven were to be realized, and when the prayer of the Great Intercessor must be answered concerning him, "Father, I will that they whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory." He was violently attacked with a prevailing fever, which in a few days (on the 20th July) released him from this body of sin, at the age of sixty-one. In this sickness he was calm, patient, and resigned to the will of God; but in the rapid progress of the disease he found occasion to say, that, though he had a thousand times reminded others that a sick bed is a poor place in which to prepare for death, he then thought much more unfavorably of it than he ever did before. But through abounding grace, he had long been ripening for his departure. It was only for the spirit to burst its earthly tabernacle, and its abode was in glory. He died suddenly, in a fit of faintness, having had no premonition that death was immediately near, and with no opportunity to add any thing to that best of all evidence of his good estate—a life of devoted piety.

His body was interred in the grave-yard, near his accustomed place of worship, where a plain and neat marble slab, bearing his name, age, and the date of his death, is erected as the only memorial of "THE MOUNTAIN MILLER." A notice of his death was inserted in the county newspaper, with this expressive and appropriate motto: "*His presence animated the Christian and awed the sinner;*" which would have been his whole recorded story, had not some special indications of Providence convinced the writer of his narrative of his duty to communicate it for the benefit, he trusts, of thousands.

His wife, for whose conversion he labored and prayed, and who was afterward so long the partner of his spiritual joys, was seized with a fever of a kindred character, almost simultaneously with himself, and died on the second day after his decease: not being informed of his departure, though under the same roof, till their happy



spirits greeted each other in the presence of their Redeemer above.

Several traits in the character of the MILLER are worthy of a distinct consideration.

*His uniform and consistent piety.* It proceeded from a heart regenerated by the Holy Spirit and guided by his influences. It was founded on the soul-subduing doctrines of the cross. His conversation abounded in practical views of the holiness and other perfections of God—the love and mercy of Christ—our sinfulness—the excellence of vital religion, and other kindred topics. No man was more easy of access on religious subjects. He was never addressed, when they were not uppermost in his mind, or when he had not words to speak for Christ and his cause. If conversation was introduced on worldly subjects, he would soon turn it to the concerns of eternity, and in a manner so natural and familiar, that it rarely struck the mind of any as abrupt. "Out of the abundance of the heart" his mouth spake, and "the law of kindness" was upon his lips. When a man came to his mill angry, because the poor beast that brought him, and which he had been beating unmercifully, had occasioned him delay, "What do you think," said the Miller, "of this passage, 'Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness?'" At another time, when a number of persons were speaking, with some animation, of their prospect of removing to a distant part of the country, "Well," said he, "I expect to move but once more—and then into eternity!"

The excellency of religion appeared in his character *at all times*, so far as any one of his most intimate friends can remember. A very devoted and useful missionary to India, who went from the neighborhood of the Miller, and who is now doubtless with him in glory, when informed of his death, wrote back, that "he should ever esteem it an honor to have belonged to the same church with JOSEPH BEALS."

To the venerable father of that missionary, who knew the Miller most intimately, and who was eminently qualified to appreciate his real character, the writer is indebted for a letter, some passages of which will be interwoven in what remains of this brief sketch. "Before he

experienced that change which was so visible to all conversant with him," says this letter, "his life was usually regarded as *strictly moral*; but his religion was formal—partaking neither of that love to God, nor good will to man, which the Gospel inspires. After the change in him, it became spiritual and evangelical. It never rose to enthusiastic zeal. It was uniform and durable; and manifested itself in active life. He brought forth much fruit to the glory of God, and thereby gave indubitable evidence that he was, in reality, a disciple of Christ. A never-failing spring—affording nearly the same quantity of pure water at a time of the severest drought, as in a season of abundance of rain—is a happy emblem of the piety of this eminently good man."

*His meekness.* This was perhaps the predominant trait in his character. The expression of his countenance clearly bespoke his communion with God. Perhaps the presence of no other man would silence so soon a company of the rude and dissolute—not because he attacked them openly, but from the impressions of the reality of religion and of eternal things which his presence awakened. Probably he *did not hear an oath in all the latter years of his life*; for the most profane revered him. It has been remarked by a very intimate friend, that, though from the time of his conversion always cheerful, he almost never laughed; or if he did, he would for a time be silent, and seem to reflect on it as unbecoming one who must soon appear before God.

*His abiding sense of the uncertainty of life and the retributions of eternity.* The prevailing theme, and his familiar conversation with his friends, in his family, and in the social circle, were the *uncertainty of life*, the *importance of a preparation for death*, and "*the glory that shall be revealed*" in them that love God. These truths filled and animated his soul. In the long winter evenings, when he would sometimes fall asleep in his chair, the introduction by his family of some topic of vital religion, would rouse him at once, and he would kindle into animation. When he came in and sat, his Bible was generally before him, and in it he said *he always found something new*. At the last religious meeting he attended, a few hours before the attack of fever that closed his life, he



urged these truths with great seriousness and prayed with great fervency, that they might be felt and practically improved by all. "He abounded," says the friend from whose letter we have quoted, "in speaking of the solemnity of dying and appearing before God in judgment. His conversation would never tire, and it seemed that he was never tired of religious conversation. It was once my privilege to spend two days with him on a short journey. Our conversation on the way, and wherever we called, was almost wholly on things pertaining to the kingdom of God; yet at the end of the second day, the time had been so agreeably spent that it seemed as though the interview had but just commenced, and we were obliged abruptly to close our conversation and part."

*His preciousness to the awakened sinner.* The conversation of no private individual was perhaps ever more ardently sought by those inquiring the way of salvation; and no man perhaps, ever felt more deeply the responsibility and delicacy of dealing with persons in that state of mind. Calling with a pious friend on Mrs. B—— in a neighboring town, she related to them the despairing state of her daughter, and begged him to pray with them. But she found his tender heart was so full, that for some minutes he could not speak to lead their devotions. Deeply as he felt for awakened sinners, he never sought to "heal slightly" the wounds which sin had made. He never told them of their blameless life, or intimated that they were making progress toward heaven, while they continued the enemies of God. He considered their views of the enormity of sin, and the nearness of eternity, as feeble compared with the reality; and urged them to surrender their hearts without delay to Christ, as the only way to obtain enduring and substantial peace. He represented Christ as knocking for admission to their hearts—as standing with open arms ready to receive them; and urged them no longer to resist such love, but to make the surrender of their all to him. When, in the social meeting, he rose to say a word for the cause of Zion, or to lead in prayer, those who were anxious for their salvation listened with eagerness. They knew what he said proceeded from a heart deeply solicitous for their welfare, and felt that his prayers would avail with God,

*His perseverance in doing good.* The continual object of his life was emphatically to *persuade men to embrace Christ*, and serve him faithfully. The benevolent exertions of the present age for the heathen, which he lived to see commenced, had his cordial approbation; but though he longed and prayed for the conversion of the world to God, the sphere of his *efforts* was mainly confined to the circle in which he moved. Not satisfied with the opportunities of usefulness afforded at his mill, he often, in his later years, committed it for a few days to the care of one of his sons, and sometime before his death, having the means of subsistence, and "owing no man any thing, but to love one another," sold it, that he might devote his declining years more exclusively to the welfare of souls. As an illustration of his persevering endeavors, the following fact is adduced: "Monthly meetings for prayer for the influences of the Holy Spirit, of which he was, if not the first mover, the principal and constant supporter, had been established not very far from his dwelling, and continued for a number of years, when nearly all on whom he had depended for their support forsook them; till at length only two or three attended. But his zeal—his resolution—his patience, were not yet exhausted. He still continued his exertions to sustain the meetings—hoping almost against hope—until he saw a little cloud arising—a few drops of mercy began to fall, and the abundant blessing of the Holy Spirit to descend. The neighborhood was thinly settled, but instead of two or three, the aged and the young crowded to attend the meetings, and the house was filled. He now, with wonder and delight, saw the salvation of God, and was actively engaged in doing all in his power to promote the good work of the Holy Spirit, and in directing anxious inquirers to the fountain where they might 'buy wine and milk without money and without price.'"

*His life of prayer.* None had the privilege of uniting with him in this exercise without feeling that he was addressing a God with whom he had intimate communion. In his private devotions he sought to be unobserved, yet his family were not ignorant of his regularity in this duty, and often well knew the sacred moments when he was pleading for them and others before the throne of his



Heavenly Father. His regular devotions in the family were fervent. And besides his delight in the social prayer-meeting, he was ever ready to embrace occasions for special prayer. In the interval of public worship, in the warm season of the year, he was frequently observed to retire, with a beloved Christian friend, toward a neighboring grove. It has since been ascertained that they improved that hour for some years, when no special call of duty interrupted, in visiting a sequestered spot for united prayer—that their own hearts might be replenished with divine grace; that the children of both families, and especially his wife during the time that she continued impenitent, might be converted; that the Holy Spirit might be shed down in the revival of religion; and the Redeemer's kingdom be advanced throughout the world.

*His care for the spiritual welfare of his family.*

This was especially manifested in the importance he attached to their regular morning and evening devotions. He selected the most favorable hours, and nothing was permitted to interrupt them. He accompanied the reading of the Bible with plain practical suggestions; extending his remarks as he thought would be most useful to his household; not neglecting them on the one hand, nor wearying them on the other. He directed their minds, both in his conversation and prayers, to the passing events of Providence, that they might notice in them the hand of God, be grateful for his mercies, submit to his chastisements, and suitably improve all his dispensations. All of them who survive have publicly professed their faith in Christ.

*His deportment in the house of God.* He was a constant attendant, and always took care to present himself early. His venerable pastor has informed the writer, that, for a long course of years, as he entered the sanctuary, a sight of the countenance of the MILLER gladdened his heart; for he knew he should have at least one hearer who would be attentive, who would love the truth, and whose prayers would be ascending for the presence and blessing of God. Ministers, who for the first time addressed the congregation, would distinguish him from the rest of the audience, and say they could with pleasure preach to him, if they had no other atten-



tentive hearer. He did not discourage his minister by sleeping. His heavenly deportment seemed to say, "How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts—Blessed are they that dwell in thy house; they will be still praising thee."

*His temperance.* This virtue he practised not merely in regard to strong liquors, but in the use of food; and it doubtless contributed in no small degree to promote the rare assemblage of excellencies which were combined in his Christian character—his uniform cheerfulness; his consistency; his readiness to engage in religious exercises; his wakefulness in the house of God; and the perpetual elevation of his religious affections.

The combinations of his character are thus summed up by the respected friend from whom we have quoted:—"He was unusually grave and serious. He was neither a flatterer nor a slanderer—'not given to wine'—'not greedy of filthy lucre,' for he appeared almost indifferent to the world. He was sound in the faith. He ruled his children and his household well. His godly example spoke powerfully in favor of the reality and the excellence of religion. Indeed I think I can say that JOSEPH BEALS, by his life, exhibited a more eminent, a more uniform, a more striking example of piety, than any other individual with whom it was ever my privilege to be acquainted."

A testimony kindred to the above is given by one who is now a preacher of the Gospel, and in a station of much responsibility and usefulness in the Christian Church: "With my earliest recollections," he says, "are associated the godly example, the affectionate Christian admonitions, and the ardent prayers of the pious MILLER. Often have I stood beside him in his mill, and heard the gracious words which fell from his lips for my own benefit and that of others. Often have I hung upon his lips in the social meeting, when he spoke of the blessedness of that salvation to which I was then a stranger; and seen him lead in the devotions, apparently in the attitude of the most intimate communion with God, and of even then bringing down spiritual blessings from on high. Often did I accompany him homeward from the social meeting, still breathing the language of Canaan. I was,

alas, unrenewed, and at heart still alienated from God; but I knew that I must obtain an interest in Christ or finally perish; and there was no man whose example and counsel I thought could do so much for my spiritual good, and whose prayers for me I thought would be so efficacious at the throne of grace.

"I very well remember the morning when I met a messenger who announced to me that the pious *Miller was gone*. I had no more reason to value his Christian character than other youth around me; but a flood of tears instantly poured down my cheeks, from the reflection that another barrier between me and perdition was removed. I immediately went and conveyed the tidings to a respected father of the church, whose tears flowed plentifully with mine; the heart of his affectionate Pastor, who had been accustomed to assuage the sorrows of others by administering spiritual consolation, seemed severely smitten; and a gloom of sadness hung over every hill, and forest, and landscape around me; for although the Miller was humble, and obscure, and unknown beyond the circle of a few miles; yet in that circle he was loved and venerated as a man of God and a spiritual guide; and the language of all seemed to be, 'Help, Lord, for the godly man ceaseth; for the faithful fail from among the children of men.'

"Since the departure of the Miller I have had the happiness to become intimately acquainted with a large circle of christian friends, in city and country; and I hesitate not to say that, with the exception of one other departed saint, the savor of whose name "is as ointment poured forth," but of whose character many circumstances might lead me to form too high an estimate, I have never known the individual who, in my view, lived so near to God, and bore so much of the image of his blessed Master as did JOSEPH BEALS."

Is the Reader a *follower of Christ*? Let the example of the Miller incite you to *raise higher* your standard of holy living. Rest not short of the blessed eminence in piety which he attained; nor of the high behests to which the bleeding Savior calls you, and to which, consecrating yourself *wholly* to him, his grace shall raise you.



Is the Reader only *almost* persuaded to be a christian? Weigh well the history of this humble individual, both before and after his conversion. Mark the blessed fruits of a spiritual religion—what abiding peace and joy it afforded him—what love to God and to his fellow-men it wrought in him—what a blessing it made him to his friends and acquaintance, and the church of God—how it supported him in trials, and sustained him in death. Would you have his sweet consolations in life and in death, and partake of his eternal joys, seek religion where he found it. Look at the law of God, till you see its extent and purity, and the terrors of that curse it pronounces against sin. Look at your own heart till you see how, in thought, word, and deed—by sins of omission and commission—you have violated that law in the sight of a holy God. Behold the atoning sacrifice offered for you by our glorious Redeemer on the cross. Hear him say, “Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.” Go and prostrate yourself before him. Confess your sins. Tell him you are “a wretch undone.” Cast yourself on his mercy, and if you perish, perish at his feet. Do this, and your soul shall live. The same Savior who said, “Except a man be *born again* he cannot see the kingdom of God,” said also, “Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.” Come now, and yield yourself to him. This is the language the pious Miller would utter in your ear, could he speak to you from heaven. Come now: let nothing hinder you. Now, while your day of probation yet lasts. Now, while the voice of mercy yet speaks to you. Now, while God is moving on your heart by the silent influences of his Spirit. Now—before you lay aside this Tract. Fall on your knees. Let your hard heart break. Give yourself to him who died for you. “Behold, now is the accepted time! behold, now is the day of salvation!”

*Note.*—The Miller lived in Plainfield, Ms. a mile south of his accustomed place of worship. In 1829 the dwelling where he died, and from which he buried his eldest daughter, was yet standing. His mill had been rebuilt.



was connected, embracing sixteen teachers and six pupils from his beloved Sabbath School.

He often alluded to the former blessing as probably in answer to the prayers of Missionary and other christian friends, whom the giving up of his daughter for the Heathen had brought frequently under his roof. Among these friends was the Rev. PLINY FISK, late Missionary to Palestine, whose visit was made soon after his daughter's departure. He had preached on the Sabbath and attended a crowded religious meeting at Mr. L's, both on Sabbath and on Monday evenings. Their interview had been eminently spiritual and full of desire for the conversion of the heathen, and the honor of Christ. On the following morning, after family worship, a little family religious meeting was held, as they were about to separate. Mr. Fisk, in prayer, seemed to plead with strong faith for spiritual blessings on the family; and as he bade them farewell, taking Mr. L. by the hand, he said, "The Lord bless you," and then, with a renewed and ardent grasp, added, as if with much assurance, "He *will* bless you—yes, He *will* bless you." The words sunk into the heart of Mr. L. and when, near ten years after, he had evidence of the conversion of all his children by the Holy Spirit, he would relate the anecdote to Christian friends, and add, with eyes filled with tears, and words struggling for utterance, "Yes, and He *has* blessed us. We all hope in His mercy."

To a daughter, who looked anxiously upon him, during a distressing season, when his difficulty of respiration threatened an immediate departure, he said, "Do not look sad. I trust you have no occasion to sorrow on my account. I am sorry to leave you so; but I am comforted that I leave you all with such a hope. This is a source of unspeakable consolation to me."

At the close of this day his aged pastor expressed to him the support he had derived from his persevering efforts, especially in the Sabbath School, and in sustaining their prayer-meetings when the state of religion was low. Mr. L. with his usual diffidence, expressed the fear that he had done very little good, and added, as he often did on such occasions, that if any good had been done, it was *not himself*, but solely of the power and mercy of God.

Soon after he said, "I have no hope from any thing I have done, or can do; all my hope is in Christ."

On another occasion he said, "I have not those great spiritual joys which some have: but I have a comfortable hope. I am one of those who believe that there is no man that liveth and sinneth not—that in all things we come short, and in most things offend altogether; and that it is only through the righteousness of Christ we can find any acceptance with God."

"More than once, when speaking in his family of the progress of his disease, he was heard to subjoin, "But why should a living man complain: a man for the punishment of his sins."

Being asked what message he would send to his daughter in India, he said, "Tell her the time of my departure is very near. Tell her I die with a comfortable hope—hoping to meet her before long, where there is no more parting and sorrow: I hope to meet you *all* there."

Soon after, his little grandson said to him, "Grandpa, Aunt is crying." "Aunt must not cry," he replied, "she must be satisfied that what God does is best."

Speaking of not resting so well for several nights as he had previously, he said, "Wearisome nights are appointed unto me; but the Lord doeth all things well, and in infinite loving kindness to those that put their trust in him."

His last conversation, a few moments before his death, was with his minister, who, having led in prayer for divine support in the hour of trial, said to him, "I suppose it does not alarm you to have the subject of death mentioned." "O no, Sir," he replied, "not at all." "What a blessed thing it will be," added his minister, "if any of us ever get to heaven." "Yes," said Mr. L. "it will be blessed, with respect to the change which will be wrought in us, and with respect to the society and employments of heaven. 'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for them that love him;'" and added, "The blessedness and glories of heaven are such as we can form no conception of here."

He soon peacefully closed his eyes, (Jan. 17, 1831,) and entered into those joys, which his tongue had just been laboring in weakness to describe.