

THE
GOLDEN
BOOK *of*
JOHN
OWEN

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THE GOLDEN BOOK OF JOHN OWEN

The Golden Book of John Owen

PASSAGES FROM THE WRITINGS OF THE
REV. JOHN OWEN, M.A., D.D., SOMETIME VICE-
CHANCELLOR OF THE UNIVERSITY OF
OXFORD, AND DEAN OF CHRIST CHURCH

Chosen and Edited, with a
Study of his Life and Age

BY

JAMES MOFFATT, B.D., D.D. (ST. ANDREWS)

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HODDER AND STOUGHTON
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'I did greatly long to see some ancient godly man's experience, who had writ some hundreds of years before I was born; for those who had writ in our days, I thought (but I desire them now to pardon me) that they had writ only that which others felt, or else had, through the strength of their wit and parts, studied to answer such objections as they perceived others were perplexed with, without going down themselves into the deep.'—BUNYAN'S *Grace Abounding*.

'At last the time of his (Mr. Grimshawe's, an active English church minister) deliverance came. At the house of one of his friends he lays his hand on a book and opens it, with his face towards a pewter shelf. Instantly his face is saluted with an uncommon flash of heat. He turns to the title-page and finds it to be "Dr. Owen on Justification." Immediately he is surprised with such another flash. He borrows the book, studies it, is led into God's method of justifying the ungodly, hath a new heart given to him; and now, behold, he prayeth.'—Quoted by ORME from the *Life of Mr. Joseph Williams of Kidderminster*.

'Except for a few years, Puritanism was militant or Puritanism was depressed. We can only conjecture whether a great literature would have developed on a Puritan basis, if the commonwealth had existed even for one entire generation; we can only surmise on the question whether righteousness would have flowered in beauty and severity have worn the garments of joy. . . . But the strife of parties during the Commonwealth made it inevitable that the graver mind of England should in the main occupy itself with practical work of immediate importance. Theological folios and political pamphlets may now slumber on dusty shelves, but some of them in their day were instinct with fire; they were living forces helping to form character, to regulate conduct, to shape public action. If few of them deserve the name of literature, they yet stirred the soil from which a literature might have sprung. . . . And what else in the literature of the period can outweigh these gifts of Puritan passion and Puritan faith?'—DOWDEN, *Puritan and Anglican*, pp. 24-26.

NOTE TO THE EDITOR FROM
DR. ALEXANDER WHYTE

7 CHARLOTTE SQUARE, EDINBURGH,
May 7, 1904.

DEAR DR. MOFFATT,—

I do not know another living man who could have done this service to John Owen. All your previous studies will but the surer gain you a multitude of astonished and admiring readers. Much as I expected from you, this far surpasses my expectations.

With high regards,

ALEXANDER WHYTE.

TO
MY WIFE

ARGENTVM ET AVRVM NON
EST MIHI : QVOD AVTEM HABEO
HOC TIBI DO

PREFACE

THE Jansenists had Pascal, but a survey of the English Calvinists almost bears out the verdict that during the seventeenth century they were less tinged with humanism than their opponents. Scholasticism was more akin to them than to the Arminians, and they were apt to be learned, rather than cultured, as a body. Humane studies were not, as Mark Pattison once sneered, simply 'swamped in a biblical brawl' throughout puritan England; but for a Calvinist like John Owen, born to the severe traditions of a Sparta based on biblical and dogmatic erudition, the wider literature of Bunyan's 'gallant country of universe,' together with most of the broader interests and opinions of the English race, were certainly little more than what a Florentine would have dubbed *fuori*. They were outside, irrelevant, inferior. Owen has hardly any historical sense. Nor is he a humanist at all. He has classical learning, but his copious quotations mainly serve to point a paragraph or clinch a theological moral. There is no word from one side to another

of his writings to indicate that he was living just below the days of Bacon and the great Elizabethans, or in the England of Milton, Falkland, and their peers. He has a passion for Augustine, but for no later author in any literature. Terence or Persius is nearer him than Massinger or Marvell, Thucydides than Hooker, and the Bible—*viâ* Calvin—closer than all else.

Primarily, I suppose, it is to this restriction of outlook and interest that one must ascribe the modern neglect, or at least the very moderate esteem, of Owen. *Voilà*, men say of him as Pascal said of Père Thomassin, *voilà un bonhomme qui est terriblement savant, mais qui n'a guère d'esprit*. *Esprit* has come to mean so much to-day. Its absence, particularly in religious writings, is such a handicap even upon the stoutest and the loudest. Our language is said to have no equivalent for the French term *ennui*. Perhaps not. But if we cannot translate it, we can illustrate it sadly from our literature as well as from our social habits.

Conscientious readers, I fear, are often thrown in the attempt to wrestle with John Owen's dry, stiff prose; it has something of the geometrical precision which proves so repellent to the majority in his contemporary Spinoza. Too many never get the length of wrestling with him. They but glance

and go. For it is not simply that he is interminably prolix, running out to a dark line of twenty-four thick volumes in Dr. Goold's standard edition. Small care had he for such a warning as that addressed by Hampden, a master of concise and well-considered elegance, to his friend Sir John Eliot! Yet the cardinal handicap on Owen's popularity lies less in the technical nature of some of his subjects, or in his voluminous treatment of all subjects, than in his style. Owen has grace, but it is not literary grace. Style nowadays, with its qualities of finish, accuracy of touch, and breadth, will serve to float materials of no great or enduring value. But what of wares loaded in unriveted language? What of authors who are never, or who will never be,

taught what fruitful things and dear
Must sink beneath the tide-waves, of their weight,
If in no vessel built for sea they swim?

Owen and many a worthy Puritan give the rueful reply. Like John Howe, he neither had nor cared to have any craft or skill of words, and unlike Jonathan Edwards he does not seem to have regretted this. His readers have. Printers cursed his handwriting, and readers ever since have bewailed his facile pen, a pen too with a hair in it repeatedly. They have sometimes hardly felt

disposed to resent Robert Hall and his 'continent of mud'—by which Owen has become a byword among the Philistines for all that is uninteresting and uninspiring. The truth is, as an artist would put it, Owen is no colourist. And this would be to put it leniently. When he was in his cradle, a young Oxford poet issued a volume whose preface flung out this audacious sentence: 'The language is but indifferent, for I affected matter rather than words.' Wither's principle unluckily was Owen's practice.

The net result is that, apart from one or two treatises still read by a too scanty retinue, John Owen's collected works have been dropped into the cells of oblivion. An anthology is apt to reflect the arbitrary taste of the anthologist, and it is prone to be scrappy, especially in the case of continuous authors; but, so far as I am able to judge, an anthology is the one chance, or at least the best chance, of rescuing John Owen for the memory and attention of the twentieth century. Indeed, although few authors of that period dealt in larger sequences or in less staccato utterances, with the possible exception of Goodwin or Baxter, it is rather curious to find that Owen's pages are always pithier than his books, his paragraphs occasionally richer than his pages, and his aphorisms or

sentences less obsolete than many of his paragraphs. Thus it is practicable to cull a series of patches from him which are not purple but silver amid the grey. The notorious verdict upon Diderot would almost cover him as well. Owen could doubtless write good books; but their goodness was not literary, and the enduring part of him can often be conveyed in sections of a page or two, or even less, detached from treatises which are well-nigh dead of a plethora of language and of logic.

The special quality of this goodness is various. It is not easy to define its scope and gist, beyond the somewhat obvious remark that a man like Owen, who gives an intellect of exceptional strength to the central things of the Christian faith, in a period of transition and debate, can hardly fail to set down here and there a sentence or a group of sentences which arrests and engages the mind. Deficient in imaginative power, he won no lucidity or charm or flexibility from his acquaintance with the classics or his intercourse with active life. Floridity is not in him. But neither is verve nor ecstasy, in general. Seldom and slowly does his passion kindle, even in moments of controversial heat when the ardour becomes nearly truculent or biting; in his very phases of religious fervour it burns up with an almost noiseless heat, only to die away soon in some

leaden network of argument and definition. The distemper of scholasticism, the dialectic itch and intellectualism, which M. Brunetière laments in Calvin, reappears in Owen the Calvinist; we feel it all the more perhaps because it is so seldom apt to be relieved by any accompaniment of spontaneous passion, any sudden glory of words, any dash of shrewdness or human vivacity. Yet ardent and compelling passages there are. In the dark grey pool of Owen's ratiocination the great style, which is born of earnestness and sincerity, will emerge. For a moment the soul will be furrowed by some line of vivid truth. Some reality of experience will be depicted with fidelity and force. And thus for any one who pores over the surface of his writings, there are rewarding moments. Here too

Sweetness, out of sadness, breaks at fits
Like bubbles on dark waters, or as flits
A sudden silver fin through its deep infinities.

If the selections in this volume (which have been culled for their intrinsic rather than for their historical interest) have been at all successful in capturing these vital and vivid passages, the reader will probably be struck by the reiterated sense of amazement which Owen always feels at the incurable levity of human nature in its behaviour towards

God, the levity with which it judges its capacities and destiny, the levity with which it will accept the Christian faith and proceed to state or realise it, and the levity with which it calmly sets aside or whittles down the Gospel. This never failed to stagger or sadden or nettle him. Other characteristics are to be traced which, as Pepys would have said, his nature was most earnest in. High seriousness, introspective powers, a conscience for liberty, a moral fervour which breaks through all formulation of belief, a keen sense of the power of God, the grace and glory of Christ, and the work of the Spirit—these and other traits are all prominent in Owen, and they have left passages of real literary merit and religious value scattered up and down his works. But looking to the general atmosphere of his mind, I always feel that irony of an austere colour—the irony native to a man who realises the dimensions of faith overarching the provincial estimates and response of the average English soul—that this represents the leading ray of light that struggles through the grey long afternoon of Owen's prose. It blends with his pathos and his satire, his remonstrances, his adoration, his appeals.

More than two centuries have cut most of the meaning from his name. Yet he lived in a day which still retains significance and interest for our-

selves,¹ and in that day he was no minor figure. His interests were multifarious. A master in what is now known as the Higher Life, a man of administrative ability in academic and in state affairs, a veteran in the front-rank of contemporary theologians and scholars, Owen played many parts, and played them with a serious and signal vigour. But it is as a thinker on religion, and especially on personal religion, that he survives. Some writer in last century (Dr. James Hamilton, if I mistake not) declared that evangelical theology had been hitherto alluvial for the most part, and that its main element was a detritus from mount Owen. The claim seems to be pitched too high. Amesius or Cocceius has moulded Calvinism more profoundly, if less publicly, than the Oxford Puritan. But when devotional stimulus is the object of a reader's quest—though I am far from echoing the dilettante severance of devotion from theology or thought—it will not always be in vain to hark back to mount Owen, even if the Puritan's good things are hoarded there like honey among the rocks. They drop sweet, but to reach them you must scramble generally over rough, uninviting country or scale the crags and

¹ 'Scattered through the 2000 volumes of pamphlet literature of the years 1640-1660 are to be found ideas, religious, political, and economic, which are connected in the closest way with our own age.'—Mr. G. P. Gooch in the *English Historical Review* (1896), p. 579.

fissures. The coveted sweets do not lie, as a rule, to be gathered by the casual passer on the highroad.

The object of this book is partly to incite some readers to this quest for themselves, but primarily to collect some brief samples of Owen's thought for the benefit of the large majority who, in this hurrying age, are disinclined or quite unable to explore the original writings. The idea of the volume is not new. Two books of selections were issued in the earlier part of last century. But I have not seen either, and the present anthology or devotional manual, which is smaller than I could have wished, has been compiled from a first-hand study of the originals. Occasionally I have ventured to add a note or to append some "parallel passage. The latter illustrations are drawn sometimes from later writers, on the plea that few things are so timeless as personal religion in its classic phases. *Deep calls unto deep*, and the call is often across broad centuries. But others of my parallels have been culled from more or less contemporary literature. They will help, for all their incompleteness, to place Owen in relation to the wider thought of his time, just as they form one more example of the truth that subsequent ages have frequently the privilege of looking back to see a hidden unity among writers who themselves were mainly, if not entirely, conscious of

- their mutual antagonisms. I have also prefixed to the anthology an outline of John Owen's life and period. But neither in sketching this, nor in compiling the selections, have I wrought for the student of history, much less for the theologian. He can find his way to Owen and through Owen without any help. My simpler aim has been to focus general readers as far as possible for an appreciation of this gaunt, noble, half-forgotten Puritan, which will present him, not as a voice alone but as a breathing figure in the misty, complex spaces of our seventeenth century.

JAMES MOFFATT.

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INTRODUCTORY SKETCH

FEW drops of Celtic fire and fancy trickled in John Owen's veins. Few at least trickled through into his prose. Yet, as his name implies, he was of Welsh extraction, although this counted for less in his case than in that of Cromwell. A branch of the Owen family had been for some time resident in Oxfordshire, where John Owen's grandfather and father held successive rectorships in the English Church ; but his main connection with the Principality seems to have lain in the fact that the expenses of his education were partially defrayed by a wealthy Welsh uncle.

The second son of the family, he was born at Stadham, a village near the Thames and within sight of the Chiltern Hills, in 1616. It is less relevant to note that this was the year that robbed the world of Shakespere, Beaumont,¹ Hakluyt, and Cervantes, than to recollect that in this year Laud left Oxford for the deanery of Gloucester, where he started his innovations and reforms, while a certain undergraduate came up to Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge, who twelve years later, as Owen entered Oxford, took his seat in the third parliament of Charles as member for Huntingdon. Milton and Fuller had been born in 1608, Clarendon and Sir Matthew Hale in 1609, Whichcote and Lord Falkland in 1610, Cartwright, Harrington, and Leighton in 1611, Pearson, Crashaw, and Calovius in 1612, Cleveland, George Gillespie, and Jeremy Taylor in

¹ Another Beaumont was born in this year, the well-known Cambridge don and divine, who is credited with having composed one of the lengthiest poems in the language, viz. the allegorical *Psyche*. He was a fit contemporary of Owen the voluminous.

1613, More in 1614, and Sir John Denham, like Baxter, in 1615. Such, with Quenstedt (1617-1688), Voetius (1589-1678), Heidegger (1633-1698), and Cocceius (1603-1669) in Germany, were some of Owen's great coevals. He was still in his cradle when Cudworth and John Smith, the Cambridge Platonists, first saw the light. To Marvell he was senior by four years, to Pascal by seven, to Fox by eight, to Witsius by ten, and to Bossuet and Molinos by eleven. Bunyan was his junior by twelve years; Locke, Wren, Pepys, and Spinoza, by sixteen. In the year of his birth the first Independent congregation is said to have been founded in Southwark. He was a child of two when the Synod of Dort¹ started to formulate Calvinism against the inroads of the Arminian reaction, and when the Thirty Years' War broke out. In his tenth year Bacon and Bishop Andrewes died.

He was a home-bred youth, trained in the quiet of such 'a parsonage in Oxfordshire,' perhaps, as that on which Wordsworth spent a sonnet. He never travelled on the Continent. He never studied at a public school or at any foreign university. His primary schooling was got at the famous academy of Edward Sylvester in Oxford, where Chillingworth had been a pupil, and at the mature age of twelve,² in the same year that Chillingworth got his fellowship at Trinity, Owen was considered fit to enter Queen's College as an undergraduate, an instance of precocity which is not quite unparalleled in the records of the period, so far as England is concerned.

¹ See Cunningham's *Historical Theology*, ii. pp. 379 f.

² Sir Thomas Browne, who had been at Pembroke College (1623-1627), was now practising in Oxfordshire, but Ireton was still at Trinity (he had entered it in 1626). Milton, More, and Jeremy Taylor meanwhile were beside 'the reedy Cam,' and Charles Diodati had left Oxford in the year of Owen's matriculation. During his last years as an undergraduate Lovelace and Sir John Denham came up to run their gay course at the university; and as the Oxford Puritan was leaving college for conscience' sake, a young Cambridge cleric was, by Laud's influence, elected Fellow of All Souls, Oxford. But we have no record of any intercourse between Jeremy Taylor and John Owen.

The most aristocratic class of students at Christ Church are said to have opened their connection with the university at an almost equally tender age. Donne went to the University of Oxford when he was eleven. Bishop Hall entered Cambridge when he was fifteen, as did Fuller and Jeremy Taylor at the age of thirteen, and in 1667 John Evelyn placed his son at Trinity College, Oxford, 'not as yet thirteen years old. He was newly out of long coates.'¹ Philip Henry, that M'Cheyne of the seventeenth century, who entered Christ Church in his seventeenth year (1647), always maintained that one reason of his failure to profit adequately by Oxford was that he went to the university too young. But Owen expressed no regret upon the matter. His college course proved him to be ambitious, athletic, and a reading man—no common blend of traits. He was distinguished by two healthy passions, for music, particularly the flute, and for gymnastics, in particular bell-ringing, the diversion that so engrossed young Bunyan. But these were merely fringes to what was, in his case, as in Hooker's and Milton's, a life of close, hard study. He was a lad of parts, and the academic ambition evidently woke early in his breast, till in his ardour he frequently did without more than four hours' sleep at night.² This did not cost him, as it cost Newman two centuries later in the Oxford schools, the distinctions he had merited. But it sapped his health in later years. 'There are many sordid tragedies in the life of the student, above all if he be poor, or drunken, or both; but nothing more moves a wise man's pity than the case of the lad

¹ See also the preface to his version of Chrysostom's tractate on education, and the diary on May 13, 1661. He himself entered Balliol in 1637, the year in which Owen left the university. The extraordinary precocity of his son Richard is noted in his diary for January 27, 1658, and elsewhere (on July 6, 1679) he describes the prodigious attainments of a child aged eleven. Cowley's precocity is equally amazing, and when James VI. visited Edinburgh Castle in 1617 a Scotch laddie of nine welcomed him with 'ane Hebrew speech'!

² Boswell's report of a similar intemperance in Sir Matthew Hale's life is well known.

who is in too much hurry to be learned.' So Stevenson, who never was in such a parlous haste. The passage occurs in his *College Memories*, where he points his sentence with a pitiful instance of this tragedy, and then concludes: 'We have all by our bed-sides the box of the Merchant Abudah, thank God, securely enough shut; but when a young man sacrifices sleep to labour, let him have a care, for he is playing with the lock.' Owen played with the lock, and, like his older ally, Milton, he paid for his presumption.

At the same time his subsequent regrets were less for physical mischief than for spiritual injury. Owen judged himself severely on this point. Looking back on his university career from the mature standpoint of the Christian ministry, he seemed to detect strange fire upon the altars lit by his mental ardour. The aspiration of the undergraduate looked unhallowed, and he was accustomed in later days to deplore the strong hopes of a distinguished clerical career which had been his leading motive at Queen's College. Probably self-condemnation of this kind is to be read in the light of Bunyan's similar words, in which he upbraids himself for his moral sins and faults of youth. Owen's addiction to study saved him at any rate from the shallow conception of the ministry against which Milton had just flamed out too severely in his own University of Cambridge, where he found that most of the Anglican curates 'flutter off, all unfledged, into theology, having gotten of philology or of philosophy scarce so much as a smattering. And for theology they are content with just what is enough to enable them to patch up a paltry sermon.' In Earle's *Microcosmographie* (published in 1628), section 2, there is a witty sketch of these raw preachers. Owen's Oxford preparation was of no such flimsy material. Questions of divinity no doubt were in the air; but no man becomes a scholar by merely breathing such an air, and Owen grew into a scholar. What he regretted was not the knowledge amassed but the motives which prompted his labours. He was

making himself during these days and nights of study. But he was making himself for himself, and it was this selfishness, veneered with clericalism, which he subsequently had the grace to bemoan, as he penitently confessed what his contemporary Donne also terms 'the worst voluptuousness, an hydroptic immoderate desire of human learning and languages'—especially, we may add, when the end in view is personal advancement in the ministry, the latter being viewed as a career rather than as a crusade. Owen was not alone in such conscientious scruples. It is curious to find his life-long adversary, Richard Baxter, in sackcloth for the same error. God's dealings with him, he confesses, 'destroyed those ambitious desires after literate fame, which was the sin of my childhood. I had a desire before to have attained the highest academical degrees and reputation of learning, and to have chosen out my studies accordingly; but sickness and solicitousness for my doubting soul did shame away all these thoughts as fooleries and children's plays.' The one thing not to be regretted in these Oxford studies is the incentive, by no means common in the Oxford of his day, leading Owen to sink those mines of classical research, patristic knowledge, and scholastic learning, which in later years yielded him at every stage so rich and timely a return. He graduated B.A. on June 11, 1632, and M.A. on April 27, 1635, while his D.D. was conferred in his absence and against his will on December 23, 1653. It was only out of respect and gratitude that he used the last-named title, so he avers, though he would not go the length of scholars like Carlostadt and Melancthon in refusing such degrees as poor unchristian distinctions. 'As for the title of reverend,' he adds in later years, 'I have very little valued it, ever since I have considered the saying of Luther: *nunquam periclitatur religio nisi inter reverendissimos.*'

Reverend or not, however, he was intended for the Church. His secret hopes of clerical promotion and prestige were rather dashed, and certainly directed into an unexpected channel in

1637, by 'a little man in lawn sleeves . . . sometimes named in a vein of pleasant wit his Little Grace, not on account of his little *stature* alone.' 'This little, red-faced man, with the querulous voice, small chin, and horse-shoe mouth,' or, as a brother bishop very lovingly described him, 'this little meddling hocus-pocus,' came down to purge the university from the bitter root of Calvinism. Ill it fared with those who failed to see the need of such a purge.

It was not Laud's first attempt upon the university, where Puritanism had not as strong a footing as in the town. In 1631 he had been foiled in a similarly indiscreet crusade by the majority of Convocation, although Charles had promptly reinforced his ally by issuing orders from Woodstock that the recalcitrants were to be expelled or deposed from their positions. Laud bided his time. Every year added to the strength of his influence with the Court and Church. In 1628 he secured for himself the bishopric of London. In 1633 he became Archbishop of Canterbury. In 1630 he had already succeeded the Earl of Pembroke as Chancellor of Oxford. And in 1636 the Laudian statutes were at last under way.

Ten years later, in a sermon before Parliament, Owen explained the rigid and unsympathetic standpoint from which he had viewed these innovations of 'the later hierarchists.' To him they represented incipient and insidious Romanism. 'In worship, their paintings, crossings, crucifixes, bowings, cringings, altars, tapers, wafers, organs, anthems, litany, rails, images, copes, vestments—what were they but Roman varnish, an Italian dress for our devotion, to draw on conformity with that enemy of the Lord Jesus?' As for the doctrinal aberrations, the *ius divinum* of Episcopacy, auricular confession, and so forth—'what were they but helps to Sancta Clara, to make all our articles of religion speak good Roman Catholic?' Sancta Clara was one of the leading Jesuit agents, who (as Panzani's *Memoirs* show) haunted Oxford, not without success. Among the residents whom he sounded was Jeremy Taylor.

In his case the manœuvre failed, but there was too good ground elsewhere within the Church and Court for suspecting Romanist intrigues and gains.

Fortunately it is impossible at this time of day to speak of Laud as that vehement quartette, Macaulay, Buckle, Hallam, and Carlyle, spoke harshly in last century. The man's personal character has been rehabilitated past any fear of reversal. Justice has been done to his love of learning, the invaluable services rendered by his firmness to the cause of university discipline and Church order, the timeliness of his protest against the overbearing dogmatism and rigidity of ultra-Puritan theology, and the sincere convictions which must be allowed to have actuated his cause as statesman and as churchman. His piety, though tinged with superstition,¹ is unquestionable, although it seems seldom to have exercised any obvious control of his public actions during the earlier period of his career. As an ecclesiastical statesman, he showed a mundane ability. But he was complacent, petty, and unteachable. Like Strafford and Charles, his partners in the misguided and misguiding triumvirate of the period, Laud is an instance of how a man's policy may be fatally inferior to his personal aims and virtues.

But when it comes to be a question of which party was right in the struggle, or rather, of which was less doctrinaire and impracticable; when the motives and arguments of both are analysed in order to discern, excrescences and extrava-

¹ One of Buckle's cardinal and luminous arguments in dealing with this period is that, for all their fanaticism, the Puritans were not specifically superstitious. This needs some qualification, but I would direct any readers who are still in what we may call the pre-Gardiner state of mind upon the Puritans, to the educative and delightful researches on pp. 64-102 of Mr. J. L. Sanford's *Studies and Illustrations of the Great Rebellion*. It is a strange comment on Laud's sense of righteousness that while he scrupled to receive consecration from the hand of Archbishop Abbot, who by a mischance had shot a keeper when out hunting, he nevertheless, by a turn of character which reminds one of Robespierre, incurred the guilt of blood quite cheerfully in his own pastoral dealings with the Puritans.

gances apart, which had a firmer grasp of the really central things in religion; then it is one outcome of the newer historic sense that the scale dips in favour of the Puritans at this period. No doubt it was of great moment to restore a decent service in the various churches (as any one will admit, *e.g.* who reads the account of St. Paul's in Earle's *Microcosmographie*, section 41), and to insist upon some uniform and comely ritual being maintained. Laud's opponents—and in this respect Owen cannot wholly be cleared from blame—were often inexcusable in the extreme position they adopted. They too frequently identified, or seemed to identify, spirituality with what verged upon irreverence; they, or at least the sectaries, bordered on an atomistic, eclectic sort of religion of *Moi*; they tended also to make purity of worship equivalent to a barren, joyless, unimpressive rite, consisting mainly if not entirely of mere preaching. There was an undue affectation of scorn for material aids to spiritual worship, an obliviousness to the place of symbolism in ritual and of music and architecture in churches, with an unfounded suspicion of ceremonies in themselves. There was a real indifference to the historic continuity of Christianity. But this extreme was in large measure due to the extreme presented by Laud and his party, who saw no guarantee for the continuity or well-being of the Church except in the episcopate and an eclectic ritual. The more one studies the prelate's life and writings,¹ the more one is disposed upon the whole to agree with the substance of Gardiner's verdict that his underlying assumption was 'that the human mind could only be purified by submis-

¹ At his trial Laud is reported to have protested—"This I will say with S. Gregory Nazianzen, "I never laboured for peace to the wrong and detriment of Christian verity," nor I hope ever shall.' The words, spoken with reference to his attitude towards Rome, were probably quite sincere. All that need be said by way of comment is that while they reflect his conscientious aim they are at variance with his practice, and that in any case his conception of Christian verity required serious revision and expansion.

sion to a certain external order.’¹ Nothing lay nearer to his soul than the wholesome apostolic principle that *God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all churches of the saints*, and therefore that *all things should be done decently and in order*. He forgot where such injunctions came in. He forgot that directions for the observance of rubrics and the like come only with grace and effect from a man who has first made it clear that his primary concern is to preach *Christ and him crucified*, and that the most *excellent way* of the Christian life and ministry is the way of *charity*. Here lay one secret of the Puritans’ suspicion of the archbishop. That he was trying to rule England by religion and for religion hardly entered the popular mind. He failed to impress the English people with a sense that his stringent reforms were the outcome of a genuinely spiritual passion, that his plea for institutions and rites as guarantees of historic Christianity did justice to the living spirit of Christ, and that his regulations for worship were really intended to safeguard the profounder interests of religion, instead of either stifling or supplanting them. Doubtless this connection was present to his own mind. The ‘radiant, adorn’d’ exterior of his Anglicanism was meant to cover ‘a hidden ground of thought and of austerity within.’ But he bound the Church to the State in a fashion that tainted the former with the autocratic temper of the Stuarts, and with methods which were absolutist or ‘thorough’ (to use his favourite word) rather than conciliatory or statesmanlike—to say nothing of Christian—until the Puritans at least saw merely the external imposition of rites, more or less minor and objectionable, dissociated from any Christian zeal or consideration for what they properly felt to be the first and

¹ The historian’s final estimate (vii. 125 f.) is that Laud was a prosaic, self-sufficient leader, whose main interests were not truth but peace, dominated by ‘an exaggerated estimate of the importance of external influences over the mind.’ Laud was ‘a lawyer in a rochet, and that not a lawyer of the highest sort’ (p. 250).

lasting and supreme things of the Gospel. The militant Puritans are blamed, and often blamed with justice, for their attempt to rule Christianity in England on principles drawn from Judges and Joshua. But their error was hardly more tragic than that of the Laudian attempt to galvanise Leviticus.

X 'It is true,' said the archbishop, 'the inward worship of the heart is the great service of God, and no service acceptable without it; but the external worship of God in His Church is the great witness to the world that our heart stands right in that service of God. . . . Now, no external action in the world can be uniform without some ceremonies; and these in religion, the ancients they be the better, so they may fit time and place. Too many overburden the service of God, and too few leave it naked. And scarce anything hath hurt religion more in these broken times than an opinion in too many men, that because Rome hath thrust some unnecessary and many superstitious ceremonies upon the Church, therefore the Reformation must have none at all; not considering therewith that ceremonies are the hedge that fence the substance of religion from all the indignities which profaneness and sacrilege too commonly put upon it. And a great weakness it is, not to see the strength which ceremonies—things weak enough in themselves, God knows—add even to religion itself.' Golden words! Too golden perhaps for the iron age in which they were uttered, and certainly too golden for the man who uttered them. They did not represent the practical impression made by Laud upon the great majority of the Puritans, and for this tragic misjudgment of his aims, which led to the deplorable conflict that tore England subsequently, he more than they must be censured. Prudence, said Ignatius Loyola once to a superior, prudence is a virtue of those in command. It devolves on persons in the seat of responsibility to set the course, to determine the issues presented to the popular judgment, and to display the right line wisely. In the world of action this is as essential, if subsequent misconceptions are

to be avoided, as it is to state a question properly in the world of theory and debate. But Laud was one of those rulers who fail to recognise that among a ruler's virtues prudence—prudence involving thoughtfulness, consideration, and judgment—is to be counted. This blindness was one of the main reasons of his unfitness for his position—an unfitness on which the open-minded historian May pounces as the secret of all the trouble. For even in aiming at some just, wise end, such as the correction of abuses in preaching due to the ultra-puritanic insistence on divine decrees, predestination, and so forth, his methods were quite faulty. They were marked by a dictatorial overbearing spirit, which was partly constitutional, partly the outcome of his co-operation with Charles and Strafford. And to this was due in some degree his great unpopularity, not among the Puritans alone by any means. But even his ends were not always to be justified. To promote uniformity in the Church by insisting on such trifles or exotic practices as bowing to the Lord's table, or the exact position of the altar in a church, to say nothing of sports on Sunday afternoon, auricular confession, invocation of the saints, etc., was to court disaster and disruption at the hands of any persons of Puritan tradition, to say nothing of an independent conscience. And behind these innovations, behind vestments, crucifixes, and the like, it was suspected (and who can say unfairly?), even by level-headed men like Owen, that there lay, not a simple craving for any richer spiritual worship, or even an intelligible desire on the part of the hierarchy for uniformity, but a policy which would shift the dogmatic basis of the Church of England. Lord Falkland's speech in Parliament is, by itself, proof positive of this suspicion. Many factors, ecclesiastical and political, as he remarked, contributed to the deep fear of Papist intrigue¹ felt in England at this period, with regard to the

¹ A bull was issued by the Pope, and intercepted by the English authorities, assuring the Catholics that those who fell fighting for Charles would be

Church and the State alike. The air was charged with suspicions. The Protestant cause seemed imperilled by the influence of the Queen, and the repeated manœuvres of the Jesuits in Ireland and in England itself. A serried array of facts and forces confronted sympathisers with the Reformation. And Laud's sacerdotal reaction, ill-timed, ill-founded, and ill-managed, brought matters to a climax. As far back as 1622, in dedicating his *Via Media* to the King, Bishop Hall foresaw a storm breaking on the Church 'which shall not only drench our plumes but shake our peace.' What drove the clouds up the sky during the next two decades, bearing 'a core of thunder and the seeds of hail,' was, more than anything else, the varied set of circumstances, thanks to which, as Canon Henson observes, 'by the accession of Charles I. patriotism was suspicious of, and Puritanism hostile to, the national Church.' In Ipswich, for example, one pious and popular minister was imprisoned for some years. Had he not committed the very heinous crime of speaking disapprovingly of the prayer-book? It was this kind of thing that helped to awaken the English people to the issues and real spirit of the ecclesiastics.

It is important to grasp the bearings of this policy of Laud in order to understand how signally it affected a young Puritan graduate like Owen. Both then and throughout his lifetime, he opposed the Laudian principle, in any shape or quarter, and that upon the twofold ground of spiritual worship and liberty of conscience. One has to keep this in mind, as one reads some of his later works on liturgies and ceremonies, in which the argument sounds nowadays curiously verbal, parochial, and remote. Owen's quarrel throughout was not with the doctrine of the Church of England as laid down in her articles or in the early councils of the Church. He

canonised. Owen, it is to be noted, did not enter the fray with the Romanists till after the Restoration. His antagonists till then were of his own household, Socinians, Erastians, Levellers, and Arminians.

did not even take offence at her episcopal organisation as such, although his bias against Episcopacy was certainly unfortunate. What roused him was the violence done to freedom of conscience by her ecclesiastical policy, the tendency towards externalism and superstition, and the far-reaching innovations in doctrine which these external changes, however innocent their appearance, seemed to harbinger. Laud's triumph was very brief, no doubt. His day ended in a sombre crash of all that he had sought to build. He over-reached himself for the moment. But his policy was taken up by lesser men with greater powers and opportunities at the Restoration, and in the afternoon Owen had to enter the same lists of battle as in the morning of his career. Various readings are possible of passages in his career bearing on Church government; but he never altered, or saw cause to alter, the loyal conviction of his early days, that Laudianism was a menace and a discord in any Christian Church that aimed to be more than a sect, even though that sect were established by the State and episcopal in principle. Not that he failed to feel the august nature of the Church of Christ, or that he was quite oblivious of the importance attaching to its history and persistency. Only, like a true Calvinist and Protestant, he found the august, enduring element of Christianity less in its institutions than in its faith and fellowship, less in its earthly polity than in the scheme of human destiny which it reflected, and in the relationship between the Divine authority and the moral career of men upon God's earth. Such an aspect, while it does not cover all the phenomena of the case, certainly embraces some which are not merely real but supreme.

Puritanism as a moral force, however, was what Laud, Charles, and Strafford never seriously tried to understand, much less to manage or conciliate. The facts stared them in the face. At home the Puritan party in the Church was winning sympathisers far beyond the circle of those whose religion consisted mainly of an antipathy to bishops or to the

Papists. More ominous still was the steady flow of emigration towards New England, which Herbert's couplet echoed. Fifteen hundred people, despairing of their Church at home as an asylum for faith and conscience, had sailed in 1630, and by 1638 nearly twenty times that number had followed. They sought, like David (Ps. lv. 6), the wings of a dove, *i.e.* in Owen's words 'a ship to sail to a foreign nation' out of the turmoil. Laud and his knot of statesmen marked such phenomena with a sullen resentment. But they learned nothing from them, save to treat the elements of Puritanism as alien to their neo-Catholic notion of the Church. And this was one central source of England's sorrow between 1630 and 1645. On the principle of the Florentine Cosimo, that you cannot rule a state by means of paternosters, politicians often ridicule what they are pleased, not, always unfairly, to call the narrow and visionary views of Christian ministers upon issues of the day. But the question of incompetence has another aspect. There is a reverse side to the medal. To a student of history it is obvious, past all demonstration, that many of the most gratuitous and tragic mistakes in national policy have flowed from statesmen choosing to ignore or undervalue some religious factor in the situation with which they were set to deal. Their motives may have been excellent. Their personal characters may have been comparatively free from any reproach of ambition or petty malice. But the damning fact remains that their private virtues and not unworthy aims have been counterbalanced by an inability or a cavalier dislike to grasp all the elements of their problem, assigning each its proper value in the scale of magnitude. Strafford thought that Hampden and his party should be 'whipped into their right senses.' Laud and the episcopal faction docked the ears and slit the noses of scurrilous, recalcitrant dissenters. *Du bist mein, denn ich bin gross und du bist klein.* Stripped of accidentals, it really came to that. It was a policy which, in the clear, calm light of history, seems

even more criminal on the score of its fatuity than detestable on the grounds of its cruelty.¹ 'In religious matters,' said Amiel once, 'it is holiness which gives authority. What all religious, poetical, pure, and tender souls are least able to pardon is the diminution or degradation of their ideal. We must never rouse an ideal against us.' And again, 'An ideal is only replaced by satisfying the conditions of the old with some advantages over.' That goes, I admit, nearly to the root of the Puritans' own failure. They were not all like the worthy Mr. John Dod whom Fuller praises. They too raised against them a religious ideal—that of many devout Anglicans, who could not have their souls satisfied with any form of worship that excluded the noble, devout Book of Common Prayer, a number of ancient ceremonies, and the grave, lovely liturgy of the English Church. It was a Puritan who wrote of 'storied windows richly dight, casting a dim religious light'; yet neither Presbyterianism nor Independency, least of all the former, did any manner of justice to this semi-sensuous, symbolic ideal of worship, and the narrowness of their judgment and generosity was one of the causes which contributed to their deposition. But the point is that the same failure was committed earlier and more ominously by Laud. Practically, so far as ordinary people could judge—for the judgment was not that of the sectaries alone—it was authority which invested most things with holiness in the archbishop's mind. The Puritans were religious, up to their lights; they had an ideal of worship, which was not yet perhaps incompatible at most points with the essential features of the settlement for which Laud was working, though it tended to forget the things that were lovely in its devotion to

¹ 'We know Satan's trade what it is—to accuse the brethren. As men are called after their profession, one a lawyer, another a physician, so is he *the accuser of the brethren*. Now surely, if ever he set up a shop on earth to practise his trade in, it was our High Commission Court, as of late employed.' Owen wrote this in 1644.

those that were honourable, pure, and just. Only, Laud roused this ideal against him. His policy promised no satisfaction or even safeguard for their ideal, and as the initiative and authority for the moment rested with the archbishop, he must carry the greater share of the blame for much of the strife that followed—for the alienation of the national Church from the body of the people, for the oppression that made wise men often mad and obstructive, and for the permanent loss to the Church of certain more or less powerful and reasonable forces in the nation which made for conscience in the exercise and statement of Christianity.

Owen's estimate of the Laudian party and policy laid stress upon three points, apart from the Romanising tendency of the archbishop. He first objected to the pretentious ignorance of most of the clergy. 'Taking advantage of vulgar esteem, they make out as though they had engrossed a monopoly of learning,' which beguiled ordinary people into the belief 'that all was not only law but gospel too which they broached.' Owen insists they were sciolists, 'especially in respect of any solid knowledge in divinity or antiquity'; and, partisan as he was, he was both competent to speak on such a subject and frank to admit scholarship even in those from whom he differed. Nor is his indictment unsupported at this point. Sacerdotalism is ever independent of serious brain-work. His second count is the familiar one that the high Episcopal party deliberately subordinated the interests of morality to those of ecclesiastical obedience. 'For were a man a drunkard, a swearer, a Sabbath-breaker, an unclean person, so he were no Puritan¹ and had money—*patet atri*

¹ 'Puritan' is not yet, of course, equivalent to dissenter. It denotes not the member of a party but the sympathiser with a reforming, spiritual tendency of the Protestantism which was encountered by Anglican semi-Romanism. Its moral aspect is vividly sketched in the extracts from contemporary literature quoted by Dr. A. F. Mitchell in his *Westminster Assembly* (1883), pp. 477-479: e.g. 'His whole life he [the Puritan] accounted a warfare, wherein Christ was his captain, his arms prayer and tears, the cross his banner, and his word *vincit qui patitur*.'

janua Ditis, the Episcopal heaven was open for them all. Now this was a dangerous and destructive qualification which, I believe, is not professedly found in any party amongst us.' Baxter's account of his own early environment tallies with this to the life, and May agrees. The final charge is that of employing civil authority to enforce ecclesiastical censure. 'To me the sword of error never cuts dangerously but when it is managed with such a hand.' Such were the thoughts seething in Owen's mind, and in the minds of many outside Oxford, at this momentous period. In the year that he entered college, Buckingham had been assassinated, and the Petition of Right presented. Before he left, Sir John Eliot had perished in the Tower, Hampden had been brought to trial, and the struggle for civil liberty had merged in the wider struggle for religious freedom and Protestant security.

Owen seems to have taken his side without much hesitation. It is hardly accurate to argue that Laud's intolerance made him a Puritan, just as Presbyterian intolerance afterwards turned him, like Milton, into an Independent. He was Puritan by training. 'My father,' he writes, 'was a Nonconformist all his days, and a painful labourer in the vineyard of the Lord.' Probably the crisis precipitated by Laud's interference at Oxford did little more than ripen seeds of Puritan conviction which had been lying in his mind since boyhood. At any rate he made the wrench. Four or five years earlier, 'perceiving what tyranny had invaded in the Church,' Milton had definitely abandoned the object of taking orders in favour of a literary career, and was now busy with *Comus* and *Lycidas*. In the former there is a far from oblique allusion to the Laudian seductions. In the latter 'the author by occasion

Mrs. Lucy Hutchinson's definition of the Puritan is well known, and in Mr. C. H. Firth's *Stuart Tracts* (pp. xiv, 233 f.), a contemporary, though slightly earlier, description is exhumed. Mr. Sanford avers that 'it is not too much to say that' of the two—some exceptions apart—it is the Puritan and not the Cavalier gentleman who 'would be appreciated and sympathised with by modern society.'

foretells the ruine of our corrupted Clergie then in their height.'¹ But his Oxford contemporary remained by the Church, though he abjured the Laudians; turning from his academic ambitions in 1637, he found a temporary shelter and occupation as chaplain in two successive county families. He had already taken orders at Oxford, and this further step was not uncommon among Puritan clergymen, who thus obtained both house-room and influence over children and young persons. It was owing to the number of domestic chaplains belonging to their party that the Presbyterians secured something of their subsequent following among the nobility and gentry of the land. Laud could abolish lecturers; but even his autocratic hand could not pull a private chaplain out of a nobleman's house.

Meantime, however, the breach between the king and the Parliament widened steadily. The tale of bricks was doubled, and the deliverer was at hand; but before the Puritans won their freedom under Cromwell, hard times were in store, and Owen did not escape the rough weather of the age. His second patron, Lord Lovelace, sided with the Royalists. Once more the youth was thrown adrift upon the world, and this time he had the further pain of learning that his Royalist uncle in Wales, who had hitherto defrayed the expenses of his education, had now disinherited him for his Puritanic bias.

To these material anxieties a spiritual crisis now fell to be added. A man may take his line on a question of religious principle and yet be far from clear on what may be termed the definitely spiritual motives of such an action. Adherence to a religious party does not mean a vital sense of personal religion. So it evidently was with Owen. As Dr. Church remarked, in one fair sentence from that review of Carlyle's *Cromwell* which all lovers of the Dean would cheerfully forget, 'The strange

¹ 'The heroes of the time were all non-Episcopalian. At the crisis of the conflict for truth and liberty the cause of God owed nothing to the bishops' (Henson's *Studies in Eng. Religion in the 17th Century*, p. 92).

and perplexed phenomena of Puritan character are not to be explained by riding wild and one-eyed through them.' No rough-and-ready explanation can be offered of this crisis in John Owen's life. All we know is that, as his biographer Asty tells the tale, he had gone to reside in London, and that he was still suffering from mental depression, which had set in before he left the university. One Sabbath morning he sallied out with a cousin to hear the famous Dr. Calamy preach in Aldermanbury chapel, where as many as sixty coaches often stopped to set down the gentry. To his disappointment it was a stranger who entered the pulpit. Instead of the popular preacher, some brother from the country was to hold forth. Many of the congregation streamed out in search of better fare, and Owen's cousin prepared to follow suit. But the young Oxonian was too tired. He sat still and listened to a sermon upon Matthew viii. 26 ('Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?'). It was plain, but it was the word for him. The preacher chanced to deal with the very problem of unbelief which had been haunting Owen for weeks past, and the upshot was that the latter left the chapel in the light and liberty of Christ.

He never could ascertain who the preacher was. We should regret this the less if he had given any hint as to the cause or cure of his own trouble. Disappointed ambition, it was said, had made a saint of that proud young scholar who had died some years before at Bemerton. So much, indeed, George Herbert has himself betrayed. But self-revelation was not Owen's way, either then or afterwards. It was an age of memoirs, religious and political; yet Owen left no autobiography, and there was no Walton to do for him what was done for Hooker, Sanderson, and Donne. Hardly any of his letters have been preserved, whilst even in the course of his writings, where in self-defence or explanation he now and then is forced to lift the veil of dignified reserve, the glimpses are but casual. With a sort of Miltonic reticence, Owen never trusts himself to his readers. There is very little of the con-

fidential or communicative about his mind. He was intensely self-reliant. He learned from few living men, and leaned on none. He had no close friend. Hence his private life and feelings remain for the most part a mystery still. All that can be traced is little more than the outward stages of his career and the successive definitions of his opinion upon questions of the day. *Secretum meum mihi*, as Francis of Assisi murmured: my secret is my own. It was not that Owen's nature was secretive or that he lived a lonely life. The reserve was constitutional, and to it is due the comparative obscurity that besets the currents and the initial crisis of his religious life. All that is certain is that he knew nothing of the secret struggle between faith and the passions of doubt and self-will that lacerated Bunyan, or even of the subtler, chronic conflict between sceptical instincts and faith in the unseen which marked a man like Baxter. Owen evidently did not believe with ease. But when he did believe, his faith was not exposed to any prolonged series of oscillations, a feature in which he resembles George Fox. His mind was neither restless nor speculative, and the sole crisis in his personal religion, so far as we are aware, ended as he left the London chapel on that Sabbath morning.

I

Queen's College, according to Fuller, was noted for its metaphysicians. Owen's mind was stamped by this time, and his enforced leisure enabled him now to publish, in 1642, his first work, a strident and scholastic 'display of Arminianism,' marked by the logical, artificial argumentation fostered in the Aristotelian discipline of Oxford. The Arminian controversy was in the air.¹ The tenets of Arminius were being pushed in

¹ Samuel Rutherford, *e.g.*, had also won his theological spurs, in 1636, by an attack on Arminianism. Burnet declares that, in the case of the Scotch clergy at least, 'books of controversy with Papists, but more especially with Arminians, were the height of their study.' See Hallam's *Constit. History* (10th ed.), i. pp. 400 f.

England by Laud and his school, till at a later date bishop Morley's witticism upon what the Arminians held began to be truth and fact. Meanwhile the system, as Owen declared, 'became backed with the powerful arguments of praise and preferment, and quickly prevailed to beat poor naked Truth into a corner.' Poor naked truth meant to Owen Calvinism, and Calvinism of the stiffest breed. It was Calvinism, too, not simply or chiefly as a ratification of democratic principles, but as a religious system. His views on Church government altered more than once, within certain limits, in the course of his career, but on Calvinism he never wavered. The youthful confidence with which, in this volume, he flings his gauntlet into the balconies of Arminianism only stiffened, as the years advanced, into a convinced, if not convincing, maintenance of Calvinism's supremacy against all comers, especially against the softening tendencies nicknamed Arminian. Otherwise, the volume is distinguished by a vicious (in both senses of the word) attack upon free-will, and by phrases like 'that Pontic vermin, Marcion,' in the exact spirit of Tertullian. The universities had for years been developing the satiric temper in litterateurs, and satire slipped easily into polemic. Surely it had been by way of sad prophecy as well as of strong protest that three years earlier a certain provost of Eton had left orders for the plain marble slab over his grave to be inscribed with words in Latin 'which may be Englished thus: Here lies the first author of this sentence—THE ITCH OF DISPUTATION WILL PROVE THE SCAB OF THE CHURCH.' Walton is not sure if Wotton's claim to the authorship of this sentence can be made out. But he has no doubt that the epitaph is 'a useful caution unto us of this nation.'

It was a caution which Owen, among others, would not and could not altogether heed. Controversy was the first park into which he stepped as an author; it was a park of artillery, and he continued in its pale, with little or no intermission, almost to the end of his literary career. This was due partly to the

exigencies of the age, partly to his own abilities and temperament. On him as Calvinist, Protestant, and Independent, devolved generally the task of stating positively the case for his party, as each successive issue rose. While many of his books are thus polemical in form, their aims and contents nevertheless are in a sense constructive. Personalities are not conspicuous, and certainly not characteristic—judged by the standard of the age. As a rule, too, he never sought debate, although, when actually drawn into it, he may have felt, like Erastus, that such discussions often clarify the mind, as they certainly denote a firm grasp of principle and an absence of intellectual flabbiness. Besides, the polemical spirit was not confined to English religion, nor to religion at all. It was chronic and contemporary in most departments of intellectual activity. Mark Pattison traces it to the vehement onslaught of the Jesuits on Scaliger, and in Owen's day *mentiris impudentissime* was heard north and south of the English Channel, from Port-Royal no less than from the Puritans, since the reaction against authority and tradition, voiced so powerfully by Milton, naturally brought with it an alert, uncomfortable questioning of the old positions which was not unaccompanied by a nervous, inflated vehemence on both sides. Be that as it may, convictions had to be defended somehow. Principles of faith and practice were no longer accepted as a yoke; and, as Buckle admits, Owen was among the foremost men of the day who had mental vigour and outlook enough to meet the situation with its demands and difficulties. In his great speech on religion during the Parliament of 1629, Sir John Eliot told the members, 'There is a ceremony used in the Eastern churches of standing at the repetition of the creed to testify their purpose to maintain it, and as some had it, not only with their bodies upright but with their swords drawn. Give me leave to call that a custom very commendable.' John Owen comes before us as an author, first of all, ready to live and die in defence of what he deemed his creed. He was no academic

recluse, for all his scholarship. Nor when he fought was it for his own hand. When we have said that, we have given the good side of the activity which opened with this pugnacious blow at the Arminians.

The work brought Owen himself both praise and preferment. It was dedicated to the ten earls, ten bishops, and ten barons, who, as 'the Committee for Religion,' had been appointed by the House of Lords, in 1640, to scrutinise the recent innovations in the Protestant religion of England. As a mark of recognition to the young scholar for his timely aid in the good cause, the committee not only printed his book, but had him presently appointed to the small living of Fordham in Essex. This enabled him to marry a Miss Rooke. As little is known of his first wife as of Jeremy Taylor's or of Milton's second spouse, except that he had eleven children by her. All died young, except one daughter. The work of his parish, neglected during his predecessor's term of office, seems to have engrossed all his time, for, beyond some parochial catechisms, the sole literary output of these years at Fordham was a little book on *The Duties of Pastors and People Distinguished* (1643). The standpoint, like the constitution of Owen's congregation, is Presbyterian, and the argument is indicated in a sentence of the preface which refers to the contemporary habit of running to extremes upon the subject of the Christian ministry, 'as though there was no habitable earth between the valley (I had almost said the pit)¹ of *democratical confusion* and the precipitous rock of *hierarchical tyranny*.' Owen's cautious

¹ How deep and muddy the pit was, may be gathered from the Presbyterian Edwards's *Gangrana*, whose onset on the sectaries is nearly as intemperate as the ill-regulated fanatics whom its pages gibbet. These ranters, familists, seekers, Quakers, and the like, were but the frothy crest of the great wave of spiritual intensity that was sweeping across England; but it was not always easy for even respectable Christian people, Episcopal or Puritan, to bear patiently the crudity and censoriousness which fell with a salt splash on deeply cherished institutions and beliefs.

conclusion is that 'the sacred calling may retain its ancient dignity, though the people of God be not deprived of their Christian liberty,' and he ends by quoting, *à propos* of 'the learned Rutherford,'¹ an Act of the Scottish General Assembly to that effect in 1641. Such sane, moderate counsel was sorely needed, though one is unable to discover whether Owen's plea told upon the nation. It reads well, but it seems convincing rather than impressive.

In 1646 he had the honour of preaching before the Long Parliament. Whatever may be thought of his eulogium upon that body, his public spirit is unexceptional. Owen cultivated no pleached garden of fastidious refinement. He was neither an anæmic pietist nor a denominational Essene. Preaching from Acts xvi. 9, he took occasion in this fine, frank sermon to recall to the triumphant Parliament, now that the royalist armies had been scattered, the dominant religious question of the struggle. Wisely he saw that Puritanism needed to return upon itself. 'The glory of God was of late by many degrees departing from the temple in our land. That was gone to the threshold, yea to the mount.' Now that the field of war is clear, the religious aim of the war must not be overlooked or subordinated. 'The God of heaven grant that the same mind be in you still, in every particular member of this honourable assembly, in the whole nation, especially in the magistracy and ministry of it; that we be not like the boatmen, look one way and row another, cry "Gospel" and mean the other thing,

¹ Rutherford's *Lex Rex* and his book on the 'Due right of presbyteries' did not appear till 1644, while his volume on 'The Divine right of Church government' was not issued till 1646; but he had been in London since 1643 as one of the Scots Commissioners. Since the famous petition against Episcopacy in 1640, a hoarse, hot war of debates and pamphlets had been waged over the question of church-polity, in which Milton had vehemently advocated the root-and-branch policy of dealing with the bishops. The feeling against the Anglican Episcopacy was not confined to the Puritans, as the Commons debates prove, nor was it a passion of recent origin. The point in controversy was, whether to end or mend Episcopacy; the opposition to it naturally sprang from various causes and rose to various heights.

"Lord, Lord," and advance our own ends.' 'Some say, this war has made a discovery of England's strength, what it is able to do. I think so also. Not what armies it can raise against men, but with what armies of prayers and tears it is able to deal with God.' Well then, he concludes with a practical turn of application, think of Wales and other districts throughout England. 'Doth not Wales cry, and the north cry, yea and the west cry, "Come and help us. We are yet in a worse bondage than any by your means we have been delivered from. If you leave us thus, all your protection will but yield us a more free and jovial passage to the chambers of death."' Owen had, of course, a hereditary interest in the Royalist principality, which explains why he singled it out in his appeal. But the three years' Bill for the propagation of the gospel in Wales did not pass till February 1650.¹

By this time Owen was settled in his second charge, at Coggeshall, a few miles distant from his former parish. The outward change corresponded to an inward. In the preface to his *Country Essay* he confesses, 'For my part I know no Church government in the world already established amongst any set of men, of the truth and necessity whereof I am convinced in all particulars; especially if I may take their practice to be the best interpreter of their maxims.' The reference is obvious. It was not merely that the committee of Parliament had occasioned considerable injustice and hardship to the Episcopalian clergy in deposing them out of deference to public safety and popular resentment. The subsequent Presbyterian régime showed further that in taking precautions against religious anarchy and sedition, the dominant party leant to an arbitrary and rigid constructive policy. In Owen's judgment the latter menaced liberty of conscience, and Owen was one of the rare spirits who had a

¹ For later legislation, see Dr. W. A. Shaw's *History of the English Church under the Commonwealth*, ii. pp. 228 f.

passion for toleration when he was in power no less than when he was in a minority. This drew him nearer than ever to the Independents. In 1644 Robinson's *Liberty of Conscience*, Williams's *Bloody Tenet of Persecution*, and the *Areopagitica* all poured out on England. Jeremy Taylor's *Liberty of Prophesying* (written, it must never be forgotten, not after but before the Restoration) followed three years later, and Samuel Rutherford's bitter Presbyterian attack upon it showed how widely its generous lessons had yet to be conned. But after 1644 the practical enforcement of such toleration as England enjoyed was mainly due to the rising influence of the Independents. It is true, no doubt, that what appear to be harsh and narrow regulations of the Presbyterians meant in several cases really the relaxation of sterner injunctions previously laid down by the Anglicans, as Dr. A. F. Mitchell very forcibly pleads (in his *Westminster Assembly*, 1883, pp. 206-211, 491-496). Nor were even the Independents advocates of complete toleration. They paid toll to the limitations of their age; but they were in advance of all other parties in that age, and thus drew to themselves men of Owen's generous and tolerant disposition. As a matter of fact, the acquisition of influence by the Independents at this epoch was due to the harmony of their principles not merely with the democratic temper of the Commonwealth—though the Independents were not on principle or unanimously anti-monarchical—but with the craving for liberty which the Presbyterians were plainly unprepared, like their Episcopalian predecessors, to satisfy. The Independents were pre-eminent not simply in their theoretical extension of toleration, but in the lengths to which they were ready to carry it in practice. Thus their power shot up, as was almost inevitable, under the pressure of the somewhat exotic and arbitrary Presbyterian settlement in 1646. The latter was never thoroughly carried out. Local attempts as a rule ended in a deadlock or compromise. But even the limited extent of the jurisdiction which it secured,

alarmed many men of very various shades of opinion, who, like Owen, saw no immediate foothold for toleration except on congregational principles. Toleration, no doubt, was worked out subsequently by other hands, including those of Chillingworth and Locke, into a dominant policy, for ultimately, as Gardiner points out, the tardy boon of religious liberty, which Owen did not live to experience, was bestowed by descendants of the very Cavaliers and Presbyterians who had once been most bitterly opposed to Cromwell. But to the latter, as a champion of toleration, belongs the credit of having been in advance even of the Independents, whilst they are entitled to the lesser yet honourable praise of having had insight and generosity enough to pick out the path along which the future of religious reform was to be attained in England.,

Such was the position of affairs during Owen's first ministry at Fordham. There he had been a Presbyterian. But, as he frankly admits in chap. ii. of his *Vindication of the Treatise on Schism* (1657), his original Presbyterianism was due rather to an imperfect acquaintance with the congregational standpoint and to the influence of his environment than to any reasoned conviction; fuller and more impartial inquiry, added to his practical experience of the Presbyterian system in its spirit and working, led him to make a change. As in the case of Goodwin and Philip Nye, the most influential book for Owen proved to be Cotton's *Doctrine of the Church*. 'And indeed,' he gravely warns his readers, in one of the rare passages where you can imagine a grim smile playing on the writer's lips, 'this way of impartial examining all things by the Word, comparing causes with causes and things with things, laying aside all prejudicate respect unto persons or present traditions, is a course that I would admonish all to beware of who would avoid the danger of being made Independents.' Hitherto the latter party had been a mere cloudlet on the horizon. But there were signs of the sky changing. For all its nominal position of

authority,¹ which was due in no small degree to a not unjustified fear of Papal intrigue² and a distrust of Episcopacy as any safeguard, Presbyterianism was sorely bested by the Erastian element in Parliament, the lukewarmness or hostility of the common people, and the growth of Independency in the army. These difficulties stiffened its intolerance of toleration,³ the result being that, as Barclay observes, 'the more spiritually minded Christians even among the Puritans were now rapidly passing over to the Independents and Baptists, and the formation of Independent churches is one of the great features of the period' (*Religious Societies of the Commonwealth*, p. 117). When Owen was appointed (August 18, 1646) to Coggeshall, he had already been in touch with the Presbyterian system in Essex, where there were fourteen 'classes' (see Shaw, ii. 374 f.). At Coggeshall there was a Presbyterian minister named Mr. Samms or Sammes. But Owen had by this time had his eyes opened. Henceforth he is to be reckoned among the Independents, and the official Puritanism of the Presbyterians knew him no more.

His new sphere was a large, hearty congregation in a town noted for its woollen trade. A large proportion of the settlers in New England came from Essex, and one reason of the local trenchant Puritanism was that the district had been sought out by those desirable aliens, the Flemish tradesmen

¹ 'The Presbyterians,' as one student of the period observes (R. S. Brooke, in *Dublin Univ. Magazine*, 1859, p. 581), 'were now at the top of the tree among the apples.'

² The Laudian manœuvres and the horrible massacre of the Protestants in Ireland (1641) combined to open the eyes of Scotch and English Protestants to the need of making common cause against the Roman faith. It was this sense of peril, rather than any vital or permanent harmony, which led the English to admit the Solemn League and Covenant.

³ The Puritans, however, did not eject the Episcopalians with quite the same regard as the latter did their opponents, when the wheel turned in 1660. The Parliament of 1643 instituted charitable relief for the families of ejected Royalist clergymen. The arrears of their tithes were allowed them, and sometimes the parsonage was left to them, if not an actual proportion of the tithes themselves (Shaw, ii. 191 f.).

who had fled from Bruges under the Papal persecution. The Independents derived from Holland instead of Scotland, and their tendency was to refuse to admit the right of civil magistrates to enforce or safeguard or control religious belief. Such, within certain limits, was their usual line of policy. To Owen and many others the intolerance of the Presbyterian party was growingly intolerable. As they felt—and no one voiced their views more fiercely than Milton, although Owen never followed him into the ranks of sectaries—Laud's tyranny had only been exchanged for another; 'new presbyter was but old priest writ large,' and they were resolved to erase such writing from the country. In his *Country Essay for the Practice of Church Government*, Owen expressed this feeling of antagonism to the imposition of any one system of Church government or doctrine, accompanied by threats of civil penalties in the event of a refusal. 'Conformity once more is grown the touchstone. Dissent is the only crime.' But Owen would have none of this Procrustean ecclesiasticism, even at the hands of a Puritan sect. No more than his Cambridge ally would he submit to the 'classic¹ hierarchy' of the Presbyterians. 'Let what pretences you please be produced, or colours flourished, I should be very unwilling to pronounce the sentence of blood in the case of heresy.' 'I believe that upon search it will appear that error hath not been advanced by anything in the world so much as by usurping a power for its suppression.' Or, as he frankly told the House of Commons in a sermon three years later (the sermon which won for him the trust and regard of that lover of toleration, Oliver Cromwell), 'Every age has its peculiar work, hath its peculiar light. . . . Plainly the peculiar light of this generation is that discovery which the Lord hath made to his people of the mystery of civil and ecclesiastical tyranny.'

Owen's adoption of Congregational principles did not, how-

¹ i.e. composed of 'classes' or presbyteries. See Dr. W. A. Shaw's *English Church under the Commonwealth*, ii. pp. 29 f., 112 f., 365 f.

ever, affect his theological position. In 1647 he published another attack on the Arminians, as did Samuel Rutherford in 1649. Owen's volume was entitled, *The Death of Death in the Death of Christ*, and was dedicated to the Earl of Warwick, admiral of the Parliament's fleet, who had presented Owen to his second living. The work, as Orme admits, contains far too much minute reasoning on the debtor and creditor hypothesis. Owing to this and other flaws, it brought Baxter out of his tent, and the two champions engaged in a more or less friendly series of combats over the various issues of the day, which lasted intermittently throughout their lifetime. Owen had not, like Baxter, taken the step of leaving his congregation for a time in order to act as a chaplain to the Parliamentary forces, as men like Jeremy Taylor, Fuller, and Pearson were doing to the royal troops. But a wave of war suddenly splashed into his quiet parish. The Royalist rising at Colchester, where a last stand was made for the king, brought Lord Fairfax to besiege that town; so that, as the headquarters of the Parliamentary troops were at Coggeshall, Owen was at last thrown into close contact with the army and the drenching realities of warfare during the seventy-six days of the siege. The dreadful spell of it seems to penetrate even the sermons he preached after the town fell. In these the heady music of battle blends rather inharmoniously with the gospel preached from so hot a text as Habakkuk iii. 1-9. It is not simply that Owen enters no protest against the execution of Sir Charles Lucas and Sir George Lisle. He may have felt on that as Fairfax felt (see the latter's defence in Firth's *Stuart Tracts*, pp. 362 f.). But the tone of exultation sounds too martial in a sentence like this: 'The lovingkindness of God to his Church is seen, as in a glass, in the blood of their persecutors.' Still, if Owen, in the vein of Mucklewraith, neither deplores the need for war nor expresses much abhorrence of its cruelties, he acknowledges in battles the God of battles, and that in a far less passionate manner than Mar-

shall¹ or Hugh Peters. Throughout the sermon passages of a deeply religious tone occur amid the stern joy of victory, and the preacher closes on this note: 'If we rejoice for being delivered from them who could have killed the body, what unspeakable rejoicing is there in that mercy whereby we are freed from the wrath to come! Let this possess your thoughts. Let this fill your souls. Let this be your haven from all former storms. And here strike I sail, in this to abide with you and all the saints of God for ever.' Such is the music of Owen's sermon, accurate as usual, but rough. He had the violin and the bow, but little or no rosin.

In dedicating the published sermons to Fairfax, with whom he had come to be intimately acquainted during the long siege, Owen regards the Colchester rising as a last effort on the part of the exasperated Cavaliers. 'The weary ox treadeth hard. Dying bites are often desperate. Half-ruined Carthage did more perplex Rome than when it was entire. Hydra's heads² in the fable were increased by their loss.' A few months later, the execution of Charles at Whitehall at once scotched the serpent and extinguished the last sparks of effective resistance among the Cavaliers. On the next day Owen was summoned to preach before the House of Commons. His prominent position as a theologian, and his friendship with men like the Earl of Warwick and Lord Fairfax, had brought him to the very front of public affairs, apart from the fact that he was an Independent—and the Independents were becoming rapidly a power, or rather the power, in the army. His text upon this delicate occasion was Jeremiah xv. 19-20, the sermon being entitled, 'Righteous zeal encouraged by Divine protection.' The Commons thanked him for it, and requested

¹ In 1643 this gospeller thundered to the Commons that 'in vain are the promises of God in your mouths, unless a two-edged sword is in your hand.' And worse might be cited.

² Milton hits upon the same metaphor in his sonnet, 'On the Lord General Fairfax, at the siege of Colchester,' and the general himself employs it in another connection (*op. cit.*, p. 357).

him to publish it. Which he did, bravely appending a few pages on 'toleration and the duty of the magistrate about religion,' where he reiterated plea after plea for toleration of a variety of opinions in the interest of religion, while he carefully defined the sense in which magistrates are bound to care for religion in the country.¹ The discourse is, for the most part, studiously general.² There is no expression of Owen's personal opinion on the transaction of the previous day, which may be taken as Delphic ambiguity or religious moderation, according to the reader's standpoint. Nor is there even a trace of any hesitation or embarrassment such as was felt by many of the more sober and cautious Puritans, including Fairfax himself. Probably Owen had no such feeling. The fact of his agreeing to preach at all under the circumstances speaks for itself. Yet allusions are not wanting in the sermon itself which indicate the trend of the preacher's mind. 'When kings command unrighteous things, and people suit them with willing compliance, none doubts but the destruction of them both is just and righteous.' Or again, 'Men that under God deliver a kingdom may have the kingdom's curses for their pains. . . . Let not upright hearts sink because they meet with thankless men' (see *Samson Agonistes*, 268-276). Owen betrays here a sense of the unpopularity of the previous day's deed in certain quarters. But in all likelihood he shared the view of Cromwell, Milton, and the regicides, that Charles's death was a disagreeable necessity, an act of war or of self-defence,¹ that

¹ Gardiner points out the remarkable similarities between this appendix, warning civil magistrates off spiritual religion as such, and the *Agreement of the People*, which had been recently presented to Parliament by the officers of the army (*History of the Commonwealth and Protectorate*, ii. pp. 25 f.). See his discussion of Owen's mind on toleration (*ibid.*, pp. 30 f.).

² 'To those that cry, Give me a king, God can give him in his anger; and from those that cry, Take him away, he can take him away in his wrath.'

³ When bishop Warburton angrily demanded by what law Charles's execution could be justified, Quin answered, 'By all the laws he had left the English people.' Horace Walpole, who loved to pose as a republican, thought this retort a fine and final sentence on the whole business.

peace and Puritanism were endangered so long as the shifty monarch was alive, and that Old Testament precedents justified them on the religious side in taking a step dictated by an imperious political situation. *Trust not in princes.* Unlike Strafford, the Puritans learned this lesson before it was too late, but few of them could foresee that the effect produced by Charles's 'decollation' throughout the country would turn out to be one of the forces of reaction during the following decade. Owen at any rate did not go the length of Goodwin, or Milton, or Colonel Hutchinson, in openly justifying the king's beheadal. Like them he was evidently covered by the Act of Indemnity in 1661, for there is no record of his arrest on any retrospective charge such as proved fatal to Harrison and Sir Henry Vane. But I cannot see how this subsequent immunity, or indeed how anything in the sermon itself, suggests that timidity or time-serving upon the preacher's part, for which he has been censured right and left.

'Here is neither haste, nor hate, nor anger,' peal the Trumpets,

'Pardon for the penitence or pity for his fall.

'It is the King!'—inexorable Trumpets—

(Trumpets round the scaffold at the dawning by Whitehall).

In Owen's sermon we catch an echo of these 'inexorable trumpets.' The stern sense of justice, and of a divine justice over yesterday's proceedings, seems to thrill the preacher's mind whenever he comes near to the event.

Three months later Owen once more preached before the Parliament, this time on Hebrews xii. 27. It was one of his most notable and historical sermons, entitled, 'The Shaking and Translating of Heaven and Earth,' a vigorous¹ plea for

¹ His reading of the contemporary political confusion at home and abroad is that it is a process of Providence designed to purge Governments of their anti-christian cement or mortar, viz. the Papal faith. 'The time shall come wherein the earth shall disclose her slain, and not the simplest heretic (as they were counted) shall have his blood unrevenged.' It is the temper of Rev. vi., and indeed the whole sermon breathes the stern spirit of that book.

thoroughness and sincerity of religion in high places of authority, now that the Papal power had been upset. 'Give the Lord Jesus a throne in your hearts, or it will not at all be to your advantage that he hath a throne and kingdom in the world.' 'You are the grains which, in the sifting of the nation, have been kept from falling to the ground. Are you not the residue of all the chariots of England? Oh that in you might appear the reality of the kingdom of Jesus Christ, which hath been so long pretended by others!' The sermon brought Owen the thanks of Parliament. But it brought him a still more lasting benefit. On the day following he chanced to call on his friend Lord Fairfax. There he met Cromwell, who had listened to the sermon on the previous day with immense admiration. Going up to the tall, grave Puritan in Fairfax's garden the general laid his hand upon the preacher's shoulder and remarked, 'Sir, you are a person I must be acquainted with.' 'That,' answered Owen, 'will be much more to my advantage than yours.' 'We shall soon see that,' said Cromwell pleasantly. He was on the point of starting for Ireland, and neither from Owen nor from his 'poor, numerous, provoking' congregation at Coggeshall would the dictator take any denial of his request that the former should accompany him in order to settle the University of Dublin. Cromwell wanted a chaplain. He needed a scholar, a preacher in sympathy with the views of the Independents in the army, and a man whose piety was accompanied with a statesmanlike view of the situation. These qualities he detected in the minister of Coggeshall, and from the hour of that interview in the London garden Cromwell and Owen worked together for nearly ten years in a close friendship. It is only one of several illustrations which might be grouped round Burnet's estimate of the Protector. 'What he showed his good understanding in was his seeking out capable and worthy men for all employments.' 'He sought out men for places,' Thurloe writes, 'and not places for men'; indeed no small part of Oliver's

success was due to this impartial and penetrating judgment of men. As Dryden afterwards allowed, it furnished him with subordinates who seldom failed or fooled him:—

For from all tempers he could service draw ;
The worth of each, with its alloy, he knew.

Owen's work in Ireland lasted little more than six months, and it was mainly confined to Dublin. While Oliver stormed up and down the country with guns and drums and wounds, writing one of the reddest pages in the story of the Emerald Isle, his chaplain was preaching in the capital as well as investigating the disordered affairs of the local university. 'I would,' he told the English Parliament in a sermon¹ preached after his return, 'I would there were for the present one gospel preacher for every walled town in the English possession in Ireland. The land mourneth, and the people perish for want of knowledge. Many run to and fro, but it is on other designs; knowledge is not increased.' 'The tears and cries of the inhabitants of Dublin after the manifestations of Christ are ever in my view. If they were in the dark and loved to have it so, it might sometimes close a door upon the bowels of our compassion. But they cry out of their darkness and are ready to follow every one whosoever, to have a candle.' Sectaries and Papists swarmed across, as Owen knew. He was therefore concerned, with the same public spirit as moved him some years earlier to plead for Wales, to bring the religious needs of Ireland before the House of Commons. As a result of this, fresh provisions were made for the support of six preachers, as well as for the endowment of Trinity College, Dublin, although the reorganisation of the latter was not effected till in 1661 Jeremy Taylor came over and reduced

¹ Asty holds this sermon was preached before Owen's visit to Ireland. But the internal evidence is against him. I agree with Orme that the references are too vivid to be explained except on the ground of personal experience and eyesight. See below, under the colophon of 'Ireland.'

disorder to some kind of harmony before he went off to combat the recalcitrant Presbyterian majority in his own diocese.

By this time Owen had succeeded Goodwin¹ (now president of Magdalen College, Oxford) as one of the two regular preachers to the council of the Commonwealth, of which John Milton was the secretary. He drew a salary of £200 for this, and had lodgings in Whitehall. But once more Cromwell bore him off, this time to Scotland, and, with Caryll, he had to follow the general in the summer of 1650 on his northern campaign. Two of his sermons, one preached at Berwick and the other in Edinburgh (where he spent some six months or so), were published shortly afterwards, with a dedication to the Lord General; but neither they nor the scanty, unsure items of tradition throw much light on Owen's experiences across the Border, except to indicate that the preacher, like the general, met his match among the argumentative, determined clergy of the Scottish Church. It has sometimes been thought that Owen wrote one or two of Cromwell's Scotch despatches for him. For this I cannot find the evidence is at all adequate. The hypothesis is plausible enough, but it loses sight of the fact that similarity of phraseology is not equivalent to identity of authorship, and that there was an *argot* of Puritanism prevalent in the circles in which both Oliver and Owen moved. Any one who chose could, for example, match phrase after phrase from Cromwell's Declaration to the Irish people with sentences from Owen's writings.

Cromwell's success in Scotland and Ireland, with the flight of Charles to Breda, now left the Commonwealth more leisure to settle its internal affairs. One of these was the question of education and the universities. According to Mr. Firth, whose word carries further than almost any other scholar's

¹ In the minute of Parliament for June 8, 1649, a vote of thanks is passed to Goodwin and Owen for their sermons on the previous day, and it is referred to the committee of Oxford to prefer both of them 'to be heads of colleges in that university.' For some reason or another, Owen's promotion was delayed.

on the men and motives of this period, Cromwell personally was far more interested in the reorganisation of the universities than in primary or secondary education. He certainly attached supreme value to an educated ministry. There was a fanatical party of the Puritans, however, who had no sympathy with learning¹ in any shape or form, and to whom the universities seemed a fit subject for spoliation rather than for reform. Of such was Kendal, who, according to the *Gangræna*, 'preach'd against human learning as flesh, and that the universities were of the devil.' To counteract their tactics, Cromwell and some others, like Prynne and Selden, carried through a proposal to settle the university of Oxford; for while Cambridge, partly owing to the Cromwellian influence, had been fairly true to the Parliament, Oxford during the greater part of the Civil War had remained with right goodwill, on the part of gown though not of town, the headquarters of Charles, his Court, and his army. The strain of the war had impoverished its resources, and the presence of the Court had demoralised its undergraduates. The whole atmosphere of the place had been unfavourable to the interests of study and learning. War and revelry² alike had dissipated scholarship, as well as morality and money. And even since 1648, when the twenty-four Parliamentary visitors, including the irritating Cheynell and Prynne, had purged it of Malignants and established the university upon a Puritan basis by enforcing the Covenant on the university officials, the forces of insubordination and the weight of debt had prevented much solid work from being accomplished. So much may be gleaned from the pages of

¹ Their protest against mere intellectualism was valid and timely, but it easily and often shot up into an extravagant repudiation of learning as essentially adverse to spiritual health, or as—to use a Baptist preacher's phrase—'the smoke of the bottomless pit.' The seeds of this fungus were sown in Protestantism as early as the Reformation. See Conan Doyle's romance of *Micah Clarke* (Note A).

² The *Somers Tracts* contain pungent evidence of the gaities, but a pleasant, if emasculated, account will be found in the ninth chapter of *John Inglesant*. The martial pursuits are sketched in Jeaffreson's *Annals of Oxford*, ii. pp. 54 f.

Neale and Walker, for all their differences. Reynolds had been dean of Christ Church and vice-chancellor since 1648. But Reynolds was a Presbyterian, and the Presbyterians were rapidly losing touch and influence with the dominant party in the Commonwealth. Cromwell, with *Caveto* as his counsellor, had already chosen an instrument of university reform. As chancellor of the university, he had Owen installed in both of Reynolds's offices. The deanery, after being refused by Caryll, fell to him in the spring of 1657; the vice-chancellorship came in the autumn of the following year. Caryll then succeeded him as a preacher to the council, and the first period of Owen's career lay definitely behind him. The Essex minister became the Oxford don.

II

Owen was obviously and sincerely reluctant to enter on an academic career, nor did he escape censure from various quarters for undertaking his Oxford duties. But Cromwell, as usual, was pertinacious. Owen yielded to his persuasions, and the success of the new régime at Oxford amply justified Oliver's insight and confidence.

Internal anarchy had reduced the university to a slack state of discipline, but Owen soon made it plain that he would stand no nonsense. One student of Trinity, for example, overstepped the bounds of decency as *terræ filius*. His comrades sided with him and repelled the university officials who tried to arrest him. Then Owen interposed. 'I will not see authority trampled on in this manner,' he declared. But as warnings were of no avail, he stepped down and by physical force personally haled off the astonished undergraduate to prison amid the consternation of the audience. Contrast this vignette with that drawn by Evelyn in 1669. That worthy man had gone to receive his honorary degree at Oxford, and lo! 'the *terræ filius* (the *universitie Buffoone*) entertain'd

the auditorie with a tedious, abusive, sarcastical rhapsodie, most unbecoming the gravity of the universitie. . . . 'Twas rather licentious lyeing and railing than genuine and noble witt. In my life I was never witsse of so shamefull entertainment.' He complained of it afterwards to the vice-chancellor and some heads of houses, 'who were perfectly asham'd of it and resolv'd to take care of it in future.' Owen's methods were much more prompt than those of the laxer Restoration, as even that sour and delving antiquarian Wood admits. And, whatever else was defective, the religious training of the undergraduates did not suffer in the hands of the Puritan dons. There was plenty of preaching, and plenty of catechising. It was not the fault of Owen and his colleagues if all the students did not turn out like Penn, Alleine, and Boyle, straight plants within the grove.

With regard to scholarship, Owen appears to have infused a fresh spirit of thoroughness into many members of the teaching staff and undergraduates. Even Clarendon allows grudgingly the 'harvest of extraordinary good and sound knowledge in all parts of learning' under the Puritan régime, although for 'under' he would angrily and perplexedly put 'despite.' The educational traditions of the place, however, appear to have remained unaltered. When young Locke entered Christ Church in 1652, he found himself delivered to the grooves of Aristotelianism, which were not 'ringing grooves of change' by any means. Students were committed, he wrote plaintively, to a course of 'verbal disputations' in dialectic and the logic of the schools. As he subsequently told Le Clerc, 'the philosophy then known at Oxford was the Peripatetic, perplexed with obscure terms and useless questions.' The *Discours sur la Méthode* had now been circulated for nearly fifteen years, but the Cartesian protest against Aristotelianism affected Cambridge earlier than Oxford. In the Scotch universities a similar revolt, on more practical lines, against the tyranny of the Stagirite had been effected

already, thanks in large measure to the influence of Andrew Melville (see Mr. R. S. Rait's study in the *English Historical Review*, 1899, pp. 250-260). But, whilst Owen was alive to the danger of undue philosophising in theology, he seems to have accepted the prevailing curriculum as his educational discipline without any protest or question. Some of his subordinates certainly needed no caution against Aristotelianism. Of any such distemper they were serenely innocent. A number of the Presbyterian tutors were comparatively illiterate, unworthy of being dons alongside of men like Prideaux, Pococke, Lloyd, and Samuel Clarke; and as moral earnestness covers few intellectual sins in the academic realm, one can imagine the state of matters in a college ruled by members of the tribe of that Independent chaplain, Mr. Dell, whom Baxter notices so caustically. 'He neither understood himself nor was understood by others any further than to be one who took Reason, Sound Doctrine, Order and Concord to be the intollerable Maladies of Church and State, because they were the greatest strangers to his Mind.'

Few incidents of Owen's career at Oxford have come down to us. With Philip Nye, he unmasked the popular astrologer, William Lilly, who complains that the vice-chancellor had 'sharp invectives' against him in his sermon. This is entirely possible. Owen preached repeatedly, and he never beat the air if he could help it. Even after his deposition, when 'St. Mary's pulpit was cleansed of him and Goodwin' (to resume Wood's genial phrase), 'he set up a lecture at another church,' to inculcate orthodox Calvinism. A less honourable reminiscence is his connection with the bench of Oxford justices who had two Quakeresses whipped for fanatical disturbance of the peace.

Owen's toleration, however, was usually unspotted, judged by the standards of his age. Most people, as he once shrewdly remarked, are advocates of liberty when they are out of power. Toleration is the plea of a harried minority for room and right

to breathe. That and little more.¹ When the tide turns, the victors generally cease to exercise the virtue for which they begged as vanquished. Yet he himself, like a true Independent, was tolerant in the hour and place of authority. It is to his honour that he managed to temper zeal with toleration in his academic reign at Oxford (see Professor Burrows's edition of the *Register of Parliamentary Visitors*, pp. 353 f.). He must have connived, at least, at the maintenance of an Anglican service conducted by John Fell² and others, in Beam Hall, opposite Merton, where young Ken was among the auditors. He interfered chivalrously and successfully on behalf of Pococke, the distinguished professor of Arabic, who was in danger at one time of losing his living at Childrey, while at Christ Church it would seem as if the Anglican chaplain had been actually permitted to remain on in the college.³ John Evelyn, on his visit to Oxford in 1654, heard Dr. French preach in St. Mary's 'on Matt. xii. 42, advising the students to search after true wisdom, not to be had in the books of philosophers but in the Scriptures alone. In the afternoon the famous Independent, Dr. Owen, perstringing Episcopacy.' 'Perstringing' is Evelyn's favourite term for polemical preaching among the Episcopalians and their opponents. But elsewhere in the *Diary* Evelyn shows that the Puritan sway at

¹ The *Liberty of Prophesying* was not written after the Restoration. Then Dromore showed another sight—of the good Taylor.

² Fell afterwards became bishop of Oxford and dean of Christ Church himself. His titles to fame are twofold. First, the epigram in which his unpopularity is embalmed; and secondly, his servile expulsion of Locke from Christ Church for having contributed (in 1654) two sets of verses to a volume edited by Owen in praise of Cromwell. Owen's own contribution is quite colourless, as is that of Philip Henry.

³ See the volume on *Christ Church* (1900, pp. 70 f.) in the series of Oxford College histories. The author, Mr. H. L. Thompson, describes Owen as 'a man of fine presence and high authority,' who was: 'a learned man and a patron of learning, and showed wise tolerance in his government of Oxford.' See too Mr. H. A. Wilson's history of *Magdalen*, ch. xii. Young South, we know, insisted on his right to use the prayer-book during his undergraduate course, and he was let alone. Owen seldom issued precepts to leviathan to come ashore.

Oxford cannot have been by any means iconoclastic or extreme at every point. He notices that the graduation formalities, 'ancient ceremonies and institutions,' were 'as yet not wholly abolished,' whilst the chapel of the New College was in 'its ancient garb, notwithstanding the scrupulositie of the times.' He found the double organ still at Magdalen chapel, 'which was likewise in pontifical order, the altar onely, I think, turn'd tablewise.' These incidental rays of evidence light up Oxford under Owen's rule sufficiently to let us see that the dominant Puritanism was very far from being rabid or sour or bare, once the Presbyterian commission lapsed in 1652. A share of the credit for this tolerant government, so far as such toleration was not merely politic or inevitable, must fall to the vice-chancellor, although Evelyn prefers to assign the honour of it in large measure to Dr. Wilkins, who married a sister of Cromwell. He was one of those who guarded the university against the iconoclasm of the wilder sectaries. But it was to the scholarly and soldierly Fairfax, Owen's friend, that the Bodleian had owed its preservation in 1646 as well as some subsequent contributions of books.¹

Antony Wood, who commonly mixed pique and imagination on his palette when he sketched a Puritan, asserts that 'instead of being a grave example to the university, Owen scorned all familiarity . . . by going about in quirpo like a young scholar, with powdered hair, snakebone bandstrings [or bandstrings with very large tassels], lawn band, a large set of ribbons, pointed, at his knees, and Spanish leather boots, with large lawn tops, and his hat mostly cock'd.' All of which probably means that the Puritan did not affect the same fastidious gravity or clerical attire as his pompous predecessors. Wood's caricature (for it is little better) is at variance with the contemporary portrait of Owen, as a tall, grave man, with large brow and nose, and arrayed in all the dignity and robes

¹ Further instances of Fairfax's culture and literary interests are given in Dr. David Murray's *Black Book of Paisley* (1885), pp. 57-59.

of office, which hangs in the Christ Church common-room.¹ It is to Dr. Goodwin, president of Magdalen (where, by the way, John Howe was a chaplain at this period), and not to Owen, that the other highly coloured account of the *Spectator* (No. 494) applies, where Addison tells a diverting story of some youth applying for admission to a certain college in Oxford presided over by a famous Independent minister. The lad had to wait for a while in a 'long gallery which was darkened at Noonday, and had only a single Candle burning in it.' He was then ushered solemnly into a chamber hung with black and lit by a single taper, 'till at length the Head of the College came out to him, from an inner Room, with half a dozen Night Caps upon his Head, and a religious Horror in his countenance.' Goodwin, we learn, did wear some extraordinary headgear, which earned him the sobriquet of 'Nine-caps.' The cross-examination related to personal religion, instead of to Latin and Greek, and it was 'summed up with one short question, *Whether he was prepared for death?*' Whereupon the youth fled, never to return. The eighteenth century had neither the means nor the inclination to inquire into the truth that underlay this excellent fooling, and a modern reader enjoys it with pretty much the same good-humoured scepticism as is awakened in the background of his historical conscience when he turns to Scott's portraits of the Roundheads in *Woodstock*, or of the Covenanters in *Old Mortality*. No doubt the Puritans' reign over Oxford was an experiment. At Cambridge a more receptive attitude was taken towards culture, thanks to the sway of men like Whichcote and his school. But few members of the party at Oxford

¹ See pp. 69 f. of Mr. Thompson's history on this point. One Anglican contemporary frankly allowed that Owen's 'liberal, graceful, and courteous demeanour speak him certainly (whatsoever he be else) one that is more a gentleman than most in the clergy.' Both Bastwick and Milton's 'shallow' Edwards scoff at the fashionable dress of the Independents, who appear to have been noted in seventeenth-century England for their fine apparel and general frankness of behaviour, as opposed to the sourer sectaries.

had enough scholarship and mental flexibility to render the experiment either the basis of a permanent discipline or even a conspicuous success while it lasted. Both Locke and Milton were dissatisfied, for various reasons. Fanaticism must have crept in through the broken walls of culture, and no personal example or precept upon Owen's part could avail to mould his heterogeneous subordinates or fellow-dons.¹ The latter were neither Platonists nor Plotinists, like their Cambridge rivals. Yet the notion of academic Puritanism at Oxford as little better than an attempt to force education and culture into the leaden moulds of Calvinistic theology, is a myth which, like that of the Puritans as essentially a sour, illiterate, and stubborn race of Intransigentists, seems to die hard beneath the sun. Lay the hands of historical research upon it, however, and it crumbles into dust. The *Progress of Learning*, for example, is but a set of partisan rhymes. Sir John Denham is as much or as little an impartial witness as Prynne upon the other side.

But Owen's indefatigable spirit pushed out to exercise and express itself beyond the limits of the university. He contributed to literature, and he took part in the wider life of politics and of ecclesiastical enterprise.

Apart from his university orations, couched in rhetorical Latin, which are little better than the ordinary run of such by-products, the vice-chancellor issued in 1653 a Latin scholastic treatise, dedicated to Cromwell. Its topic is the divine Justice, and in its pages the views of Twisse and Rutherford, amongst others, are ponderously attacked. The thesis of the treatise is the Calvinistic position that God could

¹ Locke's sarcastic reflections on the toleration of the sectaries may echo his experience as an undergraduate no less than his observation of public affairs. He found, he declares, that selfish ends were often served by loud professions of liberty for the people. The liberty he himself desiderated was 'not a liberty for ambitious men to pull down well-framed constitutions, that out of the ruins they may build themselves fortunes—not a liberty to be Christians so as not to be subjects.'

not forgive sin without an atonement. The book failed to please even some of Owen's party, and Baxter as usual bustled into the friendly controversy that ensued. One living point of interest to the modern reader is the curious parallel between the famous stately lines in *Paradise Lost* (Book iii. 374 f.) and some sentences in Owen's preface, where he exclaims that 'As every divine truth has a peculiar majesty and reverence belonging unto it, which debars from the spiritual knowledge of it (as it is in Christ) the ignorant and unstable . . . so those points which dwell in more intimate recesses, and approach nearer its immense fountain, the "Father of lights," darting brighter rays, by their excess of light present a confounding darkness to the minds of the greatest men. . . . For what we call darkness in divine things is nothing else than their celestial glory and splendour striking on our feeble eyes, the rays of which we are unable in this evanescent life to bear.' Taken as a whole, however, the book is far from radiant. Even its very darkness is not divine. Of Owen's great contemporary, painting at this moment in the Holy City, it has been said that 'one would suppose he had never seen scarlet in a morning cloud, nor a storm burst on the Apennines,' and this quiet, formal temper of Claude corresponds in one sense to the unrelieved monotony which pervades most pages in the *Justitia* of Owen. The volume is a representative of Owen's elaborate, intellectual statements of the Christian faith from a rigid Calvinistic standpoint, characterised by precision, symmetry, and architectural skill, rather than by sustained feeling; it illustrates, in fact, the strength and the defects of that passion for logical deduction which chiselled much of the best Puritan work upon its theoretical and practical sides alike. The seventeenth century, said Renan, had no taste for anything except what could be expressed with the appearance of certainty. What evidence can be found to justify this sweeping statement, as it applies to England, must be drawn largely from the argosies of Puritan

theology. Principal Tulloch, who rightly groups Owen and Howe and Baxter as the three theologians of English Puritanism, remarks that the spiritual world appeared to the first named to be moulded on a rigid outline. 'He is of all theologians, scarcely excepting Calvin himself, the most consistent, definite, and exhaustive, on his own assumptions. A bolder and more unflinching theorist never trod the way of those sublime revelations that slope through darkness up to God.'¹ This precision lent all the impressiveness of unity to his dogmatic system, but it handicapped him in two ways. In controversy he would deduce from some principle of his opponents all the logical issues which he himself ruthlessly inferred from their position; then he would turn round sharply to attribute these to all those who differed from him on the original premiss. Hence flowed, perhaps unconsciously, a wide stream of the unfairness and irrelevance which marked his endless controversies. Hence, too, the barrenness which marked a score of these debates. Owen's mind, for example, was essentially abstract. He was keener in following up a logical process than in understanding the varied factors which enter a man's mind as it seeks to relate itself to some general principle. He failed to allow for the wind, and thus his sheer powers of ratiocination often played him false, when he had to deal with less logical but equally acute and earnest minds. It was the same, in one sense, even with his devotional writings. He forgot that a merely notional theology can become as real a barrier between the soul and God as any sacerdotalism. In a treatise, for instance, like that upon *Communion with God* (1657), the mapping, synthetic instinct is indulged to a degree that renders whole pages utterly

¹ *English Puritanism and its Leaders*, pp. 282 f. One is sometimes tempted, in reading seventeenth-century theology, to think of Thorold Rogers's dictum on political economy. If Puritan polemic was not discredited by its 'traditional disregard for facts,' except in so far as its outlook on human nature was scarcely wide enough, it certainly 'strangled itself with definitions' now and then.

unreal, and lays it fairly open, not to Antony Wood's Sadducean verdict, but to Dr. Rigg's description of it as a 'piece of wire-drawn mysticism,' though the mysticism is by no means that of an enthusiast like Antoinette Bourignon (1616-1680), Owen's foreign contemporary. As is usual, the main argument embraces passages occasionally of more abiding value, such as that, for example, in which Owen plays off the Quaker and the rationalist or ritualist against one another. Once, he says, it was to be 'ordinances without the Spirit,' now men 'cry up a spirit without and against ordinances.' Once it was 'a ministry without the Spirit, now a spirit without the ministry. Then the *reading* of the Word might suffice, without either preaching or praying by the Spirit; now the Spirit is enough, without reading or studying the Word at all.' Owen is never abler than when opposing fanatical extremes. His sagacity and dialectic incisiveness come out best in positive statements of the *via media*. Unfortunately these very statements are often illustrations of that minute scrupulosity in theory and speculation which a reformer like Prynne exemplified in the Puritan sphere of action. And, judged from the standpoint of personal religion, they seem decidedly defective. You seldom find dew lying after a night of high wind, said Tennyson. In Owen's treatises upon theology the winds are usually up, with the result that the drops of morning dew upon the tangled, thorny undergrowths are apt to be sadly rare.

Such was the general type of theology taught at Oxford between 1650 and 1660 by 'the two Atlases and patriarchs of Independency,' John Owen and Thomas Goodwin. Their differences ran up into a vital unity. Genuine religion is like a coral-reef; its rise depends upon the presence of two conditions—comparative warmth and clearness. When the water is too cold, or when it contains a sediment of mud, reef-corals will not thrive. So with essential Christianity. Both ardour and intelligence are needful for its perfect work. In the

seventeenth century the Puritanism of these Oxford teachers was really stronger in warmth than in clearness, whilst the Cambridge Platonists, with their gracious and noble rationalism, inclined to lucidity of thought and width of sympathy rather than to fervour of desire and ardent passion.¹ Yet it is no disparagement to the latter to recognise in their rivals at Oxford a sensitiveness to the essential and characteristic features of the New Testament, which almost atones for their occasional obscurity and obscurantism. To the rising spirit of free inquiry they showed an unconquerable aversion. Owen dubbed it outright an 'Arian and Socinian poison.' Even the spirit of the age which was moving men like Louis Capellus and Amyraldus made no impression on the vice-chancellor of Oxford. Neither he nor his were numbered among the followers of John Cameron of Saumur. Yet, on the other hand, in the vanguard of the English Calvinists, Owen displays comparatively little of that undue predilection for the Old Testament which often threw practical Puritanism out of gear, owing to the obvious fascination exercised by the Jewish Scriptures on men who sought a model for the moral and civil government of a nation. Owen's interests are in the New Testament. In this and (as we shall see) in his supreme passion for Jesus Christ, he stands apart not merely from many of his own party but from the rational theologians who were the glory of Cambridge in the seventeenth century.

In ancient warfare a man at arms was not a unit. The term denoted not a single warrior, but a soldier attended by at least two of a retinue. Similarly a polemic treatise on theology in the seventeenth century commonly carried in its ample train appendages of more or less relevance. Owen's *Doctrine of the Saints' Perseverance* is a case in point. It is

¹ See Dr. Stoughton's *Ecclesiastical History of England* (1867), ii. pp. 284-5, on the way in which the Oxford men, for all their weaknesses, 'dwelt largely and emphatically . . . upon what makes the New Testament a book of life and joy to conscience-stricken men.'

followed by no fewer than four digressions, and in the preface we drop into a rather irrelevant but able discussion of the Ignatian epistles, whose authenticity then occupied the minds of many scholars. The book itself, written in 1654, and dedicated to Cromwell, has an innocuous title. But it was a fighting pamphlet.

The grey-haired saint may fail at last,
The surest guide a wanderer prove ;
Death only binds us fast
To the bright shore of love.

So Keble sang in later days, and so many a Christian held in Owen's day, when as now there were those who did not care to go beyond the words, *I would . . . and ye would not*. But the Puritan vice-chancellor would have none of this hesitating, modest outlook on the prospects of the Christian man. Once saved, saved for ever ; such was the theory which was championed by Owen, the Scotch *Confession of Faith*, Halyburton, Boston, and the rest of the Calvinists' far-flung battle line, who contended that to admit the possibility of a Christian becoming a castaway was to discredit the power of God and upset the doctrine of predestination. Consequently Owen's volume is a sustained effort to explain, defend, and apply the thesis that the elect Christian cannot finally fall away from grace. The book was struck out of a controversy¹ with Goodwin, the saw of which (to use Owen's own metaphor) was drawn to and fro for years after that powerful Independent theologian had issued his *Redemption Redeemed*. Owen's contribution is solid but stolid, and is characterised by marks of haste in writing. Another controversial work, the *Vindiciæ Evangelicæ*, which is more of a unity, was produced at the instance of the Council of State, and devoted to the Socinian errors of poor

¹ *Fur Prædestinatus*, the Latin Arminian manifesto, had appeared in 1651. Owen's book on perseverance closes his activity in the Arminian controversy, just as the *Vindiciæ* form his last blow in the Socinian. He never did justice to the Arminian emphasis on several elements of the gospel which Calvinism either neglected or warped out of place.

Biddle, who figures so pathetically in the days of Cromwell. Over him the thunder of the captains and the shouting raged for many a month. Owen and eleven other ministers had protested to Parliament against the publication of the *Racovian Catechism* in London during 1652. The whole edition of this work, which Milton as censor of the press had passed, was ultimately burned, and now the vice-chancellor gives an elaborate exposure of what he and his party deemed to be the insidious mischief wrought by all such continental notions, including even those of Grotius in his valuable annotations to the New Testament. It is a lifeless, loveless wrangle. But Owen had now become in some aspects for the inflexibly Calvinistic party of the Puritans what his younger contemporary, Pierre Nicole, became for the school of Port-Royal, the erudite doctor of their faith. Fortunately his Oxford writings were not to close with such a jarring production. In 1656 he issued a treatise on personal religion, entitled, *On the Mortification of Sin in Believers*, which has won the praise and gratitude of many before and after Wilberforce. It is the essence or expansion of some university sermons on Romans viii. 13, and it remains one of the permanent contributions of Puritan theology to the introspective analysis of the human soul. If Owen cannot phrase, he can probe. His scrutiny is relentless. But it is perhaps owing to the length rather than to the line of the treatise that its pages occasionally resemble a process of pulling the flower of piety to pieces, counting the streaks upon its petals, or tearing up the roots to watch its secret growth.

Then, as if to balance such a keen dissection and investigation of the Christian life, he published in 1657 another volume based either on his sermons at Coggeshall or on some university sermons, entitled, *Of Communion with God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*. The book had been promised for six years, but university duties had delayed its preparation. It is a devotional monograph on the 'soul-conquering

and endearing' aspects of religion, and these still gleam with a fitful radiance through the scholastic network of definition to which I have already alluded. Its arguments, one is hardly astonished to find, gave rise to the well-known 'communion controversy' some twenty years after the date of its publication. Owen's works, like Newman's, were commonly the result of some other man's work making an impact on his own mind, or an attack upon his creed. They bore the stamp of the sentinel or the man-at-arms, who aspired to be a champion as well as a subject of his captain Christ. For, abstruse as they seem to modern eyes, such treatises were hurtling sturdy strokes in the seventeenth century, delivered by men who, like Owen and Goodwin at any rate, fought a good fight with thrust and parry, for all their heavy panoply of scholastic phrase and category. Few cleaner strokes in this warfare were delivered than Owen's treatise on *Schism*, which also appeared in 1657. The spirit and standpoint of the essay are nearly unexceptionable. It is religious and it is readable. One has not to say of it as of some of its companion works: the arguments seem square and sound in the lamplight of logic, but will they stand the sunlight of experience?

Finally, in 1658, a fresh volume appeared, based on some other university sermons, and entitled, *Of Temptation*. It is one of Owen's gravest and most searching contributions to the religious *materia medica* of his age. In the spirit of George Fox, he spares neither his own party nor their opponents. 'Whereas we have by Providence shifted places with the men of the world, we have by sin shifted spirits with them also. We are like a plantation of men carried into a foreign country. In a short space they degenerate from the manners of the people from whence they come, and fall into that of the country whereunto they are brought, as if there were something in the soil and the air that transformed them. Give me leave a little to follow my similitude. He that

should see the prevailing party of these nations, many of those in rule, power, favour, with all their adherents, and remember that they were a colony of Puritans—whose habitation was ‘in a low place,’ as the prophet speaks of the city of God—translated by a high hand to the mountains they now possess, cannot but wonder how soon they have forgot the customs, manners, ways of their own old people, and are cast into the mould of them that went before them in the places whereunto they are translated. I speak of us all, especially of those who are amongst the lowest of the people, where perhaps this iniquity doth most abound. What were those before us that we are not? What did they that we do not? Prosperity hath slain the foolish and wounded the wise.’ Owen’s mind was not constitutionally sanguine. The unreliability of human nature, within as well as without the Church, seems to have haunted his wakeful, wistful soul, and none warned the Puritans more faithfully in the day of their power against that subtle moral corruption which is betrayed by the appearance of these vultures—presumptuousness, Pharisaism, and the inquisitorial temper in the atmosphere of conduct. He was as jealous for the discipline as for the dogmas of his creed. ‘O that the doctrine of the Gospel,’ he once cried, ‘might make way for the discipline of the Gospel, without which it will be a very skeleton.’ Few apter illustrations can be found of the temper which he sought to inculcate, and which was shared by many of the better Puritans, than those lines from a contemporary pamphlet (‘An Honest Discoverie’), published in London during 1655 :—

Ask men now, ‘What shall be next?’

The folks have many minds;

Few can expound this knotty text,

So various are their minds.

But this is very plain :

All, all will shortly down,

Returning to their dust again,

And *One shall wear the crown.*

Oh people, do not mind,
Nor talk of transient things ;
The God eternal seek to find
With strong, immortal wings.

It matters not at all
How this short world doth go ;
For every one must stand or fall
In endless joy or woe.

To this cardinal, spiritual attitude, it was Owen's aim to recall his fellows amid the anarchy and chaos of the sects,¹ who were in danger of losing their high, common calling in semi-political intrigues or ecclesiastical rivalries. Popularity, in short, had threatened the purity of Puritanism. A decline had set in, and the two symptoms of decay which Owen found in his diagnosis of the age were presumption and the inquisitorial temper of tyranny, the phylloxera to which the vine of Puritanism, in the heyday of its bloom, was inevitably liable. The latter showed itself in undue absorption in the 'transient things' of secular position and aggrandisement, as well as in the attempt to enforce uniformity upon all and sundry. The former is analysed by Owen into its two forms of Pharisaism and Antinomianism. The Pharisee finds material for complacency no matter where he looks. The past shows him a tale of error and mistakes on the part of his fathers. But all he does is to plume himself on the fact that he would not have acted thus had it been his lot to live in these sad, bad ages. The present reveals the publican among his fellow-worshippers, and again the sweet serene sense of superiority asserts itself. No doubt the doctrine of predestination helped to foster this fatal germ of spiritual arrogance, and certainly the germ too often developed into Antinomian indifference. Long before *Tartufe* and *Hudibras*, Owen and others had marked the incipient danger of pride or hypocrisy in the Puritan temper, a worm which found the fruit

¹ A succinct account is given in Masson's *Milton*, v. pp. 16 f., of the sectaries who swarmed and bit like ephemeridæ in the pool of contemporary English religion.

of morals and discipline on far wider branches than those of Presbyterianism. From his rooms in Oxford, as afterwards from the meadows of Stadham, Owen spoke out as a watchman to his own people, much in the terms of the pamphlet I have just quoted. Only, he never was guilty of swinging into millenarian fancies in the reaction against the secularisation of religion. Repeatedly he betrays the feeling that he was living in the latter days, but nothing is more characteristic of his sanity than his outspoken repudiation, for religious as well as for political reasons, of those who set their hearts and hopes on some fifth monarchy of Christ or some millenium at hand. In one sense it mattered a great deal to Owen 'how this short world doth go,' since it was God's world at the worst, requiring the duty and public conscience of God's people so long as it held together even in the straits and shallows.

John Hill Burton once observed that great historians had usually been men who were full of dealings with the world. It would be something more substantial than a mere paradox to apply this remark to great theologians, and Owen would form a case in point.¹ Though immersed in academic duties and in literary pursuits—'perspiring ink at every pore,' as people said of his fashionable and copious contemporary, Mlle. de Scudéry—he could not be spared from the councils of the Commonwealth. In 1652 he was elected a commissioner for licensing translations of the Bible, besides being one of the council appointed to confer upon the state and prospects of Protestantism in Ireland, as well as on the advisability of

¹ Or, as M. Fustel de Coulanges has said of the saints in the sixth and seventh centuries: 'Ils n'ont pas vécu en reclus et loin du monde. Ils furent, au contraire, sauf quelques exceptions, fort mêlés à la vie du monde. Plusieurs se signalèrent comme administrateurs et hommes d'état. Ainsi une vie de saint . . . est presque toujours la vie d'un homme qui s'est occupé des affaires publiques et a été en relations incessantes avec les rois et les grands de la terre' (*La Monarchie franque*, pp. 11-12). This applies especially to the post-Reformation saints of Protestantism, and in this sense men like Owen were as true to one side of the saintly life as Nicolas Ferrar was to another.

despatching 'able and godly persons' to that uneasy island. In 1654 he was chairman of a Committee upon Scottish Church Affairs, while in the autumn of 1652 he had already preached a very straight sermon to the Parliament on a day of humiliation during the hazardous naval war with Holland. 'You take counsel,' he told the members, 'with your own hearts. You advise with one another—hearken unto men under a repute of wisdom; and all this doth but increase your trouble. You do but more and more entangle and disquiet your own spirits. God stands by and says, "I am wise also," and little notice is taken of him. We think we are grown wise ourselves, and do not remember we never prospered but only when we went to God, and told him plainly we knew not what to do.' One of the main sources of the chaos into which the Commonwealth was drifting at this period was the religious unsettlement of the country, and Owen had to put his hand to a movement for consolidation at the command of Cromwell. The original scheme laid before Parliament, a scheme for which the vice-chancellor was in all probability responsible, provided for a national church surrounded by bodies of tolerated dissent—the latter, of course, excluding the papal religion (see Masson's *Milton*, iv. pp. 390, 566 f.). The question inevitably rose, What are those essential principles of Christianity outside of which dissent cannot be tolerated? How were the Government to define 'those who profess faith in Jesus Christ'? This was the rock on which the project was ultimately wrecked. Owen and his supporters did indeed draw up a list of fifteen or sixteen fundamentals, which were probably impracticable rather than unfair. Reviewing this 'foundation of the Established Church conceived in the mind of John Owen, and reduced to practical shape' in 1654, Gardiner is able to sum up his estimate with the remark that, 'with the exception of the condemnation of the use of Common Prayer, the scheme was in the highest degree broad and generous, and it is well to remember that those who strove

to revive the use of the Common Prayer were a political as well as an ecclesiastical party.' Nevertheless these definitions, practical and theoretical, failed to win universal assent. They seemed too stiff and too dogmatic. Many Puritans like Milton dreaded the 'secular chains' threatened by such framers of a religious constitution, whilst others like Baxter demurred to the whole business. It is a ticklish business, said Richard, to draw up fundamentals. Cromwell, no doubt, held more liberal views, and his 'adhesion to the general doctrine of liberty of conscience' is properly pronounced 'perhaps the noblest element in his whole mental equipment' (see Morley's *Cromwell*, pp. 381 f.). But we can only conjecture what might have transpired if the Protector, or even the vice-chancellor, had carried the day. As it was, more pressing questions swept Parliament aside from the religious settlement. No steps were taken in the meantime along the path of comprehension or reform, although in 1654 Cromwell set to work a commission of Triers, 'the acknowledged Flower of spiritual England at that time,' whose business it was to inquire, as the Protector put it, for 'the grace of God in a minister, as not foolishly nor senselessly,' but charitably; i.e. to ensure that ministers of the Gospel were moral and religious men. Episcopalians were excluded from holding office—they still hankered after Charles II.; but no theological test was applied. Owen had a seat upon this board of thirty-eight, and in the same year he allowed himself to be elected M.P. for Oxford. On the score of his clerical orders, however, the election was declared void.

Sermons before Parliament and long consultations with Cromwell upon affairs of the State filled up the public side of Owen's life during these years. Once he took the field at the head of a university troop,¹ to quell some Royalist insurrection

¹ Another dean of Christ Church, who was also bishop of Oxford, headed the undergraduates in 1685 during the preparations to repel Monmouth. John Fell, in this at least, followed in the footsteps of John Owen.

in Wiltshire, riding, as his detractors afterwards put it, 'with white powder in his hair and black powder in his pocket.' Later on he had to indignantly deny that he had received a commission from Oliver to wear a sword. But certainly, to the scandalising of some pious folk, he wore pistols, which he was evidently prepared to use if need be. Otherwise his services to the State were quite pacific. His advice is sought on the treatment of Quakers and the admission of Jews. He is found at Cromwell's side by Fox, though not to the latter's satisfaction. He is deep in the general's confidence on questions of policy and politics, like 'Cromwell's Ahitophel,' as the Royalists pleasantly muttered, and in an Act passed for the settlement of lands in Ireland upon statesmen who had deserved well of the country, Owen's name is included among the recipients.

A change came about 1657. By joining Desborough and Fleetwood in the movement which bravely, if not wisely, checked the offer of the crown to Cromwell,¹ Owen forfeited much of his favour at Court, and when Richard succeeded his father in the chancellorship of Oxford University, the vice-chancellor lost his position. Conant, the Presbyterian rector of Exeter College, reigned in Owen's stead. But the final tie that bound him to his university was not snapped till 1659, when the Parliament, under the influence of the brief Presbyterian reaction in 1659-1660, reinstated Dr. Reynolds in the deanery of Christ Church. Meantime Owen took a prominent part in the Savoy Conference of 1658, at which an attempt was made to formulate the doctrinal position of the Independents or Congregationalists. He was far less happily and honourably employed in attacking Walton's splendid edition

¹ See Von Ranke's lucid statement in his *History of England* (E. tr.), iii. pp. 173-184. Owen passed through all the phases traversed by Milton in his career. Only, he never became an Oliverian. To be a man of the Commonwealth was his final position as a politician, and he ended with the doctrinaire republicanism which opposed Cromwell's bid for royalty.

of the Polyglot Bible. Owen's dogmatic idea of the Bible¹ could not tolerate the suggestion that the Scriptures did not lie before the English reader absolutely pure and entire, as in their original languages, and he actually took Matt. v. 18 to mean that the modern Bible had been preserved externally intact throughout the ages. Walton's collection of various readings gave the deathblow to this delusion, but the Puritan theologian could not or would not recognise the untenable character of his position, and the controversy ended with all the honours of argument on Walton's side. It is an incident on which admirers of Puritan religion do not care to linger. Owen in the rôle of Uzzah is a rare and painful spectacle. Luckily he had not the Episcopal power so unhappily wielded by Bossuet against Simon's *Histoire Critique du Vieux Testament*, a translation of which Dryden welcomed in 1682.

More damage to his reputation was done, however, by another course of action at this period. For Owen slipped in politics as well as in scholarship. Cromwell's death had once more thrown the State into a whirlpool of confused passions and eddying counterplots, and Owen, who had come to distrust Oliver's strength, now distrusted Richard's weakness. Ultimately he threw himself into what is known as the Wal-

¹ In his useful *History of Religious Thought in England*, Mr. Hunt rather hastily declared that 'the deity which John Owen worshipped was a Being who had no attributes of goodness, as men judge of goodness' (i. p. 256). This opinion melts in the course of a first-hand acquaintance with all the Puritan's writings. But it is nearer the mark to state, with the same critic, that 'the main pillars of Owen's theology were—that the Bible is a book written immediately by God, therefore whatever it seems to say should be received, however it may be opposed to the reason of man or the light of conscience. This involves two things: one, a belief that the Bible everywhere and in everything is infallible, and another, that the only use of reason is to find out what the Bible contains' (i. 257 f.). The latter position was shared by some Anglicans. In the preface to his *Religio Laici* Dryden affirms, *e.g.*, that to apprehend the Scriptures 'to be the word of God is all our reason has to do.' The latter's well-known lines (295-300) are the best practical answer to Owen's fears about the unsettling tendency of Walton's *Polyglot*.

lingford House Conspiracy, which was organised by Desborough, Fleetwood, and others, to depose Richard in favour of 'the good old cause,' *i.e.* a republic. Owen did not spare himself at this crisis. He opened the meeting at Wallingford House on April 5 with prayer, and preached at the subsequent resuscitation of Oliver's Long Parliament. Like Milton with his pen, Owen with his tongue¹ advocated this measure as the sole available safeguard of the State against the Presbyterians on the one hand and the Royalist Episcopalians on the other. It was a short-sighted policy. The Rump was soon roasted, and it is matter of history how the adroit, impenetrable intrigues of Monk were able, thanks to the weary dissatisfaction of the nation, to draw Charles back from Breda to his father's throne.

At a subsequent period, when justly but too severely² censured for his conduct at this period, Owen denied that he had had any hand in the deposition of Richard Cromwell. Strictly speaking, this was true, and it is hard to determine exactly how far he was implicated in the business. But his whole indirect influence was thrown into the scale against the continuation of the Protectorate, and the general public had no doubt whatever of his aims and opinions in the crisis. The Wallingford House Plot remains, in fact, a stain on Owen's judgment, if not upon his character, like the youthful one of Laud in condoning the marriage of his patron, Lord Devon, with the *divorcée*, Penelope Devereux, Sidney's Stella. Laud repented of his fault. Whether Owen did of his, we are not aware. As Baxter keenly protests, some time later, the

¹ He had also charge of raising a troop to defend Oxford. But his chief efforts lay in diplomacy, and were directed to the design of winning over Monk to the Independents.

² Among the scandals which gathered round him, was a rumour that he had promised the dying Cromwell life and length of days from the Lord. Owen found it necessary to explicitly deny this and some other tales, in an open letter to Sir Thomas Overbury, entitled *Reflections on a Slandrous Libel*. 'I saw him not in his sickness,' the Puritan protests, 'nor in some long time before.'

Independents who were responsible for the crisis were not always repentant. 'The poor Church of Christ, the sober, sound, religious Part, are like Christ that was crucified between two Malefactors; the prophane and formal Persecutors on one hand, and the Fanatick dividing Sectary on the other hand, have in all Ages been grinding the spiritual Seed, as the Corn is ground between the Millstones: And though their Sins have ruined themselves and us, and silenced so many hundred Ministers, and scattered the Flocks and made us the Hatred and Scorn of the ungodly World, and a by Word and Desolation in the Earth; yet there are few of them that lament their Sin, but justify themselves and their Misdoings, and the *penitent Malefactor* is yet unknown to us.' In part this censure is but too well deserved. What the republicans and the sectaries expected to gain by re-establishing the Rump, it is hard to see. Their policy divided Puritan England against itself. A monarchical reaction set in, and finally the Presbyterians sided with the Royalists. When the choice lay between the Stuarts and the army, many people not unnaturally preferred the former expedient to a succession of military despots elected by a body resembling the prætorian guards in the later Roman empire. Charles, too, was full of facile promises at Breda. He played the farce of godliness and sanctity with consummate address, until it seemed, even to shrewd men like Philip Henry, Fox, and Baxter, quite a reasonable hope that on his return he would emulate his father's personal virtues, see fairplay between the Episcopalians and Presbyterians in England, and inaugurate an era of general religious comprehension, with bulwarks against the Papacy. As for the Independents, they sided as a party either with the Rump or with the doctrinaire republicans. The initiative had passed out of their hands with the practical supersession of the Cromwellian cohorts.

III

If Owen and his party had altogether failed to gauge the state of feeling in the country, the Puritans who had promoted or welcomed the restoration of King Charles were made ere long to feel how tragically they had misconstrued that monarch's character as well as the new temper of the Cavaliers and Anglicans. Any presentiments which were at first stifled were soon justified up to the hilt. The Restoration proved a right uncomfortable providence for the Puritans as well as for the Roman Catholics. It was little better, in some aspects, than a prolonged outrage of the moral sense. 'Impatient of the protestant heresy in all its forms,' to quote Sir James Stephen's pleasant phrase, 'and of Christianity itself in all its precepts,' Charles took a line of domestic policy which makes his reign as deplorable reading for a Christian conscience as, in foreign politics, it appears to modern patriotism. Only, there was one difference between them. While his disgraceful intrigues with France, political and religious, had to be partially concealed, his treatment of all religionists outside the English church, 'unprincipled' in both senses of the term, could be managed more openly. Here he had not to dread exposure any more than in his reiterated breaches of the seventh commandment. The breaker of oaths had to exercise more caution than the voluptuary or the absolutist. Not till the day of his death did the Anglican church discover that their head had been hoodwinking them all his lifetime. For Charles needed the support of the English church, and he was clever enough to out-general the clergy to suit his royal manœuvres. The Puritan, however, lay at his mercy. He was seldom of any use to Charles, and therefore had no standing rights in the merry monarch's eyes. The brief glimpses of toleration enjoyed by Nonconformists during his reign were usually due either to the politic feeling which made even Charles see that the Cavaliers' animosity was a political menace, or to the really genuine aversion

to bloodshed and violence which actuated his lazy conscience, or to the fact that he could not attempt to extend toleration to the Papists without unintentionally benefiting Protestant dissenters at the same time.

The latter soon learned what they had to expect. The day of great political ideals had set, and the age revolved round much more mundane interests. The Cavaliers returned with a thirst for retaliation which rendered concessions out of the question. Old provocations were recalled. The mind and face of the time grew hard. Resentment breathed on every side. Feeling against Puritanism, political and religious, vindictive or conscientious, ran so high that it was hardly possible for a broad and statesmanlike view of the situation to be taken by any responsible politician, least of all by an ecclesiastical layman like Clarendon. Scott has happily caught this temper in the earlier chapters of *Peveril of the Peak* (see the note to chapter x.). For while Charles, to his credit, tried to mitigate the rancour of the Cavaliers, the constitution of the Parliament which met in 1661 proved that spite against the Puritans must be gratified at almost any cost, in religion if not in politics. The political extravagances of the Fifth Monarchy party, and fanatic ebullitions like Venner's plot, lent a colour of self-protection to this cause of arbitrary procedure and civil violence. Men like Major Bridgenorth were selected as representatives of the Puritans, and their plotting was made the pretext for penal statutes of inexcusable extremity and hardship, inflicted indiscriminately on the Presbyterians who had joined the Episcopal coalition for the king's recall, and upon the Independents who had stood aloof.

Nor could any interposition be looked for from the Church. If Charles personally was too indolent and good-natured to be a persecutor, it was otherwise with his clergy. That bitter and sectarian dignitary, Sheldon, was at the head of affairs, a man whose moral courage and financial liberality only throw into relief the rancorous spirit which dominated his conduct towards

the Papists and Nonconformists. Coleridge's cutting verdict upon him is really less severe than the remark of Burnet, that 'his sense of religion was not much, if any at all; for he used to speak of it [*i.e.* religion] as the Engine of State, which gained him credit with the king as a wise and honest clergyman.' The worst that need be said of him probably is that he was a churchman first and a Christian afterwards, and that the 'afterwards' meant sometimes a woful interval. This was the creature who now governed the English church, and who rebuked the king for venturing to propose fair treatment for the Nonconformists. There were noble and generous spirits, no doubt, among the clergy. But a Pearson was less common than a Ward in the seats of the mighty. Men of Earle's stamp were more rare than those of Cosin's. Officially the church either drifted with the tide of popular exasperation against the Nonconformists, or initiated vindictive measures on her own account. As Canon Overton argues very fairly, in his ingenious defence of the Anglicans (*Life in the English Church, 1660-1714*, pp. 343 f.), it was the Conformists who were most cruel, and the rise of Sancroft undoubtedly relaxed to some degree the drastic policy of Sheldon. But by that time the mischief was done. The Anglicans, forgetting that to *fear God* and *honour the king* are apostolic precepts, only when preceded by *honour all men, love the brotherhood*, had the Act of Uniformity passed in 1662, the Conventicle Act in 1664, and the Five Mile Act in 1665. Any protest against these came not from the clergy, but from the better laity. The first, as Dr. Martineau points out, was an Act of schism, driving an irrevocable wedge into English Christianity. Historians have been perplexed in the main as to the proper adjective to select for it, but by a happy unanimity they seem to have agreed upon 'iniquitous.' Inspired by a departmental view of English Christianity, it compelled all clergymen, on pain of deprivation, to declare their 'unfeigned assent and consent to all and everything contained and prescribed in and by' the Book of

Common Prayer! This had the effect it was perhaps intended to produce. As a result of the infringement of conscience which it threatened, nearly two thousand Puritans bravely went into the wilderness on August 24, 1662, which by chance or by the irony of history was the anniversary of St. Bartholomew's Day. The breach was tragic and deplorable. In one sense the persecution was part of the retribution which fell upon the Puritans for their extrusion of the Anglican clergy fifteen years before. They reaped as they had sowed. But in another sense it represented a voluntary choice; as we now see, it witnessed to their wisdom as well as to their integrity. With that spiritual instinct which is often a surer guide of conduct at a crisis than any elaborate or reasoned set of motives, the vast majority of the Puritans declined to throw in their lot with the triumphant Episcopalians in order to form a comprehensive Church in which they saw no guarantee that the chosen, chainless principles of their faith and liberty would be respected. The Anglican dementia was powerful. But, fortunately for England, the Puritans kept their heads.

Nor were the deposed ministers permitted even to worship in their own way. The Corporation Act had cut the roots of Presbyterian influence municipally, but the Conventicle Act, based on a dread of seditious gatherings, prohibited all religious meetings outside the pale of the Episcopal Church, on pain of fine, imprisonment,¹ and transportation. This left scope for all manner of local injustice. It encouraged informers, and by its practical working seemed a contrivance for actually

¹ Among the inspiring and touching details given in Barclay's volume (pp. 474 f.), which deals with the persecution of the Quakers, it is noted that when adults were put in prison their children kept up the meeting, despite insults and whippings from the police. George Whitehead, with humorous prudence, always put his nightcap in his pocket when he attended a service, the probability being that he might have to spend the night in gaol. Bunyan, Fox, and Baxter have made the pitiful sufferings of the other dissenters a classic page in the struggle for religious liberty, and the agony of the Scots Covenanters at this period is cut even more deeply in the national memory.

goading people into disobedience or disloyalty. Finally, by what has been termed 'perhaps the meanest and most spiteful of all the persecuting edicts that ever received the sanction of an English sovereign' (Dr. Hodgkin)—although the blame and shame of it fall most heavily on the Church and Parliament—no Nonconformist minister or teacher was permitted to come within five miles of any town or borough, or of any place where he had formerly officiated. 'No honest man would take that oath,' said Lord Southampton in the House of Lords. He did not add, as posterity has added, the corollary that no honest man would have suggested or enforced it. Sheldon and the Church-party, however, were determined to mow down all Protestant dissent. Opposition and protest were overborne, and the measure passed into law. *Tam saeva et infesta virtutibus tempora.*

Such was the England in which Owen spent the third and last period of his life, nine years in Essex and nearly nine in Oxford being followed by twenty-three in domestic semi-exile. James VI. once spoke of 'this salmond-like instinct of ours' which prompts a man to revisit his early haunts. Owen had followed such an instinct on his retirement from the university. He settled down at Stadham, where he had purchased a small estate, and where, in his seclusion, he preached still to a few people as occasion offered, and pursued his studies. He was in the prime of life. His mental faculties were at their zenith. Yet no occupation offered. The Oath of Uniformity, of course, he would not take, but as the various persecuting Acts were occasionally relaxed, he seized advantage of every opportunity to engage in preaching to the common people. Unlike Bunyan and Fox, he escaped arrest and imprisonment, although his escapes were often narrow. The fact was, Owen's intellectual eminence had won him high respect among the upper classes, while he numbered among his personal friends several members of the aristocracy, including Sir John Treves, secretary of State to the Cabal, Earl Berkeley, and Lord Wharton (on whom see

Carlyle's *Cromwell*, letter lxviii.). The informers found it safer and more profitable to swoop at lower game.

His preaching during these years was naturally tinged with an indignant melancholy. Puritanism was riding out the storm, and to Owen's eye it looked as if the secular reaction was sweeping away before it every anchorage of morals and religion which the Puritans held dear. The estimate, as we now see, was exaggerated. Though the official air of the Court was what Keats once called 'an officinal atmosphere,' outside London a real religious life was thriving, and morals were not yet at a discount either in the provinces or even far outside Whitehall. 'God knows,' said honest Clarendon to his master, 'neither the Fabricii nor the Camilli can be found' at Court. Spoken previous to the Restoration, these words only gained in truth as the years passed on. Nevertheless it is absurd to generalise from the Court to the country, although even a sympathetic survey of the latter gives no great cause for optimism. Superficially it would seem as if much of the religion of the land lay at the mercy of visionaries, theological disputants, and apostates from morals or Protestantism.

One looks on God, and then with eyes struck blind
Brings a confusing rumour to mankind ;
And others listen, and no work can do
Till they have got that God defined anew ;
And in the darkness some have fallen, as fell
To baser gods the folk of Israel.

But there were still families like the Verneys, the Evelyns, and the Harleys, while, beyond question, a great body of devout Christian people in all the churches and in all classes stood aloof from extravagances of conduct and opinion, although as usual these normal folk do not emerge above the surface of history. Even the rising group of the Quakers had a part to play in the religious evolution of the age. Their protest, couched frequently in censorious language, now as ever told against the intellectual rigidity of Calvinism and the ceremonial exter-

nalism which marked Episcopal as it had marked Presbyterian worship. But the ferment of this protest was not popular, and to Owen's mind it seemed 'a confusing rumour' of divine things, threatening to evaporate the organisation of Christianity and to compromise the value of the Bible. Hence on all sides the Independent theologian was harassed. He saw but scanty patches of green grass around him. Towards the Anglican he had to keep on the defensive, when his principles of Church government or of Calvinism were attacked. Towards the Quaker, who deemed him an over-exact definer of religion, he turned a face of vigilant suspicion. Towards the Romanist his attitude was that of acrid antagonism, an attitude shared for the nonce by all the Anglicans.

If divinity be, as Bacon judged, 'the haven and Sabbath of man's contemplation,' it was generally far from being a waveless haven or a calm Sabbath for the theologians of the seventeenth century. In 1662 Owen had put into his hands for a few days, 'by an honourable person,' the Roman Catholic work entitled *Fiat Lux*, a subtle and ingenious book which had been published in the previous year by a Franciscan monk, John Vincent Cane. Since fear and hate of Popery were the sole unifying principle in the religious politics of that day, Owen, as a well-known protagonist in theology, was requested to answer Cane,¹ and if the 'person of honour' was (as most suppose) Lord Clarendon, it is a striking tribute to the wide and sincere esteem in which Owen, for all his Nonconformity, was held. Nothing loth to engage in the fray, he struck in with a true-blue Protestant reply, followed later by a vindication of his arguments or animadversions, which makes one or two good

¹ Owen would exclude Romanists from toleration on religious, not on political, grounds. His charge against them was blasphemy and idolatry; like Bunyan, he was ready to forgive Charles and the Government almost anything for proving a bulwark against the antichrist of Popery. Even Locke thought it fair, as a means of self-defence, to deny toleration to intolerant people, atheists and Romanists.

points, in a curiously modern vein of thought. Thus, in answer to the plea that outside Rome all is confusion, he retorts that the differences among Protestants are not greater than those among Romanists. 'The imputation of the errors and miscarriages of the Socinians and Quakers unto Protestantism is of no other nature than that of Pagans of old charging the follies and abominations of the Gnostics and Valentinians on Christians.' And as for Protestants, 'what evils, I wonder, are to be found amongst them, as to divisions, that are not conspicuous to all in the Papacy? The princes and nations of their profession are, or have been, engaged in mortal feuds and wars one against another, all the world over. Their divines write as stiffly against one another as men can do. . . . All public libraries and private studies of learned men abound with them: their invectives, apologies, accusations, charges, underminings of one another, are part of the weekly news of these days. . . . I profess I wonder, whilst their own house is so visibly on fire, that they can find leisure to scold at others for not quenching theirs.' This was, no doubt, an effective *tu quoque* in the days when the Jesuits and Jansenists were biting each other on the other side of the Channel. But Owen goes deeper still. 'Nor,' he adds, 'is the remaining agreement that they boast of one jot better than either their own dissensions or ours. It is not union or agreement amongst men absolutely that is to be valued. Simeon and Levi never did worse than when they agreed best.' As for the time-honoured plea that all differences would be remedied by submission to the Roman discipline, Owen here makes grim, short work of Father Cane. 'This I know, that a return to Rome will not do it, unless, when we come thither, we can learn to behave ourselves better than those who are there already. And there is indeed no party of men in the world but can give as good security of ending our differences as the Romanists. If we would all turn Quakers it would end our disputes; and that is all that is provided for us if we will turn Papists. This is the language of every party (and, for my

part, I think they believe what they say)—“Come over to us, and we shall all agree.” Only the Romanists are likely to obtain least credit as to this matter among most men, because they cannot agree among themselves, and are as unfit to umpire the differences of other men as Philip of Macedon was to quiet Greece, whilst he, his wife and children, were together by the ears at home.’

The excellence and popularity of this polemic¹ won Owen the warm praise of Clarendon, who assured him that he ‘deserved the best of any English Protestant of late years,’ and offered him preferment in the Church of England, if he would conform. He little knew his man. Neither the sunshine of favour nor the storm of persecution could divert the Puritan from his chosen path of religious liberty or woo him from the guidance of conscience, as he conceived it. Like Baxter, who refused an offer from the Earl of Lauderdale of any academic or ecclesiastical position he chose in Scotland, Owen put aside Clarendon’s bait, and also a tempting invitation from the freer country of America to be minister of a Congregational church in Boston. For reasons which it is no longer possible to fathom, he remained at home, after some hesitation. He had subsequently to decline similar overtures from academic bodies in Holland, and, it is said, even from the American Harvard.

Meantime the great plague and the great fire, which devastated London, gave a breathing-space to the Nonconformists. To the credit of Sheldon and the bishop of London, it must be allowed that they stood staunchly at their posts during the pestilence. Nor were they wholly unsupported by their clergy. But the rank and file of the latter were by no means so heroic, and as Von Ranke argues, it was the proscribed Puritans who came to the front with spiritual and temporal offices, until the

¹ There was some difficulty about getting it licensed, as the bishops took umbrage at Owen’s rejection of Peter’s visit to Rome, and at his omission of ‘St.’ before Paul and the apostles !

plague was stayed. Since the fire threw everything afresh into confusion, the dissenters now ventured to hold their meetings more openly in the metropolis, and of the Independents, Owen ('who had before kept far off,' says his opponent, Baxter), Nye, and Goodwin took advantage of the respite. Their audiences were considerable. For reasons of shame or policy, the authorities forbore meantime to prohibit the citizens from attending worship in these meetings, when most of the churches were burned down or deserted. Hence Owen and his friends 'were by the King's favour connived at,¹ so that people went openly to hear them without fear.' 'Some,' adds Baxter (*Reliquiæ Baxterianæ*, part iii. sect. 57), with his wonted shrewdness of insight, 'some imputed this to the King's own inclination to liberty of conscience; some to the Duke of Buckingham's prevalency; some to the Papists' interest, who were for liberty of conscience for their own interest. . . . But whatever else was the secret cause, it is evident that the great visible cause was the burning of London, and the want of churches for the people to meet in; it being at the first a thing too gross to forbid an undone people all publick worshipping of God with too great rigour. And if they had been so forbidden, poverty had left them so little to lose as would have made them desperately go on. Therefore some thought all this was, to make necessity seem a favour.'

Owen's pen had not lain idle during these days of change. In a series of tracts or brief anonymous manifestoes he had been copiously and forcibly pleading the rights of conscience and the due of toleration² on behalf of the dissenters. He was also

¹ Pepys corroborates this, and observes later on (Sept. 4, 1668), *à propos* of an anti-Puritan play, 'the business of abusing the Puritans begins to grow stale and of no use, they being the people that at last will be found the wisest.'

² Locke's youthful essay *On Toleration* appears to have been written about this time (1666), but Owen's arguments for toleration are, of course, less prudential than his former student's, and his ideal is not so much one comprehensive Church as permission for dissenters to live side by side with the central body. Locke's posthumous *Defence of Nonconformity*, displaying the same catholic gener-

responsible for a 'Discourse concerning Liturgies and their Imposition,' which is not particularly convincing, and for a catechism which led to some abortive attempts, on the part of Baxter and himself, to promote the union of the Independents and the Presbyterians. The worthy Baxter was, perhaps, more frank than wise in his approaches to John Owen. He was acute rather than diplomatic. 'I resolved,' he writes, 'to try once more with Dr. Owen. And though all our business with each other had been contradiction, I thought it my duty without any thoughts of former things to go to him and be a seeker of peace: which he seemed to take well. . . . I told him that I must deal freely with him; that when I thought of what he had done formerly [what of Baxter's resolve to forget "former things"?], I was much afraid lest one that had been so great a breaker, would not be made an instrument in healing; but in other respects I thought him the fittest man in England for this work . . . and that a book which he had lately written (a catechism for Independency) offensive to others, was my chief motive to make this motion to him.' Owen, however, seems to have resented Baxter's suspicion of his good faith in the matter of Christian unity, while Baxter, for his part, could not see his way to go beyond the Bible and the Creed as standards of the faith. It was futile, he argued, to stop at any one council as the final standard of orthodoxy. And thus, in spite of interviews and correspondence, the project slowly faded.

The year 1668 saw a rich harvest from John Owen's pen, in his searching, introspective treatise on *Indwelling Sin*,¹ his osity of mind, was called forth by Stillingfleet's outburst in 1680, and his famous *Epistola de Tolerantia* came out in 1685 (see Canon Henson's educative and candid chapter, pp. 211-265). On his debt to Owen, see Fox Bourne's *Life of Locke*, vol. i. pp. 72-76.

¹ Rabbi Duncan used to advise his students at the end of the session: 'Read, gentlemen, John Owen on Indwelling Sin, but prepare yourselves for the scalpel' (see *Colloquia Peripatetica*, p. 20). Owen was more afraid of the worldly holy than of the wholly worldly in the Church, and his severest strokes are reserved for those 'walking and talking skeletons in religion,' of the tribe of By-ends and Ignorance.

exposition of the 130th Psalm, and the first volume of his elaborate edition of the Epistle to the Hebrews.¹ The exposition of the psalm is a wonderful book. Really it forms a long, fertile series of discourses on the fourth verse of the psalm, which had once proved a spring of light and consolation to Owen himself when under deep depression. The massive and scholarly commentary on Hebrews occupied four volumes, the last of which was published posthumously in 1684, while other two volumes appeared at regular intervals of six years after the issue of the first, a witness not merely to Owen's capacity as a textualist, but to his unremitting powers of work amid the distractions and discouragements of an age, when, as he remarks, the blustering wind and clouds might have deterred a theologian from attempting to sow or even reap. In a preface to the first volume, he indicates a certain sense of fear in case his work might seem unseasonable. 'We live in times,' he allows, 'that are fortified against the use of discourses of this nature, especially such as are so long and bulky. The world, and the minds of men therein, are filled with disorder and confusion; and the most are at their wits' end with looking after the things that are come and coming on the earth. They have enough to do in hearing, telling, and reading real or pretended news of public affairs, so as to divert them from engaging their time and industry in the perusal and study of such discourses. Besides, there is not any thing in this now published to condite [*i.e.* recommend] it unto the palate of the present age—in personal contests and reflections, in pleading for and against any party of men or especial way in the profession of religion. Only the fundamental truths of the Gospel are occasionally contended for. These and the like considera-

¹ Hebrews was a favourite book for prelections in that age. Owen's work was only the climax of an English series which had included expositions by David Dickson (1635), Dr. William Jones (1636), Dr. Lushington (1640), Bishop Downhame (1640), Dr. Gouge (1655), and George Lawson (1662). It had the honour of being rendered into Dutch in 1733.

tions might possibly, in the judgment of some, have shut up this whole discourse in darkness, upon the account of its being unseasonable.' But Owen's edition of Hebrews, which was in the front rank of scholarship in its own day, is much more than a series of learned tomes, for the temper of reaction combated in the epistle was singularly akin to the temper of the Restoration as viewed from a Puritan study. A fear and awe ever lay for Owen in the question: *How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?* Many pages of his work on Hebrews are still unsurpassed for their conscience of the gravity which attends a profession of Christianity by the individual or by the Church, and it is this sense which vitalises passage after passage in the exposition. The lane is often narrow and dusty. But there are roses here and there upon the hedgerows, and occasionally a prospect of far spaces as the lane winds and rises. For what accompanies Owen in his exposition is a growing impression of human sin and love divine, like that which throbs in Herbert's verses on *The Agonie*, and the sections of his great commentary that reach and hold us are informed by one or other of these spacious truths. Otherwise, it shares with several other of the author's treatises the condemnation of Robert Hall, who acutely remarked that Owen as a reasoner was illogical. 'He almost always takes for granted what he ought to prove, while he is always proving what he ought to take for granted.'

The red god of debate was still abroad, however, and next year Owen stepped from these calm, cool fields into the inflammable tract of controversy, with a reply, entitled *Truth and Innocence Vindicated*, to Samuel Parker's virulent and telling book on *Ecclesiastical Polity*, which practically banned toleration in any shape. Parker had been a Puritan. He was now household chaplain to Archbishop Sheldon, and lost no chance of blackguarding his former associates with a cleverness of the Hurrell Froude order—the cleverness which, as the son of Sirach observes, 'maketh bitterness to abound.' 'He writeth the most scornfully and rashly and profanely and

cruelly against the Nonconformists of any man that ever yet assaulted them (that I have heard of). And in a fluent, fervent, ingenious style of natural rhetoric, poureth out floods of odious reproaches.' Thus far Baxter, whom Owen in vain urged to reply. In despair he wrote an answer himself which greatly increased his renown among the Nonconformists; it is thorough, religious, and informed with just enough personal feeling to give it swing and push. Other anonymous replies appeared.¹ But Parker's answer (in 1670) settled waspishly on Owen's past record. Unable to meet the Puritan's arguments with any success, the renegade pounced on personalities. His methods were not overscrupulous, and his victory was not difficult. As Baxter admits, Owen's connection with the Wallingford House movement and his anti-monarchical sermons handicapped him seriously in defending Nonconformists from the charge of being politically suspect. 'And so I fear,' says Baxter, 'his unfitness for this work was a general injury to the Nonconformists.' Fortunately Andrew Marvell, M.P. for Hull, eventually entered the lists, and, like a Puritan Ulrich von Hutten, used banter and satire to discomfit the Episcopalian man-at-arms, to the general amusement of the public. *Solvuntur tabulæ risu*. For once the laughers had a patent of right. And for once the Puritans had satire on their side.

Of Owen's other works² at this busy time, his very popular essay *On the Trinity* (1669), which I frankly allow is stone

¹ The skirmish is excellently described in Hunt's *Religious Thought in England*, vol. ii. pp. 11 f., and in Masson's *Milton*, vol. vi. pp. 700 f. Burnet dubs Parker 'a man full of satirical vivacity, but of no judgment, little virtue, and, as to religion, rather impious.' He is not an engaging figure among the Anglicans.

² In Aubrey's *Brief Lives* (ed. by Dr. A. Clark, 1898), i. 85, there is an epitaph said to have been written by Owen upon Edward Bagshaw, a former student of Christ Church, who died in 1671 after being imprisoned for refusing to take the oath of allegiance. As a minister of the Gospel, he 'received from God faith to embrace it, courage to defend it, and patience to suffer for it,' while eventually he 'took sanctuary by the will of God in eternall rest.'

rather than loadstone, was written in a few hours, whilst his book on *Christian Love and Peace*, a positive justification of the Independents and their religious attitude, appeared in 1672, when Nonconformists were allowed, in the teeth of bitter opposition from the Cavalier Parliament, to have their gatherings licensed for public worship. This abatement of the grinding persecution which had hitherto prevailed, was entirely due to Charles, for the King was probably politic enough to see the gain of posing, at no expense, as the patron of liberty in London. The Nonconformists seized their brief, golden chance. Their popularity in the capital increased, and before long the Presbyterians and Independents especially had established a weekly lectureship at Princes' Hall in Broad Street, where Owen and Baxter were among the distinguished preachers for some years. Owen further officiated to a small congregation in Leadenhall Street, with which that of Caryll was soon amalgamated after the latter's demise, and the standing of the preacher drew round him many distinguished people not merely from the Puritans, but also from the Episcopal nobility.¹ To the notes taken by one of these, Sir John Hartopp, we owe several of Owen's posthumous discourses. It was about this time (1669) also that Owen had drawn up a strong remonstrance which was forwarded by the English Independents to their American brethren, protesting against the persecuting spirit shown by the latter. Little or no immediate effect was produced, however. The lesson of *Cowper's Nightingale and Glow-worm* has been slowly and reluctantly learned, and even the better spirits of the seventeenth century had but commenced to spell it out.

The bulk of the dissenters in Owen's congregation and elsewhere, however, were tradesmen or merchants. 'They are mostly of that sort and condition of men in the commonwealth on whose industry and endeavours, in their several ways and

¹ When he died, his funeral was attended by over sixty noblemen in their carriages, besides many other mourners.

callings, the trade and wealth of the nation do much depend.'¹ The charge of sedition brought against their meetings was generally little more than frivolous, but it was often made a pretext for wanton interference with the liberty of the subject, and thus there is little or no doubt, as Von Ranke argues, that by a process of reaction 'the political springs of action co-operated' in the Nonconformists' resistance to the oaths and acts of Charles, since the struggle still was wider than a conflict between the devoutness of Puritanism and the dignity of ceremonialism. In any case political liberty, no less than a religious conscience, was imperilled by an oath, *e.g.*, which insisted that under no circumstances whatsoever was it lawful to take up arms against the king and his ministers. To Puritan Protestants of the middle classes, who knew the Duke of York's religion and the thinly disguised intrigues of Papal priests at Whitehall, it seemed a plain duty to reject at all hazards any demand like this, that opened the floodgates dangerously wide to Romanism. Affirming their loyalty, they therefore refused compliance with the Church of England, which in their view had forfeited her vantage-ground against the Italian heresy and seized unfair means of securing her position with the Court and against the Puritans. Politics and theology were still inextricably intertwined, although the issues had altered since the Restoration; but the Puritan's interest in politics sprang from his passion for personal liberty in religion and for the security of Protestantism in England. Is it to be wondered at that he was alarmed and resolute, when a man of Stillingfleet's calibre could openly avow that the Church and the monarch, like the twins of Hippocrates, rose

¹ Owen's *Plea for Indulgence and Liberty of Conscience* (1667). Towards the end he states the case of the dissenters thus. 'What are we, that we should complain of any whom God is pleased to stir up and use for our exercise and trial? We desire in patience and silence to bear his indignation, against whom we have sinned. . . . In the meantime it is our duty to live peaceably with all men in a conscientious subjection unto that authority which he hath set over us.' This resembles the temper of Milton's Samson.

and fell together? As Owen and his friends felt, such Erastianism was an outrage alike on faith and common sense.

A breathing-space, we have seen, was won for the dissenters. But it had been brief. The unrelaxed enmity of the Parliament and the bishops overbore Charles's indulgent temper towards the Puritans; Buckingham's protection of the Presbyterians proved unavailing, and licences were withdrawn. Once more the storm broke upon Owen and his fellows. But while the penal laws were vigorously enforced, and informers encouraged to ferret out the Nonconformists, somehow, owing possibly to his repute and worth, Owen still escaped comparatively scathless; as with Cyprian so with him, *non enim ipse tormentis sed tormenta ipsi defuerunt*. He was even able to exert his good offices with some statesmen in favour of his brethren, during the cruelty and confusion of these years. One of these brethren was the tinker Bunyan; and it would appear from Asty that Owen's efforts were successful in procuring his release from prison. It is well known how ardently Owen admired John Bunyan's preaching, perhaps with the noble envy felt by an academic nature in the ministry for the power of an evangelist or a popular preacher to speak effectively upon religion to the common people. Charles II. once asked him, in wonder, 'how a courtly man such as he was could sit and listen to an illiterate tinker.' 'May it please your Majesty,' said Owen, 'could I possess that tinker's abilities for preaching, I would most gladly relinquish all my learning.' To any one outside the cool zone of piety in which Southey spent his blameless days, there will not seem anything in this reply which is discreditable to Owen's judgment. The tale is obviously authentic, one fresh proof that a man's greatness is visible in his admirations as well as, ay sometimes more than, in his antipathies. Owen standing reverently in the crowd round Bunyan is not a less noble figure than Owen falling with the weapons of his logic upon Goodwin, Walton, or Socinus.

Yet he himself had considerable power and influence as a preacher, although his sermons had nothing of the vogue enjoyed by those of Travers, Taylor, Cartwright, or Tillotson. Persuasiveness is said to have been his dominant characteristic in the pulpit, where he had 'a very graceful behaviour,' and he also possessed, as several of his printed sermons help to show, a winning eloquence, with great command of language. These sermons, it must be remembered, were not preached exactly as they now stand. They were written out afterwards, in part from memory, and more than once even Owen's theological treatises were actually worked up thus from materials originally prepared for the pulpit, especially for St. Mary's at Oxford. His technical volumes often swarm with classical and patristic citations. But his sermons, prolix as they read, are almost as destitute of such meretricious adornments, as were those of Philip Henry. For the contemporary love¹ of a display of learning in the pulpit, which marks the leading preachers of the age, like Bossuet and Laud, Owen seems to have had as much sympathy as Savonarola had for the pseudo-classical orations of the Florentine clergy, while in one or two places he follows Thomas Fuller and Goodwin in openly scorning the religious foppery and far-fetched conceits of the 'Marinism'² which had soaked through Italian poetry into the English pulpit, till it became what euphuism had become in literature, an affectation and a discord. The feeling of contempt for what was merely pretty led him probably too far into a simplicity that is bare and dull for the most part. His compositions, as Dr. Johnson said of St. Andrews Castle, seem 'built with more attention to security than pleasure.' He is

¹ Pepys was properly disgusted with one divine who preached, after the fire in 1666, upon London being reduced from a large folio to a duodecimo-tertio.

² It was not confined to scholars. Erudite displays seem to have been rather relished in unexpected quarters, and it is amusing to find that when that learned Orientalist, Pocock, endeavoured to speak simply to his village congregation at Childrey, the latter remonstrated, on the score that their minister was 'no Latiner.'

sometimes recondite and archaic, if not pedantic, in his treatment of even the simplest issues in Christianity, so much so that one is tempted to think of Baxter's frank verdict on one of his own books: 'All is but briefly done (the Heads being many) without any life or ornament of stile.' Yet, for all his tedious digressions and cumbrous terminology, Owen is sincere. If pedantry is beside the purpose of a living faith, it is less irrelevant and nauseous than preciosity; and while Owen may be wooden, he is never windy, and he never preaches with detestable cleverness. When Owen is at a sermon, he is bent on business. In writing sermons, even more than in composing treatises of theology, he is too much alive to great and grave issues to let fancy divert his mind. Like Shakespeare's Ulysses, he prefers dusty gold to dust a little gilt. Still, as Fuller once said, a sermon is the better for similitudes as windows, whilst arguments serve as pillars of the edifice. And Owen's solid sermons are badly furnished with the former.

As preacher and theologian, he still occupied a prominent position which was recognised beyond the circle of his own sect. When the declaration of Indulgence was issued in 1672, he was chosen to voice the gratitude felt by the London Nonconformists to his Majesty, and throughout this period he was in fairly close contact with statesmen like the Earls of Anglesea and Orrery. He also stood before princes in his day. In 1674 the Duke of York sent for him at Tunbridge Wells and had a long interview with him, whilst Charles had private audiences with him in London, and once gave him a thousand guineas for distribution among the poor after the London fire.

Meantime the Roman controversy assumed fresh forms of menace to the Church and State. The milk-white hind was displaying some curiously venomous traits in her disposition. Maddened partly by their persistent ill-treatment, the Romanists in England were turning to some political design,

which may be roughly detected under all the hysterical and shameful exaggerations of the later Popish plot; for on this point, at any rate, I cannot see that either Father Gerard or Mr. Andrew Lang has been able to set aside Mr. Pollock's thesis. As the Duke of York, too, was a pervert, English feeling rose in a panic at the thought of the crown falling to a Romanist, and that swarthy rake and traitor Charles was shrewdly suspected of toying with a plot to reintroduce Tudor absolutism on the basis of Romanism, by making England an appanage of France. This dread of Popery felt by the nation explains most of its vagaries during the latter half of the seventeenth century. It helps to explain both the persecution and the compulsory toleration of Protestant dissenters, for now the Episcopal Church saw in the latter a source of weakness to the organisation which in their mind was the one firm dyke against the Roman sea, and now (though less frequently) the sense of a common peril drove Anglican and Puritan together in a loose league against the common foe. It helps also to explain the rise of popular suspicion which finally flashed out in 1678, and for which Charles must be held ultimately responsible. As Dr. Osmund Airy wisely judges, the king mishandled the people. 'By surrender to the Parliament during the session, and evasion of his surrender during recess; by acceding to savage laws against the Catholics, while he welcomed them at Whitehall and gave them commissions in his regiments; by his alternate alliances, first with the Protestant Republic against the aggression of Catholic France, and then with France against the Republic; by his Popish mistresses, his Popish Queen, his Popish heir—himself nominally Protestant king of a Protestant country . . . Charles had brought this "sober nation" into a state of nervous irritation in which they were ready to lose all self-control' (*Charles II.*, pp. 180 f., 330 f.).

In the 'world's debate' which accompanied the French controversy of 1664 f., Owen in England was found fighting during

1679-1682 especially, and even earlier, alongside Anglicans like Barrow, Tillotson, and Taylor, though he was sensible enough to see that no mere learned refutation of Papal errors would suffice, and that penal restrictions were quite a peevish defence. His contribution to the defence is positive, not negative; religious, not ecclesiastical. 'We may cry *Popery*, *Popery*, as we please,' but it is unavailing if Protestantism does not mean a positive establishment of personal religion in the common people. This, says Owen, is the best bulwark of Christianity against error. He says it in his treatise on *Apostasy* (1676), a mournful¹ and indignant analysis of contemporary religion in the period of reaction under Charles II., which is in reality an exposition of Heb. vi. 4-6, flung off in the course of his studies on that epistle. In its second chapter there is an interesting allusion, one of several indeed, to people who were becoming perverts not to Rome, but to the equally heinous creed of Islam. 'I myself knew one, yea was conversant with him, and assisting of him in the concerns of his soul, who in the Indies turned Mohammedan, was actually initiated by circumcision into their superstition, and lived in its outward practice a year or two; who yet was sincerely recovered unto repentance and died in the faith of the Son of God.' The reference is not isolated. Laud, it is well known, took a keen interest in the cases of captives who perverted to Islam, and actually compiled a rigid 'Form of Penance and Reconciliation of Apostates from the Christian Religion to Turcism.' Fuller, too, has his fling at Islam as evidently a real topic of contemporary interest and danger. He is astonished at the ground it gains on Christianity. 'For what is it but the scum of Judaism and paganism sod together, and here and

¹ He candidly allows in one place (ch. v.) that 'the lives of the common sort of Protestants are no better than those of the Papists, nor are theirs to be compared with those of some of the Mohammedans.' This in the course of an argument that it is unfair to judge a religion always by the rank and file of its adherents.

there strewed over with a spice of Christianity.' And so on. It is to him 'a pretty *quære* whether Turks or Tartars be easier convertible to the Christian religion,' but after due consideration he decides in favour of the latter. Islam's political power in Europe had not been long ruined. The memories of it were fresh. Still Turkish pirates were a danger to mariners, and Islam's creed was but too sadly familiar to many a prisoned sailor.

'I was helped by Owen on the Spirit,' writes Boston at the end of 1728. 'That book of Owen's was laid to my hand, for an use I knew not till I had it.' The volume in question had been in circulation for over fifty years. It was in 1677 and 1678 that Owen found leisure to issue the first two parts of a monumental treatise on the Holy Spirit, which is designed as a defence of that doctrine (see below on Eph. vi. 24) against the indifference of the current theology towards it, the depreciation of it by the Socinians, and its exaggeration by the Quakers and mystics, like Barclay, with their 'internal light.' Against the first two classes of opponents Owen inveighs, though it is quite unfair, as he ironically admits, to call them 'rational divines.' Let their plaintive demurrer be accepted by all means, for the charge, the reproach is undeserved. 'So far as I can discern, it is as Hierom was beaten by an angel for being a Ciceronian (in the judgment of some) very undeservedly.' Still, the bulk of Owen's writing on this subject is less vivid; it is sound reasoning as a rule, but terribly prolix, and its interest is mainly, if not entirely, historical. The book has dignity, coherence, and unity; but it lives by its oases of devotional refreshment. The topic seems to have been in the air when Owen wrote. We know, for example, that, besides Goodwin, John Howe lectured in London, during 1677 and 1678, upon the person and the office of the Holy Spirit. It was one issue against Quakerism.

Even more abstruse was his contemporary book on *The Doctrine of Justification*, issued in 1677. It is voluminous

and unpersuasive. Most of its arguments have been superseded, but there is a notable spirit of conciliatoriness in the preface. 'I lay more weight on the steady direction of one soul in this inquiry, than on disappointing the objections of twenty wrangling or fiery disputers.' And again: 'I have somewhat else to do than to cast away any part of the small remainder of my life in that kind of controversial writings which good men bewail and wise men deride.' Owen had had a plentiful amount of black language poured upon him in his day, and one libel by a Gloucestershire rector he had formally to answer, in an open letter to Sir Thomas Overbury. He had been termed 'a person of such rank complexion that he would have vy'd with Mahomet himself both for boldness and imposture'; 'the dunghill is his only magazine, and calumny his only weapon,' said Parker once. Which is no more than the ordinary sort of detraction to which any public man is exposed, especially if at certain periods of his career he has taken a resolute and unpopular stand in politics or religion. But, even aside from this, Owen had been ever a fighter in theology. As Joan of Arc had her little battle-axe and crucifix, so Owen had his pen sharpened for attack and for devotion. On him, as one of the most competent of living Calvinists, there still devolved the duty of defending that creed against all comers in a period both of wholesome and unwholesome reaction, and although he did his work satisfactorily to those who looked to him for a vindication of their belief, an inevitable result of it all was to lend an unduly polemical tone to his earlier writings, while even after one discounts so much as is chargeable to the form and pressure of that turbulent age, the impression of heat and hardness is not removed. It must be at once added that his contemporaries were seldom offended at what repels a modern mind. As things went, Owen bore a fair and cleanly reputation for a controversialist.¹ Yet about this period a healing

¹ It wrung even from Antony Wood the frank admission that he was 'one of the most genteel and fairest writers who have appeared against the Church of

temper is more visible in his language. 'How soft and peaceable his spirit was for many of his last years,' says Matthew Sylvester. He was not old, as age goes; not much more than sixty. But he was becoming more concerned than ever in the positive grounds of agreement between English Christians. Owen was mellowing. 'In what I have to offer on this subject,' he writes (and the italics are his own), 'I shall not in the least depart from the *ancient doctrine of the Church of England*;¹ yea, I have no design but to declare and vindicate it, as God shall enable.' 'As far as it is possible for me, I shall avoid the concerning of myself at present in these differences [among learned, sober, and orthodox persons as to justification]; for unto what purpose is it to contend about them, whilst the *substance of the doctrine* itself is openly opposed and rejected? Why should we debate about the order and beautifying of the rooms in a house, whilst fire is set unto the whole?'

A recent critic of Matthew Arnold's poetry has called attention to the poet's favourite method of rounding off a piece of verse with soothing, reconciling lines. Probably Arnold caught this device from the Hellenic drama, where many a tragedy sweeps to its close in a quiet phrase or comment, as if to draw off the mind from the sheer pain and strife of what precedes. In this sense, Owen's literary career

England, as handling his adversaries with far more civil, decent, and temperate language than many of his fiery brethren, and by confining himself wholly to the cause without the unbecoming mixture of personal slanders and reflections.' Owen had a lofty contempt for personalities. 'Downright dirty railing,' he once wrote, 'is beneath the genius of the times, and by common consent condemned to the bear-garden and Billingsgate.'

¹ In his vigorous 'Letter concerning Excommunication,' he incidentally declares, in explaining the nature of the people called 'Dissenters,' that 'there is nothing determined by the ancient councils to belong unto Christian faith which they disbelieve. . . . They own the doctrine of the Church of England as established by law, in nothing receding from it; nor have they any novel or uncatholic opinion of their own.' See the passages cited below under the colophon of 'The Genuine Catholicism.'

resembles such a poem, for it runs full and deep and quiet, with gathered waters, towards the end.

For many a league
The shorn and parcell'd Oxus strains along
Through beds of sand and matted rushy isles —
Oxus, forgetting the bright speed he had
In his high mountain-cradle in Pamere,
A foil'd circuitous wanderer—till at last
The long'd-for dash of waves is heard, and wide
His luminous home of waters opens, bright
And tranquil, from whose floor the new-bathed stars
Emerge and shine upon the Aral Sea.

It was not that Owen's hold of principle or interest in great issues was relaxed, for he still engages warmly in the Romish controversy, as we have seen, and plunges into a controversy with Stillingworth upon the nature of the Church, in order to counteract the reactionary tendencies abroad in Anglicanism, as well as to elucidate the Nonconformist theory of the Church. Yet even here, as in his *Union among Protestants*, an ironical spirit dominates the argument. Apart from the Lord's Supper, no question has so sharply divided Christendom as that of Christian unity. Owen had his oar in this as well, and whatever be thought of his arguments as a practical solution, his spirit is unexceptional. English religion in the seventeenth century was a sea of questions, ecclesiastical as well as spiritual. None rowed up and down in it more strenuously than John Owen, but few are less liable to the charge of having made undue commotion or splashed vain-gloriously.

Nor was it that his outward circumstances won him any halcyon interval. The closing years of his life fell amid black, sorry times for Nonconformists. After the Oxford Parliament of 1681 the popular feeling turned again, while the ruling powers remained, like the Philistine lords, 'wondrous harsh, contemptuous, proud, set on revenge and spite.' The Stuart dyn-

asty was to be England's shield and glory, and sharp measures were called for against the Nonconformists, who shared with the Catholics the honour of being the scapegoats of that age.¹ 'The old valour and swaggerings of the Cavaliers seemed to be revived again,' says Burnet, and 'the clergy on this occasion carried matters higher still. They cried up the Duke's succession, as if a Popish king had been a special blessing of Providence, and gave themselves a loose against Nonconformists as if there was no other danger from that quarter.' In addition to the permanent ill-usage and vexations to which they were subjected, the Puritans came under suspicion for the Rye-House Plot. No charge was too absurd to be credited, and Owen, who had retired in ill-health to his property at Ealing, did not escape the blast. Lord Wharton, one of his hearers, managed chivalrously to protect him at Woburn for a while, and he fared better in some ways than many of his brethren. But no protection could ward off public woes and private griefs. His sons all died before him, while in 1676 he had lost his wife, although shortly afterwards he married the young, wealthy widow of Thomas D'Oyley, a neighbouring proprietor in Oxfordshire. In 1668 he had inherited a legacy from a rich relative, Martyn Owen, who had been a London brewer, so that with this and his private savings he never felt the pinch of poverty, as did most of his fellow-ministers. Both at Kensington and Ealing he had a house of his own, and kept a private carriage. But disease was upon him, and his closing years were punctuated by paroxysms of severe physical distress. As he wrote in his last volume, ministers of the Gospel experience as a rule some increase of trouble as old age overtakes them—trouble in their bodies and in their affairs—and that at the very time 'when they look for nothing less, but are ready to say with Job, "We shall die in our

¹ Shortly before his death, some parts of his writings were amongst the books publicly burned at Oxford. It was the last honour done him by his old university.

nest." . . . And oftentimes both persecutions and public dangers do befall them at the same season.'

It was amid such conditions that Owen drew in his thoughts to the eternal central things, and penned his three classical treatises on *Christologia*, *The Grace and Duty of being Spiritually Minded* (1681), and *Meditations and Discourses on the Glory of Christ*. In the preface to the second of these works, he remarks that the state of public affairs engrosses the thoughts and almost absorbs the conversation of his contemporaries, 'for the world at present is in a mighty hurry, and being in many places cast off from all foundations of steadfastness, it makes the minds of men giddy with its revolutions, or disorderly in the expectations of them.'¹ His design is to set up the value and pre-eminence of the spiritual mind in such a crisis, just as in the other books he aims to vindicate the glory and majesty of God in Christ amid the chilling currents of formality within the Church. 'Of all the evils which I have seen in the days of my pilgrimage, now drawing to their close, there is none so grievous as the public contempt of the principal mysteries of the Gospel among them that are called Christians. Religion, in the profession of some men, is withered in its vital principles, weakened in its nerves and sinews; but thought to be put off with outward gaiety and bravery.' Nevertheless, in his own phrase, 'that gigantic spectre, *It is everywhere spoken against*,' did not deter him from his work or path. A resolute spirit drove his pen across the paper, and if he died before all his last works were published, it was not before he had set out the cardinal ideas of his mind in ripe and ample outline, well defined and all astir with candour.

Apart from toleration and schism, the two subjects which may be said to have moved him to his highest reach of power

¹ Historical allusions are so infrequent in John Owen, that one feels bound to note the reference to Halley's comet of 1682, that 'ensign of God's supernal host which at present hangs over us.'

are these: first, the infirmity of the human heart, as it aspires and twists in the moral passage and discipline of this life; and secondly, the splendour, the bliss, the pre-eminence of Jesus. The contemporary passion for dissecting character, which prompted the numerous character-studies of the age, was congenial to Owen. Introspective analysis of the soul draws out all his strength. Like many of the leading Puritans, and on a more religious level than Earle or Overbury or Fuller, he is a master in the art of this warfare with motives, passions, instincts, and over several of his best works on personal religion we might inscribe the motto: *For we are not ignorant of Satan's stratagems*. The behaviour of the soul in presence of temptation seems an open book to him. But, at the opposite pole of rapture and adoration, one feels under the stiff buckram folds of a scholastic Calvinism the throbbings of a devout, simple passion for the God whom he knew and served in Christ—a passion which, for one thing, preserved his study of sin from becoming a morbid and moaning preoccupation with some lower force which was able usually to outgeneral the soul.

Candidus insuetum miratur limen Olympi
Sub pedibusque videt nubes et sidera.

Pagan as they are, one is tempted now and then to apply these wonderful lines from his favourite Vergilian eclogues to the Owen who comes before us in several passages of elevation and rapt wonder as the sovereign grace of God breaks upon his mind.

In radiant wonder at heaven's gate he stands, and lo
Beneath his feet the stars and clouds pass far below.

Owen's incessant argument is that mundane temptations lose their charm and force as the soul rises to the height of its calling and redemption. Adoration is to him the surest ethical safeguard. For once he would have said 'Amen' to

Baxter, as the minister of Kidderminster wrote: 'When my belief of things Eternal and of the Scripture is most clear and firm, all goeth accordingly in my soul, and all Temptations to sinful Compliances, Worldliness, or Flesh-pleasing do signifie worse to me than an invitation to the stocks or Bedlam.'

For 'eternal things' Owen, in these later years at least, would have probably written 'Christ.' And here we come upon the saving and shining quality in Owen's treatises upon theology, viz. his profound sense of the place occupied by Christ in Christianity, together with an intuitive suspicion of all theories, ecclesiastical or dogmatic, which threatened to compromise the unique value of Jesus. His exaggerated opposition to the Arminians rests ultimately on a fear lest the redeeming grace of God in Christ should be rendered less central for the faith. His polemic against the Socinians, which repeatedly errs by defect or excess, turns on the same question of Christ's person as the one source of revelation and redemption. Even his rejection of Episcopacy and ecclesiastical tyranny runs back, as in the case of his antagonism to the Scottish Presbyterians, to the conviction that the Church owed loyalty to Christ alone as her spiritual head and king. But the full passion of Owen's mind upon this matter streams out as he turns to develop what may be termed the personal and religious aspect of Christ's relation to the Christian. This is present to him from the outset, indeed, for the feeling of Christ's majesty and mystery gives proportion to his earlier works, and occasionally breaks up through their stereotyped, technical disquisitions. But only his closing volumes on the Spirit and the person of Christ do justice to this principle; this awe and wonder which he felt before the glory of Jesus; this instinct for the magnificence and unspeakable worth of salvation as the one reality that endures amid the shows and shadows of the world. 'Young man,' said Owen once to a religious inquirer, 'in what manner do you think to go to

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God?' 'Through the mediator, sir.' 'That is easily said,' replied the Puritan, 'but I assure you it is another thing to go to God through the mediator than many who make use of the expression are aware of. I myself preached Christ some years, when I had but very little, if any, experimental acquaintance with access to God through Christ.' The personal revelation of this truth in his own experience perhaps made him all the more eager and competent to enforce it in his writings, and many a passage attests the strength of his conviction on this point of Christianity. 'O blessed Jesus,' he ejaculates at one point, 'how much better were it not to be than to be without thee—never to be born than not to die in thee!' And again: 'The most superstitious love to Christ—that is, love acted in ways tainted with superstition—is better than none at all.' 'If Christ be not God, farewell to Christianity—as to the mystery, the glory, the truth, the efficacy of it! Let a refined heathenism be established in its room.'

Such passages are all the more remarkable and impressive as they are the expression of a cool, strong intellect, which was not characterised by anything of the feminine, mystical warmth pervading men like Samuel Rutherford or the contemporary school of French religionists like François de Sales and Fénelon. Owen's note is logical rather than imaginative. He thrills a reader not by spontaneous emotion, but by a bare, honest, penetrating sort of urgency. Even in his conception of Jesus, it is not, as with Jeremy Taylor, the romantic historical aspect which captures him, much less anything of the contemporary quietistic spirit, but the massive sense of Christ in his place and person as the centre of God's redeeming work for man and in man. It is Christ the redeemer of God's elect, not Christ the Bridegroom of the soul or church, who appeals to Owen. 'The sense of our substantial union as men with Christ, and of this union with the Father, sometimes comes to one with overpowering conviction, not of delight such as

a Santa Theresa or Fénelon may have felt, but of its stern, hard, scientific reality.' Few sentences happen to do so much justice to Owen's view of Christ as this from a letter of Maurice to R. H. Hutton, except that the gusts of fervour which start up in the Puritan's pages are comparatively infrequent, not through any uncordial or rigid temperament, as in the case of Maurice, but through the severe control exercised by reasoning or intellectualism over Owen's religious tenets. He is not so much thrilled into rapture as awed into a devout, glad reverence by the contemplation of the exalted Christ. When he holds by that, he is strong and convincing as a religious writer. Where his weakness creeps in, is through the tendency to make faith an intellectual assent or a mental grasp of religious truth—a tendency of which he was well aware, but against which he did not always strive successfully. Yet even in his more scholastic moods, it is still the authority of Christ which forms for Owen the axis of man's relationship to God.

On the scroll over an engraving of Owen, done from a portrait taken during his lifetime, these words have been inscribed: *Quæramus superna*. If this is to be taken as a motto for his mind and career, it must be taken in the full Pauline context. In the words of the Benedictine de Cressy (an historical figure of the seventeenth century), whom Mr. Shorthouse has introduced in *John Inglesant*, 'Paul did not desire spiritual insight; he wanted Jesus.' Owen too sought *the things that are above*, but the spiritual world on which he set his mind was intelligible and impressive through the person of Christ (see below, on Ephesians iv. 21). It was not lofty conceptions or ideal aspirations or moral enterprise that captivated either Owen or Paul before him. To *seek the things that are above* would scarcely, by itself, have differentiated the great Puritan from men like Whichcote or the other Cambridge Platonists, any more than it would have distinguished Wesley from Bishop Butler, or—for the matter of that—St. Paul from Seneca and Epictetus. Owen's distinctive note comes in here

—where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God; for the spiritual world to him represented not the hard, cold heights of a moral order, not even Alpine virtues, or some vague, ethereal mysticism, much less the orb of an invertebrate religiosity, but a vital, personal tie to the risen and reigning Christ, and it was under the spell and impulse of this devotion to Christ that Owen did nearly all his most permanent, if not his most characteristic, work in theology. What he covets and counsels is the interpretation of the religious life through the Spirit of an indwelling God, who is at the same time authoritative and supreme over the soul of man. The interpretation meant that Christ was far more than an illustration of faith. He was its source and guide. This is the keynote to a large section of Owen's theology, especially upon the Holy Spirit, the glory of Christ, and the necessity of pardon as an element of reality in the love of God and in the moral discipline of men who are confronted with the lower world of sin.¹ This survival of baseness in a man cannot be mastered, according to Owen, apart from a profound connection with the higher world of Christ, a connection based on the sense of personal debt to Him for a redeeming bond which none but the Son of God himself could have created. And the same positive, personal tie enables a man to face the unknown future world, to meet the fear of death as well as the pride of life. Beyond, it is not a blank. Christ is there, and wherever Christ is, there must be a home and welcome for his people. Owen's simplicity of statement and absence of speculation upon heaven are very noticeable. To him it practically means the eternal presence of Christ with his redeemed, all the value and relief of *the things that are above* centring for him in their relation to Christ's person and undying glory.

// An instinct or intuition of this kind is far more than an

¹ For a slightly different aspect of this truth, see Mr. Hale White's remarkable essay on 'Principles' at the close of *Mark Rutherford's Deliverance* (especially the last paragraph on the need of a personal basis for religion).

idiosyncrasy or the transient exaltation of highly charged feeling. The passages which I have had room to cite below, under the colophons of 'Morality,' 'Present-day Religion,' 'Religious Literature,' and 'Christ and other Masters,' *e.g.*, represent an attitude which has not indeed a monopoly of Christian wisdom, but which certainly belongs to the proper focus for appreciating the central and permanent element of Christianity as a personal, historic, and redemptive faith. . . . One is often struck and sometimes surprised at the repugnance felt by evangelical religion throughout the history of the Church for terms like 'morality,' 'virtue,' and the like, a repugnance often expressed by men of hardy intellect and sane emotions. Yet unguarded and extravagant as such expressions have occasionally been (though Owen's language is very studiously wise), surely a sound instinct prompted the suspicion.

What signifies their barren shine
Of moral powers and reason?

Ideal is no more an adequate term for what Christ is to the Christian than is virtue a description of our attitude towards him. And in a survey of Owen's writings one feels more and more that one of his vital merits is the insistence with which he is ever recalling his readers to the proper proportion and order of things. Life is determined by what men count best, rather than by what they admit to be good. What they put first stamps their character. Now Christ is at once the standard and source of faith in Owen's system of theology, and the regnant consciousness of this still lends some point and freshness to many of his long, languid pages. *Let us run . . . looking away to Jesus*, is the reiterated principle of Owen's ethic. It forms perhaps the feature which invests him with a direct message for our own day. In this 'scientific' age, when the first condition of accurate work in any department is to weigh all the facts and assign to them their relative importance, it gives one pause to find religious treatises of considerable size

and value appearing, in which the origin and varieties of saintliness and religious experience are elaborately discussed, or in which demi-semi-philosophic arguments are advanced against or for the Christian religion, often without the least reference to what is the norm and source of that religion, viz., the consciousness of Jesus Christ. The creative element is ignored or underestimated. The paramount factor is in its wrong place, if it is mentioned at all, and little or no attempt is made to do justice to that personal life which is the centre of Christianity, the normal and dynamic type of our religion. Owen has his own faults as a theologian, some of which are egregious, and most of which are obvious. But however uncouth, opaque, and sterile his expressions and definitions may be now and then, his gaze is never deflected from the unique and essential vocation of Christ. Owen generally makes one feel that when Christ is *despised and rejected*, the despising comes first in the order of experience. Outward rejection is preceded, on his view of things, by an inner repudiation of Christ, a repudiation which may take the form of a quiet theory no less than of a disinclination to admit the moral control of Jesus. For Christ is despised whenever the sense of human debt to him is slackened, or when he is relegated to the position of one who is but a brilliant and primitive illustration of the religion which bears his name. Thus there is scope repeatedly for that loyal revolt of the evangelical spirit which prompted Dr. John Duncan's aphorism: 'It is the great glory of God's revelation that it has changed our abstracts into concretes . . . the infinite love into the personal Christ.' Whenever Owen is most true to this fundamental principle, and he is often true to it, he is nearly at his best. He dilates on it. He returns to it. He often puts soul and passion into it. And the most satisfying parts of his theology to some of us will always be, not his weariful theories of Christ's two natures or of the atonement, but the underlying conviction that there must be and there is an atonement, define it as you

may, that Christ mediates our relationship to God, and that *the things above* will remain comparatively inaccessible and unimpressive for the average conscience till we learn with Paul to add—*where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God*. Owen is one of the few writers on Christology who have the rare power of making their readers feel that Christ is their great contemporary, and the overwhelming sense of this partially compensates for that indubitable lack of any historical feeling for the Jesus of Galilee, which leads him, even in writing upon the epistle to the Hebrews, to be more interested in the priesthood of Melchizedek than in the human experience of our Lord.

Such were the chief topics that engrossed John Owen in his latter years. In a letter dictated on the day before his death, he evinces at the same time that fine sense of public duty which blended, as the brave, dying prayers of men like Laud and Hampden show, with the genuine piety of the greater Puritans and their opponents. It was observed by those who attended Oliver Cromwell at his end, that ‘a public spirit to God’s cause did breathe in him—as in his lifetime, so now to his very last.’ His last prayer, as given by Carlyle, bears this out, and among his final ejaculations we find this cry: ‘I would be willing to live to be farther serviceable to God and his people; but my work is done. Yet God will be with his people.’ John Owen shared the temper of his former friend and leader.¹ ‘I am leaving the ship of the Church in a storm; but whilst the great Pilot is in it, the loss of a poor under-rower will be inconsiderable.’

Able to trust his Church to God,² he had also faith enough

¹ There is another striking coincidence between the sentence of Owen (quoted below) upon the love of Christ, and Cromwell’s whisper: ‘I think I am the poorest wretch that lives. But I love God, or rather am beloved of God.’

² A hundred and eleven years earlier Knox had told Johnston of Elphinstone on the final Sabbath of his life: ‘I have been these two last nights in meditation on the troubled Church of God, the spouse of Jesus Christ, despised of the world, but precious in His sight. I have called to God for her, and have committed her to her head, Jesus Christ.’

to trust himself. On the morning of his death, when a friend called to tell him that his *Meditations on the Glory of Christ* had begun to pass through the press, the old man exclaimed : 'I am glad to hear it. But the long-wished-for day is come at last, in which I shall see that glory in another manner than I have ever done, or was capable of doing, in this world.' It was the anniversary of St. Bartholomew's massacre, and ere night fell, he was dead. Twenty-one years ago Owen had joined the company of heroic ministers who on that day had given up houses and lands for conscience' sake, and now, in his sixty-seventh year, prematurely worn out by toil and pain, he went to receive that part of the reward which cannot be handed over upon this side of the grave. A few moments before the end, he turned to say : 'I am going to Him whom my soul has loved, or rather who has loved me with an everlasting love—which is the whole ground of all my consolation. The passage is very irksome and wearisome.' But he is near the end of the passage now. After its bright speed of vigorous service, and its long course of strain and fret amid the rocks and bogs of the Restoration period, his life streams out at last, resistless and unresisting, to where

His luminous home of waters opens, bright
And tranquil.

For the Lamb is the light thereof. And there the wicked cease from troubling; there the weary be at rest.

SELECTIONS

G

READER,

If thou intendest to go any farther, I would entreat thee to stay here a little. If thou art as many in this pretending age, *a sign or tittle gazer*, and comest into books as Cato into the theatre, to go out again—thou hast had thy entertainment. Farewell!

JOHN OWEN.

I. DISCUSSIONS AND MEDITATIONS

ARGUMENT AND FORCE ¹

THE course of opposing errors and false spirits by praying, preaching, and writing, is despised by them in whose furious and haughty minds *ure, seca, occide*, 'burn, cut, and kill,' are alone of any signification—that think, 'Arise, Peter, kill and eat,' to be a precept of more use and advantage unto them than all the commands of Jesus Christ besides.—[From *A Discourse on the Holy Spirit*, Bk. I. ch. i.]

For men to act herein in a way of domination, with a visible elation of mind and spirit above their brethren; with anger, wrath, and passion; by rules, order, and laws of their own devising, without the least consideration of what the Lord Christ requires, and what is the frame of his heart towards all his disciples—is to reflect the highest dishonour imagin-

¹ 'Is there no way,' asks Andrew Fuller, 'to bring home a wandering sheep but by worrying him to death?' Owen's greater Anglican contemporary writes to the same effect in his *Liberty of Prophesying*. 'Any zeal,' he observes, 'is proper for religion, but the zeal of the sword and the zeal of anger,' since no secure basis for a reasonable religion can be won 'if the sword turns preacher, and dictates propositions by empire instead of arguments, and engraves them in men's hearts with a poniard.' One wonders if the Puritan was thinking of the anecdote which narrates how Michelangelo, who was engaged in designing a statue of Julius II., asked that eminently meek and saintly representative of Christ if he would care to hold a volume in his hand. 'What volume?' cried the indignant Pope; 'a sword! I know nothing of letters, not I.'

able upon Christ himself. He who comes into the courts of the king in Westminster Hall, when filled with judges, grave, learned, and righteous, must ordinarily be allowed to judge of the king himself, his wisdom, justice, moderation, and clemency, by the law which they proceed upon and their manner of administration of it. But God forbid that Christians should make a judgment concerning the holiness, wisdom, love, and compassion of Christ by the representation which, as is pretended, is made of him and them in some courts wherein Church rule and discipline is administered! When any had offended of old, their censure by the Church was called *the bewailing of them*; and that because of the sorrow, pity, and compassion whereby, in that censure, they evidenced the compassion of the Lord Christ towards the souls of sinners. This is scarce answered by those pecuniary mulcts and other penalties, which, with indignation and contempt, are inflicted on such as are made offenders, whether they will or no. Certainly, those who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, and have a due honour for the gospel, will, at one time or another, begin to think meet that this stain of our religion should be washed away.¹—[From Owen's posthumous treatise on *The True Nature of a Gospel Church*.]

¹ 'We read not that Christ ever exercised force but once; and that was to drive profane ones out of his Temple, not to force them in' (Milton's *Treatise of Civil Power in Ecclesiastical Causes*, etc., 1659). The gentle and gracious François de Sales (1567-1622) used to call attention to the order of Paul's words, 'Reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine.' 'Note,' he said, 'how the apostle puts long-suffering before doctrine. The reason is that patience is the only thing that answers with people whom it is hard to win. Patience enables us to win not only our own souls but the souls of others also.' His *Traité de l'Amour de Dieu* was published in the year of Owen's birth. Read also the opening sentences of the dedication to *Holy Living*, written in 1650.

ASSURANCE

*E*VANGELICAL assurance is not a thing that consisteth in any point, and so incapable of variation. It may be higher or lower, greater or less, obscure or attended with more evidence. It is not quite lost when it is not quite at its highest. God sometimes marvellously raiseth the souls of his saints with some close and near approaches unto them—gives them a sense of his eternal love, a taste of the embraces of his Son and the inhabitation of the Spirit, without the least intervening disturbance; then this is their assurance. But this life is not a season to be always taking wages in; our work is not yet done; we are not always to abide in this mount; we must down again into the battle—fight again, cry again, complain again. Shall the soul be thought now to have lost its assurance? Not at all. It had before assurance with joy, triumph, and exultation; it hath it now, or may have, with wrestling, cries, tears, and supplications. And a man's assurance may be as good, as true, when he lies on the earth with a sense of sin, as when he is carried up to the third heaven with a sense of love and foretaste of glory.—
[From *An Exposition upon Psalm cxxx.*]

CATHOLICISM, THE GENUINE

UNLESS men can prove that we have not the Spirit of God, that we do not savingly believe in Jesus Christ, that we do not sincerely love all the saints, his body, and every member of it, they cannot disprove our interest in the Catholic Church. Whilst I know this one thing, that whereas

I was blind, now I see, I shall not certainly be moved with the disputes of men that would persuade me I do not belong to the Catholic Church, because I do not follow this or that or any party of men in the world. . . .

Here then I propose to rest, in this doth my conscience acquiesce. Whilst I have any comfortable persuasion, on grounds infallible, that I hold the head, and that I am by faith a member of the mystical body of Christ; whilst I make profession of all the necessary saving truths of the gospel; whilst I disturb not the peace of that particular Church whereof by my own consent I am a member, nor do raise up nor continue in any causeless differences with them, or any of them, with whom I walk in the fellowship and order of the gospel; whilst I labour to exercise faith towards the Lord Jesus Christ and love towards all the saints—I do keep the unity which is of the appointment of Christ. And let men say, from principles utterly foreign to the gospel, what they please or can to the contrary, I am no schismatic.¹ —[*On Schism.*]

¹ Adequate justice is not always done to the desire of many noble souls in Puritanism to maintain their right to a term like 'Catholic,' which then, as now, was apt to be soiled with all ignoble use. I subjoin two instances. In the preface to Matthew Henry's life of his father, Philip Henry (1631-1696), Bates observes that the latter, an eminent and saintly Presbyterian, 'was a man of no party; but true Catholic Christianity (not debauched by bigotry, nor leavened by any private opinions or interests) was his very temper and genius.' He used to declare that he was 'too much a Catholic to be a Roman Catholic.' Baxter also once printed a sermon on *The True Catholick*, 'for I apprehended it a Matter of Great Necessity to imprint true Catholicism on the Minds of Christians, it being a most lamentable thing to observe how few Christians in the World there be, that fall not into one Sect or another. . . . And if they can but get to be of a Sect which they think the *holiest* (as the Anabaptists and Separatists) or which is the *largest* (as the Greeks and Papists), they think then that they are sufficiently warranted to deny others to be God's Church, or at least to deny them Christian love and communion' (*Reliquia Baxteriana*, Bk. 1. part i. § 168).

DISCUSSIONS AND MEDITATIONS 103

‘Be not deceived; no idolaters shall inherit the kingdom of God.’ ‘Without are idolaters.’ This added to their lives hath made Christian religion, where known only as by them professed, to be an abomination to Jews and Gentiles. Some will one day, besides himself, answer for Averroës thus determining of the case as to his own soul: ‘Quoniam Christiani adorant quod comedunt, anima mea sit cum philosophis.’—*[On Schism.]*

Athenæus tells us of one Thrasilaus, an Athenian, who being frenetically distempered, whatever ships came into the Piræus he looked on them and thought them his own, and rejoiced as the master of so great wealth, when he was not the owner of so much as a boat. Such a distemper of pride and folly hath in like manner seized upon those persons with whom we have to do, that wherever in Scripture they meet with the name *church*, presently, as though they were intended by it, they rejoice in the privilege of it, when their concernment lies not at all therein.—*[On Schism.]*

How powerful and prevalent the last voice of this church may prove, I know not. The motto of some great potentates on their great guns is, ‘Vox ultima regum,’ ‘the last voice of kings.’ That of this church is, ‘Fire and fagot.’ Wherewith I pray and hope that they shall never more be heard to speak in England.—*[From The Church of Rome no safe Guide.]*

It is the universal, collective body of them that profess the gospel throughout the world which we own as the Catholic Church of Christ. . . . Whatever share we are forced to bear in differences with or divisions from the members of this

Church, as it is a continual sorrow and trouble unto us, so we acknowledge it to be our duty to endeavour after the strictest communion with them in all spiritual things that the gospel doth require, or whereof our condition in this world is capable.

In the meantime, were Christians duly instructed how many lesser differences, in mind and judgment and practice, are really consistent with the nature, ends, and genuine fruit of the unity that Christ requires among them, it would undoubtedly prevail with them so to manage themselves in their differences by mutual forbearance and condescension in their love, as not to contract the guilt of being disturbers or breakers of it. To speak plainly, among all the churches in the world which are free from idolatry and persecution, it is not different opinions, or a difference in judgment about revealed truths, not a different practice in sacred administrations, but pride, self-interest, love of honour, reputation, and dominion, with the influence of civil or political intrigues and considerations, that are the true cause of that defect of evangelical unity that is at this day amongst them.—[From *A Discourse concerning Evangelical Love, Church Peace, and Unity.*]

CHRIST, THE PERSON OF

IF we satisfy ourselves in mere notions and speculations about the glory of Christ as doctrinally revealed unto us, we shall find no transforming power or efficacy communicated to us thereby. But when, under the conduct of that spiritual light, our affections do cleave unto him with full purpose of heart, our minds are filled with the thoughts of him and

delight in him, and faith is kept up unto its constant exercise in trust and affiance on him—virtue will proceed from him to purify our hearts, increase our holiness, strengthen our graces, and to fill us sometimes ‘with joy unspeakable and full of glory.’¹ This is the just temperature of a state of spiritual health—namely, when our light of the knowledge of the glory of God in Christ doth answer the means of it which we enjoy, and our affections unto Christ do hold proportion unto that light; and this according unto the various degrees of it—for some have more, and some have less. Where light leaves the affections behind, it ends in formality or atheism; and where affections outrun light, they sink in the bog of superstition, doting on images and pictures, or the like.

He leads not in heaven a life of mere glory, majesty, and blessedness, but a life of office, love, and care also. He lives as the *Mediator* of the Church; as the King, Priest, and Prophet thereof. Hereon do our present safety and our future eternal salvation depend. Without the continual actings of the *office-power* and care of Christ, the Church could not be preserved one moment. And the darkness of our faith herein is the cause of all our disconsolations, and most of our weaknesses in obedience. Most men have only general and confused notions and apprehensions of the present state of Christ, with respect unto the Church. And by some, all considerations of this nature are despised and derided. But revealed things belong unto us; especially such as are of so great importance unto the glory of God and the saving of

¹ The text of Jonathan Edwards’s treatise on the *Religious Affections*, which is one long expansion of the sentence in its opening section that ‘as there is no true religion where there is nothing else but affection, so there is no true religion where there is no religious affection.’

our own souls—such as this is, concerning the present state of the person of Christ in heaven, with respect unto his office-power and care.—[*Ibid.*]

There is nothing in him—nothing wherein he is concerned—nothing of him, his person, his natures, his office, his grace, his love, his power, his authority, his relation unto the Church—but it hath been unto many a stone of stumbling and rock of offence. Concerning these things have been all the woeful contests which have fallen out and been managed among those that outwardly have made profession of the Christian religion. And the contentions about them do rather increase than abate, unto this very day; the dismal fruits whereof the world groaneth under, and is no longer able to bear. The re-enthroning of the Person, Spirit, Grace, and Authority of Christ, in the hearts and consciences of men, is the only way whereby an end may be put unto these woeful conflicts.

Many, who expressly deny not his divine person, yet seem to grow weary of any concernment therein. A natural religion, or none at all, pleaseth them better than faith in God by Jesus Christ. That any thing more is necessary in religion, but what natural light will discover and conduct us in, with the moral duties of righteousness and honesty which it directs unto, there are too many that will not acknowledge. What is beyond the line of nature and reason is rejected as unintelligible mysteries or follies. The person and grace of Christ are supposed to breed all the disturbance in religion.—[From *The Person of Christ.*]

CHRIST AND OTHER MASTERS

IT is a notable effect of the atheistical pride of men, that, pretending to design obedience (at least in moral duties) unto God, they betake themselves unto other rules and directions, as either more plain, or full, or efficacious, than those of the gospel, which are the teachings of Christ himself, as the great prophet and apostle sent of God to instruct us in our duty. Some go to the light of nature and the use of *right reason* (that is, their *own*) as their guide; and some add the additional documents of the philosophers. They think a saying of Epictetus, or Seneca, or Arrianus, being wittily suited to their fancies and affections, to have more life and power in it than any precept of the gospel. The reason why these things are more pleasing unto them than the commands and instructions of Christ is because, proceeding from the spring of natural light, they are suited to the workings of natural fancy and understanding; but those of Christ, proceeding from the fountain of eternal spiritual light, are not comprehended in their beauty and excellency without a principle of the same light in us, guiding our understandings and influencing our affections. Hence, take any precept, general or particular, about moral duties, that is materially the same in the writings of philosophers and in the doctrine of the gospel, not a few prefer it as delivered in the first way before the latter. Such a contempt have men risen unto of Jesus Christ, the wisdom of God and the great prophet of the Church! When he entered upon his office, 'the voice came from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, hear him.— [From *A Discourse upon the Holy Spirit*, Bk. v. ch. iv.]

THE CHURCH'S ONE FOUNDATION

A FOUNDATION must be hidden and out of sight unto all those that outwardly look upon the house. They cannot perceive it, though every part of the house doth rest upon it. And this hath occasioned many mistakes in the world. An unwise man coming to a great house, seeing the antics¹ and pictures [figures? pillars?] stand crouching under the windows and sides of the house, may haply think that they bear up the weight of the house, when indeed they are for the most part targetted² posts. They bear not the house: the house bears them. By their bowing and outward appearance, the man thinks the burden is on them, and supposes it would be an easy thing, at any time, by taking them away, to demolish the house itself. But when he sets himself to work, he finds these things of no value. There is a foundation in the bottom, which bears up the whole, that he thought not of. Men looking upon the Church do find that it is a fair fabric indeed, but cannot imagine how it should stand. A few supporters it seemeth to have in the world, like crouching antics¹ under the windows, that make some show of underpropping it; here you have a magistrate, there an army or so. Think the men of the world, 'Can we but remove these people, the whole would quickly topple to the ground.' Yea, so foolish have I been myself, and so void of understanding before the Lord, as to take a view of some goodly appearing props of this building and to think, How shall the house be preserved if these be removed—when lo! suddenly some have been manifested to be held up by the house, and not to

¹ Fantastic mural decorations.

² Plastered or painted.

hold it up. I say then, Christ, as the foundation of this house, is hidden to the men of this world; they see it not, they believe it not. There is nothing more remote from their apprehension than that Christ should be at the bottom of them and their ways, whom they so much despise.—[From *A Sermon preached at Berwick, 1650.*]

WHAT IS THE CHURCH FOR?

THERE are two great ends why Christ did institute a particular Church; and they were to express the two great graces and duties that he requires of us.

The first end was, that his saints together might jointly profess their faith in him, and obedience to him. And we have no other way of doing it: he hath tied us up to this. . . .

The next great end was, that we might have a direct exercise of his other great command, and of that other great duty, of love to believers. 'I will try you here,' saith Christ; 'I require this of you indispensably—to love all the saints, all believers, all my disciples. You shall not need to say you must go far, this way or that, for objects. . . . I will give you an instance whereby you may be tried,' saith he;—'cast you into such a society by my order and appointment, as wherein you may have immediate objects for the exercise of love to the utmost of what I do require.' If we find a person that is orderly admitted into Church society, he is as certain and evident an object of our love as if we saw him lying in the arms of Christ. . . . Christ hath given it you for a trial: he will try your love at the last day by your deportment in that Church wherein you are. The great law and guide of his

Church binds it upon all our spirits and consciences : it is our life, our being.—[*Sermons.*]

What is a Church ? Is it not a company of sinners gathered together, according unto God's appointment, to give glory and praise to him for pardoning grace, for the forgiveness of sins, and to yield him that obedience which he requires from us on the account of his having so dealt with us ? This is the nature, this is the end of a Church.¹ He that understandeth it not, he that useth it not unto that end, doth but abuse that great institution. And such abuse the world is full of.—[From *An Exposition upon Psalm cxxx.*]

CONSCIENCE AND FORGIVENESS

CONSCIENCE naturally knows nothing of forgiveness ; yea, it is against its very trust, work, and office to hear any thing of it. If a man of courage and honesty be entrusted to keep a garrison against an enemy, let one come and tell him that there is peace made between those whom he serves and their enemies, so that he may leave his guard, and set open the gates, and cease his watchfulness ; how wary will he be, lest under this pretence he be betrayed ! 'No,' saith he ; 'I will keep my hold until I have express orders from my superiors.' Conscience is entrusted with the power of God in the soul of a sinner, with command to keep all in subjection with reference unto the judgment to come. It will not betray

¹ This is the genuine Reformation view of the Church as a fellowship of believers. Owen postulates it against the Socinian view, set forth in the *Racovian Catechism*, which practically resolved the Church into a school of people holding correct doctrines. That catechism explicitly defines the visible Church as 'the company of those who hold and profess saving doctrine' (see Ritschl's *Critical History of Justification and Reconciliation*, E. tr. by J. S. Black, pp. 295 f.).

its trust in believing every report of peace. No; but this it says, and it speaks in the name of God, 'Guilt and punishment are inseparable twins; if the soul sin, God will judge. What tell you me of forgiveness? I know what my commission is, and that I will abide by. You shall not bring in a superior commander, a cross principle, into my trust; for if this be so, it seems I must let go my throne—another lord must come in'; not knowing, as yet, how this whole business is compounded in the blood of Christ. Now, whom should a man believe if not his own conscience, which, as it will not flatter him, so it intends not to affright him, but to speak the truth as the matter requireth? . . . It will allow men to talk of forgiveness, to hear it preached, though they abuse it every day; but to receive it in its power, that stands up in direct opposition to its dominion. 'In the kingdom,' saith conscience, 'I will be greater than thou'; and in many, in the most, it keeps its possession, and will not be deposed.—[From *An Exposition upon Psalm cxxx.*]

ENGLAND'S GLORY

IT is reported of the heralds of our neighbour monarchs, that when one of them had repeated the numerous titles of his master of Spain the other often repeated, 'France, France, France'!¹ intimating that the dominion which came

¹ Next year we find Cromwell writing in a similar strain to Lord Wharton (Letter cxviii. in Carlyle's edition): 'Oh this flattering world! How great is it to be the Lord's servant in any drudgery—in all hazards his worst is far above the world's best! . . . How hard is it to *reason* ourselves up to the Lord's service, though it be so honourable.' Owen elsewhere observes, in the same strain: 'Let men think as meanly as they please of the spiritual service of God amongst his people; all glory that ever yet appeared in the world was but a bubble to it.'

under that one denomination would counterpoise the long catalogue of kingdoms and dukedoms wherewith the other flourished. Were we to contend with the grand seignior of the East about our enjoyments, we might easily bear down his windy, pompous train of titles with this one (which *millies repetitum placebit*), 'The Gospel, the Gospel!'—[From his *First Sermon before Parliament*, 1649.]

FAITH, THE ACCUMULATION OF¹

2 Cor. i. 10. 'GOD,' saith the apostle, 'hath delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver.' Now, what conclusion makes he of this experience?—'In whom we trust that he will yet deliver us.' So doth the apostle again, 'He did deliver me from the mouth of the lion'—Nero, that lion-like tyrant. And what then? 'He shall deliver us from every evil work.' David esteemed it very good logic, to argue from the victory God gave him over the lion and the bear,² to a confidence of victory over Goliath.

Let former mercies be an anchor of hope in time of present distresses. Where is the God of Marston Moor, and the God of Naseby? is an acceptable expostulation in a gloomy day. What a catalogue of mercies hath this nation to plead by in a time of trouble!

¹ For a very fine modern statement of this truth, see Phillips Brooks on Ps. lxxviii. 20 in his volume of sermons entitled *The Candle of the Lord*.

² 'Thus Captain Experience came under command to Emmanuel for the good of the town of Mansoul. He had for his lieutenant one Mr. Skilful, and for his cornet one Mr. Memory . . . and his scutcheon was the dead lion and the dead bear' (Bunyan's *Holy War*). See too 'Forgetful Green' in the second part of the *Pilgrim's Progress*, and Philip Henry's remark that 'if the end of one mercy were not the beginning of another, we were undone.'

Faith looketh backwards and forwards—to what God hath done, and to what he hath promised to do. Forget not your perils—be rich in a heap of mercies. Faith will make you so. The love, the comfort, the benefit of all former and future blessings are yours, if you know how to use them. Oh, how have we lost our mercies in every hedge and ditch! Have none of us skill to lay up the last eminent deliverance against a rainy day?—[From *Sermons.*],

FAITH AND DEATH

THERE are sundry things required of us, that we may be able to encounter death cheerfully, constantly, and victoriously. For want of these, or some of them, I have known gracious souls who have lived in a kind of bondage for fear of death all their days. We know not how God will manage any of our minds and souls in that season, in that trial; for he acts towards us in all such things in a way of sovereignty. But these are the things which he requireth of us in a way of duty :—

First, Peculiar actings of faith to resign and commit our departing souls into the hand of him who is able to receive them, to keep and preserve them, as also to dispose of them into a state of rest and blessedness, are required of us.

The soul is now parting with all things here below, and that for ever. None of all the things which it hath seen, heard, or enjoyed, by its outward senses, can be prevailed with to stay with it one hour, or to take one step with it in the voyage wherein it is engaged. It must alone by itself launch into eternity. It is entering an invisible world, which it

knows no more of than it hath received by faith. None hath come from the dead to inform us of the state of the other world ; yea, God seems on purpose so to conceal it from us, that we should have no evidence of it, at least as unto the manner of things in it, but what is given unto faith by divine revelation. This made a great emperor¹ cry out, on the approach of death,² ‘O animula, tremula, vagula, blandula ; quæ nunc abibis in loca horrida, squalida,’ etc.—‘O poor, trembling, wandering soul, into what places of darkness and defilement art thou going?’ . . . Herein, as in all other graces, is our Lord Jesus Christ our great example. He resigned his departing spirit into the hands of his Father, to be owned and preserved by him, in its state of separation : ‘Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.’ . . . So Stephen resigned his soul, departing under violence, into the hands of Christ himself. When he died he said, ‘Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.’

This is the last victorious act of faith, wherein its conquest over its last enemy death itself doth consist. Herein the soul says in and unto itself : ‘Thou art now taking leave of time unto eternity ; all things about thee are departing as shades, and will immediately disappear. The things which thou art

¹ Owen, like Leighton, was evidently fond of alluding to the so-called hymn of Hadrian—

Animula, vagula, blandula,
Hospes comesque corporis,
Quæ nunc abibis in loca ?
Pallidula, rigida, nudula,
Nec, ut soles, dabis joca.

² In his famous sermon (1496) on ‘The art of dying a good death,’ Savonarola urges similar advice on the Florentines. ‘Death,’ he cries, ‘is the most solemn moment of our life ; then it is that the Evil One makes his last attack on us. It is as though he were always playing chess with man, and awaiting the approach of death to give him checkmate. He who wins at that moment wins the battle of life.’

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entering into are yet invisible; such as “eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor will they enter into the heart of man fully to conceive.” Now, therefore, with quietness and confidence give up thyself unto the sovereign power, grace, truth, and faithfulness of God, and thou shalt find assured rest and peace.’

But Jesus Christ it is who doth immediately receive the souls of them who believe in him. So we see in the instance of Stephen. And what can be a greater encouragement to resign them into his hands than a daily contemplation of his glory, in his person, his power, his exaltation, his office, and grace? Who that believes in him, that belongs unto him, can fear to commit his departing spirit unto his love, power, and care? Even we also shall hereby in our dying moments see by faith heaven opened, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God ready to receive us. . . .

Secondly, It is required in us, unto the same end that we be *ready and willing to part with the flesh*, wherewith we are clothed, with all things that are useful and desirable thereunto. The alliance, the relation, the friendship, the union that are between the soul and the body, are the greatest, the nearest, the firmest that are or can be among mere created beings. There is nothing like it—nothing equal unto it. . . . The soul and body are naturally and necessarily unwilling to fall into a state of separation, wherein the one shall cease to be what it was, and the other knows not clearly how it shall subsist. The body claspeth about the soul, and the soul receiveth strange impressions from its embraces; the entire nature, existing in the union of them both, being unalterably averse to a dissolution. . . . How is it possible that a man should attain such an inclination unto, such a readiness for, such a vehement

desire of, a dissolution? It is from a view by faith of Christ and his glory, whence the soul is satisfied that to be with him is incomparably better than in its present state and condition.

He, therefore, that would die comfortably, must be able to say within himself and to himself, 'Die, then, thou frail and sinful flesh; "dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return." I yield thee up unto the righteous doom of the Holy One. Yet therein also I give thee into the hand of the great Refiner, who will hide thee in thy grave, and by thy consumption purify thee from all thy corruption and disposition to evil. Thou shalt no more be a residence for the least remainder of sin unto eternity, nor any clog¹ unto my soul in its actings on God. Rest therefore in hope; for God, in his appointed season, when he shall have a desire unto the work of his hands, will call unto thee, and thou shalt answer him out of the dust. Then shall he, by an act of his almighty power, not only restore thee unto thy pristine glory, as at the first creation, when thou wast the pure workmanship of his hands, but enrich and adorn thee with inconceivable privileges and advantages. Go into the dust—rest in hope; "for thou shalt stand in thy lot at the end of the days."'

That which will enable us hereunto, in an eminent manner, is that view and consideration of the glory of Christ which is the subject of the ensuing Meditations. For He who is now possessed of all that glory underwent this dissolution of nature as truly and really as ever we shall do.

Thirdly, There is required hereunto a readiness to comply with the *times and seasons* wherein God would have us depart and leave this world. Many think they shall be willing to

¹ See Walt Whitman's wonderful lines on *The Singer in the Prison*.

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die when their time is come ; but they have many reasons, as they suppose, to desire that it may not yet be. Some desire to live that they may see more of that glorious work of God for his Church, which they believe he will accomplish. So Moses prayed that he might not die in the wilderness, but go over Jordan, and see the good land, and that goodly mountain and Lebanon, the seat of the church, and of the worship of God ; which yet God thought meet to deny unto him. And this denial of the request of Moses, made on the highest consideration possible, is instructive unto all in the like case. Others may judge themselves to have some work to do in the world, wherein they suppose that the glory of God and good of the Church are concerned ; and therefore would be spared for a season. Paul knew not clearly whether it were not best for him to abide a while longer in the flesh on this account ; and David often deprecates the present season of death because of the work which he had to do for God in the world. Others rise no higher than their own private interests or concerns with respect unto their persons, their families, their relations, and goods in this world. They would see these things in a better or more settled condition before they die, and then they shall be most willing so to do. But it is the love of life that lies at the bottom of all these desires in men ; which of itself will never forsake them. But no man can die cheerfully or comfortably who lives not in a constant resignation of the time and season of his death unto the will of God, as well as himself with respect unto death itself. Our times are in his hand, at his sovereign disposal ; and his will in all things must be complied withal. Without this resolution, without this resignation, no man can enjoy the least solid peace in this world.

Fourthly, As the times and seasons, so the *ways* and *means* of the approaches of death have especial trials; which, unless we are prepared for them, will keep us under bondage, with the fear of death itself. Long, wasting, wearing consumptions, burning fevers, strong pains of the stone,¹ or the like from within; or sword, fire, tortures, with shame and reproach from without, may be in the way of the access of death unto us. To get above all perplexities on account of these things, is part of our wisdom in dying daily.—[From the preface to Owen's posthumous *Meditations and Discourses on the Glory of Christ*.]

Faith is the leading grace in all our spiritual warfare and conflict; but all along, while we live, it hath faithful company that adheres to it and helps it. Love works, and hope works, and all other graces—self-denial, readiness to the cross—they all work and help faith. Yet when we come to die, faith is left alone. Now, try what faith will do. Not to be surprised with any thing is the substance of human wisdom; not to be surprised with death is a great part of the substance of our spiritual wisdom.²—[From *Sermons*.]

FORGIVENESS

FOR the most part, we are, as it were, ready rather to steal forgiveness from God, than to receive from him as one that gives it freely and largely. We take it up and lay it down as though we would be glad to have it, so God did

¹ The disease which proved fatal to Owen himself as to many other eminent men of that age.

² On this reluctance to die, John Howe has some fine remarks in vol. vi. pp. 166-167 (ed. 1863).

not, as it were, see us take it; for we are afraid he is not willing we should have it indeed. We would steal this fire from heaven, and have a share in God's treasures and riches almost without his consent: at least, we think that we have it from him 'ægrè,' with much difficulty; that it is rarely given, and scarcely obtained; that he gives it out ἐκὼν ἀέκοντί γε θύμῳ, with a kind of *unwilling willingness*—as we sometimes give alms without cheerfulness; and that he loseth so much by us as he giveth out in pardon. We are apt to think that we are very willing to have forgiveness, but that God is unwilling to bestow it, and that because he seems to be a loser by it, and to forego the glory of inflicting punishment for our sins; which of all things we suppose he is most loath to part withal.¹ And this is the very nature of unbelief. . . .

Reason's line is too short to fathom the depth of the Father's love, of the blood of the Son, and the promises of the gospel built thereon, wherein forgiveness dwells. Men cannot by their rational considerations launch out into these deeps, nor draw water from these 'wells of salvation.' Reason stands by amazed, and cries, 'How can these things be?' It can but gather cockle-shells, like him of old, at the shore of this ocean, a few criticisms upon the outward letter, and so bring an evil report upon the land, as did the spies. All it can do is but to hinder faith from venturing into it, crying, 'Spare thyself; this attempt is vain, these things are impossible.' It is among the things that faith puts off and lays aside when it engageth the soul into this great work. This, then, that it

¹ 'In relation to the world,' said Dr. Chalmers at the close of his life, 'you will find men often open, generous, and unsuspicious; but then they keep their accounts with heaven in the most suspicious and niggardly manner—in a manner with which I can have no sympathy, continually striving against and fighting with the goodness and sincerity of God, and will not take God at his word.'

may come to a discovery of forgiveness, causeth the soul to deny itself and all its own reasonings, and to give up itself to an infinite fulness of goodness and truth. Though it cannot go unto the bottom of these depths, yet it enters into them, and finds rest in them. Nothing but faith is suited to rest, to satiate, and content itself in mysterious, bottomless, unsearchable depths.—[From *An Exposition upon Psalm cxxx.*]

How light do most men make of pardon! What an easy thing it is to be acquainted with it! and no very hard matter to obtain it! But to hold communion with God, in the blood of his Son, is a thing of another nature than is once dreamed of by many who think they know well enough what it is to be pardoned. 'God be merciful' is a common saying; and as common to desire he would be so 'for Christ's sake.' Poor creatures are cast into the mould of such expressions, who know neither God, nor mercy, nor Christ, nor any thing of the mystery of the gospel. Others look on the outside of the cross. To see into the mystery of the love of the Father, working in the blood of the Mediator; to consider by faith the great transaction of divine wisdom, justice, and mercy therein—how few attain unto it!—[From *An Exposition upon Psalm cxxx.*]

God could, if I may say so, more easily have made a new world of innocent creatures, and have governed them by the old covenant, than have established this new one for the salvation of poor sinners; but then, where had been the glory of forgiveness? It could never have been known that there was forgiveness with him. The old covenant could not have been preserved and sinners pardoned. Wherefore, God

chose rather to leave the covenant (Heb. viii. 7-13) than sinners unrelieved, than grace unexalted and pardon unexercised. Prize it as you prize your souls; and give glory unto God for it, as all those that believe will do unto eternity. . . . Would you be made partakers of this forgiveness? Go unto God, spread before him this whole matter; plead with him that he himself hath so far laid aside the first covenant, of his own gracious will, as to make a new one, and that merely because it had no forgiveness in it. This he hath made on purpose that it might be known that there is forgiveness in him. And shall not we now be made partakers of it? Will he now deny that unto us which he hath given such assurance of, and raised such expectations concerning it? Nothing can here wrong us, nothing can ruin us, but unbelief. Lay hold on this covenant, and we shall have pardon. This God expresseth. Will we continue on the old bottom of the first Isa. xxvii. 4-5. covenant? All that we can do thereon is but to set thorns and briers in the way of God, to secure ourselves from his coming against us and upon us with his indignation and fury. Our sins are so, and our righteousness is no better. And what will be the issue? Both they and we shall be trodden down, consumed, and burnt up. What way, then, what remedy is left unto us? Only this of laying hold on the arm and strength of God in that covenant wherein forgiveness of sin is provided. Therein alone he saith, 'Fury is not in me.'¹ And the end will be that we shall have peace with him, both here and for ever.

For the most part, when we come to deal with God about forgiveness, we hang in every brier of disputing, quarrelsome unbelief. This or that circumstance or aggravation, this or

¹ A favourite text of Dr. Chalmers in his later preaching.

that unparalleled particular, bereaves us of our confidence. Want of a due consideration of him with whom we have to do, measuring him by the line of our own imaginations, bringing him down unto our thoughts and ways, is the cause of all our disquietments. Because we find it hard to forgive our pence, we think he cannot forgive talents. But he hath provided to obviate such thoughts in us: 'I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger, I will not return to destroy Ephraim: for I AM GOD AND NOT MAN.'

Hosea xi. 9.

Here lies the knot and centre of Gospel forgiveness. It flows from the cross, and springs out of the grave of Christ. . . .

Pardon comes not to the soul alone; or rather, Christ comes not to the soul with pardon only. It is that which he opens the door and enters by, but he comes with a spirit of life and power. . . .

Men talk of fundamental errors. This is to me the most fundamental error that any can fall into, and the most pernicious. It is made up of these two parts: (i) They do not indeed believe forgiveness, and (ii) they suppose they do believe it—which keeps them from seeking after the only remedy. . . .

The prescription of repentance is a revelation of forgiveness. God would not call upon a sinful creature to humble itself and bewail its sin if there were no way of recovery or relief; and the only way of recovery from the guilt of sin is pardon. God's call to repentance is a full demonstration of his willingness to forgive.

And this is that which John would work a sense of upon our souls where he tells us that 'God is love,' or one of an infinitely gracious, tender, good, compassionate, loving nature. Infinite goodness and grace is the soil wherein forgiveness

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grows. It is impossible this flower should spring from any other root. Unless this be revealed to the soul, forgiveness is not revealed. To consider pardon merely as it is terminated on ourselves, not as it flows from God, will bring neither profit to us nor glory to God.

There was under the Old Testament but one sacrifice to call any thing to remembrance; and God puts a mark on that sacrifice, as that which was not, as it were, well pleasing unto him, but only what necessity did require. And that was the sacrifice of jealousy. Saith God, 'There shall be no oil in it (a token of peace); there shall be no frankincense (that should yield a sweet savour), for it is a sacrifice to bring iniquity to remembrance.' This great ordinance of the Lord's Supper is not to call iniquity to remembrance, but it is to call to remembrance the putting an end to iniquity.—[From *Sacramental Sermons.*]

It is a great and rare thing to have forgiveness in God discovered unto a sinful soul. . . . It is a pure gospel truth, that hath neither shadow, footstep, nor intimation elsewhere. The whole creation hath not the least obscure impression of it left thereon.

GENEROSITY OF GOD, THE

KNOW that God despiseth not small things. He takes notice of the least breathings of our hearts after him, when we ourselves can see nor perceive no such thing. He knows the mind of the Spirit in those workings which are never formed to that height that we can reflect upon them with our observation. Every thing that is of him is noted in

his book, though not in ours. He took notice that, when Sarah was acting unbelief towards him, yet that she showed respect and regard to her husband, calling him 'lord.' And even whilst his people are sinning, he can find something in their hearts, words, or ways, that pleaseth him; much more in their duties. He is a skilful refiner, that can find much gold in that ore where we see nothing but lead or clay. He remembers the duties which we forget, and forgets the sins which we remember. He justifies our persons, though ungodly; and will also our duties, though not perfectly godly.

Gen. xviii. 12.
1 Pet. iii. 6.

. . . When an unskilful servant gathers many herbs, flowers, and weeds in a garden, you gather them out that are useful, and cast the rest out of sight. Christ deals so with our performances. All the ingredients of self that are in them on any account he takes away, and adds incense to what remains, and presents it to God. This is the cause that the saints at the last day, when they meet their own duties and performances, know them not, they are so changed from what they were when they went out of their hand. 'Lord, when saw we thee naked or hungry?' So that God accepts a little, and Christ makes our little a great deal.—[From *An Exposition upon Psalm cxxx.*]

Exod. xxx. 36.

God doth not take it well to be limited by us in any thing, least of all in his grace. This he calls a tempting of him (Ps. lxxviii. 41), a provoking temptation. This he could not bear with. If there be any pardon with God, it is such as becomes him to give. When he pardons, he will abundantly pardon. Go with your half-forgiveness, limited, conditional pardons, with reserves and limitations, to the sons of men. It may be, it may become them; it is like themselves. That of

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God is absolute and perfect, before which our sins are as a cloud before the east wind and the rising sun.

GOD, THE LOVE OF

AND this is the glory of love, the most orient pearl in the crown of it. It is not mercenary, nor self-ended, nor Eph. i. 4. deserved; but as a spring or fountain it freely vents or pours out itself upon its own account. And what ingenuous, truly noble, heavenly-descended heart can hold out against the power of this love? . . . Its *constancy* and *unchangeableness* is another star of eminent magnitude in the heaven of love. It is not a fading, a wavering, an altering thing, but abides for ever. . . . It may be eclipsed and obscured, as to its beams and influence for a season; but changed, turned away, it cannot be. And this consideration of it renders it to the souls of the saints inestimably precious. The very thought of it is marrow to their bones and health to their souls, and makes them cry out to all that is within them to love the Lord and to live unto him.—[From *The Perseverance of the Saints*, ch. x.]

Let the love of God to believers be considered as it is in itself, as the vital act of his will.

GOD, THE POWER OF

THE first thing we consider in God, in the resignation of our souls to him, is his sovereignty.¹ It is mentioned in two places in the Psalms, in both which this duty

¹ 'I spent nearly a twelvemonth in a sort of mental elysium, and the one idea which ministered to my soul all its rapture was the magnificence of the God-head, and the universal subordination of all things to the one great purpose for which he evolved and was supporting creation.' So Dr. Chalmers writes of

- Ps. xvi. 1-2. is proposed to us. 'Preserve me, O God; for in thee do I put my trust. O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, "Thou art my Lord."' 'Thou art my Lord, who hast the sovereign disposal of me. I am going to give up my spirit to thee; I do it upon consideration of thy sovereignty.' So,
- Ps. xxxi. 14-15. 'I trusted in thee, O Lord.' Why so? 'I said, Thou art my God. My times are in thy hand.'—'It is because of thy sovereignty.'—[From *Sermons*.]

- Have frequent thoughts of *God's omnipotency*, or his almighty power. This most men, it may be, suppose they need not much exhortation unto; for none ever doubted of it. Who doth not grant it on all occasions? Men grant it, indeed, in general; for eternal power is inseparable from the first notion of the Divine Being. So are they conjoined by the apostle:
- Rom. i. 20. 'His eternal power and Godhead.' Yet few believe it for themselves and as they ought. Indeed, to believe the almighty power of God with reference unto ourselves and all our concerns, temporal and eternal, is one of the highest and most noble acts of faith, which includes all others in it: for this is that which God at first proposed alone as the proper object of our faith in our entrance into covenant with him,
- Gen. xvii. 1. 'I am the Almighty God'; that which Job arrived unto after his long exercise and trial. 'I know,' saith he, 'that thou canst do every thing, and no thought of thine can be hindered.' 'God hath spoken once,' saith the psalmist; 'twice have I heard this; that power belongeth unto God.' It was that which God saw it necessary frequently to instruct

himself as a student of divinity. But this, as he premises, was before his change to evangelical religion. With Owen, as a true Calvinist, the sovereignty of God bears directly on the personal religion of the individual.

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him in ; for we are ready to be affected with the appearances of *present power* in creatures, and to suppose that all things will go according unto their wills because of their power. But it is quite otherwise ; all creatures are poor feeble ciphers, that can do nothing. Power belongs unto God ; it is a flower of his crown imperial, which he will suffer none to usurp. . . . —[From *Of Spiritual Mindedness*, ch. ix.]

HEAVEN AND EARTH

I HAVE seen and read somewhat of the writings of learned men concerning the state of future glory ;¹ some of them are filled with excellent notions of truth, and elegance of speech, whereby they cannot but much affect the minds of those who duly consider what they say. But I know not well whence it comes to pass—the things spoken do not abide nor incorporate with our minds. They please and refresh for a little while, like a shower of rain in a dry season, that soaketh not unto the roots of things ; the power of them doth not enter into us. Is it not all from hence, that their notions of future things are not educed out of the experience which we have of the beginnings of them in this world ? Yea, the soul is disturbed, not edified, in all contemplations of future glory, where things are proposed to it whereof in this life it hath neither foretaste, sense, experience, nor evidence. No man ought to look for anything in heaven, but what one way

¹ Save in one fearful passage towards the close of his exposition of Ps. cxxx., I remember no sentences in Owen which gloat over the physical torments of hell. And if his rare and incidental descriptions of heaven have any defect, it lies on the side of abstraction rather than on that of literal and sensuous presentment.

or other he hath some experience of in this life.—[From *The Glory of Christ.*]

HISTORY, THE WITNESS OF

WE take it for a good token and evidence of a virtuous healing water, when, without fraud or pretence, we see the crutches of cured cripples and impotent persons hung about it as a memorial of its efficacy. And it is a great demonstration of the skill and ability of a physician, when many come to a sick person and tell him, 'We had the same distemper with you—it had the same symptoms, the same effects; and by his skill and care we are cured.' 'Oh,' saith the sick man, 'bring him unto me, I will venture my life in his hand.' Now, all the saints of heaven stand about a sick soul; for in this matter 'we are compassed about with a cloud of witnesses.' And what do they bear witness unto? what say they unto a poor guilty sinner? 'As thou art, so were we; so guilty, so perplexed, so obnoxious¹ to wrath, so fearing destruction from God.' 'And what way did you steer, what course did you take, to obtain the blessed condition wherein now you are?' Say they, 'We went all to God through Christ for forgiveness; and found plenty of grace, mercy, and pardon in him for us all.'—[From *An Exposition upon Psalm cxxx.*]

Heb. xii. 1.

God was with them; and they lived to his glory, and died in peace: 'whose faith follow,' and example pursue. And remember the faith they lived and died in: look round about,

¹ *i.e.* exposed.

and see whether any of the new creeds have produced a new holiness to exceed theirs.¹

HOLINESS AND TRUTH

AN apostasy from the holiness of the gospel is, on many accounts, more dreadful and dangerous than a partial apostasy from its truth. . . . If there be an error broached against the doctrine of the gospel, it is odds but some or other will take notice of it, confute it, and warn all men of the danger wherewith it is attended ; but let the whole world, as it were, lie in evil, let the lives and conversations of men be as contrary to the rule of the gospel as darkness is to light, so they make no disorder in this or that way of outward worship, and be either good Catholics or good Protestants, or any thing else of that kind, he shall scarcely escape the censure of peevishness and severity (it may be of self-conceitedness and hypocrisy) who shall reflect any great blame on these things.—[From *The Nature and Causes of Apostasy*, ch. viii.]

Sometimes truth² is lost first in a church, and then holiness ; and sometimes the decay or hatred of holiness is the cause of the loss of truth. But when either is rejected, the other will not abide.—[*Ibid.*, ch. x.]

¹ 'Tis opportune to look back on old times and contemplate our forefathers. Great examples grow thin, and to be fetched from the passed world. Simplicity flies away, and iniquity comes at long strides upon us.—Sir Thomas Browne, in the epistle dedicatory to *Hydriotaphia* (1658). Cf. his *Christian Morals*, part i. sect. 12.

² One of the religious street-cries in London at the opening of the Civil War was, 'No peace without truth !'

IRELAND

HOW is it that Jesus Christ is in Ireland only as a *lion staining all his garments with the blood of his enemies*; and none to hold him out as a *lamb sprinkled with his own blood to his friends*? Is it the sovereignty and interest of England that is alone to be there transacted? For my part, I see no farther into the MYSTERY of these things but that I could heartily rejoice, that, innocent blood being expiated, the Irish might enjoy Ireland so long as the moon endureth, so that Jesus Christ might possess the Irish. But God having suffered those sworn vassals of the man of sin to break out into such ways of villany as render them obnoxious unto vengeance, upon such rules of government amongst men as he hath appointed; is there, therefore, nothing to be done but to give a *cup of blood* into their hands? Doubtless the way whereby God will bring the followers after the beast to condign destruction for all their enmity to the Lord Jesus, will be by suffering them to run into such practices against men as shall righteously expose them to vengeance, according to acknowledged principles among the sons of men. But is this all? hath he no farther aim? Is not all this to make way for the Lord Jesus to take possession of his long since promised inheritance? And shall we stop at the first part? Is this to deal fairly with the Lord Jesus?—call him out to the *battle*, and then keep away his *crown*? God hath been faithful in doing great things for you; be faithful in this one—do your utmost for the preaching of the gospel in Ireland.—
[From a *Sermon preached at Westminster before Parliament*, Feb. 28, 1649.]

JESUS, THE LOVE AND DEATH OF

IF Christ had not died, sin had never died in any sinner unto eternity.

It was required of him that he should pity us until he had none left to pity himself when he stood in need of it—that he should relieve us in our sufferings by suffering the same things that we should have done. But he was not in the least hereby deterred from undertaking this work of love and mercy for us; yea, his love rose on this proposal like the waters of a mighty stream against opposition.¹—[From *The Glory of Christ*.]

Christ's offering himself was the greatest expression of his inexpressible love.

To fancy that there is any cleansing from sin but by the blood of Christ, is to overthrow the Gospel.

Then do we in our measure know the love of Christ, when we know that it passeth knowledge; when we comprehend so much of it as to find we cannot comprehend it. . . . And we are never nearer Christ than when we find ourselves lost in a holy amazement at his unspeakable love.

In his cross the world proclaimed all its good qualities and all its powers, and hath given unto them that believe its naked face to view and contemplate. Nor is it now one jot more comely than it was when it had gotten Christ on the cross.

Our love, being once fixed on Christ, meets with no difficul-

¹ Who can ever forget, once he has read it, the thrilling passage on Christ's dying love in Baxter's *Saints' Rest* (ch. i. sect. 5)?

ties of that nature that the love of Christ met withal when it was fixed on us.

Let us learn to run up all the mercies we are partakers of, whatsoever it be we value, to the proper spring: 'Who loved me and gave himself for me.'

THE SPIRITUAL MIND

MEN whose calling and work it is to study the Scripture, or the things revealed therein, and to preach them to others, cannot but have many thoughts about spiritual things, and yet may be, and oftentimes are, most remote from being spiritually minded. They may be forced by their work and calling to think of them early and late, evening and morning, yet their minds be no way rendered or proved spiritual thereby. It were well if all of us who are preachers would diligently examine ourselves herein. So is it with them that oblige themselves to read the Scriptures, it may be so many chapters every day. Notwithstanding the diligent performance of their task, they may be most remote from being spiritually minded. See Ezek. xxxiii. 31.—[From *On Spiritual Mindedness*, pt. 1. ch. iii.]

Let us not mistake ourselves. To be spiritually minded is not to have the notion and knowledge of spiritual things in our minds, it is not to be constant, no nor to abound, in the performance of duties: both which may be when there is no grace in the heart at all. It is to have our minds really exercised with delight about heavenly things, the things that are above, especially Christ himself as at the right hand of God.—[*Ibid.*]

There is no lawful calling that doth absolutely exclude this

grace of being spiritually minded in them that are engaged in it, nor any that doth include it. Men may be in the meanest of lawful callings and be so, and men may be in the best and highest and not be so. Consider the calling of the ministry: The work and duty of it calls on those that are employed in it to have their minds and thoughts conversant about spiritual and heavenly things. They are to study about them, to meditate on them, to commit them to memory, to speak them out unto others. It will be said, 'Surely such men must needs be spiritually minded.' If they go no farther than what is mentioned, I say they must needs be so as printers must needs be learned, who are continually conversant about letters. A man may with great industry engage himself in these things, and yet his mind be most remote from being spiritual. The event doth declare that it may be so. And the reasons of it are manifest. It requires as much if not more watchfulness, more care, more humility, for a minister to be spiritually minded in the discharge of his calling, than for any other sort of men in theirs; and that, as for other reasons, so because the commonness of the exercise of such thoughts, with their design upon others in their expression, will take off their power and efficacy. And he will have little benefit by his own ministry who endeavours not in the first place an experience in his own heart of the power of the truths which he doth teach unto others.—[From *On Spiritual Mindedness*, ch. xi.]

THE MINISTRY

HE that is more frequent in his pulpit to his people than he is in his closet for his people, is but a sorry watchman.

In our prayers for our people, God will teach us what we shall preach unto them. We cannot pray for them, but we must think on what it is we pray for, and that is the consideration of their condition. . . . The apostles 'gave themselves to prayer and the word.' Prayer is in the first place.—[From *Sermons*.]

Acts vi. 4.

Eph. iv. 9.

That which the apostle designs to manifest is, that the deep humiliation and the death of Christ are the fountain and original of the ministry of the Church. *It is a fruit whose root is in the grave of Christ*; for in those things, in the humiliation and death of Christ, lay the foundation of his mediatory authority, whereof the ministry is an effect.—[From *Of Spiritual Gifts*, Bk. ix. ch. vi.]

Clear shining from God must be at the bottom of deep labouring with God. What is the reason that so many in our days set their hands to the plough, and look back again?—begin to serve Providence in great things, but cannot finish? give over in the heat of the day? They never had any such revelation of the mind of God upon their spirits, such a discovery of his excellences, as might serve for a bottom of such undertakings. Men must know that if God hath not appeared to them in brightness, though they think highly of themselves, they'll deny God twice and thrice before the close of the work of this age. If you have no great discoveries, you will wax vain in great undertakings.—[From *Sermons*.]

Acts i. 1.

Though Noah's servants built the ark, yet themselves were drowned. God will not accept of the tongue where the devil has the soul. Jesus did 'do and teach.' If a man teach uprightly and walk crookedly, more will fall down in the

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night of his life than he built in the day of his doctrine.—
[From *Eshcol*.]

God hath work to do in this world; and to desert it because of its difficulties and entanglements, is to cast off his authority. It is not enough that we be just, that we be righteous, and walk with God in holiness; but we must also serve our generation,¹ as David did before he fell asleep. God hath a work to do; and not to help him is to oppose him.—[From *Sermons*.]

I do not know a warning that I judge more necessary to be given those who are called this day, than to charge them not to trade too much with their natural gifts, and abilities, and learning. These are talents in their kind; but it is the Spirit must manage all that learning they have, or it will prejudice them and you also. *I have known some good men who have been so addicted to their study, that they have thought the last day of the week sufficient to prepare for their ministry, though they employ all the rest of the week in other studies.* But your great business is to trade with your *spiritual* abilities. . . . A man may preach a very good sermon, who is otherwise himself; but he will never make a *good minister of Jesus Christ*, whose mind and heart is not always in the work. Spiritual gifts will require continual ruminating on the things of the gospel in our minds; . . . and it is surprising how a little necessary diversion will unfit the mind for this work.—
[From *An Ordination Sermon*, April 3, 1678.]

It will one day appear that there is more glory, more excel-

¹ 'Not every citizen is a believer, but every believer is a citizen' (Vinet).

lency, in giving (Eph. iv. 8 f.) one good minister to a congregation, by furnishing him with spiritual gifts for the discharge of his duty, than in the pompous instalment of a thousand popes, cardinals, or metropolitans.

And this in an especial manner is required of us who are ministers, that we be not like a hand set up in crossways, directing others which way to go, but staying behind itself.

I think truly that *no man preaches that sermon well to others, who doth not first preach it to his own heart.*

‘MORALITY’

THE very name of *virtue*, in the sense wherein it is commonly used and received, comes from the schools of philosophy and not from the Scripture. . . . The word ‘moral’ is yet far more exotic to the Church and Scripture. We are beholden for it, if there be any advantage in its use, merely to the schools of the philosophers, especially of Aristotle. . . . The schoolmen brought in this expression with all its concerns, as they did the rest of Aristotle’s philosophy, into the Church and divinity; and I cannot but think it had been well if they had never done it, as all will grant they might have omitted some other things without the least disadvantage to learning or religion.

It is granted that wherever grace is, there is virtue; for grace will produce and effect all virtues in the soul whatever. But virtue, on the other side, may be where there is no grace.

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Some would have moral virtue to be holiness, which (as they suppose) they can understand by their own reason and practise in their own strength. And I heartily wish we could see more of the fruits of it from them. But real moral virtue will hardly be abused into an opposition unto grace. The pretence of it will be so, easily, and is so every day.

Gospel truth is the only root whereon gospel holiness will grow.

PETER

THE case of Peter is clear unto this: 'I will not deny thee; though all men should deny thee I will not; though I were to die for it, I would not do it.' This said the poor man when he stood on the very brink of that temptation that cost him in the issue such bitter tears. And this taught him so far to know himself all his days, and gave him such acquaintance with the state of all believers, that when he had received more of the Spirit and of power, yet he had less of confidence, and saw it was fit that others should have so also, and therefore persuades all men to 'pass the time of their sojourning ^{1 Peter i. 17.} here in fear'; not to be confident and high as he was, lest, as he did, they fall. At the first trial he compares himself with others, and vaunts himself above them: 'Though all men should forsake thee, yet I will not.' He fears every man more than himself. But when our Saviour afterward comes to him, and puts him directly upon the comparison, 'Simon, son of John ^{xxi. 15.} Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?' he hath done com-

paring himself with others, and only crieth, 'Lord, thou knowest that I love thee.' He will lift up himself above others no more.—[From *Of Temptation*, ch. vii.]

Most men think with Peter, and on no better grounds than he did (nor so good neither, as not being conscious unto themselves of so much sincerity as he was), that though all men should forsake the truth and purity of religion, yet they will not do so. But they understand not at all what it is to be preserved in an hour of temptation, nor what is required thereunto. They scorn to fall away, and yet they scorn all the means whereby they may be preserved from so doing.—[From *Apostasy*, ch. vi.]

Peter was broken loose and running downhill apace, denying and forswearing his Master; Christ puts a restraint upon his spirit by a look towards him. . . . It is so frequently with the saints of God, though in lesser evils. Like as a hawk sitting on a man's hand, eating her food in quietness, is suddenly, by the original wildness of her nature, carried out to an attempt of flying away with speed, but is checked by the string at her heels, upon which she returns to her meat again; we have an innate wildness in us, provoking and stirring us up to run from God. Were we not recovered by some clog fastened on us for our restraint, we should often run into the most desperate paths. And this restraint, I say, is from the indwelling Spirit.—[From *Doctrine of the Saints' Perseverance*, ch. viii.]

PRESENT-DAY RELIGION

RELIGION is the same that ever it was, only it suffers by them that make profession of it.

Never was there less regard of the person and offices of Christ, of his grace, and benefits of his mediation, among them that are called Christians, than is found among many at this day. . . . I know those things are despised by many, unto whom the want of Christ and the receiving of him, or an interest in him, are contemptible things. But that is all one. We must not forego the gospel, with our experience, and ruin our souls, to escape their reproaches. Sin will be sin, and Christ will be Christ, and salvation by him will be what it is, when they have done what they can.—[From *The Nature and Causes of Apostasy*.]

The world, indeed, seems to be weary of the just, righteous, holy ways of God, and of that exactness in walking according to his institutions and commands which it will be one day known that he doth require. But the way to put a stop to this declension is not by accommodating the commands of God to the corrupt courses and ways of men. The truths of God and the holiness of his precepts must be pleaded and defended, though the world dislike them here and perish hereafter. His law must not be made to lackey after the wills of men, nor be dissolved by vain interpretations, because they complain they cannot, indeed because they will not, comply with it. Our Lord Jesus Christ came not to destroy the law and the prophets, but to fulfil them, and to supply men with spiritual strength to fulfil them also. It is

evil to break the least commandment; but there is a great aggravation of that evil in them that shall teach men so to do.

REASON, THE CULT OF

HE that despairs¹ says, 'I am in the stead of God to myself in this matter. There is neither goodness nor grace nor mercy in him but what I can comprehend.'—[From *The Nature and Causes of Apostasy*, ch. xii.]

Now the souls of the men whose good is sought in this work are no less precious in the sight of God, though they are unacquainted with philosophical terms and ways of arguing, than the souls of the most learned. Besides, that which we account our wisdom and learning may, if too rigorously attended, be our folly. When we think to sharpen the reason of the Scripture, we may straiten the efficacy of the spirit of it. It is oftentimes more effectual in its own liberty than when restrained to our methods of arguing, and the weapons of it keener in their own soft breathings than when sharpened in the forge of Aristotle.—[From the epistle dedicatory prefixed to *The Doctrine of the Saints' Perseverance*.]

Faith is highly rational, in all its acts of obedience towards God.—It reckoneth, computeth, judgeth, chooseth, determineth, in the most exalted acts of reason. All these

Heb. xi. 24-26. things are here ascribed unto Moses in the exercise of

¹ 'Nothing resembles pride so much as discouragement' (Amiel). And 'discouragement,' said Mazzini, 'is but disenchanted egotism.' Spinoza's contemporary sentence in the *Ethic* is that 'although dejection is the opposite of pride, the humble dejected man is very near akin to the proud.'

his faith. I would willingly insist hereon, to vindicate *the honour of faith* from the imputations that are cast on all its actings in the world, as weak and foolish; or that it is nothing but an engine or pretence set up unto *the ruin of reason*,¹ and the use of it in the lives of men.² And if we cannot prove that the wisdom of faith, and the reason wherewith and whereon it always acts, are the most eminent that our nature is capable of in this world, and that whatever is contrary to them, or inconsistent with them, is arrant folly, and contrary to the primigenial light of our nature and all the principles of reason truly so called, we shall freely give up the cause of faith unto the vainest pretence of reason that foolish men can make.

REFORMERS, THE

OUR first reformers did not think themselves obliged, they did not think meet, to abide within the bounds and limits of that reformation of the church which had been attempted before them, by men wise, learned, and holy, even in this nation. Such was that which was endeavoured by Wickliffe and his followers; in giving testimony whereunto many suffered martyrdom, and prepared the way to those that were to come after. They approved of what was then done, or attempted to be done, for the substance of it, yet esteemed

¹ See Newman's sarcastic lines:—

'Brothers! spare reasoning; men have settled long
That ye are out of date, and they are wise.'

² 'There can be no surer sign of decrepitude and decay in faith than a prevalent nervousness about naming and commending reason. . . . The faith of ordinary people would be far more clear and sure if they had been freely instructed in the responsibilities of reason' (F. J. A. Hort).

- themselves at liberty to make a farther progress in the same work; which they did accordingly. Surely such persons never designed their own judgment and practice to give boundaries unto all reformation for evermore, or pretended that they had made so perfect a discovery of the mind of Christ, in all things belonging unto the rule and worship of the church, as that it should not only be vain but sinful to make any farther inquiries about it. Some thought they were come unto the utmost limits of navigation and discovery of the parts of the world before the West Indies were found out; and some men, when in any kind they know as much as they can, are apt to think there is no more to be known. It was not so with our reformers.—[From the preface to *An Enquiry concerning Evangelical Churches*.]

PERSONAL RELIGION, THE BEGINNINGS OF

WHEN God converts a soul, he comes into it with a cloud. I know nothing in this world I would be more jealous of in my ministry than of speaking anything, on conversion or regeneration, that I had not experience of myself. I would not bind others by any experience of my own, unless it be confirmed by a general rule; for one man may have an experience that another hath not.¹ But yet I think

¹ James Fraser of Brea (1639-1699), in his *Memoirs*, insists more than once that 'the Lord's dealings and method with others are not our rule. It is the cause of much doubting and disquietness that persons, reading unattentively in books the Lord's way to others, hence cut out this channel to themselves, and think, Thus and thus I must be dealt with, or else not at all.' The same sensible view is urged by William Guthrie of Fenwick (1620-1665), whom Owen pronounced to be 'one of the greatest divines who ever wrote.' See chap. i. sect. ii. 4, of the first part of his *Christian's Saving Interest*, which Owen carried about with him as a *vade-mecum*, declaring that there was 'more divinity in it than in' all his own folios.

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this I can say, that God generally takes possession of souls in a cloud. That is, there is some darkness upon them; they cannot tell what their state is. Sometimes they have hopes, and sometimes fears; sometimes they think things are well, and sometimes they are cast down again. This is the way whereby God generally enters into all souls. These things may be in part where God does not come; but seldom have I heard of any that have come unto God, but that God first took possession of them in a cloud.¹—[From *Sermons*.]

The prophet says of Ephraim (Hosea, x. 11), 'He loved to tread out the corn.' He loved to work when he might eat, to have always the corn before him. But God, says he, would 'cause him to plough'; a labour no less needful, though at present not so delightful. Most men love to hear of the doctrine of grace, of the pardon of sin, of free love, and suppose they find food therein. But to be breaking up the fallow ground of their hearts, to be inquiring after the weeds and briers that grow in them, they delight not so much—though it be the only way to come to a true knowledge of grace itself. . . . This will beget reverence of God, a sense of our distance from him, a due valuation of mercy, far above those light, verbal, airy attainments, that some have boasted of.

¹ This tallies with Greatheart's opinion, in his account of Mr. Fearing. 'For my part I care not at all for that profession that begins not in heaviness of mind. The first string that the musician usually touches is the base, when he intends to put all in tune. God also plays upon this string first when he sets the soul in tune for himself.' 'I was a man of sorrows,' wrote Fox in 1647, 'in the times of the first workings of the Lord in me.' 'Every time that the words *contrition* or *humility* drop from the lips of prophet or psalmist, Christianity appears' (M. Arnold).

RELIGIOUS LITERATURE

THERE are not a few who pretend high unto religion and devotion, who yet manifest themselves not to have that regard unto Christ which the gospel prescribes and requires. Hence have we so many discourses published about religion, the practical holiness and duties of obedience, written with great elegancy of style and seriousness in argument, wherein we can meet with little or nothing wherein Jesus Christ, his office or his grace, are concerned. Yea, it is odds but in them all we shall meet with some reflections on those who judge them to be the life and centre of our religion. Concerning many books of this nature, we may say what a learned person¹ did of one of old: 'There were in it many things laudable and delectable, *sed nomen Jesu non erat ibi*.'—[From *The Person of Christ*, ch. ii.]

I fear that some men *write* books about these things because they *read* none.

Nothing, I confess, is more nauseous to me than magisterial dictates in sacred things. . . . Some men write as if they were inspired, or dreamed that they had obtained to themselves a Pythagorean reverence. Their writings are full of strong, authoritative assertions, arguing the good opinion they have of themselves. Which I wish did not include an equal contempt of others.

¹ Augustine, as Owen elsewhere explains. The book was Cicero's *Hortensius*.

THE SAINTS

THE world does not know, nor is able to make a right judgment of believers. Nor do you so; for it is the spiritual man alone that discerneth the things of God. Their infirmities are visible to all—their graces invisible: the king's daughter is glorious within. And when you are able to make a right judgment of them, you will desire no greater advancement than to be of their society. . . .

Remember that of many of the best Christians the worst only is known and seen.¹ Many who keep up precious communion with God do yet oftentimes, by their natural tempers of freedom or passion, not carry so glorious appearances as others who perhaps come short of them in grace and the power of godliness. They may, as the king's daughter, be all glorious within, though their clothes be not always of wrought gold.—[From *The Nature and Power of Indwelling Sin*, ch. xv.]

Unskilful men may cast away rough, unwrought diamonds as useless stones; they know not what polishing will bring them unto. Nor do men unskilful in the mysteries of godliness judge there can be any glory in rough, unwrought grace; they know not what lustre and beauty the polishing of the heavenly hand will give unto it.—[From *Spiritual Mindedness*, ch. vi.]

Poor souls are apt to think that all those whom they read

¹ In his essay on the poetry of the Celtic races, Renan notes how the *Mabinogion* describes the Irish saints who came forward to bless King Arthur and receive boons from him as 'a race of men who are vaguely known and hard to understand.'—Cp. Newman's verses on *The Hidden Ones*, *St. Paul*, etc.

or hear of to be gone to heaven, went thither because they were so good and so holy. . . . Yet not one of them, not any one that is now in heaven (Jesus Christ alone excepted), did ever come thither any other way but by forgiveness of sins. And that will also bring us thither, though we come short of many of them in holiness and grace. . . .

I will not judge¹ a person to be spiritually dead whom I have judged formerly to have had spiritual life, though I see him at present in a swoon as to all evidences of the spiritual life. And the reason why I will not judge so is this—because if you judge a person dead, you neglect him, you leave him ; but if you judge him in a swoon, though never so dangerous, you use all means for the retrieving of his life.—[From *Sermons*.]

SAINTS, THE SINS OF

CONSIDER the fearful eruptions of actual sin that have been in the lives of believers. (1) They are most of them in the lives of men that were not of the *lowest form* or ordinary sort of believers, but of men that had a peculiar eminency in them on the account of their walking with God in their generation. Such were Noah, Lot, David, Hezekiah, and others. They were not men of an ordinary size, but higher than their brethren by the shoulders and upwards in profession, yea in real holiness. And surely that must needs be of a mighty efficacy that could hurry such giants in the

¹ F. D. Maurice to his mother : ‘Of all spirits I believe the spirit of judging is the worst, and it has had the rule of me I cannot tell you how dreadfully and how long. . . . This, I find, has more hindered my progress in love and gentleness than all things else. I never knew what the words, “Judge not that ye be not judged,” meant before ; now they seem to me some of the most awful, necessary, and beautiful in the whole Word of God.’

ways of God into such abominable sins as they fell into. An ordinary engine could never have turned them out of the course of their obedience. It was a poison that no athletic constitution of spiritual health, no antidote, could withstand.

(2) And those men fell not into their great sins at the *beginning of their profession*, when they had had but little experience of the goodness of God, of the sweetness and pleasantness of obedience, of the power and craft of sin, of its impulsions, solicitations, and surprisals; but after a long course of walking with God and acquaintance with all these things, together with innumerable motives unto watchfulness. . . . Now, to set upon such persons, so well acquainted with its power and deceit, so armed and provided against it, that had been conquerors over it for so many years, and to prevail against them, it argues a power and efficacy too mighty for every thing but the Spirit of the Almighty to withstand. . . .

(3) As if God had permitted their falls on set purpose, that we might learn to be wary of this powerful enemy, they all of them fell out when they had newly received *great and stupendous mercies* from the hand of God, that ought to have been strong obligations unto diligence and watchfulness in close obedience. Noah was but newly come forth of that *world of waters*, wherein he saw the ungodly world perishing for their sins, and himself preserved by that astonishing miracle which all ages must admire. Whilst the world's desolation was an hourly remembrancer unto him of his strange preservation by the immediate care and hand of God, he falls into *drunkenness*. Lot had newly seen that which every one that thinks on cannot but tremble. He saw, as one speaks, '*hell coming out of heaven*' upon unclean sinners: the greatest evidence, except the cross of Christ, that God ever gave in his

providence of the judgment to come. He saw himself and children delivered by the special care and miraculous hand of God; and yet, whilst these strange mercies were fresh upon him, he fell into *drunkenness and incest*. David was delivered out of all his troubles, and had the necks of his enemies given him round about, and he makes use of his peace from a world of trials and troubles to contrive *murder and adultery*. Immediately it was after Hezekiah's great and miraculous deliverance that he falls into his *carnal pride and boasting*. I say, their falls in such seasons seem to be permitted on set purpose to instruct us all in the truth that we have in hand; so that no persons, in no seasons, with what furniture¹ of grace soever, can promise themselves security from its prevalency any other ways than by keeping close constantly to Him who hath supplies to give out that are above its reach and efficacy. Methinks this should make us look about us.—[From *On Indwelling Sin*, ch. xiv.]

STUDY OF THE SCRIPTURES

I KNOW not a more deplorable mistake in the studies of divines, both preachers and others, than their diversion from an immediate, direct study of the Scriptures themselves unto the studying of commentators, critics, scholiasts, annotators, and the like helps, which God in his good providence, making use of the abilities and sometimes the ambitions and ends of men, hath furnished us withal. Not that I condemn the use and study of them, which I wish men were more diligent in, but desire pardon if I mistake,

¹ *i.e.* equipment.

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and do only surmise, by the experience of my own folly for many years, that many which seriously study the things of God do yet rather make it their business to inquire after the sense of other men on the Scriptures than to search studiously into them themselves.—[From the preface to *Vindiciæ Evangelicæ*.]

It was the word of prophecy that gave the writers of it the reputation and authority of prophets; and their being prophets gave not authority to the word they declared, or wrote as a word of prophecy. Hence an anxious inquiry after the penman of any part of the Scripture is not necessary.—[From *Hebrews*.]

If we complain of the treacherousness of our memories, it is the most harmless way of the slipping out of the word. It is not the treachery of our memories, but of our hearts and affections, that makes the heart like a broken vessel, that makes all the rents in it where the water runs out. . . . We talk away a sermon and the sense of it.¹—[From *Sermons*.]

Here is our guide, our rule, ready to direct us in all stated duties, on all occasions and emergencies; so that nothing can befall us, nothing can be required of us in the worship of God, in the course, ways, and actions of our lives, but what we may have here light, guidance, and direction for. It is the word of his wisdom, will, and grace, who made us these souls, and who foreknew every thought that would be in them to eternity, and hath secretly laid up in his word that which shall suit and answer unto every occasion of all that

¹ See below, on Acts x. 33.

believe in him. Whence one¹ cried out of old, ‘Adoro plenitudinem Scripturarum’—‘I adore the fulness of the Scriptures’; in which posture of holy admiration I desire my mind may be found whilst I am in this world.—[From *Hebrews*.]

The Jews’ frontispiece to their great Bible is that saying of Jacob upon the vision of God that he had at Bethel, ‘How dreadful is this place! This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.’ So ought we to look upon the word, with a holy awe and reverence of the presence of God in it.

TESTAMENT, THE NEW

THAT which the Lord Christ taught his disciples, in his *personal ministry* on the earth, was suited unto that economy of the Church which was antecedent unto his death and resurrection. Nothing did he withhold from them that was needful to their faith, obedience, and consolation in that state. Many things he instructed them in out of the Scripture, many new revelations he made unto them, and many times did he occasionally instruct and rectify their judgment; howbeit he made no clear, distinct revelation of those sacred mysteries unto them which are *peculiar unto the faith of the New Testament*, nor were to be distinctly apprehended before his death and resurrection.

What the Lord Christ revealed afterward by his Spirit unto the apostles, was no less *immediately from himself* than was the truth which he spoke unto them with his own mouth in the days of his flesh. An apprehension to the

¹ Tertullian. Philip Henry also used frequently to employ this saying.

contrary is destructive of Christian religion. The epistles of the apostles are no less Christ's sermons than that which he delivered on the mount.¹—[From *The Doctrine of Justification by Faith*.]

There is no duty which in this world we perform unto God that is more acceptable to him than fervent prayers for a right understanding of his mind and will in his Word. . . .

We do not affirm that the Spirit immediately by himself saith unto every individual believer, This book is or contains the Word of God. We say not that the Spirit ever speaks to us *of* the Word, but *by* the Word. . . .

It is a safe rule of interpreting Scripture, that in places mentioning the love and grace of God to us, the words are to be taken in their utmost significance.

SELF, CRUCIFYING

AS a man *nailed to the cross* ; he first struggles and strives and cries out with great strength and might, but, as his blood and spirits waste, his strivings are faint and seldom, his cries low and hoarse, scarce to be heard—when a man first sets on a lust or distemper to deal with it, it struggles with great violence to break loose ; it cries with earnestness and impatience to be satisfied and relieved ; but when by mortification² the blood and spirit of it are let out, it moves seldom

¹ 'I do not believe that after our Lord departed from the world—withdrew His visible presence—the light which had come into the world declined ; it grew and grew, and I find in the Epistles to the Romans and Ephesians a fuller manifestation of the mind of Christ than in the Sermon on the Mount' (R. W. Dale).

² 'The two highest points of life, wherein a Christian is most seen, are patience and mortification' (George Herbert in *A Priest to the Temple*, ch. iii.). Jeremy Taylor's chapter on Mortification (in part i. sect. viii. of his *Life of Christ*) is too well known to need quoting.

and faintly, cries sparingly, and is scarce heard in the heart; it may sometimes have a dying pang that makes an appearance of great vigour and strength, but it is quickly over.

He is no true believer unto whom sin is not the greatest burden, sorrow, and trouble.—[From *The Mortification of Sin in Believers*, ch. vi.]

SIN, THE DECEITFULNESS OF

THERE are *three false notions* whereby the deceitfulness of sin deludes the souls of men—

(1) The first is, that it is *one sin alone* wherein alone they would be indulged. Let them be spared in this *one thing*, and in all others they will be exact enough. This is the composition that Naaman would have made in the matters of religion, and it is that which many trust unto. Hence it hath, by the event, been made to appear that some persons have lived long in the practice of some gross sin, and yet all the while used *a semblance of great diligence* in other duties of religion. . . . One sin willingly lived in is as able to destroy a man's soul as a thousand. Besides there is no man that lives in any one known sin but he really lives in more, though that only bears the chiefest sway. Let no man relieve himself with thoughts that it is but one sin, whilst that one sin keeps him in a constant neglect of God. Hence—

2 Kings v. 18.

(2) They deceive themselves thereby; for they judge that although they cannot as yet *shake off their sin*, yet they will continue still to love God and abound in the duties of his worship. They will not become haters of God and his ways

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and persecutors for all the world; and therefore hope that, notwithstanding this one Zoar, this lesser sin, which their constitution and their circumstances engage them in, it may be well with them at the last. This also is a false notion, a mere instrument in the hand of sin to act its deceit by; for no man that willingly liveth in any sin can love God at all. Where God is not loved above all, he is not loved at all.

(3) They determine that at *such or such a season* or time, after such satisfaction given unto their lusts or pleasures, they will utterly give over, so as that iniquity shall not be their ruin. But this is a false notion also, an effectual instrument of the deceitfulness of sin. He that will not now give over, say what he will and pretend what he will, never intends to give over, nor is it probable, in an ordinary way, that ever he will do so.

The man that understands the evil of his own heart, how vile it is—is the only useful, fruitful, and solid believing and obedient person. Others are fit only to delude themselves, to disquiet families, churches, and all relations whatever.

SIN, THE IMPORTUNITY OF

ENEMIES in war are restless, pressing, and importunate; so is the law of sin. Doth it set upon the soul? Cast off its motions; it returns again. Rebuke them by the power of grace; they withdraw for a while, and return again. Set before them the cross of Christ; they do as those that came to take him—at sight of him they went backwards and fell unto the ground, but they arose again and laid hands on him. Sin gives place for a season, but returns and presseth on the

Rom. viii. 3.

soul again. Mind it of the love of God in Christ; though it be stricken, yet it gives not over. Present hell-fire unto it; it rushes into the midst of those flames. Reproach it with its folly and madness; it knows no shame, but presseth on still. Let the thoughts of the mind strive to fly from it; it follows as on the wings of the wind. And by this importunity it wearies and wears out the soul; and if the great remedy come not timely, it prevails to a conquest. There is nothing more marvellous nor dreadful in the working of sin than this of its importunity.—[From *The Nature and Power of Indwelling Sin*, ch. vi.]

SIN AND UNBELIEF, THE MISERY OF

THE miseries of this state have been the subject of innumerable sermons and discourses; but there is a general misery in the whole,¹ that few take themselves to be concerned therein, or apply these things to themselves. Let us tell news of it a thousand times, yet they either take no notice of it, or believe it not, or look on it as that which belongs to the way and course of preaching, wherein they are not concerned. ‘These things, it seems, preachers must say; and they may believe them, who have a mind thereunto.’ It is a rare thing that any one shall as much as say unto himself, ‘Is it so with me?’—[From *The Person of Christ*.]

¹ This reminds one of Jeremy Taylor’s well-known aphorism, that ‘a prosperous iniquity is the most unprosperous condition of the whole world.’—*Giusti sono duo, ma non vi sono intesi*.

TEMPTATION

OFTENTIMES the outward sight of the eye is the occasion of these imaginations. So Achan declares how sin prevailed with him. First, he *saw* the wedge of gold and *Josh. vii. 21.* Babylonish garment, and then he *coveted* them. This entanglement is heightened when the imagination can prevail with the mind to lodge vain thoughts in it, with secret delight. This is termed by casuists,¹ ‘cogitatio morosa cum delectatione’—an abiding thought with delight. And here, if the will parts with its sovereignty, sin is actually conceived.—[From *The Nature and Power of Indwelling Sin*, ch. x.]

If a man have a grenade or fire-ball cast into his clothes by his enemy, he doth not consider whether it will burn or no, but immediately shakes it off from him. Deal no otherwise with these fiery darts, lest by their abode with you they *Eph. vi. 16.* inflame your imagination unto greater disturbance.—[From *Spiritual Mindedness*, pt. i. ch. ix.]

And when or wherein the soul is brought but to parley with an objection, then and therein unbelief is at work, whether it be as unto a particular fact or as unto our state. It was so with our first parents in the very entry of their treaty with Satan, in giving a considering audience unto that one question, ‘Hath God said so?’ Our great Pattern hath showed us what our deportment ought to be in all suggestions and temptations. When the devil showed him ‘all the kingdoms

¹ See Martensen’s *Christian Ethics* (Individual), p. 87, where an apt instance is cited from Schiller’s *Wallenstein*. Also Augustine’s *Confess.* x. 35.

of the world and the glory of them,' to tempt him withal, he did not stand and look upon them, viewing their glory, and pondering their empire, though he was fully assured that after all he could despise and trample upon the offer, and him that made it; but instantly, without stay, he cries, 'Get thee hence, Satan.'

Eph. vi. 16.

Meet thy temptation in its entrance with thoughts of faith concerning Christ on the cross; this will make it sink before thee. Entertain no parley, no dispute with it, if thou wouldst not enter into it. Say, "'It is Christ that died"—that died for such sins as these.' This is called 'taking the shield of faith to quench the fiery darts of Satan.' Faith doth it by laying hold on Christ crucified, his love therein, and what from thence he suffered for sin. Let thy temptation be what it will—be it unto sin, to fear or doubting for sin, or about thy state and condition—it is not able to stand before faith lifting up the standard of the cross.—[From *Of Temptation*, ch. vii.]

Temptation is like a knife, that may either cut the meat or the throat of a man; it may be his food or poison.

Temptations and occasions put nothing into a man, but only draw out what was in him before.—[From *Of Temptation*.]¹

I say, that as great winds and storms do sometimes contribute to the fruit-bearing of trees and plants, so do corruptions and temptations unto the fruitfulness of grace and holiness. The wind comes with violence on the tree, ruffles its boughs, it may be breaks some of them, beats off its buds, loosens and

¹ No apter instance of the difference between the evangelical fervour of the Puritans and the earnest but less profound spirit of their finest opponents, can be desired than the comparison of Owen's paragraphs on temptation with the fifth discourse in Jeremy Taylor's *Life of Christ*, part I. sect. ix.

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shakes its roots, and threatens to cast the whole to the ground; but by this means the earth is opened and loosed about it, and the tree gets its roots deeper into the earth, whereby it receives more and fresh nourishment, which renders it fruitful, though it bring not forth fruit visibly, it may be, till a good while after. In the assaults of temptations and corruptions the soul is wofully ruffled and disordered—its leaves of profession are much blasted, and its beginnings of fruit-bearing much broken and retarded; but, in the meantime, it secretly and invisibly casts out its roots of humility, self-abasement, and mourning, in a hidden and continual labouring of faith and love after that grace, whereby holiness doth really increase, and way is made for future visible fruitfulness.—[From *Discourse of the Holy Spirit*, Bk. iv. ch. ii.]

TEMPTATION, WHAT IT IS TO ENTER INTO

THIS is not merely to *be tempted*. It is impossible that we should be so freed from temptation as not to be at all tempted. Whilst Satan continues in his power and malice, whilst the world and lust are in being, we shall be tempted. 'Christ,' says one, 'was made like unto us, that he might be tempted; and we are tempted that we may be made like unto Christ.' Temptation in general is comprehensive of our whole warfare; as our Saviour calls the time of his ministry the time of his 'temptations.' We have no promise that we shall not Luke xxii. 28. be tempted at all; nor are to pray for an absolute freedom from temptations, because we have no such promise of being heard therein. The direction we have for our prayers is, 'Lead us not into temptation'; it is 'entering into tempta- Matt. vi. 13.

tion' that we are to pray against. We may be tempted, yet not enter into temptation.

So that something more is intended by this expression than the *ordinary work* of Satan and our own lusts, which will be sure to tempt us every day. There is something signal in this entering into temptation, that is not the saints' every day's work. It is something that befalls them peculiarly in reference to seduction unto sin, on one account or other, by way of allurements or affrightment.

It is not *to be conquered* by a temptation, to fall down under it, to commit the sin or evil that we are tempted to, or to omit the duties that are opposed. A man may 'enter into temptation,' and yet not fall under temptation. God can make a way for a man to escape; when he is in, he can break the snare, tread down Satan, and make the soul more than a conqueror, though it have entered into temptation. Christ *entered* into it, but was not in the least *foiled* by it.

1 Tim. vi. 9.

But it is, as the apostle expresseth it, ἐμπίπτειν, 'to fall into temptation,' as a man falls into a pit or deep place where are gins or snares, wherewith he is entangled; the man is not presently killed and destroyed, but he is entangled and detained—he knows not how to get free or be at liberty. So

1 Cor. x. 13.

it is expressed again to the same purpose, 'No temptation hath taken you'; that is, to be taken by a temptation and to be tangled with it, held in its cords, not finding at present a

2 Peter ii. 9.

way to escape. Then saith Peter, 'The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations.' They are entangled with them; God knows how to deliver them out of them. When we suffer a temptation to enter into us, then we 'enter into temptation.' Whilst it knocks at the door we are at liberty; but when any temptation comes in and parleys with

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the heart, reasons with the mind, entices and allures the affections, be it a long or a short time, do it thus insensibly and imperceptibly, or do the soul take notice of it, we 'enter into temptation.'—[From *Of Temptation*, ch. ii.]

By temptation, some bosom ~~hidden~~ corruption is oftentimes discovered, that the soul knew not of before. Yea, divers having been tempted to one sin, have discovered another that they thought not of.

There is no way to have our work done but by always doing of it; and he who dies fighting in this warfare dies assuredly a conqueror.¹

To be always in readiness is a good part of our warfare.

He that changes pride for worldliness, sensuality for Pharisaeism, vanity in himself for the contempt of others, let him not think that he hath mortified the sin that he seems to have left. He hath changed his master, but is a servant still.²

There is something in all our temptations more than was in the temptation of Christ. There is something in ourselves to take part with every temptation; and there is enough in ourselves to tempt us, though nothing else should appear against Jas. i. 14-15. us. With Christ it was not so. But this is so far from John xiv. 30. taking off his compassion towards us, that, on all accounts whatever, it doth increase it.

Let no man pretend to fear sin that doth not fear temptation to it. They are too nearly allied to be separated. He hates not the fruit who delights in the root.

Temptation despised will conquer.

¹ See M. Arnold's sonnet on 'Immortality.'

² When Philip Henry was thirty years old, he noted in his diary that 'so old and no older was Alexander when he conquered the great world; but I have not subdued the little world, myself.'

He that would be little in temptation, let him be much in prayer.

TEMPTATION, THE HIGH NOON OF

HOW or by what means commonly any temptation attains its *hour*?

1st. By long *solicitations*, causing the mind frequently to converse with the evil solicited unto, it begets extenuating thoughts of it. If it makes this process, it is coming towards its hour. It may be when first it began to press upon the soul, the soul was amazed with the ugly appearance of what it aimed at, and cried, 'Am I a dog?' If the soul, by conversing with the evil, begins to grow, as it were, familiar with it, not to be startled as formerly,¹ but rather inclines to cry, 'Is it not a little one?' then the temptation is coming towards its high noon.

2ndly. When it hath prevailed on *others*, and the soul is not *filled with dislike* of them and their ways, nor with pity and prayer for their deliverance. This proves an advantage unto it, and raises it towards its height. When that temptation sets upon any one which, at the same time, hath possessed and prevailed with many, it hath so great and so many advantages thereby, that it is surely growing toward its hour. Its prevailing with others is a means to give it its hour against us.—[From *Of Temptation*, ch. ii.]

¹ 'Our great security against sin lies in being shocked at it' (J. H. Newman); see Illingworth's *Univ. Sermons*, pp. 107-108.

TIMES AND SEASONS

SOME men have a wisdom to know things, but not seasons, in any measure. Surely a thing in season is no less beautiful than a word in season.¹ . . . Importune insisting on the most useful things, without respect to alterations of seasons, is a sad sign of a narrow heart. Indeed, what is most wisely proposed in one season may be most foolishly pursued in another. He who thinks the most righteous and suitable proposals or principles that ever were in the world, must be performed, as desirable, because once they were so, is certainly a stranger to the affairs of mankind.—[From *Owen's Funeral Sermon upon Ireton.*]

TOLERATION²

SOME say it is a sin to grant it; others, that it is no less to deny it. Generally the pleaders of each side have their interest in the cause. I never knew one contend earnestly

¹ This is singled out as a distinctive virtue of Ireton, that he was a wise reader of the times without being an opportunist. He steadily looked to the divine will in all events, continues the preacher, and was not one of those who applied 'secondary causes to events, without once looking to the name of God—like swine following acorns under the tree, not at all looking up to the tree from whence they fall.'

'Every one,' says Mr. Morley in his essay on Diderot, 'every one knows Mirabeau's saying about Robespierre: *That man will go far; he believes every word that he says.* This is much, but it is only half. It is not only that the man of power believes what he says; what he believes must fit in with the facts and the demands of the time.'

² Quite in the spirit of Cromwell's letter to the Speaker on the storm of Bristol: 'In things of the mind we look for no compulsion but that of light and reason.' Dr. Shaw's *History of the English Church* (ii. pp. 34-97) has an admirable discussion of Puritan legislation on toleration, and Cromwell's policy is surveyed best by Masson (*Milton*, v. pp. 60 f.) or Hallam (*Constitutional History*, ii. pp. 198 f.). But add *Church Quart. Review* (July 1904), pp. 409 f.

for a toleration of dissenters, but was so himself; nor any for their suppression, but were themselves of the persuasion which prevaieth.

Now amongst these testers, few (nay, not any) have I found, either on the one side or on the other, clearly and distinctly to define what they mean by toleration. Some, perhaps, by a toleration understand a universal, uncontrolled licence, *vivendi ut velis*, in things concerning religion; that every one be let alone; and in the meantime the parties at variance, and litigant about differences, freely to revile, reject, and despise one another, according as their provoked genius shall dispose their minds thereunto. Now truly, though every one of this mind pretends to cry for mercy to be extended to poor afflicted truth, yet I cannot but be persuaded that such a toleration would prove exceeding pernicious to all sorts of men.

Others there are that press for a non-toleration of any thing that opposes or contradicts the truth in any part, themselves being in their own judgments fully possessed of all—their tenets being unto them the only form of wholesome words. . . .

Whatsoever restraint or other punishment may be allowed in case of grosser ends, yet slaying of heretics for simple heresy, as they call it, for my part I cannot close withal, nor shall ever give my vote to the burning, hanging, or killing of a man, otherwise upright, honest, and peaceable in the state, merely because he misbelieveth any point of Christian faith. . . . As such heresy is a canker (but a spiritual one), let it be prevented by spiritual means. Cutting off men's heads is no proper remedy for it. If state physicians think otherwise, I say no more but that I am not of the college, and what I have already said I submit to better judgments.

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I believe that upon search it will appear that error hath not been advanced by any thing in the world so much as by usurping a power for its suppression.—[From *A Country Essay for the Practice of Church Government there.*]

The blood of many erring persons, I doubt not, will one day have a *quo warranto* granted them against their (as to the particulars in debate) orthodox slayers, who did it to promote the service of God.

If errors must be tolerated, say some, then men may do what they please, without control. No means, it seems, must be used to reclaim them. But is gospel conviction no means? Hath the sword of discipline no edge? Is there no means of instruction in the New Testament established, but a prison and a halter?

That they are obstinate and pertinacious is also a cheap supposal, taken up without the price of a proof. What we call obstinacy, they call constancy. If we may be judges of other men's obstinacy, all will be plain; but if ever they get uppermost, they will be judges of ours.¹—[From *Of Toleration.*]

¹ With these passages it is apt to compare the very remarkable anonymous tract on *Liberty of Conscience, or the Sole Means to obtain Peace and Truth*, published by an Anglican of broad sympathies in 1644. Mr. Gardiner (*History of the Great Civil War*, i. 341 f.) cites these wise sentences from its pages: 'I am verily persuaded that one great reason which moved God to permit these kingdoms to be thus divided and engaged in a civil war was the general obstinacy and averseness of most men of all ranks and qualities in each nation to tolerate and bear with tender consciences and different opinions of their brethren. . . . It is true that if liberty be given for men to teach what they will, there will appear more false teachers than ever; yet it were better that many false doctrines were published, especially with a good intention and out of weakness only, than that one sound truth should be forcibly smothered or wilfully concealed.' Romanism is, of course, excepted from this law of freedom, not for political reasons, but on the score of its idolatry. See above, pp. 25 f., 40 f., 67, 70 f.

Toleration 'is the alms of authority, yet men who beg for it think so much is at least their due.'¹

TRIALS AND TROUBLES

I HAVE heard² that a full wind behind the ship drives her not so fast forward as a side wind, that seems almost so much against her as with her; and the reason is, they say, because a full wind fills but some of her sails, which keep it from the rest that they are empty; when a side wind fills all her sails, and sets her speedily forward. Which way ever we go in this world, our affections are our sails; and according as they are spread and filled, so we pass on, swifter and slower, whither we are steering. Now, if the Lord should give us a full wind and continual gale of mercies, it would fill but some of our sails, some of our affections—joy, delight, and the like. But when he comes with a side wind, a dispensation that seems almost as much against us as for us, then he fills all our sails, takes up our affections, making his works wide and

¹ They did not always get it. The synod at Sion College in 1645 pronounced it 'a root of gall and bitterness,' and it is almost incredible to read how the Presbyterians in particular detested and opposed it as the supreme device of the devil. 'A toleration hath all errors in it and all evils,' they cried; 'it is against the whole stream and current of Scripture.' Specimens of such language can be seen in Edwards's *Gangræna* (1644-1646); see above, p. 23, with Bagehot's *Lit. Studies*, iii. pp. 204 f., Leslie Stephen's *Agnostic's Apology* (essay 6), and Carlyle's *Life in London*, i. 135. It was the Independents first of all who stood for a toleration which was more than a religious idealism or the plea of a harried minority for the rights of existence, and on this field Owen was one of their noblest spokesmen. To him toleration was an essential part of spiritual religion. He practically restated Tertullian's long-forgotten principle: *Nec religionis est cogere religionem, quæ sponte suscipi debeat non vi.*

² See Sir Thomas Browne's *Christian Morals*, part I. sect. i., for a similar passage.

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broad enough to entertain them every one; then are we carried freely and fully towards the haven where we would be. Therein hope, fear,¹ reverence, with humility and repentance, have a share; as well as joy, delight, and love, with thankfulness.—[From *Sermons*.]

Men walking in the sincerity of their hearts are very apt to conceive that all sheaves should bow to theirs, that all men should cry ‘Grace, grace,’ to their proceedings. Why should any oppose? . . .

Hath he a cup of affliction in one hand? Lift up your eyes and you will see a cup of consolation in another. And if all the stars withdraw their light, whilst you are in the way of God, assure yourselves that the sun is ready to rise.

TRUST IN GOD

TO omit the instances of Asa, Jehoshaphat, and many others, take that signal one of David in his great distress at Ziklag. You know the story—his habitation was burnt and spoiled, his wives and children captived, his people consulting to stone him, so that he was greatly distressed; the enemy numerous and without his reach—all means of relieving his condition, and bringing it to a comfortable issue, far removed. But what course did he now take? did he despond? did he give over? did he rest on his own counsel and strength? No, saith the Holy Ghost; ‘but David encouraged himself in 1 Sam. xxx. 6.

¹ Thackeray almost says as much in his own way in describing the Princess of Wales at her marriage (in his *Roundabout Paper* ‘On Alexandrines’).

the Lord his God.' Have you any affair that lies before you that is good and honest, but yet dreadful, difficult, entangled? Your hearts are ready to faint whenever you think of it; it is almost beyond your imaginations to contrive a comfortable issue. In such a season, if you will be with God, he will be with you; if you so trust him as to encourage your hearts on the account of his wisdom, goodness, power, that he can find out and bring about a comfortable, glorious end—this is to trust him for protection. . . .

Isa. xxviii. 16.

Hab. ii. 3-4.

To trust God for protection, is to wait under discouragements and disappointments for a desired issue of the affairs we commit to him. 'He that believeth will not make haste.' This the Lord pleads for. Men will have their desires precisely accomplished this year, this month, this week, or they will wait no longer. These, says God, are proud men; their hearts are lifted up in them; they trust not to me for protection. Men love to trust God (as they profess) for what they have in their hands, in possession, or what lies in an easy view; place their desires afar off, carry their accomplishment behind the clouds out of their sight, interpose difficulties and perplexities—their hearts are instantly sick. They cannot wait for God; they do not trust him, nor ever did. Would you have the presence of God with you? Learn to wait quietly for the salvation you expect from him.¹ Then, indeed, is he glorified, when he is trusted in a storm.—[From *Sermons*.]

Nothing but himself can give us confidence to go to him.

¹ See Miss Wedgwood's *Message of Israel*, pp. 141 f.

UNITY AND UNIFORMITY

I SHOULD be very sorry that any man living should outgo me in desires that all who fear God throughout the world, especially in these nations, were of one way as well as of one heart.¹ I know I desire it sincerely; but I do verily believe that when God shall accomplish it, it will be the effect of love, and not the cause of love. It will proceed from love, before it brings forth love. There is not a greater vanity in the world, in my weak apprehensions, than to drive men into such and such a way, and then suppose that love will be the necessary consequence of that way; to think that if, by sharp rebukes, by cutting, bitter expressions, they can but drive men into such and such practices, that their love will certainly ensue. . . .

As it was with a poor man, who took a dead body and set it up, and it fell; and he set it up again, and it fell; upon which he cried out, *Oportet esse aliquid intus*—‘There wants something within’ to enliven and quicken it; so is it with church order and rule; set them up as often as you will, they will all fall, if there be not a love to one another.—
[From *Sermons*.]

In the meantime, to expect unity in profession,² by the reduction of all men to a precise agreement in all the doctrines

¹ ‘The desire for *unity* has haunted me all my life through; I have never been able to substitute any desire for that, or to accept any of the different schemes for satisfying it which men have desired’ (F. D. Maurice).

² In his *convivium theologicum* under the oaks of Tew, Falkland had defined the Presbyterian system in England as ‘the destruction of unity under pretence of uniformity.’ But the Presbyterian attempt to organise England was in reality provoked by the attempt of Laud and the Anglicans to Anglicise Scotland. As the *jus divinum* principle was unluckily assumed by both parties, it

that have been and are ventilated among Christians, and in all acts and ways of worship, is to refer the supreme and last determination of things evangelical to the sword of secular power and violence, and to inscribe *Vox ultima Christi* upon great guns and other engines of war. . . .

Would Christians of all parties make it their business to retrieve its reputation, wherein also their own bliss and happiness is involved, by a universal obedience to the precepts of it, it would insensibly sink a thousand of their differences under ground. Were this attended to, the world would quickly say with admiration—

Magnus ab integro seclorum nascitur ordo :
Jam nova progenies cœlo demittitur alto.¹

The old, glorious, beautiful face of Christianity would be restored to it again.

And if ever we intend to take one step towards any agreement or unity, it must be by fixing this principle in the minds of all men—that it is of no advantage to any man whatever church or way in Christian religion he be of, unless he personally believe the promises, and live in obedience unto all the precepts of Christ; and that for him who doth so, it is a trampling of the whole gospel under foot to say that his

was hardly possible for either to abstain from interference with recalcitrant religionists who had other views on church government. When Laud opened Parliament in 1628 by a sermon on Ephesians ii. 3, he defined unity as ‘a thing so good that it is never broken but by the worst of men. Nay, so good is it that the very worst men pretend best when they break it.’ This was meant as a charge against the Puritan party. Unfortunately, as often happens, the words came to be only too apt a description of the speaker himself, who became, if not a schismatic in the technical sense of the term, at least a cause of schisms throughout the English Church. But indeed both Prelatists and Puritans were too prone to attempt the reduction of English religion to a song in unison, ignoring the truth that human worship is most a unity when it is most a harmony.

¹ Verg., *Eclog.*, iv. 5, 7.

salvation could be endangered by his not being of this or that church or way, especially considering how much of the world hath immixed itself into all the known ways that are in it. Were this once well fixed on the minds of men, and did they practically believe that men shall not be dealt withal at the last day *by gross*, as of this or that party or church, but that every *individual* person must stand upon his own bottom, *live by his own faith, or perish for want of it*, as if there had been no other persons in the world but himself, we should quickly find their keenness in promoting and contending for their several parties taken off. For the present, some Protestants think that when the Roman power is by one means or other broken (which they expect), then we shall agree and have peace; Romanists, on the other side, look for and desire the extirpation of all that they call heresy or heretics, by one way or other. Some pretending highly to moderation on both sides, especially among the Protestants, hope that it may be attained by mutual condescension of the parties at variance, contemperation of opinions and practices unto the present distant apprehensions and interests of the chief leaders of either side: what issue and event their desires, hopes, and attempts will have, time will show to all the world. For my part, until, by a fresh pouring out of the Spirit of God from on high, I see Christians in profession agreeing in pursuing the end of Christianity, endeavouring to be followers of Jesus Christ in a conversation becoming the gospel, without trusting to the parties wherein they are engaged, I shall have very little hopes to see any unity amongst us that shall be one jot better than our present differences.

The present face of Christianity makes the world a wearisome wilderness; nor should I think any thing a more necessary

duty than it would be for persons of piety and ability to apologise for the religion of Jesus Christ, and to show how unconcerned it is in the ways and practices of the most that profess it, and how utterly another thing it is from what in the world it is represented to be—so to put a stop unto that atheism which is breaking in upon us from the contempt that men have of that idea of Christian religion which they have taken from the manner of its profession and lives of its professors—were it not that I suppose it more immediately incumbent on them and us all to do the same work in a real expression of its power and excellency, in such a kind of goodness, holiness, righteousness, and heavenliness of conversation,¹ as the world is only as yet in secret acquainted withal. When this is done, the way for a farther agreement will be open and facile; and until it be so, men will fight on—

Ipsique, nepotesque
Et nati natorum, et qui nascentur ab illis ;

we shall have no end of our quarrels. Could I see a heroic temper fall on the minds of men of the several parties at variance, to bid adieu to the world, its customs, manners, and fashions, which are all vain and perishing—not in a local, corporeal retirement from the men and lawful businesses of it, or a relinquishment of the necessary callings and employments in it, but in their spirits and affections; could I see them taking up the cross of Christ—not on their backs in its *figure*, but on their hearts in its *power*—and in their whole conversation¹ conforming themselves unto his blessed example, so teaching all others of their parties what it is that they build upon for a blessed eternity, that they may not please

¹ *i.e.* Conduct.

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and deceive themselves with their conceited orthodoxy in the trifling differences which they have with other Christians; I should hope the very name of persecution, and every thing that is contrary to Christian moderation, would quickly be driven out of Christendom, and that error, and whatever is contrary to the unity of faith, would not be long-lived after them. But whilst these things are far from us, let us not flatter ourselves as though a windy flourish of words had any efficacy in it to bring us to moderation and unity. At variance we are, and at variance we must be content to be; that being but one of the evils that at this day triumph in the world over conquered Christianity. . . . —[From *A Vindication of the Animadversions on Fiat Lux*, 1664.]

WATCHFULNESS

WHEN once the soul of a believer hath obtained sweet and real communion with Christ, it looks about him, watcheth all temptations, all ways whereby sin might approach, to disturb him in his enjoyment of his dear Lord and Saviour, his rest and desire. How doth it charge itself not to omit any thing, nor to do any thing that may interrupt the communion obtained! . . . A believer that hath gotten Christ in his arms, is like one that hath found great spoils, or a pearl of price. He looks about him every way, and fears everything that may deprive him of it. Riches make men watchful; and the actual sensible possession of him, in whom are all the riches and treasure of God, will make men look about them for the keeping of him. The line of *choicest communion* is a line of the greatest *spiritual solicitousness*.—[From *On Communion with God*.]

WORLD, LOVE OF THE

2 Tim. iv. 10.

LOVE of this present world and the perishing satisfactions of it betrays innumerable souls with frequent apostasies from the gospel. . . . I shall only make mention of *two seasons* wherein the predominancy of this love in the heart of men multiplies apostates from the truth.

Matt. xiii. 20-21.

The first is that of persecution. . . . What multitudes such seasons have driven away from the truth, what stars they have cast down from heaven, no nation hath had greater experience of than our own in the days of Queen Mary. I pray God it never meet with another trial, and also hope that it is not likely so to do.

The other season when love of the world gives up men unto this fatal evil is, when and where superstition and error are enthroned. . . . And such a season as this is more to be feared than persecution itself. Men have a generous stoutness not to be violently forced out of their persuasion and profession. But . . . the warmth of the sun caused him to cast away his garment which the blustering of the wind did but wrap closer about him. The rays of power in honours and favours have made more cast away their religion in the neighbouring nations than persecution could ever do.—[From *The Nature and Causes of Apostasy*, ch. vi.]

WORLD, SENSE OF THE SIN OF

WANT of a due sense of the sin of others is a great sign that we are partially hardened from God's fear. . . . I think there is not in any one duty more spiritual wisdom

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required of believers than how to deport themselves with a suitable frame of heart, in reference to the sins of other men. Some are ready to be contented that they should sin, sometimes ready to make sport at their sins; and for the most part it is indifferent to us at what rate men sin in the world, so it go well with us or the church of Christ. We understand but little of that¹—‘Rivers of water run down mine eyes, because men keep not thy law.’ I confess, I think there is little of this in the world. . . . And, the Lord help us, I am afraid we have very small concern for the sins of other men. And it is resolved into these two principles:—want of zeal for God’s glory, and want of compassion to the souls of men.—[From *Sermons*, 1675.]

Such would be found mourners for the sins of the age, place, and time wherein they live, with the consequents² of them, in the dishonour of God, and the judgments which will ensue thereon. There are times wherein this is an especial and eminent duty, which God doth highly approve of. Such are they wherein the visible church is greatly corrupted, and open abominations are found amongst men of all sorts; even as it is at this day. Then doth the Lord declare how much he values the performance of this duty—as he testifies they alone shall be under his especial care in a day of public distress and calamity—a duty wherein it is to be feared that we are most of us very defective.³—[From *Evidences of the Faith of God’s Elect*.]

¹ An even apter text would be Neh. i. 6.¹

² *i.e.* Consequences.

³ Nothing is more characteristic of F. D. Maurice’s life than his poignant sense and confession of the sins of his age.

II. PASSAGES OF EXPOSITION

Gen. iii. 10. ‘ I WAS afraid and hid myself.’ Never were there words of greater horror in the world, nor shall be until the day of judgment.

Exod. xx. 8. ‘ R E M E M B E R the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.’ We have *had a week* unto our own occasions, or we have a *prospect of a week* in the patience of God for them. Let us remember that God puts in for *some time* with us. All is not our own. We are not our own lords. Some time God will have to himself, from all that own him in the world ; and this is that time, season, or day. He esteems not himself acknowledged, nor his sovereignty owned in the world, without it. And therefore this day of rest he required, the first day as it were that the world stood upon its legs, hath done so all along, and will do so to the last day of its duration. When he had made all things, and saw that they were good, and was refreshed in them, he required that we should own and acknowledge his goodness and power therein. This duty we owe to God as God. . . .

Let men in whose hearts are the ways of God seriously consider the use that hath been made, under the blessing of God, of the conscientious observation of the Lord’s day, in the

past and present ages, unto the promotion of holiness, righteousness, and religion universally, in the power of it; and if they are not under invincible prejudices, it will be very difficult for them to judge that it is a plant which our heavenly Father hath not planted. For my part, I must not only say, but plead whilst I live in this world, and leave this testimony to the present and future ages, if these papers see the light and do survive, that if I have ever seen any thing in the ways and worship of God wherein the power of religion or godliness hath been expressed, any thing that hath represented the holiness of the gospel and the Author of it, any thing that hath looked like a prelude unto the everlasting Sabbath and rest with God, which we aim through grace to come unto, it hath been there and with them where and amongst whom the Lord's day hath been had in highest esteem, and a strict observation of it attended unto, as an ordinance of our Lord Jesus Christ.¹

WHEN Achan saw the 'goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold,' first he 'coveted them,' then he 'took them.' Temptation subtly Josh. vii. 21. spreads the Babylonish garment of favour, praise, peace, the silver of pleasure or profit, with the golden contentments of the flesh, before the eyes of men. If now there be that in them alive, unmortified, that will presently fall a-coveting; let what fear of punishment will ensue, the heart or hand will be put forth unto iniquity.

¹ Matthew Henry, in the Memoir of his father, gives a vivid and charming account of that devout minister's method of keeping the Lord's day. 'His common salutation of his family or friends, on the Lord's day in the morning, was that of the primitive Christians: *The Lord is risen, he is risen indeed*; making it his chief business on that day to celebrate the memory of Christ's resurrection.' See Canon Henson's *Eng. Relig. in Seventeenth Century*, pp. 35-75.

THE free love of every mercy is faith's proper object. It makes all Joshua's great victories present to every one of us. The promise that had the love and grace in it, which ran through them all, is given him, 'I will be with thee, I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.' Now the apostle tells us that the truth and love of this promise is ours. Faith may, doth assure itself, that what good-will soever was in all the great mercies which Joshua received upon that promise, is all ours. All the good-will and choice love of 'I will never leave thee nor forsake thee,' is mine and thine, if we are believers. He that hath this present, hath all Joshua's victories present. The very glory of the saints in heaven is ours in the love of it. We enjoy that love which gave them glory, and will crown us also in due time.—[From the *Sermon preached after the Siege of Colchester.*]

Josh. i. 5.

Heb. iv. 8.

AMONG the Jews there was a peculiar kind of stubbornness and obstinacy, above any other nation under heaven, which God complaineth of in their successive generations from first to last, and which continueth to be their characteristic evil unto this day. Hence Josiah was eminently commended *because his heart was tender*. He was not under the power of the common sin of that people, which indeed includes all other evils whatever. It was a rare thing to find one of a tender¹ heart among them.

2 Chron. xxxiv.
27.

Ps. xix. 12-13.

'SECRET' sins, such as are not known to be sins (it may be) to ourselves, make way for those that are 'presumptuous.' Thus pride may seem to be nothing but a frame

¹ Readers of Fox's *Journal* will recollect how frequently he employs this term to denote sensitiveness and delicacy of religious feeling. Dr. Hodgkin, in his

of mind belonging unto our wealth and dignity, or our parts and abilities; sensuality may seem to be but a lawful participation of the good things of this life; passion and peevishness, but a due sense of the want of that respect which we suppose due unto us; covetousness, a necessary care of ourselves and our families.¹ If the seeds of sin are covered with such pretences, they will in time spring up and bear bitter fruit in the minds and lives of men. And the beginnings of all apostasy, both in religion and morality, lie in such pretences. Men plead they can do so and so lawfully, until they can do things openly unlawful.

THERE are two things required unto those thoughts, which we have of God: (a) That we *take delight in them*. The remembrance of God delighteth and refresheth Ps. xxx. 4. the hearts of his saints, and stirs them up to thankfulness. . . . That God *is what he is*, is the matter of their chiefest joy. . . .

(b) That they be accompanied with godly fear and reverence. It is unimaginable how the subtile disquisitions and disputes of men about the nature, properties, and counsels of God, have been corrupted, rendered sapless and useless, by vain curiosity and striving for an artificial accuracy in the

short Life of Fox (p. 22), defines this tenderness as 'unwillingness to be satisfied with the polemical theology of the ordinary Puritans—a desire to get into communion with the spirit of the Eternal One, and to learn his will.'

¹ James Hinton used to say, when it was urged that the thought of our families must come first, 'Yes! the devil always comes to an Englishman in the shape of his wife and family.' See also the remark of Moore (quoted in Sir W. Scott's *Journal*, pp. 8-9) that 'more mean things have been done in the world under the shelter of "wife and children" than under any pretext worldly-mindedness can resort to.' Dr. Shrapnel's opinion of 'the family view,' in *Beauchamp's Career* (ch. xii.), expresses Meredith's mind on the same ethical peril. See, too, Heine's lyric, *Die Grenadiere*.

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expansion of men's apprehensions. When the wits and minds of men are engaged in such thoughts, 'God is not in all their thoughts,' even when all their thoughts are concerning him. —[From *Spiritual Mindedness*, pt. 1. ch. viii.]

Ps. xlii. 6, 9,

BEING now in great distress and disconsolation of spirit, among other things under a sense that God had forgotten him, he calls to mind the blessed experience he had of communion with God, in the land of the Hermonites, wherein he now found support and refreshment. So at other times he called to remembrance 'the days of old,' and in them his 'songs in the night,' or the sweet refreshment he had in spiritual converse with God in former times. I have known one in the depth of distress and darkness of mind, who, going through temptation to destroy himself, was relieved and delivered in the instant of ruin by a sudden remembrance that at such a time, and in such a place, he had prayed fervently with the engagement of all his affections unto God.¹

Ps. cxvi. 1.

THE saints do not love God for nothing, but for that excellency, loveliness, and desirableness that is in him. As the psalmist says in one particular, 'I love the Lord, BECAUSE!'—so may we in general; we love the Lord, BECAUSE! If any man inquire about our love to God, we may say, 'What have we now done? is there not a *cause*?'

Ps. cxxx.

IT is a good saying of Austin on this place, 'Valde sunt in profundo qui non clamant de profundo';—'None so in the deep as they who do not cry and call out of the deep.'

¹ Compare the well-known passage towards the close of Bunyan's preface to *Grace Abounding*: 'Have you never an Hill Mizar to remember? Have you forgot the Close, the Milk-house, the Stable, the Barn, and the like, where God did visit your souls?' etc.

They are in a deep of security who are never sensible of a deep of sin.

SAYS the wise man, 'Surely in vain is the net spread in the sight of any bird'; or 'before the eyes of every thing that hath a wing,' as in the original. If it hath eyes open to discern the snare, and a wing to carry it away, it will not be caught. And in vain should the deceit of sin spread its snares and nets for the entanglement of the soul, whilst the eyes of the mind are intent upon what it doth, and so stir up the wings of its will and affections to carry it away and avoid it.¹ But if the eyes be put out or diverted, the wings are of very little use for escape.

DID you never run to a tree for shelter in a storm, and find fruit which you expected not? Did you never go to God for safeguard, driven by outward storms, and there find unexpected fruit?

ONE sin liked and loved will make way for every other. . . . It will be like a thief that is hidden in a house and only waits an opportunity to open the doors unto his other companions. Prov. xxiii. 31, 33.

IN the turning of a door upon its hinges there is some motion but no progress. So it is with the spiritually slothful man in his bed, or in his security. He makes some

¹ 'O Lord, keep thou mine eyes from beholding vanity; and, though mine eyes see it, let not my heart stoop to it, but loathe it afar off. And, if I stoop at any time and be taken, set thou my soul at liberty, that I may say, my soul is escaped even as a bird out of the fowler's snare' (Bishop Hall).

motions or faint endeavours towards a discharge of his duty, but goes not on. There where he was one day, there he is the next.

Isa. viii. 17.

I WILL wait upon the Lord that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him.' The face of God is his love in Christ, and the shining of his countenance in the promises of the covenant; for the way whereby God communicates his love unto our hearts, is by his promises. Now, when the soul is sensible of no communication of love, nor promise of it, then God is said to hide his face. What will faith do in such a case? Betake itself unto any thing else for relief? No; saith he, 'I will wait upon God that hideth his face.' As a traveller, when the sky is filled with clouds and darkness, tempests and storms, that are ready to break upon him everywhere, yet remembers that these are but interpositions, and the sun is where it was; and if he can but shelter himself till the storm be over, the sun will shine out again, and its beams refresh him: so is it with the soul in this case; it remembers God is still where he was.

Isa. viii. 17.

THE church is nowhere called 'Jacob' but with reference to its low estate. . . . The church in a low, tempted, oppressed, scornful and mean condition, is 'the house of Jacob.' It is in a wrestling condition.

Brethren, you see who it is that is here intended—the true church of God, in a low, weak, distressed condition; and there are some at least among them eminently wrestling with God and eminently wrestling with men for the great blessing of Jesus Christ and the gospel. Pray take notice that God can, and sometimes doth, hide himself from the church in this

state or condition. Now, a man would think, now if ever is the time for God to shine upon the house of Jacob. But there may be such things found in the church, when it is in a low, wrestling condition, that God is compelled to hide his face from them. . . .

What is 'waiting'? Waiting is a permanent continuance in the performance of duties against all difficulties and discouragements. It is a permanent abiding, a continuance in duty, whereby we seek for the return of God unto us, against all discouragements, difficulties, temptations whatsoever.¹

JESUS CHRIST is a plant and root out of a dry ground, a *Isa. liii. 2.* blossom from the stem of Jesse, a bud from the loins of sinful man; born of a sinner, after there had been no innocent flesh in the world for four thousand years, every one upon the roll of his genealogy being infected therewithal. To have a flower of wonderful rarity to grow in paradise, a garden of God's own planting, not sullied in the least, is not so strange. But, as the psalmist speaks (in another kind), to hear of it in a wood, to find it in a forest, to have a spotless bud brought forth in the wilderness of corrupted nature, is a thing which angels may desire to look into.

DELIGHT is the flowing of love and joy—the² rest and complacency of the mind in a suitable, desirable good enjoyed. Now, Christ delights exceedingly in his saints:

¹ Perhaps the best comment on this text is Mr. G. F. Watts's well-known picture of 'Hope.' It is one of Owen's favourite verses. Compare Cromwell's severe use of it in his letter (No. cxlvii. in Carlyle's edition) to the Governor of Edinburgh Castle.

² Owen quotes here two passages from the Nicomachean Ethics of Aristotle, viz.: 'Ἡδονὴ μᾶλλον ἐν ἡρεμίᾳ ἐστίν, ἢ ἐν κινήσει' (vii. 14), and 'Τελειοὶ δὲ τῇ ἐνέργειαν ἢ ἡδονή' (x. 4). 'Rest admits of finer pleasures than motion,' and 'Pleasure makes the exercise of any faculty complete.'

Isa. lxii. 5.

‘As the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee.’ It is known that usually this is the most *unmixed* delight that the sons of men are in their pilgrimage made partakers of. The delight of the bridegroom in the day of his espousals is the height of what an expression of delight can be carried unto. This is in Christ answerable to the relation he takes us into. His heart is glad in us, without sorrow. And every day whilst we live is his *wedding-day*. It

Zeph. iii. 17.

John i. 14.

is said of him, ‘The Lord thy God in the midst of thee’ (that is, dwelling amongst us, taking our nature) ‘is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing’; which is a full description of delight, in all the parts of it—joy and exultation, rest and complacency. The thoughts of communion with the saints were the joy of his heart from eternity.

Jer. li. 5.

BRETHREN, no man, I think, hath less of faith than I. No man doth more despond. But if I could see these two things in concurrence, ‘his God’ and ‘the Lord of hosts’ (that is, sovereign grace according to his covenant; and sovereign grace according to his providence), there is ground for any man’s faith to build upon: ‘his God, the Lord of hosts.’

Ezek. ix. 4.

IT will not be enough for us, that we are free from these abominations, unless we are found to mourn for them.¹

¹ There is an appositeness in this exposition, if we recollect that Ezekiel’s description of Jerusalem and its covert idolatry had been applied already, in 1642, to the state of England by Dr. Hill, the famous conservative divine. His sermon before Parliament urged the removal of several corrupt practices in the cathedrals and elsewhere. See also above, p. 173.

‘**T**HUS saith the Lord God; Remove the diadem, and ^{Ezek. xxi. 26-27.} take off the crown: this shall not be the same: exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high. I will overturn, overturn, overturn, it: and it shall be no more, until he come whose right it is.’ One dissolution shall come upon the neck of another, until it all issue in Jesus Christ. ‘I will overturn it,’ saith God. ‘But men will set it up again.’ ‘I will overturn it again,’ saith God, ‘perfectly overturn it. All men’s endeavours shall but turn things from one destructive issue to another, till all issue in one whose right it is.’ . . . Truly, God hath strangely wrapped up all this mystery in one word: ‘This word,’ saith he, ‘yet once more, signifieth the removing ^{Heb. xii. 27.} of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.’ It is wrapped up in this one word. Carry this about with you as a note of remembrance, that God in dealing about these things has put a ‘once more’ upon them; which is a sign they must come to a dissolution. It signifies that they are shaking, movable things, and must be gone. Remember God hath said concerning every thing, except only the unshaken things of the kingdom of Christ, God hath said of them, “Once more,” and they shall have an end.’ That mark is set upon every thing but the things of Christ.

THOUGH you cannot yet attain unto any evidence that ^{Hos. vi. 3.} you have received him, have closed with him, nothing can ruin you but giving over the way wherein you are: for then shall you know, if you follow on to know the Lord. Many can give you their experiences, that if they had been discouraged by present overwhelming difficulties, arising from their disappointments, breaking of vows, relapses into folly,

they had been utterly ruined; whereas now they are at rest and peace in the bosom of Christ.

Hab. i. 1.

IT is the burden which Habakkuk did see. Habakkuk, I do judge, is a proper name, though there is some question, because of the composition; and it signifies the 'wrestler' or 'striver.' It is apparent he was a very great wrestler with God, a great pleader with God; as any man may discern, if he will but read the first and third chapters, where there is as great a spiritual conflict and wrestling in them both as in the whole book of God. He may be so called because he was an eminent wrestler with God in those days, as Jacob was. And it is such to whom God gives visions. God gives visions of judgment and of peace (for they are both here in a principal manner) to those that are great wrestlers with him.

Hab. ii. 3.

'THOUGH it tarry, wait for it.' Wait for it believing, wait for it praying—wait for it contending. Waiting is not a lazy hope, a sluggish expectation. When Daniel knew the time was come, he prayed the more earnestly. You will say, perhaps, what need he pray for it, when he knew the time was accomplished? I answer, The more need. Prayer helps the promise to bring forth.

Dan. ix. 2-3.

Zeph. iii. 17.

BOTH these things are¹ here assigned unto God in his love—rest and delight. 'He shall be silent because of his love.' To rest with contentment is expressed by being

¹ This verse and Isa. viii. 17 may be described as Owen's favourite texts (see above, on Isa. lxii. 5). He is constantly recurring to them. Baxter also quotes Zeph. iii. 17 towards the close of the first chapter of his *Saints' Rest*, but it is to describe the heavenly welcome given by God to the believer. 'And it is not thy joy only; it is a mutual joy, as well as a mutual love. Is there joy in

silent ; that is, without repining, without complaint. This God doth upon the account of his own love, so full, so every way complete and absolute, that it will not allow him to complain of any thing in them whom he loves, but he is silent on the account thereof. Or, 'rest in his love'; that is, he will not remove it. And 'he rejoiceth with singing'; as one that is fully satisfied in that object he hath fixed his love on.

CONSIDER that it is not failing in this or that attempt Matt. xv. 25. of coming to Christ, but a giving over of your endeavours, that will be your ruin.

PETER venturing upon the waves at the command of Matt. xiv. 30. Christ, seeing 'the wind to grow boisterous,' he also hath a storm within, and cries out, 'Lord, save me !' What was now the cause of Peter's fear and crying out? Why, the wind and sea grew boisterous, and he was ready to sink ; no such thing, but merely unbelief, want of faith. 'O thou of Matt. xiv. 31. little faith,' saith our Saviour, 'wherefore didst thou doubt?' It was not the great wind, but thy little faith that made thee stagger.

AND thereon this supposed rock, being a little left unto Matt. xvi. 22-23. his own stability, showed himself but to be a 'reed shaken with the wind.' For he is so far from putting himself under the weight of the building, that he attempts an obstruction of its foundation. He began to rebuke Christ himself for

heaven at thy conversion, and will there be none at thy glorification?' John Howe explains and applies the text much as Owen did ; 'Desire and delight,' he observes, 'are but two acts of love, diversified only by the distance or presence of the same object,' and 'to rest' is, in this connection, equivalent to being satisfied.

mentioning his sufferings, wherein alone the foundation of the Gospel Church was to be laid.

THE human nature of Christ was capable of having *new objects* proposed to its mind and understanding, whereof before it had a *simple nescience*. And this is an inseparable adjunct of human nature as such (as it is to be weary or hungry), and no vice or blamable defect. Some have made a great outcry about the ascribing of ignorance by some Protestant divines unto the human soul of Christ: Bellarm. de Anim. Christi. Take 'ignorance' for that which is a *moral defect* in any kind, or an unacquaintedness with that which any one *ought to know*, or is necessary unto him as to the perfection of his condition or his duty, and it is false that ever any of them ascribed it unto him. Take it merely for a nescience of some things, and there is no more in it but a denial of infinite omniscience—nothing inconsistent with the highest holiness and purity of human nature. So the Lord Christ says of himself that he knew not the day and hour of the end of all things.—[From *A Discourse on the Holy Spirit*, Bk. II. ch. iv.]

Mark xiii. 32.

Luke xxi. 28.

OUR Saviour having told his disciples of wars, tumults, seditions, famines, earthquakes, etc., which were to come upon the earth, bids them, when they see these things, to 'lift up their heads for joy.' But how should this be? Rejoice in the midst of so many evils and troubles, in the most whereof they were to have a Benjamin's mess—a double portion! Yea, saith our Saviour, Rejoice; for I have told you before, that then it is that your deliverance and redemption draweth nigh. It is for them to shake and tremble who

are in the dark, who know not what the Lord is doing. 'They may be at their wits' end who know no other end of these things; but for you who know the mind of the Lord, what he intendeth and will effect by these things, cast off all sinful fears, and rejoice in him who cometh.

THESE words, 'Father, into thy hand I commend my spirit,' were the first breathing forth of the faith of Christ towards a conquest. He looked through all the clouds of darkness round about him towards the rising sun, through all storms to the harbour, when he cried those words with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost. And by the way it is the highest act of faith upon a stable bottom and foundation, such as will not fail, to give up a departing soul into the hands of God, which Jesus Christ here did for our example.—
[From *Sacramental Sermons*.]

'WITHOUT me ye can do nothing'; that is, which appertains to fruitbearing unto God. In things natural and civil we can do somewhat, and in things sinful too much; we need no aid or assistance for any such purpose. But in fruitbearing unto God we can do nothing.

'NOW are we all here present, . . . to hear all things that are commanded thee of God'; that is, so to hear as to give up our souls in obedience unto the word, because of the authority of God, whose word it is. And when we are not in this frame we shall be unprofitable hearers; for the immediate end of our hearing is practice. Herein, then, lies the great wisdom of faith in hearing, namely, in delivering up the soul and conscience unto the commanding authority of God in the

Rom. vi. 17. word. And hereunto, among other things, it is required—
 (1) That the heart hath no *approved reserve* for any lust or corruption, whose life it would save from the sword of the word. (2) That it be *afraid of no duty* on the account of the difficulties and dangers with which it may be attended: for where these things are, the heart will close itself against the influences of God's authority in his word. (3) A diligent watchfulness against *distractions and diversions*, especially such as are growing to be habitual from temptations and sloth.

Acts. xvii. 16f. **P**AUL comes to Athens, and in all probability he intended not to preach immediately upon his journey. He intended to take some time for his refreshment. But observing the wickedness of the place, 'that they were wholly given to idolatry,' and observing an altar to the unknown God, he laid hold of that intimation given him by God's providence from these things, and immediately fell upon his work; which God blessed with great success. There are a thousand ways, if I may so say, wherein an observing Christian may find God hinting and intimating duties to him. The sins of other men, their graces, mercies, dangers, may be all unto us intimations of a season for duty.—[From *Sacramental Sermons*.]

IT is true our persistency in Christ doth not, as to the issue and event, depend absolutely on our own diligence. The *unalterableness of our union with Christ*, on the account of the faithfulness of the covenant of grace, is that which doth and shall eventually secure it. But yet our own diligent endeavour is such an indispensable means for that end, as that without it it will not be brought about. . . . Diligence and endeavours

Acts xxvii. 24,
25.

in this matter are like Paul's mariners, when he was shipwrecked at Melita. God had beforehand given him the lives of all that sailed with him in the ship, and he believed that it should be even as God had told him. So now the preservation of their lives depended absolutely on *the faithfulness and power* of God. But yet when the mariners began to flee out of the ship, Paul tells the centurion and the soldiers that unless those men stayed they could not be saved. But what need he think of shipmen, when God had promised and taken upon himself the preservation of them all? He knew full well that he would preserve them, but yet that he would do so in and by the use of means. If we are in Christ, God hath given us the lives of our souls, and hath taken upon himself in his covenant the preservation of them; but yet we may say with reference unto the means that he hath appointed, when storms and trials arise, unless we use our own diligent endeavours, 'we cannot be saved.' Acts xxvii. 31.

THE essence of faith consists in a due ascription of glory to God. Rom. iv. 20.

ALL is quiet and serene: not only that storm is over, but they are in the haven where they would be. Rom. v. 1.

IT always *abides* in the soul, it is never absent. The apostle twice useth that expression, 'It dwelleth in me.' There is its constant residence and habitation. If it came upon the soul only at certain seasons, much obedience might be perfectly accomplished in its absence; yea, and as they deal with usurping tyrants, whom they intend to thrust out of a city, the gates might be sometimes shut against it, that it might not

return—the soul might fortify itself against it. But the soul is its home; there it dwells, and is no wanderer. Wherever you are, whatever you are about, this law of sin is always in you; in the best that you do, and in the worst. Men little consider what a dangerous companion is always at home with them. When they are in company, when alone, by night or by day, all is one, sin is with them.¹ There is a living coal continually in their houses; which, if it be not looked unto, will fire them, and it may be consume them.

Rom. vii. 21.

‘ I FIND a law.’ He *found* it. It had been *told* him there was such a law; it had been *preached* unto him. But it is one thing for a man to know in general that there is a law of sin; another thing for a man to have an experience of the power of this law in himself. . . . They that find not its power are under its dominion. Whosoever contend against it shall know and find that it is present with them, that it is powerful in them. He shall find the stream to be strong who swims against it, though he who rolls along with it will be insensible of it.

1 Cor. x. 11.

IT will ruin our souls if, when we read in the Scriptures how the saints of God express their experience in faith, love, delight in God, and constant meditation on him, we grant that it was so with them, but it is not necessary that it should be so with us. These things are not written in the Scripture to show us what they were, but what we ought to be.²

¹ Cp. *Religio Medici*, part II. sect. vii.

² Cp. Dora Greenwell’s *A Present Heaven* (ch. iii., beginning).

‘**I**N that same night in which he was betrayed.’ One would ^{1 Cor. xi. 23.} think that our Lord Jesus Christ, who knew all the troubles, the distresses, the anguish, the sufferings, the derelictions of God, which were coming upon him, and into which he was just now entering, would have had something else to think of besides this provision for his church. But his heart was filled with love to his people; and that love which carried him to all that darkness and difficulty that he was to go through, that love at the same time did move him to institute this ordinance for the benefit and advantage of his church.

NO man will appoint a remembrance of that which he doth not delight in. When God brought the children of Israel out of Egypt, whereby he exalted his glory, he appointed a passover, and said, ‘It was a day greatly to be remembered’; because the people had a great deliverance, and God received great glory and satisfaction, therefore it was greatly to be remembered. We are to celebrate this ordinance ^{1 Cor. xi. 25.} in remembrance of Christ, and therefore there is a representation of that satisfaction which Jesus Christ did receive in the travail of his soul, so that he never repented him of one groan, of one sigh, of one tear, of one prayer, of one wrestling with the wrath of God. It is matter of rejoicing, and to be remembered. And do you rejoice in the remembrance of it?—[From *Sacramental Sermons*.]

WHEN men have strong convictions that such and such ^{2 Cor. iii. 5, ix. 8.} things are their own duty, they are apt to act as if they were to be done in their own strength. They must do them, they will do them—that is, as unto the outward work—

and therefore they think they can do them ; that is, in a due manner. The Holy Ghost hath for ever rejected this confidence—none shall prosper in it.¹ But hereby many deceive themselves ; they have been negligent and careless, whereby things are come to an ill posture with them, and that peace which they had is impaired ; but now they will pray, and read, and fast, and be liberal to the poor, and now strive after an abstinence from sin. All these things they suppose they can do of themselves, because they can and ought to perform the outward works, wherein the duties intended do consist. Hereby Christ is left out of the whole design, who, when all is done, is the Lord that healeth us. And there is another evil herein ; for whatever men do in their own natural abilities, there is a secret reserve of some kind of merit in it. Those who plead for these things, do aver there can be no merit in any thing but what proceeds from our own free-will ; and what is so done hath some kind of merit inseparably accompanying of it ; and this is enough to render all endeavours of this kind not only useless and fruitless, but utterly rejected. Faith must engage the assistance of Christ and his grace in and unto these duties ; or, however they may be multiplied, they will not be effectual unto our healing and recovery.

Exod. xv. 26.

GIVE me leave to say that hell itself comes short of representing the guilt of sin, in comparison of the cross of Christ. And the Holy Ghost would have us attend to it,

¹ Matthew Arnold, quoting 2 Cor. iii. 5 in his *St. Paul and Protestantism* (ch. ii.), proceeds : 'Most true and natural is this feeling ; and the greater men are, the more natural is this feeling to them. . . . Through every great spirit there runs a train of feeling of this sort ; and the power and depth which there undoubtedly is in Calvinism comes from Calvinism's being overwhelmed by it. Paul is not, like Calvinism, overwhelmed by it ; but it is always before his mind, and strongly agitates his thoughts.'

where he saith, 'He was made sin for us.' See what comes of 2 Cor. v. 21. sin, saith he, what demerit, what provocation there is in it; to see the Son of God praying, crying, trembling, bleeding, dying; God hiding his face from him; the earth trembling under him; darkness round about him. How can the soul but cry out, 'O Lord, is this the effect of sin? Is all this in sin?' Here, then, take a view of sin. Others look at it in its pleasures and in the advantages of it, and cry, Is it not a little one? as Lot of Zoar. But look at it in the cross of Christ, and there it appears in another hue. All this is from my sin, saith the contrite soul.—[From *Sacramental Sermons*.]

THERE is not the least line of truth, how far soever it may be extended, and how small soever it may at length appear, but the springs of it lie in the person of Christ. And then we learn it aright, when we learn it in Eph. iv. 21. the spring, or as it is in him; which when we have done, we may safely trace it down, and follow it unto its utmost extent. But he that looks on gospel truths as sporades, as scattered up and down independently one of another—who sees not the root, centre, and knot of them in Jesus Christ—it is most probable that when he goes about to gather them for his use, he will also take up things quite of another nature. They say that all *moral virtues* are knit up in one—that is, *righteousness*; so that he who hath that hath all the rest, at least radically and virtually. This I know, that all spiritual truths are knit up and centred in him who is 'the truth'; Eph. iv. 20. and they who have 'learned him,' as the apostle speaks, have with him received the seeds of all truth: which being watered and attended as they ought, will in due time flourish into all

Eph. i. 10. their proper branches and fruits; for all things are gathered into one head in him.

Eph. iv. 30.

IT is an evidence that his work proceedeth from and is wholly managed in love, in that we are cautioned not to *grieve* him. And a double evidence of the greatness of his love is herein tendered unto us in that caution:—(1) In that those alone are subject to be grieved by us who act in love towards us. . . . A severe schoolmaster may be more provoked with the fault of his scholar than the father is, but the father is grieved with it when the other is not. . . . (2) And as the work of the Holy Ghost is to comfort us, so a lustre is put upon it by this, that he comforts those who are very prone to grieve himself. Even herein the Holy Ghost commendeth his love unto us, that even whilst we grieve him, by his consolations he recovers us from those ways wherewith he is grieved.¹

Grief in the sense here intended is a trouble of mind arising from an apprehension of unkindness not deserved, of disappointments not expected.

Eph. vi. 13.

A LITTLE armour might serve to defend a man if he might choose where his enemy should strike him.²

Eph. vi. 24.

THE first great act of hypocrisy, with respect to Christ, was treachery, veiled with a double pretence of love.

¹ Not long before Owen wrote this, George Herbert had published his verses on the same subject in the *Temple* (No. 105):—

I sinne not to my grieffe alone,
But to my God's too.

² Cf. *Religio Medici*, part I. sect. lv.

He cried, 'Hail, Master!' ¹ and kissed him, who betrayed him. His words and actions proclaimed love, but deceit and treachery were in his heart. Hence the apostle prays for grace on them who love the Lord Jesus *ἐν ἀφθαρσίᾳ*—without dissimulation or doubling, without pretences or aims at other ends, without a mixture of corrupt affections; that is, in sincerity.

THE apostle tells us that 'the peace of God' *φρουρήσει* Phil. iv. 7. *τὰς καρδίας*, 'shall keep our hearts.' *φρουρά* is a military word—a garrison.² And so *φρουρήσει* is 'shall keep us

¹ Cf. Jonathan Edwards's *Religious Affections* (part i. vi.). 'The more excellent anything is, the more will be the counterfeits of it. Thus there are many more counterfeits of silver and gold than of iron and copper. There are many false diamonds and rubies, but who goes about to counterfeit common stones? . . . There are perhaps no graces which have more counterfeits than love and humility,' etc. This very idea about the counterfeits occurs in another passage towards the opening of Owen's treatise on the Holy Spirit, viz. :—'The great *deceit* and *abuse* that hath been, in all ages of the church, under the pretence of the *name* and *work* of the *Spirit* make the thorough consideration of what we are taught concerning them exceeding necessary. Had not these things been excellent in themselves, and so acknowledged by all Christians, they would never have been by so many falsely pretended unto. Men do not seek to adorn themselves with rags, or to boast of what, on its own account, is under just contempt. And according to the worth of things, so are they liable to abuse; and the more excellent anything is, the more vile and pernicious is an undue pretence unto it. Such have been the *false pretences* of some in all ages unto the Spirit of God and his work, whose *real excellences* in themselves have made those pretences abominable and unspeakably dangerous; for the better the things are which are counterfeited, the worse always are the ends they are employed unto.'

In another paragraph he argues that 'God never more honoured his true prophets than when there were most false ones; neither shall ever any false pretence to the Spirit of Grace render him less dear to those that are partakers of him, or his gifts of less use to the church.'

² As in Francis Thompson's lines :—

'The hold that falls not when the town is got,
The heart's heart whose immured plot
Hath keys yourself keep not! . . .
Its keys are at the cincture hung of God;
Its gates are trepidant to His nod;
By Him its floors are trod.'

in a garrison.' Now a garrison has two things attending it. First, that it is exposed to the assaults of its enemies; secondly, that safety lies in it from their attempts. It is so with our souls. They are exposed to temptations, assaulted continually; but if there be a garrison in them, or if they be kept as in a garrison, temptation shall not enter, and consequently we shall not enter into temptation. Now, how is this done? Saith he, 'The peace of God shall do it.' What is this 'peace of God'? A sense of his love and favour in Jesus Christ. Let this abide in you, and it shall garrison you against all assaults whatever. Lay in store of gospel provisions, that may make the soul a defenced place against all assaults.

Heb. iii. 8.

NO place, no retiredness, no solitary wilderness, will secure men from sin or suffering, provocation or punishment.

These persons were in a wilderness, where they had many motives and encouragements unto obedience, and no means of seduction and outward temptation from others, yet there they sinned and there they suffered. They sinned in the wilderness, and their carcasses fell in the wilderness; they filled that desert with sins and graves. And the reason hereof is, because no place as such can of itself exclude the principles and causes either of sin or punishment. Men have the principle of their sins in themselves, in their own hearts, which they cannot leave behind them, or yet get off by shifting of places, or changing their stations. And the justice of God, which is the principal cause of punishment, is no less in the wilderness than in the most populous cities; the wilderness is no wilderness to him—he can find his paths in all its intricacies. The Israelites came hither on necessity, and so they found it with them; and in after ages some have done so

by choice—they have retired into wildernesses for the furtherance of their obedience and devotion. In this very wilderness, on the top of Sinai, there is at this day a monastery of persons professing themselves to be religious, and they live there to increase religion in them. I once for some days conversed with their chief (they call him Archimandrite) here in England. For aught I could perceive, he might have learned as much elsewhere. And, indeed, what hath been the issue of that undertaking in general? For the most part, unto their old lusts men added new superstitions, until they made themselves an abomination unto the Lord, and utterly useless in the world, yea, burdensome unto human society. Look for all relief and for help against sin *merely from grace*. A *wilderness* will not help you,¹ nor a *paradise*. In the one Adam sinned, in whom we all sinned; in the other all Israel sinned, who were an example unto us all. Men may to good purpose go into a wilderness to exercise grace and principles of truth, when the acting of them is denied elsewhere: but it is to no purpose to go into a wilderness to seek for these things; their dwelling is in the love and favour of God, and nowhere else can they be found. Do not expect that mercies of themselves will do you good, or that afflictions will do you good, that the city or the wilderness will do you good; it is grace alone that can do you good. See Job xxviii. 12-28.

A TIME wherein we are called unto *the performance of any great and signal duty* is such a season. So was it with Abraham when he was called first to leave his country, and afterwards to sacrifice his son. Such was the call of Joshua to enter into Canaan, proposed to our example; and of the

¹ See Newman's verses on *The Desert*.

apostles to preach the gospel, when they were sent out 'as sheep in the midst of wolves.' Now, although we may not perhaps be called in particular to such duties as these, yet we may be so to them which have an equal greatness in them with respect unto us and our condition. Something that is new, that we are yet unexperienced in, something that there is great opposition against, somewhat that may cost us dear, somewhat that as to the state of the inward and outward man we may seem to be every way unfit for, somewhat that the glory of God is in an especial manner concerned in, we may be called unto. And there is nothing of this nature which doth not render the time of it a season wherein we stand in need of especial aid and assistance.

Job x. 17. Times of *changes, and the difficulties wherewith they are attended*, introduce such a season. 'Changes and war,' saith Job, 'are against me.' There is in all changes a war against us, wherein we may be foiled if we are not the more watchful, and have not the better assistance. And freedom from changes is in most the ground of carnal security: 'Because they have no changes, therefore they fear not God.' Changes will beget fear; they are trials to all that are subject unto them. And these we are in all instances of life continually obnoxious unto. No man can enumerate the vicissitudes of our course; yet no one of them can we pass through in a due manner without renewed especial assistances of grace.

Ps. lv. 19.

The time of *death* is such a season. To let go all hold of present things and present hopes, to give up a departing soul entering into the invisible world, and an unchangeable eternity therein, into the hands of a sovereign Lord, is a thing which requires a strength above our own for the right and comfortable performance of.

NONE can be said to fall into the hands of God, as though Heb. x. 31. they were not before in his power.¹ But to fall into the hands of God absolutely, as it is here intended, is to be obnoxious² to the power and judgment of God, when and where there is nothing in God himself, nothing in his word, promises, laws, institutions, that should oblige him to mercy or a mitigation of punishment. So when a man falls into the hands of his enemies, between whom and him there is no law, no love, he can expect nothing but death. Such is this falling into the hands of the living God; there is nothing in the law, nothing in the gospel, that can be pleaded for the least abatement of punishment.

THIS is peculiar to these first two instances of the power Heb. xi. 4-5. of faith; that in the one it led him to death, a bloody death: in the other it delivered him from death, that he did not die at all. . . . God can and doth put a great difference, in outward things, between such as are equally accepted before him.

THIS fear, which arose from faith, was used by the same Heb. xi. 7. faith to excite and stir him up to his duty.³ And therefore this reverential fear of God is frequently in the Scripture used for the whole worship of God and all the obedience

¹ In Mr. A. H. Craufurd's *Recollections of James Martineau* (1903), p. 105, it is told how the saintly bishop Ewing of Argyll and the Isles, speaking of the extreme fear expressed by many people at the idea of falling into the hands of God, once remarked, 'I wonder in whose hands they think that they *now* are.'

This was a text on Cromwell's lips as he lay dying. He repeated it three times solemnly and earnestly.

² *i.e.* Exposed.

³ See the remarkable and searching description of Noah's faith in *Mark Rutherford's Deliverance* (pp. 162-163).

required of us. . . . Then is fear a fruit of faith, when it engageth us to diligence in our duty.

Heb. xi. 32 f.

BUT whereas the things which they performed were, for the most part, heroic actions of valour, courage, and strength, in war and battle,¹ such as Christians, *as Christians*, are not called unto, what can we gather, from what they were and did, as unto those things and duties which our faith is called unto, that are quite of another nature? But there are sundry things in their example that tend unto our encouragement; as—

Jas v. 16-18.

(1) Whatever their faith was exercised in, yet they were men subject to like passions and infirmities with ourselves. This consideration the apostle James makes use of to stir us up unto prayer, by the example of Elias, whose prayers had a miraculous effect. . . . And so it is with respect unto the faith of these worthies. Its success depended on God's ordinance and grace; for they were men subject to the like passions as we are.

(2) The faith whereby they wrought these great things, was the same, of the same nature and kind, with that which is in every true believer. Wherefore, as it was effectual in them as unto those things and duties whereunto they were called, it will be so in us also, as unto all that we are or may be called unto.

¹ In Mr. Gladstone's reply to Ingersoll *on Christianity* (1888), he considers 'the remarkable structure of this noble chapter, which is to Faith what the thirteenth of 1 Corinthians is to Love,' and points out that the apostle 'seems with a tender instinct to avoid anything like stress on the exploits of warriors. Of the twelve persons having a share in the detailed expositions, David is the only warrior, and his character as a man of war is eclipsed by his greater attributes as a prophet.' Joshua too is never named. 'But the series of four names, which are given without any specification of their title to appear in the list, are all names of distinguished warriors. They had all done great acts of faith and patriotism against the enemies of Israel. . . . All of them, moreover, had committed errors.'

(3) Whereas their faith was exercised in conflicting with and conquering the enemies of the church, we also are engaged in a warfare wherein we have no less powerful adversaries to contend withal than they had, though of another kind. To destroy the kingdom of Satan in us, to demolish all his strongholds, to overcome the world in all its attempts on our eternal safety, will appear one day not to be inferior unto the conquest of kingdoms, and the overthrow of See Eph. vi. 10-12. armies.

(4) *Most* of the persons mentioned did themselves fall into such sins and miscarriages, as to manifest that they stood in need of pardoning grace and mercy as well as we; and that therefore our faith may be effectual, on the account thereof, as well as theirs. Gideon's making of the ephod out of the spoils of the Midianites cannot be excused, and is condemned by the Holy Ghost. Jephthah's rash vow, and, as is supposed, more rash accomplishment of it, enrols him among sinners. Samson's taking a wife of the Philistines, then keeping company with a harlot, were sins of a high provocation; not to mention the killing of himself at the close of all, for which he seems to have had a divine warranty. And it is known what great sins David himself fell into. And we may learn hence—

That it is not the dignity of the person that gives efficacy unto faith, but it is faith that makes the person accepted.

That neither the guilt of sin nor the sense of it should hinder us from acting faith on God in Christ, when we are called thereunto.

That true faith will save great sinners. For that they were all saved who are on this catalogue of believers, the apostle Heb. xi. 30. expressly affirms.

That which we are taught in the whole is, that there is nothing so great or difficult, or seemingly insuperable, no discouragement so great from a sense of our own unworthiness by sin, nor opposition arising against us from both of them in conjunction, that should hinder us from believing, and the exercise of faith in all things, when we are called thereunto.—The truth is, the first call of men to believe, is when they are under the greatest sense of sin; and some of them, it may be, of sins great and heinous—as it was with them who were accessory to the murder of Christ himself: and our call is, to believe things more great and excellent than the conquest of earthly kingdoms.

Acts ii.

Heb. xii. 2.

‘**H**E endured the cross, and despised the shame.’¹ Pain and shame are the two constituent parts of all outward sufferings. And they were both eminent in the death of the cross. No death more lingering, painful, and cruel; none so shameful in common reputation, nor in the thing itself, wherein he that suffered was in his dying hours exposed publicly unto the scorn and contempt with insultation of the worst of men. It were easy to manifest how extreme they were both in the death of Christ. And the Scripture doth insist more on the latter than on the former.

Heb. xii. 5.

THERE are two great evils, one of which does generally seize on men under their afflictions and keep them from a due management of them. Either men despise the Lord’s

¹ ‘Good people,’ said Laud on the scaffold to the mob, ‘this is an uncomfortable time to preach, yet I shall begin with a text of Scripture.’ Whereupon he quoted and applied Heb. xii. 2. But the piety of the man could not restrain even then the bitterness of the ecclesiastic. He must needs have a last fling at ‘the bleating of Jeroboam’s calves in Dan and Bethel’—a gratuitous and singularly maladroit reference to the Puritans, from one whose policy had been the erection of what Puritans honestly believed to be idolatrous symbols and ceremonies.

correction or sink under it. (1) Men despise it. They account that which befalls them to be a light or common thing; they take no notice of God in it; they can shift with it well enough. (2) Men faint and sink under their trials and afflictions. The first despises the assistance of the Holy Ghost through pride of heart; the latter refuse it through dejectedness of spirit, and sink under the weight of their troubles.¹

IF the saints say, 'Come and have fellowship with us,' 1 John i. 3. are not men ready to say, 'Why, what are you? a sorry company of seditious, factious persons. Be it known unto you, that we despise your fellowship. When we intend to leave fellowship with all honest men, and men of worth, then will we come to you.' But alas! how are men mistaken! Truly their fellowship is with the Father. Consider the company they keep.

WHEN the church of Sardis was really dead, the principal means of keeping it in that condition was the name it had to be alive. Rev. iii. 1.

THUS the saints are called to sing 'the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb.' The deliverance by Moses was a temporal deliverance from outward yokes and bondage;—the deliverance of the Lamb was a spiritual deliverance from spiritual bondage: the deliverance that God will give his saints from this oppression shall be mixed; as their bondage partakes of both, so shall their deliverance be; and therefore they shall sing the song of Moses and the Lamb. If ever any persons in the world had cause to sing the song of Moses and the Lamb, we have this day. Rev. xv. 3.

¹ See the sentence of Amiel quoted above under 'The Cult of Reason.'

III. SENTENCES AND APHORISMS

HE that puts forth a book sentences his reason to the gauntelope:¹ every one will strive to have a lash at it in its course ; and he must be content to bear it.

I HAVE from the beginning resolved not to persist in any controversy, as to the public debate of it, when once it begins to degenerate into a strife of words and personal reflections.

STEADFASTNESS in believing doth not exclude all temptations from without. When we say a tree is firmly rooted, we do not say that the wind never blows upon it.

THAT faith alone will never forsake Christ which springs out of or is built on a conviction of the want of him.

To pray well is to pray always, that is, to keep the heart always in that frame which is required in prayer. And where this is, sin can have no rule, no, nor quiet harbour in the soul.

To be true to convictions is the life of sincerity.

OBEDIENCE unto Christ doth not consist merely in doing

¹ *i.e.* Makes it run the gauntlet.

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the things he requireth. . . . All obedience unto Christ proceeds from an express subjection of our souls and conscience unto him.¹

IN the evening, in the close, it will be light, so light as to be to us discernible. In the meantime we are like unskilful men, who going to the house of some eminent artist, so long as he is about his work, despise it as confused; but when it is finished, admire it as excellent. Whilst the passages of Providence are on us, all is confusion; but when the fabric is reared, glorious.

A DUNGEON with Christ is a throne; and a throne, without Christ, a hell.

THERE is a far greater distance between the vision of heaven and the sight which we have now by faith, than is between the sight which we now have and what they had under the Old Testament.

WITHOUT justice, great commonwealths are but great troops of robbers.

MANY we have who plead themselves to be *Christians*. Which might be allowed them (if they pleased themselves), would they

¹ Perhaps the classic words in which Dr. Chalmers describes his change to evangelical religion are not too well known to be cited as an apt parallel to Owen's sentence. 'I am now most thoroughly of opinion, and it is an opinion founded on experience, that on the system of *Do this and live* no peace, and even no true and worthy obedience, can ever be attained. It is *Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved*. When this belief enters the heart, joy and confidence enter along with it,' etc.

not do such things as Christian religion abhorreth. But this is the least part of their claim. They will also be the *only Christians*; all others who differ from them, however falsely so called, being only a drove of unbelievers, hastening unto hell.

IGNORANCE of God and of ourselves is the great principle and cause of all our disquietments; and, this ariseth mostly not from want of light and instruction, but for want of consideration and application.

GRACE and truth are the two ingredients of an evangelical promise.

ABILITY of speech in time and season is an especial gift of God, and that eminently with respect unto the spiritual things of the gospel; but a *profluency of speech*,¹ venting itself on all occasions and on no occasions, making men open their mouths wide when indeed they should shut them and open their ears, and to pour out all that they know and what they know and what they do not know, making them angry if they are not heard and impatient if they are contradicted, is an unconquerable fortification against all true spiritual wisdom.

I no way doubt but that many men do receive more grace from God than they understand or will own, and have a greater efficacy of it in them than they will believe. Men may be really saved by that grace which doctrinally they do deny.

¹ In 1651 George Fox stood up in York Minster, at the close of the service, and informed the clergy and congregation that 'This was the Lord's word to them that they lived in words.'

SENTENCES AND APHORISMS 207

HAD not Esau come against him with four hundred men, Jacob had not been called Israel; he had not been put to it to try his strength with God, and so to prevail. Who would not purchase with the greatest distress that heavenly comfort which is in the return of prayers?

No wild beast in a toil doth more rave and tear and rend, than a proud man when he is reprovèd.

IN all our approaches unto God we are to consider him as a throne.

OUR ignorance is both our calamity, our sin, and an occasion of many sins unto us.

WHILST the gospel is preached unto men, they are under their great trial for eternity.

FAITH, if it be a living faith, will be a working faith.

NOTHING shall be lost that is done for God or in obedience to him.

AFTER the most sincere performance of the best of our duties, our comforts and securities are centred in Christ alone.

It is a great honour to serve in the church, by doing or suffering, for the use and service of future generations.

O THE deep wounds the gospel hath received by the mutual keen invectives of learned men!

COMMON experience declares how momentary and useless are those violent fits and gusts of endeavours which proceed from fear and uncertainty, both in things spiritual and temporal, or civil. Whilst men are under the power of actual impressions from such fears, they will convert to God, yea, they will *momento turbinis*, and perfect holiness in an instant; but so soon as that impression wears off (as it will do on every occasion, and upon none at all), such persons are as dead and cold towards God as the lead or iron, which ran but now in a fiery stream, is when the heat is departed from it.

MEN think all things would be very glorious, if they might be done according to their mind. Perhaps, indeed, they would—but with their glory, not the glory of God.

I HAVE seen many good laws for the Sabbath, and hope I shall see some good examples.

SOME relate or talk that the eagle tries the eyes of her young ones by turning them to the sun; which if they cannot look steadily on, she rejects them as spurious. We may truly try our faith by immediate intuitions of the Sun of Righteousness. Direct faith to act itself immediately and directly on the incarnation of Christ and his mediation; and if it be not of the right kind and race it will turn its eyes aside unto any thing else.

Look what the roots are in the family; such will the fruit be in the church and commonwealth.

SENTENCES AND APHORISMS 209

‘DEEP calleth unto deep.’ The deeps of affliction awaken the conscience to a deep sense of sin.

GIFTS are given to trade withal for God. Opportunities are the market-days for that trade. To napkin up the one and to let slip the other will end in trouble and disconsolation. Disquietments and perplexities of heart are worms that will certainly breed in the rust of unexercised gifts. God loseth a revenue of glory and honour by such slothful souls; and he will make them sensible of it. I know some at this day whom omissions of opportunities for service are ready to sink into the grave.

ALL men are equally concerned in the love of God and pardon of sin. Every one hath a soul of the same immortal constitution, equally capable of bliss and woe.

THE terms of reconciliation which some fancy to be offered in the shining of the sun and the falling of the rain, never brought souls to peace with God. Life and immortality are brought to light only by the gospel.

ALL love in general hath an assimilating efficacy; it casts the mind into the mould of the thing beloved. . . . Every approach unto God by ardent love and delight is transfiguring.

Love and likeness unto God are inseparable.

HE that cannot live in an actual resignation of himself and all his concerns unto the sovereign pleasure of God, can neither glorify him in any thing nor have one hour’s solid peace in his own mind.

THEN are we servants of God, then are we the disciples of Christ, when we do what is commanded us and because it is commanded us.

A DUE respect unto God's promises and threatenings is a principal part of our liberty.

THERE is indeed no better frame of heart to be attained in this life than that whereby it is to the Word as the wax to the seal, fit and ready to receive impressions from it—a frame that is tender to receive the communications of the Word in all their variety, whether for reproof, instruction, or consolation.

EVERY thing in the preaching of the Word comes cross and displeasing to the minds of proud men.

THE language of spiritual complacency is, *I will go in the strength of the Lord God: I will make mention of thy righteousness, of thine only.* That of spiritual pride is, *God, I thank thee that I have done thus and thus.*

HE whose religion lies all in prayer and hearing, hath none at all.

I SHALL not value his prayers at all, be he never so earnest and frequent in them, who gives not alms according to his ability.

No man is safe a moment whose mind by any means is dispossessed of a sense of the sovereign authority of God in his commands.

SENTENCES AND APHORISMS 211

THE church is no less beautiful and glorious when encompassed and seemingly overwhelmed with all the evils and dreadful miseries here recounted (Heb. xi. 35-37), than when it is in the greatest peace and prosperity.

To do the greatest things and to suffer the hardest, is all one to faith. It is equally ready for both, as God shall call. These things, unto the flesh, differ as next to heaven and hell; they are both alike to faith, when duty calls.

THIS is the praise of a man, the only praise whereof in this world he is partaker, that he doth the will of God¹ before he fall asleep; that he faithfully serves his generation, until he be no more.

You have your season, and you have but your season; neither can you lie down in peace, until you have some persuasion that your work as well as your life is at an end.

WE have but an uncertain season for the due performance of most certain duties.

It is not the distance of the earth from the sun, nor the sun's withdrawing itself, that makes a dark and gloomy day; but the interposition of clouds and vaporous exhalations. Neither is thy soul beyond the reach of the promise, nor doth God withdraw himself; but the vapours of thy carnal, unbelieving heart do cloud thee.

¹ 'The perfected character is a cordial, delighted, intelligent sympathy with the whole revealed will of God' (Thomas Erskine's *Unconditional Freedom of the Gospel*, p. 112).

THE most tremendous judgment of God in this world is the hardening of the hearts of men.

AND whatever there is in any trouble of allay from the utmost wrath, is of mere goodness and grace.¹ Thy houses are burned, but perhaps thy goods are saved—is there no grace, no goodness therein? Or perhaps thy substance also is consumed, but yet thy person is alive; and should a living man complain. But say what thou wilt, this stroke is not hell, which thou hast deserved long ago, yea, it may be a means of preventing thy going thither; so that it is accompanied with infinite goodness, patience, and mercy also.

I DOUBT not but that men for a season *may not know*, may *disbelieve* and deny, some fundamental articles of Christian religion, and yet not be absolutely concluded not to hold the Head by any sinew or ligament.

It is the ‘terror of the Lord’ that causes us to ‘persuade’ others, but it is the ‘love of Christ’ that constraineth us to live to him.

THE house built on the sand may oftentimes be built higher, have more fair parapets and battlements, windows and ornaments, than that which is built upon the rock; yet all gifts and privileges equal not one grace.

¹ Almost the devout thought of Izaak Walton’s sentence: ‘Every misery I miss is a new mercy, and therefore let us be thankful.’ Or of Jeremy Taylor’s reflection that ‘the very privative blessings, the blessings of immunity, safeguard, and integrity which we all enjoy, deserve a thanksgiving of a whole life.’ But neither of these good men would have finished the paragraph precisely as their Puritan contemporary has done.

SENTENCES AND APHORISMS 213

THAT which the seed of wheat brings forth is wheat; but that which the gospel brings forth is not gospel but faith.

THE profession of the truth by not a few is the greatest dishonour and disparagement that can be cast upon it. The best service many can do it is by forsaking it, and declaring that the belief of it is inconsistent with their cursed wicked lives.

NEITHER is it a verbal acknowledgment, in owning that which Christ suffered at Jerusalem, which will free any from this charge and guilt. Unless the Lord Christ, that Christ which is God and man in one person, be owned, received, believed in, loved, trusted unto, and obeyed in all things, as he is proposed unto us in the Scripture, and with respect unto all the ends of righteousness, holiness, life, and salvation, for which he is so proposed, he is renounced and forsaken.

It is in many places a lost labour to seek for Christianity among Christians.¹

FAITH can rest in what it cannot comprehend.

THIS is not the way to answer that love which passes knowledge, to know not whether we love Christ again or not.

I VERILY believe that the life of faith doth answer in proportion to our thoughts about the dying of Jesus.²

¹ This sentence, italicised in the original, was written in 1676, as were the two preceding paragraphs.

² 'The principle of growth is not love only, but forgiven love' (F. W. Faber).

No argument can be rationally and usefully pleaded for the necessity of holiness, which doth not contain in itself an encouraging motive unto it.

AMONG all the glorious works of God, next unto that of redemption by Jesus Christ, my soul doth most admire this of the Spirit in preserving the seed and principle of holiness in us, as a spark of living fire in the midst of the ocean, against all corruptions and temptations wherewith it is impugned.

THAT fear which keeps from sin and excites the soul to cleave more firmly to God, be the object of it what it will, is no servile fear, but a holy fear or due reverence unto God and his word.

NOTHING is duty, nothing is obedience in believers, but what is grace from Christ communicated unto them.

THE gospel leaves men, unless upon extraordinary occasions, their names, their reputations, their wealth, their honours, if lawfully obtained and possessed; but the league that is between the mind and these things in all natural men must be broken. They must be no longer looked upon as the chiefest good, or in the place thereof.

AMONG those who lay any serious and real claim to Christianity, there is nothing more certain nor more acknowledged than that there is no deliverance from a state of misery for those who are not delivered from a state of sin.

CUSTOM of sinning takes away the *sense* of it; the course of the world takes away the *shame* of it.¹

¹ See, Owen adds, Augustine's *Confess.* ii. 6.

SENTENCES AND APHORISMS 215

THE life of faith is every way a safe life.

THEY cast themselves out of the verge of Christianity who suppose that the Lord Christ is no otherwise our life, or the author of life to us, but as he hath revealed and taught the way of life to us. He is our life as he is our head, and it would be a sorry head that should only teach the feet to go, and not communicate strength to the whole body so to do.

IN our desires for heaven, if they are regular, we consider not so much our freedom from trouble as from sin ; nor is our aim in the first place so much at complete happiness as perfect holiness.

It is to be feared that the most of us know not how much glory may be in present grace, nor how much of heaven may be obtained in holiness on the earth.

THERE is a religion in the world that runs in a parallel line by that of evangelical truth, but toucheth it not, nor will do so to eternity.

As the elect of God, let us put on humility in all things ; and let me add, that there is no grace whereby at this day we may more glorify God and the gospel, now the world is sinking into ruin under the weight of its own pride.¹

WE are greatly mistaken if we suppose we have no benefit

¹ See Jeremy Taylor's quite admirable paragraphs in *Holy Living* (chap. ii. sect. iv.).

by the Word beyond what we retain in our memories, though we should labour for that also. Our chief advantage lies in the excitation which is hereby given unto our faith and love to their proper exercise.

BELIEVERS are all 'trees planted in the garden of God.' Some thrive, some decay for a season, but the growth of the best is secret.

LET no man think¹ to kill sin with few, easy, or gentle strokes. He who hath once smitten a serpent, if he follow not on his blow until he be slain, may repent that ever he began the quarrel. And so will he who undertakes to deal with sin, and pursues it not constantly to the death.

It is truth alone that capacitates any soul to give glory to God.

As there are good duties which have sin adhering to them, so there are sins which have good in them.

LET them pretend what they please, the true reason why any despise *the new birth* is because they hate *a new life*. He that cannot endure to *live to God* will as little endure to hear of being *born of God*.

OUR forgiving of others will not procure forgiveness for

¹ 'Let no man think that sudden in a minute
All is accomplished and the work is done;—
Though with thine earliest dawn thou shouldst begin it,
Scarce were it ended in thy setting sun.'

F. W. H. Myers.

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ourselves ; but our not forgiving of others proves that we ourselves are not forgiven.

THE world is now growing towards six thousand years old, and yet is no nearer the bottom of the springs of its vanity, than it was the first day that sin entered into it.

THE whole world hath been employed in the practice of iniquity five thousand years and upwards ; and yet '*aspice hoc novum*' may be set on many villainies.

MANY previous sins make way for the great sin of finally rejecting the voice or word of God.

THE end of all God's works, of his mighty works of providence towards a person, a church, or a nation, is to bring to faith and dependence.

RICHES have been kept for men to their hurt. Wisdom and high place have been the ruin of many. Liberty and plenty are to most a snare. Prosperity slays the foolish. It is enough to fill the soul of any man with horror and amazement, to consider the ways and ends of most of them that are entrusted with this world's goods.¹

ARGUMENTS that are equally true may yet, on the account of evidence, not be equally cogent.

¹ Written during the Restoration period. The aptest comment is supplied by the diaries of Pepys (*e.g.* November 8, 1663 ; October 15, 1666 ; July 27 and 29, 1667 ; October 23, 1668) and John Evelyn (February 17, 1662 ; October 10, 1666 ; March 1, 1671 ; January 14, 1682, etc.), both Royalists. Clarendon's evidence is even more mournful and analytic.

SINS have their aggravations from mercies received.

AGGRAVATIONS of sin do glorify grace in pardon.

It is one thing to fear God as threatening, with a holy reverence, another to be afraid of the evil threatened.

WE can have no power from Christ unless we live in a persuasion that we have none of our own.

SEE in the meantime that your faith bringeth forth obedience, and God in due time will cause it to bring forth peace.

THINK of the *guilt of sin*, that you may be humbled. Think of the *power of sin*, that you may seek strength against it. Think not of the *matter of sin*, . . . lest you be more and more entangled.

NONE use instituted ways or forms of worship profitably, but such as find communion with God in them or are seriously humbled because they do not.

You cannot be carried before any magistrate, but Christ is there present, greater than them all, who hath their breath in his hand, their lives and their ways at his disposal, and can do what he pleases with them.¹

THE best duties of unbelievers are but white sins.²

¹ Epictetus writes, under Domitian : 'When you go in to the presence of any great personage, remember there is Another as high who sees all that happens ; him you should please, not the other person' (cf. *Diss.* i. 30).

² This familiar and dreadful sentence is on a par with Luther's 'damned heathen, Aristotle,' and with Owen's own contemptuous allusion to Socrates (*On Communion with God*, part II. ch. iv.), which is as painful to read as John

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A MAN may want liberty and yet be happy, as Joseph was. A man may want peace and yet be happy, as David was. A man may want children and yet be blessed, as Job was. A man may want plenty and yet be full of comfort, as Micaiah was. But he that wants the gospel, wants everything that should do him good. A throne without the gospel is but the devil's dungeon. Wealth without the gospel is fuel for hell. Advancement without the gospel is but a going high to have the greater fall.

THE height of rebellion against God is the despising of spiritual gospel mercies. . . . I had almost said, hell furnishes no greater sin.

CAN none of you look back on any particular days or nights, and say, 'O Lord, that thou shouldst be so patient and so full of forbearance as not to send me to hell at such an instant! But, O Lord, that thou shouldst go further and blot out mine iniquities, for thine own sake, when I made thee serve with my sins!' Lord, what shall I say it is? It is the free grace of my God! What expression transcendeth that, I know not.

Howe's derision of Spinoza. Socrates, says Owen, 'died like a fool.' Like some of the illiberal fathers in the early church, he took offence at the cock for Æsculapius.—A more guarded expression of the same idea is given in the *Discourse on the Holy Spirit* (Bk. iii. ch. iv.), where Owen proceeds to argue on 'the duties of men unregenerate. Formally, and unto them they are sin; materially, and in themselves, they are good. This gives them a difference from, and a preference above, such sins as are every way sinful. As they are duties, they are good; as they are the duties of such persons, they are evil, because necessarily defective in what should preserve them from being so.' Owen, as he explains, is here following the lead of Augustine's *splendida peccata*. 'This some are now displeased with, but it is easier to censure him than to confute him.'

IN the extreme north one day and one night divide the year ; but with a people without the gospel it is all night.

CHRIST knows the minds of all. But all know not how to communicate their mind to Christ. It will not avail a man at all that Christ knows his mind ; for so he doth of every one, whether he will or no. But that a man can make his heart known unto Christ, this is consolation.

So unspiritual are many men's minds . . . that they reckon men's happiness by their possessions, and suppose the catalogue of their titles to be a roll of their felicities.

IT was a storm that occasioned the discovery of the golden mines of India. Hath not a storm driven some to the discovery of the richer mines of the love of God in Christ ?

O THAT . . . we might have less writing and more praying, less envy and more charity ! that all evil surmisings, which are works of the flesh, might have no toleration in our hearts, but be banished for nonconformity to the golden rule of love and peace.¹

MEN may be more or less holy, more or less sanctified, but they cannot be more or less regenerate. All children that are born into the world are equally born, though some quickly outstrip others in the perfections and accomplishments of nature ; and all born of God are equally so, though some speedily outgo others in the accomplishments and perfections of grace.

¹ 'Seeing we are civilised Englishmen,' said Fuller in his quaint, straight way, 'let us not be naked savages in our talk.'

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EVERY promise of God hath this consideration tacitly annexed to it—‘Is anything too hard for the Lord?’

EARNEST exhortations on feeble principles have more of noise than weight.

OLD Testament examples are New Testament instructions.

EXHORTATION is nothing but an encouragement given unto others to walk with us or after us in the ways of God.

ALL grace is special grace. It proceeds not from any common principle, but from the especial love of God in Christ; and is given out in an especial, distinguishing manner; and that for especial ends and purposes.

ALL men, it is hoped, design to obey in some things, most in most things, but few in all.

It is a dangerous condition for children to boast of the privileges of their fathers and to imitate their sins.

THE heart of a believer affected with the glory of Christ, is like a needle touched with the loadstone.¹ It can no longer be quiet, no longer be satisfied in a distance from him. It is

¹ See Jeremy Taylor's use of the same simile (in *Growth of Sin*, part II. ch. xvii.). ‘As the needle of a compass, when it is directed to its beloved star, at the first addresses waves on either side, and seems indifferent in his courtship of the rising and declining sun, and when it seems first determined to the north, stands awhile trembling, as if it suffered inconvenience in the first fruition of its desires, and stands not still in full enjoyment till after first a great variety of motion, and then an undisturbed posture; so is the piety, and so is the conversion of a man, wrought by degrees and several steps of imperfection,’ etc.

put into a continual motion towards him. This motion, indeed, is weak and tremulous. . . . However, it is continually pressing towards him. But it obtains not its point, it comes not to its centre and rest, in this world.

IN all the sins of men God principally regards the principle—that is, the heart.

It is a matter of great and tremendous consequence, to have the promises of God left and proposed unto us.

WHEN we have, through Christ, obtained mercy for our persons, we need not fear but that we shall have suitable and seasonable help for our duties.

WHOSOEVER dealeth with God or man about the sins of others should look well, in the first place, unto his own.

OPPORTUNITIES for duty which render it beautiful, ought diligently to be embraced.

GOD doth as well undertake for our being his people as he doth for his being our God.

WE have no bounds, under the gospel, for a Sabbath-day's journey, provided it be for Sabbath ends.

A GOOD work it is to pare off all unnecessary occasions of debate and differences in religion, provided we go not so near the quick as to let out any of its vital spirits.

SENTENCES AND APHORISMS 223

To speak of religion without a supposition of sin, and the way of a relief from the event of it mentioned, is to talk of chimeras—things that neither are, ever were, or will be.

ONE principle contended for as rational and true, which (if admitted) will insensibly seduce the mind unto and justify a practice ending in atheism,¹ is more to be feared than ten thousand jests and scoffs against religion.

I AM persuaded that some have scarce any better or more forcible argument to satisfy their own minds that they are in the right in religion, than the inclination they find in themselves to hate and persecute them whom they suppose to be in the wrong.

THE light of the stars is useful and relieving in a dark night as we are on our way ; but what are they when the sun ariseth ! Will any man think it a loss, that, upon the rising of the sun, they shall not enjoy their light any more, though in the night they knew not what to have done without it ? It may be we cannot conceive how it will be best for us to forego the use of sacraments, ministry, and the Scripture itself. But all the virtue of the streams is in the fountain ; and the

¹ In the preface to his *Truth and Innocence*, Owen makes a curious statement (see *Samson Agonistes*, 294-299). While he had often met practical atheists, 'For my part,' he confesses, 'I have had this advantage by my own obscurity and small consideration in the world, as never to converse with any persons that did or durst question the being or providence of God, either really or in pretence.' He understands, however, from hearsay and printed matter, that some people occupy this attitude of 'prodigious licentiousness and impiety.' When Hume, a century later, made a similar remark at Holbach's dinner-table, the Parisian sceptic calmly told him he was sitting at table with no fewer than seventeen of the men whose existence he doubted.

immediate enjoyment of Christ unspeakably exceeds whatever by any means we can be made partakers of here below.

POWER, they say, is a liquor that, let it be put into what vessel you will, is ready to overflow.

WE have lived to see the utmost extremes that the Christian religion can divert into. Some, with all earnestness, do press the formal invocation of saints and angels as our duty ; and some will not grant that it is lawful for us so to call on Christ himself.

It is sottish ignorance and infidelity to suppose that, under the gospel, there is no communication between God and us but what is, on his part, in laws, commands, and promises ; and on ours, by obedience performed in our strength and upon our convictions unto them. To exclude hence the real internal operations of the Holy Ghost, is to destroy the gospel.

THERE is a state of perfect peace with God to be attained under imperfect obedience.

THERE is no rule of proportion between eternal and temporal things.

WE may receive the promises, as to the comfort and benefit of them, when we do not actually receive the things promised.

FAITH must be tried, and of all graces it is most suited unto trial.

THERE may sometimes, through God's providential disposal of all things, be an appearance of such an opposition and inconsistency between his commands and promises as nothing but faith bowing the soul unto divine sovereignty can reconcile.

No man knows whereunto a deliberate sin may lead him, nor what will be the event of it.

THE doctrine of the law, indeed, humbles the soul *for* Christ, but it is the doctrine of the gospel that humbles the soul *in* Christ.

SIN is never less quiet than when it seems to be most quiet.

SOME refuse, transient thoughts are sometimes cast away on God; which he despiseth.

GOD accounts a flight to the strong tower of his name to be the most excellent valour.

THE particular end of literature is none other but to remove some part of that curse which is come upon us by sin. Learning is the product of the soul's struggling with the curse for sin. To disentangle the mind in its reasonings, to recover an acquaintance with the works of God—is the aim and tendance of literature.¹

¹ This view is not peculiar to Owen. Milton throws out the same idea in his tractate 'On Education,' where he advises Master Samuel Hartlib that 'the end of learning is to repair the ruins of our first parents by regaining to know God aright, and out of that knowledge to love him,' etc.

ECCLESIASTICAL laws have been always looked on as cobwebs that catch the smaller flies, whilst the greater break them at their pleasure.

A RETURN unto obedience is an act of greater power than a persistency in the way and course of it, and more is required thereunto.

THAT wisdom which cannot teach me that God is love, shall ever pass for folly.

A RIVER continually fed by a living fountain may as soon end its streams before it come to the ocean, as a stop be put to the course and progress of grace before it issue in glory.

It is not the glorious battlements, the painted windows, the crouching antics¹ that support a building, but the stones that lie unseen in or upon the earth. It is often those who are despised and trampled on that bear up the weight of a whole nation.

MUCH of the glory of heaven may dwell in a simple cottage, and poor persons, even under rags, may be very like God.

THOSE who would take away the use of our reason in spiritual things would deal with us as the Philistines did with Samson—first put out our eyes, and then make us grind in their mill.

FAITH keeps the soul at a holy distance from these infinite depths of divine wisdom, where it profits more by reverence

¹ Grotesque decorations of a building.

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and holy fear than any can do by their utmost attempt to draw nigh to that inaccessible light wherein these glories of the divine nature do dwell.

It is true God can and often doth direct a word of truth, spoken as it were at random, unto a proper effect of grace on some or other; as it was when the man drew a bow at a venture and smote the king of Israel between the joints of the harness. But ordinarily a man is not likely to hit a joint who knows not how to take his aim.

ASSURANCE encourageth us in our combat; it delivereth us not from it. We may have peace with God when we have none from the assaults of Satan.

For the most part we live upon successes, not promises:—unless we see and feel the print of victories, we will not believe.

UNTIL men know themselves better, they will care very little to know Christ at all.

SIN aims always at the utmost. Every time it rises up to tempt or to entice, might it have its own course, it would go out to the utmost sin in that kind. Every unclean thought or glance would be adultery, if it could. Every covetous desire would be oppression. Every thought of unbelief would be atheism, might it grow to its head.

EXERCISE and success are the two main cherishers of grace in the heart.

DUTIES are excellent food for an unhealthy soul; they are no physic for a sick soul.

SOMETIMES in reading of the word God makes a man stay on something that cuts him to the heart, and shakes him as to his present condition.¹

WHEN we go to Christ for healing, faith eyes him peculiarly as pierced.

MEN are sometimes carried into sin by love to it, and are continued in it by fear of what will ensue upon it.

How will young men put themselves on any company, any society? At first being delighted with *evil company*, then with the *evil of the company*.

THE same faith works equally in them that die by violence (Heb. xi. 37) and them who, to escape death, expose themselves to other miseries, provided that the call to the one or the other be of God.

THAT alone makes sinners wise which tenders them relief.

THE countries which send up no vapours receive down no showers. Remembrance with thankfulness of former mercies is the matter, as it were, which by God's goodness is condensed into following blessings.

EVANGELICAL truth will not be honourably witnessed unto but by evangelical grace.

¹ Bunyan's *Grace Abounding* is crowded with instances of this experience.

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They that know anything in this world know that, as the first great opposition of hell, the world, and corrupt nature, is against faith to God by Christ; so the next great opposition made against us, is against our love.

WHEN men have laboured as much in the improvement of the principle of forbearance as they have done to subdue other men to their opinions, religion will have another appearance in the world.

SIN may be the occasion of great sorrow, when there is no sorrow for sin; as it was with Esau.

THE sum of all false religion consisteth always in contrivances for the expiation of sin.

ALL our rest in this world is from trust in God.

THE church is the safest society in the world.

THIS is the great apostolical canon for the due performance of divine worship, namely, 'Let us have grace to do it'; all others are needless and superfluous.

HE who prays as he ought will endeavour to live as he prays.

UNTO a reproof it is essential that it spring from love. 'Whom I love, I rebuke' is the absolute rule of these things.

I CANNOT believe in him as my heavenly king, who is not

able by himself and by the virtue of his presence with me to make what changes and alterations he pleaseth in the minds of men, and in the whole creation of God, to relieve, preserve, and deliver me, and to raise my body at the last day.

It is to no purpose to boast of Christ, if we have not an evidence of his graces in our hearts and lives. But unto whom he is the hope of future glory, unto them he is the life of present grace.

THE life of religion is in the Life.

HE suffered not as God, but he suffered who was God.

THIS is the end of divine revelation : to direct us in paying that homage which is due to the divine nature.

HE that really improves gospel truths, though he hears them a thousand times, they will be always new and fresh unto him, because they put him upon newness of practice.

A COMMANDMENT that is always practised is always new, as John speaks of that of love.

THE bottom of a pit or well gives the best prospect of the heavenly luminaries, and the soul in its deepest humiliations hath for the most part the clearest view of things within the veil.

As for religion, it is the choice of men, and he that chooseth not his religion hath none.

THE dream of setting up an outward, glorious, visible kingdom of Christ, which he must bear rule in, and over the world, be it in Germany or in England, is but an ungrounded presumption. The Jews not called, Antichrist not destroyed, the nations of the world generally wrapped up in idolatry and false worship, little dreaming of their deliverance—will the Lord Christ leave the world in this state, and set up his kingdom here on a molehill? ¹

IT is almost as difficult to convince men of their spiritual decays as it is to recover them from them.

THERE is no grace or mercy that doth more affect the hearts of believers, that gives them a greater transport of joy and thankfulness, than this of deliverance from backslidings.

ALL that a natural man hath on this side hell is free mercy.

WHEN hath a gracious soul the soundest joys, but when it hath the deepest sorrows? '*Habent et gaudia vulnus.*'

EVERY act of sin is a fruit of being weary of God.

YOU that are engaged in the work of God, seek for a reward of your service in the service itself.

¹ Baxter too came to have a proper scorn for such flighty views. 'I am farther than ever I was from expecting great matters of Unity, Splendour, or Prosperity to the church on earth, or that Saints should dream of a Kingdom of this World, or flatter themselves with the Hopes of a Golden Age or reigning over the Ungodly.'

Owen had no sympathy at any time with millennial fancies. Elsewhere in an earlier sermon he curtly observes: 'For the personal reign of the Lord Jesus on earth, I leave it to them with whose discoveries I am not, and curiosities I would not be, acquainted.'

To some men it is hard seeing a call of God through difficulties; when if it would but clothe itself with a few carnal advantages, how apparent it is to them! They can see it through a little cranny.

THE things of Christ should be as Joseph's sheaf, to which all others should bow.

WHAT am I the better if I can dispute that Christ is God, but have no sense or sweetness in my heart from thence that he is a God in covenant with my soul? ¹

TRUE faith can no more be without true holiness, than true fire without heat.

LOVE in the Father is like honey in the flower; it must be in the comb before it be for our use. Christ must extract and prepare this honey for us.

EVERY one who is now in heaven hath his pardon sealed in the blood of Christ. All these pardons are, as it were, hanged up in the gospel; they are all enrolled in the promises thereof, for the encouragement of them that stand in need of forgiveness to come and sue out theirs also. Fear not then the guilt of sin, but the love of it and the power of it.

¹ Compare Melancthon's great sentence: 'Hoc est Christum cognoscere, beneficia eius cognoscere, non eius naturas, modos incarnationis, contueri.' Also the sentence quoted from Luther by Hermann in his *Verkehr* (E. tr., p. 125). Owen elsewhere observes: 'When the heart is cast indeed into the mould of the doctrine that the mind embraceth, when not the sense of the words only is in our heads but the sense of the things abides in our hearts, when we have communion with God in the doctrine we contend for—then shall we be garrisoned by the grace of God against all the assaults of men.'

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PRUDENCE and skill for the management of ourselves in reference to others, in civil affairs, for public good, is much the fairest flower within the border of nature's garden.

WERE men not so wise, the world, perhaps, would be more quiet.

WHOEVER hath an interest in any one promise hath an interest in them all, and in the fountain-love from whence they flow. He to whom any drop of their sweetness floweth may follow it up unto the spring. Were we wise, each taste of mercy would lead us to the ocean of love. Have we any hold on a promise?—we may get upon it, and it will bring us to the main, Christ himself and the Spirit, and so into the bosom of the Father. It is our folly to abide upon a little, which is given us merely to make us press for more.

CHURCHES may *inform* the minds of men; they cannot *enforce* them. And if those that adhere unto any church do not do so, because they judge that it is their duty, and best for them so to do, they therein differ not much from a herd of creatures that are called by another name.

SOME men's words go exceedingly beyond their hearts. Did their spirits come up to their expressions, it were well.

TRUTH and good company will give a modest man a little confidence sometimes.

LET new light be derided whilst men please; he will never

serve the will of God in this generation, who sees not beyond the line of foregoing ages.¹

THE Lord break the pride of our spirits before it break the staff of our bread and the help of our salvation.

I AM persuaded that if every Absalom in the land, that would be a judge for the ending of our differences, were enthroned, the case would not be much better than it is.

HEREIN is Christ honoured indeed, when we go to him with our sins by faith, and say unto him, 'Lord, this is thy work. This is that for which thou camest into the world. This is that thou hast undertaken to do. Thou callest for my burden, which is too heavy for me to bear; take it, blessed Redeemer. Thou tenderest thy righteousness; that is my portion.'

¹ This aphorism, like the well-known passage in the *Areopagitica*, is in line with the best traditions of the Independents. It is said that when their congregations in England covenanted to walk in gospel ordinances, they added the proviso, 'till God should give them "new light" and "further light"' (see Barclay's *Inner Life of the Religious Societies of the Commonwealth*, p. 122). Neal gives the whole noble address said to have been spoken by John Robinson to the *Mayflower* emigrants, and from it these sentences may be cited: 'If God reveal anything to you by any other instrument of his, be as ready to receive it as ever you were to receive any truth by my ministry: for I am verily persuaded, the Lord has more truth yet to break forth out of his holy word. For my part I cannot sufficiently bewail the condition of the reformed churches, who are come to a period in religion and will go at present no farther than the instruments of their reformation.' That Robinson meant the Bible by the 'word of God' is put beyond reach of doubt by what follows. 'I beseech you remember, it is an article of your church-covenant that you be ready to receive whatever truth shall be made known to you from the written word of God.' The American Independents, it must be allowed, were less true to this principle than their English brethren.

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ADMIRATION is the soul's 'non-plus,' its doing it knows not what, the winding of it up until it stands still, ready to break.

HE never will be, he never was, behind with any poor soul in return of love.

TAKE heed of decays. Whatever ground the gospel loseth in our minds, sin possesseth it for itself and its own ends.

THE minds of some are apt, on occasions of signal mercies, to be filled with thoughts of what they have received, but he who is spiritually minded will immediately retreat into thoughts of God.

THE general who heard one of his soldiers cry out, upon a fresh onset of the enemy, 'Now we are undone, now we are ruined,' called him a traitor, and told him it was not so whilst he could wield his sword. It is not for every private soldier on every danger to make judgment of the battle; that is the work of the general. Jesus Christ is 'the captain of our salvation'; he hath undertaken the leading and conduct of our souls through all our difficulties. Our duty is to fight and contend; his work is to take care of the event, and to him it is to be committed.

TROUBLES and afflictions in themselves and their own nature have no good in them, nor do they tend unto any good end; they grow out of the first sentence against sin, and are in their own nature penal.

HE that is alive may know that he was born, though he

know neither the place where nor the time when he was so ; and so may he that is spiritually alive, and hath ground of evidence that he is so, that he was born again, though he know neither when, nor where, nor how. And this case is usual in persons of quiet natural tempers, who have had the advantage of education under means of light and grace. God oftentimes, in such persons, begins and carries on the work of his grace insensibly, so that they come to good growth and maturity before they know that they are alive.

Do not deceive yourselves. It is not an indifferent thing, whether you will come in unto Christ upon his invitations or no—a thing that you may put off from one season to another. Your present refusal of it is as high an act of enmity against God as your nature is capable of.

THERE is nothing more dreadful than for a man to be able to digest his convictions ; to have sin look him in the face, and speak perhaps some words of terror to him, and to be able, by any charms of diversions or delays, to put it off.

WHEN Christ comes with his spiritual power upon the soul, to conquer it to himself, he hath no quiet landing-place. He can set foot on no ground but what he must fight for and conquer.

THE very notion that some men have, though you may think there is little in it, that they can dedicate¹ anything to God,

¹ *i.e.* as the context indicates, 'consecrate'—in the sense of setting apart, as specially holy, any spot or place to be reserved exclusively for God. These rather extravagant words occur in a sermon on 'A Christian, God's Temple,' preached in 1674, in which Owen's reaction against the dominant ritualism of

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hath been the greatest ruin that ever befell religion in this world.

THERE is not a day but sin foils or is foiled, prevails or is prevailed on; and it will be so whilst we live in this world.

THE multitude of the guilty take away the sense and shame of the guilt.

ALL things do now call us to be *martyrs in resolution*, though we should never really lose our lives by violence.¹

I AM not sometimes without some suspicion that many of the impure abominations, follies, villainies, which are ascribed to the primitive heretics, yea, the very Quakers themselves (upon whom the filth that lies is beyond all possible belief), might be feigned and imposed, as to a great part thereof. For though not the very same, yet things as foolish and opposite to the light of nature, were at the same time charged on the most orthodox.²

the Anglican Church brings him pretty close to the well-known position of his former opponent, George Fox. One of the grudges against Laud had been raised by his elaborate consecration of some churches in London. His tossing of dust into the air may be alluded to in *Comus*, 164-165, and indeed the whole poem has sometimes been thought to contain an allegorical reflection of the true church beguiled by Laud's popish potion.

¹ See the passage quoted by Keble below his verses on St. Stephen's Day in *The Christian Year*.

² 'I confess I give but halting credit to most histories that are written, not only against the Albigenses and Waldenses, but against most of the ancient hereticks who have left us none of their own writings, in which they speak for themselves; and I heartily lament that the historical writings of the ancient schismatics and hereticks (as they were called) perished, and that partiality suffered them not to survive, that we might have more light in the church-affairs of those times and been better able to judge between the fathers and them. And I am prone to think that few of them were so bad as their adversaries made them,' etc. (Baxter's *Reliquiae*, part I. sect. 212. 40).

To say a man is convinced, when, either for want of skill and ability or the like, he cannot maintain his opinion to and against all men, is a mere conceit.

THE enmity between God and us began on our part: the peace which he hath made begins and ends with himself.

It is a sad sign that our ways please not God, when his ways please not us at all.

A MAN may beat down the bitter fruit from an evil tree, till he is weary; whilst the root abides in strength and vigour, the beating down of the present fruit will not hinder it from bringing forth more.

A CAUSE is good or bad before it hath success one way or another; and that which hath not its warranty in itself can never obtain any from its success. The rule of the goodness of any public cause is the eternal law of reason, with the first legal rights and interests of men. If these make not a cause good, success will never mend it.

THE giving way to the law of sin in the least is the giving strength to it. To let it alone, is to let it grow; not to conquer it, is to be conquered by it.¹

It hath been observed that the schoolmen themselves, in their meditations and devotional writings, wherein they had immediate thoughts of God, with whom they had to do, did

¹ 'In the sense of religion we all are warriors or slaves' (Jeremy Taylor).

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speak quite another language as to justification before God than they do in their wrangling, philosophical, fiery disputes about it. And I had rather learn what some men really judge about their own justification from their *prayers* than their *writings*.

I HAD rather be instrumental in the communication of light and knowledge to the meanest believer, than to have the clearest success against prejudiced disputers.

It is good to strive to excel and to go before one another in knowledge and in light, as in holiness and obedience. To do this *in the road* is difficult. Many, finding it impossible to emerge into any consideration by walking in the beaten path of truth, and yet not able to conquer the itch of being accounted *τινες μεγάλοι*,¹ turn aside into byways, and turn the eyes of men to them by scrambling over hedge and ditch, when the sober traveller is not at all regarded.

WE allow no faith to be justifying, which is not itself and in its own nature a *spiritually vital principle* of obedience and good works.²

¹ 'Certain great persons.'

² For once Owen's italics serve as a right emphasis. The thought of these words may seem a truism, but it was something very different in the seventeenth century, when statements of the atonement often suggested and actually led to a development of antinomianism among the Puritans. Nor was the snare confined to one party. 'It is true,' says Mr. Shorthouse (*John Inglesant*, chap. xvii.), 'that the Laudian press teemed with holy works, setting the highest of pure standards before its readers, and exhorting to the following of a holy life; but this life was looked upon rather as a spiritual luxury and privilege, to which high and refined natures might well endeavour to attain, than as absolutely necessary to salvation.' It was a real service to evangelical faith when George Fox entered his protest against the isolation of pardon which in some current phases of Puritanism was tending to produce anti-moral consequences.

THE first beam of spiritual light and grace instates¹ an indefatigable desire of the glory of God in the minds and souls of them in whom it is. Without this the soul knows not how to desire its own salvation. I may say, it would not be saved in a way wherein God should not be glorified.

CONSCIENCE is the territory or dominion of God in man, which he hath so reserved to himself that no human power can possibly enter into it or dispose of it in any wise.

THESE two principles, their own reputation and that of their sect, constituted the life and soul of Pharisaism of old.

No heart can conceive that treasury of mercies which lies in this one privilege, in having liberty and ability to approach unto God at all times, according unto his mind and will.

IF we would talk less and pray more about them, things would be better than they are in the world; at least, we should be better enabled to bear them.

It is one reason against the restraint of forms, because there is in them too little exercise of the faculties of our minds in the worship of God.

It is a throne of grace that God in Christ is represented to us upon; but yet it is a throne still whereon majesty and glory do reside, and God is always to be considered by us as on a throne.

¹ *i.e.* Instils.

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No man of sobriety can, on any mistake, reprove us for anything, be it never so false, but that it is merely of sovereign grace that we have not indeed contracted the guilt of it; and humble thankfulness unto God on this occasion, for his real preserving grace, will abate the edge and take off the fierceness of our indignation against men for their supposed injurious dealings with us.

THERE are many saints in these nations who can truly say that the best and most comfortable days they ever saw in their lives were those wherein they were exercised with the greatest fears, dangers, and troubles.¹

DOTH the heart promise fair? Rest not on it, but say to the Lord Christ, 'Lord, do thou undertake for me.' Doth the sun shine fair in the morning? Reckon not therefore on a fair day; the clouds may arise and fall.

THIS is the trial and touchstone of gospel light. If it keep the heart sensible of sin, humble, lowly, and broken on that account; if it teach us to water a free pardon with tears, to detest forgiven sin, to watch diligently for the ruin of that which we are yet assured shall never ruin us—it is divine, from above, of the Spirit of grace.

I HOPE many a poor soul will be able to say with him that

¹ In sect. 6, ch. x., of the *Saints' Rest* we read: 'When did Christ preach such comforts to his disciples, as when their hearts were sorrowful at his departure? When did he appear among them and say, Peace be unto you, but when they were shut up for fear of the Jews? . . . Is not that our best state, wherein we have most of God?'

was banished from his country and found better entertainment elsewhere, 'My friends, I had perished if I had not perished—had I not been undone by fire, it may be I had been ruined in eternal fire.'

No duties need to jostle one another, I mean constantly. Especial occasions must be determined according to especial circumstances. But if in anything we take more upon us than we have time well to perform it in, without robbing God of that which is due to him and our own souls, this God calls not unto, this he blesseth us not in.

SINNERS at their first conversion are very sensible of great forgiveness: 'Of whom I am chief' lies next their heart.

THE paths of faith and love wherein he [David] walked are unto the most of us like the way of an eagle in the air—too high and hard for us. Yet to this very day do the cries of this man after God's own heart sound in our ears.

THERE is '*vox naturae clamantis ad Dominum naturae*'—a voice in nature itself, upon anything that is suddenly too hard for it, which cries out immediately to the God of nature. So men, on such occasions, without any consideration, are surprised into a calling on the name of God and crying unto him.

OUR solitudes and retirements . . . give us the most genuine trials whether we are spiritually minded or no. What we are in them, that we are, and no more.

HE that loves not God for himself—that is, *for what he is in himself*, and what from himself alone *he is and will be to us in Christ* (which considerations are inseparable)—hath no true affection for any spiritual thing whatever.¹

WITH what little disadvantage to the religion of Jesus Christ, I suppose, a loss of all the canons of all councils that ever were in the world since the apostles' days, with their acts and contests (considering what use is made of them), might be undergone!

IT is love alone that is the salt of every kindness or benefit.

LOVE is that jewel of human nature which commands a valuation wherever it is found.

ALL mercies without Christ are bitter; and every cup is sweet that is seasoned but with a drop of his blood.

IF one falsity be not covered with another, it will quickly rain through all.

HE alone is in a posture to learn from God who sincerely gives up his mind, conscience, and affections to the power and rule of what is revealed unto him.

SOME, yea many, promises of God may have a full accom-

¹ This is almost the high note struck repeatedly by Jonathan Edwards, in his *Religious Affections* (e.g. pt. III. § 2, § 12, etc.), though the latter carries disinterestedness to the verge of unreality. It is curious to compare Spinoza's famous sentence—'He who loves God cannot expect God to love him in return'—the sentence which bound Goethe to him for his great disinterestedness of nature.

plishment, when very few or none at all know or take notice that so they are accomplished.¹

THERE is no death of sin without the death of Christ.²

For a sinner out of hell not to rest in the will of God, not to humble himself under his mighty hand, is to make himself guilty of the especial sin of hell. Other sins deserve it; but repining against God is principally, yea, only committed in it.

THERE is more glory under the eye of God, in the sighs, groans, and mournings of poor souls filled with the love of Christ, after the enjoyment of him according to his promises . . . than in the thrones and diadems of all the monarchs on earth.

THEY that love him would have him be *all that he is*—as he is, and *nothing else*; and would be themselves like him.

BLESSED Jesus! we can add nothing to thee, nothing to thy glory; but it is a joy of heart unto us that thou art what thou art—that thou art so gloriously exalted at the right hand of God. And we do long more fully and clearly to behold that glory, according to thy prayer and promise.

¹ Compare the lines by Coventry Patmore, ending thus:—

‘For want of me the world’s course will not fail;
When all its work is done, the lie shall rot;
The truth is great and shall prevail,
When none cares whether it prevail or not.’

² Pity that so deep a sentence is immediately preceded by a narrow attack on ‘Seneca, Tully, Epictetus.’ ‘You know,’ cries Owen (*Mortification of Sin*, ch. vii.), ‘what affectionate discourses they have of contempt of the world and self, of regulating and conquering all exorbitant affections and passions! The lives of most of them manifested that their maxims differed as much from true mortification as the sun painted on a signpost from the sun in the firmament. They had neither light nor heat.’

No man ever yet, but Jesus Christ, was able to finish all that was in his heart to do for God. On the removal of such accomplished and useful persons, I have sometimes relieved myself with this thought, that Christ lives in heaven still, and the blessed Spirit, from whom the head and heart of this chosen vessel were so richly replenished, liveth still.

NATHANIEL MATHER, in his preface to Owen's
posthumous *Discourses on the Holy Spirit and*
His Work.

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